

THE INCORPORATION OF THE BELIEVER
INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

—

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ABSTRACT

THE INCORPORATION OF THE BELIEVER INTO
THE BODY OF CHRIST

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

School of Graduate Studies

Avondale Campus

Title: THE INCORPORATION OF THE BELIEVER INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

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Problem

One of the greatest problems facing the church today is inadequate incorporation of the believer into the Body of Christ. Too much emphasis has been placed by the church's evangelistic outreach on getting a decision or on indoctrination. Once the individual has been converted and baptised it is easy to think that the new believer "has arrived." This results in a lack of follow-up and incorporation, with some new believers never becoming an active participant within the community. It was the purpose of this study to research and discover better ways to facilitate the incorporation of the believer into the Body of Christ.

Method

The areas of sociology, New Testament, church growth and evangelism were researched and appropriate material was included in this study.

A group made up of twelve members was part of an incorporation programme. A four-week programme was designed to encourage interpersonal relations and to deal with the problems new members face. This group was structured to be an experience of acceptance, belonging and growth, thus in the process helping the members with incorporation.

Results

During the time spent together the members of the group began relating to one another in a personal manner. Problems faced by new members were highlighted within the group, and opportunities were given for members of the group to minister to each other. In effect, the members were being incorporated into the Body of Christ within the small group.

Conclusions

In order for incorporation to take place the needs of the individual ought to be met, and a balanced approach to the cognitive, behavioral, relational dimensions and worship must be encouraged. Unless one ensures the balanced development of all these dimensions there will be a corresponding lack of incorporation.

Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies
Avondale Campus

THE INCORPORATION OF THE BELIEVER INTO
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A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

PROJECT
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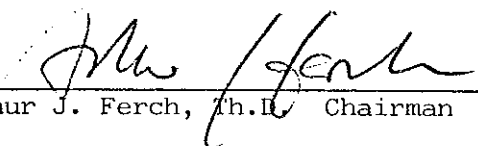
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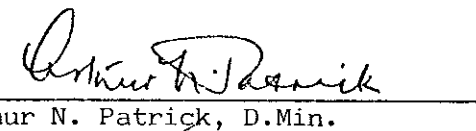
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Twentieth century man is in search of belonging and acceptance. The church has a golden opportunity to provide an answer to this need through its message and its fellowship. However, in order for the church to be successful in its mission, the believer needs to be incorporated effectively into the Body of Christ.

The author has become more and more interested in this topic during the last two years. The New Testament develops the realization that some aspects which are today considered as "church" are merely man-made structures. Thus the dream and desire has arisen to belong to the New Testament church. The writer recognizes that the church will always remain fallible, yet this is no reason to stop working for the ideal.

Perhaps every minister has struggled with the issue of how to make a church more loving and caring. It is most frustrating to see interested people coming to church "window shopping" and then leaving never to return since they have not found that for which they were searching. Likewise, it is frustrating to be confronted by apostasies which could have been prevented.

Much emphasis is placed by the church upon evangelism, which is correct. The importance of follow-up is realized by most evangelists and church leaders. However in many cases incorporation

and post-baptismal instruction is limited to telling the new believer the importance of Bible study, prayer, witnessing and attending church.

Last year the writer was approached by two different persons requesting baptism, but who did not want to belong to any church. Both wanted to be Christians in isolation, rather than worshipping or fellowshiping with a community. The dilemma that the writer faced was whether such a situation is possible. Does belonging to Christ necessarily demand belonging to a group? Or is an individual's attitude toward God only of importance?

Furthermore, during the past two years the author has been observing a theological struggle within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The tension between the individual and the power structure of the group has been noted with great pain. Unfortunately due to this tension scores of fellow ministers and friends have found themselves outside of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some are fellowshiping with other Christian believers. But of most concern is that some have lost their faith in Christianity. Hence the question arises as to how the church can have diversity and yet unity.

Purpose of this Project

This project attempts to help new believers to be incorporated effectively into the Body of Christ. The writer implemented this project at the Hillview Seventh-day Adventist Church after consultation with the pastor, Dr. Eoin Giller.

The writer was involved with the church during the past ten months, while studying at Avondale College. A four week programme was conducted with new members to facilitate their incorporation

and to help identify those who required extra care, at the same time discovering their needs and feelings. If there was in the church at large a greater degree of incorporation consciousness, this project with new members could have achieved more positive results.

Procedure of this Study

In Chapter II a theological foundation for incorporation is laid down. The relationship of faith, community and Holy Spirit is studied in respect to incorporation into the Body of Christ. However the main concern of this paper is the relationship of the individual to the church in order for assimilation to take place.

Chapter III deals with the tension between the individual and the group. When the individual is emphasized, the group is sacrificed. On the other hand where the group is ultimate, freedom and diversity is sacrificed. The writer endeavoured in this chapter to maintain a creative tension between the individual and the group. When either is stressed to the neglect of the other, one has either anarchy or authoritarianism.

Chapter IV considers the views and findings of other writers from the fields of sociology, evangelism and church growth. Various methods of integration are discussed. These different strategies could be implemented to facilitate the incorporation into the church of new believers as well as members from transfer growth.

Chapter V describes the method, implementation and evaluation of this project. Included are some recommendations that will enhance the effectiveness of the incorporation process.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF INCORPORATION

Introduction

How does a person become a member of Christ's body? What enables effective incorporation to take place? These questions have received three main answers, with each group of respondents placing greater emphasis upon one area of incorporation. These areas are as follows:

1. Faith in Jesus Christ
2. Joining the community, which is the Body of Christ
3. Receiving the Holy Spirit

These three categories have sometimes been classified as Protestant, Catholic, and Pentecostal.¹ There have been excesses in these differing positions. In addition, each group has tended to neglect the other two. It has to be admitted that all three groups have biblical grounds for emphasizing their point of view. Therefore the writer proposes that the biblical account of incorporation includes all three aspects. No person who is truly incorporated into the Body of Christ only believes. He also belongs to the community of believers and has received the Holy Spirit. One dimension of this process cannot exist in biblical wholeness without the other two.

¹Lesslie Newbigin, The Household of God (London: SCM Press, 1953), pp. 32-110.

Those emphasizing faith in Jesus--the Protestant position--tend to make Christianity individualistic.¹ They also shy away from anything related to experience.

Those emphasizing the second--the Catholic model--tend to tie salvation to a particular church, and play down faith in Jesus Christ because they see the church as the channel of grace. For them the church has the monopoly of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, those who accept the third model tend to make Christianity subjective, with an emphasis on experience, thus reducing the significance of Christ's substitutionary death. Some extreme expressions of this form even tend to identify two kinds of Christians, those who have faith in Jesus Christ and those who have subsequently received the Holy Spirit.

When the New Testament speaks about incorporation into Christ it unifies these three categories harmoniously, affirming that ". . . life 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' is inseparable from life 'in the body'."²

In order for incorporation into the Body of Christ to take place three parties have roles to play. The individual is to have faith in the completed atonement which Christ made on Calvary, and repent of his sin. Then there is the role of the church. The individual cannot baptize himself, he is baptized by one of the representatives of the community of believers. Thus symbolically by baptism the group incorporates the believer into the Body of Christ

¹This is further developed in chapter three.

²J. Christiaan Beker, Paul the Apostle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 274.

and in turn the believer becomes a member of the Body of Christ. The further role of God disclosed in number three: the Spirit is given to the believer as an evidence or seal that he has been adopted as a son of God, that in fact he has been incorporated into the Body of Christ.

Incorporation by Faith

The problem which faces mankind is that by birth human beings are incorporated into the first Adam, with their only reward being death (Rom 5:12). How can mankind reverse this situation? The answer that Paul gives is by faith in Jesus Christ. "Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus" (Rom 5:1).¹

In order to become a son of God, we need to be transferred from one world to another, from the sphere of the flesh and law-keeping to the sphere of grace which one enters by faith and baptism.² The Scriptures require faith of one wanting to become a son of God. "But to all who receive him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12). In the great commission the emphasis is placed on faith. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

Judaism saw circumcision as the rite of initiation into the covenant people of God. But in the New Testament what marks a person as a member is not circumcision but faith that works by love

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

²Newbigin, p. 41.

(Gal 5:2-12). Circumcision is always contrasted with faith, never with baptism. The issue at stake at the Jerusalem Council was faith versus circumcision, or faith versus works (Acts 15:1-21).

A person becomes incorporated into the new Adam not by works, not by merits that are engendered within him, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:1-5, 19-29).

To be of the seed of Abraham is not to be born within a specific nation but to be of those that have faith (Rom 4:13-25). Paul makes this very clear in the book of Galatians.

Thus Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith (Gal 3:6-9).

To become a child of God one must have faith "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:26-27).

. . . in the New Testament faith and baptism are viewed as inseparable whenever the subject of Christian initiation is under discussion, so that if one is referred to, the other is presupposed, even if not mentioned.¹

The New Testament when it refers to the incorporation of the believer with Christ, uses the term 'in Christ.' The term 'in Christ' does not imply merely belief that salvation comes about through Christ, but that the believer is 'in Christ,' he is incorporated in Christ and therefore what Christ has experienced, the believer also experiences. With incorporation, that which pertains to

¹G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster Press, 1962), p. 272.

'the one' pertains as well to 'the many' in 'the one.'

"Do you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3). Baptism thus symbolizes that the believer by faith 'in Christ' died when Christ died (Rom 6:4,5; Gal 2:20). Baptism also symbolizes the raising of the believer 'in Christ.' "And you were buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12).

. . . the effects of Christ's work are 'communicated' to us in baptism--we should never of course say 'baptism' without also thinking 'faith'--and that this 'communication' can be described as incorporation or sonship by adoption or as sharing in the death and resurrection of Christ.¹

Faith is paramount if one wants to be incorporated into Christ.² Faith plays such a large role in the Christian life that the church can be called "the household of faith" (Gal 6:10).

Faith enables the Christian to receive all he needs in Christ Jesus. "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30). Being 'in Christ' the Christian lacks nothing. Hence faith means personal identification with Christ.

Thus to become a Christian there has to be objective faith in our substitute Jesus Christ, who died once for all (2 Cor 5:14; Heb 9:26; 10:10,14). This faith is focused upon what Christ has done not upon what the person must do. Therefore to become a member of the

¹D. E. H. Whitely, The Theology of St. Paul (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 170.

²Faith is vital if there is to be any incorporation into Christ. G. R. Beasley-Murray, p. 364 writes, "For there is no incorporation in Christ without participation in his death and resurrection in and with Christ apart from the response of faith."

company of believers, one must have faith and then one will be added to the Lord (Acts 5:14).

This emphasis on faith gives Christian assurance. Salvation is not dependent upon human attainment but upon Christ's atonement. The guarantee of salvation is thus not connected to the person's works but to Christ's works. Seeing Christ has made a full and complete atonement, the Christian can come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16), for the Christian is one in Christ by faith.

However where incorporation by faith is preached to the exclusion of incorporation into the community which is the Body of Christ, as well as incorporation by receiving the Holy Spirit, true incorporation has not taken place. A one-sided emphasis such as this could lead to a static church. Christianity can become so objective that it becomes a mere philosophical concept. Instead the church ought to be a dynamic living organism. Christianity must affect the individual's thinking, feeling, and daily living. Christianity has a subjective side, which is experiential. Lawrence O. Richards¹ is correct when he says that evangelicals tend to see Scripture as truths to be understood rather than reality to be lived.

Furthermore, an individualistic kind of religion could be a result of neglecting incorporation into the community. Whereas Christ raised up a community, a family, a new humanity, the people of God are called into a new relationship with one another on the basis of common faith in Jesus Christ.

¹A New Face for the Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 178.

Incorporation into the Community

From the New Testament perspective it is a contradiction to speak about being a Christian without belonging to the community. Seldom does a hermit Christian long continue. Just as it is impossible to be married without having a partner, so to it is impossible to belong to the head without at the same time belonging to the body. The person who is 'in Christ' must surely be, therefore, in the Body of Christ. Joining the Christian community is not an option, a "join it if you want to" situation. A Christian must be part of the family of God, part of the redeemed community.

For Paul the gospel bound men and women to one another as well as to God. "Then, as Christ has welcomed you, welcome one another in order to glorify God" (Rom 15:7). Acceptance by Christ must inevitably lead to acceptance of those whom Christ has already welcomed.

It is through baptism that the individual is incorporated into Christ and the church. This incorporation into the community is well demonstrated in Acts 2:41:

1. "Those who received his word"--Conversion
2. "were baptized"--Identification
3. "and there were added"--Incorporation

This incorporation into the community of believers was not symbolic but a real experience. There was sharing of goods, as they looked after each other's physical needs. There was worship and praise together as they supplied each other's spiritual needs. There was contact with the wider community, as they reached out together. They celebrated the Lord's Supper together (Acts 2:42-47). The

"agape" feast was not just a make-believe communion. Christians were actually experiencing communion, fellowship, oneness. The bread and wine was interspersed with a common meal, the communion was indeed communion and not just a charade. Thus it is said "because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

The new believers were incorporated by study. This was related to the Scriptures and the apostles (Acts 2:42). They were then incorporated into the fellowship as they related to each other. Incorporation also involved relating to God by way of worship, this included formal worship in the temple, as well as informal worship in homes (Acts 2:42,46,47). Finally, incorporation also involved sharing in the mission of the church. Thus they related to the world "and every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

The person who became a believer experienced a sense of belonging to the body of Christ. However, in the Old Israel the individual was born into the community. With the New Israel--the church--the individual is incorporated into the community. When the believer is baptized he is baptized into Christ and into the church. It must be both, because the church is the Body of Christ. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greek, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). As Robinson states ". . . baptism is one because it makes one."¹ When one is incorporated into 'the one' there are no human barriers.

¹ John A. T. Robinson, Twelve New Testament Studies (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 158.

Christ reconciled us to God and thus from this flows reconciliation between humans. He who wants to distinguish in the church between Jew or Greek, between slave or free, between man or woman has not yet realized what incorporation involves. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

When a person is baptized he accepts the death of Christ on the cross on his behalf: indeed, Christ's death was his baptism (Mark 10:38,45; Luke 12:49). No wonder Robinson states ". . . Christian baptism is none other than the great baptism of Christ now made individually effective."¹ On the matter of becoming "one" after a person is incorporated by a baptism, he writes: "Indeed the fundamental reason why baptism 'makes one' is that it brings men under a baptism 'once made'."²

Thus the incorporation motif ties together the following key components of Paul: 'the one for all,' 'the one in all,' and 'the once for all.'

When the representative of the church baptizes the believer, the individual is formally being incorporated into the Body of Christ. James D. G. Dunn states: "For Paul, to become a Christian and to become a member of the Body of Christ are synonymous."³

If Christianity was meant to be individualistic, then the person who has faith in Christ would have been able to perform his own baptism. Christ intended that the Christian should be

¹Ibid., p. 169. ²Ibid., p. 158.

³James D. G. Dunn, Baptism in the Holy Spirit (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 129.

incorporated into a community, thus a person is baptized by another member of the Body of Christ. Baptism removes man from the loneliness of his own ego, as he joins in the fellowship he feels accepted and feels that he belongs. He can minister to the other members and the more mature member can minister and nurture the new believer.

Within the community the believer can experience forgiveness; it is not until this has taken place that the believer can grasp the fact that God has forgiven him. When the believer is treated as worth something by the community, he then is reassured that God loves him and his self-worth is established. Thus the Christian is joined to the community in order that he might benefit from it. Likewise, the community is benefitted by the new member. Stephen Neil writes about the community: "Theologically we have been discovering anew that the church is not an appendage to the gospel; it is itself a part of the gospel."¹

Those that have stressed this facet of incorporation have been correct, but it also has been abused. "Water-baptism could be regulated, whereas faith and the Spirit can not."² Thus the church was liable to injustice at times. It should always be remembered that baptism takes place in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and not in the name of the church. It is futile to put one's faith in the church, because people form the church, and people are sinful. A church which starts pointing to itself as the source of salvation is denying Christ's glory. At the same time a church

¹ Christian Faith and Other Faiths (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 206, quoted in Elton Trueblood, The Incendiary Fellowship (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 28.

² Dunn, p. 224.

which sees itself as Christ, no longer listens but only teaches. Neither can one put his faith in a creed or set of doctrines of the church. Douglas writes". . . what our Lord left behind Him when He ascended from earth was not a book, not a creed, not a system of thought, not a rule of life, but a visible community called and gathered by Him through a deliberate choice on his part."¹

This is what we are called to and into which we are to be incorporated. Newbigin states:

. . . we do not find that our Lord first laid down a compendium of doctrine and then invited those who believed it to form an association on that basis. The personal fellowship and the doctrine were given together, and in such wise that in both there was room for ever-new growth.²

Great harm has been done by those who want to define the church in terms of theological creeds and statements. The church is as well a sociological entity, we are called into a community with new social relationships.³ The focal point was not in a book or rite, but a set of relationships.

The Christian community has to be a foretaste of the kingdom. In microcosm it is to demonstrate what is to take place in macrocosm.

¹Walter B. T. Douglas, "The Church: Its Nature and Function," in Servants for Christ: The Adventist Church Facing the '80's, ed. Robert E. Firth (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1980), pp. 70-71.

²Newbigin, p. 74.

³The church should not be seen just as a social phenomenon. If faith in Christ and the Spirit indwelling the community is denied, then the church has degenerated into another club. This is what James B. Nelson does when he speaks about the Christian community in relation to other communities "It is not the only community under God's lordship - all are." Moral Nexus Ethics of Christian Identity and Community (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 53.

Baptism is the initiation into this community. This community is sustained and maintained by sharing in one loaf, one cup and one fellowship. By receiving the Body of Christ the community reveals itself as a body. The Lord's Supper involves the breaking of the bread. Not only does this symbolise Christ's body being broken for us. But breaking the bread instead of biting it also tells us that the bread is to be shared with others.

Great responsibility falls upon the church to ensure the incorporation of the believer that God has called. The community which does not take this seriously is placing that individual in a precarious situation. The bigger issue that flows out of the situation where the community does not fulfill its God-ordained duty, is whether that community still constitutes part of the body of Christ. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:42).

The New Testament used many images to describe the church. Amongst these images there are some that relate directly to the individual becoming part of the whole. Some of these images are in relation to the community of believers and Christ: the branches and the vine; the bride and the bridegroom; the temple and the chief corner stone; family members and the elder brother; the new human race and the new Adam; the body and the head. These images, whether of the temple, the family, the body or the people of God, are stating that one should become part of the whole. When the Bible speaks about those who are justified, it uses the first person plural 'we.'¹

¹Rom 1:17; 5:1,9,19; 8:30; 1 Cor 6:11; Heb 12:32.

The Christian church is the new humanity, but this is only on the basis of Christ. "The individual is incorporated into the one new man, and this signalizes the transformation of his inward nature and his solidarity with all men."¹

Incorporation by the Holy Spirit

Whereas the Protestant emphasis is upon the given message, and the Catholic emphasis is upon the given structure, the Pentecostal emphasis is upon the experience and the presence of the Holy Spirit. But we are born 'in Adam.' In order to be born 'in Christ' there has to be a rebirth.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:5-6).

Baptism by the spirit is essential for incorporation into the Body of Christ. If there has been no baptism by the Holy Spirit, then there has been no rebirth. Then the person is not in Christ but is still in the old order of things. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13).

To be 'in Christ' is to have the Spirit, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit is the starting point of the Christian life. "By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us his own Spirit" (1 John 4:13; 3:24).

¹Paul Minear, "Church, Idea of," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 616.

having the Spirit, and everyone who is a son of God is led by the Spirit (Rom 8:9,10,14,15). Having faith in Jesus Christ and thus being adopted as a son is closely related to possessing the Spirit (Gal 3:2; 4:6).

The promise of receiving the Holy Spirit is connected with repenting and believing (Acts 2:38). The New Testament does not portray the believer only receiving a part of the Holy Spirit, as if it is an evolving power that is complemented by a steady increase and by a full outpouring at the parousia or just prior to the parousia.

The receiving of the Spirit is not one of the last blessings which the Christian experiences, rather baptism of the Spirit is the down-payment (Eph 1:14) or the first fruits (Rom 8:23). The receiving of the Spirit takes place at conversion-baptism. And the guarantee constituting us as sons of God, is the receiving of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5).

In order to be incorporated, the work of the Spirit is vital. This is a work in men. This includes personal growth for the new Christian is only a babe in Christ and needs to be raised to Christian maturity. But this has to be kept in the right balance.

An individualistic interpretation of Paul's ethic will almost inevitably lead to perfectionism, an attitude alien to the Apostle. When Paul mentions growth toward Christian maturity and perfection, he means a growth within the congregation, serving one's brothers on the foundation which Christ laid once and for all.¹

Under the old covenant only a few are gifted: kings, judged, and prophets. Christ under the new covenant has insured that all are

¹Nils A. Dahl, Studies in Paul (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), p. 113.

gifted. The church is a fellowship of gifts of the Holy Spirit, thus within the church we have a fellowship of different ministries.

Each Christian receives at least one spiritual gift.¹ And these gifts are to be used in three ways: 1) to strengthen the church's fellowship: 2) to extend the church's ministry and witness: and 3) to bring the members of the body to maturity.

The spiritual gifts help the incorporation process, by giving each a part and a responsibility to minister to the body. Thus there occurs an edification of the members of the Body of Christ as they minister mutually one to another (1 Cor 14:12,26). Each one who is incorporated into the Body of Christ has a part to play for the healthy function of the body. With the reception of the Holy Spirit Christianity becomes a dynamic growing experience and graduates from history to reality.

However, there have been times where this aspect of incorporation has been abused, where Christian experience has diminished the role of Christ as the head of the body. It should also be kept in mind that the subjective experience of the Christian should be compared and shared with the community. Another guide to adopt is the concept that personal experiences should harmonize with what the Spirit gave in the Scriptures.

The New Testament does not equate the reception of the Holy Spirit with a "second blessing." To teach such is to create first and second class Christians. Paul only knows of one reception of the Spirit and one baptism in the Spirit.² This is none other than

¹Rom 12:5-8; 1 Cor 12:11,27-28; Eph 4:11-13.

²Dunn, pp. 170-71.

God's means of incorporating the convert into Christ. The New Testament knows only of one body and one baptism (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4). There is no room for spiritual apartheid in the body of Christ.

When one grasps the fact that baptism in the Spirit, incorporation into the body, as well as union with Christ are descriptions of the same event, then one realizes that the notion of a second blessing experience is not biblical.

Incorporation involves three aspects: faith, community and the Spirit. There are dangers where these are not held in balance. When they are held in creative tension the Christian community will be blessed.

Conclusion

As has been seen, different Christian groups have tended to emphasize one specific aspect of incorporation, whether it be faith, community or the work of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament deals with all three areas in relation to incorporation into the Body of Christ. The Christian community shares a common salvation which has its roots in an historical event. By having faith in Christ's death on his behalf, man is adopted as a son of God and treated as if he has never sinned. There is also a sharing in a present experience as the Holy Spirit works in the community. The Christian community is essentially an eschatological community which is proclaiming by its presence the dawning of the new age and the expected culmination in a future life.

The harmony of the three areas which the Bible speaks about can be stated as follows:

Faith demands baptism as its expression;
 Baptism demands faith for its validity,
 The gift of the Spirit presupposes faith as its condition;
 Faith is shown to the genuine only by the gift of the Spirit.¹

The Bible cannot conceive of a Christian without the Spirit,
 neither can it imagine a Christian who does not belong to the
 fellowship of Christians.

By the gift of the Spirit God accepted the individual into his
 church and baptized him into the body . . .; by water-baptism
 . . . the christian community accepted the individual into the
 church. In and by his water-baptism the individual committed
 himself both to Christ and to his people. Christian water-
 baptism . . . was the means of entry into the Christian community,
 and, as the means of commitment to Christ, resulted in the
 reception of the Spirit.²

Incorporation thus involves the objective acceptance by
 faith of what Christ has done. This is followed by the dynamic
 on-going guidance of the Holy Spirit which was first received as the
 seal of incorporation, as well as the sociological incorporation into
 the community of believers. The church needs to emphasize all three
 aspects of incorporation in order to accomplish its task effectively.

¹Ibid., p. 228.

²Ibid., p. 101.

CHAPTER III

THE TENSION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

One of the distinguishing signs of our Western society is its individualistic spirit, a philosophy of life that emphasizes individualism. On the other hand, Christians have a concern for both the community and the individual. There exists a tension between the individual and the corporate entity, between the "I" and the "we," between the "one" and the "many." If the group is ultimate then individuals are sacrificed to the group. If the individual is ultimate then unity is sacrificed to the will of the individuals.

At different times one of these factors has been stressed to the neglect of the other. Western Christianity needs to take a closer look at these aspects for it is liable to fall into the trap of partiality, either stressing the individual to the neglect of the community or emphasizing the community to the detriment of the individual. This tension is not necessarily bad as long as we realize that it exists. Indeed it may even be creative and healthy, stimulating us to maintain a healthy balance.

In order for us to understand the present situation we need to look at some historical, sociological and theological factors.

Historical Development of Individualism

During the Middle Ages feudalism was the norm. It played a major role and exerted its influence to a very large degree till the end of the eighteenth century. During this time a rigid hierarchical social structure existed, where a small minority was in control and in which there was no equality or freedom for the ordinary individual.

The rise of individualism was a reaction against feudalism. Great emphasis was placed on the value and the freedom of the person, whereas previously, unless born into the elite--the landlords or the rulers--the individual was insignificant.

The glorification of the individual arose out of the French Revolution, with its catch-cry, "Liberty, Fraternity and Equality." With the Declaration of the Right of Man on August 26, 1789, the individual received many rights which were previously denied to him. The foundation for this development was laid by the Enlightenment and philosophers such as Montesquieu and Rousseau. As a case in point, Montesquieu presented the liberty of the individual as the cardinal objective of good government in his book De l' Esprit des Lois.

This, too, was the age of reason, fostering the idea that man's reason is capable of finding the solutions to major problems. Rationalism and humanism were the order of the day. Salvation was to be found within man. This concept was to be supported by Darwin's theory of evolution, with its notion of the survival of the fittest. Man dreamed of unlocking Utopia. Scientific knowledge seemed to indicate that there were to be no limits for mankind. In contrast to the Dark Ages when the individual was regarded as of little

consequence, this situation was now reversed. Individuality was deemed to be the apex of success.

On the American scene, with the great westward movement, the individual was given another boost through having to be dependent upon his own resources for survival. This emphasized the individual's competency, self-sufficiency and freedom. The frontier influence upon America could lead only to individualism.

Individualism in the Church

The Christian Church does not live in isolation from society and what takes place within society will more than likely reveal itself within the church, even if it is slightly diluted. Yet it should not be forgotten that what takes place within the church has an influence upon society as well.

The role of the church during the Dark Ages was authoritarian and hierarchical. The church was the means of grace, and the provider of the sacraments which demanded penance from the people. There was great disparity between the laity and the priesthood. The individual was totally dependent upon the church from birth, with the necessity of infant baptism, until his death with the necessity of the last rites. This situation was to be challenged theologically by Martin Luther and the Reformation. Bainton observes that in the little tract, The Babylonian Captivity:

Luther with one stroke reduced the number of the sacraments from seven to two. Confirmation, marriage, ordination, penance and extreme unction were eliminated. The Lord's Supper and baptism alone remained.¹

¹Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand (New York: New American Library, 1950), p. 106.

With the removal of confirmation and extreme unction, as we have seen, he removed the church's control over the youth and death. The doing away of penance led to direct access between the individual and God for the forgiveness of sins. Only the sacraments which Christ instituted remained, thus ordination had to go, which led to the priesthood of all believers.

Luther changed the mass to the Lord's Supper, rejecting transubstantiation. For Luther the efficacy of the sacraments depended upon the faith of the individual. "But as to the need for faith in the sacraments, he declared, I will die before I will recant."¹ This made the sacrament highly individualistic for faith is an individual response.

Every soul, insisted Luther, stands in naked confirmation before its Maker. No one can die in the place of another; everyone must wrestle with the pangs of death for himself alone. "Then I shall not be with you, nor you with me. Everyone must answer for himself." Similarly "The mass is a divine promise which can help no one, be applied for no one, intercede for no one, and be communicated to none save him only who believes with a faith of his own. Who can accept or apply for another the promise of God which requires faith of each individual?"²

This was a shift from an emphasis upon the church, to giving the individual greater significance.

In the Catholic Church the relationship of the individual to God has been based on membership in the church. The church was the link between him and God, thus on the one hand restricting his individuality, but on the other hand letting him face God as an integral part of a group. Protestantism made the individual face God alone. Faith in Luther's sense was an entirely subjective experience and with Calvin the conviction of salvation also had this same subjective quality.³

¹ Ibid., p. 107. ² Ibid., p. 109.

³ Erich Fromm, Fear of Freedom (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 93-94.

The reformers challenged traditional theological views to bring about this change. The issue about Righteousness by Faith, sola fide, made the individual independent from the church, his salvation being determined by his personal faith in Christ's work.

The power of absolution is given to all Christians, although some, like the Pope, Bishops, Priests and Monks, have appropriated it to themselves alone. They say publicly and shamelessly that this power is given to them alone and not to the laymen.¹

No longer was the church the channel of grace. Closely tied with this is Luther's affirmation of the priesthood of all believers. "All Christians are priests and all priests are Christians."² This freed the believers. The individual, as it were, started to crawl out of the cocoon of obscurantism giving flight to individualism.

Martin L  ther's exposition of the invisible church gave the individual another thrust forward. No longer was salvation tied down to a particular church. Luther was stressing the invisible church in order to counteract the Roman Catholic concept that the church constituted the one, holy, apostolic church. The Reformers maintained that the invisible church consisted of those having personal faith.

Luther unshackled the individual even further by insisting that everyone ought to be able to read the Bible for himself in his own language. Thus he translated the Bible into German. No longer were biblical truths denied to the individual because of a priestly

¹ Ewald M. Plass, What Luther Says (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1:5.

² Conrad Bergendoff, ed., Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 40:19.

language. No longer was the individual dependent upon the church to tell him what was truth. "Scripture is intended for all people," Luther declared. "It is clear enough so far as truths necessary for salvation are concerned."¹ The Scripture became the arbitrator for the Christian. this allowed personal freedom of belief based on sola scriptura.

My dear Pope, you must not lord it over scripture, nor must I or anybody else, according to our own ideas. The devil takes that attitude! We should rather allow scripture to rule and master us.²

No longer was the church to be the one that established what was truth.

We have never yet desired anything else, nor do we now desire anything else, than the liberty to have the Word of God, or the Holy Scriptures, to teach and to practice.³

'The Pope' he declared 'is no judge of matters pertaining to God's Word and faith, but a Christian man must examine and judge for himself.'⁴

The very core of Luther's individualism was his insistence that every man must answer for himself to God.

In addition to this, the Protestant work ethic played a major part in the emancipation of the individual. Luther saw in every occupation a Beruf from God. This gave religious significance to secular work, necessitating and motivating diligence in one's occupation to which one has received a religious calling. Luther was attacking the traditional view of separation between the laity and the clergy, the secular and the sacred. Secular work for Luther became a sacred Beruf from God. This magnified the individual for, no

¹Plass, 1:74. ²Ibid., 3:90. ³Ibid., 3:1178.

⁴Bainton, p. 147.

matter what his occupation, it was significant as long as he did it well for the glory of God.

This total onslaught by theological means against the domination of the individual was to have far reaching effects.

The Reformation was a preliminary explosion of destructive individualism and republican sentimentality. Great intellectual and social questions, instead of being solved in common and on traditional lines, began to be interpreted by the secret light of the individual heart and in the isolation of the individual conscience.¹

The history of the individual within our Western world over the last few centuries has been described as follows:

Through the course of centuries our Western world, formed by Christianity yet inheriting ancient thought, has directed its efforts through a thousand vicissitudes towards the liberation of the human person. The church upheld the freedom of the individual so that he might work in peace for his salvation and entrance into heaven. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries philosophers proposed that man also throw off the fetters that held down his rise on earth; they urged him to become the master of nature and make his kind the true rule of creation.²

Once the spirit of individualism started to exert itself, it touched all aspects of life. "The individualistic relationship to God was the psychological preparation for the individualistic character of man's secular activities."³

Individualism in Commerce and Politics

Capitalism resulted from the freedom to hold and engage in trade and business. This encourage competition between one individual

¹ Daniel Mornet, "The Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution," in The Influence of the Enlightenment of the French, ed. William F. Church (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath, 1964), p. 80.

² George Lefebvre, The Coming of the French Revolution, trans. R. R. Palmer (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 214.

³ Fromm, p. 94.

and another, placing the individual entirely on his own two feet. What he did, how he did it, whether he succeeded or failed, was the individual's responsibility. No longer was he working in co-operation but in competition with others in society. This individual freedom led to alienation from the community. "His relationship to his fellow men, with everyone a potential competitor, has become hostile and estranged; he is free---that is, he is alone, isolated, threatened from all sides."¹

The relationship between the 'one' and the 'many' in our Western world emphasizes the individual. In the East the emphasis is upon the group to the neglect of the individual. Totalitarian states place so much more emphasis on society that the individual is often sacrificed for the sake of the group. This is well illustrated by Hitler's Germany.

They are told again and again: the individual is nothing and does not count. The individual should accept this personal insignificance, dissolve himself in a higher power, and then feel proud in participating in the strength and glory of this higher power. Hitler expresses this ideal clearly in his definition of idealism. Idealism alone leads men to voluntary acknowledgement of the privilege of force and strength and thus makes them become a dust particle of that order which forms and shapes the entire universe.²

Goebbels states in his book Michael that "To be a socialist is to submit the I to the thou; socialism is sacrificing the individual to the whole."³

The most amazing factor of Nazi Germany, is that the Germans who had striven for the freedom of the individual in previous centuries, readily submitted themselves to the group, which in this case was the volk.

¹Ibid., p. 53.

²Ibid., pp. 200-201.

³Quoted in Fromm, p.201.

The Individual and the Group in
the New Testament

An amazing thing about man is his longing for submission, for belonging to a group, being a part of a whole. But man also lusts after power. He wants to accomplish, and to be given recognition as an individual. This creates a tension between the individual and the group. The church is faced with a similar tension as the individual is being incorporated into the Body of Christ.

The New Testament body metaphor is not only a description of various gifts, but also of relationships. This involves the relationships of individuals to Christ, and the relationship of the individual to the community of believers. To be in Christ means to be part of His Body. "In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom 12:5).

In 1 Cor 12 Paul emphasizes that the body is made up of many members, but all the members belong to Christ. So it is with us, who are members of Christ.

The body is a unit, though it is made of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (1 Cor 12:12,13).

The body concept is able to portray a number of key ideas:

1. The headship of Jesus Christ to the church
2. The collective unity of the believing fellowship
3. The belonging of the believers one to another
4. The mutuality of service
5. The identification between Jesus and His people

The church is concerned with man-in-community. Christians are individuals within a community. Unity in diversity is stressed

in the body metaphor.

"Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor 1:13). The body is one (1 Cor 12:13). Yet there are many members. "Now the body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Cor 12:14). Although both unity and diversity exist there is also unity due to mutuality.

Within the body of believers we find the answer to the problems both of individualism and totalitarianism.

The redemption of man today means his release to become, not an individual--for in independence he is powerless in the face of the giant state--but a person, who may find rather than lose himself in interdependence of the community. The content of social salvation for the modern man is to discover himself as a person, as one who freely chooses interdependence because his nature is to be made for others, rather than as one who is engulfed in it because the pressures of his age demand it. The alternative to the 'They' is not the 'I' but the 'We.'¹

The dilemma of man wanting to find himself as well as desiring to yield to a larger group, is solved within the Body of Christ. The New Testament community is based upon the Christian's commitment to the gospel and to each other. As Christians we are no longer independent individuals before God, but now individuals-in-community before God. This new relationship and fellowship with others is a result of fellowship with Christ. Paul speaks of "God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1:9).

Thus it has been stated that there can be no Christian life apart from the Body of Christ, and a Christian existing outside the Body of Christ is as impossible as a fish living out of water. To be a Christian not only involves a new vertical relationship but also

¹ John A. T. Robinson, The Body (London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 8.

a horizontal relationship. "One must come to God as an individual, but after we have come one at a time, God does not make us to be horizontally alone."¹ The focus of the Christian is on solidarity, rather than solitary living.

With baptism the believer is joined to the new humanity which Christ established (1 Cor 5:17). The Kingdom of Christ was inaugurated by His first coming. Thus the believer is joining a community that should be endeavouring to demonstrate in microcosm what is to take place in macrocosm at the final consummation. Baptism is the start of new life in the community.² It is a commitment to Christ and His body. Baptism is not an individualistic experience, for unity in Christ implies unity with others, according to 1 Cor 12:13.

The members cannot be separate from the church nor can the church be separated from the members. Acts 2:41 gives a model:

Those who accepted this message--conversion
were baptized--identification
and were added to their number---incorporation

Baptism effects a transfer from one community to another, a re-location from being 'in Adam' to being 'in Christ' (Rom 5,6). This new humanity finds its unity no longer in Adam but in Christ. It is only in those Pauline letters that deal with the Body of Christ that the apostle uses the expressions the 'new man' and the 'new Adam.' Paul emphasizes both the 'one in all' and the 'all in one.'

¹ Francis A. Schaeffer, The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century (London: Norfolk Press, 1970), p. 69.

² See 1 Cor 10:1-2; 1 Pet 3:20-21.

The Protestant concept of the invisible church does not imply that it is against the visible. Even though some extremists may have done away with a visible community, yet to the Reformers a Christian was always a member of the visible church. The church is visible because it is made up of human beings. A fellowship of believing Christians must live in space and time not just on cloud nine. The Christian does not live his faith solipsistically, for it is maintained, supported and furthered by an actual community of faith. Baptism removes the individual from the loneliness of his own ego, because he has joined the Body of Christ. The ekklesia is the new humanity which was reconciled with God by God and which therefore has fellowship with others. In the New Testament one is a believer by virtue of being a member of the Body of Christ, and one is a member of the Body of Christ by virtue of being a believer. It is inconceivable to think of the Christian life apart from the Body of Christ.

The community is a complex mosaic, in which each part has needs, likes and dislikes. The community must protect individuality, "without community there is not true freedom, nor is there any true community without freedom."¹

When freedom is threatened by the world outside the Christian can find protection, refuge and freedom within the church, the community of those who are truly free. When freedom is threatened from within, inside the church herself, the Christian can only find protection, refuge and freedom alone in himself, in the fortress of his own conscience.²

¹ Arthur G. Gish, Living in Christian Community (Scotsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1979), p. 53.

² Hans Küng, The Church and Freedom, trans. Cecily Hastings (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), p. 21.

The church consists of human beings and thus is liable to injustice. When leadership is not based on servanthood it may give way to domination and authoritarianism (Matt 20:25-28). There is a need for active participation by the individual. Each individual has a spiritual gift for the benefit of his fellows according to Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 12:7,11; Eph 4:7.

The church, because it is human, needs continuous reformation and self-criticism in order to protect itself against complacency, pride and self-idolatry. No wonder the reformed churches adopted the maxim ecclesia reformata sed semper reformanda.

The acid test for the true church is found in John 13:35
 "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."
 The church was made for man and not man for the church.

Like the state and other secular groups, the churches have also denied freedom to their own members. They have rejected the prophets and critics who have arisen in their midst, because they have been more concerned with their own power and prestige as institutions than they have with justice, more concerned with the appearance of religion than with integrity and more concerned with conformity than with freedom.¹

No particular church may claim that it has the sole rights on truth, it is only those that claim infallibility which will claim absolute loyalty from the individual. This does not deny the fact that God works particularly within a particular church group.

Just because one has experienced hierarchical domination and authoritarianism, one cannot therefore reject authority. The attitude that should reign in the church is found in Phil 2:4-8; 1 Pet 4:10. These verses call for humbling self and working for the benefit of each other.

¹E. Clinton Gardner, The Church as Prophetic Community (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 200-201.

The problem of individualism is its tendency to reduce Christianity merely to the vertical relationship. Due to the emphasis on individual freedom, competence and self-reliance we have a tendency toward subjectivism, which leads to making the individual's reason and conscience the sole arbiter in faith and morals.

Salvation is individual, but not individualistic. People cannot become Christians except one at a time, and yet our salvation is not solitary. God's people are called together in community.¹

There is a close relationship between ecclesiology and soteriology. These doctrines cannot be looked at in isolation. God wills to have a people, not just individual believers (Eph 2:11-22; 1 Pet 2:9-10). The church is the eschatological community where the individual experiences acceptance of himself. There is a shared salvation, rooted in an historical event, which enables believers to experience the reality of love, forgiveness and sharing in the present while awaiting the culmination of their hopes in the future.

The church is not just a Gessellschaft of odd acquaintances. Rather than being merely a society which bases its units on organizational interdependence the church is Gemeinschaft where the community is based on common life. It is more the 'we' than the 'I,' for it is closely connected. C. Norman Krause has described it aptly:

Communities may be groups but not all groups are communities Some of the ingredients of community are mutual acceptance, and the responsibility for each other implied by that acceptance, interdependence, participation in group decision-making, and identity through involvement with the group.²

¹ Schaeffer, p. 74.

² Norman C. Krause, The Authentic Witness (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), p. 120.

In all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph 4:15-16).

There are three ways that unity may be perceived amongst Christians. Firstly, as unity in Christ, it encompasses all Christians, transcending any man-made denominational barriers. God has made us all one in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, for all walls, partitions and exclusivism are broken down. Secondly, confessional unity is based on similarity of beliefs. Thirdly, unity describes relationships within the local church.

Jesus Christ did away with social apartheid (1 Cor 1:10). The Old Testament has a sharp division between priests and people but in the New Testament all are priests alike (1 Pet 2:4-9). This does not deny differing ministeries, but the individuals in the church "are all brethren" according to Matt 23:8-9.

Extreme forms of clericalism dare to re-introduce the notion of privilege into the only human community in which it has been abolished. Where Christ has made out of two, one, the clerical mind makes two again, the one higher the other lower, the one active and the other passive, the one really important because vital to the life of the church, the other not vital and therefore less important.¹

The church of all places should protect the many. The individuality of the believer is not to be shipwrecked by the rock of oneness.

Orestes A. Brownson wrote with great clarity concerning the difference between individualism and individuality.

Community without individuality is tyranny, the fruits of which are oppression, degradation and immobility, the synonym of death. Individuality without community is individualism, the fruits of

¹ John Stott, One People, (Eastbourne, East Sussex: Falcon Books, 1975), p. 21.

which are dissolution, isolation, selfishness, disorder, anarchy, confusion, war.¹

Individuality acknowledges the uniqueness of the person, it liberates him from oppression. Individualism, on the other hand, is a name of an ideology with the individual at the centre of this new religion. Individuality found its roots in the biblical faith. Individualism, on the other hand, finally destroys freedom through chaos and anarchy.

As we have observed, this problem of the relationship between the one and the many, of unity and plurality, is of concern theologically, philosophically, and politically. An instance of these struggles may be observed within Hinduism and Buddhism as the individual seeks to be absorbed into the one.

C. Van Til finds an apt solution within the Godhead for this problem which confronts mankind.

Unity in God is no more fundamental than diversity, and diversity in God is no more fundamental than unity. The persons of the Trinity are mutually exhaustive of one another.²

Thus within the triune God we have the solution to our problem. Both unity and diversity is found in the Godhead.

Within Christianity the focal point is not the believer or the church, rather both need to be held together. When the one and the many on earth are viewed other than from the perspective of the God of the New Testament, the result is individualism which leads

¹ Quoted in Robert T. Handy, "The Individualistic Spirit and Concern for Community: A Critical Tension in American Protestant History," Encounter 32 (Summer 1971): 224.

² Cornelius Van Til, The Defense of the Faith (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1955), p. 42.

either to anarchy or to a totalitarian reign of one over the many. Thus the emphasis should be on the believer and the church, not one or the other; the individual and the government, the person and the family. If the one seeks to obliterate the other, this will in effect involve self-obliteration.

Historically it has been hard to hold the two in focus. Either order and community control has been so prized as to limit a proper freedom, or individual freedom has been so emphasized and theorized as to weaken concern for a just and responsible social order.¹

The individual will discover himself and find fulfillment within the Christian community.

There is thus no basic conflict between individual and community. The individual lives in community and the community flourishes as the individual finds himself and grows in terms of consistent Christian faith.²

The Protestant Reformation saw truth first and unity second. The Ecumenical movement sees no conflict for they see truth is unity, and unity is truth. But from a biblical perspective such appears to be an inadequate solution.

Solidarity is needed but not uniformity. The church needs to remain polyform. Ernst Käsemann says uniformity is petrified solidarity.³

In the Body of Christ there needs to exist a creative tension between the individual and the community. "From the

¹Handy, p. 224.

²Rousas J. Rushdoony, The One and the Many (Nutley, New Jersey: Craig Press, 1971), p. 16.

³Ernst Käsemann, Perspectives on Paul (London: SCM Press, 1971), p. 119.

perspective of history can come both warning and inspiration as we struggle with this important matter in our fateful time."¹

¹Handy, p. 224.

CHAPTER IV

A SURVEY OF INCORPORATION BY OTHER WRITERS

There are many groups within society. Sociologists have studied these groups and observed the process whereby a newcomer is made a member. The newcomer must face a change in behaviour, emotions, norms, group goals, and group values.

There are two aspects to the process whereby a newcomer joins a group: the socializing agent and the socialized individual. The former role is performed by the group, the latter by the newcomer. This process is known as socialization. Shibutani explains it as follows:

Socialization is a continuous process of communication in which a newcomer selectively incorporates into his behavioural sets those patterns of conduct that are sanctioned in the group. Once he learns the conventional meanings and symbols, he can participate with greater ease in a variety of collective enterprises.¹

According to Wheeler,² if socialization is to take place the group must have the capacity to present clear norms and the individual must have the capacity to learn these norms. The group must be able to provide performance opportunities, whereas the individual must be able to perform. The group also needs to selectively reward

¹Tamotsu Shibutani, Society and Personality (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1961), pp. 494-95.

²Stanton Wheeler, Socialization after Childhood (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), p. 112.

performance, whereas the individual needs motivation to perform. The responsibility for the incorporation of a new member does not lie with the individual alone, nor is it solely a function of the group. Sociologists have noted the necessity of each party performing its function. Mills² notes that the individual, as well as the group has the responsibility of adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, pattern-maintenance and extension. He expands on each of these points as follows. The individual needs to be adaptable to new information, freedoms, responsibilities and roles, as well as adapting his beliefs, norms and emotional attachments. The group needs to be adaptable in openness and diversity and to extend the group's contacts and responsibilities beyond the present boundaries. The group also needs to be adaptable in its customs and rules when receiving new information.

The goal-attainment of the individual needs to be held in abeyance while greater input is received. He also needs to be flexible by accepting new goals. The group needs to have the capacity to incorporate new goals and discard some of the old goals.

The individual must have the capacity to perform in new roles and establish new relationships. The group on the other hand needs to be able to integrate and form sub-groups as well as sending representatives to other groups.

With pattern-maintenance and extension, the individual must be able to relate emotionally with others, sharing his experience and learning with others. The group however, needs to receive new

¹Theodore M. Mills, The Sociology of Small Groups (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 21-22.

members and teach them the group's culture as well as formulating the group's experience and transmitting it to other groups and the next generation.

The Christian community can learn a lot from the research that has been carried out by sociologists in this field. The principles in most instances are applicable to the incorporation of the believer into the Body of Christ. Being incorporated into the Body of Christ does not merely involve the teaching and acceptance of a set of propositions.

Moberg has categorized four areas in which the church influences members and non-members.

The experiential dimension deals with individuals feelings, sensations, and perceptions related to God and ultimate reality. The ideological dimension includes what people believe or think. The ritualistic aspect of religiosity deals with what people do, their religious practise, and the consequential with relationships of man to man as a result of the other three dimensions, which presumably relate to man's relationship with God.¹

Shibutani observes that "Values of all kinds are sometimes learned through instruction, but more often they are formed through the consistent emotional reactions of other people."²

One person joining a group of persons involves a complex system of interaction. Mills makes a classification of five levels.

- "1. Behaviour: How persons act in the presence of others
- "2. Emotions: The drives persons experience, and the feelings they have toward one another and about what happens
- "3. Norms: Ideas about how persons should act, should feel, and should express their feelings
- "4. Goals: Ideas about what is most desirable for groups, as units, to do

¹David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 418-19.

²Shibutani, p. 483.

- "5. Values: Ideas about what is most desirable for groups, as units, to be and to become"¹

In order for the group to be successful, Mills states that empirical research shows that successful groups tend:

- "1. to commit themselves more fully to the group goal
- "2. to communicate with each other more freely and more clearly
- "3. to coordinate their activities more closely
- "4. to feel more friendly toward one another"²

Thus the church, which is the socializing agent, needs to create an environment which will facilitate the socialization process for the newcomer. The newcomer by himself is much less likely to be incorporated into the Body of Christ.

It should be remembered that the motives and reasons why the individual wants to join a group may differ from person to person. This is true of incorporation into any group, including the church.

Why do People Join a Church?

Various studies have been made to analyse the factors motivating individuals who want to join a church. It is very difficult to single out one motive. Rather, a number of stimuli appear to be significant.

A study conducted by David O. Moberg³ of 104 out of 107 persons who had joined five congregations of the Baptist Church, during a twelve month period, indicated various reasons for joining. The main reasons given were "family, friendliness in the church, spiritual reasons, and nearness of the church to the home." Fifty joined the church in spite of knowing that some other Baptist

¹Mills, p. 58.

²Ibid., p. 85.

³Moberg, p. 402.

Church was nearer to their homes, thus indicating that people choose the church they join.

It is important to realise that people are not just motivated by a set of propositional truths. "Theology is relatively unimportant to most people in the selection of a church,"¹ according to Moberg's research.

Ruth A. Wallace made a study of change of religious affiliation. She defines this process "as a process by which an individual attaches to an organized religion by becoming a member of that religious group and in this act of affiliation, accepts the teachings of the group."² Furthermore she states that her main concern is "What sociological factors are positively associated with the formal entry into a church in which one had no prior membership?"³

Wallace proposes that a change of religious affiliation results from deficiencies which the individual possesses. Change in religious affiliation occurs when the remedy for the individual's deficiency is supplied by the church. Her hypothesis locates four areas where deficiencies may occur.

1. social rewards
2. consistency of life experiences
3. religious solidarity
4. membership of a significant other

These deficits which she enlarges on can be summarized as

¹Ibid., p. 404.

²Ruth A. Wallace, "A Model of Change of Religious Affiliation," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 14 (December 1975): 345.

³Ibid.

as follows:

1. Individuals who receive few reward from society, such as low occupational rank, low educational level, low income level, female sex and old age are more likely to join a church
2. Individuals who face some crisis situation or role change want to find relief from the strain and tension
3. Individuals who have not experienced a sharing of religious values in the family
4. When an individual has a close bond with someone who values his membership he is more likely to change his religious affiliation to share with the significant other; the significant other may be a spouse or fiancé, or parent or a close friend

The group which Wallace observed had all enrolled in a twenty-six week course on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church at some time between 1958 and 1965 at Toronto, Ontario. There were a total of 3574 cases. Of this total, 1546 joined the Catholic Church while 2028 did not join, even though both groups completed the course. She then analysed the data in relation to the deficiencies and whether people joined the Catholic Church or not. She concluded that "the rates of change tended to increase as the number of deficits, combined with personal influence, increased."¹

The findings of this study have some bearing upon the incorporation of members. For effective incorporation to take place a church should not just present its agenda and hope that the newcomer will fit into it. First and foremost it ought to supply the need that the individual has. As well as this, it should be

¹Ibid., p. 353. For further information see Appendix 1.

noted that factors one to three cannot be created by the church. However there is the possibility of creating a need in an individual with factor four. Individual church members as well as the group can create friendship with potential members. A study done by Oosterwal confirms the hypothesis by Wallace. Oosterwal states:

People moving from one area to another are in general much more receptive to the Eternal Gospel and more open to accept new church membership than settled population. . . . The same high receptivity to the SDA message is shown also by people who had changed jobs or positions, or who otherwise were strongly affected by change in their lives. In all these instances, people stand in need of a new communion where they find stability, meaning in life and fellowship.¹

Another study conducted by Charles Lee Wilson noted that "over 75 per cent of the members received into a large Protestant Church over a three year period were first assimilated into some phase of the church's organized social life."²

It may be a point of concern for some to discover that there are many reasons and motives for people searching out the church. The obvious question which arises is whether they will become responsible Christians. Pickett made a significant study in India concerning the influence which motives have on Christian achievement. He interviewed 3,947 individuals and, from the answers, categorized four kinds of motives.

In Group 1 (spiritual motives) are placed all whose answers had been recorded under the heads: "seeking salvation," "convinced by the preacher," "to know God," "to find peace," "because of faith in Jesus."

In Group 2 (secular motives) are placed all those giving answers

¹Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of SDA Church Growth in North America (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1976), pp. 25-26.

²Quoted in Moberg, pp. 402-403.

such as "sought help of the missionaries," "in hope of education for children," "for improved social standing," "because landowners oppressed us," "to marry a Christian girl."

In Group 3 (social reasons) we put all those giving answers such as "family was being baptized," "my people told me to do so," "I did not want to remain a Hindu when my relatives where Christian."

In Group 4 (natal influences) we put those whose replies were entered as "child of Christian parents," i.e., who were brought up in the Christian faith . . .¹

Attainments according to McGavran were measured in eleven categories: "Knowledge of the Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed and Ten Commands, Sabbath Observance, Church Membership, Church Attendance, Frequency of Services, Support of the Church, Freedom from Idolatry Charms and Sorcery, Non-participation in Non-Christian Festivals, Freedom from Fear of Evil Spirits, Christian Marriage, and Use of Intoxicating Beverages."²

Pickett arrived at remarkable conclusions: There was only a small difference between the Christian attainment of those who came from spiritual, secular or social motives. "Whether they had good postbaptismal training made more difference in their attainments than the motives from which they became Christians."³

Considering the research done by Pickett the church can take courage. No matter what the motives or needs of the newcomer if he is incorporated into the Body of Christ effectively he will become a mature Christian. Consequently there is a big responsibility and task awaiting the community of believers. The church must make sure

¹Quoted in Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth fully rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), p. 174.

²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 175.

that the new member is integrated into the life of the community.

It has been recognized widely that the follow-up work is a vital part in producing mature members. Becoming a mature Christian involves more than just a decision. It is a process, for discipleship involves a way of life. It is functioning within a group, it is identification with a group, it is serving in a group.

To help incorporation to take place many methods have been suggested which may be implemented by the church.

Follow-up Procedures by Adventist Writers

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places a significant emphasis upon the pre-baptismal indoctrination of the new believer as well as demanding a high standard for the candidate to attain prior to baptism.

Much has been said by the church about the importance of follow-up and incorporation, however there is room for improvement in this area. According to H. L. Rudy¹ there are certain things which the church expects of the new convert, which can be summarized under the following points. He is expected to (1) participate regularly in public worship; (2) form a habit of private prayer and devotion; (3) join in some form of Christian service, and (4) grow spiritually. Rudy states that the new convert should expect that the church will (1) accept his sincerity; (2) teach him; (3) provide church fellowship; (4) supply a program of Christian education and (5) integrate and enlist him into the life and service of the church.

¹H. L. Rudy, "Receiving and Holding Converts," Ministry 36 (October 1963): 29-30.

John Shuler, a prominent evangelist in the Adventist church said: "Evangelism embraces both soul winning and soul building."¹ In the same book Shuler² gives some guidelines for follow-up work, which may be condensed under twelve points:

1. Visit the new member
2. Have a particular care for any who may be absent on Sabbath
3. Absorb the new converts into the church family
4. Maintain a continuous interest in the spiritual welfare of every new convert
5. Get the new member to read Adventist literature regularly
6. Make sure every convert is enrolled in the Sabbath School
7. Place the young people into Adventist Schools and in the Youth organization
8. Assign the convert a place in one of the missionary bands of the church
9. Continue evangelistic meetings
10. Lead converts to be tithe payers
11. Establish in the lives of the new converts the habits of daily prayer, Bible study, and working for others
12. Enlist the convert at once in a Bible training course

It is obvious that much is involved if we want to incorporate new believers. Baptism is the formal incorporation of the believer but the informal is just as important. Once a person has been baptized, incorporation has not been completed. In many respects it

¹J. L. Shuler, Public Evangelism (Takoma Park, Washington: Review and Herald, 1939), p. 255.

²Ibid., pp. 256-66.

has just begun. A danger of which the Adventist Church may need to be aware is that for some potential converts it makes too many demands and requirements prior to baptism. The New Testament church did not have a long list of requirements before a person was accepted into the church, so "we must allow for much of the reformation that takes place to do so following baptism."¹ In other words, instead of placing all the emphasis upon teaching prior to baptism we need to leave room for teaching, maturing and discipleship subsequent to baptism. Maybe there is a need for re-evaluation of the church's criteria for church membership. Ruben Lores warns against the holy club attitude that the Christian church can take. When it makes too many strigent requirements prior to baptism the church is, in effect, saying: "You are good enough for Christ or even for heaven, but you are not good enough for us to receive you."²

The Witnessing for Christ³ manual suggests that the two ingredients that need to go hand in hand are Bible doctrine and fellowship. This book suggests a special pastor's Sabbath School class, in which new members can be instructed, carefully monitored, and visited when they are absent. It also suggests the use of literature, but cautions against excesses in this area.

One of the areas that has received attention is the use of

¹ John Fowler, "Caring for New Converts," Ministry 52 (April 1979): 5.

² "Mobilization of Believers and Churches for Evangelism," Mobilizing for Saturation Evangelism, ed. Clyde W. Taylor and Wade T. Coggins (Wheaton, Illinois: Evangelical Missions Information, 1969), p. 66.

³ Witnessing for Christ: Guide for Witnessing Laymen (Washington D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 1975).

guardians with new members. Elden K. Walter¹ has a list of duties for such sponsors:

- "1. At every service of the church make it a point to speak a few friendly cheerful words to the one in your charge.
- "2. Visit him in his home, often, at least twice a month.
- "3. Invite him to your home for a Sabbath meal once a month. Get someone else to invite him at least once a month.
- "4. Call him on the telephone frequently.
- "5. Invite him to sit with you in church from time to time.
- "6. Introduce him to others.
- "7. If he is absent on a Sabbath, do not let the day pass without calling to inquire if he was ill.
- "8. Care for him when ill.
- "9. Avoid discussing church problems with him and never gossip or criticize.
- "10. Take him with you on soulwinning work.
- "11. Pray for him daily. Pray with him frequently.
- "12. If any dangerous spiritual signs develop in him, let the pastor know.
- "13. Avoid monopolizing him, encourage him to form close friendship with other members.
- "14. Get the new member out to secular, social functions of the church.
- "15. These responsibilities continue for four months."

The guardianship method can be successful depending upon how it is implemented. If true incorporation takes place there will be far less apostasies. But not only do we want to hold our members; those members that are in the church must feel that they belong, are needed, and grow spiritually. "Adventist Churches may have to re-discover that the success in church growth is as much dependent upon the creation of genuine communities of believers characterized by warm fellowship as it is on the preaching of the message."²

New members are faced by difficulties when they become Adventists. "Those difficulties centred around the 'fringe parts' of the SDA message, from dress and jewelry to dietary laws. . . .

¹Elden K. Walter, New Testament Witnessing (Richardson, Texas: Elden K. Walters Publishers, 1971), p. 114.

²Oosterwal, p. 53.

of these difficulties, it was felt, disappeared later when the message was better understood . . ."¹ When new people join the church older members do not always understand the struggles they have to go through, Oosterwal writes:

New members, without an Adventist background, often do not feel at home in the church. They feel as outsiders. They don't share in the "Adventist group experience"; they don't speak the "Adventist language," nor do they understand Adventist behaviour Many a new member experiences something not unlike "culture shock."²

If the new believer has been incorporated into the fellowship of the community, thus having personal friends within the church, this will function as a shock absorber for the new believer.

Not only do friends and relatives help in the incorporation process, but also in forming the initial contact and motivating the person toward becoming a Christian and joining a church.

Gottfried Oosterwal conducted research amongst Seventh-day Adventists in the United States of America. His findings show that 67% of the converts stated that friends or relatives were the agencies by which they first became acquainted with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.³ There was a 57% response for friends and relatives being the most influential agencies which help them join the church.⁴

Eoin Giller conducted a similar study in Australia amongst the new converts of five years in the North New South Wales Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In response to the question concerning "which persons or agencies influenced non-SDA most to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church?" 33.1% indicated

¹Ibid., p. 55.

²Ibid., p. 51.

³Ibid., p. 39.

⁴Ibid., p. 40, see Appendix 2.

"relatives and friends." The survey also revealed that 75.4% associated with Adventist friends, acquaintances and workmates before baptism.¹

Perspective on Follow-up Procedures

Evangelism embraces a wide range of responsibility. There needs to be "follow-up, converting and consolidating, finding and folding, baptizing and teaching, discipling and perfecting."² The importance of nurturing and incorporating new members has been described vividly by many authors. One of these authors is Russell Bow:

Spiritual nurture is a necessity for all church members. Newborn babes require special care. One of the reasons for the failure of the church to provide Christian nurture for its new members is the low spiritual temperature of the old members. Instead of warm cradles of love, we put our babes in Christ in spiritual refrigerators. Samuel Shoemaker has said: "Putting an eager seeker after Christ into the conventional church is like putting a live chicken under a dead hen." We can never achieve integrity of membership in our present churches if our only approach is at the point of entrance. No matter how healthy our spiritual babies are at birth, they will not live if we put them in an icebox.³

The church has a responsibility to make the new believer feel a sense of belonging. Within the fellowship opportunity for growth must be provided. As the new believer grows in faith he can identify more with the group. However, opportunity for service must be provided so that the new believer feels that he is making a

¹E. B. Giller, Church Growth Patterns in the North New South Wales Conference, unpublished paper, Avondale College, 1982. See Appendix 3.

²David C. E. Liao, "Comment," in Mobilizing for Saturation Evangelism, p. 171.

³Quoted in Bob E. Patterson, ed., The Stirring Giant (Waco Texas: Word Books, 1971), p. 160.

contribution to the group. Thus he will come to the conclusion that he needs the group and the group needs him. Robert A. Raines has described the responsibility of the church to ensure growth and incorporation of the new believer as follows: "The church is both evangelist and educator, both obstetrician and pediatrician, helping deliver those newly born in Christ and nurturing them from infancy to maturity in Christ."¹

The church must be able to reach, receive, accept and assimilate newcomers into its fellowship. Unfortunately the church has not always welcomed newcomers with warmth. Samuel Chadwick described the cold reception that some new Christians receive by the church, as "like putting a baby in the arms of a corpse."² The tendency has been to baptize believers and then to drop them. This carelessness on the part of the church seems to portray a philosophy of the survival of the fittest as far as incorporation is concerned. However "God is not in the business of putting healthy babies in sick incubators."³

An Australian evangelist, Gordon Moyes,⁴ suggests ten ways to conserve new members. In summary they are:

1. Get them to attend church with a nearby Christian family

¹Robert A. Raines, New Life in the Church (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 48.

²Quoted in George E. Sweazey, Effective Evangelism (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p. 214.

³Joseph C. Aldrich, Life Style Evangelism (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1981), p. 102.

⁴Gordon Moyes, How to Grow an Australian Church (Melbourne, Victoria: Vital Publications, 1975), p. 96.

2. Give them good Christian literature
3. Write them a letter after baptism and after their welcome into membership
4. Pay them a visit soon after their baptism
5. Involve them in the church, where they can exercise their talent
6. Put them on the church mailing list and make sure they get a copy of church publications
7. Ask an elder and his wife or a mature family to act as shepherds and invite them to their home
8. Invite them to attend a Bible study group
9. Make sure they get invited to all functions
10. Have a prayer group specifically pray for them

D, James Kennedy has developed an effective lay witnessing ministry. In his book Evangelism Explosion¹ he gives a step-by-step method of training people for witnessing. Kennedy has a very systematic follow-up procedure for new believers right from the point of initial contact. Some of his methods directly related to the topic of this paper are in summary:

1. Arrange a get-acquainted coffee hour, when new Christians can get to know each other as well as older Christians. This is held in the home of a mature Christian who has experience in working in small groups. The conversation is gently directed so that in an informal manner people are able to express their personal testimony
2. Have small groups in people's homes. This provides an opportunity for openness and fellowship. The newcomer finds it

¹D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion, rev. ed. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1970), pp. 143-63.

much easier to relate to a limited number of people, rather than a hundred

3. Invite new Christians as well as older Christians for fellowship meals. Select the older Christians on the basis of common interests and age
4. Encourage new Christians to attend Sunday school. This gives an opportunity for further education in the Scriptures as well as for meeting in smaller groups
5. Conduct new members classes and gives a personal invitation to potential members
6. One week before the new members' class begins the pastor ought to write a letter to all potential members
7. During the time of membership classes one of the members of the ministerial staff conducts an interview in order to determine where the individual is spiritually
8. Make the baptism of the new believer meaningful. Introduce each person to the congregation. After the service let the new converts receive the right hand of fellowship by the other members
9. Assign sponsors to each new member. The responsibilities of the sponsor includes praying for them, welcoming them personally, and visiting them at their homes. At church services introduce them to other members, sometimes sit with them. Help to get new members into church organization and activities. Invite them to your own home. Discover and try to use the new members' talents in the ministry of the church. Give guidance how one observes and practices family and personal devotions

10. After baptism, arrange a new-member class social. Opportunity is given for each to tell how they came to know Christ. Tell them there will be another social in three months at which time members will be asked how the church is meeting their needs and how they are fitting into the ministry of the church
11. Send spiritual birthday cards on the anniversary of the believer's new life
12. Enroll new believers in correspondence Bible studies
13. Get the new believers involved in the different church groups
14. Train the new believers to witness

The time prior to and after the baptism must be utilised to educate the new believer in the responsibility of being a Christian and a member of the church. It is during the period of joining and up to the two years after baptism that people are most eager to learn and grow in Christ. This time of opportunities must be utilized so that when the new Christian moves from the honeymoon stage into the "for better or worse" stage, not only is a divorce between the member and church avoided, but so are Christian retardation and religious sterility.

According to Donald McGavran and Win Arn, past evangelism has focused upon converting strangers. However when one looks at why people come to Christ and a particular church, the reasons are different from what one would expect in comparison with the emphasis conventional evangelism has had. The Institute for American Church Growth questioned 10,000 people concerning their reason for being a Christian and a member of their church. The findings of this research indicate a pattern for evangelism:

"Special need	2%
"Walk-in	3%
"Pastor	6%
"Visitation	1%
"Sunday School	5%
"Evangelistic Crusade	$\frac{1}{2}\%$
"Program	3%
"Friend/Relative	79%" ¹

Thus the most effect way of evangelism is making use of existing social relationships. These webs of relationships include neighbours, family, friends, those with common interests, fellow students or fellow workers. Even the success of conventional evangelism can be traced back to the social web. One of the most successful Billy Graham Crusades ever held in America was followed up a year later with a study. Questionnaires were sent to 1200 pastors in the Greater Seattle/Tacoma area. Win Arn achieves two important insights from this survey:

1) Of the total "new Christians" decision cards sent to local churches, only 15% of the people represented were in a local church one year later. 2) However, of the 15% involved in a church after the crusade, 86% had a friend or relative in the church prior to the crusade!²

Such results indicate that the goal of evangelism should be changed from decisions to disciples.³ A decision suggests a moment

¹ Charles Arn, Donald McGavran, and Win Arn, Growth: A New Vision for the Sunday School (Pasadena, California: Church Growth Press, 1980), p. 76.

² Ibid., p. 77. See also Win Arn, ed., The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook (Pasadena, California: Church Growth Press, 1979), pp. 95-109. See Appendix 4.

³ Adventist evangelism has tended in the past to emphasize indoctrination however this still falls short of complete incorporation.

of life, whereas a disciple suggests a way of life, incorporation into the body.

Instead of ignoring existing webs, evangelism should make use of these webs and many more people would unite with the church and be incorporated into the Body of Christ. From the above study it is obvious that the majority of people who remain in the church and are incorporated with conventional evangelism, reduces to those who already belonged in the social network of a Christian member. In effect what these church growth leaders are saying, is that if the church wants to solve the obedience gap, the lack of incorporation, special attention should be given to our approach toward evangelism. There needs to exist a relation prior to evangelism, or at least a relationship needs to be cultivated with the receptive persons prior to their becoming members. In other words, just to emphasize incorporation during the post-baptismal period is not adequate. Incorporation and assimilation should start prior to baptism or church membership. Furthermore, when the evangelized person already belongs to the social web of existing members, incorporation takes place naturally. Old members may feel threatened by the arrival of new members, because the interpersonal relationships of the church could change. However, evangelizing those who already belong to the social web of one of the members is much less threatening.

The closer the ties between the new member and the church the easier is the process of incorporation. People feel comfortable with others that are similar to themselves. C. Peter Wagner, demonstrates that people will join more readily and be incorporated

into a church if they consist of a similar kind of people.¹ Donald A. McGavran² speaks about homogeneous units. Linguistic, ethnic, economic and educational differences are some factors which set one group apart from another. The greater the difference, the greater difficulty will be encountered in bringing about incorporation.

Even within homogeneous units, incorporation of new members does not take place automatically; it is something which has to be worked at. If left to the natural laws of social life, incorporation of new members is not likely to occur. Members are so glad to see their existing friends that new arrivals are hardly noticed and the new member is unlikely to force his way into the group.

The importance of cultivating friendships with new converts has been demonstrated in a study conducted by Flavil R. Yeakley.³ This study compared 50 new members who were still active six months after joining, with 50 other new members who dropped out after six months. The members who remained and became a part of the church fellowship had each made more than seven new friends in the church, whereas those who dropped out had made less than two friends. "It takes more than a few official handshakes to make 'those church people' seem like 'we members'."⁴

In order for incorporation to be more successful new

¹See C. Peter Wagner, Our Kind of People (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1979).

²Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, p. 225.

³Quoted in Arn, McGavran and Arn, p. 95.

⁴Sweazey, p. 232.

friendship bonds need to be established with the new believers. Evangelism should be aimed at those who have been more receptive, thus making use of existing friendship bridges, and focusing on the significant others in the lives of those who are already Christians. Evangelism that only focuses upon converting total strangers will not be as successful.

Another factor in incorporation is "lift," a term coined by McGavran for certain changes occurring when a person becomes a Christian, especially in third world countries. Christianity is accompanied by medicine, education, schools and hospitals. Converts are taught hygiene and a different way of life. The Christian tends to rise in financial position. Lift occurs with most believers but the amount is determined by the emphasis which is placed by the particular church on standards of Christian conduct. Some obvious factors causing lift are the Christian's different attitudes to entertainment, diet, dress, and language. The Christian tends to move into a higher sociological bracket. The lift that occurs needs to be recognized by the church. These changes in behaviour can break down old friendships which the new believer had, causing friction and barriers between the new believers and his family. Some breaking of relationships are inevitable. Unfortunately, often the new Christian who committed himself to Christ at the cost of alienation to his past life and relationships finds himself suddenly in a no-man's land, so to speak. He has given up his old relationships but finds that he is not fully accepted by the church.¹

¹ Lores, quoted in Taylor and Coggins, p. 66.

The bigger the demands which are placed upon the new believer by the particular church he wants to join, the greater the lift and the possible alienation between him and his previous social network. Though this helps him to find a new identity it can be disastrous if the individual is not assimilated effectively into the church.

The church has a two-fold responsibility to new believers in respect to lift. When alienation does occur between the new Christian and his old friends, the church must be able to supply sustaining fellowship and friendship. If not, often the new believer will consider reverting to his former state, having lost much fellowship and found nothing to take its place. Secondly, similarities between the new Christian and his old friends need to be strengthened, compensating for the new differences which cause barriers. Common interests and old ties need to be reinforced. The new Christian often stresses the differences now present with his family, old friends and associates, not realizing that this is interpreted as rejection. Furthermore, with the breaking down of relationships, future evangelism through the social web is limited.

An outstanding book on incorporation by Lyle E. Schaller,¹ lists twelve ways to keep people from joining your church. These concepts are summarized here because one can learn from negatives:

1. Do not invite them to join the church
2. Change the pastor every two or three years. By breaking down the relationships that are formed, people will not be assimilated
3. Have big financial subsidies from the denomination, this will

¹Lyle E. Schaller, Assimilating New Members (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1978), pp. 51-68.

tend to a low level of congregational self-esteem, and will discourage church growth

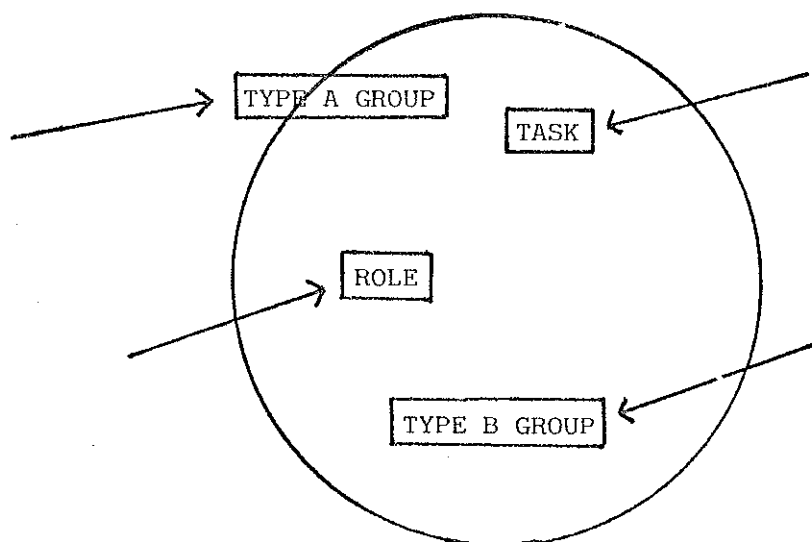
4. Limit church growth to the size of the church building. For example, do not contemplate a second worship service. And if there is room to grow do not offer diversity of ministries. Give interested people the following choices a) take what we offer, b) stay home, or c) go somewhere else
5. Use architectural evangelism, build a new church, and do not be concerned about person-to-person evangelism
6. Function only as a single-cell church. Do not have multi-cells because then people will find more places of entry
7. Run big inter-congregational evangelism, for this plays down the importance of the local congregation and thus incorporation is less likely to take place
8. Cut back on existing ministries, either by the amalgamation of existing groups or by elimination. This limits places of entrance to new members. Groups become less diverse and thus less likely to fulfill their needs. It lessens the number of people who are involved and leading out, thus limiting the opportunity for service on the part of new believers, as well as reducing the options to which members can invite their friends
9. Transfer responsibility on to others. Take the stance that if they want to come to church, the doors are open. It is their responsibility to come and become one of us
10. Make the agenda of the church self-centred. Be more concerned with institutional maintenance than with church growth

11. Accept a "no" answer from newcomers literally, rather than viewing it as "not-yet, now"
12. Use the shotgun and not the rifle method of evangelism. Try and win everybody rather than studying your target and focusing upon a need of a specific group, which makes them more receptive

Schaller has carefully examined these factors which hinder people from joining the church. The church who wants to incorporate new members must ensure then these hindrances are not present.

Furthermore Schaller has categorized new adult members as follows:¹

1. The ones who are best assimilated are those who joined a small group which was meaningful prior to becoming members of the congregation. They are represented by the arrow pointing to type A group
2. Next are those represented by the arrow pointing to the type B group. These people become members of a meaningful group, after they become church members. They are also assimilated, because they gain a sense of acceptance and belonging



¹Ibid., pp. 76-77.

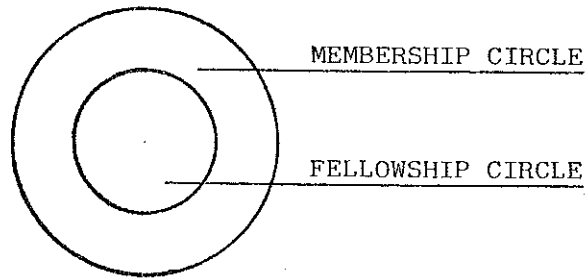
3. Other members are assimilated by accepting a role or office
4. Then there are others who are helped to feel assimilated by accepting a task or job for the church

Schaller concludes that "new members who do not become part of a group, accept a leadership role, or become involved in a task during their first year tend to become inactive."¹ These four categories can be summarized by saying that incorporation takes place either by belonging to a small group, or by service, which gives a feeling that one belongs and is part of the group. It is only when some of his time and energy is invested in the church that a person feels that the church is his church.

Schaller² states that people are basically loyal to a congregation because they have a shared heritage in the congregation or they share in the contemporary goals of the church. Since only a few new members can share in the heritage of the church greater attention should be placed upon contemporary goals in order to include new members. With contemporary goals new members can relate, give support and thus become involved very quickly.

It should be remembered that just because a person has accepted Christ, it should not be taken for granted that the new believer feels accepted by the group. Schaller³ has described how this occurs by means of a circle, which represents the membership of the church circle. Inside the membership he has a small circle which represents the fellowship circle.

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., pp. 78-79. ³Ibid., p. 81.



Just because a person is a member of the church does not mean that he belongs to the fellowship circle. Often it is very difficult for new members to become part of the fellowship circle. However those within the fellowship circle cannot see that there are any boundaries. Schaller¹ maintains that the more meaningful groups there are in the church which are open for new believers, the better people will be assimilated into the church. In order to ascertain the opportunities for assimilation Schaller presents a test, summarized thus:

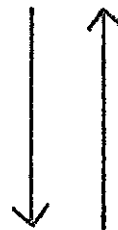
1. Identify the various groups within the church which give an opportunity for meaningful relationships with other persons
2. How many are on the list? What is the ratio per one hundred members? Schaller suggests that there ought to be six to seven of these groups per one hundred members
3. Identify the common characteristics of the members who are in the largest number of groups. Is there any common pattern?
4. Do the same for those members who do not belong in any group. Is there any common pattern?
5. List the names of each new member who joined during the last two years and try to identify the primary reason why that individual joined
6. List the names of each person who joined the last two years and

¹Ibid., p. 95.

beside each person list (1) the groups in which he is an active member, (b) the roles or offices held by the new member, and (c) the tasks or jobs held by the new members. Notice the members who have blanks behind their names, and ask how well are they assimilated¹

The small group can play an important role in the process of incorporation. The conventional church format gives little room for inter-personal relationships. Furthermore it is only when members know each other personally that they are able to minister to one another's needs. There are three basic types of interactions according to Lawrence Richards.²

1. First is the one-way flow of communication, where one person speaks and others listen. This is the typical church service. Information in this format is learned as concepts, but is less likely to be transformed into action, or to attitudes and values. It is a good method to use if one has to communicate information in a logical form in a limited time period
2. Two-way communication is between one person and another, with one of the persons being the leader. This is typical of board meetings. The weakness of this type is that communication seldom moves to a personal level. In this

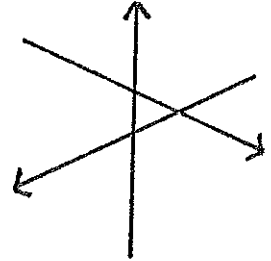


¹Ibid., p. 97-98.

²Lawrence O. Richards and Gib Martin, A Theology of Personal Ministry (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 197-98.

setting it is unusual for group members to address each other personally. All interactions tend to go through the leader

3. The free and spontaneous communication is typified by face-to-face small groups. It is informal and has a lot of involvement. This type of interaction allows people to come to know one another in a personal way. Thus people are able to meet the needs of the other members. This format is time-consuming and not very effective for communicating new ideas



The church which wants to nurture and bring new members to maturity needs to create opportunities where the third type of communication can take place. The small group concept is ideal for this. Within the small group members can minister to one another's needs by means of their spiritual gifts. A sense of belonging and fellowship exists which is lacking in many churches. The small group can also give an opportunity for service. Winston A. Johnson says

The aim of the small group in the church is to function as the church. Notice that the group is not to be a microcosm of the institutional church. It is the church in its purest and most intimate sense.¹

A greater interest in small groups needs to be taken by the people of God. The church which wants to change people and incorporate new believers into the community should take note of "attitudes,

¹Winston A. Johnson, "Groups," in Christian Perspectives on Sociology, ed. Stephen A. Grunlan and Milton Reimer (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1982), p. 163.

values, character. These are socially anchored."¹ If we want to change people it needs to be done within a community of inter-personal relations. "For spiritual growth cannot be understood merely as a change in ideas, or in belief systems. It must be understood in terms of character change - transformation of attitudes, of values, of personality."² These are best changed within an accepting group, where one does not feel threatened but where mutual love reigns. As well as this the small group provides a comfortable point of entry for new members. Thus evangelism and incorporation does not consist of just what we say, but how members of the body relate to one another and to newcomers. "The health of the body is critical to effective evangelism because personality is a product of relationships. That is, we become like the people we associate with."³ One's values, beliefs and character is shaped by the group one associates with.

In order for the new Christian to grow to maturity, the church has to provide a balanced ministry. The tendency to emphasize one aspect of ministry to the neglect of others leads to unhealthy churches, and unhealthy members. Gene A. Getz categorizes three vital experiences which Christians need. Firstly, a vital learning experience with the word of God. Secondly, a vital relational experience with God and with one another. Thirdly, a vital witnessing experience with the unsaved world. Churches which only structure one or two of these experiences, according to Getz, have the following

¹ Richards, A New Face, p. 156.

² Ibid., p. 155. ³ Aldrich, p. 103.

results:

First, churches that structure for Bible teaching . . . but exclude fellowship and evangelism, soon become cold and academic.

Second, churches that structure for fellowship (the relational churches), but neglect solid Bible teaching and sharing Christ, soon become superficial and emotional.

Third, churches that structure for evangelism (the great soul-winning churches), but neglect Bible teaching and fellowship, are filled with people starved for the word of God and hungry for deep relationships.

Fourth, churches that structure for Bible teaching and fellowship, but neglect evangelism, become ingrown and stagnant.

Fifth, churches that structure for Bible teaching and evangelism, but neglect relational Christianity, produce Christians who do know the word but never feel comfortable in developing deep relationships with others. Consequently, they also feel uncomfortable with non-Christians. They are the "soul-saving" people, but they have difficulty relating to these individuals as total human beings.

Sixth, churches that structure for fellowship and evangelism and neglect Bible teaching are the most hazardous, for they often cause Christians to get off into false doctrine and into cultic groups.¹

Undoubtedly if the incorporation of new believers is of the highest concern and if the church wants to nurture its members, then what Getz is saying should be noted. The church must structure itself in such a way as to allow maximum growth for each of its members.

¹Gene A. Getz, "The Future of the Church: Its Nature, Form and Function," in An Evangelical Agency 1984 and Beyond, sponsored by the Billy Graham Center (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1979), pp. 77-78.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

This project attempted to work with a group of potential converts and new members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church over a period of four weeks. During this time it was the aim of the writer to assist the group in getting to know each other better as well as giving an opportunity for the participants to share and learn together from each other's experiences. Incorporation necessitates becoming one with the group, and thus it cannot be accomplished by the mere teaching of a set of propositions.

The writer has been attending the Hillview Seventh-day Adventist Church since January 1982. After consultation with the local pastor he was appointed to work with the pastor's class in implementing this project of incorporation.

A short summary of the background to the Hillview Church may be of assistance to the reader. Hillview Church with a membership of over 200, is situated in a small country town which includes a large number of Adventists. There are four other Adventist Churches in the area, two of which have more than 600 members. The Adventist Church has a tertiary College with 530 students and a large health food factory in the district. Unfortunately the relationship between the Adventists and the community is not always as good as it should

be.

Hillview Church was formed mainly by health food workers, who had been worshipping with the College Church. In the early seventies it was decided that the College Church should be limited to faculty members and students, thus the Hillview Church was formed.

In 1974 the new Hillview Church building was erected. During the last two years Dr. Eoin Giller, a lecturer in Church Growth at Avondale College, has been the church's pastor. He has been working at, amongst other things, creating a loving, caring church. Various programmes have been conducted by the church to meet the needs of the people. These included: Five Day Plan to Stop Smoking Clinics, stress control courses, cooking demonstrations, human relations workshops and family life programmes. Recently an agape meal was conducted. The writer has noticed during the last ten months that the members have been relating to one another in a more intimate way.

Implementation

The writer worshipped and fellowshiped with the Hillview Church from the beginning of 1982, becoming acquainted with the membership and involving himself in the life of the Church. By preaching in church services and teaching Sabbath School lessons he had sufficient exposure to be well known. After consultation with Dr. Giller the author was given approval to run a four-week incorporation programme with the pastor's class.

In order to make the transition from previous leadership and the writer's entry as smooth as possible, the writer attended the class as an observer for one week. The class was informed that the writer would be taking the next few lessons. During the following

three weeks the writer continued to lead out, getting to know the group. During this time the group was acquainted with the writer's project relating to the incorporation of new members into the Church. The members of the group were made aware of the need for this study and revealed a willingness to participate in the project.

After this, the four weeks of the incorporation project commenced. It was intended to make the four-week programme a growth process for the participants. The meetings included only a limited formal structure, as the writer intended to create an informal setting in order to allow the personal sharing of needs and frustrations as the group members were endeavouring to become incorporated into the Body of Christ.

The role the writer took during the four weeks was not that of teacher to students. Rather, as the leader, he functioned as a stimulator, guiding the group in its growing experience. Participation by all members was encouraged. Content was taught through this process, but the structure was such that the group was learning and discovering this together rather than being told.

The leader had a hidden agenda, intending that during this time together the group's members could experience being loved and accepted for who they were. By the new relationships they were experiencing, they were being assisted with the incorporation process.

The group included an average attendance of eleven members, this being an ideal number for what the writer intended. Membership of the group consisted of three new church members, two older members and six potential members. Having the group composed of persons at various stages of Christian experience in the incorporation

process was to the group's advantage.

During the four weeks the writer intended to cover certain areas of concern. Some of the areas that were covered are described below, together with reasons for dealing with these topics.

Week One

The writer wanted to discover how the members view their relationship with the Hillview Church. In order to stimulate discussion the question was asked "Do you feel part of the Hillview Church?" Some responded. The question was then re-phrased by asking the group "Do you feel that Hillview is your Church?"

Another objective was to discuss "lift." The purpose for dealing with this topic was to discover, and have the group share, any problems which lift had caused. The writer wanted the participants to discuss any breakdown of old relationships which may have occurred. By asking this, not only was an opportunity given for sharing experiences but also older members of the group were alerted to the greater need that some members have, thus creating an opportunity for them to minister to their fellow members.

At the same time the importance of reinforcing their old relationships was emphasized. The purpose for dealing with this topic was to create an awareness of individual responsibility and opportunity for leading to Christ other people in their social web.

Week Two

The purpose of this meeting was to make sure that all the members were firmly established in Jesus Christ. In order to ascertain their understanding of the gospel two questions were

asked: "If you died tonight are you sure you would go to heaven?"

The other question followed on from the previous one: "If you got to heaven one day and God asked you, 'Why should you deserve eternal life?' What would you reply?" The members were requested to write their answer on a piece of paper. The writer wanted to make sure that each member had the assurance of salvation as it is only when persons are firmly founded in this subject that Christian growth can take place.

It was also intended to have the group share their experience with the struggles which Christians encounter. As Robert A. Raines wrote: "Conversion is not only an initial act; it is a growing experience! For no one of us is ever fully, totally converted to Christ. There are pockets of resistance; there is falling from grace as well as growing in grace."¹

Week Three

This meeting was structured to find out, firstly, the group member's expectation of the church, and secondly, the church's expectation of its members. To encourage interaction the group was asked: "What do you expect to receive from the Church?" The question was then reworded by asking: "What would you miss if you were prohibited from coming to Church?" The purpose for this approach was to help the members see that there are various benefits which people want to get out of the church, with different members having differing expectations of what the church should supply. On

¹Raines, p. 48.

the other hand a person does not come to church just for what can be gotten out of it. One of the members shared with the group the frustration she experienced when coming to Hillview Church. In the previous church she attended, she was very involved and served in many capacities. It took some time for her to become involved, consequently she did not feel a part of the church. Fortunately she is now serving in several ministries.

The group also talked about the value they received in corporate worship. They felt that the experience could not just be replaced by personal worship. Some of the members receive their greatest satisfaction from what is learned through the teaching ministry of the church.

The church's expectation of the individual was also discussed. It was agreed that the individual should support the church, attend worship, contribute his talents and grow spiritually.

Week Four

A questionnaire¹ was designed to be used during this week. The questions covered various areas of incorporation. In order to facilitate the incorporation of members into the Body of Christ, different dimensions are involved. It has been said that evangelism takes place through diakonia, kerygma and koinonia, whereas incorporation takes place through these three dimensions which are behavioral, cognitive and relational, plus one extra resource, leitourgia or worship.² Through these four areas the believer is

¹See Appendix 4

²Aldrich, p. 122. See also George G. Hunter III, The

made part of the group. By means of service the individual is given a role or task which is appropriate to the gifts he has. Giving his time and service the individual becomes one with the group. Through teaching and preaching the believer comes to accept a similar outlook on life. The fellowship provides a sense of belonging. In worship the group is reminded of the reason for its existence; the group worships because its members are the people of God.

The questions included these four areas as well as looking at the life-style of the individual in comparison with the group. The questionnaire provided ample opportunity for discussing these areas.

During the first four weeks the group learned and shared together. On the first occasion the meeting was started by each member re-introducing himself to the others. The discussion concerning their relationships with the Hillview Church brought both positive and negative responses. Those who did not feel a part of the church felt that "Adventists do not accept you until you have conformed to their way as far as smoking and drinking is concerned." Discussion also centred around the breakdown of relationships with old friends and the difficulties encountered since vast changes were made in their way of life. The group discussed the lack of contact between the church and society. When discussion progressed to reinforcing old social webs, the main focus of attention centered around the tension between maintaining contact and living the Christian life.

The second week revealed that all the members in the group

had a good understanding of salvation. The group shared openly the struggles they were facing in walking the Christian life. It was good for the new Christians to see that the older members also had battles, thus helping the members to be more honest with one another and to identify with each other. Bible study was a significant part of this session. Each time a portion of Scripture was read, the group was asked to explain what it meant.

The third week started with the expression of their expectations of church. Fellowship and friendship received the greatest amount of attention by the group. Some suggested that if they did not receive fellowship they would not feel like coming to church. Another person mentioned that to be a true friend involves more than saying "hello" Sabbath morning; he saw friendship as seeing a person not just at the church service but during the week also. At this stage a man who came along with one of the members changed the subject by asking what could be done for backsliders. When he was asked what he suggested, he stated that friendship was the key in reclaiming backsliders. He then shared with the group his experience in leaving the church ten years previously. During that time he received no friendship from the church members but during the previous week a member befriended him and that was the reason why he came to church.

One of the older members shared with the group that after the first week's discussion she wanted to see how it felt being a stranger at church, so during the next week she went to another church. She then explained to the group how she felt going to a church where she did not know anyone. Her experience was valuable

because she was now able to relate better to new members.

As the discussion continued one of the members pointed out the importance of personally inviting new members to church functions. In many cases a mere invitation in the church bulletin or from the pulpit will not get newcomers involved.

At the end of the meeting members requested that the group should meet the following week even though it was intended to have a combined Sabbath School lesson. They were so enthusiastic it was decided to meet the following week and not a fortnight later, as originally intended. The reason given by different members was that they preferred to meet in a small group, in which they felt they could share and learn together.

The fourth week included an incorporation survey. Some of the results are of interest. The response to question three "What was the main reason for your coming to this church?" included the following: "small church," "warm and friendly," "friendship," "a friend," "fellowship," "the pastor," "I felt it was where I belonged," and "close to my home." These responses indicate the importance that friendship and fellowship have in relation to incorporation. The response to question five re-emphasizes this importance of relationships.

Questions ten and eleven indicated a significant trend. All those baptized felt they had adequate Bible studies prior to baptism, however they all said they had no personal Bible studies since baptism, apart from one individual who received two.

The response to question seventeen: "How many close friends do you have in this church?" drew the following responses: "none,"

"one," "two," "three," "four," "six," "seven." It was obvious also that the person who scored low in this section needed extra personal care.

At least four members scored low in questions twenty-one and twenty-two. However, their response to question twenty indicated that a big change had taken place in their life-style. This indicated that the criteria which sometimes are used to test whether someone is becoming a Christian are not always valid. In other words in the growth of a Christian there are many more changes than just what one eats or drinks.

After the survey the group discussed question six. They shared with one another where they placed themselves: within the fellowship circle, membership circle, or outside both. One of the ladies who placed herself in the membership circle told the group that she did not feel that she was in the fellowship circle because a few years ago she was divorced, and ever since, people have been treating her differently. She felt that people were not asking her to be involved in the same way as previously. Another member then shared with the group that she had found herself in a similar situation a few years earlier. Consequently these two ladies were able to relate to each other.

Those who found themselves within the fellowship circle seemed to be better integrated within the church. This exercise revealed that just because a person is a church member does not necessarily mean he is part of the fellowship circle. The goal of incorporation is to get each person into the fellowship circle.

Evaluation and Recommendations

The four weeks provided a growing process for all involved. The level of intimate sharing increased as time progressed. Under normal circumstances members of the group would have had little opportunity to share their struggles with others. The mere fact they were able to express their frustrations and have others hear what they had to say seemed to have therapeutic value. At the same time hearing others who had similar problems helped them to realize that they were not the only ones in this particular situation.

According to the leader's assessment the group started to relate very well with one another as the weeks progressed. It seemed that they felt they belonged to the group and could speak freely. The fact that they requested the group should not skip one meeting was a good indication that the members were receiving benefit from their time together. Thus both the proposed agenda and the hidden agenda were accomplished.

However relationships take a long time to be of lasting benefit. Thus a programme such as this would be more beneficial if it was conducted over a longer period of time. The writer felt that he was limited in the effectiveness of his project due to the class-work he was involved in at the same time. In the future he would have a group such as this come to his home on occasions so that the setting could be more relaxed.

Having Christians at different levels of incorporation in the class was of great benefit. Not only were the older members able to share how they went through similar problems, but it opened the eyes of the older members to the great need of individuals

for help in the incorporation process. The action by one of the older members in going to another church to experience how new members felt was a good indication of the concern that was engendered.

Using the survey helped identify specific areas in which the individual could be having problems. Thus one is able to help the incorporation process in the area which is needing greater attention.

Furthermore the writer would suggest the running of a spiritual gifts series to help the members find their gifts and thus fit with greater ease into the Body of Christ.¹

There is one area which has been neglected by this project. The value of helping new members is one-sided. In many cases the problem does not lie with the new members; rather the problem of incorporation often lies with the rest of the church. Thus to run an effective incorporation programme the church needs to be prepared. The difficulties the new member faces needs to be shared with the church. How effective incorporation takes place needs to be taught to the members of the church. Some of the material in Chapter IV of this report could be used to instruct the church members. The goal is to teach incorporation consciousness to the church. By preparing both the believer and the church the process of incorporation would have a better chance of success.

¹Unfortunately spiritual gifts have been used to break up the Body of Christ. Various churches have over-emphasized one gift, e.g., healing; speaking in tongues; prophecy; preaching.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted the significance of incorporation. Often only lip service is rendered to the importance of this subject.

While implementing this project the present writer had the experience of growing with the group. To see the sharing and intimacy that developed within the group was a rewarding experience. Additionally, it is hoped that other people who are finding themselves cut off from their old acquaintances and yet not accepted by the church, will find a more receptive church in the future: a church that not only wants to win people to a set of doctrines, but which desires to win them to a new community and a new set of relationships. This is the fruit of the gospel.

Those who take the incorporation of believers into the Body of Christ seriously, will not only see numerical growth but will also witness growth toward maturity by the individual and the group.

APPENDIX 1

A SUMMARY OF THE ADDITIVE PATTERN IN RELATION
TO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

A SUMMARY OF THE ADDITIVE PATTERN
(Per cent of inquirers who changed religious affiliation)

Number of Deficits						
	0	1	2	3	4	
With Personal Influence	36% (322)	41% (640)	50% (799)	58% (393)	55% (27)	(2181)
Without Personal Influence	25% (97)	41% (247)	38% (294)	41% (146)	25% (12)	(796)
Total	(419)	(887)	(1093)	(539)	(39)	(2977)

Note: Total number of respondents is shown in parenthesis. Total has decreased from 3574 due to non-response and unclassifiable occupations, such as students and housewives.

Extract from: Ruth A. Wallace, "A Model of Change of Religious Affiliation," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 14 (December 1975): 353.

APPENDIX 2

OOSTERWAL'S SURVEY ON INFLUENCES IN BECOMING A
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

PERSONS AND AGENCIES BY WHICH NON-SDA

FIRST BECAME ACQUAINTED

WITH THE SDA CHURCH

(In Percentages)

Neighbours, Friends, etc.	43
Relatives	24
SDA Publications	13
Radio and TV Programs	4
SDA Community Service (medical, social and other institutions)	4
SDA Minister	3
Public Evangelism	2-3
Other	7-8

PERSONS AND AGENCIES THAT INFLUENCED

NON-SDA MOST TO JOIN THE CHURCH

(In Percentages)

Neighbours, Friends	40
SDA Minister	21
Relatives	17
Public Evangelism	13
SDA Schools	9
SDA Publications	7
Radio, TV	7
Bible Correspondence School	2-3
Other	2-3

Extract from: Gottfried Oosterwal, Patterns of SDA Church Growth in North America (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1976), pp. 39-40.

APPENDIX 3

GILLER'S SURVEY ON INFLUENCES IN BECOMING
A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

PERSONS AND AGENCIES BY WHICH NON-SDA

FIRST BECAME ACQUAINTED

WITH THE SDA CHURCH

(In Percentages)

Relatives	19.8
Public Evangelism	7.9
Friends, Neighbours, acquaintances	22.8
Bible Correspondence Schools	2
SDA Publications	5
Radio and TV	5
SDA Community Services	5
Adventist Minister	18.8
Other	13.9

PERSONS AND AGENCIES THAT INFLUENCES

NON-SDA MOST TO JOIN THE CHURCH

(In Percentages)

Relatives	17.9
Friends	15.2
Acquaintances/Workmates	2.8
Public Evangelism	13.8
SDA Publication	6.2
SDA Minister	38.6
Radio, TV	2.8
Bible Correspondence School	1.4
SDA School or medical work	1.4

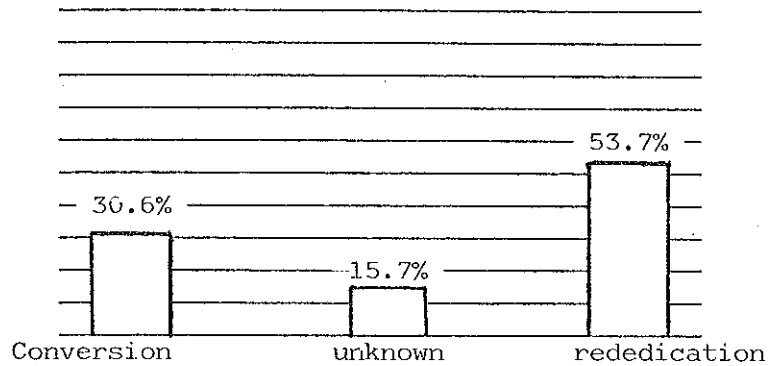
Extract from: E. B. Giller, "Church Growth Patterns in the North New South Wales Conference," Unpublished paper, Avondale College, 1982.

APPENDIX 4

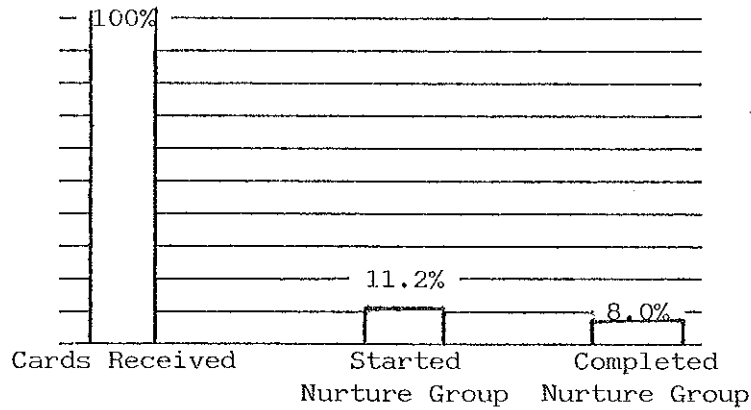
PASTOR'S RESPONSES TO THE BILLY GRAHAM

1976 GREATER SEATTLE/TACOMA CRUSADE

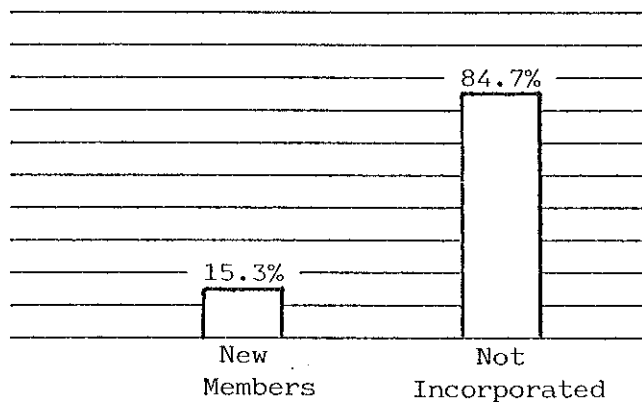
Of the follow-up cards your church received, how many were for conversion? Rededication? Unknown?



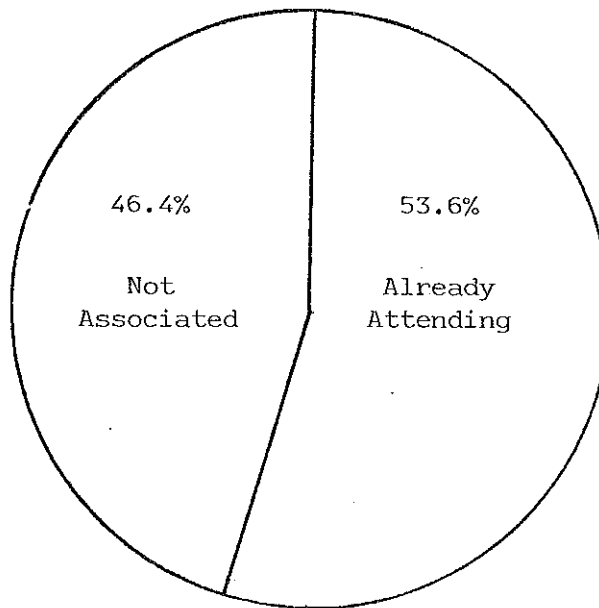
Of the total decision cards you received, how many actually participated in the nurture groups? Completed?



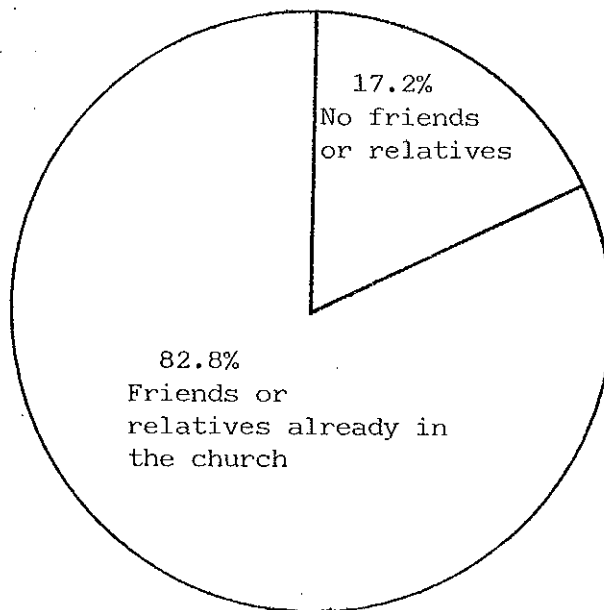
As a direct result of the crusade, how many are now (one year later) new members of your church?



Of the total decisions sent to your church, how many were already attending or associated with your church?



How many of those new members were friends or relatives of people already in your church?



Extract from: Win Arn, ed., The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook (Pasadena, California: Church Growth Press, 1979), pp. 99-102.

APPENDIX 5

INCORPORATION SURVEY

Incorporation Survey

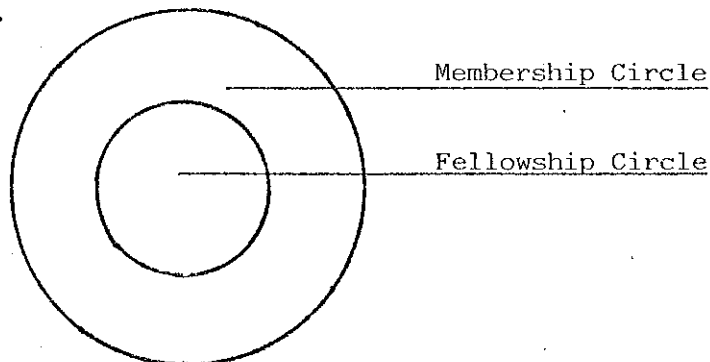
The following questions have been designed to help our church asses areas in which we can make some improvements. All questions are optional, if you prefer not to answer a question just skip that question. Some of the questions are on a scale from 1-7. Circle the number on the scale which applies to you.

NAME (optional):

1. Age: 18 years and young ()
 19 years - 30 years ()
 31 years - 45 years ()
 46 years - 65 years ()
 66 years and older ()
2. How long have you been attending this church?
3. What was the main reason for your coming to this church?

4. Have you been baptized When
5. Do you feel like you are a part of this church?
 What makes you feel this way

6. The following two circles represents the membership circle, and the inner fellowship circle, mark with a little cross where you feel you are.



7. How often do you attend Sabbath worship service:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

seldom always

8. How do you find the format and content of the worship service:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

not at all very
meaningful meaningful

Further comments:

.....

9. What are your feelings about participation in the Lord's Supper:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

it is not it is
necessary important

10. Have you received any personal Bible studies:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

none adequate

11. Have you received any personal Bible studies since your baptism:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

none adequate

12. How often do you attend Sabbath School:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

seldom always

What do you find most enjoyable during Sabbath School:

.....

13. Would you be able to explain to a friend how one becomes a Christian:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
with great difficulty			with ease			

14. Have you had the opportunity for Christian service within the church or community:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
none			much			

What Christian services do you or would you like to do

.....

15. What do you know about the gifts of the Spirit:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
nothing			a lot			

16. Have you had the opportunity to explain to a friend or relative how happy you are since you became a Christian:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all			many times			

17. How many close friends do you have in this church:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
one or less			seven or more			

18. When you first came to this church did you:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
have a difficult time making friends			find it easy making friends			

19. When church is over do you feel that members only talk to:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
their friends			new people and make them feel at home			

20. Do you feel your lifestyle has changed since you became a Christian:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
no change			big change			

What changes have you noticed taking place

.....

.....

21. Where would you place your present relationship to the Adventist way of life concerning tea, coffee, and meat eating:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not yet your lifestyle			in complete harmony with your life-style			

22. Where would you place your present relationship to the Adventist way of life concerning gambling, dancing, smoking, and drinking alcohol:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not yet your lifestyle			in complete harmony with your life-style			

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