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An Evaluation of the Churches of the Allegheny
Conference of the (Brethren In Christ Church)
Involving Growth Patterns from 1973 - 1978
Present Growth Potential Projected Measureable
Goals to 1985

Alvin J. Book

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INVOLVING
GROWTH PATTERNS FROM 1973 - 1978
PRESENT GROWTH POTENTIAL
PROJECTED MEASUREABLE GOALS TO 1985

BY

ALVIN J. BOOK

A project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The background for this project is one in which for me a significant number of transitions have taken place - from my earlier life as a Missionary Teacher and Church Administrator in Rhodesia, to serving as Pastor and Voluntary Service Director in the Bronx, New York City, to attending Seminary at Western Evangelical Seminary in Portland, Oregon, to my present calling by the Brethren in Christ Church to serve as Bishop of the Allegheny Conference. During this past year while attending Western Evangelical Seminary, aware of the responsibilities which I was to assume, a desire developed to become more knowledgeable and acquainted with this sector of the church. Realizing the Divine Mandate to service, it was incumbent upon me to prepare this resource for use when working among the churches.

As a reference guide for factual up-to-date information, a Congregational Information Sheet has been developed for each church. It is desired that all pertinent data be available at a quick glance. A form then was

prepared to outline this material which includes the following: the church's name, the pastor's name, address and telephone number, the congregational secretary, treasurer, and Sunday School superintendent, the service schedule, previous pastors, pastoral family information, statistics for the Sunday School and Church Membership for the years of 1973-1978, with projected growth patterns, by county, until 1990. The compilation of this data only become relevant as it is used and up-dated regularly. The purpose then of this material is that it be used in seminars with pastors, church boards and laity and that it will serve as a manual of orientation. This tabulation for each of the churches in the conference will immediately give a past record, as well as a present picture. The church administrator can quickly assess where each church is in its growth pattern from 1973 to the present. The Pennsylvania county population increase is projected in five year blocks. By seeing the growth patterns of the churches in a given county it serves as a trends indicator of which the church needs to be aware. Individual churches are encouraged to graph their status, past and present, and project future membership, morning worship, evening worship and mid-week increases according to a pre-determined goal schedule.

It is the opinion of this writer that only as the "track record" is seen, definite plans of action can be

taken. Suggestions, therefore, are included for congregations to use when desiring to react responsibly to the Biblical commands for preaching, discipling new converts and reaching into unchurched population centers within the Allegheny Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.

All of this can be accomplished only as leadership and laity accept responsibility for growth, praying earnestly, determining measureable goals for the next five year period. The driving force is the knowledge that not everyone who names the name of Christ will, in fact, enter into the kingdom of heaven. The heartfelt aspiration of this project is that it serves catalytically as an agent to inspire and guide the small, medium and larger churches of the Allegheny Conference to a clearer understanding of the Biblical Mandate and reach more effectively into their communities.

VISION AND CHURCH GROWTH

Most Pastors have at sometime used or been stirred by the text, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Proverbs 29:18). Perhaps New Testament passages, emphasizing the lostness of mankind and the value of one soul in the light of God's Word (Luke 9:25), speak even more definitively to the church today. It cannot be ignored that people the world over are dying in their sins. With these great needs in the world and local community, the church must be inspired and challenged to continue its efforts to evangelize. Leaders must humble themselves before God, sensing their awesome responsibility to proclaim a strong, biblical and expository message. It was Jesus who pointed His disciples in Matthew 9:36 to His own compassion for the community of the lost, for He viewed them as sheep without a shepherd. This being true, leadership also cannot neglect the stirring and involvement of the laity to develop tools for witnessing the essential message of salvation and for

nurturning believers to maturity. But how can this be done when much existing worship facility is not filled to capacity? Far too often the recorded statistics¹ reveal that congregations remain with little, limited or no increase in the Sunday School and Morning Worship. this condition can be attributable to limited visions and contentment with remaining "holy and pure." C. Peter Wagner emphasizes that evangelism needs to be geared toward the making of disciples and not just decisions.² With renewed vigor messages in such Scriptures as Acts 16:9 and Ezekiel 37:1-14 need to grip firmly leadership and laity - "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; Come over into Macadonia and help us;" Ezekiel prophesied as commanded and breath entered into the dry bones, and they lived again. The church must alter her thinking and realistically confront her own community, wherever that is, moving out and relating the truth to a confused and bewildered people. What is needed is the power of a vital message of salvation gripping the hearts of men and women today! Within the Allegheny Conference, I must conclude that there are varieties of vision, some excellent and measureable, some mediocre, but measureable and a considerable number limited,

¹See Appendix A

²C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1976), p. 135.

plateaued and unmeasureable. We commend those churches which are praying and growing and reaching out with a saving, nurturing message. True there are problems, but there is measureable growth. Each church is urged to see through Biblically oriented church growth eyes, eliminating the foe, who is clouding the vision and is happy to see little or no movement toward entering boldly into his territory in order to claim the lost for the Lord.

Renewed vision could mean relocating the church building. Much is and has happened in some Brethren in Christ communities. Churches need to be situated where there are people. Careful demographic study and prayer needs to be made before deciding to relocate. Up-to-date church boards will want to review community and county population growth patterns and be aware of people trends. Vision will take hold of God's people who seek Divine guidance.

An example of relocating with noticable increase is the Antrim Church in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. The congregation sold their more rural out-of-the-way church and moved to a new facility located on Route 11, a major artery highway between cities. During the years of 1973 through 1976 attendance had plateaued at the 155 mark. Within the transition year (the new church was dedicated in June, 1977) a noticeable increase occurred with an attendance of 212 reported. And for the year 1978

there was a 9% increase. New people are attending every Sunday. A new vision has taken place. Things are happening! No one now says that the move was not important to the life and ministry of their church. Here is a church where things are happening and on the move!

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH GROWTH

As the Brethren in Christ Church has approved the challenge of doubling in a decade, attention focuses on the leadership. Is the Pastor growing? Is he willing to grow? Is he reading and leading his people effectively? The late J. H. Jowett counseled his ministers to be as systematic and businesslike as the businessman. He told them to enter their study at an early hour and not be behind their parishioners in their quest of the Bread of Life. There can be little doubt that a relationship exists between the study and preaching of God's Word and Church Growth. Quality time, persistent, prayerful and patient preparation, is required for effective proclamation. For it is in the study that a Pastor sharpens his own tools in order to release effectively the power of the Gospel, II Timothy 2:5.

But it is not only the study and proclamation of God's Word that is important, it is a careful understanding and pursuit of principles that will result in a spiritually and numerically growing church. This writing assumes

some leadership familiarity with Church Growth concepts.³

For when a leader is stirred in his study, he will want to reach out to the unreached in the community. Men, who are leading growing churches, will not only know that certain principles are necessary, but will find appropriate means to instill them into their laity. It is C. Peter Wagner, a Church Growth specialist, who says:

Yes, few people are making jokes about the Church these days. Most Christians are dead serious about their churches. Where they are growing, people are excited and anxious to do their part to keep things moving for the glory of God. Where they are declining, people want to know the reasons why and what they can do about it.

Finding the answers to the question of why churches are growing or not growing is what the Church Growth Movement is all about...

*There are many different ways of approaching the task of discovering what God is doing in today's world. And one of them... is to look around the country at the churches that seem to be doing something unusual and, consequently, are maintaining a steady pattern of growth.*⁴

Putting this into the perspective of some local situations, we will now look at several churches that are growing. Addressing a Seminar of Church Growth conducted at Western Evangelical Seminary in 1978, Dr. Wendell W. Price gave these reasons why he felt his church had grown from 445 in 1972 to 800 in 1978:

³See Selected Bibliography for a current listing of books on Church Growth.

⁴C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1978), p. 27-28.

1. The Staying Pastor - he stayed beyond the sixth year,
2. The expository preaching of God's Word,
3. The professional staff - regular meeting twice a week,
4. Caring people - responsible and community oriented with the Pastors working as "player coaches",
5. Evangelism - not "crusade type", but "Campus Crusade" instruction in evangelism classes for periods of twenty weeks,
6. The organization of the church in its various functions:
 - In Worship,
 - In Christian Education,
 - In Missions,
 - In Fellowship,
 - In Outreach and Ancillary Services,
7. The ministries providing for every segment of the family.⁵

For Dr. Price these were the significant factors which God permitted to be at work in his church, producing steady growth.

Rolland Boyce of the Milwaukie Covenant Church, at the same seminar, gave completely different reasons why he felt his church was growing. His reasons for growth are:

1. A prayer accountability - periods of prayer, monthly seasons of prayer, sharing in prayer the needs of the body,

⁵Wendell W. Price, D.Min., Pastor North Seattle Alliance Church, chapel address at Western Evangelical Seminary, March 30, 1978.

2. A protection of Pastoral priorities - adequate family input, preparation for teaching and preaching of the Word, the discipling of men,
3. An integration of Biblical teaching - unified Sunday School materials, family devotional guide, verse of the week,
4. In-house development of Body Ministries - growth within the body (laity as a word does not exist, only "ministers"),
5. A Forum for Body Sharing and feed-back,
6. A goal oriented growth strategy with a quest for quality and goals which are attainable, measureable and accountable,
7. A need-oriented approach to people,
8. A community service mind-set,
9. A Total World Missions perspective.⁶

Again it is Peter Wagner who questions and reminds us:

Just what is it that makes churches like these grow? Of course it is, in the final analysis God at work through His Holy Spirit. But if we study these churches and others like them more closely, we can⁷ learn more about God and the way He works.

Having a desire to grow, prayer and the Holy Spirit leading is, therefore, the major force that inspires the leader to fill his worship facilities and reach more effectively into the community. No two churches will be

⁶Rolland Boyce, Milwaukie Covenant Church, Portland, Oregon, March, 1978.

⁷Wagner, op. cit. p. 28

alike, but each will assume a character suited to the gifts and leadership style of its pastor. There will be direct laity involvement in caring and sharing the Good News of the Gospel. It seems clear then that strategy and goal setting must be bathed in persistent and in-depth praying, testing each move in each congregation before implementing measureable and attainable goals. It is a movement that is wanted, not just a campaign or effort that soon terminates. Holy Spirit resources are never exhaustible. The Storehouse is ample. He wants us to move on, out and higher in the journey toward eternity.

As plans develop and the Holy Spirit leads, pastors and church leadership will want to visit already growing churches of the area. Seeing what is happening and understanding what functional elements could be applied to a local situation, has great value. It must be remembered that no two churches will grow alike. New procedures and plans of action must be carefully studied and tailored to the needs of the local congregation. Definitive decisions only happen when church leadership sees the need for growth and assumes the responsibility for it.

THE CHURCH BOARD AND CHURCH GROWTH

The Manual of Doctrine and Government assigns these functions to the Church Board:

To serve in an advisory capacity to the Pastor,

To determine matters of policy within the scope of Council authorization and to cooperate with the Pastor in planning the congregational program,

To receive and review questions for Congregational Council and, when adviseable, to make recommendations to the council,...

To be responsible, in consultation with the Bishop, for questions of membership and discipline....⁸

Realizing the scope of these and other functions, major responsibility is assigned to Church Boards for the organization, activity and movement of all people within the congregation. Since so much depends on "esprit de

⁸Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ Church (Nappanee, Ind: Evangel Press, Revised 1973), p. 103.

corp" in any group, those in executive positions, consciously or unconsciously, bear responsibility for creating and maintaining a church growth atmosphere. They are assigned the care of all age groups, making provision for meaningful activity, teaching and nurture. A clear understanding of this responsibility commands decisions (such as planning special programs, choosing Sunday School curriculum, Youth Leaders, etc.) to be undertaken much more seriously. An efficient, well organized, fully cooperative Church Board membership, then, who are happily accountable to each other and the Holy Spirit, contracts responsibility for the spiritual "flow" to those within and without the congregation.

Frequently, though, Church Board members are bound with a short sighted view of their duties. Careful consideration needs to be given to proper representation of the congregation in the decision making process and when deciding policy. There are times when Board Members must express their personal convictions as determined by their understanding of Scripture; however, as persons elected by a Church Council, they also must represent the people.

Generally no church desiring to grow will be able to accomplish any measureable growth unless the Church Board and officials are working together with strength and unanimity. Far too often growth cannot take place because the Official Board are not in harmony among themselves. Pastors need leadership qualities that will unite

members of the board. A Pastor must be diplomatic and exercise great care in bringing matters to decision. The decision process needs careful consideration.

Deciding by consensus is sometimes necessary in decision making. Arriving at consensus as a process does not just happen, and it must be strived for unrelentingly. But then, what is consensus? It takes place when each member of the board is ready to give his or her general consent and approval to an action after careful and considered reasoning together. It implies that the board believes that the proposed action finally arrived-at represents the best collective opinion that can be expected on that issue at that particular time and situation. Unity is attained, but there may not be complete unanimity. There is harmony in accepting some compromise of individual opinion on certain details - a willingness to set aside some personal preferences. Undoubtedly consensus is more closely identified with method than with final decision. The ideal is to use processes in decision making whereby each person involved feels that the technique used for coming to a conclusion was open and fair, each had a chance to be heard, all proper resources were used, ample information was available, there were no hidden agendas, and there was no attempt at coercion or embarrassment. Consensus should be tested at various steps in the discussion by giving opportunity for every board member to ask any

further questions and to express reservations or affirmations about what seems to be emerging as the general sense of the meeting on the particular question at issue. The Pastor, as Chairman, should take every effort to see that accomodation is made for covering as many suggestions or ideas as possible which do not distort the general intent of the main action under consideration. It is not intended that every action have a formal vote. And when a consensus is reached, the Chairman should indicate such, and that if there are no further objections or suggestions, the Secretary shall be instructed to state in the minutes that a general consensus on that question has been reached and the action recorded. Every effort then must be taken to assure that the Church Board actions clarify, internal and external issues, taking remedial steps necessary to reassure the Church. Good policy and decision making by a Church Board is assuring to a congregation who wants to grow.

Within the Brethren in Christ Church the Church Board plays a key role in the decision process and must initiate carefully and prayerfully the procedures whereby the membership, and those with usable gifts, will develop ownership of the ideas for growth. It goes without saying that it is most unlikely that a church will grow unless the Pastor and his church see the need for growth. Sometimes there may be those of the laity who have been captured by a vision to grow and who pass it on

to the church leadership; however, most churches are conditioned to wait for the leadership. Pastors and Church Board Members, let us give the required leadership.

PRESENT CHURCH GROWTH POTENTIAL

Measuring growth potential is essential and will vary in different localities. Much untapped internal and external potential stands ready to be challenged by pastors who are ready to grow. What then is this "internal potential?" It starts with the pastor whose Biblical understanding is that every christian has one or more spiritual gifts, and these gifts need to be discovered and used in the body (Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). The discovery by every church member of his or her spiritual gifts must begin with whatever process is necessary. After discernment, these gifts need to be developed and put to full use through appropriate channels, as planned by the pastor in consultation with the church board. Peter Wagner believes nothing can be done unless members think soberly of themselves as Romans 12:3 indicates, and he lists five necessary steps to be taken for discovering spiritual gifts:

1. *Explore the possibilities. Read and study lists of gifts in the New Testament. Know the options that appear in the Word of God...*
2. *Experiment with as many as possible. If you do not try a particular gift, you will have a hard time knowing whether you have it or not. Obviously there are some gifts in the list that are hard to know how to experiment with. But, many of them, including the gift of evangelist, lend themselves to serious experimentation.*
3. *Examine your feelings. If you try a gift out and enjoy doing it, that is a good sign. On the other hand if you find yourself disliking the task the gift involves, that in itself is a fairly good sign that God hasn't given it to you.*
4. *Evaluate your effectiveness. Spritual gifts are functional. Each one is designed to accomplish some specific objective. If you begin to think you have a certain spiritual gift be sure that you see the appropriate results when you use it. If you get no results you may not have the gift.*
5. *Expect confirmation from the Body. No gifts can be discovered, developed, and used alone. Why? Because they are members of a total organism, the Body. If you have a spiritual gift, it will fit with others. Other Christians will recognize your gift and confirm to you that you have it. If you think you have a gift, but no one else agrees you have it, be very suspicious of your assessment in the matter.*

*Once these five steps are taken and surrounded with much prayer, you should be able to answer clearly and precisely when asked, "What are your gifts?"*⁹

⁹C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1976), p. 74.

As consideration is given to the total development of spiritual gifts, it defies the ability to even think of the undeveloped and unused power potential in most churches and what would happen if these gifts were recognized, dedicated and put to God's use. To only know what spiritual gifts have been given and used within congregational body life takes little account of the spiritual dynamic that should be operative in the church and out into the world. Evangelism and church growth both must be the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the Life of the Believer and the Life of the Church. There is no evangelism and church growth apart from Him. He is the quality and quantity in every part of the church. Vergil Gerber suggests that the following four key factors are to be used in evangelizing and church growth. Commenting on Luke 24:45-49 he says,

1. *The evangelistic MESSAGE of repentance and forgiveness through the suffering and resurrection of Christ is based upon Holy Scripture. v.v. 45-47.*
2. *The evangelistic MANDATE is to share this message with all nations. v. 47*
3. *The evangelistic METHOD is through human witnesses (man). v. 48.*
4. *The evangelistic MEANS is¹⁰ the dynamic of the Holy Spirit. v. 49.*

¹⁰Vergil Gerber, A Manual for Evangelism/Church Growth (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973), p. 19.

What an explosive dynamic there was with one-hundred and twenty disciples staying in the upper room, awaiting the means of going to a task! The same dynamic is required today - a church, envisioned, waiting for the Holy Spirit power in order to evangelize the church, the community and the world. There is unlimited, unmeasurable potential ready to be harnessed when the church gets her act together and prays and plans and responds according to Divine Mandate.

However, spiritual dynamic and discovery of spiritual gifts must also be accompanied by measuring the potential of existing facilities, such as size and development of church plant and giving patterns with potential budget projections. Most churchmen have come to recognize that as the sanctuary is regularly filled to approximately 80% or more capacity, it is time to analyze existing needs and take steps to enlarge or plan for dual service schedules. As an analysis is undertaken, the following questions (among others) must be not only asked but answered:

1. Is the church big enough to provide the range of services that meet the needs and expectations of its members?
2. What size sanctuary is required for "X" number of people? In other words how big a church is needed?

3. When an attendance goal is determined, from where will the people come? Is the community growing and will it offer the people potential to achieve the goal?
4. What kind of growth is wanted? Conversion growth? Expansion growth? etc.
5. What are the immediate priority needs of the congregation?
6. Is the parking facility adequate for present and projected needs?
7. Will more land be needed in order to care for the enlarged facilities and the regulations that govern a new or enlarged plant?
8. What are the present and future Christian Education needs of the church?
9. Would an enlarged foyer, cloak, nursery and restroom facility enhance the present and/or future program?
10. Is the present location situated in a receptive, high-potential people area?

It must constantly be borne in mind that, humanly speaking the application of all wisdom, upwardly and outwardly, must be brought to bear in the local church when examining the need of a larger ministry to people.

No one will question the necessity of evaluating the financial strength of a people when enlargement is considered. In fact, too often, the subject of increased giving is initiated and spoken to prior to seriously asking

the question, "What would the Lord have us do now in the church and in the community?" At times an excessive emphasis can be placed on giving and good ideas can be jettisoned prematurely. Priority with spiritual perspective must constantly be kept in mind.

Within the Allegheny Conference, it is interesting to observe that the total giving for the year 1978 was \$2,424,951. And according to the March, 1979 survey assembled by Carl E. Keefer, Director of Stewardship and Finance (U.S.A.) of the Brethren in Christ Church, the potential giving for the same period of time was \$3,112,061.¹¹ Concerning this potential within the Brethren in Christ Church he has this to say,

Imagine what the differential between suggested giving potential and actual contributions could mean in terms of:

1. *Meeting the needs of the local church.*
2. *Providing more adequate compensation for pastors.*
3. *Strengthening Regional and General Conference ministries.*
4. *Planting new churches in North America.*
5. *Opening and expanding foreign fields.*¹²

The potential for a substantial increase in giving is within the hands of the members and friends of the Brethren in Christ Church. The conclusion drawn is that

¹¹Carl E. Keefer, Giving Potential and Financial Performance Analysis of the Brethren in Christ Churches in North America (Harrisburg, PA: 1979), p. 32.

¹²op. cit. p. 39.

as giving habits are realistically measured by Biblical teachings and with the appraisal of a tenth or more of the mean income of the members of any congregation, a potential giving is available for that congregation. Keefer's excellent survey of the giving patterns of the church must serve as a resource for those who really desire to stimulate increased giving. No one will say that potential giving is to be only measured by these methods. Each church must determine a method whereby the giving potential is arrived at in a way suited to congregational make-up.

MEASUREABLE PLANS OF ACTION FOR CHURCH GROWTH

Making disciples involves people. Responsible, reproducing Christians are people who are committed to Christ and His command to make others His disciples too and to relate them to Communities of Christians called Churches. Churches are people. People are both the object of the evangelistic goal and the agent of evangelistic strategy. In the Scriptures Jesus realized how important strategy is (Matthew 25, Matthew 13:1-13, Matthew 9:37-38). "Goal setting" for His disciples would probably have been a strange term. So Jesus talked to them in parables and spoke of spiritual gifts rather than goal setting. Disciples then must become responsible, reproducing Christians.

When planning for growth, the goal setting or strategy begins with the Pastor Discippler who has become aware of and feels the need of growth. He has studied the Scriptures, prayed and become acquainted with church growth principles and has observed growing churches and has attended selected church growth seminars.

In order to assist any church leader who desires to grow, the following represents principles to bear in mind when setting a direction for his congregation:

Why Plan?

It is necessary to formulate specific objectives by the establishing of a time sequence with priority-of-action steps to be taken, in order that the end results may be accomplished. A pre-determined course of action is important for significant results. No gun will be accurate and hit the target unless it is previously sighted-in.

Who Plans?

The Pastor is the recognized leader and serves as the catalyst that causes people - laymen and church leaders - to become involved and participating in the plan of action.

The Decision Process

When necessary the pastor leads the church board and people to the making of decisions, creating understanding for the purpose of getting people to accept responsibility for what is to be done. The required action results as he lends inspiration and encouragement. The pastor will be as actively involved as his people.

Organizing for Church Growth

1. Develop an organizational structure which identifies and groups the work to be performed.

2. Delegate and entrust responsibility and authority to others, creating accountability for results.
3. Establish relationships by creating conditions necessary for mutually cooperative efforts of people and groups.

Controlling, Developing and Directing

1. Establish performance standards by which methods and results will be evaluated.
2. Set procedures whereby performance is measured by recording and reporting the steps in progress and results secured.
3. Correct performance by regulating and improving on methods and results.

Whenever planning retreats or sessions are held, the pastor and his leadership will need to set out each of the principles above into time and sequence priority. No two congregations will be similar in every respect. Careful planning and prayer will of necessity precede any steps to be outlined. Included in the planning sessions are suggestions for dividing the work to be done into action phases.

- | | | |
|-------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase | I | Praying
Reading
Thinking
Preaching (Mandate and Stewardship Messages)
Finding Responsive Areas |
| Phase | II | Praying
Analyzing Growth Patterns of the Past Decade
Finding Responsive Areas
Plotting
Projecting |

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase III | Praying
Planning
Structuring
Costing
Requiriting and Training Leaders
Delegating Responsibility
Procedures for Creating Accountability |
| Phase IV | Praying
Adjusting
Finalyzing
Control Evaluating
Budgeting
Establishing Sequence Steps |
| Phase V | Praying
Publicizing
Communicating
Motivating
Implementing |

Since no two groups will think alike, phases may want to be adjusted to suit each situation. For best results a re-arrangement of the phases may be made, establishing a time sequence for each phase to be begun and completed. As progress is made, further adjustments can and should be made. Keep everything current. Good record keeping is important. A period of one year is considered to be a maximum time period to move through all five phases. Much prayer needs to be practiced, for each step forward is possible only through the clear leadings of the Holy Spirit. Resist all temptations to discouragement! Remember it is the will of God to permit "whosoever will" to enter heaven.

In order to more clearly develop plans of action, it will be necessary to study and analyze the percentage church growth increase by county and the projected

population increase by county. Church planting and growth options necessitates that careful demographic studies be made in order to determine the high potential areas, if any. Investigations like these will immediately reveal several important facts:

1. The counties that are estimated to grow- new church planting options fit in this category.
2. The counties with insignificant or minus growth- has this effected church growth?
3. The percentage membership gain, by county, for a four year period.

As a part of this project the population of the various counties in which there are Brethren in Christ Churches has been tabulated along with projected growth*. The church membership in those same counties is also included. The comparison between county growth and church growth is shown in percentages. The churches are also tabulated according to size so that it is possible to compare percentage growth of the small churches and the large churches. These charts are included at the end of this section. Several interesting observations are seen when studying these tables:

1. The smaller churches(less than 50), which seem not to grow, show a significant overall growth of 15.5%.

*

See pp. 34-36

2. Church growth does not always parallel county growth or decrease- the churches in the counties which had little or no growth, had significant growth, e.g. Bedford County had a minus 1.7%, while the churches increased by 10.1%.

From these observations some conclusions are drawn:

1. The pastors of smaller congregations (many of them are untrained and earning partial support from secular employment) are having a significant ministry. Their role and the contribution of the smaller church must not be minimized.
2. The larger churches, need, in some instances, to bring a balance in attendance between the Sunday school and worship periods. They need to guard against the "plateau syndrome"; it is easy to become content and static.
3. It can be anticipated that the major growth contribution in the Allegheny Conference within the next several years will come from the newly established and smaller churches.
4. Serious consideration needs to be given to the larger churches dividing and starting "daughter churches" in order to avoid stagnation.

Statistics do tell a story and Leadership needs to compile detailed graphs and charts, over a significant period of time that will reveal patterns that need correcting. Present and future goal measurements depend on an analysis of the past. Much prayerful hard work lies ahead. There are no short cuts for the church which desires to grow. Careful analysis of the following charts will reveal interesting and helpful information.

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: *Percentage Increase According to Size -
Four Year Period*

CHURCHES	Under 50		Between 50-100		Between 100-200		Over 200	
	1975	1978	1975	1978	1975	1978	1975	1978
<u>SECTION ONE</u>								
Air Hill					165	171		
Antrim					152	209		
Chambersburg							244	271
Five Forks					126	158		
Green Spring					106	266		
Hollowell							239	287
Iron Springs	27	28						
Montgomery					106	128		
Mt Rock					101	110		
Mt Tabor	34	41						
Mowersville			58	65				
New Guilford					184	201		
Paramount					117	101		
South Mountain	48	47						
Van Lear	18	50						
	127	166	58	65	1057	1281	483	558
Percentage gain		31%		12%		7%		16.5%
<u>SECTION TWO</u>								
Altoona	34	33						
Blandburg	10	5						
Canoe Creek	19	17						
Center Grove	12	19						
Clear Creek			51	57				
Eight Square	10	11						
Martinsburg			85	95				
Mt Chapel	19	24						
Petersburg	15	15						
Saxton	26	22						
Searights	8	11						
Sherman's Valley	45	40						
Spring Hope	16	24						
Woodbury	31	30						
	245	251	136	152				
Percentage gain		2.4%		12.1%				

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: *Percentage Increase According to Size -
Four Year Period*

CHURCHES	Under 50		Between 50 100		Between 100 200		Over 200	
	1975	1978	1975	1978	1975	1978	1975	1978
<u>SECTION THREE</u>								
Big Valley			49	64				
Blairs Mills	12	13						
Cedar Grove			72	119				
Cedar Heights			69	85				
Clarence Center					118	113		
Colyer	26	33						
Ferguson Valley	11	13						
Granville	42	13						
Green Grove	41	38						
Jemison Valley	34	50						
Marsh Creek	33	34						
Newton Hamilton	14	15						
Saville	21	32						
	234	261	190	268	118	113		
<u>Percentage gain or loss</u>		11.5%		41%		-4.2%		

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: *Percentage Increase According to Size -
Four Year Period*

CHURCHES	Under 50		Between ⁵⁰ ₁₀₀		Between ¹⁰⁰⁻ ₂₀₀		Over 200	
	1975	1978	1975	1978	1975	1978	1975	1978
<u>SECTION FOUR</u>								
Baltimore			62	72				
Carlisle							466	556
Dillsburg			76	78				
Fairview	24	22						
Grantham							334	389
Hanover	27	40						
Locust Grove			60	66				
Mechanicsburg							211	250
Morning Hour			47	58				
Mt Holly Springs	15	21						
Pleasant Valley	20	25						
Pleasant View	32	30						
Redland Valley	45	76						
Ridgevue	28	12						
Roseglen	33	46						
Williams Grove	16	27						
	240	299	245	274			1011	1195
<u>Percentage gain or lose</u>	24.6%		11.8%				18.2%	
<hr/>								
<u>Total Membership</u>	846	977	629	759	1175	1247	1494	1753
<u>Total Gain</u>	131		130		72		259	
<u>Percentage Increase</u>	15.5%		20.7%		6.1%		17.3%	

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

Percentage Church Increase by County
Projected County Population Increase

COUNTY	County Projected Population		Percentage Church Increase	
	1975	1980	1975	1978
<u>ADAMS</u>	56671	60342		
Iron Springs			27	26
Morning Hour			47	58
			<u>74</u>	<u>84</u>
	Increase	6.4%	Increase	13.5%
<u>BEDFORD</u>	42959	42223		
Clear Creek			51	57
Eight Square			10	11
Mt Chapel			19	24
Saxton			26	32
Sherman's Valley			45	40
Spring Hope			16	24
Woodbury			31	30
			<u>198</u>	<u>218</u>
	Decrease	-1.7%	Increase	10.1%
<u>Blair</u>	136207	135296		
Altoona			36	33
Canoe Creek			19	17
Martinsburg			85	95
			<u>140</u>	<u>145</u>
	Decrease	-.28%	Increase	3.6%
<u>Cambria</u>	186207	189148		
Blandburg			10	5
	Increase	1.6%	Decrease	-100%

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

Percentage Church Increase by County
Projected County Population Increase

COUNTY	County Projected Population		Percentage Church Increase	
	1975	1980	1975	1978
<u>CENTRE</u>	102467	113770		
Colyer			26	33
Green Grove			41	38
Marsh Creek			33	34
			<u>100</u>	<u>105</u>
	Increase	5.6%	Increase	17.5%
<u>CLINTON</u>	39546	41043		
Cedar Heights			69	85
	Increase	3.8%	Increase	23.2%
<u>CUMBERLAND</u>	164522	173738		
Green Spring			106	112
So Mountain Chapel			48	47
Carlisle			466	556
Mechanicsburg			211	250
Mt Holly Springs			15	21
Williams Grove			<u>16</u>	<u>27</u>
			862	1013
	Increase	5.6%	Increase	17.5%
<u>FAYETTE</u>	153629	152078		
Searights			8	11
	Decrease	- 1%	Increase	37.5%

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

Percentage Church Increase by County
Projected County Population Increase

COUNTY	County Projected Population		Percentage Church Increase	
	1975	1980	1975	1978
<u>FRANKLIN</u>	103209	106602		
Air Hill			165	171
Antrim			152	209
Chambersburg			244	271
Five Forks			126	158
Hollowell			239	266
Montgomery			106	128
Mt. Rock			101	110
Mt Tabor			34	41
Mowersville			58	65
New Guilford			184	201
Waynesboro			<u>168</u>	<u>163</u>
			1577	1783
	Increase	3.3%	Increase	13%
<u>HUNTINGTON</u>	40766	40686		
Center Grove			12	19
	Decrease	-1.7%	Increase	58.3%
<u>JUNIATA</u>	17277	17416		
Blairs Mills			12	13
Cedar Grove			<u>72</u>	<u>119</u>
			84	132
	Increase	.8%	Increase	57.1%

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

Allegheny Conference

Percentage Church Increase by County
Projected County Population Increase

COUNTY	County Projected Population		Percentage Church Increase	
	1975	1980	1975	1978
<u>MIFFLIN</u>	47557	48446		
Big Valley			49	64
Ferguson Valley			11	13
Granville			42	53
Newton Hamilton			<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>
			115	145
	Increase	1.8%	Increase	26%
<u>Perry</u>	28851	29662		
Saville			21	32
Pleasant Valley			20	25
Roseglen			<u>33</u>	<u>46</u>
			74	103
	Increase	2.8%	Increase	39%
<u>Tioga</u>	39564	40151		
Jemison Valley			34	50
	Increase	1.5%	Increase	17.6%
<u>York</u>	293874	312620		
Dillsburg			76	78
Fairview			24	22
Grantham			334	389
Hanover			27	40
Locust Grove			60	66
Pleasant View			32	30
Redland Valley			45	76
Ridgevue			<u>28</u>	<u>12</u>
			626	713
	Increase	19.96%	Increase	13.9%

A NEW MODEL FOR CHURCH PLANTING

In the past number of years the Allegheny Conference has placed considerable emphasis on the financing of church buildings. Some of this was due to the fact that in several instances there were worship facilities on the market which were located in suitable locations, and the Allegheny Church Extension Board secured the approval and financial backing of the Regional Conference and assumed responsibility for payments, thus, the church building existed before the congregation. This was done until the new congregations were able to care for all the payments themselves. However, some of these churches felt that someone else had made the decision for them and they had to make payments on facilities that were not of their own choosing. Considering this slow process in buying buildings and paying for them before a body of believers was established; it was felt another way must be found. Out of this situation the following model was brought into being.

PHILOSOPHY

To plant pastoral leadership who will introduce men and women, children and youth to the Lord Jesus Christ; develop, organize and lead this new group of people to become obedient followers of God's Word; give guidance in

locating and developing worship facilities according to local needs and abilities.

GOALS

A. Long Range

To begin, establish and develop viable congregations with a developed program within a five year period. This is to be accomplished by following the guidelines of the short and intermediate goals.

B. Intermediate Range

1. Within a one to three year period have a Church Board.
2. Within a one to three year period have definite plans for a permanent place of worship.
 - a. Capital funds in a saving account.
 - b. Land site projection.
 - c. Building plans.

C. Short Range

1. Establish three Bible Study groups and a Sunday Worship service within six months.
2. Create a Biblical "body life" atmosphere as emphasized by the Brethren in Christ Church.
3. Commence a building fund savings account within six months with a \$150 a month goal and pay all local operating expenses.
4. Pastor responsible for weekly contact with Bible Study group and follow-up convert nurture.
5. Aim at Bible reading and memorization program.
6. Give special attention to the development of public relations and the building of bridges to denominations and groups within the community.
7. Make a list of and contact all Brethren in Christ people and Messiah College graduates.

LEADERSHIP

- A. Have a vision for the lost of the world.
- B. Be committed to Brethren in Christ teachings and doctrines.

- C. Have a clear calling to this type of church planting.
- D. Have a willingness to live sacrificially.

SUPPORT PLANS - Three different plans depending on situation:

- A. Working in the parish five days a week plus Sunday (full time).
- B. Pastoral family employment providing additional income where necessary (part time).
- C. Pastoral leadership is securely employed while establishing a viable Brethren in Christ congregation.

TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Fellowship

Every six months (January and July) all church planting men come together for fellowship, spiritual encouragement, training and accountability.

B. Seminars

The Allegheny Extension Board allocate funds and plan all seminars in consultation with the Secretary of Home Ministries (Brethren in Christ Missions) and Regional Conference Church Planter.

C. Reporting

Monthly written reports shall be made for the bishop consisting of:

1. Timetable accountability; i.e. Bible studies, visitation, reading, family, preaching, etc.
2. Goal measurement of previous month's projections and outlining plans and goals for month ahead.

CONCLUSION

This project stresses the need that all churches should be growing. Since growth is an integral part of the New Testament message, churches today cannot ignore or side step these issues and implications that spring from the scriptures; however, growth is more than a Cedar Grove church which has more members this year than it had last year. A concern also must center in growth in the things of the Spirit and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gratefully, by the Spirit's help, a proper perspective can be realized and both can and should happen simultaneously.

Since so much of the vision for growth depends on leadership, communication is a prime factor in the growing process. It is one thing to read, pray, and believe that church growth is necessary; communicating it is another. Church growth is dependent upon viable communication, which begins with the one, which is enlarged to two and then on to a corporate witness. Concerning

communication, Reuel Howe writes,

The purpose of communication is not to give our answers to peoples questions. When we have been asked, "What would you do if you were in my place?" we often comment later, "I didn't know what to tell him." Implicit in that response is the assumption that we should have known and told the inquirer what he should do. We are all tempted to think of ourselves as potential dispensers of answers to people's questions. Certainly this is true of those who are regarded as authorities in some field of study or action. When a question is put to an authority, he often answers what is being asked instead of using his knowledge, understanding, and skill to help the inquirers move in the direction of finding answers to their own questions...he has not discovered the greater excitement and satisfaction of having learners experience for themselves, with guidance, of course, the joy of acquiring insight and knowledge.¹³

Careful attention then needs to be given by the leader to communicating. His is the responsibility to develop a framework in which significant discovery can be made by the people with whom he works. Ownership of ideas, goals and directions in which a church goes can only result from proper communication.

It is a responsibility then that the bishop of the Allegheny Conference become a facilitator in developing vision for growth within his conference. He has responsibility to be enthusiastic and supportive for growth in each of his churches. He will need to help some pastors

¹³Reuel L. Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), p. 52.

to catch a vision. He will need to spend quality time in churches which are desiring to grow, helping the leadership, understanding the significance of past and present growth and giving patterns and assisting in the establishing of measureable goals.

At the Regional Conference at the Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church, held April 7, 1979, it was decided to plant three new churches in the Fredrick County, Maryland area during the 1979-1980 period. The impetus for this action began when the General Conference gave its approval that the denomination double in a decade. It was the work of select facilitators who implanted the vision, with the Lord's help, within the extension boards and pastors of the regional conferences. It is now incumbent upon the bishop of the Allegheny Conference to be a catalyst to communicate, inspire and transfer to leaders, measureable concepts of growth, and through them on to the laity. Even though it is strongly felt that this should happen; it will never adequately take hold unless there is a spirit of prayer, belief and expectancy within the body which develops into a spiritual exercise. To this end may it be so!

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CHURCH REFERENCE TABLES

Section- One

S-101 Air Hill
 S-102 Antrim
 S-103 Chambersburg
 S-104 Five Forks
 S-105 Green Spring
 S-106 Hollowell
 S-107 Iron Springs
 S-108 Montgomery
 S-109 Mt. Rock
 S-110 Mt. Tabor
 S-111 Mowersville
 S-112 New Guilford
 S-113 Paramount
 S-114 South Mountain
 S-115 Van Lear
 S-116 Waynesboro

Section-Two

S-201 Altoona
 S-202 Blandburg
 S-203 Canoe Creek
 S-204 Center Grove
 S-205 Clear Creek
 S-206 Eight Square Chapel
 S-207 Martinsburg
 S-208 Mt. Chapel
 S-209 Petersburg
 S-210 Saxton
 S-211 Searights
 S-212 Sherman's Valley
 S-213 Spring Hope
 S-214 Woodbury

Section- Three

S-301 Big Valley
 S-302 Blairs Mills
 S-303 Cedar Grove
 S-304 Cedar Heights
 S-305 Clarence Center
 S-306 Colyer
 S-307 Fergeson Valley
 S-308 Granville
 S-309 Green Grove
 S-310 Jemison Valley
 S-311 Marsh Creek
 S-312 Newton Hamilton
 S-313 Saville
 S-314 Susquehanna Valley

Section-Four

S-401 Baltimore
 S-402 Carlisle
 S-403 Dillsburg
 S-404 Fairview
 S-405 Grantham
 S-406 Hanover
 S-407 Locust Grove
 S-408 Mechanicsburg
 S-409 Morning Hour
 S-410 Mt. Holly Springs
 S-411 Pleasant Valley
 S-412 Pleasant View
 S-413 Redland Valley
 S-414 Ridgevue

CHURCH REFERENCE TABLES

Section- Four

S-415 Roseglen
S-416 Williams Grove
S-517 Messiah Village