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A Survery of Growth Factors in Selected Churches of the Greater Metropolitan Portland Area

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A SURVEY OF GROWTH FACTORS IN SELECTED CHURCHES
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of the total church program has been increasingly questioned in recent years. Some of the questioning comes from those who feel the church program generally is irrelevant to the needs of contemporary man, with the Sunday School being the "most wasted hour of the week." Others, though not so thorough in discarding the church's present structure and efforts, nevertheless question whether some changes in the life of the church are not in order if new people are to be reached with the Gospel and involved in programs that promote genuine spiritual growth and development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of how to effectively present the Gospel to the present day is one which must be re-examined periodically. This must be done if the church is to adequately minister the message of salvation and justify its existence.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine underlying factors in the growth of selected churches in the Portland, Oregon area. Growth that is due to the faithful application of "old" methods (calling programs, sanctuary evangelism, etc.) will be noted, as will growth

encouraged by changes in the normal church program (double Sunday School and/or morning worship services, etc.), and new methods of outreach outside the ordinary structure of the church (home Bible studies, coffee-house ministry, etc.).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In choosing churches to be surveyed three criteria were generally followed: (1) the church must be evangelical in emphasis, (2) a minimum of two hundred must attend Sunday School and/or morning worship, and (3) the growth pattern of the Sunday School and/or morning worship must go back for a period of two to three years.

The Sunday School and morning worship service were chosen as criteria for growth because it was felt that these two areas are where growth is generally most evident statistically.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Church Growth

The term church growth refers to the increase of the number of people reached by, and participating in, the programs of the local church.

Evangelical

The evangelical position may be defined as the religious philosophy that agrees to the inspiration of Scripture, the sufficiency of the atonement of Jesus Christ for sin, the necessity of the new birth and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Local Church

A local church is a group of evangelical believers gathering at regular times in a specific place(s) to worship God and participate in programs designed for their own spiritual development as well as the reaching of others with the Gospel.

Mainline Denomination

A mainline denomination is considered to be one of the denominations that generally represent the older, larger and more established segment of American Christianity. Included in this group are (among others) the American Baptist Convention, the American Lutheran Church, the Episcopalian Church, the Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, and the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

These denominations generally do not hold to the inspiration of Scripture, the sufficiency of Christ's atonement for sin, the necessity of the new birth, or the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. The main concerns of these churches lie, instead, in the area of social involvement and reform.

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

To aid in gathering information for the study a questionnaire was prepared by the writer. Help in setting up the questionnaire was obtained from check lists relating to programs in the local church in W. Curry Mavis' book Advancing the Smaller Local Church. Information was also selected from Elmer Towns' book America's Fastest Growing Churches.

To find growing churches that would be willing to participate in the survey the Greater Portland Sunday School Association was contacted, as was the regional office of the National Association of Evangelicals. Both of these organizations informed the writer that they had no records that would verify the growth, or lack of it, of local churches associated with them.

The headquarters of nine different denominations were then contacted to determine which of their local churches in the Portland area met the minimum attendance requirement. These local churches were then contacted to determine that: (1) they were growing, and (2) their growth pattern extended back for a period of two to three years. A total of thirty-two churches representing fifteen denominations plus three independent churches were contacted.

Fifteen local churches that met the above qualifications were then chosen and permission obtained by means of telephone conversation to include them in the study. A questionnaire was then sent to the pastor, or someone whom he designated, to be filled out and returned. A letter introducing the researcher and explaining the study was sent with each questionnaire.

The deadline for questionnaires to be returned was set as February 24, 1973. By this time twelve of the fifteen questionnaires had been returned. On one of these it was found that the growth pattern of the church did not go back quite one year. Since this failed to meet the two year growth pattern requirement established for the project, this church was not included in the study. A total of eleven churches was thus left to participate in the survey.

These eleven churches represented seven denominations and one independent group.

Chapter 2

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in this chapter deals with growth, or the lack of it, in the churches and Sunday Schools of America. Downward trends in church membership and Sunday School enrollment were noted, as well as those churches that are currently growing in both of these areas. Factors underlying growth and decline were examined by authors in this field.

STATISTICS INDICATE DECLINE

Recent studies have confirmed the fact that a large part of the American religious establishment has stopped growing. Rev. Dean M. Kelley, Director for Civil and Religious Liberty of the National Council of Churches, makes the following statement:

In the latter years of the 1960's something remarkable happened in the United States: for the first time in the nation's history most of the major church groups stopped growing and began to shrink.

At least ten of the largest Christian denominations in the country, whose membership totals 77,666,223, in 1967, had fewer members the next year and even fewer yet the year after. Most of these denominations had been growing uninterruptedly since colonial times. In the previous decade they had grown more slowly, some failing to keep pace with the increase in the nation's population. And now they have begun to diminish, reversing a trend of two centuries.¹

Rev. Kelley presents statistical confirmation of the decline of

¹Dean M. Kelley, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 1.

mainline denominations, as compared to Bible-believing denominations that are growing, in chapters 1 and 2 of his recent book Why Conservative Churches are Growing.²

This trend is reflected in mainline denominational Sunday School attendance also. In Christian Life magazine's listing of America's one hundred largest Sunday Schools for 1971, the representation of mainline denominational Sunday Schools was described as limited by Christian Life's Sunday School editor Elmer Towns.³

REASONS FOR DECLINE

Various reasons for this decline have been offered. David Kucharsky lists among the possibilities the following:

It may be that laymen are finding what they consider as better ways of spending their religious dollars. Independent Christian organizations are having a great financial impact through direct-mail appeals, the mass media, and representatives traveling among local congregations.

Other possible reasons for the decline: Young people are not replacing old members at a sufficient rate, nor is their giving; a growing number of distractions--like the appeal of weekend travel--that keep people and their money out of the churches; people are moving more often and tend to lose interest in churches in the process.⁴

Elmer Towns suggests another factor that has contributed to decline in referring to the small number of mainline denominational Sunday Schools in America's one hundred largest Sunday Schools for 1971:

²Ibid., pp. 1-35.

³Elmer Towns, "100 Largest Sunday Schools," Christian Life, September, 1971, pp. 28-29.

⁴David Kucharsky, "New Statistics Confirm Downturn," Christianity Today, February 27, 1970, p. 40.

Once again the limited listing of mainline denominational churches (other than Southern Baptist) appears to reflect their lack of emphasis on evangelistic outreach. Most growing churches believe the 'Sunday School is the evangelistic arm of the church.' In many denominations which are holding their own or declining in attendance Sunday School is inclined to be limited to children's classes only. The largest Sunday Schools stress adult attendance at both Sunday School and church.⁵

DOCTRINAL ORTHODOXY NOT ENOUGH

In all fairness, it must be recognized that local churches belonging to mainline denominations are not alone in experiencing decline in church membership and Sunday School attendance. Local churches in Bible-believing denominations are facing problems in this area too. Mere orthodoxy in doctrine does not automatically insure success and growth.

In the January, 1972, issue of Christian Life magazine, Elmer Towns lists five factors that will lead to a decline in Sunday School attendance.

Neglect of Evangelism

The Sunday Schools which are growing usually have an aggressive evangelistic outreach. The largest Protestant denomination in America, the Southern Baptists, was built on the premise that the Sunday School is the evangelistic arm of the church. In 1969, 92 percent of their church additions came from the Sunday School.

Inadequate Facilities

Growth in attendance must be matched by expanded space. Failure

⁵Towns, loc. cit.

of leadership to recognize and act on this fact will cause attendance to level off.

Emphasis on Quality to the Exclusion of Quantity

This comes from a failure to properly emphasize numerical increase. Charles Spurgeon once said, "The minister that will not emphasize numbers will not have them."

Inadequate Administration

The Sunday School will rise or fall on its leadership. Improper administration will block growth.

Antiquated Educational Environment

It is a reproach to the church when children accustomed to enjoyment, involvement and experience in public school instruction attend a Sunday School where their class meets in the furnace room, studies from quarterlies with small type and out of date pictures and endures boring lectures.⁶

BIBLE-BELIEVING DENOMINATIONS GENERALLY GROWING

Yet in spite of the fact that there are problems facing Bible-believing denominations, statistics bear out the fact that these bodies are generally experiencing growth.

In reply to the question of the Sunday School's future, Rev. Wayne Buchanan, head of the National Sunday School Association gave the following answer:

⁶Elmer Towns, "Why Sunday Schools Decline," Christian Life, January, 1972, p. 17.

First, we should remember that criticism is the 'rule of our day.' Second, some of the criticism against the Sunday School is valid. Sunday Schools can improve, but the critics aren't offering many answers. And third, the Sunday School is wrestling with its problems. Any time there is wrestling, there is sign of life. Sunday Schools are a long way from being dead.⁷

According to Elmer Towns, one of the encouraging signs for the future is the increase in the number of large Bible-believing Sunday Schools. An article accompanying Christian Life magazine's 1972 listing of the one hundred largest U.S. Sunday Schools states:

Christian Life magazine's reporting of the emergence of the large Sunday Schools correctly predicted that the '70s would be the decade of the large church. There were only 12 churches averaging more than 2,000 in weekly attendance when the listing began. This year 34 have reached that plateau. Then only one Sunday School averaged 5,000; this year there are six.⁸

REASONS FOR GROWTH

Different reasons have been given as to why Bible-believing churches are generally experiencing growth in church membership and Sunday School attendance at a time when mainline churches are generally experiencing a decline in those areas.

Five factors that contribute to church growth are listed by Elmer Towns in the December, 1972, issue of Christian Life magazine.

Great Preaching

Perhaps the most important factor in a great Sunday School is the pastor who emphasizes old-fashioned preaching. It is in the

⁷Wayne Buchanan, "He Sees Brighter Days Ahead for the Sunday School," Christian Life, September, 1968, p. 54.

⁸Elmer Towns, "100 Largest U.S. Sunday Schools," Christian Life, October, 1972, p. 16.

preaching service that the Word of God "planted" in Sunday School is "harvested."

New Methods

Bus evangelism is one of the most productive new methods of reaching the unchurched.

Fresh Hymnody

These large churches do not use liturgy or choir anthems. Rather, they emphasize songs of the common man which reflect the joy of being a Christian.

An Unusual Turning Out by Out-of-the-Ordinary People

People from a wide variety of social and economic classes attend the large churches. Because evangelism, rather than fellowship or worship, is the main thrust of the large church they do not have problems of integrating these different groups.

New Emphasis on Bible Study

These large churches give allegiance to the Bible, and teach its content with a view to change lives spiritually.⁹

As Towns points out, these five factors can be used successfully by a church of any size.

THE BASIC FUNCTION OF RELIGION

Dean M. Kelley submits the following as an explanation of the

⁹Elmer Towns, "What Makes Large Sunday Schools Larger?" Christian Life, December, 1972, p. 70.

growth/decline phenomenon:

Not only are some religious groups thriving, but new ones are constantly coming into being, some of them quite unconventional and even bizarre in character. At the very moment when it begins to be accepted that religion is no longer needed and churches are expiring, new manifestations of religiousness appear where least expected--among adolescents and young adults--the very age groups which had most visibly abandoned the conventional religious bodies in seeming apathy and disillusionment.

What function is religion performing that is as essential to mankind as a carburetor is to an automobile? What religion is 'doing' in every instance (albeit with greater or lesser effectiveness) is explaining the meaning of life in ultimate terms.¹⁰

According to Rev. Kelley mainline churches, in failing to explain the meaning of life in ultimate terms, have failed to give their adherents meaning of life. He goes on to say:

If a religion should set out deliberately to benefit the whole society by patriotic preaching or welfare services or social action, but did not make life meaningful for its members, it would benefit the whole society less than if it had contented itself with ministering its unique function to those who looked to it for that ministry.¹¹

SUMMARY

The failure of mainline denominations to give adequate meaning in life to their constituents has resulted in a decline in Sunday School and church participation, for those bodies.

At the same time, although faced with problems and difficulties, Bible-believing denominations have generally been experiencing growth.

Changes are sometimes necessary in the life of a local church. These may be changes in its schedule of services or its programs of

¹⁰Kelley, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing, pp. 36-37.

¹¹Ibid., p. 45.

outreach. Recognition of this fact, along with a willingness to be flexible, is essential to promotion of growth. A failure to make needed adjustments at this point can be one of the greatest hindrances to continued growth and progress.

Chapter 3

AN ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

THE PROBLEM

The trend of growth or decline at the denominational level is but a reflection of thousands of local churches, some of which are growing and some that are not.

It will help our understanding of phenomena such as this to take time to discover what some of the underlying factors are that help to cause the condition. That is what this chapter endeavors to do. The churches presented are all growing churches in the Sunday School, and/or morning worship service, as well as in other areas. An attempt will be made to discover and analyze why these churches are experiencing this growth.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Vital information about each of the churches surveyed is contained in Table 1. This information includes the name of the local church, its denominational affiliation, how long the present pastor has been there, how long the church has been at its present location and the assigning of a number to identify that church in following tables. These numbers were assigned on the basis of an alphabetical arrangement of denominations. In instances where there was more than one local church representing a denomination, those churches were arranged

Table 1

Biographical Information of Churches Surveyed

Local church	Denomination	Number assigned	Tenure of pastor	Time at present location
First Assembly of God	Assembly of God	1	7 years	20 years
First Baptist Church of St. Johns	Baptist (Conservative)	2	7 years	5 years
Montavilla Baptist Church	Baptist (Conservative)	3	4 years	21 years
Cedar Mills Bible Church	(Independent)	4	23 years	25 years
Beaverton Christian Church	Christian	5	2 years	10 years
Holladay Park Church of God	Church of God	6	4 years	16 years
East Hill Foursquare Church	Foursquare Gospel	7	7 years	
Portland Foursquare Church	Foursquare Gospel	8	3 years	43 years
Clackamas Park Friends Church	Friends	9	7 years	7 years
Reedwood Friends Church	Friends	10	2 years	3 years
Beaverton Nazarene Church	Nazarene	11	2 years	17 years

alphabetically with the denomination and numbered accordingly.

The average length of time that the pastor had been at the church was six years. Tenure ranged from two years to twenty-three years.

INDEX OF CHURCH GROWTH

The Sunday School and morning worship service were the two prime areas of consideration in this study in determining which were growing churches.

Growth in these two areas was noted as was increase in the Sunday evening service, mid-week service and membership. In this way a better picture of the overall growth of the local church was afforded. This made possible the study of those areas that were generally growing more rapidly, as well as the areas in which growth was less evident.

Sunday School

Table 2 lists the numerical increase of each Sunday School and the percent that increase represents. The percentage of increase ranged from 11 percent to 45 percent, with the average increase being 26 percent. Four Sunday Schools were above the average and four Sunday Schools fell below it.

The largest of these Sunday Schools (8) averaged 743 in attendance in 1972. The largest numerical increase (11) was 103. The largest percentage increase (2) was 45 percent.

Morning Worship Service

The numerical increase of each church in its morning worship service is recorded in Table 3, along with the percentage of increase

Table 2
Growth in the Sunday School

Church	Average attendance				Amount of increase over four years	
	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	Numerical	Percent ^a
1	460	510	540	540	80	17
2	200	220	220	290	90	45
3 ^b				425		
4 ^b				500		
5	234	230	239	264	30	13
6	191	245	249	246	55	29
7 ^b						
8	669	659	714	743	74	11
9	124	135	124	172	48	39
10	232	210	257	265	33	14
11	270	250	271	373	103	38

^aAll percentages are rounded to nearest whole number.

^bIncomplete information received.

Table 3
Growth in the Sunday Morning Worship Service

Church	Average attendance				Amount of increase over four years	
	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	Numerical	Percent ^a
1	450	570	650	750	300	67
2	300	325	375	400	100	33
3 ^b				450		
4 ^b				700		
5	280	216	282	316	36	13
6	290	308	350	350	60	21
7	163	210	231	293	130	80
8	436	477	518	526	90	21
9	146	155	161	236	90	62
10	146	214	280	327	181	124
11	220	225	302	420	200	91

^aAll percentages are rounded to nearest whole number.

^bIncomplete information received.

that gain represents. These increases ranged from 13 percent to 124 percent, with 57 percent being the average.

The largest of the morning worship services (1) averaged 750 in 1972. The largest numerical gain (1) was 300, while the greatest percentage increase (10) was 124 percent.

Table 4 makes a comparison between the average Sunday morning worship service attendances for 1972, and the average membership figures given for that same year. Four of the seven churches reporting averages in both areas had a larger membership than worship service attendance. With the three remaining churches the opposite was true.

Table 4

Comparison of Morning Worship Attendance with Membership^a

Church	1	2	5	8	9	10	11
Attendance	750	400	316	526	236	327	420
Membership	571	456	561	2,559	150	468	336

^aChurches 3, 4, 6 and 7 were not included in this table as they submitted no membership statistics.

Sunday Evening Service

Increases in the Sunday evening service are listed in Table 5. The average percent of increase was 61 percent, with individual percentages ranging from 16 percent to 100 percent.

The largest of the Sunday evening services (8) averaged 613. The largest numerical gain (8) was 307, and the largest percentage gain (8) was 100 percent.

Table 5

Growth in the Sunday Evening Service

Church	Average attendance				Amount of increase over four years	
	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	Numerical	Percent ^a
1	300	340	420	550	250	83
2	175	195	200	275	100	57
3 ^b						
4 ^b						
5 ^b	84	73		124	40	48
6 ^b						
7 ^b						
8	306	396	402	613	307	100
9	82	80	79	95	13	16
10	82	105	130	130	48	59
11	165	172	216	275	110	67

^aAll percentages are rounded to nearest whole number.

^bIncomplete information received.

Mid-Week Service

Table 6 records increases in the mid-week service for those churches which record the attendance. As the table shows, several do not.

The largest average mid-week service attendance (8) was 312. The largest numerical gain (8) was 172, and the largest percentage gain (8) was 123 percent.

Membership

Increases in this area are noted in Table 7. As the table shows, some churches do not keep a record of membership.

The largest membership recorded (8) was 2,559. The largest numerical gain (1) was 221, while the largest percentage gain (9) was 105 percent.

Summary

Length of pastorate. There seems to be no link between the length of the present pastor's stay and the rate of growth in the church.

One pastor who had been at his church for seven years (6) experienced a growth rate of 29 percent in Sunday School during the four year period covered by the questionnaire. Another pastor who had been at his church for only two years (11) experienced a growth rate of 49 percent in Sunday School during that period (1970-71, 1971-72).

The opposite was also true. A pastor who had been at his church for two years (5) experienced a growth rate of 15 percent during that time (1970-71, 1971-72), while a 45 percent growth rate was experienced during the four year period by a second pastor with seven years at his church (2).

Table 6
Growth in the Mid-Week Service

Church	Average attendance				Amount of increase over four years	
	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	Numerical	Percent ^a
1	100	105	110	150	50	50
2	15	12	17	25	10	67
3 ^b						
4 ^b						
5 ^b						
6 ^b						
7 ^b						
8 ^b		140	177	312	172	123
9	58	48	50	60	2	3
10	58	36	30	125	67	116
11 ^b						

^aAll percentages are rounded to nearest whole number.

^bIncomplete information received.

Table 7
Growth in Church Membership

Church	Average membership				Amount of increase over four years	
	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	Numerical	Percent ^a
1	350	390	470	571	221	63
2	375	400	407	456	81	22
3 ^b						
4 ^c						
5	412	443	501	561	149	36
6 ^c						
7 ^b						
8	2,448	2,444	2,491	2,559	111	5
9	73	76	95	150	77	105
10	373	362	390	468	95	25
11	196	211	259	336	140	71

^aAll percentages are rounded to nearest whole number.

^bIncomplete information received.

^cNo recorded membership.

Church's time at present location. The time the church had been at its present location was not an evident factor in its growth.

A church that had been at its present location for only three years (10) has nevertheless experienced a growth rate of 14 percent in Sunday School and 124 percent in the morning worship service. By the same token a church that had been at its present location for seventeen years (11) experienced an increase of 38 percent in Sunday School, and 91 percent in the morning worship service.

Relationship of growing areas. The area in which the greatest amount of growth in terms of percent was experienced, as reported by churches returning the questionnaire, was the Sunday evening service with a growth rate of 61 percent. The morning worship service was next with a growth rate of 57 percent, followed by the Sunday School with 26 percent.

The average increase for the mid-week service was 72 percent. This figure represented less than a majority of churches surveyed, however, since only five of the eleven churches submitted averages in this area.

Seven of the eleven churches listed their membership averages for the four year period covered by the questionnaire as indicated in Table 7. Two churches submitted no figures and the remaining two churches have no recorded membership. All seven of the churches reporting showed gains. The average percentage gain was 47 percent. Five of the eight churches reporting in both areas had larger percentage gains in the morning worship service than in the Sunday School.

Conclusion

Not only were the churches surveyed found to be growing in Sunday School and the morning worship service, they were growing in all other areas with which the questionnaire dealt.

PHILOSOPHY

Local Church

This section deals with the underlying philosophy of the local church. A question was included in this area because it was felt that what the local church actually believed would be reflected, not only by programs to promote activity, but by the areas those programs were in.

Necessity of repentance. All of the churches sending in questionnaires responded with "yes" to the question: "Will unrepentant sinners perish?"

This answer reflected a feeling on the part of these churches that man is lacking something, and is in imminent danger unless something is done to correct his present situation.

Type of preaching. The type of preaching that characterized most of the responding churches was evangelistic preaching. Inspirational preaching was second, followed by informational preaching. Seven churches responding checked more than one of the three possible answers to this question. The combination of answers occurring most frequently was evangelistic-inspirational. One pastor reported that all three categories were characteristic of his preaching.

The churches that indicated that their preaching could be characterized as evangelistic, at least in part, did not have a higher

ratio of converts than those churches that did not so indicate.

Social concern. As indicated in Table 8, the two areas of social concern in which responding churches were most frequently involved were marriage counseling and premarital counseling. Eight of the eleven churches surveyed reported activity in this area. For five of the eight churches, this was their only involvement in the eight categories listed as possibilities.

Those churches which participated in the six remaining categories are listed as follows: suicide prevention (9, 10), alcoholism (5), civil rights (10), drug abuse (10), and juvenile delinquency (2, 10). No church was listed as participating in a coffee house ministry.

The church with the greatest number of programs (10) was active in five of the eight possible categories listed in the questionnaire. In addition to this, four other areas of endeavor were listed by this church: a ministry to the elderly, a school for the emotionally disturbed, an international students' organization, and a health-care program for indigent families.

Sunday School

Most important function. Responding churches indicated they felt instruction to be the most important function of the Sunday School. Evangelism was second and worship third. Five of the churches reported a combination of the three possible factors as the function of the Sunday School. The combinations most frequently listed were as follows: evangelism, instruction, and worship (1, 10); and evangelism and instruction (4, 11).

Six of the Sunday Schools chose a single function as being most

Table 8

Involvement in Areas of Social Concern

Church	Type of ministry							
	Marriage counseling	Pre-marital counseling	Suicide prevention	Alcoholism	Civil rights	Drug abuse	Juvenile delinquency	Coffee house
1	x	x						
2	x	x					x	
3	x	x						
4	x	x						
5	x	x		x				
6	x	x						
7 ^a								
8	x	x						
9	x	x	x					
10	x		x		x	x	x	
11 ^a								

^aNo programs listed in these areas.

important. Four of that number chose instruction (5, 6, 8, 9), while the remaining two chose evangelism (3, 7).

Sunday Schools which listed evangelism in a combination, or as their single most important function, were not growing more rapidly than those which did not list evangelism as a function of the Sunday School at all.

Predominant age-groups. Six of the churches surveyed reported that they had a fair balance in Sunday School of all age-groups. Three churches indicated certain age-groups were characteristic of their Sunday School.

One church (1) indicated a fair balance in all age-groups plus a predominance in the 20-35 and 36-50 age-groups. Because it is not clear which category is truly representative of its Sunday School, this church was not included in observations on Table 9.

The breakdown of those predominant groups was as follows: the 1-12 year-old group was a predominant factor in two churches (2, 6); the 13-19 year-old group was a predominant factor in two churches (2, 11); the 20-35 year-olds were a predominant group in two churches (2, 6); the 36-50 year-olds were a predominant factor in two churches (2, 11); and the 51-65 year-old group was a predominant factor in one church (6).

The age-groups mentioned most frequently as being a predominant factor were all in the 1-50 year-old range. Only one of the two groups composing the 51-66 and up range was mentioned by one church as a predominating group.

Summary

The opinion of some that Sunday School is just for children and

Table 9

Age-Groups Predominant in Sunday School

Church	1-12 years	13-19 years	20-35 years	36-50 years	51-65 years	66-up years	Fair balance in all groups
1			x	x			x
2	x	x	x	x			
3							x
4							x
5							x
6	x		x		x		
7 ^a							
8							x
9							x
10							x
11		x		x			

^aIncomplete information received.

therefore will be largely made up of younger age-groups is not born out by the statistics gathered from reporting churches.

Rather, the young adult through early middle-age groups have been listed as being predominant more often than the two youngest groups.

Conclusions

These churches either represent a fair balance of all age-groups, or tend to be characterized by those age-groups under fifty.

The majority of these churches do not list evangelism as the main purpose of either the Sunday School or the church, yet they are experiencing growth in each of those areas.

The programs and emphases of the Sunday Schools of these churches attract those who are in the prime productive years of their lives.

PROGRAM

This section deals more directly with what these local churches are doing about what they said they believed.

Outreach

This section deals with the efforts the local church is making, both inside, and outside, of its four walls to reach new people with the message of salvation.

Public opportunity. All of the churches returning questionnaires stated that they provided an opportunity for those who desired to do so to receive Christ publicly. This opportunity was given weekly by eight of the churches (1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12), one church provided the

opportunity twice a month (3), one regularly (11), and one occasionally (5).

The four churches listing the greatest number of conversions for 1972 (1, 7, 8, 11) were all churches that provided a weekly opportunity in their services for people to respond to the gospel invitation. There is, however, no way to determine on the basis of data secured by the questionnaires if there is a definite cause-effect relationship at this point.

Two of the three churches that gave a public invitation on other than a weekly basis recorded twenty-five (3) and forty to sixty (10) conversions for 1972. The third church in this group did not give a record of conversions for the complete year.

Evangelistic campaigns. Only three of the churches surveyed conducted evangelistic campaigns on a yearly basis (5, 6, 11). None of the churches reported more than one such meeting per year. Seven churches indicated that they have no such meetings at all.

Two of the three churches which have an evangelistic campaign on a yearly basis were in the upper 50 percent of conversions reported. The third church had no record of its conversions for 1972.

Participation in programs. Church participation in the ten different areas of outreach is recorded in Table 10. There were three areas in which 50 percent or more of the responding churches were participating.

The area most frequently listed was that of home Bible studies. All of the eleven churches that responded were active in this area. The next most frequent area of activity was that of camping programs.

Ten churches participate in this area. Seven churches reported that they had a program of visitation evangelism (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11). Finally, five churches said they had a day care center. Totals in the other areas listed in the chart are as follows: youth center, five churches; bus ministry, four churches; jail ministry, three churches; counseling center, three churches; radio, two churches; and television, one church.

The number of programs in which the average church participated was five, according to the data. Five churches of the eleven responding were in this group. Of this number three were among churches reporting the highest number of conversions for 1972. Those churches which had fewer than the average number of outreach activities tended to be in the lower 50 percent of conversions reported. An exception to this is church number 11, which recorded 129 conversions, yet participated in only three programs of outreach.

Only three of the five churches participating in the average number of outreach programs sent in the figures for Sunday School attendance over the four year period covered by the questionnaire. These three Sunday Schools recorded a percentage increase of from 11 percent to 17 percent, or an average increase of 15 percent. All of these schools were in the lower 50 percent of percentage increase in Sunday School.

Four of the five churches participating in the average number of outreach programs sent in the average for the morning worship service for the four year period. Three of these four churches were among the five churches which recorded the highest percentage increase for the four year period.

Table 10
Involvement in Programs of Outreach

Church	Type of program									
	Home Bible studies	Camping program	Visitation evangelism	Day care center	Youth center	Bus ministry	Jail ministry	Counseling center	Radio program	TV program
1	x	x	x		x		x			
2	x	x								
3	x	x	x			x				
4	x	x	x	x	x		x			
5	x	x	x	x						
6	x			x		x				
7	x	x		(a)	x	(a)	(a)	x	x	(a)
8	x	x	x		x	x			x	x
9	x	x		x				x		
10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
11	x	x	x							

^aIndicates this church plans to begin a program in this area soon.

Lay involvement. Of the responding churches, nine listed the participation of lay persons in their programs of outreach to be a very important factor. The two remaining churches (8, 3) listed this participation as important.

Recorded conversions. Table 11 gives the number of conversions recorded by each church in 1972. The four highest figures reported were over the one-hundred mark with one of those four being estimated as over one-thousand. Three of the remaining churches reported between fifty to one-hundred conversions, with the remaining two churches reporting twenty-five each. Two churches kept no records of their conversions.

Responsive age-groups. Table 12 shows which age-groups have been most responsive to the outreach efforts of the churches surveyed.

Five churches indicated they had response from a fair balance of all age-groups mentioned.

Of the age-groups listed as being particularly responsive, the 20-35 year-olds and the 36-50 year-olds were the groups most frequently listed. Three churches (1, 2, 10) listed the 20-35 age-group as being one of the most responsive, while one church (11) listed only this group as its most responsive. Four churches (1, 2, 5, 10) indicated the 36-50 age-group as one of their most responsive groups. Three churches (1, 2, 10) listed both of these age-groups as being particularly responsive to their programs.

Three churches (1, 5, 10) listed the 13-19 year-old group as one of the most responsive to its programs, while one church (10) listed the 66 and up group. No churches reported the 51-65 year age-group as being particularly responsive to their programs.

Table 11
Record of Conversions Reported for 1972

Church	Conversions
1	120
2	25
3	50
4	47
5	85
6 ^a	
7	1,040
8	392
9	25
10	40-60
11	129

^aThis church submitted no report.

Table 12

Age-Groups Most Responsive to Church Programs

Church	1-12 years	13-19 years	20-35 years	36-50 years	51-65 years	66-up years	Fair balance in all groups
1		x	x	x			
2			x	x			
3							x
4							x
5		x		x			
6							x
7 ^a							
8							x
9							x
10		x	x	x		x	
11			x				

^aIncomplete information received.

Thus out of twelve indications given of responding age-groups, eight fell into the 20-50 year age-bracket.

Of the three churches listing both the 20-35 and the 36-50 age-groups as responding well to their programs, one (2) recorded the top percentage gain in Sunday School. The other two churches were in the lower half of reported Sunday School percentage gains. Two other churches listed one of the two groups. Of these two, one was in the upper half of reported Sunday School gains while the other church was in the lower half.

Of the three churches reporting both the 20-35 and the 36-50 age-groups as responding to their programs two (1, 10) were in the upper 50 percent of reported morning worship service gains. The other church was in the lower 50 percent.

Of the two churches that recorded one of the two groups as responding, one (11) was in the upper 50 percent of reported percentage gains in both Sunday School and morning worship, while the other was in the lower 50 percent in both of those categories.

Of the five churches that indicated a response from a fair balance of all age-groups, one (4) was in the upper 50 percent of reported Sunday School and worship service gains. Of the remaining four churches, one (6) was in the upper 50 percent of reported Sunday School gains, two (6, 8) were in the lower 50 percent of worship service gains, and two (3, 4) did not submit statistics for growth in either the Sunday School or the morning worship service.

Training

Classes which are conducted for lay training in these churches

are indicated in Table 13, along with how often those classes are held.

The area most frequently listed for lay training was that of teaching methods. All of the eleven churches stated that they provided such training, four on a weekly basis, one on a monthly basis, two quarterly, and one yearly.

Bible courses and evangelism were the next most frequently listed areas. Nine churches stated they provided training in each of these areas.

All of the four churches (1, 7, 8, 11) that reported the largest number of conversions for 1972 provided training in evangelism for their lay people.

Seven churches reported having a class in church membership, while only one reported a class in stewardship.

Table 13
Opportunities for Lay Training

Offered	Classes				
	Evangelism	Teaching methods	Bible courses	Church membership	Stewardship
Weekly	6, 2	6, 8, 10, 2	9, 10, 2	10, 2	
Monthly		9		8	
Quarterly	4, 5, 8	4, 5	5	5	
Yearly	1	1		9	
Other	3, 11, 7	3, 11, 7	8, 11, 7 3, 4	3, 11	7

Publicity

Church. Four of the responding churches (1, 6, 9, 10) indicated they felt publicity was very important for them. Of this number three (1, 9, 10) were in the upper 50 percent of reported morning worship service growth.

Four reported they felt publicity to be important (2, 3, 5, 8). None of these churches was in the upper half of morning worship service growth.

Three churches (4, 7, 11) felt publicity to be unimportant. Of this group two (7, 11) were in the upper 50 percent of worship service growth. The remaining church failed to send averages for its morning worship service during the four year period covered by the questionnaire.

Sunday School. Two churches (1, 8) indicated they had two Sunday School promotional campaigns a year. Neither of these churches was in the upper 50 percent of reported Sunday School growth.

All three of the churches which reported that they had one promotional campaign per year in Sunday School (2, 6, 9) were in the upper 50 percent of reported growth.

Five churches (4, 5, 7, 10, 11) indicated they had no promotional campaigns in Sunday School. Of this number only one (11) was in the upper 50 percent of reported Sunday School growth. Two of these churches however (4, 7) did not submit statistics for their growth in Sunday School. Their percentage of growth was therefore unknown.

One church (3) did not indicate whether or not a promotional campaign was conducted.

Facilities

Table 14 indicates how close the surveyed churches are to capacity in the morning worship service. Taking the figure of 75 percent of capacity presently occupied as a guideline, six of the churches are nearing capacity. Of this number four (3, 5, 7, 11) stated they had room at their present location for future expansion. Two (1, 2) indicated they did not.

Table 14

Comparison of Worship Service Attendance and Auditorium Capacity

Church	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Average attendance	750	400	450	700 ^a	316	350	293	526	236 ^a	327	420
Maximum capacity	885	500	550	550	350	700	350	805	220	500	550

^aTwo morning worship services.

Summary

Outreach. One of the interesting facts that came to light as a result of this study was that only three of the eleven churches surveyed held evangelistic crusades. While some would be alarmed at this statistic, it is offset by the fact that most of these churches are engaged in a more systematic and regular evangelistic program. This is strongly suggested by the fact that all eleven churches have home Bible studies, seven have a program of visitation evangelism and nine provide a program of training in evangelism for their lay people. Thus the average church member is afforded an opportunity to participate in an

evangelistic outreach that is more integrated into his regular schedule of life.

The opportunity that these churches provide for lay training in evangelism, as mentioned above, as well as in other areas is an indication that these are churches which realize that there is tremendous spiritual potential in the "average" Christian. A professionally trained and paid ministry is not the only way to advance Christ's Kingdom.

Another rather suprising discovery was the fact of the predominance of the 20-35 and 36-50 year age-groups. In both the Sunday School and those age-groups responding to the programs of the local churches, these two groups figured most prominently.

Publicity. The fact that growing churches were to be found among those who felt publicity was unimportant as well as those who felt it to be important seems to indicate there is more than one way to "publicize" a church. Adequate programs and appropriate emphases seem to be as important, if not more so, than advertising.

This same observation may be made about the Sunday School. Growing Sunday Schools were to be found among those which had no yearly promotional campaign as well as among those which did.

PEOPLE

The means by which the local church reaches others with the Gospel are important. But this section deals with members of the church staff and the membership of the local church--the people whose task it is to make those programs work. They compose the indispensable backbone of any successful church.

Staff

Table 15 records the personnel included on the staff of each of the churches surveyed.

Assistant pastor and church secretary. The positions on the church staff most frequently occupied by a full-time person (next to the pastor) were those of assistant pastor and church secretary. Ten of the eleven churches responding indicated that they had one of these positions occupied by a full-time person. Six of those ten churches had at least one full-time employee in both positions. Five churches reported that they had a church secretary on a part-time basis, while only one church reported an assistant pastor on a part-time schedule. The reason for the latter fact is that some of those who actually were serving as assistant pastors were placed under another category, such as minister of youth, minister of music, or director of christian education.

Minister of youth. The third position most frequently occupied by a full-time person was that of minister of youth. Six of the eleven churches surveyed listed a full-time minister of youth. Two churches listed a part-time employee in this area, while three churches reported no full or part-time youth minister.

Minister of music. Two churches listed a full-time minister of music, while seven listed a part-time employee in this area.

Others. Two churches reported a full-time director of christian education and three a part-time director. Three churches listed a part-time Sunday School superintendent and one church listed a full-time

minister of visitation.

Other positions indicated on the questionnaires are listed as follows, with the identifying number of the church having the position: a church manager and custodian, both full-time, and a bookkeeper, part-time (5); a bus minister, part-time (9); a counselor and shepherd minister, both part-time (10).

The average number of persons on church staffs filling positions indicated in Table 15, was six. Five churches (3, 7, 8, 10, 11) had an average, or above average, number of persons on the staff. One of the five churches (11) which had six or more staff members was in the upper 50 percent of reporting churches in percentage of Sunday School increase. Three of those five churches were in the upper 50 percent of churches reporting percentage increases in the morning worship service, and all five were in the upper 50 percent of conversions reported for 1972. Of these five churches two (3, 8) were in the upper 50 percent of average Sunday School and morning worship service attendance. Two of the remaining churches (10, 11) were in the lower 50 percent of reported Sunday School and worship service attendance. The fifth church (7) was in the lower half of the morning worship service attendance, and did not submit statistics for Sunday School attendance.

Three of the four churches with the most outreach programs (Table 9) were among those having the highest number of personnel on their staffs.

Pastor and staff. All of the churches reported that the pastor and his staff met at least weekly. Two of the churches (3, 5) reported that the pastor met daily with the staff.

Table 15

Members of Church Staff

Church	Position						
	Church secretary		Assistant pastor		Minister of youth	Minister of music	Director of christian ed.
	Part Full		Part Full		Part Full	Part Full	Part Full
1	1	1			1	1	1
2	2		1				
3		1			3	1	1
4		1	1		1	1	
5		1	1			1	
6		1	1			1	1
7	3		2		1	1	1
8		2	2		1	1	1
9	1				1	1	
10		7	2	3	1		1
11	1	1		2	1	1	1

Five of the churches surveyed indicated that they had an annual staff-planning retreat (1, 3, 7, 8, 9). Five answered they did not (2, 4, 5, 6, 11). One church (10) stated that quarterly staff-planning meetings were held.

Of the five churches which do have an annual staff-planning retreat, three were in the upper 50 percent of reported percentage increase in the morning worship service. One of the five churches (11) that did not have such a meeting was in the upper half of reported morning worship increase.

A comparison in the Sunday School is not possible because of a lack of information due to the fact that some churches did not send in statistics in the area of the Sunday School.

Teacher-pupil ratio. The ratio of teachers to pupils in the Sunday School is given in Table 16.

Table 16

Comparison of Sunday School Attendance
and Sunday School Staff^a

Church	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9	10	11
Sunday School attendance	540	290	425	500	264	246	743	172	265	373
Sunday School staff ^b	60	45	50	90	26	30	102	22	42	35
Ratio	9/1	6½/1	8½/1	5½/1	10/1	8/1	7¼/1	8/1	6/1	10½/1

^aChurch 7 submitted no report.

^bIncludes assistants.

This ratio ranged from five and one-half to one to ten and one-half to one. The average ratio was eight to one.

Of the five Sunday Schools whose ratios were higher than the average, two were listed in the upper 50 percent of percentage growth in Sunday School. Two of the five Sunday Schools whose ratios were average or below were in the upper 50 percent.

Membership

Record. Of the churches surveyed, nine reported that they kept a record of the offices their members had held in the church, their abilities, interests, etc. Two churches (8, 9) reported that they kept no such record.

Tithe. Seven of the eleven churches responded with a definite figure indicating the percent of members who tithed. Six (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11) of those seven indicated that 26-50 percent of their members were tithers. One church (9) stated its percentage to be 51-75. Two churches submitted no figures (7, 10), one pastor stated that he did not know (3), and one church (4) kept no records because of the fact that no membership roll is kept. Although one other church (6) kept no membership roll, the pastor indicated that 26-50 percent of those who might be considered "members" were tithers. For this reason the church was included in that group.

Summary

Staff. The fact that the churches in the study have personnel, in addition to the pastor, in key positions on their staffs is no doubt a factor in their growth.

Churches that had larger staffs generally registered greater percentage growth in the morning worship service, but not the Sunday School. These churches all reported a larger number of converts for 1972 than did those churches which had fewer than the average number of persons on their staffs.

The size of the Sunday School and worship service did not seem to be the determining factor as to the size of the church staff. Two of the five churches with the largest staffs were among the larger churches surveyed, while the remaining three churches were in the smaller category.

Pastor and staff. The fact that all reporting churches stated that the pastor and staff met at least weekly suggests that there was an opportunity provided for the channels of communication to be kept open, thereby helping to maintain a good relationship between pastor and staff. This also provides a good opportunity for intelligent goal-setting and the formulation of plans to reach those goals.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The church is faced with the necessity of demonstrating its relevance to the actual needs of men. Failure to do this results in a decline at either the denominational and local level, or both.

SUMMARY

To discover underlying factors that explain growth at the local level in Bible-believing churches a questionnaire was drawn up. This document dealt with the growth pattern over the past four years in the areas of Sunday School, morning worship service, Sunday evening service, mid-week service, and membership. Questions were formulated that dealt with the philosophy, programs, and people of the local church.

Three criteria were generally followed in the selection of local churches that would be selected for the study: (1) the church must be evangelical in emphasis, (2) a minimum of two hundred must attend Sunday School and/or morning worship, and (3) the growth pattern of the Sunday School and/or morning worship must go back for a period of two to three years.

A total of fifteen churches that met the three requirements were selected to participate in the study. After securing permission from the pastor, or other authorized person, for the church to be included in the study, a questionnaire and a letter of introduction and explanation

were mailed to each church. Of the fifteen churches, twelve sent the questionnaires back in time to be included in the study. This was a return of 80 percent. One of the returned questionnaires was subsequently excluded because of failure to meet the growth pattern requirement. Thus a total of eleven out of fifteen questionnaires originally sent out, or 73 percent, were used in the study.

The average length of time the churches surveyed had been at their present locations was fifteen years. Four churches were under this figure, six were above it and one failed to report. The average length of the present pastor's stay was six years. Six pastors were under this figure, while five were above it. Neither the length of time the church had been at its present location, nor the length of the present pastor's stay were factors in the growth of the local church.

During the four year period covered by the questionnaire as seen in Table 17, the average Sunday School experienced a numerical gain of fifty-three, or 26 percent. At the close of this four year period in 1972 the average attendance was 362. The size of the average morning worship service at the close of the four year period was 402. This represented a numerical gain of 132, or 57 percent during that time.

Average growth in the Sunday evening service during the four year period was 124, or 61 percent. Average attendance in this service in 1972 was 295. The average membership of churches surveyed at the end of the four year period in 1972 was 423. This represented a gain during that time of 125, or 54 percent.¹ Of the eleven churches studied,

¹One church's membership was excluded from figures used to determine the average because its membership was larger (2,559) than the other six reporting churches combined.

five sent in statistics for the mid-week service. The average gain was 60, or 72 percent, with the average attendance in 1972 being 134.

Table 17
Averages and Increases

Area	Average for 1971-1972	Amount of increase	
		numerical	percent
Sunday School	362	53	26
Morning worship	402	132	57
Sunday evening	295	124	61
Mid-week service	134	60	72
Membership	423	125	54

The average church surveyed in this study believed those who do not repent will perish. Its preaching was evangelistic-inspirational and its involvement in the area of social concern was limited to the areas of pre-marital and marriage counseling. The average Sunday School studied considered its most important function to be instruction, and was characterized by a fair balance in all age-groups.

No yearly evangelistic campaign was held in the average church of this survey. A weekly opportunity was provided, however, for those desiring to make a public commitment to Christ to do so. The programs most frequently found in churches responding to the questionnaire were as follows; home Bible studies, camping program, visitation evangelism, youth center, day care center, bus ministry, counseling center, jail ministry, radio program and television program.

The average church considered lay participation in its programs to be very important. Opportunity for lay training was provided in the areas of teaching methods, evangelism and Bible courses, and church membership. These classes were conducted at various times. Publicity was listed as important to very important by the average church which is also nearing capacity in its morning worship program.

Six persons (in addition to the pastor) were on the staff of the average church. These six included: at least one church secretary, full-time; a full-time minister of youth; and a part-time minister of music. The pastor and the staff met weekly in this church. A ratio of eight pupils to one teacher (assistants included) was found in the Sunday School of the church. A record of its members' abilities, church positions held, etc., was kept by this church, and 26-50 percent of its members were tithers.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions arising from the study are as follows:

1. When specific age-groups were listed as being characteristic of a Sunday School they were usually the 20-35 and 36-50 year-old groups.
2. A program of evangelism more frequent than the yearly evangelistic campaign was carried on by the churches surveyed.
3. These churches were characterized by more activity in the field of evangelistic outreach than in the field of social endeavor.
4. The programs in which most churches participated, in the field of outreach, were home Bible studies, camping, and visitation evangelism.
5. The age-groups most frequently reported as responding to

programs of outreach were the 20-35 and 36-50 year-old groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the nature of this investigation has been that of a survey, no particular in-depth study was attempted. Areas which appear to hold promise for such a study are as follows:

1. A study of the type of teaching, content of teaching, materials used, class structure and general emphases of Sunday Schools characterized by a fair balance of representative age-groups, as compared with Sunday Schools which have an imbalance in those age-groups.
2. A more detailed investigation as to what programs have been most responsible for the growth of the church and Sunday School.
3. An investigation to determine if any particular program seems to find greater response from a specific age-group (youth center for teen-agers, home Bible study for young marrieds, radio and/or television programs for the elderly, etc.).
4. A study to determine what the general response has been on the part of the laity to training classes and what influence, if any, these classes have had on the programs of the church.

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- _____. "What Happens When Sunday School Is Abolished?" Christian Life, January, 1969, pp. 56-57.
- _____. "What Makes Large Sunday Schools Larger?" Christian Life, December, 1972, p. 70.
- _____. "What Makes Thomas Road Grow?" Christian Life, October, 1972, pp. 34-35, 58, 60-62.
- _____. "Why Sunday Schools Decline," Christian Life, January, 1972, p. 17.
- _____. "100 Largest Sunday Schools," Christian Life, September, 1971, pp. 21, 28-33.
- _____. "100 Largest U.S. Sunday Schools," Christian Life, October, 1972, pp. 16-23, 94-96.
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- White, Earl E. "Happy Growing Pains," Christian Life, November, 1971, pp. 56-57.
- Wollen, Al. "Where Is Your Church Going?" Moody Monthly, October, 1970, pp. 28-29, 44.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A. Addresses of Churches

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. First Assembly of God
1315 S.E. 20th
Portland, Oregon 97214

Phone: 234-7329 | 2. First Baptist Church of St. Johns
7535 N. Chicago
Portland, Oregon 97203

Phone: 286-1333 |
| 3. Montavilla Baptist Church
9204 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.
Portland, Oregon 97216

Phone: 255-0141 | 4. Cedar Mills Bible Church
12208 N.W. Cornell Road
Portland, Oregon 97229

Phone: 644-3157 |
| 5. Beaverton Christian Church
13600 S.W. Allen Blvd.
Beaverton, Oregon 97005

Phone: 646-2151 | 6. Holladay Park Church of God
2120 N.E. Tillamook
Portland, Oregon 97212

Phone: 284-0201 |
| 7. East Hill Foursquare Church
1525 N.W. Division
Portland, Oregon 97030

Phone: 666-5511 | 8. Portland Foursquare Church
1302 S.E. Ankeny
Portland, Oregon 97214

Phone: 235-3133 |
| 9. Clackamas Park Friends Church
8120 S.E. Thiessen Road
Portland, Oregon 97222

Phone: 655-7177 | 10. Reedwood Friends Church
2901 S.E. Steele
Portland, Oregon 97202

Phone: 234-5017 |
| 11. Beaverton Nazarene Church
6275 S.W. Hall Blvd.
Beaverton, Oregon 97005

Phone: 643-6616 | |

APPENDIX B. Letter of Introduction

Dear Pastor :

Some students of church growth are questioning the validity of the total church program, labeling it irrelevant to the actual needs of contemporary man. Yet in spite of such charges there are churches that are reaching new people with the Gospel and involving them in programs that promote genuine spiritual growth and development.

An indication of the effectiveness of any evangelical church program should be growth. As a student at Western Evangelical Seminary I am doing a research project to discover some of the factors underlying growth at the local level. This study involves a number of churches in the greater Portland area. Your church has been selected as one of this group.

To aid in the project the enclosed questionnaire has been prepared. Your cooperation will be appreciated and will make a contribution to the value and success of this study. An attempt has been made to make the questions clear and concise, thus keeping the time required to fill out the questionnaire at a minimum.

Should you be interested in a summary of this study for possible use in your local church please check the blank on the first page of the questionnaire. Upon completion of the study you will be mailed (probably sometime this spring) a copy of the summary.

If possible I would appreciate the return of the questionnaire within two weeks. A self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed for this purpose.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours in Christian service,

Jim Adamson

APPENDIX C. Questionnaire

RESEARCH STUDY IN CHURCH GROWTH

Western Evangelical Seminary

Church Name: _____ Denomination: _____

Church Address: _____

How long at present location? _____

Pastor's Name: _____

Length of present pastorate: _____

Index of church growth: averages over the past four years:

	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72
Sunday School attendance	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sunday Morning Worship	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sunday Evening Service	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mid-Week Service	_____	_____	_____	_____
Average recorded membership	_____	_____	_____	_____

Return questionnaire to: Jim Adamson, Western Evangelical Seminary,
4200 SE Jennings Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97222. Home Phone: 654-3748.

Check here ☐ if you desire a summary of this study.

SECTION I: PHILOSOPHY

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Local Church:

1. What is the prevailing philosophy of your local church?
Will unrepentant sinners perish? Yes () No ()

2. What kind of preaching most characterizes your church?

☐ evangelistic
☐ inspirational
☐ informational

3. Check the specific area(s) of social concern in which your church is involved:

<input type="checkbox"/> coffee house <input type="checkbox"/> drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> alcoholism <input type="checkbox"/> civil rights <input type="checkbox"/> marriage counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> pre-marital counseling <input type="checkbox"/> suicide prevention <input type="checkbox"/> juvenile delinquency <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ _____ _____
--	---

Sunday School:

1. What do you consider to be the most important function of the Sunday School?

☐ evangelism
☐ instruction
☐ worship

2. Which age group(s) tend to predominate numerically in your Sunday School?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1-12 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/> 13-19 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/> 20-35 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/> 36-50 yrs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-65 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/> 66 and above <input type="checkbox"/> a fair balance in all groups
---	---

SECTION II: PROGRAM

Outreach:

1. How often do you give people an opportunity to publicly receive Christ in your services?

☐ weekly
☐ annually

☐ monthly
☐ occasionally

2. How many evangelistic campaigns does your church regularly have per year?

☐ none
☐ two

☐ one
☐ more than two

3. Check any of the following programs that your church is involved in:

<input type="checkbox"/> home Bible studies <input type="checkbox"/> youth center <input type="checkbox"/> counseling center <input type="checkbox"/> jail ministry <input type="checkbox"/> visitation evangelism <input type="checkbox"/> camping program	<input type="checkbox"/> day care center <input type="checkbox"/> radio program <input type="checkbox"/> television program <input type="checkbox"/> bus ministry <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ _____ _____
--	--

4. How would you evaluate the part your laymen play in these programs?

☐ not important ☐ important ☐ very important

5. How many conversions were recorded through your church program last year?

6. Which age group(s) have been most responsive to your program?

☐ 1-12 yrs. ☐ 51-65 yrs.
☐ 13-19 yrs. ☐ 66 and above
☐ 20-35 yrs. ☐ a fair balance in
☐ 36-50 yrs. ☐ all groups

Training:

1. Check the areas in which you have classes for lay training:

☐ evangelism ☐ church membership
☐ teaching methods ☐ stewardship
☐ Bible courses other _____

2. How often are these classes conducted?

☐ weekly ☐ yearly
☐ monthly other _____
☐ quarterly _____

Publicity:

1. How important do you feel publicity to be for your church?

☐ not important ☐ important ☐ very important

2. How often do you have specific promotional campaigns in your Sunday School?

☐ one per year ☐ two per year other _____

Facilities:

1. What is the maximum capacity of your auditorium?

2. Do you feel you have enough room at your present location for future expansion?

Yes () No ()

SECTION III: PEOPLE

Staff:

1. Check the positions included on your church staff:

	part-time	full-time
<input type="checkbox"/> assistant pastor(s) How many? _____	()	()
<input type="checkbox"/> church secretary	()	()
<input type="checkbox"/> director of christian education	()	()

☐ minister of music
☐ minister of youth
☐ minister of visitation
☐ sunday school superintendent
 other _____

() ()
 () ()
 () ()
 () ()
 () ()

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2. How often do the pastor and the staff meet?

☐ weekly ☐ monthly other _____

3. Do you have an annual staff-planning retreat? Yes () No ()

4. How many Sunday School teachers do you have including assistants?

Membership:

1. Do you keep a record of your members' abilities, church positions held, etc.? Yes () No ()

2. Approximately what percentage of your members faithfully tithe?

☐ 0-25%
☐ 26-50%

☐ 51-75%
☐ 76-100%