

Andrews University  
The Institute of Church Ministry

A STUDY OF FACTORS RELATING TO CHURCH GROWTH  
IN THE OREGON CONFERENCE OF  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A Research Study  
commissioned by  
the Oregon Conference  
of  
Seventh-day Adventists

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Administrators of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States have become aware of the need of understanding church growth. In 1976, the Annual Council of the Adventist church called for an evaluation of the church's progress and priorities with respect to the goal "to proclaim the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14."

This study addresses itself to church growth within the Oregon Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The research has been conducted under the direction of the Institute of Church Ministry of the Andrews University Theological Seminary.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study is directed to a fundamental problem among local Adventist churches. Why are some churches growing rapidly while others are growing slowly, not at all, or even declining? What factors make the difference between church growth or decline?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study has been to gather, organize and interpret data relating to church growth in the Oregon Conference. The research identifies relationships and trends among pastors and

lay members that correlate with church growth. The conclusions reached through this study will serve as a resource for developing a meaningful and valid reporting system to be used by the administration as a base in its decision-making responsibilities. The conclusions will also be valuable in developing a seminar curriculum of benefit to both pastors and administrators in dealing with the problems of church nurture and growth.

#### Significance of the Study

Research in the area of church growth is timely because:

1. Some churches in the conference have been showing a pattern of decline or a growth rate less than would be normally expected.
2. The findings will provide resource information for:
  - a. developing comprehensive evangelistic strategies.
  - b. developing tools for evaluating church growth.
  - c. designing programs for the local congregation.
  - d. designing a pastoral reporting system that will serve to forecast church growth.
  - e. providing a set of indicators for actual and kingdom growth.

#### Definition of Terms

Since a number of terms used in this study may be unfamiliar to the reader, the following definitions are provided:

Actual growth rate: membership at the close of the period under study minus membership at the beginning of the period divided

by the beginning membership and expressed as a percentage.

Kingdom growth rate: A percentage derived by subtracting membership losses through apostasy and missing from membership gains through baptism and profession of faith and dividing this number by the church membership at the beginning of the period under consideration. For example, the church growth percentage for church A in 1981 is computed as follows:

January 1, 1981 membership	=	100
Baptisms + profession of faith	=	15
Apostasies + missing	=	10

Kingdom growth = +5%

Indicators: items or a group of items which serve to forecast growth.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by the following factors:

1. The present study employs correlational research. It is recognized that correlation does not necessarily prove causation. If, however, certain factors are found to be highly related to church growth, these factors may then be employed in minimal-growth churches to determine if the growth rate can be increased. Thus correlational research suggests directions for experimental-type research.
2. The findings are limited by the element of human error and misperception which exists in filling out the survey forms. However, it is believed that when the data are collected from a representative area that systematic error will be negated and the

overall findings will be sufficiently accurate to reveal valuable information.

3. A third limitation concerns the extent to which sample members or pastors have cooperated in responding to survey and interview items. Every effort has been made to win the type of cooperation which will ensure valid results.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

#### Type of Research

This research consists of two types of designs:

1. A descriptive research in which profiles of the typical pastor and the typical member in the Oregon Conference are developed. These profiles are based upon answers given to the questions in their respective surveys.

2. A correlational research in which various items on the questionnaires have been correlated with the growth rates of Oregon churches.

In the correlational phase of the study the rate of church growth in churches in the Oregon Conference for the two-year period, 1980-1981, constitutes the dependent variable. These rates are sub-divided into actual and kingdom growth as these terms are defined in the preceding chapter.

#### Population and Sample

The populations for this study include all Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Oregon Conference and all senior pastors of these churches. There were 123 such churches at the time the surveying was done. The pastors were asked to fill out a survey for each church they pastored. Thus a complete response would have been 123



pastor surveys, and the sample for that phase of the study was equal to the population.

For the member survey the sample consisted of all baptized members present at a given Sabbath worship service in each of the 123 churches. These members were asked to complete their questionnaires during the personal ministries period.

### Research Instruments

Two instruments were employed in the research. The "Church Growth Survey: The Adventist Pastor" collects fifty-five items of information. The "Oregon Church Growth Survey" (for the lay member) collects fifty items of information. Both surveys were developed by the Institute of Church Ministry. Samples of the instruments are given in the appendix.

### Procedures for Collecting Data

In February, 1982, data collection began in the following manner:

Distribution of survey material. The Institute of Church Ministry shipped to the Oregon Conference office:

1. An Adventist Pastor Survey for each church in the conference. Where a pastor served more than one church, he was asked to complete a separate survey for each church since the survey called for perceptions, attitudes, and practices concerning a particular church. All surveys were pre-coded with a number assigned to each church in the conference.

2. An estimated number of Adventist Member Surveys for each

of the 123 churches. Each survey had been pre-coded with the number assigned to that particular church.

3. A letter and an instruction sheet for each pastor providing the information needed for him to conduct the survey in his church. This included suggestions on how to make the survey a deeply spiritual part of the worship service.

The Oregon Conference distributed the materials described above to each pastor according to the pre-labeled, pre-coded plan.

Administering the survey. On the appointed Sabbath the pastor rearranged the worship schedule to allow about twenty-five minutes for the personal ministries period. This was done by omitting some features of the Sabbath school or by shortening the worship service. The pastor spoke briefly about the "great commission" and the importance of a growing church. He presented the survey as a means of taking spiritual inventory of the attitudes and practices of the church which might help or hinder the finishing of God's work. He explained that the results of the research will help all churches to focus their efforts on things of first importance. Then he allowed time for each baptized member present to complete the survey.

Retrieving survey material. The pastor returned to the conference office the surveys completed by himself and his members. The Oregon Conference shipped this material to the Institute of Church Ministry. Staff at the conference office were assigned to contact the pastors of any churches that allowed a time lag in returning survey materials.

### Procedures for Analyzing Data

As the packets of material were returned from the conference, the data were recorded and analyzed at the Andrews University Computing Center along the following lines:

Church file: A computer file was set up to contain all the information received from church members.

1. First a membership file was established. It contains for each church member the code number of the church to which he belongs, followed by his numerical response to each item on the "Oregon Church Growth Survey."

2. Next a church file was created by calculating the mean response of all members of a sample church on each survey item. Each record on this file contains the code number for the church followed by the mean response of all members sampled on each item.

3. To each church file was attached statistics for the two-year period, 1980-1981. These were the actual and kingdom growth rates, the beginning membership size, the number of baptisms, and the number of apostasies.

Pastor file. A separate computer file was set up to contain all the information received from the pastors. This file consisted of the code number for each sample church followed by the numerical responses of the pastor to each item on the "Church Growth Adventist Pastor Survey." Also entered in this file was the actual growth (or loss) rate, the kingdom growth (or loss) rate, the number of baptisms, and the number of apostasies for the church during the two-year period.

Statistical analysis. The data files have been analyzed by using several statistical programs:

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Stepwise Multiple Regression program is the principle program for discovering church-growth indicators. It has been run separately for the pastor variables and the member variables. Each of those two runs has been performed two times. The two sets of independent variables have each been regressed on actual growth rate and kingdom growth rate. So there are four different looks at the data through the multiple regression program.

In addition to the SPSS program, other appropriate analyses have been performed. A tally program has revealed the percent responding to each choice on each item of the pastor survey. The mean response of each item has also been calculated. A special modification of the tally program has produced a descriptive profile of the membership of each church in the conference and of the combined membership of the conference.

The relevant findings have been organized and are presented as follows:

Chapter 3--findings from the Adventist Pastor Survey

Chapter 4--findings from the Adventist Member Survey

Chapter 5-- summary and conclusions

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS FROM THE ADVENTIST PASTOR SURVEY

This chapter describes the findings from the survey of pastors in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The "Church Growth Survey: the Adventist Pastor" was sent in February of 1982 to the pastors of each of the 123 churches in the conference. By May, 107 pastors had returned usable surveys. This constitutes a highly respectable return rate of 87 percent and ensures that the results are typical of the viewpoints, attitudes, and behaviors of pastors in the Oregon Conference.

First the descriptive profile will be presented and briefly discussed. Then the correlations of the survey items with the two growth indices will be explained.

#### A View of Pastoral and Church Behavior

Each survey gathered fifty-five items of information. The profile reveals the percentage of the 107 pastors choosing each of the multiple possible responses or (in cases of open-ended questions) the average numerical response.

A quick inspection of the profile reveals that most of the questions that call for rating on a continuum are quite balanced. Most pastors have chosen a middle position with the percentages trailing off at the ends. It is interesting to notice slight shifts.

PROFILE OF THE ADVENTIST PASTOR  
IN THE OREGON CONFERENCE  
Number of Surveys = 107

1. Rate your church on:	UNATTRACTIVE					HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
A. Attractiveness of church plant	4%	16%	16%	36%	28%	
B. Type of neighborhood of church location	WIDE OPEN SPACES				CROWDED CITY	
	17%	22%	33%	22%	6%	
C. Accessibility to those you wish to attract	UNACCESSIBLE				VERY ACCESSIBLE	
	1%	12%	16%	25%	46%	
D. Use of church buildings as a center for community activity	NO USE				HEAVY USE	
	19%	23%	27%	25%	6%	
E. Average educational level of membership	NOT WELL EDUCATED				HIGHLY EDUCATED	
	3%	25%	47%	21%	4%	
F. Average socioeconomic status of membership	LOW INCOME				WELL-TO-DO	
	6%	29%	49%	15%	1%	
G. Degree of unity	DIVIDED				UNITED	
	6%	10%	27%	39%	18%	
2. Would it be better for your church to double or triple its size in one year or grow more gradually?	GRADUAL GROWTH				GROWTH EXPLOSION	
	9%	17%	28%	26%	20%	
3. Rate the potential of your local church for real growth?	NO POTENTIAL				POTENTIAL UNLIMITED	
	5%	15%	30%	33%	17%	

4.	How complete a ministry does your church have for all age groups?	VERY LIMITED	9%	19%	29%	31%	PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES	12%
5.	What % of your membership is:	<u>AVERAGE</u>						
	A. Regularly attending prayer meeting?		20%					
	B. Enrolled or graduates of classes in witnessing, giving Bible studies, etc.?		9%					
	C. Actively engaged in some form of personal outreach to non-members?		14%					
	D. The baptismal goal of your church this year?		12%					
	E. The growth goal of your church this year?		14%					
6.	Rate the effectiveness of your program for involving new converts in the fellowship and activities of the church.	NO PROGRAM	4%	10%	43%	36%	VERY EFFECTIVE	7%
7.	New members are:	GIVEN TIME TO SETTLE IN BEFORE BEING PUT TO WORK	3%	13%	47%	29%	ASSIGNED A JOB IMMEDIATELY	8%
8.	How many series of evangelistic meetings have you personally preached in the last three years?		0 - 59%	1 - 23%	2 - 12%	3 - 4%	4 - 4%	5 - 2%

9. Fill in the number of hours you spend in the average week on:

	<u>AVERAGE</u>
A. Sermon preparation	10 hours
B. Church administration	11 hours
C. Working for non-members	10 hours
D. Ministry to members	13 hours
E. Personal devotions	6 hours

10. Do you take lay members with you to Bible studies for training?

1. NEVER	9%
2. SOMETIMES	57%
3. OFTEN	33%
4. ALWAYS	1%

11. If you pastor more than one church, what % of your time last year did you spend with this church? For only one church write in 100%.

AVERAGE

69%

12. What is the number of years a pastor should serve in a church the size of yours?

AVERAGE

7 years

13. Circle your rating on these leadership scales:

	I MAKE MOST DECISIONS					MEMBERS RUN THE CHURCH	
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
A. Style	0%	1%	15%	25%	30%	25%	4%
B. Work organization	0%	2%	14%	17%	32%	27%	8%
C. Work intensity	1%	2%	11%	30%	29%	26%	1%

SPONTANEOUS

EASY GOING

THOROUGHLY ORGANIZED

WORKAHOLIC



14. Circle your degree of skill in:	LOW				HIGH
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
A. Gaining decisions in personal visitation	0%	4%	24%	57%	15%
B. Gaining decisions in public meetings	2%	21%	39%	32%	6%
C. Training lay members in soul winning	3%	17%	45%	31%	4%
D. Getting people to take Bible studies	0%	1%	32%	55%	12%
E. Conducting Bible studies	0%	0%	14%	50%	36%

15. How much effort has your church invested in a study of your local community, its make-up and needs?	NO STUDY				MUCH STUDY
	45%	25%	16%	10%	4%

16. How effective have the following methods proven to be in this church for gaining baptisms?	NOT USED				VERY EFFECTIVE
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
A. Public evangelistic meetings	12%	28%	24%	18%	18%
B. Personal visitation by pastor	3%	3%	34%	45%	15%
C. Bible studies by pastor	3%	7%	35%	38%	17%
D. Bible studies by lay persons	4%	30%	33%	24%	9%
E. Pastor's Bible class	34%	20%	18%	20%	8%
F. Literature evangelist	52%	34%	6%	7%	1%
G. Health ministries	14%	48%	24%	10%	4%

H. Church school	13%	15%	22%	28%	22%
I. Radio and TV	35%	41%	20%	3%	1%
J. Bible correspondence lessons	27%	38%	30%	4%	1%
17. How many evangelistic series were held in your church area in the last year?	38%	- 0 series			
	46%	- 1 series			
	8%	- 2 series			
	7%	- 3 series			
	1%	- 7 series			
18. What % of non-member names from radio, TV, etc., is followed up with at least one in-the-home visit?	<u>AVERAGE</u>				
	74%				
19. What % of your territory has been subdivided and assigned to members as their personal responsibility?	<u>AVERAGE</u>				
	60%				
20. Does your church have:	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>			
A. A functioning evangelism council to plan a coordinated soul-winning program?	49%	51%			
B. Specific written objectives in the various areas of church life?	26%	74%			
C. Planned methods to reach these objectives?	35%	65%			

21.	To what extent is every phase of church activity focused on church growth?	EACH PHASE INDEPENDENT					EVERY PHASE FOCUSED ON CHURCH GROWTH
			4%	29%	37%	22%	8%
22.	Does your church use conference plans or develop local ones in its thrust for evangelism?	CONFERENCE PLANS					LOCAL PLANS
			2%	20%	29%	37%	12%
23.	To what extent is your wife:	NOT AT ALL					FULL TIME
	A. Employed outside the home?		46%	22%	11%	6%	15%
		LITTLE					VERY MUCH
	B. Involved in church activities?		6%	9%	32%	30%	23%

In question 1F the average socioeconomic status of the membership is definitely leaning toward the lower income brackets. Question 3 reveals a rather strong shift toward the pastors' believing that their churches have unlimited growth potential. This is important in light of the fact that the North American Division-wide church growth study found that belief in growth potential was related to growth in the churches.

Some interesting averages are given for question 5. The 20 percent regularly attending prayer meeting is slightly below the Division average of 25 percent. The 9 percent enrolled in or graduates of classes in witnessing or giving Bible studies seems low in view of the importance of lay involvement in the outreach of the church. Likewise it must be of some concern that only 14 percent of the membership in Oregon are actively involved in some form of personal outreach to non-members.

The responses to question 9 reveal that the average pastor puts in a fifty-hour week. However only ten hours of that time are spent working directly for non-members. Perhaps a shift in emphasis will be necessary if church growth is to be placed in top priority.

If the pastor is to make the best use of his soul-winning time, he will need to involve lay members with him in outreach activities so that they might be trained to multiply his efforts. The answers to question 10 reveal a need for much more emphasis in this area.

A comparison of 14A and 14B shows that pastors are much more confident about their abilities to gain decisions in personal visitation

than they are in public meetings. Additional training and practicum in calling for decisions in public would be indicated.

Modern research has shown that church growth is dependent on being able to identify and meet the felt needs of the community in which the church is located. Therefore the responses to question 15 should be reason for concern since they reveal that only minimal attention is being given to the study of the various communities.

The low rating received by the literature evangelist (lowest mean of the ten methods listed) in 16F should lead to study as to how to more effectively utilize this branch of the church in promoting growth. The same is true for radio and TV (16I) which had the second lowest mean.

Since a series of evangelistic meetings are one proven method of winning new converts, it must be asked why 38 percent of the churches did not have a series in the area during the last year.

Question 20 is an important one since it relates results (growth) to careful planning. The majority of the churches in the conference have no planning council, no specific written objectives, and no planned methods. This is probably the most serious deficiency revealed by the pastor survey. Conference leadership will no doubt want to make these topics major ones in their in-service training programs.

Finally, question 21 is most instructive. About as many churches lean toward independent church activities as those that make every phase focused on church growth. The Division-wide study found that this was the leading variable on the pastor survey for identifying

growing churches. It is vital that churches focus all activity on the soul-winning mission.

#### Correlations of Growth with Survey Items

Each individual survey gathered fifty-five items of information (see appendix). Each of these items has been correlated with each of the two measures of church growth in a separate multiple regression program.

The correlation of any one independent variable with the dependent variable (growth) is called the zero-order correlation. It is symbolized by  $r$ . It will be possible to note the strongest zero-order or simple correlations. But the multiple regression program provides a way to allow a group of independent variables to be correlated with the dependent variable thus raising the correlation. This measures the combined effects of the independent variables, sometimes called "predictors." The extent of this relationship is measured by the coefficient of multiple correlation, symbolized by  $R$ .

The multiple regression program does not find  $R$  by simply adding all the  $r$ 's. After all, there is much overlapping in the effect of the predictors upon the dependent variable. Rather the program attempts to isolate the unique effect of each predictor variable on the dependent variable after the effect of the other variables has been removed. In the stepwise program, variables are added to the equation one at a time. The first variable to be included is the one with the highest  $r$ . Then the program calculates which of the remaining variables would contribute the largest unique effect to

explaining the changes in the dependent variable. This is added and the re-calculation continues until a point is reached where adding any more variables makes no significant difference.

Thus a logical order of steps is created which reveals the best predictors, taken together, in the order of their strength to explain changes in the dependent variable--in this case church growth. For each of the two dependent variables, the predictors will be displayed in a table in the order of their selection.

#### Actual Growth Rate

It may be recalled that the actual growth rate for each church was calculated by subtracting the membership on January 1, 1980 from the membership on December 31, 1981 and dividing this number by the beginning membership. The results have been expressed as percentages. The average actual growth rate for the 107 churches during the two-year period was 6.5 percent or a yearly rate of 3.25 percent. This is a bit less than the 4.1 percent yearly growth rate found in the 248 churches in the Division-wide study.

The highest zero-order correlation ( $r$ ) between actual growth and any of the fifty-five variables on the pastor survey was .337. This is only a moderate relationship, but in twelve steps the multiple correlation ( $R$ ) was raised to .549 between actual growth and the twelve variables chosen. Each step contributed significantly at the .01 level. Table 1 displays the results.

Only two of the variables were significant in themselves. To be significant at the .05 level means that there is less than

TABLE 1

BEST PREDICTORS OF ACTUAL GROWTH  
IN THE OREGON PASTOR SURVEY  
Number of Cases = 107

Stepwise Selection	Name of Variable	Multiple R Cummulative	Simple <u>r</u>
1	% of members engaged in personal outreach	.337	.337**
2	Hours pastor spends in personal devotions	.379	-.113
3	% of media names followed up	.400	-.130
4	Bible studies by lay members gain baptisms	.423	.209*
5	Church school effective for gaining baptisms	.448	-.078
6	Church is accessible to prospective converts	.475	.154
7	Complete ministry for all age groups	.491	.112
8	Educational level of membership	.513	-.079
9	Pastor's wife involved in church activities	.522	.097
10	Planned methods to reach church objectives	.530	.172
11	Health ministries effective for gaining baptisms	.540	-.085
12	Church is united	.549	.132

\*probability equal to or less than .05

\*\*probability equal to or less than .01

a .05 probability that the correlation could have occurred in the sample items if there were no correlation in the population from which they were drawn (that is, all Oregon pastors). However, even though most of the items are insignificant by themselves, they provide a rather substantial correlation of nearly .55 when taken in this combination.

One of the immediate problems that arises from this and the



following tables is the presence of the negative correlations. They indicate that the relationship is not in the expected direction and therefore is difficult to interpret in terms of church growth. For example, pastors who spend fewer hours in personal devotions are more likely to be in growing churches. However, the five negative relationships are mostly weak and all insignificant by themselves. They will be ignored in the analysis.

The two significant relationships highlight the importance of lay involvement. While (as pointed out in the last section) only 14 percent of the members in the average congregation were actively engaged in some form of personal outreach to non-members, those churches with higher percentages involved were more likely to be experiencing actual growth. Also in growing churches, pastors were more likely to report that Bible studies by lay persons were effective for gaining baptisms. One other item that involves laity is that churches marked by unity are more likely to grow.

Another theme is sounded in the item that reveals that churches that have planned methods to reach their specific objectives are more probably churches with higher actual growth rates.

#### Kingdom Growth Rate

Kingdom growth examines the baptism-apostasy ratio of growth while holding out the influence of transfers and death. It is calculated by subtracting the number of apostasies and missings from the number of baptisms and professions by faith for the period under study. The resulting figure is divided by the beginning membership and expressed as a percentage. The average kingdom growth

rate for the two-year period was 6 percent. This is a yearly rate of 3 percent, considerably less than the 5.2 percent yearly kingdom growth rate found in the Division-wide study. No doubt the reason for the lower rate lies in the high ratio of apostasies to baptisms. The average number of baptisms in the 107 churches for the two years was 17.7, but the average number of apostasies was 8.6. Thus apostasies equal nearly 49 percent of the baptisms.

The highest  $r$  between kingdom growth and any of the survey variables was  $-.236$ . The program selected sixteen steps to raise this to a strong  $R$  of  $.684$ . Each step contributed significantly at the  $.01$  level. The results are displayed in table 2.

The first negative is more puzzling here because it is the strongest relationship and is significant at the  $.05$  level. As the pastor rated the church school less effective as a means for gaining baptisms, the kingdom growth rate was more likely to increase. The probable explanation is that if no church school was present, the lowest rating would be given. Perhaps several churches without schools had some of the higher kingdom growth rates, and this would account for the negative correlation.

Six of the selections were also chosen for actual growth including the item about Bible studies by lay members. But two new themes are sounded. The first states that where new converts are effectively involved in the fellowship and activities of the church, kingdom growth goes up. This procedure is more likely to bring in new members and to prevent them from dropping out.

TABLE 2

BEST PREDICTORS OF KINGDOM GROWTH  
IN THE OREGON PASTOR SURVEY  
Number of Cases = 107

Stepwise Selection	Name of Variable	Multiple R Cumulative	Simple <u>r</u>
1	Church school effective for gaining baptisms	.236	-.236*
2	New converts involved in church activities	.352	.208*
3	Hours pastor spends working for non-members	.422	.223*
4	Bible studies by lay members gain baptisms	.471	.147
5	% of media names followed up	.505	-.134
6	Church is accessible to prospective converts	.542	.166
7	Hours pastor spends in ministry to members	.565	.123
8	Evangelistic series preached by pastor	.589	.208*
9	Educational level of membership	.605	-.106
10	% of members attending prayer meeting	.622	-.085
11	Pastor's skill in training lay members	.636	.012
12	Complete ministry for all age groups	.645	.087
13	Pastor's Bible class effective for gaining baptisms	.660	-.054
14	Pastor's skill in starting Bible studies	.670	-.091
15	Years a pastor should serve in a church	.678	.026
16	Public evangelism effective for gaining baptisms	.684	.130

\*probability equal to or less than .05

The second theme is the outreach ministry of the pastor himself. As he spends more of his time in working for non-members and as he personally preaches more evangelistic sermons, kingdom growth goes up.

### Other Correlations

In addition to the items chosen in the two selections, question 10 deserves mention. The practice of the pastor in taking lay members with him to Bible studies for training purposes correlates .174 with actual growth and .185 with kingdom growth. Both come close to being significant at the .05 level. Again the importance of lay involvement is underlined.

It is interesting to note that (as would be expected) actual growth correlates quite strongly with kingdom growth (.557). Both growth indices have negative correlations with membership size (actual, -.246 and kingdom, -.243). Smaller churches average better growth rates (the average membership of the 107 churches was 210 on January 1, 1980). Baptisms have practically no correlation with actual growth (churches growing by transfer in) but a moderate correlation with kingdom growth (.187). On the other hand apostasies have a strong negative correlation with actual growth (-.398) and kingdom growth (-.430). Preventing apostasies may be one of the best ways to grow.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS FROM THE ADVENTIST MEMBER SURVEY

This chapter describes the findings from the survey of members in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Supplies of the "Oregon Church Growth Survey" were sent to each of the 123 churches in the conference in February of 1982. The surveys were administered at Sabbath worship services during March and April.

One hundred twelve (112) of the churches completed and returned 7857 usable surveys. This constitutes a highly respectable return rate of 91 percent and ensures that the results are typical of the viewpoints, attitudes, and behaviors of members in the Oregon Conference.

First the descriptive profile will be presented and briefly discussed. Then the correlations of the survey items with the two growth indices will be explained.

#### A Profile of the Membership

Each survey gathered fifty items of information. The complete profile of 7857 members in Oregon Conference churches follows. The profiles of individual churches were sent to the conference in May 1982, in advance of this report.

The combined profile reveals the percentage of respondents who selected each possible choice in the survey. In this section,

Oregon Church Growth Survey - The Adventist Member  
 Institute of Church Ministry  
 Theological Seminary, Andrews University  
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 Church # \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORETOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF SURVEYS FOR THIS REPORT = 7857

1. Circle the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.  
 Less than 1 year 5%      6-10 years 10%      11-20 years 17%      Over 20 years 53%

2. Was at least one of your parents an Adventist sometime during the first 12 years of your life?  
 Yes 62%      No 38%

3. Circle the number indicating the relationship that you have with Jesus Christ.  
 None 1%      1 4%      2 27%      3 33%      4 34%      5 Intimate

4. What number shows your assurance that you have eternal life?  
 Not sure 3%      1 2%      2 4%      3 17%      4 25%      5 Very certain 51%

5. To what extent have you attended Adventist schools?  
 Not at all      All the way

A) Elementary	1 56%	2 5%	3 6%	4 7%	5 26%
B) Academy	1 56%	2 6%	3 5%	4 5%	5 28%
C) College	1 68%	2 7%	3 5%	4 4%	5 16%

6. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on soul-winning.  
 Little importance 1%      2 4%      3 19%      4 26%      5 Top priority 50%

7. How do you feel about the amount of money the conference spends on public evangelism? Circle a number.  
 Too much spent 4%      1 2%      2 3%      3 4%      4 5%      5 Should spend more 24%

8. How well prepared are you for the work of soul-winning? Circle a number.  
 Not at all 11%      1 28%      2 40%      3 15%      4 6%      5 Very well 6%

9. Have you been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past twelve months?  
 Yes 59%      No 41%

10. Do you hold a Church office or other position of service?  
 Yes 56%      No 44%

11. Did you set a personal soul-winning goal this year?  
 Yes 21%      No 79%

12. Have you been involved in community outreach services (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, etc.)?  
 Yes 42%      No 58%

13. Have you held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months?  
 Yes 22%      No 78%

14. Within the last year have you attended a witnessing training program?  
 Yes 16%      No 84%

15. How much do you agree with these statements? Circle the number.  
 A) My immediate family helps my relationship with Christ.  
 Disagree strongly 1%      2 2%      3 3%      4 4%      5 Agree strongly 84%

B) I would feel comfortable bringing a visitor to our sabbath school.

1	2	3	4	5
5%	5%	14%	20%	55%
1	2	3	4	5
4%	5%	16%	26%	49%

C) Most sabbath sermons are interesting.

1	2	3	4	5
7%	12%	37%	23%	22%

D) We have generally had good experience with public evangelism in this church.

1	2	3	4	5
12%	10%	31%	18%	30%

E) Our church should join with other Adventist churches to hold Crusades.

1	2	3	4	5
13%	17%	46%	16%	7%

F) People who are brought into the church in evangelistic meetings just do not stay.

1	2	3	4	5
5%	9%	26%	26%	34%

G) I can speak easily about my faith.

1	2	3	4	5
4%	6%	36%	32%	23%

H) People in our community have a high opinion of our church.

16. How many people have you been wholly or partially responsible for bringing into the church in the last three years?

One	Two to five	Six to ten	More than ten
13%	13%	1%	1%

17. Circle the number which shows the degree that you have been involved in:

- DA - Doesn't apply
- N - Never
- S - Sometimes
- U - Usually
- A - Always

DA	N	S	U	A
----	---	---	---	---

A) Daily personal Bible Study

28

5%	5%	31%	33%	26%
----	----	-----	-----	-----

B) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people

5%	6%	33%	22%	34%
----	----	-----	-----	-----

C) Study of Ellen White books

5%	8%	45%	23%	19%
----	----	-----	-----	-----

D) Financial support for local soul-winning

9%	9%	33%	24%	24%
----	----	-----	-----	-----

E) Attending prayer meeting

12%	30%	35%	12%	11%
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

F) Meeting regularly with a small study or fellowship group

16%	39%	27%	9%	9%
-----	-----	-----	----	----

G) Helping neighbors with their personal problems

9%	15%	44%	19%	13%
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

H) Daily family worship

10%	12%	29%	20%	30%
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

I) Witnessing in everyday activities

6%	5%	32%	32%	24%
----	----	-----	-----	-----

J) Attending Sabbath School

3%	1%	5%	17%	74%
----	----	----	-----	-----

K) Tithing

4%	2%	8%	10%	76%
----	----	----	-----	-----

L) Working to win non-Adventist relatives

9%	10%	30%	20%	31%
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

18. Circle the number which best describes your church group:

No	1	2	3	4	5	Yes
2%	7%	37%	29%	25%		

A) Soul-winning church

	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
B) Adventist standards	1%	3%	26%	37%	33%		
C) Friendliness							
	Cold and unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	Warm and friendly
		2%	4%	20%	29%	45%	
E) New members							
	Ignored	1	2	3	4	5	Involved
		2%	6%	28%	32%	33%	
F) Feelings towards church people							
	I don't fit in	1	2	3	4	5	My kind of people
		3%	4%	23%	29%	41%	
19. Do you have close friends who are not Adventists?	None	1	2	3	4	5	Many
		3%	6%	38%	18%	34%	
20. Where do you presently send your children to school?	Public schools						No school-age children
		27%		8%			66%
21. Do Adventist pastors stay at a church?	Too short?						Too long a time?
		34%				63%	3%
22. Circle the number of the age group you are in.							
	19 years or under						Over 65 years
		10%					21%
23. Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.							
	Under \$8,000						Above \$50,000
		21%					3%
24. Circle the number that shows your ethnic background.							
	Black						Other
		1%					2%
25. Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.	Asian						
		1%					
	Under 3 miles						Over 25 miles
		37%					2%
26. Your sex							
	Male						Female
		40%					60%



brief comments will be made on certain of the items that seem to be particularly significant and helpful. It is important to remember that this survey reflects the attitudes and behaviors of those Oregon Adventists who attend Sabbath worship services and does not represent inactive members.

Church-attending Adventists in Oregon are a rather mature group with 70 percent having been members more than ten years (53 percent more than twenty years). Only 5 percent are in their first year of Adventism. They also are largely a second-generation group with 62 percent having been brought up in an Adventist home.

In spite of this Adventist background, the majority have not attended Adventist schools at all on any level. Others reported partial attendance. Only 26 percent received all of their elementary schooling in Adventist schools. The corresponding figures for academy and college are 28 percent and 16 percent.

Although a small majority (59 percent) report that they have been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past year, only 21 percent (combining choices 4 and 5) feel that they are well prepared for this work. This may be partially explained by the fact that only 16 percent have attended a recent witnessing-training program.

When question 9 is translated into specifics, the prospects for church growth appear even dimmer. Only 42 percent of the members have involved themselves in any type of community outreach services, only 22 percent have held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months, and only 21 percent have set a personal soul-

winning goal. Even more to the point, 71 percent of the active members are unaware of anyone that they helped bring into the church in the last three years and only 2 percent have won as many as six people during that time.

On question 15D, note that a minority are willing to be more than neutral about the statement, "We have generally had good experience with public evangelism in this church." On the other hand, only 30 percent disagree with the statement that "people who are brought into the church in evangelistic meetings just do not stay."

In recent years much literature has been produced concerning the value of small fellowship and study groups as a means of evangelism and Christian nurture. They attempt to capture the sense of "community" revealed in the early chapters of Acts. The concept has not been actualized among Oregon members for only 18 percent are involved in these groups to any significant extent.

It is encouraging to note that 86 percent of the members usually or always pay tithe. But it is somewhat less cheering to observe that only a slight majority (54 percent) would describe their local congregation as a "soul-winning church."

It is surprising to discover that 66 percent of the members report having no school-age children. Of those who do however, more than three-fourths are sending them to Adventist schools.

Oregon members are apparently happy with their pastors. Only 3 percent believe that Adventist pastors stay at a church too long.

The member survey supports the pastors' impressions that by-and-large the active membership in Oregon is not affluent. Note

that 50 percent report yearly family incomes of under \$16,000 and only 22 percent are over \$25,000.

The conference is predominately white and has one and one-half times as many females as males in attendance at Sabbath worship.

This discussion has identified a number of areas that need to be strengthened if church growth is to be maximized in the Oregon Conference. No doubt leadership will wish to build a variety of learning experiences directed toward strengthening these areas.

#### Correlations of Growth with Survey Items

Each individual survey gathered fifty items of information (see appendix). Each of these items has been correlated with each of the two indices of church growth in a separate stepwise multiple regression program using the procedures explained in chapter 3. The main difference is that rather than correlate the responses of the members directly, all of the responses from a given church were averaged to yield a church score for each item. These church scores were correlated with the growth measures.

#### Actual Growth Rate

The average actual growth rate for the 112 churches during the two-year period was 6.1 percent. The addition of five more churches in the calculations explains the slight difference from the 6.5 percent rate reported in chapter 3.

The highest zero-order correlation ( $r$ ) between actual growth and any single item on the survey was .300. Fourteen steps raised the  $R$  to .641. Each increment contributed at the .01 level. The

results are displayed in table 3.

TABLE 3  
BEST PREDICTORS OF ACTUAL GROWTH  
IN THE OREGON MEMBER SURVEY  
Number of cases = 112

Stepwise Selection	Name of Variable	Multiple R Cumulative	Simple $r$
1	Converts won by members in last 3 years	.300	.300**
2	How long should pastors stay at a church?	.371	.121
3	Join other Adventist churches in crusades	.416	-.192*
4	Age of membership	.441	-.215*
5	Holds church office or service position	.472	.210*
6	Attends Sabbath School regularly	.494	-.082
7	Church is warm and friendly	.529	.203*
8	Members raised in Adventist homes	.543	.021
9	Attendance at Adventist academy	.576	-.071
10	Approves Conference spending on evangelism	.591	-.123
11	Witnesses in everyday activities	.605	.101
12	Attends prayer meeting regularly	.617	-.058
13	Attendance at Adventist college	.630	-.118
14	Yearly family income	.641	.098

\* probability equal to or less than .05

\*\* probability equal to or less than .01

The strongest item, significant at the .01 level, is the one which relates the number of converts won by lay members to actual growth. In growing churches, a higher proportion of members are able to identify people that they have been wholly or partially responsible for bringing into the church. This re-emphasizes the note which was so important in the interpretation of the pastor survey--growth is highly related to lay-member involvement in the outreach program of the church.

The lay-involvement theme is continued in two of the other significant findings. Churches in which a larger proportion of the membership hold church office or some other position of service are more likely to experience actual growth. And growth is also related to the extent to which members perceive their church as warm and friendly. The climate created by the members will attract or repel prospective additions.

As pointed out in the discussion of the pastor survey, negative correlations are usually difficult to interpret in terms of church growth. Fortunately, most of them are weak and insignificant when taken by themselves. However there are two significant negative correlations between the member survey and actual growth. The first indicates that growing churches have a larger proportion of members who disagree with the statement, "Our church should join with other Adventist churches to hold crusades." This item perhaps speaks more to the question of cooperation than it does to church growth activity or spiritual depth.

The second correlation is the negative relationship between growth and age. Unlike most negatives, this one is in the expected direction. The greater the proportion of younger people in the congregation, the more likely the church is to be experiencing growth. Churches that would grow must find ways to attract and hold younger people, especially young families.

In addition to the stepwise selections, actual growth was found to be significantly correlated at the .05 level with four other variables:

1. Question 1. Growing churches have a larger proportion of members who have not been in the church a long time (-.231). Churches where most of the members have been there twenty or more years are obviously not growing.

2. Question 9. Growing churches have more members who have been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the recent past (.189).

3. Question 13. Growing churches have a greater proportion of members who have held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past year (.233).

4. Question 18D. Growing churches do not ignore new members but quickly involve them in the fellowship and activities of the church (.224).

#### Kingdom Growth Rate

The average kingdom growth rate for the 112 churches was 5.5 percent for the two-year period or a yearly rate of 2.75 percent. The addition of five churches has reduced this by a quarter percent from the 3 percent found in the pastor study. Obviously kingdom growth in Oregon has been considerably behind the Division rate of 5.2 percent. As mentioned earlier, the problem lies in the high ratio of apostasies to baptisms. The average number of baptisms in the 112 churches for the two years was 17.4, but the average number of apostasies was 9.3. Thus apostasies equal more than 53 percent of the baptisms.

The highest  $r$  between kingdom growth and any variable on

the survey was .327. In sixteen steps an  $R$  of .659 was reached. Each increment contributed at the .01 level. The results are displayed in table 4.

TABLE 4  
BEST PREDICTORS OF KINGDOM GROWTH  
IN THE OREGON MEMBER SURVEY  
Number of Cases = 112

Stepwise Selection	Name of Variable	Multiple R Cumulative	Simple $r$
1	Converts won by members in last 3 years	.327	.327**
2	Where children attend school	.391	.144
3	Assurance of eternal life	.458	-.158
4	Join other Adventist churches in crusades	.488	-.137
5	How long should pastors stay at a church?	.508	.050
6	Witnesses in everyday activities	.525	.037
7	Attends Sabbath School regularly	.549	-.140
8	Holds church office or service position	.564	.202*
9	Church is warm and friendly	.578	.170
10	Attends prayer meeting regularly	.590	-.054
11	Attendance at Adventist college	.600	-.151
12	Working to win non-Adventist relatives	.616	-.140
13	Tithes regularly	.628	-.012
14	Church is "my kind of people"	.636	.068
15	Attended witnessing training program	.645	-.042
16	Held Bible studies with non-Adventist	.659	.289**

\*probability equal to or less than .05

\*\*probability equal to or less than .01

The picture is quite similar to that of actual growth. Nine of the kingdom growth selections were also found on actual growth including the leading one about how many people the members have been

wholly or partially responsible for bringing into the church in the last three years. The item on holding church office or other position of service was also selected for actual growth.

The question on whether or not the member held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months was significantly correlated with growth at the .01 level. This item also was significant for actual growth even though not selected on the stepwise selection. All of these selections affirm the key position of active, witnessing lay members in the church experiencing kingdom growth.

Though not chosen on the stepwise selection, question 1 was significantly correlated (-.283) at the .01 level with kingdom growth. As with actual growth, churches experiencing kingdom growth have a higher proportion of members who have been Adventists a shorter time.

Another question correlated with kingdom growth (.220) is #12. This is significant at the .05 level. Growing churches have a greater proportion of the membership involved in community outreach services such as Dorcas and the Five-day Plan to Stop Smoking.

#### Other Correlations

Certain inter-correlations were presented at the end of chapter 3. The difference between the 112 churches with member surveys and the 107 churches with pastor surveys results in slight shifts in these correlations.

The correlation between actual and kingdom growth is even higher (.598). Actual growth is correlated with membership size at -.274 and kingdom growth is correlated with size at -.264. Smaller



churches are averaging better growth rates. Baptisms have practically no correlation with actual growth (.031) and a surprisingly small correlation with kingdom growth (.171). The largest single predictor of growth by far is the number of apostasies, even larger than reported on the pastoral survey. Apostasies are correlated -.470 with actual growth and -.517 with kingdom growth. Thus controlling apostasy appears to be the most important single factor in promoting church growth in Oregon.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

This study has investigated the problem of differing rates of church growth and decline among churches in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. All 123 churches in the conference were sent a supply of the "Oregon Church Growth Survey" to administer to the baptized members present at a given Sabbath worship service. Each church was also sent a copy of the "Church Growth Survey: the Adventist Pastor" for the minister to complete.

Surveying began in late February of 1982. By May 112 churches had returned 7857 usable member surveys, and 107 pastor surveys were also received. From this data profiles were constructed of the total Oregon Conference membership, of the membership of each individual church, and of the 107 pastor surveys. These profiles revealed various attitudes and behaviors in Christian life and witness.

In addition to the profiles, correlations were performed between the various survey items and actual growth rates and kingdom growth rates for the two-year period, 1980-1981. Not only were the largest simple correlations identified, but a multiple regression program made possible the best combination of variables to predict

church growth. These findings have been displayed in charts and tables, and their implications have been briefly discussed.

### Conclusions

An examination of the findings which have been presented suggests several conclusions:

1. Over and over it has been emphasized that the key to growth is found in the involvement of lay membership. Growing churches have more of their members engaged in personal outreach and holding offices and other positions of service in the church. The members are more active in community outreach services and hold more Bible studies with non-members. They are at least partially responsible for bringing converts into the church. Yet it is in these very qualities that Oregon members are lacking. On the average they are below the rate of the North American Division in personal witnessing and, as a result, in growth rates.

Ways must be found to incorporate the lay members as intrinsic components of the church operation. If the pastor wants to do all the thinking and planning and make most of the decisions, the members will probably let him. But the church will go nowhere. Laity must sense that this is their church, they are part of the team, and they are responsible for the accomplishment of the church's mission. When each member, under the inspired leadership of the pastor, becomes excited about and committed to church growth, nothing can stop the church from growing. No matter how capable or visionary the pastor is, he does not possess the ideas or the

resources that are waiting to be tapped when the whole congregation becomes involved.

2. Age and length of time in the church are predictors of growth. Growing churches report a younger average age for the baptized membership. Probably this means a church with more young couples with children and thus greater biological growth. It may also indicate that new members are more likely to be attracted to a church with a younger congregation and the range of ministries that this implies. Then too, a younger congregation may be more active in witnessing. Related to this is the conclusion that growing churches have a greater proportion of their memberships who are more recent converts. This is logical. Churches where all members have been in the church for twenty or more years are not growing. But there is something else. New converts are the best potential soulwinners. This is because they still have many contacts with non-Adventists in the environment from which they came. Adventists who have been members for many years find most of their close friends and social environment among fellow members. They simply do not have the open doors of the newly baptized. And often the new convert in his first love for the message will be more active in telling his friends what the Lord has done for him.

3. No single item had as great an influence on the growth rates as did the lowering of the number of apostasies. Church growth, both numerical and spiritual, moves forward when apostasy is controlled and eliminated. This is best accomplished by fostering the spiritual life of the members, actively involving them in the internal and

outreach life of the church, and creating a climate that is warm, friendly, and caring.

Our system of pastoral recognition must also be broadened to include the prevention of apostasy. In the sports world, baseball pitchers were long judged by such statistics as games won and earned-run average. But with the development of the relief pitcher as a specialist came the need for a new category--the save. The relief pitcher comes in when the starter is beginning to falter but while his team is still ahead. If he can prevent the game from being lost, he is credited with a save.

Now in the pastoral ministry, a record is kept of how many new converts are won, and each man is credited with this number. But if a pastor brings back an erring sheep who has not actually been dropped from membership and therefore cannot be counted as a baptism, he has no way to report this. Since it is a law of human behavior that we tend to do that for which we are rewarded, the minister with a multitude of pressing duties may find it easy to neglect the wandering ones.

But the prevention of an apostasy is as important to church growth as the baptism of a new convert. Like the sports world, we may need to institute the category of "saves." A pastor could have a place to report those members who had ceased regular attendance and an Adventist life-style but who had been restored to active membership through his ministry.

4. Church growth is a result of concentrated effort and planning. Growing does not just happen. It involves a functioning

evangelism council to plan a coordinated soul-winning program, specific written objectives, and planned methods to reach those objectives. The church sets a yearly growth-rate goal. Everything that happens in that church is focused on reaching that goal. Every other program and ministry is evaluated by the extent to which it contributes toward attaining the goal. The pastor places prime emphasis on soul-winning. He spends less time on church administrative duties and in routine ministry to members and major portions of his time in ministry to non-members and in training laity. The church studies and knows its local community. It gears its programs to meeting the felt needs in that community. The church board, each sub-committee, and each auxiliary organization should be involving as great a proportion of the membership as possible in developing goals, an overall strategy, and specific tactics for growth. How to make every department and every activity a soul-winning agency? How to reach the community? How to control apostasy? How to spawn new churches? These are the questions the church must concentrate upon.

5. Church growth is found where new members are quickly incorporated into the life of the church. Converts are not ignored but given meaningful work to do. A high proportion of the growing congregation consists of relatively recent members who in the zeal of their first love for the truth are sharing their testimony with their unconverted friends. This church tends to have a somewhat younger average age also. Young people and young families are essential to the growing church. A complete ministry is provided for all age groups.

6. Much more consideration must be given to the roles of the pastor. He should involve his members in a dialog for setting his priorities and time blocks. Members are better able to understand the pastor and cooperate with him in the work of the church when they understand the many roles and functions he is expected to fill and perform and can assist him in struggling to plan a schedule that will maximize his effectiveness in leading the church in its mission. The pastor must give a major share of his time to training, assigning, and supervising members in soul-winning work and to directly working for non-members in an evangelistic life-style that will serve as a model for the laity. The pastor must multiply his hands many times by doing the work through the members.

7. The church needs to give much more attention to the felt needs of the community. It cannot be successful by giving its world "what is good for it" whether it wants it or not. Surveys should be conducted to determine which people will respond to which methods. Communities should be carefully profiled using latest census bureau information. Evangelistic approaches should not use the wasteful "shot-gun" approach but should be carefully targeted to specific audiences whose receptivity to the message has been pre-determined.

8. There must be a fostering of the spiritual life of the church for without a growth toward Christian maturity there will not long be a growth in numbers. This is not an either/or proposition. "The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted, and those who were once converted but who have backslidden. What influence

would these unconsecrated members have on new converts?" 6T 371.

Sermons that build faith and that explain the "how" of the Christian life are called for--sermons that portray religion as relationships rather than performance. Meaningful prayer meetings and fellowship groups that actually involve people in their inner life are essential. People who walk with Jesus will not find it difficult to work for Jesus.

9. Churches should carefully evaluate all evangelistic methods and strategies and employ those that bring the best results in specific situations. It is not possible to adopt conference-wide plans and expect that every church will use these in a carbon-copy sameness. Rather each church should test and evaluate various church growth methods in its own particular situation. Each pastor and each church needs its own unique way of working to fulfill its mission. Higher levels of the organization whether administrative or departmental should serve as resource centers with a multitude of wares for the local church to choose from and as consultative agencies to assist the local church in building a program tailor-made to its special needs.

It is the deep hope of the staff at the Institute of Church Ministry that the findings of the Oregon Church-Growth Study will prove extremely practical. From this report should come curricular materials, preservice and inservice education for the ministry, a new reporting system, and aid for the burdened administrator. May it all be to the glory of God, the rapid growth of His church on earth, and the soon appearing of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.



**APPENDIX**  
**Surveys**  
**and**  
**Instructions**

# Oregon Church Growth Survey

1. CIRCLE THE NUMBER SHOWING HOW LONG YOU HAVE BEEN A BAPTIZED ADVENTIST.

- 1. LESS THAN 1 YEAR
- 2. 1-5 YEARS
- 3. 6-10 YEARS
- 4. 11-20 YEARS
- 5. OVER 20 YEARS

2. WAS AT LEAST ONE OF YOUR PARENTS AN ADVENTIST SOMETIME DURING THE FIRST 12 YEARS OF YOUR LIFE?

- 1. YES      2. NO

3. CIRCLE THE NUMBER INDICATING THE RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU HAVE WITH JESUS CHRIST.

- |      |   |   |   |   |          |
|------|---|---|---|---|----------|
| NONE |   |   |   |   | INTIMATE |
| 1    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |          |

4. WHAT NUMBER SHOWS YOUR ASSURANCE THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

- |          |   |   |   |   |              |
|----------|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| NOT SURE |   |   |   |   | VERY CERTAIN |
| 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |              |

5. TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE YOU ATTENDED ADVENTIST SCHOOLS?

- A) ELEMENTARY
- B) ACADEMY
- C) COLLEGE

- |            |   |   |   |   |             |
|------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| NOT AT ALL |   |   |   |   | ALL THE WAY |
| 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |

6. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH SHOWS THE EMPHASIS YOUR PASTOR PLACES ON SOUL-WINNING.

- |                   |   |   |   |   |              |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| LITTLE IMPORTANCE |   |   |   |   | TOP PRIORITY |
| 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |              |

7. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THE CONFERENCE SPENDS ON PUBLIC EVANGELISM? CIRCLE A NUMBER.

- |                |   |   |   |   |                   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| TOO MUCH SPENT |   |   |   |   | SHOULD SPEND MORE |
| 1              | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                   |

8. HOW WELL PREPARED ARE YOU FOR THE WORK OF SOUL-WINNING? CIRCLE A NUMBER.

- |            |   |   |   |   |           |
|------------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| NOT AT ALL |   |   |   |   | VERY WELL |
| 1          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |

9. HAVE YOU BEEN ENGAGED IN SOME TYPE OF SOUL-WINNING DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS?

- 1. YES      2. NO

- |     |   |                   |                |   |   |  |                |
|-----|---|-------------------|----------------|---|---|--|----------------|
| 10. | DO YOU HOLD A CHURCH OFFICE OR OTHER POSITION OF SERVICE?   | YES               |                |   |   |  | NO             |
|     |   | 1                 |                |   |   |  | 2              |
| 11. | DID YOU SET A PERSONAL SOUL-WINNING GOAL THIS YEAR?   | 1                 |                |   |   |  | 2              |
| 12. | HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, Etc.)?                                 | 1                 |                |   |   |  | 2              |
| 13. | HAVE YOU HELD BIBLE STUDIES WITH A NON-ADVENTIST DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS?   | 1                 |                |   |   |  | 2              |
| 14. | WITHIN THE LAST YEAR HAVE YOU ATTENDED A WITNESSING TRAINING PROGRAM?   | 1                 |                |   |   |  | 2              |
| 15. | HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE STATEMENTS? <u>CIRCLE THE NUMBER.</u>  |                   |                |   |   |  |                |
|     | A) MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY HELPS MY RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST.   | DISAGREE STRONGLY |                |   |   |  | AGREE STRONGLY |
|     |   | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | B) I WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE BRINGING A VISITOR TO OUR SABBATH SCHOOL.   | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | C) MOST SABBATH SERMONS ARE INTERESTING.  | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | D) WE HAVE GENERALLY HAD GOOD EXPERIENCE WITH PUBLIC EVANGELISM IN THIS CHURCH.                                     | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | E) OUR CHURCH SHOULD JOIN WITH OTHER ADVENTIST CHURCHES TO HOLD CRUSADES.   | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | F) PEOPLE WHO ARE BROUGHT INTO THE CHURCH IN EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS JUST DO NOT STAY.                                | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | G) I CAN SPEAK EASILY ABOUT MY FAITH.   | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
|     | H) PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE A HIGH OPINION OF OUR CHURCH.   | 1                 | 2              | 3 | 4 |  | 5              |
| 16. | HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE YOU BEEN WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING INTO THE CHURCH IN THE LAST THREE YEARS? |                   |                |   |   |  |                |
|     |   | 1.                | UNAWARE OF ANY |   |   |  |                |
|     |   | 2.                | ONE            |   |   |  |                |
|     |   | 3.                | TWO TO FIVE    |   |   |  |                |
|     |   | 4.                | SIX TO TEN     |   |   |  |                |
|     |   | 5.                | MORE THAN TEN  |   |   |  |                |

17. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH SHOWS THE DEGREE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN:

	DOESN'T APPLY	NEVER	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS
A) DAILY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY	1	2	3	4	5
B) DAILY PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF SPECIFIC PEOPLE	1	2	3	4	5
C) STUDY OF ELLEN WHITE BOOKS	1	2	3	4	5
D) FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SOUL-WINNING	1	2	3	4	5
E) ATTENDING PRAYER MEETING	1	2	3	4	5
F) MEETING REGULARLY WITH A SMALL STUDY OR FELLOWSHIP GROUP	1	2	3	4	5
G) HELPING NEIGHBORS WITH THEIR PERSONAL PROBLEMS	1	2	3	4	5
H) DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP	1	2	3	4	5
I) WITNESSING IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES	1	2	3	4	5
J) ATTENDING SABBATH SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5
K) TITHING	1	2	3	4	5
L) WORKING TO WIN NON-ADVENTIST RELATIVES	1	2	3	4	5

18. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH GROUP:

A)	1	2	3	4	5
	NOT A SOUL-WINNING CHURCH				SOUL-WINNING CHURCH
B)	1	2	3	4	5
	LOW ADVENTIST STANDARDS				HIGH ADVENTIST STANDARDS
C)	1	2	3	4	5
	COLD AND UNFRIENDLY				WARM AND FRIENDLY
D)	1	2	3	4	5
	NEW MEMBERS IGNORED				NEW MEMBERS INVOLVED IN FELLOWSHIP & ACTIVITIES
E)	1	2	3	4	5
	I DON'T SEEM TO FIT IN				MY KIND OF PEOPLE

19. DO YOU HAVE CLOSE FRIENDS WHO ARE NOT ADVENTISTS?

1	2	3	4	5
NONE		FEW		MANY

20. WHERE DO YOU PRESENTLY SEND YOUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL?
1. SEND TO ADVENTIST SCHOOLS
  2. SEND TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
  3. HAVE NO SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN
21. DO ADVENTIST PASTORS STAY AT A CHURCH:
1. TOO SHORT A TIME?
  2. ABOUT THE RIGHT TIME?
  3. TOO LONG A TIME?
22. CIRCLE THE NUMBER OF THE AGE GROUP YOU ARE IN.
1. 19 YEARS OR UNDER
  2. 20-35 YEARS
  3. 36-50 YEARS
  4. 51-65 YEARS
  5. OVER 65 YEARS
23. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH SHOWS YOUR YEARLY FAMILY INCOME.
1. UNDER \$8,000
  2. \$8,001 TO \$16,000
  3. \$16,001 TO \$25,000
  4. \$25,001 TO \$50,000
  5. OVER \$50,000
24. CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT SHOWS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND.
1. ASIAN
  2. BLACK
  3. SPANISH
  4. WHITE
  5. OTHER
25. CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT SHOWS THE DISTANCE THAT YOU LIVE FROM THE CHURCH.
1. UNDER 3 MILES
  2. 4-10 MILES
  3. 11-15 MILES
  4. 16-25 MILES
  5. OVER 25 MILES
26. YOUR SEX.
1. MALE
  2. FEMALE

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS  
THE OREGON CHURCH GROWTH SURVEY  
FROM THE INSTITUTE OF CHURCH MINISTRY

Church \_\_\_\_\_ Code No. \_\_\_\_\_ No. Surveys \_\_\_\_\_

The Oregon Conference has voted to survey the entire church-attending membership on attitudes and behaviors related to church growth and evangelism. As a pastor, here is everything you need to know to do the job. It will not take a great deal of your precious time, but it is important to follow directions.

The plan is to conduct the survey during a Sabbath service asking the baptized members present to complete it. We suggest using the Lay Activities period but lengthening it to about 20 to 25 minutes. Most people will complete the survey in 15 minutes or less which will allow time for explanations and for distributing and collecting the material. If you prefer a different time during the Sabbath services, fine. The main thing is to survey as far as possible all members present on a given Sabbath.

#### Spiritual Emphasis

Some will raise the question as to whether or not this is appropriate on the Sabbath. We believe this depends on the way it is handled. We urge you to take a brief period (perhaps 5 minutes) to talk about the survey in the light of finishing God's work. Tell the congregation that your local and conference leadership are deeply concerned about the fulfillment of the Great Commission. They need to find out why we have or have not been successful in soul-winning, and what can be done about it. Tell them that this is an opportunity to take spiritual inventory of how they see themselves and their church. This information will help the pastor and the conference leaders to give wiser direction to God's cause in their district and throughout all of the Conference. Tell them that the questions can help focus on areas in their own lives that need changing and may thus prove to be a positive spiritual experience. Share that results of the survey will be used in planning a soul-winning thrust in their community.

#### Specific Instructions

1. Tell the members a week ahead of time so that they will be mentally prepared. Don't just drop it on them. You might mention that your church has been chosen for an important study that will help your conference leaders lay plans for finishing the work. Tell them that a special time schedule will be arranged for next Sabbath.
2. Bring extra pencils for those who have forgotten a writing implement. Pens are okay.

3. Give the survey only to baptized members of this local church.
4. We have estimated the number of surveys you will need by a formula. In a few churches there might not be enough to cover everyone. Don't worry. Just give them out as far as they go.
5. Emphasize that there are no right answers. We need to know how the members actually believe and do, not how they think they should answer the questions.
6. Ask them to circle a number for each questions--not a word.
7. If a member has difficulty in choosing a response or feels that none of the choices is exactly applicable, instruct him to pick the choice nearest to what he feels is right but to answer every question. Blanks in the data throw off the results.
8. Instruct them to make their answers reflect habitual attitudes and practices over the past year rather than the present state of affairs.
9. Emphasize that all answers are confidential. Members do not put their names on the sheet and no one will know how they answered. The number on the survey is a church code and is the same for everyone in their church.

After the members are finished, collect the surveys, and early the next week, return them to the designated place.

Do not return unused surveys since they are coded for your church.

A profile showing the percentage of the members who chose each response will be provided.

Thanks so much for your help. Blessings on you in your ministry.

CHURCH GROWTH SURVEY - THE ADVENTIST MEMBER  
 INSTITUTE OF CHURCH MINISTRY  
 THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ANDREWS UNIVERSITY  
 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
 CHURCH #  
 00000

NUMBER OF SURVEYS FOR THIS REPORT = 8211

1.	CIRCLE THE NUMBER SHOWING HOW LONG YOU HAVE BEEN A BAPTIZED ADVENTIST.	LESS THAN 1 YEAR 8%	1-5 YEARS 21%	6-10 YEARS 13%	11-20 YEARS 19%	OVER 20 YEARS 39%		
2.	WAS AT LEAST ONE OF YOUR PARENTS AN ADVENTIST SOMETIME DURING THE FIRST 12 YEARS OF YOUR LIFE?			YES 48%	NO 52%			
3.	CIRCLE THE NUMBER INDICATING THE RELATIONSHIP THAT YOU HAVE WITH JESUS CHRIST.			NONE 1%	1 2 3 4 5 5% 26% 29% 40%	INTIMATE		
4.	WHAT NUMBER SHOWS YOUR ASSURANCE THAT YOU ARE RIGHT WITH GOD?			NOT SURE 4%	1 2 3 4 5 6% 23% 30% 37%	VERY CERTAIN		
5.	HOW CERTAIN ARE YOU ABOUT WHAT YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE? CIRCLE A NUMBER.			NO IDEA 9%	1 2 3 4 5 11% 26% 24% 31%	QUITE CERTAIN		
6.	HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU ATTENDED ADVENTIST SCHOOLS? CIRCLE A NUMBER.	0 58%	0-2 8%	2-4 8%	5-8 11%	9-12 7%	13-16 7%	17 & UP 2%
7.	DO YOU HAVE MANY NON-ADVENTIST FRIENDS?			NONE 2%	1 2 3 4 5 10% 19% 13% 57%	MANY		
8.	HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MONEY THE CONFERENCE SPENDS ON PUBLIC EVANGELISM? CIRCLE A NUMBER.			TOO MUCH SPENT 3%	1 2 3 4 5 5% 27% 24% 41%	SHOULD SPEND MORE		
9.	HOW WELL PREPARED ARE YOU FOR THE WORK OF WITNESSING? CIRCLE A NUMBER.			NOT AT ALL 10%	1 2 3 4 5 22% 35% 18% 14%	VERY WELL		
10.	WOULD IT BE BETTER FOR YOUR CHURCH TO DOUBLE OR TRIPLE ITS SIZE IN ONE YEAR OR GROW MORE GRADUALLY?			GRADUAL GROWTH 18%	1 2 3 4 5 13% 28% 16% 26%	GROWTH EXPLOSION		
11.	HAVE YOU BEEN ENGAGED IN SOME TYPE OF WITNESSING PROGRAM OVER THE PAST YEAR?			YES 57%	NO 43%			
12.	DO YOU HOLD A CHURCH OFFICE OR OTHER SERVICE POSITION?			58%	42%			
13.	DID YOU SET A PERSONAL SOUL-WINNING GOAL THIS YEAR?			30%	70%			
14.	HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING TO WIN NON-ADVENTIST RELATIVES?			68%	32%			
15.	HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES (DORCAS, STCP SMOKING, ETC.)?			38%	62%			
16.	HAVE YOU HELD BIBLE STUDIES WITH A NON-ADVENTIST THIS YEAR?			33%	67%			
17.	WITHIN THE LAST YEAR HAVE YOU ATTENDED A WITNESSING TRAINING PROGRAM?			23%	77%			
18.	CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH GROUP: A) SOUL WINNING CHURCH			NO 7%	1 2 3 4 5 14% 32% 19% 28%	YES		



B) ADVENTIST STANDARDS	LOW	1 3%	2 6%	3 28%	4 30%	5 32%	HIGH
C) FRIENDLINESS	COLD AND UNFRIENDLY	1 4%	2 6%	3 19%	4 26%	5 46%	WARM AND FRIENDLY
D) UNITY	DIVIDED FIGHTING	1 4%	2 6%	3 24%	4 31%	5 34%	COOPERATIVE UNITED
E) NEW MEMBERS	IGNORED	1 4%	2 7%	3 20%	4 27%	5 42%	INVOLVED
F) FEELINGS TOWARDS CHURCH PEOPLE	I DON'T FIT IN	1 3%	2 5%	3 18%	4 27%	5 46%	MY KIND OF PEOPLE

19. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH SHOWS THE DEGREE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN:

- DA - DOESN'T APPLY
- N - NEVER
- S - SOMETIMES
- U - USUALLY
- A - ALWAYS

	DA	N	S	U	A
A) DAILY PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY	2%	4%	34%	34%	25%
B) DAILY PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF SPECIFIC PEOPLE	2%	5%	32%	23%	38%
C) REGULAR STUDY OF ELLEN WHITE BOOKS	4%	12%	47%	20%	17%
D) REGULAR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SOUL-WINNING	4%	10%	29%	23%	33%
E) MEET REGULARLY WITH A SMALL STUDY OR FELLOWSHIP GROUP	9%	30%	33%	13%	14%
F) HELP NEIGHBORS WITH THEIR PERSONAL PROBLEMS	5%	13%	40%	22%	20%
G) CONCERN FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ACCEPTED CHRIST	1%	2%	16%	27%	54%
H) DAILY FAMILY WORSHIP	5%	11%	32%	22%	30%
I) WITNESSING IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES	2%	5%	35%	32%	26%

20. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH SHOWS THE EMPHASIS YOUR PASTOR PLACES ON:

A) MINISTRY TO MEMBERS	LITTLE IMPORTANCE	1 3%	2 4%	3 15%	4 26%	5 52%	TOP PRIORITY
B) SOUL-WINNING	LITTLE IMPORTANCE	1 1%	2 3%	3 12%	4 24%	5 60%	TOP PRIORITY

21. HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE YOU BEEN WHOLLY OR PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING INTO THE CHURCH IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

UNAWARE OF ANY 62% ONE 15% TWO TO FIVE 17% SIX TO TEN 2% MORE THAN TEN 3%

22. CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PASTOR'S SERMONS:

A)	DISCOURAGES	1 1%	2 3%	3 12%	4 22%	5 62%	BUILDS FAITH
B)	NON-CHRIST CENTERED	1 1%	2 1%	3 7%	4 16%	5 76%	CHRIST CENTERED

C)

23. CIRCLE THE NUMBER OF YOUR OVERALL EVALUATION OF:

A) YOUR PASTOR

B) YOUR PASTOR'S WIFE

24. CIRCLE THE NUMBER OF THE AGE GROUP YOU ARE IN.  
19 YEARS OR UNDER

20-35 YEARS  
29%

36-50 YEARS  
22%

51-65 YEARS  
19%

OVER 65 YEARS  
16%

25. CIRCLE THE NUMBER WHICH SHOWS YOUR YEARLY FAMILY INCOME.

UNDER \$8,000  
26%

\$8,001 TO \$16,000  
33%

\$16,001 TO \$25,000  
25%

\$25,001 TO \$50,000  
14%

ABOVE \$50,000  
2%

26. CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT SHOWS THE DISTANCE THAT YOU LIVE FROM THE CHURCH.  
UNDER 3 MILES

4-10 MILES  
39%

11-15 MILES  
13%

16-25 MILES  
8%

OVER 25 MILES  
5%

NOT HELPFUL

1 2 3 4 5  
1% 3% 9% 18% 69%

HELPFUL

NOT VERY EFFECTIVE

1 2 3 4 5  
2% 3% 11% 24% 59%

VERY EFFECTIVE

NOT VERY EFFECTIVE

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 5% 15% 24% 52%

VERY EFFECTIVE



B) Adventist standards	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
		3%	7%	29%	28%	33%	
C) Friendliness	Cold and unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	Warm and friendly
		4%	5%	19%	24%	49%	
D) Unity	Divided and fighting	1	2	3	4	5	Cooperative/unity
		5%	8%	20%	35%	32%	
E) New members	Ignored	1	2	3	4	5	Involved
		3%	7%	18%	32%	41%	
F) Feelings towards church people	I don't fit in	1	2	3	4	5	My kind of people
		3%	5%	19%	27%	46%	

19. Circle the number which shows the degree that you have been involved in:

- DA - Doesn't apply
- N - Never
- S - Sometimes
- U - Usually
- A - Always

	DA	N	S	U	A
A) Daily personal Bible Study	2%	2%	38%	34%	24%
B) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people	1%	4%	37%	23%	34%
C) Regular study of Ellen White books	3%	10%	49%	21%	16%
D) Regular financial support for local soul-winning	5%	10%	32%	25%	28%
E) Meet regularly with a small study or fellowship group	8%	31%	38%	12%	11%
F) Help neighbors with their personal problems	5%	12%	42%	24%	17%
G) Concern for those who have not accepted Christ	1%	1%	20%	29%	50%
H) Daily family worship	4%	8%	33%	25%	29%
I) Witnessing in everyday activities	2%	4%	37%	31%	26%

20. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on:

A) Ministry to members	Little importance	1	2	3	4	5	Top priority
		2%	5%	16%	27%	51%	
B) Soul-winning	Little importance	1	2	3	4	5	Top priority
		3%	3%	13%	23%	59%	

21. How many people have you been wholly or partially responsible for bringing into the church in the last three years?

Unaware of any	One	Two to five	Six to ten	More than ten
63%	12%	18%	2%	4%

22. Circle the number that best describes your pastor's sermons:

A)	Discourages	1	2	3	4	5	Builds faith
		2%	5%	16%	21%	57%	
B)	Not Christ-centered	1	2	3	4	5	Christ-centered
		0%	1%	10%	19%	70%	

C)  
 23. Circle the number of your overall evaluation of:  
 A) Your pastor

B) Your pastor's wife  
 24. Circle the number of the age group you are in.  
 19 years or under 9%

25. Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.  
 Under \$8,000 13%

26. Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.  
 Under 3 miles 13%

20-35 years 36%  
 \$8,001 to \$16,000 31%  
 4-10 miles 41%

Not helpful	1	2	3	4	5	Helpful
	1%	6%	11%	22%	61%	
Not very effective	1	2	3	4	5	Very effective
	1%	5%	10%	29%	55%	
Not very effective	1	2	3	4	5	Very effective
	2%	7%	14%	23%	54%	
36-50 years	51-65 years		Over 65 years			
24%	23%		8%			
\$16,001 to \$25,000	\$25,001 to \$50,000		Above \$50,000			
31%	21%		3%			
11-15 miles	16-25 miles		Over 25 miles			
26%	16%		4%			

DATA INFORMATION-IGNORED