

ferences as insignificant in the preaching of the gospel.

The other school of thought declares that different groups of people perceive the gospel in different ways. Devotees of this philosophy seek to reach people through their own cultural milieu. The place which culture occupies in the presentation and perception of the gospel continues to be a subject of lively debate which shows no sign of conclusive resolution. What is definite, however, is the fact that most evangelists recognize that it is very important to seek to reach different people in different ways. The process of targeting various populations is therefore a very important part of any soul winning strategy.

The first step in population targeting is the development of a demographic study. Demographic studies have long been used by various commercial businesses as a method of discovering the basic characteristics of people in a given market area. This information has proven very useful in the introduction of new products. Soft drink companies did such studies of several market areas to determine the buying habits of consumers in the target zones before introducing new products, especially caffeine-free colas. Radio and television stations and political candidates also make use of demographic studies.

Essentially a demographic study is a study of the basic characteristics of a community and its people. The accumulated data is organized in such a way that a quick reading will reveal similarities and differences among the population. Such variables as racial composition, sex ratios, age, and economic classification usually stand out most prominently and are probably the most important demographic indicators. Indicators such as education, number of people in the family, number of female-headed families, and value of the housing are also important. All of this information is readily available in the decennial census records which are purchased by most public and university libraries. While the work of looking at various sections of town and isolating the population's age, ethnic, economic, and sexual characteristics may be a little time consuming, the results are well worth the time spent. When the data are utilized with a city map, the evangelist can easily determine

the ethnic, national, age, and socio-economic characteristics of the area in which an evangelist thrust is planned.

The most important part of this procedure is interpreting the data and formulating a plan. Actually, once the data is before one in an organized manner it often speaks for itself. For instance, if a section of town is characterized by a high percentage of married people between the ages of 21-25, with an educational average of 12.6 grades and an average of two children, certain needs emerge. In such an area outreach strategies tied in with family life ministries are likely to be more effective than a large general public campaign. Such information should also alert the pastor or evangelist to the need for babysitting or children's programs if adult attendance is expected.

By contrast, an area characterized by a large percentage of upper income people between the ages of 40 and 55 is not likely to respond well to traditional public evangelism, yet stress clinics and Bible seminars might prove much more effective.

In all of this it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict people. The worker's responsibility is to do his or her best to meet people where they are and communicate to them in a way which is meaningful to them. To this end targeting populations with demographic aids may be a most helpful tool.

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Doing Demographics

In order to identify target populations, it is necessary to gather as much information as possible about the people in a community. Such data can be classified into two basic categories. The first is survey data. The information is gained by asking the people themselves. An example is a community felt needs survey. The second category comprises information gathered from various records—statistics like race, income, housing, family, religion, etc. These data are called demographics.

There are a number of sources of information for building a demographic profile: the chamber of commerce, the city or regional planning commission, the local Ministerial Association, and insurance companies, for instance. But the most comprehensive information for major cities and other metropolitan areas comes from the decennial census conducted by the United States Census Bureau. Unfortunately, this census does not gather any information on religious affiliation. But it does provide a wealth of data on a variety of personal, family, and social characteristics of American people.

Like its predecessors, the 1980 census report is published in a series of thick volumes and is available from good libraries. Building a useful profile from such a massive amount of data, however, is a formidable task when done by hand, and many churches or groups of churches in a single area prefer a computer analysis.

The Institute of Church Ministry has joined with an interdenominational consortium to make computer profiles of selected areas available at a reasonable cost. The consortium first purchased all the information from the 1980 census on computer tape (at a cost of more than \$35,000). Then programmers developed a profile containing the data which the various churches agreed would be most useful to church planners.

The information selected includes population, sex, family households, non-family households, marital status, race, Hispanic backgrounds, age, housing

characteristics, housing structure, and housing value. All together, eighty-five pieces of information are organized into twenty-four modules.

All information is provided by census tracts, which are small, relatively permanent areas defined by the U. S. Census Bureau. When census tracts are established, they are designed to be as homogeneous as possible with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions. Tracts generally have between 2,500 and 8,000 residents.

On the profile the county (identified by number) appears in column 1. Column 2 lists the particular tract number. The profile gives the information organized under module 1 for each census tract in the area requested. Then it goes back over the same tracts with the data in module 2, and so on through module 24. The first twelve modules give the information as actual numbers of people. Modules 13 to 24 repeat the data of modules 1 to 12 but provide the information as percentages of the total. In areas of many census tracts, the computer printout will be a very thick document.

To make the profile intelligible, the reader must have a census tract map of the area on which the tracts are identified by numbers corresponding to those on the profile. Major U. S. cities with their surrounding areas are called standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSA). Tract maps are available for all SMSAs. For example, the entire Denver SMSA is composed of 407 tracts and takes in a four-county area including Boulder. Denver County alone is composed of 135 tracts. Maps are also available for each state, giving those tracts that are not included in any SMSA. Tract maps are often available from the local regional planning commission, or any map can be purchased from The Superintendent of Documents at the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. They cost between \$4.00 and \$7.50. A price list may be secured from the Bureau of the Census in Washington, zip 20233.

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The Uniqueness of the Small Church

The small church is not on one end of a continuum of church size. It is different in quality than larger churches. It constitutes a primary group. A primary group is a place where everyone knows (or knows about) everyone else. It is a place where values are formed, where people are more open to each other, where they care and share. It is also a place where people are more emotional, where there is more fighting, where they can let it all hang out.

All congregations are collections of primary groups, but the small church is where all are in the same primary group. It is a "single cell" church. In a small church, growth is traumatic because it threatens the primary group. Most evangelism programs grow by division. Small church growth usually takes place by adoption (not conversion). Members who would come in must join the past and share the story of the church.

In the small church, time is important—people time. The church is closely tied into its history and roots. Annual events become important. These are occasions when everyone participates and there is opportunity to rehearse the history of the church. The congregation that remembers how God blessed them in the periods of crisis is the one that can use their history most effectively. Place is also important because of the people that are associated with that place. Community space is remembered for early owners and significant happenings. Building programs can be traumatic in small churches.

Larger churches like to provide a variety of programs with something for everyone. In a small church, a lot of programs exhaust the people, because everybody is involved in everything. In assessing their pastor, a small congregation wants not a specialist or a generalist, but a lover. They respond to someone who knows them all by name, who is not a polished professional, but someone who is vulnerable and can share their life experience.

The church that lives only in the past is dead; the church that lives only in the future is unreal. Those who keep the image of the church are the liberators

of the future. Culture-carrying congregations will do what is faithful to the history of their past as they move forward to exploits for God.

Condensed from address by Carl Dudley

Working Policy

The Advent Movement began its prophetic journey toward the kingdom in 1844. The believers were few in number, having come out of various churches. They walked at first uncertainly. They were sure of the doctrines they held but were unsure as to the form of organization they should follow.

While the church name, Seventh-day Adventist, was chosen in 1860 and a legal body created to hold church property, it wasn't until the 1926 Annual Council that a working policy was adopted. The purpose of a working policy was to collect General Conference Committee actions, state them briefly and concisely, and bring them together in pamphlet form for use by our denominational leaders in every part of the world field.

In 1971 a North American Division edition of the General Conference *Working Policy* was published. It contains the accumulated policy-making recommendations and resolutions as passed by the General Conference Session and the Annual Council and also the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference. It is therefore the authoritative voice of the Church in all matters pertaining to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Because of this it should be strictly adhered to by all organizations.

The *Working Policy* is the result of careful, prayerful thought and planning. It reflects the consensus or majority conviction of the Church leadership and should, therefore, be accepted as the general working plan for the Church.

The General Conference in session and the Executive Committee between sessions is the highest authority under God among us. However, its relationship to its divisions, unions, and other organizations is not arbitrary and dictatorial. It is in the spirit of counsel and cooperation that the work is to be carried forward. The success achieved and the wonderful accomplishments attained in the carrying forward of a world-wide work are built upon the loyalty, the devotion, and the willing support and cooperation of every organization, church, and individual in the denomination.

J. William Bothe
Associate Secretary, GC

JESUS MODEL (continued from page 5)

With this philosophy, meeting the needs of men and women, Jerry watched his church grow. When he came to the East Hill Church in 1965, it had a total membership of 23. In the next 14 years it grew to over 4,500 by becoming what he calls the body of Christ in its own community. To Jerry Cook, pastor of the Four Square Gospel Church outside of Portland, the church is an extension of the ministry of Christ in a given community. When our churches become an extension of the ministry of Christ, they will grow. When they meet the needs of men and women in Jesus' name and become servants in the world, God will miraculously work to lead multitudes to them.

As the local congregation ministers to felt needs in the community, minds and hearts are prepared for the presentation of God's special message for these last days. Love and concern do not necessarily win converts but rather create a climate of openness and receptivity where individuals can be won. They are prepared to listen.

Throughout the gospels Jesus met felt needs. There was a limited immediate harvest. Still thousands of minds were prepared for the straightforward proclamation of "present truth" in Acts.

Identifying target populations, meeting felt needs, developing an atmosphere of loving sensitivity for the needs of others—none of these are substitutes for

evangelistic proclamation. Rather, they are the best preparation for it. A caring church whose members are equipped to serve, meeting needs in Jesus' name with a clear evangelistic focus, giving emphasis to the proclamation of the three angels' messages, cannot help but grow!

Mark Finley
NAD Evangelism Institute

DEMOGRAPHICS (continued from page 9)

The cost for ICM to prepare a demographic profile as described varies according to the number of contiguous tracts desired. ICM will secure estimates on request. Some examples: St. Joseph, Michigan—\$70, Dayton, Ohio—\$92, Hamilton County, Tennessee (Chattanooga)—\$115, Indianapolis—\$350, the entire Denver SMSA—\$500. Profiles can be secured for an entire SMSA, a city or town alone, or any section of a city. In the latter case the particular tracts should be specified by number.

Once a demographic profile is in hand, target populations can be identified for each tract area. The church planner may look at the percentage of the population made up by each race, for areas with high concentration of younger couples with small children, or for those with middle-class economic status. Knowing the primary characteristics of an area helps church planners to select evangelistic approaches that are most likely to be fruitful.

Since new church planting is more likely to be successful in rapidly growing areas, planners often wish to know the rate of change in each area. It is now possible for ICM to secure a demographic that will compare *each item* in the 1980 profile with the corresponding figure for 1970. Thus it is possible to note the amount and direction of change of each tract on all eighty-five pieces of information. This analysis costs about 50% more than producing the 1980 profile alone.

Send in requests with tract identification. ICM is pleased to be able to assist in identifying target populations.

Roger L. Dudley