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Andrews University  
The Institute of Church Ministry

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

A Research Study  
commissioned by  
the Ohio 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 Ohio 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 Ohio Conference.

The research identifies relationships and trends among 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. 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 1981-82 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 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 member in the Ohio Conference are developed. These profiles are based upon answers given to the questions in the survey.
2. A correlational research in which various items on the questionnaire have been correlated with the growth rates of Ohio churches.

In the correlational phase of the study the rate of church growth in churches in the Ohio Conference for the two-year period, 1981-1982, 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 population for this study includes all Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Ohio Conference. There were 94 such churches at the time the surveying was done. The sample consisted of all baptized members present at a given Sabbath worship service in each of the 94 churches. These members were asked to complete their questionnaires during the personal ministries period.

### Research Instrument

The instrument employed in the research was the Ohio Church Growth Survey which collects fifty items of information. The survey was developed by the Institute of Church Ministry. A sample of the instrument is in the appendix.

### Procedures for Collecting Data

In February, 1983, data collection began in the following manner:

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

1. An estimated number of Ohio Church Growth Surveys for each of the 94 churches. Each survey had been pre-coded with the number assigned to that particular church.
2. 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 Ohio 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 his members. The Ohio 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 Ohio 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 were attached statistics for the two-year period, 1981-82. These were the actual and kingdom growth rates, the beginning membership size, the number of baptisms, and the number of apostasies.

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 two times for the member variables. The set of independent variables has been regressed on actual growth rate and kingdom growth rate. So there are two 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 produced a descriptive profile of the membership of each church in the conference and of the combined membership of the conference. In addition two selections were made. One compares the answers of those members baptized longer than six years with those baptized less than six years. A second selection compares the answers of those who know of at least one convert they have brought into the church in the past three years with the answers of those who are unaware of bringing anyone into the church in the previous three years.

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

Chapter 3--findings from the Ohio Church Growth Survey

Chapter 4--summary and conclusions

### CHAPTER III

#### FINDINGS FROM ADVENTIST MEMBER SURVEY

This chapter describes the findings from the survey of members in the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Supplies of the "Ohio Church Growth Survey" were sent to each of the 94 churches in the conference in February of 1983. The surveys were administered at Sabbath worship services during March and April.

Seventy-nine (79) of the churches completed and returned 3157 usable surveys. This constitutes a highly respectable return rate of 83 percent and ensures that the results are typical of the viewpoints, attitudes, and behaviors of members in the Ohio Conference.

First the descriptive profiles 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 3157 members in the Ohio Conference churches is shown in Profile 1. The profiles of individual churches were sent to the conference in June 1983, in advance of this report.

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

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Church #

OHIO CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

Profile 1

Number of surveys for this report = 3157

1. Circle the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.	Less than 1 year 7%	1-5 years 19%	6-10 years 12%	11-20 years 19%	Over 20 years 43%	
2. Was at least one of your parents an Adventist sometime during the first 12 years of your life?	Yes 50%		No 50%			
3. Circle the number indicating the relationship that you have with Jesus Christ.	None 1%	1 5%	2 26%	3 33%	4 35%	5 Intimate
4. What number shows your assurance that you have eternal life?	Not sure 4%	1 4%	2 17%	3 24%	4 51%	5 Very certain
5. To what extent have you attended Adventist schools?	Not at all					All the way
A) Elementary	1 67%	2 5%	3 4%	4 6%	5 18%	
B) Academy	1 67%	2 5%	3 3%	4 4%	5 21%	
C) College	1 73%	2 6%	3 3%	4 3%	5 15%	
6. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on soul-winning.	Little importance 2%	1 4%	2 16%	3 25%	4 52%	5 Top priority
7. How do you feel about the amount of money the conference spends on public evangelism? Circle a number.	Too much spent 5%	1 7%	2 39%	3 23%	4 25%	5 Should spend more
8. How well prepared are you for the work of soul-winning? Circle a number.	Not at all 12%	1 27%	2 37%	3 16%	4 8%	5 Very well
9. Have you been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past twelve months?	Yes 58%		No 42%			
10. Do you hold a church office or other position of service?	54%		46%			
11. Did you set a personal soul-winning goal this year?	22%		78%			
12. Have you been involved in community outreach services (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, etc.)?	40%		60%			
13. Have you held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months?	24%		76%			
14. Within the last year have you attended a witnessing training program?	16%		84%			
15. How much do you agree with these statements? Circle the number.	Disagree strongly					Agree strongly
A) My immediate family helps my relationship with Christ.	1 9%	2 9%	3 22%	4 21%	5 39%	

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

1 2 3 4 5  
5% 6% 14% 21% 53%

C) Most sabbath sermons are interesting.

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 5% 15% 26% 50%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
11% 14% 32% 21% 22%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
12% 9% 24% 19% 36%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
13% 18% 39% 18% 12%

G) I can speak easily about my faith.

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 7% 21% 27% 41%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
7% 11% 36% 26% 20%

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

Unaware of any  
68%

One  
14%

Two to five  
15%

Six to ten  
2%

More than ten  
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

3% 7% 39% 30% 21%

B) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people

2% 7% 35% 22% 33%

C) Study of Ellen White books

3% 12% 49% 20% 15%

D) Financial support for local soul-winning

7% 13% 34% 22% 24%

E) Attending prayer meeting

12% 33% 32% 12% 11%

F) Meeting regularly with a small study or fellowship group

13% 38% 29% 11% 9%

G) Helping neighbors with their personal problems

6% 16% 41% 22% 15%

H) Daily family worship

7% 18% 34% 18% 23%

I) Witnessing in everyday activities

2% 7% 38% 31% 22%

J) Attending Sabbath School

1% 2% 9% 20% 59%

K) Tithing

2% 3% 11% 13% 71%

L) Working to win non-Adventist relatives

6% 12% 33% 20% 28%

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

A) Soul-winning church

No 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

4% 9% 38% 27% 22%

B) Adventist standards	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
		2%	6%	27%	35%	30%	
C) Friendliness	Cold and unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	Warm and friendly
		3%	6%	19%	28%	45%	
E) New members	Ignored	1	2	3	4	5	Involved
		3%	7%	23%	29%	38%	
F) Feelings towards church people	I don't fit in	1	2	3	4	5	My kind of people
		3%	4%	20%	31%	42%	
Do you have close friends who are not Adventists?	None	1	2	3	4	5	Many
		3%	5%	32%	18%	42%	
Where do you presently send your children to school?	SDA schools	Public schools				No school-age children	
	19%	17%				63%	
Do Adventist pastors stay at a church?	Too short?	About right?				Too long a time?	
	39%	55%				6%	
Circle the number of the age group you are in.	19 years or under	20-35 years	36-50 years	51-65 years	Over 65 years		
	11%	28%	22%	21%	17%		
Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.	Under \$8,000	\$8,001 to \$16,000	\$16,001 to \$25,000	\$25,001 to \$50,000	Above \$50,000		
	22%	26%	27%	20%	4%		
Circle the number that shows your ethnic background.	Asian	Black	Spanish	White	Other		
	2%	3%	3%	91%	1%		
Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.	Under 3 miles	4-10 miles	11-15 miles	16-25 miles	Over 25 miles		
	28%	39%	16%	13%	4%		
What is your sex	Male				Female		
	39%				51%		

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 Ohio Adventists who attend Sabbath worship services and does not represent inactive members.

Church-attending Adventists in Ohio are a somewhat mature group with 62 percent having been members more than ten years (43 percent more than 20 years). Only 7 percent are in their first year of Adventism. There's an even split between those brought up in an Adventist home and those who were not.

Ohio members seem to feel good about their spiritual lives. More than half describe their relationship with Christ as "Intimate" (68 percent). Also 75 percent of Ohio members feel certain about eternal life.

In spite of this positive note, the majority of members have not attended Adventist schools at all on any level. Others reported partial attendance. Only 18 percent received all of their elementary schooling in Adventist schools. The corresponding figures for academy and college are 21 percent and 15 percent.

Although a majority (58 percent) report that they have been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past year, only 24 percent feel prepared for this work. This may be partially explained by the fact that only 16 percent have attended a recent witnessing-training program.

Along these same lines, 77 percent of Ohio members feel that the local pastor places a great deal of emphasis on soul-

winning, yet only 22 percent set a personal soul-winning goal for the year and only 24 percent have held Bible studies with someone during the past twelve months. Even more to the point, 68 percent of the active members are unaware of anyone that they helped bring into the church in the last three years and only 3 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 3 percent disagree with the statement that "people who are brought into the church in evangelistic meetings just do not stay."

Feelings about the local church are good in Ohio with 74 percent indicating that they would feel comfortable bringing someone to Sabbath School and 76 percent indicating that they find most Sabbath sermons interesting and yet only 46 percent feel that the community has a high opinion of their church.

When it comes to personal Bible study only 51 percent of Ohio members study their Bibles regularly and even fewer (35 percent) study the writings of Ellen White on a regular basis. Also less than half of the Ohio members indicated that they participated in regular family worship (41 percent).

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. The concept has not been actualized among Ohio members for only 20 percent are involved in these groups

to any significant extent, and only 23 percent attend mid-week meetings on a regular basis.

It is encouraging to note that 84 percent of the members usually or always pay tithe. And most members find their church maintains high Adventist standards (65 percent), is warm and friendly (73 percent), involves new members (67 percent) and describe the members as "my kind of people" (73 percent).

It is surprising to discover that 63 percent of the members report having no school-age children. Of those who do however, only slightly more than half are sending them to Adventist schools.

The member survey indicates that over half of the Ohio membership is under 50 (61 percent) and are mostly white (91 percent). Ohio members are by-and-large not affluent. Note that 48 percent report yearly family incomes of under \$16,000 and only 24 percent are over \$25,000. Finally women outnumber men almost two to one when it comes to church attendance; 61 percent of those filling out the survey were women and only 39 percent were men.

#### Two Group Comparisons

In addition to an analysis of the full membership of the Ohio Conference two selections were made for comparison purposes. First those unaware of bringing anyone into the church during the past three years were compared with those who have brought at least one person into the church during the previous three years. Secondly, those baptized members of five years or less were compared to members who have been baptized members for more than five years.

In the first selection (Profiles 2 and 3) those who have brought at least one person into the church during the previous three years report a more intimate relationship with Christ, are more certain about eternal life and feel much better prepared for soul-winning. Yet it is interesting to note that with the exception of college they have attended Adventist schools less than those unaware of bringing anyone into the church in the past three years.

Further, those who have won converts tend to be church office holders, to set a personal soul-winning goal, are more involved in community outreach, and hold Bible studies twice as much as those who are unaware of bringing any converts into the church.

Ohio members who report themselves as soul-winners feel better about the local church, speak more easily about their faith, and study their Bibles more. They pray more for the conversion of specific people, study Ellen White books more, give more money to local soul-winning efforts, meet more often in small groups, and witness more in everyday activities than those who are unaware of bringing anyone into the church in the past three years.

Finally those who report bringing at least one convert into an Ohio Adventist Church generally are from 36-65 years old, with a slightly greater number among blacks and Spanish than among whites in proportion to Ohio members in these three groups.

Turning now to the selection which compares the answers given by members who have been baptized for six years or longer with those members baptized less than six years (Profiles 4 and 5), the first thing to notice is that long-time members more often describe

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Q16 THOSE UNAWARE OF CONVERTS

Number of surveys for this report = 2013

Profile 2

1. Circle the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.
 

Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	Over 20 years
8%	18%	11%	19%	43%
2. Was at least one of your parents an Adventist sometime during the first 12 years of your life?
 

	Yes	No
	53%	47%
3. Circle the number indicating the relationship that you have with Jesus Christ.
 

	None	1	2	3	4	5	Intimate
		1%	6%	31%	33%	30%	
4. What number shows your assurance that you have eternal life?
 

	Not sure	1	2	3	4	5	Very certain
		5%	5%	19%	26%	46%	
5. To what extent have you attended Adventist schools?
 

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	All the way
A) Elementary		65%	5%	5%	6%	20%	
B) Academy		1	2	3	4	5	
		65%	5%	4%	3%	23%	
C) College		1	2	3	4	5	
		72%	6%	4%	3%	15%	
6. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on soul-winning.
 

	Little importance	1	2	3	4	5	Top priority
		2%	5%	18%	26%	49%	
7. How do you feel about the amount of money the conference spends on public evangelism? Circle a number.
 

	Too much spent	1	2	3	4	5	Should spend more
		6%	8%	41%	23%	22%	
8. How well prepared are you for the work of soul-winning? Circle a number.
 

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very well
		14%	32%	36%	13%	5%	
9. Have you been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past twelve months?
 

	Yes	No
	50%	50%
10. Do you hold a church office or other position of service?
 

	51%	49%
--	-----	-----
11. Did you set a personal soul-winning goal this year?
 

	16%	84%
--	-----	-----
12. Have you been involved in community outreach services (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, etc.)?
 

	34%	66%
--	-----	-----
13. Have you held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months?
 

	16%	84%
--	-----	-----
14. Within the last year have you attended a witnessing training program?
 

	14%	86%
--	-----	-----
15. How much do you agree with these statements? Circle the number.
 

	Disagree strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Agree strongly
A) My immediate family helps my relationship with Christ.		9%	10%	23%	21%	36%	

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

1 2 3 4 5  
6% 7% 15% 23% 49%

C) Most sabbath sermons are interesting.

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 5% 16% 28% 47%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
11% 16% 34% 20% 19%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
12% 9% 26% 19% 35%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
13% 17% 39% 19% 12%

G) I can speak easily about my faith.

1 2 3 4 5  
5% 8% 24% 26% 37%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
7% 11% 39% 25% 18%

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

Unaware of any 100% One 0% Two to five 0% Six to ten 0% More than ten 0%

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

19

A) Daily personal Bible Study

4% 9% 42% 27% 17%

B) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people

2% 9% 39% 21% 29%

C) Study of Ellen White books

4% 14% 52% 18% 12%

D) Financial support for local soul-winning

8% 15% 35% 21% 21%

E) Attending prayer meeting

14% 38% 30% 11% 8%

F) Meeting regularly with a small study or fellowship group

13% 44% 27% 8% 7%

G) Helping neighbors with their personal problems

7% 18% 41% 20% 13%

H) Daily family worship

7% 21% 35% 18% 19%

I) Witnessing in everyday activities

3% 8% 42% 28% 20%

J) Attending Sabbath School

1% 2% 9% 22% 67%

K) Tithing

2% 3% 12% 13% 70%

L) Working to win non-Adventist relatives

7% 15% 36% 18% 24%

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

A) Soul-winning church

No 1 2 3 4 5 Yes  
4% 10% 40% 26% 20%

B) Adventist standards

Low 1 2 3 4 5 High  
3% 7% 28% 35% 28%

C) Friendliness

Cold and unfriendly 1 2 3 4 5 Warm and friendly  
3% 6% 19% 27% 45%

E) New members

Ignored 1 2 3 4 5 Involved  
3% 8% 23% 29% 37%

F) Feelings towards church people

I don't fit in 1 2 3 4 5 My kind of people  
3% 5% 21% 32% 39%

19. Do you have close friends who are not Adventists?

None 1 2 3 4 5 Many  
3% 5% 33% 17% 42%

20. Where do you presently send your children to school?

SDA schools Public schools No school-age children

21. Do Adventist pastors stay at a church?

Too short? 18% 15% 66%  
38% About right? 55% Too long a time? 6%

22. Circle the number of the age group you are in.

19 years or under 12% 20-35 years 29% 36-50 years 22% 51-65 years 20% Over 65 years 19%

23. Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.

Under \$8,000 22% \$8,001 to \$16,000 27% \$16,001 to \$25,000 27% \$25,001 to \$50,000 20% Above \$50,000 5%

24. Circle the number that shows your ethnic background.

Asian 2% Black 3% Spanish 2% White 92% Other 1%

25. Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.

Under 3 miles 29% 4-10 miles 39% 11-15 miles 15% 16-25 miles 13% Over 25 miles 4%

26. Your sex

Male 40% Female 60%

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Q16 THOSE WHO HAVE WON CONVERTS

Number of surveys for this report = 935

Profile 3

1. Circle the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.
 

Less than 1 year 6%	1-5 years 21%	6-10 years 13%	11-20 years 22%	Over 20 years 38%
------------------------	------------------	-------------------	--------------------	----------------------
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 2%	3 20%	4 36%	5 41%	Intimate
------	---------	---------	----------	----------	----------	----------
4. What number shows your assurance that you have eternal life?
 

Not sure	1 3%	2 2%	3 13%	4 23%	5 59%	Very certain
----------	---------	---------	----------	----------	----------	--------------
5. To what extent have you attended Adventist schools?
 

Not at all	1 70%	2 5%	3 4%	4 6%	5 15%	All the way
A) Elementary						
B) Academy	1 69%	2 6%	3 3%	4 5%	5 17%	
C) College	1 73%	2 6%	3 2%	4 3%	5 16%	
6. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on soul-winning.
 

Little importance	1 2%	2 4%	3 14%	4 23%	5 57%	Top priority
-------------------	---------	---------	----------	----------	----------	--------------
7. How do you feel about the amount of money the conference spends on public evangelism? Circle a number.
 

Too much spent	1 4%	2 6%	3 37%	4 23%	5 29%	Should spend more
----------------	---------	---------	----------	----------	----------	-------------------
8. How well prepared are you for the work of soul-winning? Circle a number.
 

Not at all	1 6%	2 17%	3 40%	4 23%	5 14%	Very well
------------	---------	----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------
9. Have you been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past twelve months?
 

Yes 76%	No 24%
------------	-----------
10. Do you hold a church office or other position of service?
 

63%	37%
-----	-----
11. Did you set a personal soul-winning goal this year?
 

34%	56%
-----	-----
12. Have you been involved in community outreach services (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, etc.)?
 

52%	48%
-----	-----
13. Have you held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months?
 

39%	61%
-----	-----
14. Within the last year have you attended a witnessing training program?
 

21%	78%
-----	-----
15. How much do you agree with these statements? Circle the number.
 

Disagree strongly	1 8%	2 8%	3 21%	4 21%	5 42%	Agree strongly
A) My immediate family helps my relationship with Christ.						

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

1 2 3 4 5  
3% 6% 13% 19% 59%

C) Most sabbath sermons are interesting.

1 2 3 4 5  
2% 4% 14% 24% 56%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
11% 11% 29% 24% 25%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
13% 10% 20% 19% 37%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
12% 19% 40% 17% 12%

G) I can speak easily about my faith.

1 2 3 4 5  
3% 4% 17% 30% 46%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
6% 11% 33% 27% 23%

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

Unaware of any 0% One 44% Two to five 47% Six to ten 5% More than ten 5%

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

2% 3% 36% 34% 26%

B) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people

2% 5% 29% 25% 39%

C) Study of Ellen White books

2% 9% 46% 24% 19%

D) Financial support for local soul-winning

5% 9% 32% 27% 28%

E) Attending prayer meeting

10% 23% 36% 14% 17%

F) Meeting regularly with a small study or fellowship group

10% 28% 33% 16% 13%

G) Helping neighbors with their personal problems

5% 13% 40% 27% 16%

H) Daily family worship

6% 13% 34% 20% 28%

I) Witnessing in everyday activities

1% 5% 31% 37% 26%

J) Attending Sabbath School

1% 2% 9% 18% 71%

K) Tithing

2% 2% 10% 13% 73%

L) Working to win non-Adventist relatives

4% 6% 30% 25% 35%

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

A) Soul-winning church

No 1 2 3 4 5 Yes  
2% 8% 36% 30% 24%

B) Adventist standards

Low 1 2 3 4 5 High  
2% 5% 28% 35% 30%

C) Friendliness

Cold and unfriendly 1 2 3 4 5 Warm and friendly  
2% 5% 18% 30% 44%

E) New members

Ignored 1 2 3 4 5 Involved  
4% 6% 22% 29% 40%

F) Feelings towards church people

I don't fit in 1 2 3 4 5 My kind of people  
2% 4% 17% 29% 48%

19. Do you have close friends who are not Adventists?

None 1 2 3 4 5 Many  
3% 5% 33% 19% 41%

20. Where do you presently send your children to school?

SDA schools 22% Public schools 22% No school-age children 56%

21. Do Adventist pastors stay at a church?

Too short? 40% About right? 53% Too long a time? 7%

22. Circle the number of the age group you are in.

19 years or under 11% 20-35 years 30% 36-50 years 24% 51-65 years 24% Over 65 years 12%

23. Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.

Under \$8,000 21% \$8,001 to \$16,000 26% \$16,001 to \$25,000 28% \$25,001 to \$50,000 21% Above \$50,000 4%

24. Circle the number that shows your ethnic background.

Asian 2% Black 4% Spanish 5% White 8% Other 2%

25. Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.

Under 3 miles 27% 4-10 miles 38% 11-15 miles 16% 16-25 miles 14% Over 25 miles 4%

26. Your sex

Male 39% Female 61%

\*STOP\* 0

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Q1 BAPTIZED 5 YEARS OR LESS

Number of surveys for this report = 888

Profile 4

1. Circle the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.	Less than 1 year 28%	1-5 years 72%	6-10 years 0%	11-20 years 0%	Over 20 years 0%		
2. Was at least one of your parents an Adventist sometime during the first 12 years of your life?	Yes 38%		No 52%				
3. Circle the number indicating the relationship that you have with Jesus Christ.	None 1%	1 7%	2 33%	3 33%	4 25%	5 Intimate	
4. What number shows your assurance that you have eternal life?	Not sure 6%	1 5%	2 23%	3 27%	4 39%	5 Very certain	
5. To what extent have you attended Adventist schools?	Not at all		All the way				
A) Elementary	73%	1 5%	2 4%	3 5%	4 12%	5	
B) Academy	86%	1 4%	2 2%	3 2%	4 6%	5	
C) College	95%	1 1%	2 1%	3 0%	4 3%	5	
6. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on soul-winning.	Little importance 2%	1 4%	2 14%	3 27%	4 52%	5 Top priority	24
7. How do you feel about the amount of money the conference spends on public evangelism? Circle a number.	Too much spent 5%	1 5%	2 43%	3 23%	4 24%	5 Should spend more	
8. How well prepared are you for the work of soul-winning? Circle a number.	Not at all 15%	1 28%	2 34%	3 15%	4 7%	5 Very well	
9. Have you been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past twelve months?	Yes 54%		No 46%				
10. Do you hold a church office or other position of service?	35%		55%				
11. Did you set a personal soul-winning goal this year?	22%		78%				
12. Have you been involved in community outreach services (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, etc.)?	32%		58%				
13. Have you held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months?	26%		74%				
14. Within the last year have you attended a witnessing training program?	15%		34%				
15. How much do you agree with these statements? Circle the number.	Disagree strongly		Agree strongly				
A) My immediate family helps my relationship with Christ.	12%	1 12%	2 24%	3 20%	4 32%	5	

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

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 6% 13% 19% 58%

C) Most sabbath sermons are interesting.

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 5% 16% 25% 50%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
7% 11% 29% 23% 29%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
8% 8% 25% 21% 38%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
15% 22% 38% 16% 9%

G) I can speak easily about my faith.

1 2 3 4 5  
6% 7% 23% 27% 37%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
9% 13% 37% 25% 16%

16. 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
69%	15%	14%	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

4% 10% 44% 26% 16%

B) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people

3% 11% 38% 23% 25%

C) Study of Ellen White books

6% 21% 50% 14% 9%

D) Financial support for local soul-winning

12% 21% 37% 16% 13%

E) Attending prayer meeting

10% 33% 32% 13% 12%

F) Meeting regularly with a small study or fellowship group

8% 37% 28% 15% 12%

G) Helping neighbors with their personal problems

7% 21% 43% 18% 11%

H) Daily family worship

6% 24% 37% 16% 16%

I) Witnessing in everyday activities

3% 11% 45% 26% 15%

J) Attending Sabbath School

1% 3% 11% 26% 59%

K) Tithing

3% 5% 19% 17% 55%

L) Working to win non-Adventist relatives

6% 16% 34% 20% 24%

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

A) Soul-winning church

No	1	2	3	4	5	Yes
3%	7%	32%	30%	29%		

		Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
B) Adventist standards			1%	5%	21%	34%	39%	
C) Friendliness	Cold and unfriendly		1	2	3	4	5	Warm and friendly
			2%	4%	15%	24%	55%	
E) New members	Ignored		1	2	3	4	5	Involved
			2%	6%	19%	27%	46%	
F) Feelings towards church people	I don't fit in		1	2	3	4	5	My kind of people
			3%	4%	20%	30%	44%	
19. Do you have close friends who are not Adventists?	None		1	2	3	4	5	Many
			4%	4%	24%	18%	50%	
20. Where do you presently send your children to school?	SDA schools							No school-age children
			14%		26%			60%
21. Do Adventist pastors stay at a church?	Too short?							Too long a time?
			36%		60%			4%
22. Circle the number of the age group you are in.								
	19 years or under	20-35 years	36-50 years	51-65 years	Over 65 years			
	30%	36%	17%	8%	8%			
23. Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.								
	Under \$8,000	\$8,001 to \$16,000	\$16,001 to \$25,000	\$25,001 to \$50,000	Above \$50,000			
	26%	26%	27%	18%	3%			
24. Circle the number that shows your ethnic background.								
	Asian	Black	Spanish	White	Other			
	1%	5%	5%	87%	2%			
25. Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.								
	Under 3 miles	4-10 miles	11-15 miles	16-25 miles	Over 25 miles			
	30%	39%	15%	11%	4%			
26. Your sex								
			Male	Female				
			43%	56%				

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Q1 BAPTIZED 6 OR MORE YEARS

Number of surveys for this report = 2269

Profile 5

27

1. Circle the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.
 

Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	Over 20 years
0%	0%	16%	26%	58%
2. Was at least one of your parents an Adventist sometime during the first 12 years of your life?
 

	Yes	No
	55%	45%
3. Circle the number indicating the relationship that you have with Jesus Christ.
 

	None	1	2	3	4	5	Intimate
		0%	4%	24%	33%	39%	
4. What number shows your assurance that you have eternal life?
 

	Not sure	1	2	3	4	5	Very certain
		4%	3%	14%	23%	56%	
5. To what extent have you attended Adventist schools?
 

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	All the way
A) Elementary		64%	5%	4%	6%	20%	
B) Academy		60%	6%	4%	4%	26%	
C) College		65%	8%	4%	4%	19%	
6. Circle the number which shows the emphasis your pastor places on soul-winning.
 

	Little importance	1	2	3	4	5	Top priority
		2%	4%	17%	24%	52%	
7. How do you feel about the amount of money the conference spends on public evangelism? Circle a number.
 

	Too much spent	1	2	3	4	5	Should spend more
		6%	8%	37%	23%	25%	
8. How well prepared are you for the work of soul-winning? Circle a number.
 

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very well
		11%	26%	38%	17%	8%	
9. Have you been engaged in some type of soul-winning during the past twelve months?
 

	Yes	No
	60%	40%
10. Do you hold a church office or other position of service?
 

	62%	38%
--	-----	-----
11. Did you set a personal soul-winning goal this year?
 

	22%	78%
--	-----	-----
12. Have you been involved in community outreach services (Dorcas, Stop Smoking, etc.)?
 

	43%	57%
--	-----	-----
13. Have you held Bible studies with a non-Adventist during the past twelve months?
 

	22%	78%
--	-----	-----
14. Within the last year have you attended a witnessing training program?
 

	17%	33%
--	-----	-----
15. How much do you agree with these statements? Circle the number.
 

	Disagree strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Agree strongly
A) My immediate family helps my relationship with Christ.		8%	8%	22%	21%	41%	

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

1 2 3 4 5  
6% 7% 14% 22% 51%

C) Most sabbath sermons are interesting.

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 4% 14% 27% 50%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
12% 15% 33% 20% 19%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
14% 10% 23% 18% 35%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
12% 16% 39% 19% 13%

G) I can speak easily about my faith.

1 2 3 4 5  
4% 7% 21% 26% 42%

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

1 2 3 4 5  
6% 10% 36% 26% 22%

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

Unaware of any 68% One 13% Two to five 15% Six to ten 2% More than ten 2%

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

3% 6% 37% 31% 23%

b) Daily prayer for the conversion of specific people

2% 6% 34% 22% 36%

c) Study of Ellen White books

2% 9% 49% 23% 17%

d) Financial support for local soul-winning

5% 10% 32% 25% 28%

e) Attending prayer meeting

13% 33% 32% 11% 11%

f) Meeting regularly with a small study or fellowship group

15% 39% 29% 9% 8%

g) Helping neighbors with their personal problems

6% 14% 40% 24% 16%

h) Daily family worship

7% 16% 33% 19% 25%

i) Witnessing in everyday activities

2% 5% 35% 33% 25%

j) Attending Sabbath School

1% 1% 8% 18% 72%

k) Tithing

1% 2% 8% 11% 78%

l) Working to win non-Adventist relatives

7% 11% 33% 20% 29%

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

A) Soul-winning church

No 1 2 3 4 5 Yes  
4% 10% 40% 26% 19%

B) Adventist standards

Low 1 2 3 4 5 High  
3% 6% 30% 35% 26%

C) Friendliness

Cold and unfriendly 1 2 3 4 5 Warm and friendly  
3% 6% 20% 29% 41%

E) New members

Ignored 1 2 3 4 5 Involved  
4% 8% 24% 30% 35%

F) Feelings towards church people

I don't fit in 1 2 3 4 5 My kind of people  
3% 5% 20% 31% 42%

19. Do you have close friends who are not Adventists?

None 1 2 3 4 5 Many  
3% 5% 36% 18% 39%

20. Where do you presently send your children to school?

SDA schools 22% Public schools 14% No school-age children 64%

21. Do Adventist pastors stay at a church?

Too short? 40% About right? 53% Too long a time? 7%

22. Circle the number of the age group you are in.

19 years or under 3% 20-35 years 25% 36-50 years 24% 51-65 years 26% Over 65 years 21%

23. Circle the number which shows your yearly family income.

Under \$8,000 21% \$8,001 to \$16,000 27% \$16,001 to \$25,000 27% \$25,001 to \$50,000 21% Above \$50,000 5%

24. Circle the number that shows your ethnic background.

Asian 2% Black 2% Spanish 2% White 32% Other 1%

25. Circle the number that shows the distance that you live from the church.

Under 3 miles 28% 4-10 miles 38% 11-15 miles 16% 16-25 miles 14% Over 25 miles 4%

26. Your sex

Male 38% Female 62%

their relationship with Christ as "intimate" and are more certain about eternal life.

Recent converts are not chosen for church leadership positions as often as those who have been in the church longer than six years, yet long-time members don't feel any better prepared for soul-winning than recent ones.

As might be expected newer members have a better impression of public evangelism and feel that public evangelism converts are more likely to stay in the church.

Members who have been in the church longer than six years tend to study the Bible and Ellen White writings more regularly than recently baptized members, yet newer members are more likely to attend prayer meeting or meet regularly with a small study or fellowship group. Members baptized longer than six years report having family worship, witnessing in everyday activities, attending Sabbath School, and tithing on a more regular basis than members of six years or less.

Newer members are more likely to call the local church "soul-winning", find church members more warm and friendly, feel the church standards are higher, and have more friends who are not members of the Adventist Church than long-time members.

Finally those who have been members for six years or less tend to be young (66 percent under 35), earn less than \$25,000 a year (79 percent), and have a higher representation among ethnic groups than those who have been members for longer than six years.

### Correlations of Growth with Survey Items

Each individual questionnaire gathered fifty items of information (see appendix). All of the responses from a given church were averaged to yield a church score for each item. These church scores have been correlated with both the actual and the kingdom growth rates of the churches in two separate stepwise multiple regression programs.

The correlation of any one independent variable (the survey items) 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, 1981 from the membership on December 31, 1982 and dividing this number by the beginning membership. The results have been expressed as percentages. The average actual growth rate for the 79 churches during the two-year period was 9.0 percent or a yearly rate of 4.5 percent. This is a bit better 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 single item on the survey was  $-.431$ , a reasonably strong relationship for this kind of study. In fourteen steps the multiple correlation ( $R$ ) was raised to  $.734$  between actual growth and the fourteen variables chosen. This is a strong relationship and indicates that the combination of variables is a powerful predictor of growth. Each step contributed significantly at the  $.01$  level.

Table 1 displays the results.

TABLE 1  
BEST PREDICTORS OF ACTUAL GROWTH  
IN THE OHIO MEMBER SURVEY  
Number of Churches = 79

Stepwise Selection	Name of Variable	Multiple R Cumulative	Simple <u>r</u>
1	Length of time as baptized Adventist	.431	-.431**
2	Can speak easily about faith	.504	.181
3	Help neighbors with personal problems	.540	-.169
4	Community has high opinion of church	.570	-.034
5	Good experience with public evangelism	.606	.376**
6	Participation in tithing	.630	.013
7	Send children to Adventist schools	.655	.210
8	Members raised in Adventist homes	.668	-.055
9	Yearly family income	.683	-.077
10	Daily family worship	.701	.017
11	Attendance at Adventist college	.707	.011
12	New members involved in church	.718	.120
13	Church is "my kind of people"	.725	-.026
14	Church is warm and friendly	.734	.063

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

Only two of the variables were significant in themselves. To be significant at the .01 level means that there is less than a one-in-a-hundred 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 Ohio church-attending members). However, even though most of the items are insignificant by themselves, they provide substantial significance

when taken in this combination.

One of the immediate problems that arises from this and the following table is the presence of negative correlations when positive ones are expected (sometimes the negative ones make good sense). There are three unexpected negatives in this table (selections 3, 4, and 13) which are difficult to interpret in terms of church growth. For example, growth is likely to be less in churches where members are more involved in helping their neighbors with their personal problems. However, the three negative relationships are mostly weak and all insignificant by themselves. They will be ignored in the analysis.

The strongest item, significant at the .01 level, relates growth to length of time the members have been in the church. The relationship is a negative one. Growing churches have a greater proportion of their memberships who are more recent converts than do nongrowing churches. This is logical. Churches where all members have been in the church for twenty or more years are not growing. But another principle is operating here. New converts are the best potential soul-winners. 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.

The other significant predictor is based on the item, "We have generally had good experience with public evangelism in this church." The more strongly the members agree with this statement, the more likely it is that the church will be growing. This emphasizes the important role that public evangelism continues to play in church growth when it is perceived in a positive light by the congregation. It is important for the evangelist to gain the cooperation of the local membership and to so conduct the series that they will feel comfortable with the quality of the new converts being added to their church family.

Other themes found in this combination are lay witnessing ("I can speak easily about my faith"), inner spiritual experience ("Daily family worship"), the nurturing of new members ("New members involved in fellowship and activities" and the church is "warm and friendly"), Adventist education ("Send to Adventist schools" and "attendance at Adventist college"), and participation in tithing.

In addition to the stepwise selections, actual growth was found to be significantly correlated (.321) at the .01 level with "Soul-winning church." Members were asked to rate their churches on a scale of one to five as soul-winning churches. Those with higher ratings tended to be the growing churches. This was a strong correlation for both actual and kingdom growth. While this might be shrugged off as simply a matter of the members keeping count of the procession into the baptismal pool, the whole tenor of the study suggests another explanation. A certain mindset is operating here. Pastors and members need to exercise "possibility

thinking." The high response reflects a sort of team spirit--  
 "The Lord is working with us! We are in partnership with Him!  
 Our church is serious about fulfilling the divine commission."  
 When the members sense that their church exists for the purpose of  
 bringing people to Christ, things begin to happen. This item was  
 the strongest predictor of church growth in the Division-wide study.

Another correlation, significant at the .05 level, was age  
 (-.226). The negative relationship means that growing churches  
 are likely to have a greater proportion of their membership in  
 younger age groups. The presence of youth in the church generally  
 signals growth. This highlights the need for an effective youth  
 ministry.

#### Kingdom Growth Rate

The average kingdom growth rate for the 79 churches was  
 12.8 percent for the two-year period or a yearly rate of 6.4 per-  
 cent. This is considerably better than the 5.2 percent rate found  
 in the NAD study. The key to healthy kingdom growth lies in the  
 ratio of apostasies to baptisms. The average number of baptisms  
 or profession by faith accessions in the 79 churches for the two  
 years was 17.5, while the average number of apostasies was 4.6.  
 Thus apostasies were only about one-fourth (26%) of baptisms--  
 a lower than average ratio.

The highest r between kingdom growth and any variable on  
 the survey was -.497. In twelve steps an R of .768 was reached.  
 Each increment contributed at the .01 level. The results are

displayed in table 2.

TABLE 2  
BEST PREDICTORS OF KINGDOM GROWTH  
IN THE OHIO MEMBER SURVEY  
Number of Cases = 79

Stepwise Selection	Name of Variable	Multiple R Cumulative	Simple <u>r</u>
1	Length of time as baptized Adventist	.497	-.497**
2	Good experience with public evangelism	.557	.430**
3	Help neighbors with personal problems	.602	-.202
4	Family helps relationship with Christ	.639	-.001
5	Can speak easily about faith	.672	.182
6	Community has high opinion of church	.701	-.002
7	Relationship with Jesus Christ	.723	.102
8	Assurance of eternal life	.733	-.002
9	Involved in community outreach services	.744	.115
10	Attendance at Adventist academy	.753	-.032
11	Held Bible studies with non- Adventists	.760	.246*
12	Higher percentage of non-white members	.768	.191

\*probability equal to or less than .05

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

The picture is quite similar to that of actual growth. Five of the first six kingdom growth selections were also found on actual growth including the two items significant at the .01 level. Five unexpected negatives appear, but all are statistically insignificant in themselves, and all but one (selection 3) approach zero. They will be ignored in the discussion.

A new predictor, significant at the .05 level, is selection 11. Churches where a larger proportion of the membership have held Bible studies with non-Adventists during the past year are more likely to have a higher kingdom growth rate. This strengthens the theme of lay involvement in growing churches. So does selection 9 which indicates that growing churches have more members involved in community outreach services such as helping the needy, conducting stop-smoking clinics, etc.

The theme of inner spiritual experience is bolstered by selection 7. Members in growing churches are more confident of their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The final selection indicates that kingdom growth is more likely in churches that have a higher percentage of non-white members. This is in harmony with the Division-wide study which indicated that kingdom growth was greater among black and Hispanic Adventists than among white ones.

In addition to the stepwise selections kingdom growth was found to be significantly correlated with four other items. Two of these were mentioned under actual growth. "Soul-winning church" was correlated .327 (.01 level) and "Age" was correlated -.229 (.05 level) with kingdom growth. The other two, both significant at the .05 level, are unique to kingdom growth in this study.

The item, "How many people have you been wholly or partially responsible for bringing into the church in the last three years?" was correlated .279 with kingdom growth. This item was the strongest predictor in the Oregon Study. In growing churches, a higher propor-

tion 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 that growth is highly related to lay-member involvement in the outreach program of the church.

The other item relates kingdom growth to the degree that members participate in prayer meeting. The correlation is .230. This relationship lends support to the theme of inner spiritual experience as a key factor in kingdom growth.

#### Other Correlations

Certain inter-correlations among the growth figures themselves may be of interest.

A number of similarities were noted between the selections for actual and kingdom growth. This is because these two measures are highly correlated at .857. Encouraging a good kingdom growth will also result in actual growth unless large numbers are moving away or dying.

Actual growth is correlated with membership size at  $-.086$ , and kingdom growth is correlated with size at  $-.109$ . This indicates a slight tendency for smaller churches to have greater growth rates, but the tendency is weak and not statistically significant. Growth is available to any sized church when the proper principles are adopted.

Baptisms have a moderate correlation with actual growth (.316) and a somewhat better one with kingdom growth (.440). Apostasies are correlated  $-.247$  with actual growth and  $-.272$  with king-

dom growth. The negative correlations indicate that as apostasies go down, growth goes up. Controlling apostasy is an important factor in promoting church growth in Ohio.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

This study has investigated the problem of differing rates of church growth and decline among churches in the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. All 94 churches in the conference were sent a supply of the Ohio Church Growth Survey to administer to the baptized members present at a given Sabbath worship service.

Surveying began in late February of 1983. By May 79 churches had returned 3157 usable member surveys. From this data profiles were constructed of the total Ohio Conference membership and the membership of each individual church. 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, 1981-1982. 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 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.

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 soul-winners. 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. 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. Faithfulness in tithing is related to growth. Perhaps the Lord adds His special blessing to the tithing church. At any rate, attention to this important item is part of the climate of inner spiritual experience that makes growth possible.

7. Plans should be laid to encourage and provide for the attendance of all the youth of the church at Adventist Christian schools. This factor definitely relates to growth in several ways. The most important seems to be that a larger proportion of the young people are retained as members.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. Churches should carefully evaluate all evangelistic methods and strategies and employ those that bring the best results in specific situations. Evangelistic meetings must be conducted in

such a way as to cause the members to perceive the results in a positive manner. 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 Ohio 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.