McMASTER UNIVERSITY

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH:
The Presence of the Spirit
In Congregational Dynamics
And the Practice of Stewardship

A Project Thesis Submitted to

McMaster Divinity College

In Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

By

Robert T. Matton

Acton, Ontario, Canada

April 23, 2004

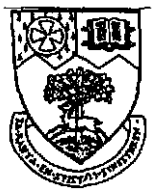
Doctor of Ministry McMASTER UNIVERSITY Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Communities of Faith: The Presence of the Spirit in Congregational Dynamics and the Practice of Stewardship

AUTHOR: Robert Matton

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Kenneth R. Morgan

NUMBER OF PAGES: 189



McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

Upon the recommendation of an oral examination committee and vote of the faculty, this thesis-project by

Robert Matton

is hereby accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

Kenneth R. Unger
First Reader and Advisor

Ronald E. Vallet
Second Reader

External Reader

Stanley E. Porter
Dean

Date: April 23, 2004

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My completion of this project thesis, as the culmination of more than five and a half years commitment to the Doctor of Ministry programme, properly invites my acknowledgement of all who have been supportive, both of me personally and of my ministry, as I have sought to discern God's calling to be a steward of the Gospel.

First and foremost, I wish to thank my immediate family, including Lois, my wife and soul mate of nearly twenty-four years, and our three children—Rita, Darryl, and Jane. I am most grateful and appreciative of all your patience and forbearance, in contending with a husband and father whose heart was set on returning to school yet again. For the times when, during my studies, I was either physically absent or simply absent-minded, consumed by the task at hand, such that I seemed oblivious to all else around me, I thank you for your understanding—or at least tolerance—of me during this academic odyssey.

I would also like to pay tribute to all who, in some way, have shaped my life. I give thanks for the loving support of my parents, Agnes Matton (Balfour) and the late Joseph Matton, and my brother David, as well as Lois' parents, Margaret and Richard Barton. I am grateful for many friendships from childhood through the present day in different aspects of my life, all of which have left their mark. I extend my appreciation to many teachers and professors who, over the years, have instilled a love of learning, and challenged me to take my education to the next level. I thank many ministry colleagues who, in The United Church of Canada and beyond, have befriended me and enriched my understanding of what it means to be a servant of God. I kindly acknowledge the good folk of the pastoral charges to which, over fifteen years, I have been called to serve—

Marsden-Neilburg and Kelvington-Lintlaw in Saskatchewan, and Acton: Trinity and Alma-Goldstone in Ontario.

In regard to the growth of my passion in regard to the subject of stewardship, I am eternally grateful for my 1993 initiation into the Saskatchewan Conference Stewardship Education Committee, as well as subsequent opportunities to serve, notably on Stewardship Committee and Revenue Generation Project of Toronto Conference, as well as General Council Stewardship Education Committee. Further to such involvement, I have had the privilege of various learning opportunities related to stewardship and congregational development. All such experiences played a role in my decision to embark on the course of studies, which led to this thesis.

In the completion of the Doctor of Ministry degree, I especially wish to thank Andrew Irvine, former director of the Advanced Degree programme, Marge Geroux, administrative assistant and "friend to D.Min.s", and Kenneth Morgan who, as acting director and my faculty advisor, mentored and prodded me. I also thank all those involved as teachers and guides on the journey, my Ministry Base Committee—Dean Dunn, George Elliott, Linda Inglis, Anna Raats, and Natalie Tuitman, and my fellow classmates with whom I began studies in September 1998. In particular regard for their assistance towards completion of my thesis, I extend gratitude to Ronald Vallet and Vincent Alfano, who faithfully served as my internal and external readers. Further, I am most appreciative of the generous assistance of Jane Armstrong of *Environics Research* who helped me craft my survey, and Eddy Yau who provided statistical analysis. Finally, I would thank the Brampton *Consulting as a Career Option* group #32, for their timely encouragement and support in motivating me to finally complete this thesis. Peace and blessings to all!

ABSTRACT

The Doctor of Ministry project thesis that follows is a product of many years experience, both in the local pastorate and in service to the wider church. It addresses its author's passion and conviction regarding the work of stewardship and congregational development. Its approach and direction is focused upon what the author maintains has been an often-neglected aspect of theology within the denominational tradition of The United Church of Canada—that which concerns the presence of the Spirit. In this light, the thesis' focus is turned towards a closer examination of congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship where, respectively, the Spirit is held to dwell and work.

Following the introductory first two chapters, the examination begins in the earnest in chapter three, where the author considers the Foundational Perspectives that underlie the thesis' consideration of community, the Spirit, and stewardship. Particularly in this chapter, theological and historical, as well as ecclesiastical and sociological insights, gleaned from many and diverse sources, are shared and expanded upon. In chapters four and five, the author intensifies the focus on the subjects of congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship respectively. It is in these chapters that, supported by available statistical data, the findings of a "congregational leadership" survey involving the participation of churches in Dufferin-Peel and Halton Presbyteries, west of Toronto, are analysed and utilized, in assessing the situation, and prescribing measures and strategies that may enhance the health and vitality of these prospective "communities of faith." The conclusion reached by this study contends that, focusing at the local level, future efforts aimed at improving the state of local churches must be both holistic and comprehensive, as well as emphasizing the need to acknowledge and trust in the presence of the Spirit.

Chapter One

A PROLOGUE

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and the news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read . . . "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:14-16,18-19

I fondly remember that quintessential "finger play" in which the leader or teacher introduces impressionable children to a playful concept of church for which we all long: "Here's the church, here's the steeple; open the doors, and here's the people." This very ideal, such as captivates young and old alike, is also expressed in the well known children's action song, ***We Are the Church***:

I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!
All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we're the church together!

The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple,
The church is not a resting place, the church is a people.[1]

Unfortunately, the innocence of early childhood, not to mention the playfulness of our "inner child," is displaced by realization that life does not always unfold as planned. Today, more than ever, in the world and in the church, it's not enough to think we can; sometimes it seems we can't. As our hopes and dreams suffer disappointment after disappointment, the human spirit within us becomes bruised and broken. In desperation, people have tended to place their "faith"—so to speak—in what promises to restore and heal, strengthen and encourage. The emphasis on results and instant gratification is far-

[1] Richard Avery and Donald Marsh, *We Are the Church* (Hope Publishing Co., 1972), v. 1 and refrain.

reaching, having contributed to the increased popularity of *self-help* practitioners and *new age* religion, often at the expense of traditional religion and values.

In a more traditionally religious context, foremost among many popular proponents of a positive and optimistic outlook have been **Norman Vincent Peale**, as well as his disciple and inheritor of the mantle of "positive Christianity," Robert Schuller. In a newspaper article observing the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Peale's ***The Power of Positive Thinking***, **Valerie Takahama** describes it as "one of the highest-selling spiritual books of all time—and one of the most successful books of nonfiction (*sic*) on any subject," one whose "practical, can-do spirit" still resonates in contemporary culture. It relates how, arising from Peale's own early struggles with self-doubt, and based upon his thesis that "a hopeful, positive state of mind achieved through prayer can lead to spiritual, emotional, and material well-being," the book draws on actual stories of real people, their problems, and Peale's prescription for solving them.[2]

Takahama's article further cites Carol George's contention from her biography of Peale, *God's Salesman*, in which she states that, although his work has been a target of much criticism over the years, in retrospect Peale has come to be widely regarded in merging theology and psychology. In advocacy of her perspective, George argues that its widespread adoption and application in both pastoral and secular contexts represents a measure of vindication for Peale's message and approach. Describing the marked similarities of Peale's technique to various models seeking to effect change by means of

[2] Valerie Takahama, "The Positive Influence of Norman Vincent Peale", *Toronto Star*, 22 April 2002, D5.

"positive thinking or mental suggestion," George is cited in outlining Peale's three-step approach as one that encourages persons to "picturize, prayerize, and actualize."[3]

In the simplicity of his approach and the advice given, it can be surmised how the very populist appeal of Peale's seminal work has engendered negative reviews from secular and religious sources alike. A particular concern to the latter camp is the conviction that the pseudo-psychological approach to religion advanced by Peale and his successors lacks the requisite theocentric focus. Nonetheless, despite these shortcomings, I contend that it unequivocally expresses the imperative that we ultimately need to believe and trust in the presence of a higher power. Also, notwithstanding my significant reservations regarding its individualistic focus and concern, I nonetheless argue there are elements of Peale's approach that invite collective application within the context of the church, not dissimilar to those prescribed by numerous works in the field of congregational dynamics and development. In illustration of this contention, I cite three pertinent excerpts from *The Power of Positive Thinking*, indicating in theological terms how each may address the realities facing the church.

In the first chapter entitled "Believe in Yourself," Peale states that feelings of security or insecurity arise from how we think. Insecurity results from our fixation on the situations and conditions we tend to fear. Paralyzed by a lack of self-confidence, many persons are inwardly afraid and withdrawn, suffering a deep sense of inadequacy and insecurity that leads them to doubt and mistrust their own powers and abilities, such that tends to sap their energy and leaves them spent and discouraged. To overcome such negativity, Peale contends, it is "vitally essential to re-appraise your personality assets" in

[3] Takahama, "The Positive Influence of Norman Vincent Peale," D5.

order to be convinced that "you are less defeated than you think you are."[4] As in the case of an individual, feelings of security or insecurity within institutions, such as the church, are similarly affected by how its constituent population thinks. I can affirm that the presence of a confident and positive psyche enables a congregation to be and do what another, lacking such confidence, cannot contemplate much less accomplish. Paradoxically fixated on fear and doubt, rather than courage and faith, and ceasing to believe either in itself or God's possibilities, the latter opts for a *maintenance* agenda at the expense of its vision and mission. Beset by negativity, it is necessary—indeed vital—that the church similarly reassess who it is and what it has to offer in Jesus' name.

Later in a chapter entitled "Expect the Best and Get It," Peale asserts "things get better when you expect the best instead of the worst," in that it frees us to put our whole self and whole heart into that which we want to accomplish. Only if our heart is in it and we have given it our all, will we realize the desired results. In approaching any challenge, Peale contends that only those who expect success will ultimately achieve it.[5] The dilemma faced by the individual is also a familiar scenario facing many congregations who, in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges, become disheartened and pessimistic. Indeed, under such conditions, its outlook can become predisposed to regard the glass as being *half-empty* rather than *half-full*. If a church is to overcome diminished expectations, it must resist dwelling upon worst-case scenarios. This point, I maintain, has particular relevancy in regard to the practice of stewardship.

---

[4] Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1952), 19-20.
[5] Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, 97.

Finally, in a chapter entitled "I Don't Believe in Defeat," Peale claims that an effective way of providing for a positive subconscious is to eliminate the "little negatives," the cumulative effect of which is to condition the mind negatively to expect failure and accept defeat. Rather, it is by focusing on positive thoughts and attitudes that we may overcome our obstacles, most of which he asserts to be rooted in mental attitudes. Peale notes that "if you have been long defeated by a difficulty, it is probably because you have told yourself for weeks, months, and even for years that there is nothing you can do about it." In response, he cites Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ . . . ," asserting that by emphasizing and reemphasizing a positive attitude, one can discover a power that would never otherwise be acknowledged.[6] Similar to the previous cases, on experiencing a series of setbacks and/or failures, as with an individual, the collective mind of a congregation can become conditioned to expect failure and accept defeat. The means of overcoming this and other such chronic negative attitudes Peale raises, I maintain, comes in the reaffirmation of "whose we are" as Christ's followers. I further assert that, by entrusting all our *being* and *doing* to that power that is made known through the enlivening presence of the Spirit, we put our faith in God's will.

In the context of theological inquiry and the practice of ministry, I have come to the conviction that one occasionally needs to step back from what is considered conventional and orthodox in order to discern the unconventional and unorthodox leading of the Spirit. It is for this reason that I have credited the work of Norman Vincent Peale which, while arguably less than spiritual, nonetheless alludes to what I strongly contend,

---

[6] Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, 114-15.

in the context of the church, is too often inexplicably ignored if not suppressed—the vital presence of the Spirit. I contend that, as shaped by both my ministry experience and work in stewardship, in its emphasis on the potential influence of a positive and hopeful attitude and outlook upon outcome and results, the aforementioned premise of this prologue is not adverse to nor diminishes, but rather invites and motivates my intention in this thesis to explore the spiritual dimensions of congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship.

Before I proceed to the introduction, I recall how, in preparing to begin this thesis, in conversation regarding its aims, a short passage was brought to my attention from **Gail Sheehy's** book ***New Passages***. It seems appropriate to cite it in closing this prologue, in that it expresses, not only my passionate interest in the subject of stewardship, and my anticipation of the promises, possibilities, and potential of this exploration, but also the excitement that arises in the presence of the Spirit. Sheehy writes, "The arrogance of possibility and the fiery excitement that fueled my twenties through my early forties were best expressed in several (*sic*) bracing lines of poetry by Goethe:

> 'What you can do, or dream you can, begin it;
> Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.'"[7]

[7] Gail Sheehy, *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time* (New York: Random House, 1995), xiv.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTRODUCTION

The very spectre of institutional insecurity that, at a local level, leads many congregations to despair of the possibility of realizing their ministry and mission also afflicts the mainline church as a whole. As a local church's outlook suffers as a consequence of an aura of negativity, so also the wider church's focus is adversely affected by unduly dwelling upon its downside. Most certainly, I would agree, there is an ongoing need to critique candidly and forthrightly who we are and what we do. However, it is unnecessary and indeed detrimental to its health and vitality that we should engage in excessive revisionism, such that undermines our very confidence to be the church.

Addressing such challenges facing the mainline church in ***The Church Confident***, **Leander Keck** begins with an epigraph from Charles Clayton Morrison's 1939 Lyman Beecher Lecture. It boldly asserts, "Christianity can repent, but it must not whimper." In preliminary remarks on the malaise of mainline Protestant churches, Keck notes the widespread conviction that they are indeed in crisis, such that he asserts necessitates a "renewal that reforms the churches' worship, theology, ethos, and communication" in order to restore *the church confident*.[8] Responding to the spectre of alienation that has provoked a crisis of confidence in proclaiming the gospel, Keck asserts that in the interest of mainline renewal, the development of "a 'hermeneutic of affirmation' is as essential as recovering the praise of God in worship." Insisting that it represents neither a new theology nor one that--updated and improved--seeks a return to an idealized past, he rather

[8] Leander E. Keck, *The Church Confident* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1993), 19-20.

likens a hermeneutic of affirmation to Paul Ricoeur's concept of a *second naiveté*. He further maintains that it is not intended to replace the hermeneutic of suspicion but rather to function alongside it, both sequentially and dialectically. Towards renewal and revitalization, Keck maintains that a hermeneutic of affirmation is necessary on two counts. First, he asserts it promotes the mix of new and old within the church community that enables it both to assimilate change with confidence and to make lasting change possible. Second, in tandem with a hermeneutic of suspicion, it opens the door towards church renewal that is necessarily both self-critical and confident[9]

The prevalence, in my view, of an inexplicable and disturbing lack of positive thinking and confident outlook within my own denomination, The United Church of Canada, is typical of the malaise within mainline churches of which Keck writes. Concerned that such defeatism seems increasingly to have become the accepted norm throughout the church and among its leadership, as the United Church approached its seventy-fifth anniversary I boldly sought to challenge the pundits who regard its decline and fall as a foregone conclusion. Contrary to such expressions of doom and resignation to the inevitable, I wrote:

> There are surely others who must be disturbed by the pall of despair and pessimism that seems to permeate so much of our church, who would dare to hope and take charge of our future for the sake of Christ and the gospel. What our United Church desperately needs at this juncture in its history are: far fewer apologists for a declining church who would concede that our best years are behind us, fewer practitioners of *palliative care* ushering us into death, fewer undertakers who would prepare this Body of Christ for burial. Instead what is needed are more visionaries who can see a light in the darkness reflecting reality through the lens of hopeful optimism that witnesses not to death but to

[9] Keck, *The Church Confident*, 63-66.

resurrection, more people of faith who in the wilderness will prepare the way of the Lord.[10]

Further, from the perspective of my involvement in the area of stewardship development and education, I expressed concern that, in citing "projections of our declining membership and resources as justification for yet further budget-cutting and downsizing of our church's wider ministry and mission," we abandon our call to follow Christ and to proclaim the Good News. In lament that our church had largely ignored the findings and recommendations of the 1994 ***Unitrends*** survey and report commissioned by the Department of Stewardship Services, I expressed disappointment that "we have inexplicably tended to opt for a negative view of reality" despite **Reginald Bibby**'s suggestions to the contrary.[11]

In his report, under "implications for the future," Bibby suggests two scenarios. In the first, worse case scenario, he describes "the aging and dying church" that, if it continues to exist at all in 50 years, will do so only "in dramatically diminished form." Bibby asserts that those who subscribe to this scenario of "a denomination in demise" tend to applaud declining numbers as virtuous, warning that such an outlook is indicative of "an incredible level of self-absorption." In the second, more-hopeful scenario, he encourages The United Church of Canada to look beyond current challenges to future opportunities, asserting that ". . . this is not a time when churches should be contracting. This is a time when ministry should be expanding." In consideration of this scenario of "the serving and growing church," Bibby challenges it to move beyond concern over

---

[10] Robert T. Matton, "As the Dawn of the 21st Century Approaches, Is the Sun Setting on Our Denomination?" (unpublished article submitted to *The United Church Observer*, May 10, 1999*)
[11] Matton, "As the Dawn of the 21st Century Approaches, Is the Sun Setting on Our Denomination?".

numbers on our congregational rolls to take into account a much broader "affiliate pool," considering their needs as "both your opportunity and your responsibility."[12] Such an expression of optimism and hope for the future is further developed addressing the prospects for Canadian churches as a whole in Bibby's recent book ***Restless Gods***, as will be cited later in the thesis.[13]

Douglas John Hall is a widely respected theologian whose body of work encompasses the exploration of contextual theology and stewardship. In ***The Future of the Church***, Hall presents a theological perspective that, beginning with his relationship to The United Church of Canada, seeks to address questions of equal relevance to the local congregation as well as the ecumenical movement in consideration of "where are we headed?" In his introduction, he states his book "is addressed to those exceptional people in our midst who have concluded—*with their eyes wide open!*—that the church does have a future." However, he cautions against guarantees of such a future, given questions raised by the church's experience of change. Rather, what Hall commends to those who care about the church's future is "the courage and imagination to entertain alternatives to what appears to be real, even inevitable." Responding to Christendom's demise as sadly marked by church closures, he frowns upon the prevalent but troubling attitude of local managers to "let it die." Without overstatement, Hall asserts, ". . . in these *little* decisions, decisions about buildings and programs and ministries and the like, it is very often possible to glimpse . . . a very *large* decision about the Christian movement . . . ." In stark

[12] Reginald W. Bibby, "Unitrends" (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, Dept. of Stewardship Services 1994), 73-76.
[13] Reginald W. Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, (Toronto: Stoddart Publ. Co. Ltd., 2002).

contrast to the above attitude, from the Brothers Grimm fable "The Musicians of Bremen," Hall recounts the refrain of the old donkey who, balking at fate, in turn counsels other animals, saying "instead of giving in to that, come along with us to Bremen; we can always find something better than death." Nonetheless, emphasizing the need for "sober realism," Hall maintains, "that the best beginnings, *real* beginnings, always emerge at the point of real endings."[14]

Hall further asserts that, in contrast to the optimism of modernity, "so far as Christianity is concerned, realism is grounded in the recognition that existence under the conditions of history entails suffering." Dismissing such "'positive thinking' that refuses even to admit that we live in a dangerous world," he contends that as Christ's followers we must boldly confront the 'kingdom of death'. In advocacy of a "cruciform" reality, Hall affirms with confidence:

> . . . the Church that is enabled to endure the suffering of those who follow Jesus Christ into earth's uncertain future will itself have a future. Willing to lose its life for his sake who lost his life for the world's sake, it will find its life.[15]

From the perspective of sound theology, in principle I would strongly agree with Hall's call for sober realism as well as his advocacy of a cruciform reality. In practical and pastoral terms, however, the adage that "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink" seems to apply, in that my experience suggests that among the general population of most congregations, with few exceptions, there exists little ground swell of interest much less enthusiasm for such strong medicine.

---

[14] Douglas John Hall, *The Future of the Church: Where Are We Headed?* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1989), iv-vi.
[15] Hall, *The Future of the Church*, 106-08.

Faced with the dilemma such a situation presents, I contend an arguably more effective prescription is presented by **Donna Sinclair** and **Christopher White** in ***Jacob's Blessing***. In its introduction, Sinclair and White speak frankly of a tough two decades for the mainline church. Citing declining numbers, church mergers, and closures, they observe that despite expressions of interest in "spirituality" there seems to be little interest--much less involvement--in church by society as a whole. In response they note that "two distinct and opposite camps" have arisen within the church community. Briefly, the first are proponents of what has come to be called *the faithful remnant* theory, regarding such decline as symptomatic of a post-Christian society, likening it to the separation of wheat from the chaff. The second, on the other hand, ascribe to what is called the *big box* model witnessed in the rise of metropolitan transdenominational "megachurches." Typified by Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago, this genre is characterized by contemporary worship services that can reach hundreds if not thousands, and by multiple staff and small group ministries.[16] Beyond what they regard as the limitations and shortcomings of the above options, Sinclair and White state their belief in another possibility. Such a hopeful alternative holds to faith and yet allows congregations to thrive and grow, allowing us to speak of justice and yet live with mystery, to understand the past and anticipate the future. Commending its resiliency and ability to respond to challenges throughout the ages, they reaffirm the model of the local congregation as being best able to respond in "a time of opportunity for the church." They

[16] Donna Sinclair and Christopher White, *Jacob's Blessing: Dreams, Hopes, and Visions for the Church*, (Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 1999), 10-13.

also cite the observation that a congregation is "never just an audience," but rather a community in which "the power of the Saviour" works.[17]

Yet another alternative vision is presented by **Ben Johnson** and **Glenn McDonald** in ***Imagining a Church in the Spirit***. Regarding the situation faced by the mainline church, Johnson and McDonald assert that its greatest problem concerns a loss of vision and identity by which as the Body of Christ, "we have been blinded to the living Christ among us." In response they cite that "our greatest need is a vision of his living presence, here and now working through the members of the body."[18] Further to such a vision, Johnson and McDonald assert that a church need not--must not--"live on a memory of a memory, or a secondhand report," but can and needs to live in the Spirit. The Church in the Spirit "lives with the awareness of the indwelling Christ," that commends it to the world as "a community of the Real Presence, the embodiment of the risen and living Lord." Among the seven essential characteristics subsequently identified, a Church in the Spirit must be: **1.** *a living community of faith* formed of "living stones"; **2.** *an incarnate community* through which the Lord is embodied; **3.** *a worshipping community* praising and thanking God; **4.** *a transformative community* where all who meet God are made whole; **5.** *an inclusive community* welcoming and reconciling all people; **6.** *a unified community* joined together in baptism; and **7.** *a missional community* sent into the world to serve.[19]

Some ten years ago, I first became intimately acquainted with the subject of stewardship. Before that time, my knowledge and understanding of stewardship was in

---

[17] Sinclair and White, *Jacob's Blessing*, 14-15.
[18] Ben Campbell Johnson and Glenn McDonald, *Imagining a Church in the Spirit: A Task for Mainline Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 1-2.
[19] Johnson and McDonald, *Imagining a Church in the Spirit*, 12-13.

essence comparable to a prepubescent's awareness and experience in relating to the opposite sex. What I claimed to know, or perhaps more correctly assumed, concerning this subject, was strictly of a utilitarian and serviceable nature. What I didn't know couldn't hurt me--or so I told myself, knowing only that within the context of the congregations I served it was a subject that more often than not was a cause of discomfort if not controversy. In local churches typically "stewardship committees" were reluctantly constituted in order to at the very least help the church *meet its budget*, if not in reaction to the latest *financial crisis.*

In general, within the church the subject of stewardship has been, and I believe continues to be, regarded as a topic of conversation to be avoided, in much the same way secular society used to pointedly counsel us that, in order to maintain harmony, we should avoid discussion of "sex, politics, and religion." This avoidance of dialogue owes much to such folk who have persisted and seemingly delighted in misquoting scripture—arguing that "money is the root of all evil." As a "necessary evil," stewardship has been considered only out of obligation to attend to the distasteful reality of providing for the *financial*—and to a somewhat lesser extent *human*—resources required to do God's work. Indeed, in my estimation, this unfortunate dichotomy has been effectively enshrined within the polity of The United Church of Canada as the most common model of local church governance. While the *Session* is given responsibility for "the oversight of the spiritual interests of the Pastoral Charge," the *Committee of Stewards* is entrusted with "the management of its temporal and financial affairs."[20]

---

[20] The United Church of Canada. *The Manual 2001*, "Basis of Union: Polity" 5.8.4 (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1928, 2001), 20.

I was serving my second pastorate in Saskatchewan, when I was approached in June 1992 by the Parkland Presbytery nominations committee to chair the *Stewardship Education Committee.* I initially understood its mandate as one chiefly concerned with the promotion of the denomination's *Mission and Service Fund.* Little did I realize in undertaking this work how my subsequent exposure to a holistic concept of stewardship would result in a passionate interest and commitment that continues to this day. As a result of the energy, enthusiasm, and encouragement of a strong and vibrant "stewardship network" within Saskatchewan Conference, I became a "convert to the cause."

Such commitment to the work of stewardship continued when, shortly after my 1995 call to a pastorate in south-central Ontario, I gladly assumed a similar role in Dufferin-Peel Presbytery and Toronto Conference respectively. The extent and intensity of my involvement grew when, early in 1997, I accepted an invitation to serve as a member of the Toronto Conference *Revenue Generation Committee,* whose three-year mandate was aimed at revitalizing the fortunes of the Mission and Service Fund. While I was serving in this capacity, in conjunction with my enrichment both through much reading on the subject and in twice attending the North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy, I came to articulate an understanding of stewardship that would ultimately lead me to apply to the Doctor of Ministry programme in 1998.

The particular focus of my studies upon the area of *congregational stewardship* grew out of my experience and observations that something was amiss in the way stewardship was being addressed. As mentioned above, what I regard as the misplaced but nonetheless real dread and disdain for the subject and work of stewardship was, and

continues to be, more than evident in the approach taken to it by many congregations. In that its mere mention is frequently perceived to be disconcerting and demoralizing--enough to "send them running for the doors" and out of the church, few and foolish are those who would readily engage in meaningful discourse. Further to the foregoing experiences and observations of the way it is addressed in the context of the local pastorate, I contend that--along with other *mainline* denominations--The United Church of Canada shares responsibility for the negative way that stewardship is often perceived and practiced by local congregations. In this regard, I identify two root causes, both of which ironically are reflected in its practice of stewardship—or rather its lack thereof.

First, as alluded to earlier, I argue that the reluctance of the wider church over the past decade to "practise what it preaches" effectively calls into serious question its beliefs and convictions in God's infinite possibilities. While imploring its congregations and pastoral charges to adopt an outlook of *abundance* in expansion of their ministry and mission as faithful stewards of God's Living Word, the denomination paradoxically witnessed to the dismal expectations of *scarcity* in "downsizing" its ministry and mission such as spelt capitulation to the ways of this world. Such an indictment is merited, I contend, in the ways that denominational managers have not only determined to disregard but to discredit the "Unitrends" report and its proponents, and specifically to ridicule the hopeful possibility of Bibby's second scenario.

Secondly, I have often observed with dismay and frustration how indeed, despite the late 20th century renaissance of stewardship studies, the wider church persists in upholding old ways and ideas. Despite unprecedented theological and biblical exploration

of stewardship's integral role in the practice of faith, as well as the rise of new and innovative approaches to the practice of stewardship, much of the rationale and methodology routinely employed continues to reflect archaic understandings and presumptions that no longer fit or work. Particularly, I cite The United Church's failure to substantively acknowledge the transformation of society, especially as it affects church identity and affiliation and hence the motivation for charitable giving. Further to my consternation about how stewardship has been approached within the denomination, until very recently the *Division of Finance* had overseen the work of stewardship, such as led somewhat predictably to the setting of priorities that focused on "revenue generation," often at the expense of more holistically-minded stewardship education and development. It remains to be seen if the April 2002 restructuring of the General Council Office, which promisingly places "stewardship education" within the *Faith Formation and Education* unit, will restore an appropriate balance

Given these experiences and observations that have framed my perspective, I approached my studies seeking to challenge the ways and means by which we as a church might approach stewardship at the dawn of the 21st century. Contending from the onset of my studies that the former top-down approach is no longer tenable, in undertaking to forge a case for a more congregationally-focused approach to stewardship I have integrated various learnings and insights. Briefly noted here, they will be more fully documented over the course of this thesis. First and foremost, I acknowledge the considerable contributions of both requisite and elective courses in providing a firm foundation for learning. Indeed, in approaching the task of completing this project thesis,

I acknowledge with gratitude that it marks the culmination of a comprehensive programme involving an enriching diversity of learning opportunities.

Having begun with a previously solid background in terms of the subject of stewardship, I nonetheless benefited from two elective courses that had that specific focus. Both a directed study course, undertaken in conjunction with my attendance at the 1999 *North American Stewardship Conference* in Toronto, and the "Foundations of Stewardship" course with Ronald Vallet, yielded expanded insights towards an already familiar subject. Conversely, my prior background in congregational studies was much more limited. Acknowledging that I had much to learn concerning the role of congregational dynamics in a church's life, I cite the contributions of first-year courses: "Trends and Prospects in Biblical Studies" and "Church and Ministry in Historical Perspective," as well as a second-year reading course on "Organizational Citizenship."

Equally important in contributing to the convergence of these two aforementioned subjects, I further credit a first-year course "Christian Theology in the Modern Setting" and a second-year elective course, "Ministry of Faith Development." In consideration of the latter first, as explored in my major paper, it contributed particularly towards an understanding of how persons--and, by extension, churches--at different stages of faith relate to and respond in the practice of stewardship. It is in particular regard to the former that, atypical of one trained in The United Church, in the study of various doctrines of the Christian faith I undertook to focus on the Holy Spirit, encouraged by two Pentecostal classmates—Gary Empey and Owen Black. Ultimately my focus led to a major paper addressing its potential relationship to the practice of stewardship.

Beyond the course work of the first two years of the programme, it seems appropriate to briefly note two other sources of learning and insight. First, I acknowledge my classmates and teachers who graciously shared in and enriched my learning, most especially in the spirited and ecumenical expression of our diversity. In formal and informal settings as cited above, they challenged and encouraged me to boldly go where I needed to go. Second, coinciding with my acceptance into the Doctor of Ministry programme, I was invited to join, and subsequently to chair, the General Council *Stewardship Education Committee.* This opportunity provided me with beneficial insight and helpful contacts within the wider United Church, such as assisted me in determination of the ultimate direction my project thesis would take.

Having appropriately set the stage, in the sharing of my personal stewardship journey as well as the learnings, insights, and experiences during the course of my Doctor of Ministry studies leading towards the thesis, I will now proceed to describe in outline my plan and approach with regard to the project thesis itself.

Notwithstanding my foregoing prophetic indictment of The United Church of Canada's past inconsistency in its approach to and practice of stewardship, I embark upon this project thesis with the best of intentions and hope that, as a result, my exploration as well as its findings and recommendations will benefit my denomination's future. Indeed, it is out of an abiding concern for the particular context of my ministry within The United Church of Canada as a Canadian mainline tradition that I have undertaken this work. I contend that such a study holds the key to reversing the stagnation and decline that plagues its congregations and compromises our call to proclaim the Gospel.

What I am endeavouring to advance and affirm within a Canadian context is that there exists a relationship between the dynamics of congregational health and identity and the practice of a stewardship lifestyle. Additionally, I will seek to prove that in this relationship one furthers the other, and vice-versa. Specifically, two hypotheses are advanced. First, it is my contention that the dynamics of *health and identity* contribute to the functional and relational stability essential for a congregation truly to become a *community of faith* marked by the adoption, integration, and practice of a stewardship lifestyle. Second, it is my contention that intentional and ongoing stewardship education and development at the congregational level contributes to the health and vitality of its life and work as a whole. Also, I contend that it serves to nurture individual and communal identity with the ministry and mission, initially of the local church, and ultimately of the wider church. Towards the testing of these hypotheses, in the fall of 2000, I sent out an invitation to churches within Dufferin-Peel and Halton Presbyteries, both in the Greater Toronto area, seeking the participation of "congregational leaders" in a survey (see Appendix A). The response to the survey, conducted in the winter of 2001, of nineteen congregations/pastoral charges and 239 respondents is the primary resource informing my study. Additionally, I hope to draw upon secondary and complementary resources, including statistical data (see Appendix D).

Proceeding from this introduction, in **chapter three** the first and very important step in the development of this thesis will be to examine the **Foundational Perspectives** that inform my particular study. As the title of my project thesis proposes, I maintain that churches befitting the description as *communities of faith* will be marked by and a product of *the presence of the Spirit* witnessed in both their *congregational dynamics* and *practice*

of stewardship. In seeking to provide the prerequisite perspective that will serve to inform my subsequent examination and exploration, in this chapter consideration of the Spirit will be "front and centre," given what I contend is its most significant if not fundamental role and function.

In having established a firm foundation upon which to build, the focus of **chapter four** concerns **Congregational Dynamics** that, by way of its subtitle, I describe as being marked by *the dwelling of the Spirit*. Earlier, in the Prologue, I cited the importance of maintaining a positive attitude and confident outlook, such as I contend is conducive to fulfilling its ministry and mission. In support of this premise, from a first-year *Research Methodology* course assignment, I cite the following observation:

> I have had the opportunity of witnessing firsthand both the day-to-day and ongoing functioning of congregations, such that I might gain insights of what in each case might be described as their collective psyche. Foremost among my observations concerns the extent to which the dynamics of a congregation's fundamental outlook and attitudes can inform such a body's response in all its decision-making.[21]

Over the course of this chapter, I will seek to demonstrate how, as the catalyst of congregational dynamics, the Spirit may be considered indeed to influence the life and work of the local church. As supported by various learnings and insights, and confirmed by the results of my congregational leadership survey, I will further seek to develop strategies promoting congregational health and identity.

In **chapter five**, the focus shifts to consideration of **the Practice of Stewardship**, which, in a similar fashion to the previous chapter, I describe by means of its subtitle as *the working of the Spirit*. In the course of this chapter, I intend to transform theory into

---

[21] Robert Matton, "Project Proposal", DM 61A3 assignment, McMaster Divinity College (1998), 1.

praxis, proceeding from understanding to practice. Similarly supported by various learnings and insights, and confirmed by the results of my congregational leadership survey, I will seek to develop a comprehensive program that is predicated upon a congregational context and motivated by the Spirit. Further, to the stated objective of this project thesis to transform the approach and direction of stewardship within the larger context of The United Church of Canada, particular attention will be focused on developing a methodology and strategy that resonates with its theology and ethos.

In the **Conclusion**, I will seek to identify what basis exists for a connection between congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship, such that supports a comprehensive and integrated approach. As supported by the findings of my research, I will further seek to establish criteria for such an approach, describing how our attention to the dwelling of the Spirit as a determinant of congregational health and identity relates to our desire to promote the working of the Spirit in the practice of stewardship.

Chapter Three

FOUNDATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY, THE SPIRIT, AND STEWARDSHIP

In setting the stage for my examination of the relationship of congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship arising in the presence of the Spirit, it is important to consider such foundational perspectives that may be deemed quintessential in defining the underlying premise that informs my approach to this important subject. I hold that, while such perspectives may be regarded as being essentially historical and theological in nature, the success of an intentionally comprehensive study depends on the consideration of the further impact of ecclesiastical and indeed sociological perspectives. In this chapter, from the aforementioned perspectives, I will explore each of the components or variables in turn, providing the context that frames my particular study.

Defining Community

I have chosen, from the onset, to address the subject of congregational dynamics, not in an abstract or analytical manner, but rather in terms of the qualities and relationships that define the local church as a ***community***. In order to comprehend the meaning of community, one may begin with its definition in general terms as (an) "organized political, municipal or social body; body of people living in the same locality; body of people having religion, profession, etc., in common."[22] Additionally, I hold that, apart from its definition, etymological study provides further insights in pointing towards an understanding of those words (i.e., communion, communism, and communication) that

---

[22] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1976), s.v. "community".

share the same root or source with *community*. In ***Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah** defines a *community* as having a history, such that necessitates its being a "community of memory" involved in telling and retelling the narrative of its collective history, upholding exemplary individuals, as well as recounting stories of shared love and suffering that are central to its tradition. In this exercise of tying its people to the past, he asserts it also serves to turn its people toward the future as a "community of hope." As distinct from a mere "gathering of the similar" that is defined as a *lifestyle enclave*, Bellah maintains that genuine community is distinguished by its witness to history and hope, which he emphasizes involves participation in "practices of commitment" that define it as a way of life. Befitting such a definition, *ethnic*, *racial*, and *religious* communities are highlighted, the last of which he observes "recall and reenact their stories in the weekly and annual cycles of their ritual year."[23]

Christian Community – In the Beginning

> **They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the good will of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.**
>
> Acts 2:42-47 (NRSV)

Turning specifically to a consideration of Christian community, it is of foremost importance to understand the historical context that gave birth to what would become the

---

[23] Robert N. Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1985), 153-54.

church. **Wayne A. Meeks** argues in ***The Moral World of the First Christians*** that an anxious atmosphere prevailed from the church's inception, marked by a belief in the impending world judgment employed by the Apostle Paul in order to reinforce a sense of absolute obligation to serve and please a sovereign God. Citing II Thessalonians, Meeks claims that the call to holiness and separation, coupled with an unusual emphasis on solidarity and intimacy in Christian fellowship, represents a paradox.[24] Whether such is indeed the case, it certainly represents the necessity of maintaining the community within in the face of persecution without. In any case, although undoubtedly we, too, live in anxious times, it is rather doubtful that, especially in a reserved mainline context, Paul's arguments would carry the same weight today in terms of generating a similar degree of dedication and relationship to one's church and faith as witnessed in the early church.

William Willimon offers a further description of the obvious excitement generated by the dramatic events of Acts, comparing the emotionally-charged atmosphere of Christianity's beginnings with a more reserved and less urgent expression of faith that followed and continues into our contemporary context. In contrasting short-term enthusiasm with long-term commitment, he states that in Acts we are shown the fourfold embodiment of Pentecost enthusiasm in the activities of the early Christian community in teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer, all of which together he asserts contribute to "a well-rounded picture of the church."[25] By contrast, in the context of my study, I maintain that the alleged present-day faith community is generally weak on

---

[24] Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 128-29.

[25] William Willimon, "Acts", *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching*, James Luther Mays, ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 39-42.

application when it comes to embodying more than an apparition of *Pentecost enthusiasm* regarding these activities. Indeed, I further contend that, in many cases, the expression of faith disturbingly not only lacks urgency, but reveals complacency.

In ***Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance and Use of Money***, **Justo Gonzalez** further contends that, given the Jesus movement's beginnings within the context of an unsettled atmosphere, the messianic expectations and belief in the imminent restoration of Israel on the part of the disciples and others should not surprise us. Given this context, Gonzalez affirms the political, social, and economic implications underlying the preaching of the Kingdom of God among Jesus' followers, such that motivated them towards a high calling to do justice and effect a "great reversal."[26]

Addressing this call in a modern context, in **"Theology for Christ's Church and the Kingdom of God in Modern Society,"** is **Jurgen Moltmann**. Citing Alfred Loisy's observation that "Christ proclaimed the kingdom of God, and what came was the church," Moltmann asserts that if the church is to consider itself a form of the kingdom in the history of this world, then it must express concern "with more than just the church itself." In its proclamation, fellowship, and service, the church must demonstrate its concern "with the *world in the kingdom of God* and with *the kingdom of God in the world*" in pointing to God's future. Likewise, he asserts that the theology cannot be merely of the church, but "must become a function of the coming kingdom of God in the world",

---

[26] Justo L. Gonzalez, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance and Use of Money* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1990), 75-78.

belonging to and participating in all spheres of life within society.[27] Further to the contentions of Gonzalez and Moltmann regarding the focus and function of the church's mission and ministry, I advocate that, rather than presenting a facade, the church steadfastly must remain outwardly focused and passionately dedicated to preparing the way for God's reign.

Gonzalez points to the parallelism of Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-35 as representing two of the most debated passages in Acts, posing the following three questions. Asking "if it really happened as described," he answers in the affirmative. As to whether Luke might have projected practices of a recent past into an idealized account, Gonzalez responds that this seems hardly to be the case owing to the inclusion of the unflattering account of Ananias and Sapphira. Finally, regarding the suggestion that these passages are pre-Lukan insertions, Gonzalez suggests that as Luke introduced the theme of *renunciation* in Jesus' teaching in order to "shame the rich," so in Acts the introduction of *common property* would serve the same purpose.[28] However, in contrast, **Hans Conzelmann** contends in ***Acts of the Apostles*** that Luke does not speak of the *breaking of bread* in 2:42 as a rite at the beginning of a meal itself, nor does he make a distinction between it and the Eucharist, rather suggesting its unity as part of the ideal picture of the early church. He also suggests that the picture of "sharing property" is an idealized communal portrait associated either with utopian dreams or primeval accounts.[29]

---

[27] Jurgen Moltmann, "Theology for Christ's Church and the Kingdom of God in Modern Society" in *A Passion for God's Reign*, ed. Miroslav Volf (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1998), 51-52.
[28] Gonzalez, *Faith and Wealth*, 79-81.
[29] Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles, Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, trans. James Limburg et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 23-24.

Community – From Ideal to Reality

The study of community also involves examining the phenomena of religion and religiosity from both psychological and sociological perspectives. To this end, **Richard Kalish** cites the approach taken by Glock and Stark (1965) in outlining five "dimensions" of religiosity in individuals, relating: **1.** *religious experiences and feelings*; **2.** *religious beliefs*; **3.** *religious practices*; **4.** *religious knowledge*; and **5.** *consequences of religion*, in regard to their impact upon one's day-to-day living. Kalish contends that everyone develops a set of values and beliefs—be it sacred or secular—that is learned "primarily through interaction with significant others."[30] Specifically, in regard to religious values, Kalish observes that variably they "can offer opportunities for growth and increased self-esteem and stability, or they can lead to intense conflict and limit the possibilities for growth motivation." He also observes that church groups can either be "warm, friendly, and emotionally-satisfying," or "cold, demanding, and emotionally-punishing." On motivating factors for church attendance and membership, from a positive perspective Kalish maintains of the former that it reflects a "sincere desire to join with a community of others to express deeply felt spiritual beliefs," while the former provides for "spiritual satisfaction," as well as a sense of "belonging to a group that has similar beliefs and performs similar rituals."[31]

In ***Studying Congregations: A New Handbook***, **Nancy Ammerman** affirms that within its particular setting various activities define a congregation's culture and identity

---

[30] Richard A. Kalish, *The Psychology of Human Behaviour* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Ltd., 1973), 388-92.

[31] Kalish. *The Psychology of Human Behaviour*, 400-03.

by what it "does together." Foremost among those cited, she identifies worship services and other rituals as the most common and intentional expression of "who they are," both collectively and individually, respectively describing such as rites of *intensification* and *passage*. Additionally, Ammerman names other activities that serve to express a congregation's character, internally through its "religious education," "fellowship," and other "task-oriented" functions, and externally through "ministry" to the wider community and world in its witness, mission, and outreach, all of which are made possible by the ongoing, behind-the-scenes support of "kitchen work."[32] Beyond the definition of congregational culture and identity according to the nature of its activities, Ammerman cites the importance of their "accounts" of "who they are" as variously related in terms of "the stories congregations tell." She maintains that such stories employ a particular *language* of distinct words and phrases that define their tradition in its local context. Similarly, as components in storytelling, she cites the role of *symbols*, *images*, and *metaphors* in conveying—both implicitly and explicitly—the meanings and values that define the congregation's culture and identity. Regarding the essence of the stories themselves, Ammerman contends that the telling of a congregation's story transcends the facts to relate its unique *history* and *myths*, such that relate in grand fashion memories of events and individuals who have shaped the past so as to inform and energize future directions. She further contends that such storytelling conveys a congregation's innate perceptions and presumptions in regard to both its *theology* and *worldview*. In regard to the former, Ammerman asserts that how a congregation understands God's actions and

---

[32] Nancy T. Ammerman et al., eds., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 84-89.

their own determines its orientation of its mission in the world. In regard to the latter, she relates it as characteristic of the basic way a congregation looks at and seeks to explain what happens in the world, citing the pivotal contribution of James Hopewell to this interpretative model.[33]

Hopewell advocates a "symbolic" approach as the basis for his study of the local congregation, asserting that in "its attention to a pattern of motifs, its use of a linguistic model, and its narrative dimension" it represents a "discourse" on the "personality" of the congregation.[34] In regard to the task of "narrative discourse" Hopewell states that, along with plot and characterization, the establishment of settings is a key element in storytelling, such as it serves to describe the "story's universe." Specifically within the context of the study of congregations, "in an ethnographic analysis of a community the setting is termed its *world view*"—the "picture" that over time the community develops and claims as its own as it seeks to describe "what is really going on in the world." While granting that the development of worldviews arises from a social need heightened by crisis or challenge, Hopewell cautions that all are "fragile and incomplete constructions, subject to damaging contradictions." Further, he cites as important the distinction made by anthropologists between a community's worldview and its *ethos*, the former indicating the universe the group constructs based on perception, whereas the latter "reflects the values and dispositions that the group maintains" based on preference. In either case he

[33] Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, 92-100.
[34] James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, ed. Barbara Wheeler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 28-31.

maintains that, at the level of a local parish or congregation, there will be consequences in both the way it operates and in its relationships both outwardly and inwardly.[35]

Hopewell begins with the example of a rather unique building constructed by a church community he had helped to start, in order to address the congregation's adoption of a setting or orientation as informed by its particular worldview. Given the inadequacy of a bipolar scale that seeks to characterize and position belief on a continuum between orthodoxy/conservatism and modernism/liberalism, instead he draws upon Northrup Frye's identification of four definitive "genres"—*tragedy*, *comedy*, *romance*, and irony—setting all Western literature around "the gigantic circle of human interpretation," to identify four corresponding "categories"—*canonic*, *gnostic*, *charismatic*, and *empiric*—that serve to describe and differentiate among the complexity of beliefs and outlooks encountered in his congregational study.[36]

Analogous to the Hopewell's approach, the study of congregational dynamics from the perspective of sociology, specifically in the area of organizational studies, is affirmed. In ***Organizational Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives***, **Mary Jo Hatch** cites Larry Grenier's seminal description of an **organizational lifecycle** that, similar to the stages of human development in which one moves from *infancy* and *childhood* to *adolescence* and *maturity*, is distinguished by **five** stages labeled as ***entrepreneurial***, ***collectivity***, ***delegation***, ***formalization***, and ***collaboration***. According to Grenier's theory a different focus dominates at each stage in the lifecycle, punctuated in

[35] Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, 55-57.
[36] Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, 67-69.

turn by a series of crises - *leadership*, *autonomy*, *control*, *'red-tape'*, and *renewal* - that will test and determine its survival as well as progression to the next stage.[37] Further, in describing the "influence of organizational learning styles on early development," in ***The Organizational Life Cycle***, **Robert Miles** and **W. Alan Randolph** contrast *enactive* and *proactive* organizations in terms of "the creation of organizational knowledge," leading to "the emergence and strengthening of a belief system." In both types of organizations, the resulting beliefs were examined in regard to relationships between **1.** individual and organizational effectiveness, **2.** teamwork and organizational effectiveness, and **3.** organizational structure and conflict, with the expectation that members' identity with the organization would increase with experience. However, expectations were only generally confirmed in the case of enactive organizations, while on the whole members of proactive organizations exhibited weaker patterns of association. What Miles and Randolph did observe in the proactive versus the enactive organization over their early development was the former's relative stability of its belief system.[38]

Indeed, although in faith we profess otherwise, for many the evocative vision of Acts that purports to "turn the world upside down" is often deemed unrealistic and untenable in today's world. In regarding the very prospect of applying this model and standard of Christian community in our individual and collective lives to be demanding if not threatening, it is predictable that most church folk would resonate with Conzelman's

---

[37] Mary Jo Hatch, *Organizational Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 173-74.

[38] Robert Miles and W. Alan Randolph, "Influence of Organizational Learning Styles on Early Development" in *The Organizational Life Cycle*, eds. John Kimberley and Robert Miles (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980), 65-70.

view that Luke's account represents an idealized communal portrait. Yet I maintain that, if in faith we profess to trust in God's possibilities and involvement, not only must we uphold as credible and believable the assertion of Gonzalez and others that it really happened, but heirs of such a community we are called as to make it a present reality.

Speaking of the Spirit

> **When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit . . .**
>
> Acts 2:1-4a

Aside from the temporal considerations suggested to this point, many maintain that "otherworldly" influences played a significant role in the emergence of the early Christian community. In the theological context, that in a significant way informs this study, it entails that we now turn our attention to the often neglected yet, I contend, important subject of the Spirit. Relevant to the study of Christian theology and doctrine, the Greek *pneumatology* translates as "discourse about the Holy Spirit." Referred to in both the Old and New Testaments, in biblical terms the *spirit* may be understood as referring to either "distinctively human life" or "the dynamic activity of God."

In an article, **"A Fruitful Field: Recent Study of the Acts of the Apostles," Ward Gasque** cites the *gift of the Holy Spirit* as key to the early church's flexibility as well as the secret of its growth and success, given an ecclesiology that was not only *Christocentric* but also *charismatic*. Gasque asserts that the Spirit assured continuity with Jesus and was the source of early Christian mission. This, he argues, is affirmed in the

theology of Acts and its accent on growth of the church through proclamation of the Word. As it instructs the modern church, he suggests that indeed the Acts narrative may serve as a means of opening our imagination to the life of the early church, its sermons, and descriptions of church life as examples of an ideal.[39] In agreement with his suggestion concerning the purpose of the Acts narrative, I would assert that such ideals are "in touch"—not "out of touch"—with God's possibilities. Sharing Gasque's viewpoint of the Holy Spirit's pivotal influence among the first Christians is **Norman Pittenger** who, in ***The Holy Spirit***, notes that the Spirit is not known as a "vague, diffused, subpersonal or mechanical influence," but rather as "active, energizing, living and focused, acting personally in human life." He further maintains that in the Spirit a spirit of response among Jesus' followers led this fellowship of believers in a helping and healing ministry whose boldness was extraordinarily marked by the power and strength of its love.[40]

Returning to Jurgen Moltmann, in ***The Church in the Power of the Spirit*** he describes the church as "the community of justified sinners, the fellowship of those liberated by Christ," created in the power of the Holy Spirit to be both historical and eschatalogical. He contends that "the powers of the Spirit are the powers of life, which determine the present, extending their influence forward from the future of new life." He further contends that, as part of the history of the creative Spirit, "the church is a way and a transition to the kingdom of God," and "lives in the experience and practice of the Spirit

---

[39] Ward A. Gasque. "A Fruitful Field: Recent Studies of the Book of Acts", *Interpretation* 42:2 (April 1988): 126-28.

[40] Norman Pittenger, *The Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), 54-55.

from the eschatological anticipation of the kingdom."[41] Similarly, **Leon Suenens** addresses, in ***A New Pentecost?***, what may be regarded as the two dimensions of the church, being at once sociological and theological, witnessed to in Scripture and yet enlivened by the Spirit. As both "visible and institutional" as well as "invisible and charismatic," he contends that "the unity of these two dimensions is essential to the very concept of the Church." Suenens asserts "the Holy Spirit, no less than Christ, builds the Church," maintaining that "the consequences of this mysterious, interpenetrating action of Jesus and the Spirit has (sic) deep meaning for the life of the Church."[42]

In advocacy of recovering the Spirit's vital role as essential to the concept of the Church, I commend Suenens' representation of church renewal as a *new pentecost* in encouraging an arguably ailing if not moribund institution to rediscover and be enlivened by its roots. I assert in agreement with him that, if the church is to be born anew as an imaginative and invigorated body, it must once again dare to entertain dreams and visions that result when we open ourselves to receive God's Spirit. As prophesied by Joel and cited in the second chapter of Acts in witness to the Pentecost event, God promises:

> **Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.** Joel 2:28-29

Samuel Terrien similarly upholds the role of the Spirit in ***The Elusive Presence***, asserting that Paul placed "*freedom of the Spirit* above subservience to a written code."

---

[41] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit.* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), 33-35.

[42] Leon Joseph Suenens, *A New Pentecost?*, trans. Francis Martin (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1975), 5-8.

He cites of the Spirit, as described in II Corinthians 3:6-17, that "it creates *responsible freedom* in the presence of the living God," and "takes hold of the total person and animates the whole being," thus giving life. As the very source of such freedom, Terrien describes this *Presence* as being "elusive, intangible, unpredictable, untamed, inaccessible to empirical verification, outwardly invisible but inwardly irresistible."[43] One comes to understand the reason for the apostle Paul's emphasis on spiritual freedom, in consideration of what would prove to its later domestication by an establishment church as the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Without such freedom to "blow where it chooses," the sense of mystery and awe that is prevalent especially in the Old Testament, the Spirit's power and influence is diminished.

> **Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow thro' the wilderness calling and free,**
> **Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, Wind, Wind on the sea.**
>
> **You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill, then you**
> **whispered in silence when the whole world was still;**
> **and down in the city you called once again, when you**
> **blew through your people on the rush of the wind.**[44]

Overcoming Spiritual Estrangement

Douglas Hall contrasts the established church with the original community of faith in ***Professing the Faith***, asserting that in the Constantinian Church a developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit was considered far from vital to the continued growth and nurture of the disciple community. He maintains that in its established, state-sanctioned form, entry came to be practically automatic without a call to decision and regeneration,

---

[43] Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: The Heart of Biblical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), 456-57.

[44] James K. Manley. *Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness* (James K. Manley, 1975), v. 3 and refrain.

leading to where Christians were effectively born and not *reborn.* In the emerging era of Christendom the work of the Spirit came to be emphasized primarily in off-shoots and sects outside of, and persecuted by, the established church. Without sanction by civil law or social custom, it was in just such a setting that the *converting work of the Spirit* was stressed as a regular and vital aspect of Christian life, the importance of such as recalled in Lukan and Johannine literature as well as the Pauline epistles that cite the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit/Spirit of Christ in struggle with our own spirits. Citing Paul's description from Romans 8 of the changes effected by the "continuous intervention" of the Holy Spirit upon the disciple community, Hall argues that the *suffering* of the church was as much a result of internal resistance to its "ongoing conversion" as the incidence of external persecution.[45] Such a contention of the early church's self-affliction in resistance to the Spirit is seemingly verified by the testimony of verses 9 to 16, as well as in verses 22 to 23 cited below:

> **We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.** Romans 8:22-23

In ***Thinking the Faith***, **Hall** argues that in its established form Christianity had turned its "end-event" into a kind of *myth*, a final pronouncement or Word to silence all words, a once-for-all Truth as extension of its thirst for finality. He contends that, unlike the example of the Scriptures embodied by its earliest followers, history reveals how, far from its living in dialectical tension with the *Paraclete*, the Church chose to regard the

---

[45] Douglas John Hall, *Professing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 248-50.

Holy Spirit as an enormous threat. Hall further contends that, aside from the perceived need to check *ungrounded Spiritism,* had it been given its due, seventeenth century Protestant scholasticism could not have succeeded in silencing and bounding the Spirit "hand and foot to the doctrine of the 'second person.'"[46] Further to Hall's contention that the subordination and weakening of the Spirit has its origins in the orthodoxy of established Christianity, I maintain that likewise in contemporary times, the Spirit is still regarded as somewhat of a threat by the self-proclaimed defenders of orthodox belief that, in regarding all Scripture as inerrant and infallible, subscribe to a Christology that tends to belittle the Holy Spirit.

Van Harvey observes in **A Handbook of Theological Terms** that, while in the Old Testament the Hebrew *ruach* commonly refers to "the power and presence of God in the world and, especially, in the history of Israel," in the New Testament the Greek *pneuma* primarily refers to "the peculiar redemptive power of God at work in Jesus Christ and in the lives of those who surrender their own claims to righteousness and accept God's graciousness." Such, it may be argued, represents a subtle but significant difference, in the latter's invitation to initiative and responsibility on the part of God's people. Harvey argues that, while general qualities of power, influence, and consistency of the Holy Spirit are cited in New Testament writings, they do not comprise a doctrine of the Holy Spirit *per se*. Instead, he asserts that such discourse "provided the materials for

---

[46] Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 104-05.

later theological elaboration," leading to the formulation of "three coequal persons in one godhead" by the Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E.[47]

While Hall acknowledges as factual truth that the Holy Spirit was not prominent in discussions leading up to the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., yet in another sense he asserts that it could also be regarded as the foundational theology of Christianity. He contends that, without the *metanoia* attributed to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, there could have been no enlightened remembrance of the Christ, concluding that the *binatarian* problem of New Testament theology arises from a "prior *Trinitarian* problem" that necessitates an understanding of the Holy Spirit as being present from the beginning.[48] Hall recounts the many good reasons why an "ungrounded Spirit" must be caused again and again to conform its testimony to the One who has "come in the Flesh." Yet he notes as equally true that "Jesus Christ will only live for us today if made lively by the One whom the Nicean Creed wisely described as 'the Lord and Giver of Life.'" Hall further concedes that, throughout its history, nothing has been more threatening to established religion than the Holy Spirit that, in presenting problems for evolving Christianity, became "the primary enemy of Christendom." Yet again he argues nonetheless, "there can be no renewal of the living Christ in the church without a renewal of faith's recognition of and possession by the Holy Spirit."[49] In Hall's affirmation of the Spirit, on all counts I could not agree more. In elaboration of the last point, as witnessed over the remaining course of this thesis, I will further maintain that indeed the church's health and stewardship stand to benefit from such "recognition of and possession by the Holy Spirit."

---

[47] Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Collier Books, 1964), 228-29.

A Way of Life in the Spirit

Writing in *The Interpreter's Bible* commentary on ***The Acts of the Apostles***, **G.H.C. MacGregor** and **Theodore P. Ferris** observe that while many intellectuals accept Christianity as an "explanation of life," they are not inclined to accept it as a "way of life." In consideration of a reluctance towards the latter's application, they cite Acts 2:41-47 "from which certain explanations and inferences about life were inevitably drawn," in asserting that "it is far more difficult to practice the way than to accept the explanation."[50] Indeed, I would assert of the church and its leadership that, while citing this passage as true and reliable, all too often their inaction speaks louder than words. The failure to practice what we preach serves only to compromise the message.

Examining the church and its formation in ***The First Urban Christians***, Wayne Meeks focuses upon the models and groupings in which early Christians congregated, asserting that *kat'oikon ekklesia* or house churches represented the "basic cell" of the movement.[51] Meeks also draws attention to other New Testament references to Christ's followers as "brothers and sisters in Christ and children of God," and their conversion in "putting on Christ and being baptized into Christ."[52] Returning to Gonzalez, he firmly maintains that, given the experience and example of the early church, the common understanding of *koinonia* as "the inner disposition of goodwill" in the light of fellowship

---

[48] Hall, *Professing the Faith*, 61.
[49] Hall, *Professing the Faith*, 487-88.
[50] G.H.C. MacGregor and Thomas P. Ferris, *The Acts of the Apostles, The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. IX, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 50-51.
[51] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 75-80.
[52] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 87-89.

must be broadened and expanded to include a sense of partnership and sharing—not only symbolically but substantially, not only spiritually but materially—such that challenges traditional norms.[53] There is much to commend in the above models of early Christian community, foremost of which I would name their intentionality to be in community together, as well as their willingness to be moulded and shaped by the Spirit.

> **Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**
> **Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**
> **Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me.**
> **Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**
>
> **Spirit of the living God, move among us all;**
> **make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:**
> **humble, caring, selfless, sharing.**
> **Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love!**[54]

Yet, I argue, by design rather than coincidence that, with Christianity's establishment under Constantine, such spirited idealism that so marked early Christian communities effectively dissipated. With the formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, God's once-elusive presence was tamed and domesticated. Dispirited, the church's role changed from transformer of the world to conformer to the world.

According to **M. Douglas Meeks**, "the transformation of the world begins with the transformation of the God concepts by which our church and world are organized." In **"Towards a Trinitarian View of Economics: The Holy Spirit and Human Needs,"** Meeks contends of the seemingly strange juxtaposition of the title and subtitle that these two subjects indeed concern the same thing. Economics, he maintains, such as it derives

---

[53] Gonzalez, *Faith and Wealth*, 82-84

[54] Daniel Iverson and Michael Baughen, *Spirit of the Living God* (Birdwing Music, 1935, 1963, Hope Publishing Co., 1982), vv. 1,2.

from the Greek *oikonomia* referring to "the law or management of the household," basically concerns the question of "whether everyone in the household will get what it takes to be human and live a full life," while the Holy Spirit is cited as "God working economically so that God's creatures and the whole creation may live and live abundantly." Yet Meeks also acknowledges that indeed the Holy Spirit as such will be in "severe conflict with the economics of our society today," focusing on reigning *God concepts* both in our churches and in the ethos of North American society. To this end, Meeks contends on behalf of the need for an "ecclesial revolution" that will liberate in particular the mainline churches from the concept of God as "a radically individual and isolated being," out of which arises the notion of the "radically separated, individual human being and the disastrous concept of possessive individualism."[55] In this regard, I concur with Meek's assessment of the challenge before the church to claim again the role of transformer in the power of the Spirit. I also agree that to travel such a road will be most difficult, as the reigning societal and economic norms are firmly entrenched. However, from a stewardship standpoint I contend that, as Christ's followers in the Spirit, we have a responsibility to model an alternative way of being the church and in the world.

In ***God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*** Meeks subsequently addresses the question as to how the church can be more faithfully "the economy of God" and thus become "the household of Jesus Christ." Differentiating between God's economy and that of the world, Meeks proceeds to describe the main problem of all economy as domination, stating an urgency "to juxtapose God and the

---

[55] M. Douglas Meeks, "Toward a Trinitarian View of Economics: The Holy Spirit and Human Needs", *Teaching and Preaching Stewardship: An Anthology*, ed. Nordan C. Murphy (New York: Commission on

economy" in response to the unconscious support of such domination by "deformed God concepts." He contends that it is the egalitarian thrust of God's economy to free households of people and creation from domination. Advancing a "shared understanding of goods," such a critical doctrine reveals God as "not a radical individual but rather a community of diverse persons that finds unity in self-giving love." Describing the "mutual coinherence" of the three persons of the Trinity as a model for the interrelationship of members of the household that God intends for the human economic community, Meeks asserts that there can be no *just society* until there is society.[56]

Meeks further describes the doctrine of the church as that of the economy of God's household, noting that, because the church exists for the sake of God's love for the world, there can be no sound teaching that does not speak to the church's relationship to the economy of society and the world. Citing the intention of the church to be where God's interests and those of the world meet "in the presence of the Holy Spirit," he asserts that to live in the Holy Spirit is to live in solidarity with and for transformation of the world. As such, in that God's economy is meant for this world, it will necessarily entail that, as the church, we will come into conflict with the powers of domination.[57] I agree with Meeks' assertion that to raise such radical concepts as *Trinitarian economics* and the *economy of God* is most certain to evoke criticism, mockery, and hostility towards the church from those who believe the economy belongs to them. Yet I also affirm that, as a church in the spirit, it is our primary—if not ultimate—call to be in solidarity with the

---

Stewardship, National Council of Churches, 1985), 183-84.

[56] M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 10-12.

[57] Meeks, *God the Economist*, 23-24.

least of our brothers and sisters, and to work for justice for all of creation in fulfilling God's intentions.

Stewardship as Spiritual Formation

In turning to some foundational perspectives on stewardship, I trust that the thrust of my passionate approach to this subject firmly demonstrates a resolve to address simultaneously issues concerning congregational and spiritual development. As I alluded in the Introduction, I maintain that too often—in my experience and that within the context of The United Church—the subject of stewardship is approached on an *ad hoc* basis, regarded as but "a means to an end." Beyond such considerations, seldom is the subject raised in a substantive manner. Given such an approach, whatever effort and energy is expended in the interest of stewardship education and development will inevitably yield unsatisfactory results.

It is my contention that in order to arrive at more satisfactory results, it is essential to change the approach the church takes to the subject of stewardship. Rather than subjecting people to the exploitation of stewardship as another name for fundraising, why not encourage them to adopt the practice of stewardship as an alternative lifestyle? Further to this point, it is my assertion that an emphasis on grace and generosity will take us further along the road of faith than one that stresses guilt and obligation. I further advocate that, as a prerequisite of our living together in the Spirit as one in Christ, provision must be made for intentional and ongoing spiritual formation.

In examination of the etymology of the *economy* of God, in ***Stewardship and the Economy of God***, **John Reumann** identifies the starting point as the Greek *oikos* meaning

"household," such a far-reaching concept that included the extended family as well as servants and slaves. Reumann also cites the Greek *oikonomia*, involving the management of the household, in reference to the household's role in antiquity as not only a fundamental social organization, but also to its function as an important economic entity. He then proceeds to draw a connection between its wider usage and its application within the Christian community to stewardship and the economy of God.[58]

However, in order that a Christian community might embark upon such an alternative lifestyle entails its steadfast determination to break with the ways of the world. In **"Learning Christ," Stanley Saunders** refers to the fourth chapter of Ephesians in comparing *Christian spiritual formation* to the "learning of a new language or culture, learning that comprises both knowledge and practice." Saunders cites verses 22-24 that read: "You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, . . . and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness," asserting that its "baptismal language" points "toward both renewed imagination and the practices appropriate to a new understanding of the world."[59] As it relates to the concept of covenant within a faith community, such "baptismal" symbolism will be more fully developed by John Westerhoff later in this chapter.

Michael Warren further addresses the subject of spiritual or religious formation in the context of social formation in ***Faith, Culture and the Worshipping Community***.

---

[58] John Reumann, *Stewardship and the Economy of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 11-15.

[59] Stanley P. Saunders, "Learning Christ: Eschatology and Spiritual Formation in New Testament Christianity" (*Interpretation*, Vol. 56, No. 2, April 2002), 155-56.

Citing early church leader Tertullian's contention that "Christians are made, not born," Warren speaks to the fashioning process of which *catechesis* is one part. He further contends that such formation is not only characteristic of religious groups, but is "a central and inevitable process of all human life" of which religious life is an important aspect.[60] Yet, despite the strength of such assertions, such efforts seemed to have been inexplicably abandoned. It may be argued that, aside from efforts focused upon its priesthood and religious orders, for some 1,500 years, until the mid-late nineteenth century emergence of the Sunday School movement, religious formation involving wider Christian community was conspicuously absent. Assuming that those within the fold would remain faithful from generation to generation, its focus shifted to the evangelistic efforts of foreign and domestic missions to convert the masses to Christendom.

Warren asserts that *religious formation* is particularly important in helping new members to participate in and be integrated into a group's understandings and way of life. Indeed, he argues, such was the spirited practice in the early church before gradually falling into general disuse about 300 A.D., only to be seriously revived in the past 25 years within contemporary churches.[61] In my estimation, it is ironically more than coincidental that the practice of religious formation so pivotal to the health and vitality of the early Christian community declined with the institutionalization of the Christian church. Could there be a connection between its decline and the domestication of the Spirit as cited earlier? I am of the conviction that this is clearly the case.

---

[60] Michael Warren, *Faith, Culture and the Worshipping Community* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 23-24.
[61] Warren, *Faith, Culture and the Worshipping Community*, 33-34.

In maintaining that a key component of any such religious formation necessitates the understanding and practice of stewardship, a brief consideration of how stewardship in general has come to be commonly understood and practiced in the contemporary church setting is in order. To begin, in reference to its wide usage in the middle of the 20th century, Reumann cites the definition adopted in 1946 by the United Stewardship Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States and Canada, that it is:

> the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities and material possessions, based on the conviction that they are trusts from God to be used in his service for the benefit of all mankind in grateful acknowledgement of Christ's redeeming love.[62]

Further to its definition, Reumann refers to a subsequent 1964 statement of the Department of Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. It reads "Christian stewardship is man's grateful and obedient response to God's redeeming love, expressed by the use of all resources for the fulfillment of Christ's mission in the world." While further noting (in his own words) the "somewhat flamboyant" description of that period regarding stewardship as "one of basic doctrines of the Christian religion . . . ," he concedes that for all intents and purposes by the mid-1960s such reference to the term "went into eclipse."[63]

Particularly in regard to the earlier statement, such a succinct definition is remarkably thorough in expressing a concept of stewardship that one might presume would have been widely adopted as a model for congregational stewardship statements. However, in framing the post-Second World War period widely described as the "baby

---

[62] Reumann, *Stewardship and the Economy of God*, 4.
[63] Reumann, *Stewardship and the Economy of God*, 4-5.

boom," it might be that in an era of euphoric church growth in North America, few took much notice of the subject of stewardship. Indeed, I contend that, while prominent in stewardship circles, response to such ideals among congregations was never strong. In my estimation, to this day rarely is the understanding and thus practice of stewardship in the local context significantly informed by biblical, theological, or ecclesiastical ideals.

It is in ***The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age***, as arguably the seminal work upon which further theological examination of stewardship has built, that **Douglas Hall** seeks to recover and develop a biblical understanding of this subject. Hall asserts that efforts to trace changes in the faith affecting the theology of stewardship have been all the more difficult because they are indirect. Contrasting the Hebraic and Hellenistic influences upon the consideration of matter and spirit in the context of faith, he notes that, while the former was very *earthly* in rendering the material universe as inherently good as the creation of God, the latter was marked by powerful nuances that in their abiding suspicion of all matter stressed "separation of the flesh and the spirit." As such, Hall contends that, despite William Temple's characterization of Christianity as "the most materialistic of all religions," in its move into a Hellenistic world as well as in its historical evolution the essentially Jewish offspring was *spiritualized* and made *otherworldly*, robbing it of its potential and essential worldliness.[64]

Also in his groundbreaking work, Hall explores the scriptural meaning of the stewardship concept from the standpoint of its *theological, christological, ecclesiastical,*

---

[64] Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (New York: Friendship Press, 1982), 32-33.

anthropological, and eschatological dimensions or assumptions.[65] I am puzzled that, given his advocacy that the exploration of stewardship entails the multiple perspectives of God, Christ, the Church, humanity, and "last things," Hall seemingly neglects the very perspective of the Spirit. Therefore, additionally, I argue that any comprehensive exploration of the scriptural meaning of stewardship must take into account its pneumatological dimensions as concerned with the Holy Spirit.

Hall further contends that the exploration of stewardship is not intended for "the preservation of some eternal truth," but necessitates "our actual involvement in existence." Referring to such *necessary risk* in Jesus' terms as "discerning the signs of the times," he argues that such risk is not only of the intellect but of our very self, especially in times of great unrest and crisis when "the whole inclination of the human heart is to 'flee from the wrath to come.'"[66] Such counsel as implores us to engage in the 'risky business' of life in all its fullness seems all the more relevant in the wake of September 11, 2001, given what I contend is the incredible rise of "terrorist paranoia" that has led many North Americans to fear living itself. In reaction to the unthinkable and the exposure of our vulnerability, does our resulting loss of innocence and the sacrifice of freedoms in the interest of security ironically hand the terrorists their victory?

I earlier observed that, in many congregations I have served, the subject of stewardship more often than not has been a cause of discomfort if not controversy. Consequently, stewardship is considered only out of obligation to attend to the distasteful

---

[65] Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, 23-28.
[66] Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, 42-43.

reality of providing for the *financial*—and to a somewhat lesser extent *human*— resources required to do God's work. This may indeed be a residual effect of the cultural influence upon the church of the Hellenistic dichotomy of "matter" and "spirit." I also observed that in local churches, typically "stewardship committees" are reluctantly constituted in order to at the very least help the church *meet its budget*. Indeed, in Douglas Hall's estimation the concept of stewardship has been truncated, and generally appropriated in a purely *functional* sense. He asserts that, for the majority of churchgoers, stewardship is perceived as "the acquisition and management of ecclesiastical monies and properties." Hall further asserts that, contrasted with the "real work" of the church's mission, stewardship has come to be regarded as "the material means by which the spiritual end is achieved."[67] Hall instead describes stewardship as "a matter of direct confrontation" with the modernist, anthropocentric concept of mastery, challenging us to assume the posture of *the servant* and to adopt a life of *worldly responsibility*. Regarding stewardship no longer as concerned with the periphery, but belonging to the essence of all things, he advocates on behalf of the potential of its radical and sorely needed Truth to change both the church and the world.[68] In agreement with Hall regarding the central and crucial role of stewardship as an instrument for change in both the church and the world, I contend that in its calling of us to servanthood and responsibility, it is a most serious business.

Another pioneer in the theology of stewardship, **John Westerhoff** writes, in ***Building God's People in a Materialistic Society***, that "as stewards of God, we are invited to join God's action, God's mission in the world." As Christ's Body and God's

---

[67] Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, 6.
[68] Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, 53-54.

Sacrament, through whom God may be present in human life and history, we are called to be stewards, managers and administrators of a trust by which God's will is accomplished and all humanity may benefit. He contends that "as a baptized people" we are to acknowledge all that has been entrusted to us by God, and to practice stewardship within the context of community as "our continuous response to the grace of God through responsible daily life." In such a way, "Christian faith, therefore, affirms both the sacred and the secular, the spiritual and the material."[69] In regarding baptism as a sign of our covenant with God, Westerhoff's contention that we practice stewardship at all times and in all aspects truly affirms what Christian faith is meant to be. I agree with him that, in and through our practice of stewardship, we both represent and witness to God's will.

Stewardship as Covenant

I am surprised that, as a concept rooted firmly in the Bible, in the context of both faith and the church, we refer to covenant as little as we do. In addressing this anomaly, it is in regard to stewardship that I maintain we can most appropriately refer to covenant. Indeed, Westerhoff seeks to evoke this concept in his assertion that the church's understanding of stewardship is "rooted in our baptismal covenant," such that we are incorporated into the body of Christ to be led by the Spirit in manifesting God's will. In this context, he maintains that our stewardship is multidimensional in its expression and involves "nothing less than a complete lifestyle, a total accountability and responsibility before God." In our commitment as members of God's household, he asserts we become

---

[69] John Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), 23-26.

subject to God's economy or stewardship.[70] In this regard, from a theological perspective, Westerhoff's contention of a comprehensive approach to stewardship commends, at least in principle, a return to the idealism of Acts. More recently, in ***The Steward Living in Covenant***, a corresponding biblical perspective has been presented by yet another pioneer in the development of a theology of stewardship, **Ronald Vallet**. In drawing upon the emphasis towards "living in covenant" found in several Old Testament stories, Vallet seeks to renew the concept of *covenant* in the church's practice of stewardship.[71]

Returning to Westerhoff, he further depicts this covenant relationship as our "Christian vocation," addressing it as an expression of stewardship that is both *individual* and *corporate*. Our calling to be "in the world but not of it," participating socially, politically, and economically so as to further God's will and reign, is not just a fulfillment of duties but involves our being an advocate and sign of God's rule. Indeed, he argues that God calls us to identify with others--especially the weak and vulnerable. As we ourselves become as one with all the world and its people, we may honour God's intentions, understanding stewardship in terms of life within community and history, and involving radical community-centredness, ethical norms, and the ongoing search for a new reality.[72]

Stewardship as Witness

> **Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you; do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"** Matthew 6:25

---

[70] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 15-16.

[71] Ronald Vallet, *The Steward Living in Covenant: A New Perspective on Old Testament Stories* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001).

[72] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 33-34.

> **This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.** I Corinthians 4:1-2
>
> **Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce.** Proverbs 3:9
>
> **What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.** Psalm 116:12-14

As briefly attested in the selected verses above, there are numerous references to be found in the scriptures concerning the subject of stewardship. Vallet considers the subject of biblical stewardship through the parables of Jesus in ***Stepping Stones of the Steward***. In reference to the parables of the treasure and the pearls (Matt. 13:44-46), he relates the steward's setting of priorities and willingness to take risks.[73] Vallet, in turn, cites the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), in further relating the practice of stewardship to our grateful expression of love in caring, helping, and risking for others.[74] In this regard, **Timothy Ek** further contends in an article on "**Stewardship and Spiritual Health**" that, as related by the story of his encounters both with Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10) and the "rich young ruler" (Matthew 19:16-24), "Jesus recognized that giving is a barometer of our spiritual health." He further contends that "the church must teach about giving because it is linked to our growth as Christ's disciples." Citing Martin Luther's assertion of need for a threefold conversion of peoples' hearts, minds, and pocketbooks, Ek asserts that "if the church is to equip contemporary disciples for the work of ministry"

---

[73] Ronald E. Vallet, *Stepping Stones of the Steward: A Faith Journey through Jesus' Parables* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 91-94.

[74] Vallet, *Stepping Stones of the Steward*, 102-05.

it must deal with "pocketbook" issues.[75] Although I argue that stewardship must not be defined by a fixation on that aspect that concerns our pocketbooks, I nonetheless agree that the practice of holistic stewardship necessarily involves such giving as a reflection of our spiritual health and commitment to a stewardship lifestyle.

Isaac Block takes a different position in regard to the subject of stewardship and the management of money. Proceeding from a biblically based examination of what constitutes the role of a steward, he addresses the issue of "urban poverty" and the questions it raises for stewardship. In that Jesus *chose to become poor to make us rich*, Block asserts that "the starting point has to do with attitude," questioning the position the church has frequently taken in being primarily concerned with appearances rather than what is right and just. Challenging the contemporary church "to be in this world in an authentic way so that we are more eager to give than to receive," he maintains that we must "also be willing to receive" in exchanging gifts with those we serve, realizing that "while it is in giving that we receive, it is in receiving that we give."[76] Block's point is worth noting, as I would affirm that stewardship requires of us not only a generous, but a humble heart. Further, I suggest, in opening our hearts to receive the gifts of other people, we also need to acknowledge that everything we have has been given to us by God.

> **For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.** Mark 10:45
>
> **Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all persons and especially to those who are of the household of faith.**
> Galatians 6:9-10

---

[75] Timothy C. Ek, "Stewardship and Spiritual Health", in *The Abingdon Guide to Funding Ministry*, eds. Donald Joiner and Norma Wimberley [CD-ROM] Vol. 3, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 19-20.

[76] Isaac I. Block, "Not Just About Money", *The Practice of Ministry in Canada*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (Jan. 1993), 21-22.

But if any one has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need, yet closes their heart against them, how does God's love abide in them?

I John 3:17

In a similar vein, Douglas Hall upholds in ***Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship***, that our fear of serving has been and is conquered by the Spirit who leads us into all truth, and that the greatest humanity is the one that serves. He maintains that in the adoption of a stewardship lifestyle, our covetousness of the gifts of others is replaced by gratitude for the diversity of gifts among humankind and for the richness of community made possible in radical new forms. Hall asserts that, as justice, mercy, truth, and peace become guiding ideals of the church, in this sphere human beings will be beckoned to *new beginnings* and *new relationships* within "a community of the cross" as we begin to "image God" in our relationships and seek to implement the same praxis in the life of the world as a whole.[77]

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and God's righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you. Hallelu, hallelujah.

Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Hallelu, hallelujah.[78]

In ***Stewards in the Kingdom***, **R. Scott Rodin** also addresses the subject of relationships, contending that, on account of our sinful and fallen nature, every level of relationship is affected. As two defining marks of this fallenness, he identifies, first, the shift in self-understanding from "steward" to "owner" in seeking to possess and control "in defiance of the God who gives all things freely," and, second, the cessation of our

---

[77] Douglas John Hall, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 158-60.

[78] Karen Lafferty, *Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God*, (Maranatha Music, 1972), vv. 1, 2.

relationship to creation as part of our self-definition. As a consequence of sin that endangers rendering the very concept of stewardship meaningless, Rodin asserts:

> A theology of stewardship must take seriously the brokenness of these relationships and the reality of sin. If we do not understand the depth of this brokenness, we will not respond with the gratitude and joy that distinguishes the life of the steward.[79]

Douglas Meeks, in ***Towards a Trinitarian View of Economics***, confronts the creation of "artificial scarcity" in order to feed "the blind compulsion to growth, increase, and success that has a death grip on our society." Meeks asserts that the hope of transformation "depends on the conflict between modes of artificial scarcity and the Holy Spirit, who destroys all our attempts to build economics on scarcity," maintaining that "in the presence of the Holy Spirit all we can do is confess the abundance, the richness, the fullness of God's righteousness." As the exclusive gift of God's abundant grace, he further asserts that, contrary to popular belief, neither can we justify ourselves through work, nor is there any scarcity of what it means to be human.[80] I recounted my dismay in the Introduction that, in the last decade, my denomination had paradoxically seemed to capitulate to the myth and expectations of *scarcity*. To be certain, as Meeks observes, such is a product of our times and society is difficult to resist. Yet with Meeks I agree that, in the presence of the Holy Spirit and as witnesses to redeeming ministry of Jesus Christ, the church must lead the way in confronting it.

> **In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated**

---

[79] R. Scott Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life in All Its Fullness* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 101-03.

[80] Meeks, *Towards a Trinitarian View of Economics*, 191-93.

> **the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.**
> Genesis 1:1-5

In ***Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope: Contested Truth in a Post-Christian*** **World, Walter Brueggemann** contrasts the "liturgy of abundance" with the "myth of scarcity." Addressing the former, he states that Genesis 1 is "a song of praise for God's generosity," further noting how especially in Psalms 104 and 150 "Israel celebrates God's abundance." He contrasts the blessings of God upon Abraham and his ancestors in the early chapters of Genesis with the depiction of the Pharoah in Genesis 47 as the one responsible for introducing the notion of scarcity into the biblical faith. However, unable to crush the promises of the creation story or to control the people of Israel, by the end of Exodus, the Pharoah reluctantly admits that Israel's "little community of abundance" will prevail. This story he asserts proves that "the power of the future is not in the hands of those who believe in scarcity . . . but in the hands of those who trust God's abundance."[81]

> **And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly . . . ."**
> Luke 1:46-52

Challenging the church to ask "whether our faith allows us to live in a new way," Brueggemann cites both Joshua's profession of faith in God's generosity before those gathered at Shechem and Jesus' pronouncement that "you cannot serve God and

---

[81] Walter Brueggemann, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 69-71.

Mammon" as examples of the call to choose between abundance and scarcity. He asserts that Mary's *Magnificat* was a "revolutionary song" of the prophetic tradition that Jesus enacted through his ministry in parables, wonders, and signs. In particular, he cites "the feeding of the multitudes" as "an example of the new world coming into being through God," describing it as Jesus' engagement "in the sacramental, subversive reordering of public reality." In summation he maintains that "sharing our abundance may, as Jesus says, be impossible for mortals, but nothing is impossible for God."[82] I maintain that Brueggemann's emphasis on Jesus' proclamation through "signs" and "wonders" is very important in appreciation of the sacramental aspect of his ministry, and that it is indeed instructive to the church in its continuing witness.

Brueggemann, in ***Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination***, cites the "failure of the imagination of modernity" in its universal and absolute claims, proposing an alternative that—daring to challenge dominant and conventional norms—might "fund" or enable a "counterimagination of the world." As a reflection of postmodern reality, he contends that such a task calls upon the church in the local context "to provide the pieces, materials and resources out of which a new world can be imagined."[83] I strongly agree with Brueggemann's contention concerning the call of the local church to initiate such a *counterimagination* through its stewardship. It is on this basis that I have come to believe in the wisdom of local initiative in my advocacy of congregational stewardship. Yet prior to addressing this subject in the context of my

---

[82] Brueggemann, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, 73-75.

[83] Walter Brueggemann, *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 19-21.

project, I will first turn to Ronald Vallet who, in his approach to stewardship, employs a model of the congregation as "a household of God" upon which I propose to build.

> **The church is wherever God's people are praising,**
> **singing God's goodness for joy on this day.**
> **The church is wherever disciples of Jesus**
> **remember his story and walk in his way.**
>
> **The church is wherever God's people are helping,**
> **caring for neighbours in sickness and need.**
> **The church is wherever God's people are sharing**
> **the words of the Bible in gift and in deed.**[84]

As a starting point regarding the promotion of a stewardship lifestyle within a faith community, in ***Congregations at the Crossroads: Remembering to be Households of God***, Vallet proposes three "characteristics" of the church as *a household of God*. The first characteristic states that the church is "built on the resurrection of Jesus Christ," such as he notes the apostle Paul clearly believed was foundational to the faith. Stressing the importance of "the dancing and laughter of Easter," Vallet contends that "the church is possible only through God's victory over death in Jesus Christ and God's promise that God will destroy death in all things."[85] I affirm that such an assertion cannot be overstated in the need to recover the centrality of Easter, so as to counteract the elevation of a sentimentalized celebration of Jesus' birth. Indeed, I would further maintain that without the resurrection, there is no basis for the Christian faith.

Second, Vallet asserts that, characteristically, the church exists "for the sake of God's mission," as part of a "subplot" in the larger story of God's love—and passion—for

---

[84] Carol Rose Ikeler, *The Church is Wherever God's People* (W.L. Jenkins, 1963), vv. 1, 2.

[85] Ronald E. Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads: Remembering to be Households of God* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 110-12.

the world.[86] I would again heartily agree with Vallet, contending that, as the reason for its creation by God, mission must continue to be at the heart of the church's meaning and purpose. In bearing witness to many cases where an emphasis on maintenance has overshadowed the commitment to mission, I contend that the very *being* of the church risks compromise from a misplaced focus on self-preservation.

The third and final characteristic named by Vallet is that indeed such a household is "built around the table," such that it is in this setting that we "*remember* who we are and what we are called to do."[87] It is my contention that the often explicit and sometimes overbearing emphasis of churches on the proclamation of the Word serves to restrain and frustrate the free movement of the Spirit, so as to relegate it to a subservient position. Therefore, I especially affirm Vallet's advocacy of the role and function of sacraments in constituting the church as a household of God, having maintained that as an expression of the Spirit they deserve more attention in the Protestant tradition to which my denomination, The United Church of Canada, belongs.

Vallet subsequently proceeds from consideration of these three characteristics to describe what he refers to as the five "rules" of the household, such as the congregation is "called to live by" according to *the logic of the gospel*. Of such rules and indeed any rules, rather than blind and unquestioning obedience, Vallet stresses the need to explore and understand why they have been given or instituted. Drawing upon the household rules of the Torah as his source, he states that they "have their parallel in the ministry of Jesus."

---

[86] Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads*, 115-16.
[87] Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads*, 116-18.

Far from being outmoded and irrelevant, Vallet maintains that such rules have ongoing significance and are intended for today, and that their "memory and hope are the sources of the energy of stewardship in the household of God."[88]

Over the course of this chapter, I have highlighted such foundational perspectives that, over the course of the forthcoming chapters, will play a quintessential role in my approach to this study of congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship. In many respects, such an approach reflects my deepest convictions about the church, as concerns its meaning and purpose, as well as its character and potential. In due course, I have sought to differentiate between church as an institution and church as a community, maintaining throughout that the latter expression better reflects God's presence. It is in advocacy of the importance of God's presence that I have sought to advance the case that a *community of faith* is defined and characterized by *the presence of the Spirit dwelling and working within it.* In the Spirit's dwelling and working within the context of the local church, I propose that the resulting spirit of community respectively enhances the congregation's health and sense of identity, as well as its practice of stewardship. Nonetheless, I continue to believe in the role of denominational bodies as providing a vital connection to a wider expression of faith and commitment to all of God's Creation. Yet, I have come to the conviction that, within the denominational context of The United Church of Canada, we must direct greater focus to the life and work of congregations in the interest of recovering the enlivening power and influence of the Spirit for all the church.

---

[88] Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads*, 119-20.

Chapter Four

CONGREGATIONAL DYNAMICS:

THE DWELLING OF THE SPIRIT

> **The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord." So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy and say to them, . . . I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act," thus says the Lord.** Ezekiel 37:1-12a, 14

In the previous chapter, I shared the various perspectives that inform my study of the interrelationship between congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship. I proceed now in this chapter to begin my examination with particular regard to the former, considering it in terms of a focus on "the dwelling of the Spirit." I uphold that the phenomenon, as I depict it, contributes to a local congregation's description, not merely as a religious institution, but more appropriately as a community of faith. Given this context, this first invites the question as to what is understood to be community.

Congregations as Communities: Models and Ideals

Kevin Heatherington provides an excellent starting point for my examination of the subject at hand, beginning from a sociological context. In ***Expressions of Identity***, he addresses the embodiment of "expressive community," chronicling the development of diverse concepts of this archetype. Heatherington first critiques such depictions as *neo-tribes* (Maffesoli, 1988), *communion* (Gurvitch, 1941), *intentional communities* (Moss-Kanter, 1976), and, most notably, *communitas* (Turner, 1969), before commending the *Bund*, as a model of community that is both expressive and elective in character. In its advocacy, he names as its seven characteristics that it is: **1.** *an elective, unstable, affectual form of sociation*; **2.** *small in scale and based on face-to-face interaction*; **3.** *maintained by active, reflexive monitoring of group solidarity* by members; **4.** *marked by intense but weak* (due to elective origin) *social bonding requiring much self-management*; **5.** *self-enclosed body identified by practices and symbols*; **6.** *involved in blurring of public and private spheres among it members*; and **7.** *both emotional and moral communities, involving affectual and value-rational forms of action.* Heatherington asserts of community in summary that, as a type of organization it is especially well suited to a variety of personal aptitudes and outlooks.[89]

Evelyn Whitehead and **James Whitehead** provide a parallel consideration of the same archetype from a religious perspective in ***Community of Faith: Models and Strategies for Building Christian Communities***, in which they describe "community" as a vague and diffuse term. On the one hand, they assert that it suggests interdependence in its call for a return to the kind of small-town relationships supported by the definition of a

[89] Kevin Heatherington, *Expressions of Identity: Space, Performance, Politics* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1998), 96-99.

parish, while on the other hand, suggesting the close interpersonal relationships of a "support group" within a Christian context. They maintain of these two understandings it is stated that they are "not necessarily opposed but neither are they always in harmony."[90] The Whiteheads further assert that such a basis for community begins with the discovery of a shared concern in the context of communication and commitment to common goals. Functioning somewhere between primary groups and formal organizations, such that their continued existence depends upon an active appreciation of diversity and a willingness to resolve conflicts, communities are ideally depicted in terms of: **1.** common orientation; **2.** agreement about values; **3.** commitment to common goals; **4.** opportunities for personal exchange; and **5.** agreed-upon expectations of members.[91]

It is important, I assert, to differentiate between the above *ideals* of "community," and the *reality* that ultimately and inevitably reflects less perfect and more complicated relationships among and between even the most steadfastly idealistic persons. My own experience reveals that all communities have their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Yet, despite such a cautionary critique, I prescribe that such an ideal motivates, encourages, and inspires efforts to realize collectively *dreams* and *visions* that, in the context of faith, respond to God's will and enable us as a spiritually-focused body to rise above self-centred individualism and temporal concerns.

> **The Spirit of the risen Christ, unseen, but ever near, is in such friendship better known, alive among us here, alive among us here.**
>
> **Together met, together bound by all that God has done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.**[92]

---

[90] Evelyn E. Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, *Community of Faith: Models and Strategies for Building Christian Communities* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982), 22.
[91] Whitehead and Whitehead, *Community of Faith: Models and Strategies . . .* , 49-50.
[92] Brian Wren, *I Come with Joy* (Hope Publishing Co., 1977), vv. 4, 5.

Evelyn and James Whitehead further address the embodiment of a faith community, describing the model of *the parish* as a "local body of believers whose religious hope is made manifest in their ministries of service and sacrament." They advocate that its development of the social forms of community is most appropriate, given both internal and external foci, in addition to their emphasis on the nourishment and expression of communion, through meaning and mission, as well as in fellowship.[93] They insist that, while the concept of a parish is commonly associated with the Roman Catholic and perhaps Anglican traditions, it need not exclude its application in describing and serving as a model for other faith communities. My concern with and focus upon the congregational dynamics leads me to assert that the features and aspects attributed to the Whiteheads' parish model contribute to the health, vitality, and faithfulness of the local church as a whole in terms of its identity, function, and relationships, effectively defining it as a "community of faith," as well as a fertile ground for the practice of stewardship.

Relationships within a *community of faith* are reflective of our attitude and approach to living in covenant, not only with one another but with God. Healthy relationships are rooted in mutuality and interdependence, acceptance and understanding, trust and respect. Peter Steinke claims that "we are created for relationship" and that "Creation is relational," citing the many biblical stories of relationships whereby "reality is known only in connections and interactions." Beginning from the observation that "congregations are essentially relationships," he asserts as "two equal dangers" in all such relationship systems our succumbing to either the *distancing* or *dissolving* principles. Steinke defines the *distancing* threat as that of "insisting on having one's way," such that

[93] Whitehead and Whitehead, *Community of Faith: Models and Strategies* . . . , 59-60.

leads people to be cut off from one another, while the *dissolving* threat is described in terms of its insistence on our fusion with one another in "forcing the other to be like oneself"—and indeed an extension/possession of *me*. Steinke maintains, in contrast, that real relationship allows for space between people "so there can be dialogue, exchange, alongsideness, and engagement."[94] It is such a premise that defines my hypothesis affirming a positive interrelationship of congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship. To that end, I proceed now to examine some responses to my congregational leadership survey, in regard to the nature of relationships as they inform the former.

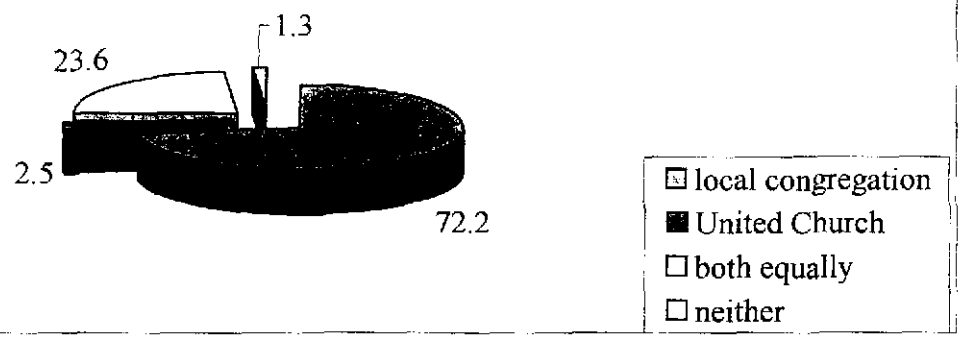
I maintain that the state of congregational dynamics owes much to relational issues, both within local and wider contexts. My first task involves the determination of the basis and extent of church relationships, as attributed to persons serving in a leadership role. To this end, an initial measurement focused on the degree of association (questions #8 and 9) and identity (question #12), respectively. Overall, among those responding to the survey, 75.2% or three in four indicated a long term association of more than 25 years within the denomination, comparable with the findings of other studies that indicate a prevailing loyalty to one's faith tradition. In terms of association with the local church or congregation, a significant difference is noted between the Dufferin-Peel and Halton Presbyteries. While in the former 39.3% cited an association of more than 25 years, in the latter case a smaller 20.8% similarly responded in comparison to a larger 30.2% who cited a significantly shorter association of five to ten years. Such differences in this regard are not surprising, given the wider demographic distinctions within the two Presbyteries, pointing to a more urban environment within the boundaries of Halton (see Appendix D).

---

[94] Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach* (Bethesda: The Alban Institute, 1996), 83-86.

Somewhat ironically, the indication of peoples' longer term association with the wider church does not translate in terms of the respondents' sense of identification which, as depicted in the graph (Figure 1) below, is primarily focused on the local congregation at 72.2% overall, more than three times that of those who—at 23.6%—identify equally with The United Church of Canada and their local congregation. Indeed, of the congregational leaders surveyed, only 2.5% overall cite a primary identity with the wider church.

Figure 1: **Primary Sense of identity with Church** (Overall)



Question 12. As a follower of Jesus Christ with which of the following do you identify most strongly?

Such dim prospects are reflected in response to survey question #39, which cites lukewarm relations with the wider United Church, including one in five who express some level of disagreement in terms of the wellness of the relationship. I assert that there is a real need to confront such an underwhelming sense of identity, as marked by—if not the result of—strained relations beyond the local church. While arguably not a harbinger of denominational demise forecast by some pundits, I maintain that it is a cause for concern, and an encouragement—to the wider church—to rethink how to rekindle its "terms of endearment" with its grassroots constituency.

In loving partnership we come, seeking, O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now receive; we freely offer them to you.

Loving community we seek; your hope and strength within us move.
The poor and rich, the strong and weak are brought together in your love.[95]

This weakening and decline of church relationships and identity, however, has not been a recent phenomenon unique to the domain of the wider church, but has also long beset the local church seeking an elusive balance of trying to live in both worlds. Focusing on the parish model, in *The Acts of the Apostles*, MacGregor and Ferris concede, "the Christian community has gradually lost its identity as it has moved into the total community of a semi-Christian civilization." As to how such identity might be recovered, they propose a five-fold strategy that in the local context might well strengthen: **1.** the *teaching* by which the people might know what they believe in common; **2.** the *fellowship* by which the church becomes the centre of community life and support; **3.** the *ritual* "not as a matter of routine but as habitual acts in which people are drawn together"; **4.** the *prayer life* in remembering one another; and **5.** the *ties of economic responsibility.*[96]

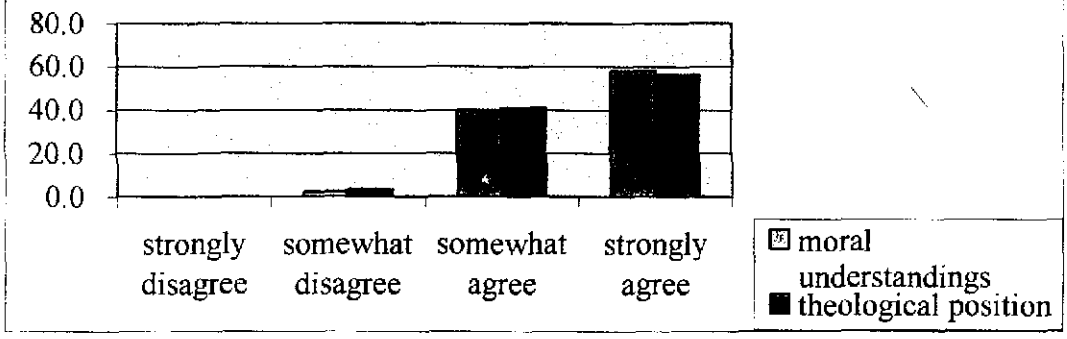
In his introduction to **Jurgen Moltmann's *The Passion for Life*, Wayne Meeks** contends that what contemporary western society calls a congregation generally bears little resemblance to what the Reformation envisaged of "the congregated people of God," asserting that the conditions necessary for it to "come of age" are precluded by its organization and structure. Meeks advocates that, in its quest of maturity and the rediscovery of its identity, a congregation needs to bear passionate witness "through the power of the Spirit." In anticipation of an exciting future of rediscovery, he asserts that the congregation "can and must become passionate, evangelical, diakonal, missional,

---

[95] Jim Strathdee, *In Loving Partnership We Come* (Desert Flower Music, 1982), vv. 1, 3.
[96] MacGregor and Ferris, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 51-52.

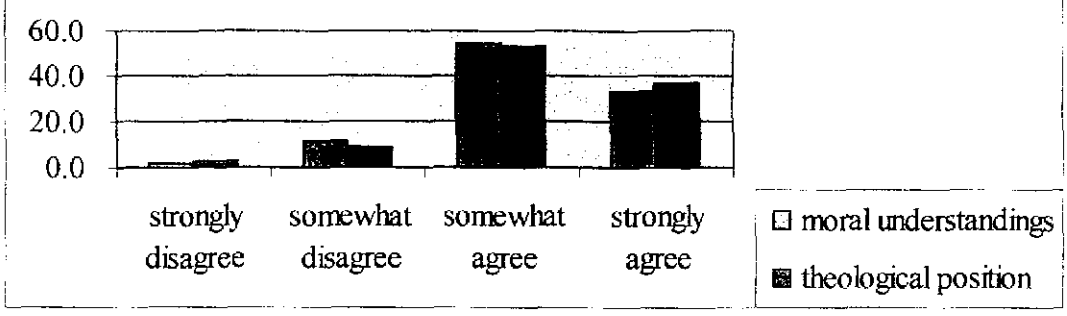
ecumenical, charismatic, and esthetic."[97] Moltmann himself asserts that in this context "we are no longer individuals but a congregation in which one accepts the other in the way that one has already been accepted by Christ," sharing in community with all whom we both agree and disagree. Beyond consideration on the basis of one's status as a church member, he further asserts that to be part of a congregation represents "a new kind of living together" in acceptance and affirmation, enabling us to experience more fully "in the power of the Spirit in our midst."[98]

Figure 2: **Support of Local Congregation Position** (Overall)



Question 13. On the whole I would affirm and support the local congregation's: a) moral understandings b) theological position

Figure 3: **Support of United Church Position** (Overall)



Question 14. On the whole I would affirm and support the United Church of Canada's: a) moral understandings b) theological position

[97] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Passion for* Life, introduction by Wayne Meeks (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 14-18.
[98] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Passion for Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1978), 32-33.

Returning to my survey of congregational leaders, on successive questions regarding their affirmation and support, on the whole, of the moral understanding and theological position of (#13) the local congregation and (#14) The United Church of Canada respectively, as illustrated above by Figures 2 and 3, overall responses clearly indicate a higher degree of affinity with the local versus the wider church. Regarding moral understandings, 57.9% strongly agreed with local congregation, as compared to 33.2% for the wider church. In regard to the theological position, respectively for the local and wider church, 56.1% and 36.7% responded as strongly agreed. In light of recent controversy within The United Church, especially in regard to questions of morality, such findings should not come as a surprise. Nonetheless, such variance in terms of the support expressed by congregational leaders towards the local and wider church in these matters confirms the earlier finding, in regarding the local congregation as the primary source of identity with the church. Furthermore, I maintain that, as identity is directly reflected in the degree of commitment, efforts to revitalize the church cannot discount but must acknowledge such findings, in building upon its strengths—from the ground up.

Congregational Relations and Relationships

In ***Congregation and Community***, **Nancy Ammerman** observes that, along with elementary schools, traditionally congregations have maintained connections with the people and places they serve. This social pattern persists in small town and rural contexts, as well as in regard to Roman Catholic parishes and Orthodox Jewish synagogues. However, Ammerman asserts that, with urbanization, increasingly congregations and the communities they represent are identified, not only in the geographical terms of their location, but according to the niche they occupy in "serving a culturally or theologically

defined constituency."[99] Ammerman expands upon this point in ***Studying Congregations: A New Handbook***, contending that indeed within a congregation there are "multiple theological perspectives," reflective of differences in experience and social location. Of this diversity, she notes differences between congregational leaders and other members, generations, roles and experiences, and motivations for "joining or staying" in the congregation. Ammerman also cites differences in the way a congregation relates not only to its local parish setting, but to a wider denominational tradition.[100]

Peter Steinke addresses congregational dynamics in the light of "systems theory." He cites Susan Sontag who asserts that "everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and the kingdom of the sick," claiming that while we may wish to claim the former, inevitably we are also obliged to identify ourselves as citizens of the latter. Steinke maintains that potentially congregations can similarly be "members of both kingdoms," contending that health is not a thing or a state but a process, being "ongoing, dynamic and ever changing," as well as representing "a direction, not a destination." He asserts that, while allowing for some differences, a shared vision is necessary, cautioning that, in confusing *community* with *sameness*, certain persons will "feel threatened by the disorder differences create." Ultimately, Steinke contends that "congregational leaders are the key stewards of the congregation as a unit in itself," claiming that accordingly they can best promote congregational health.[101]

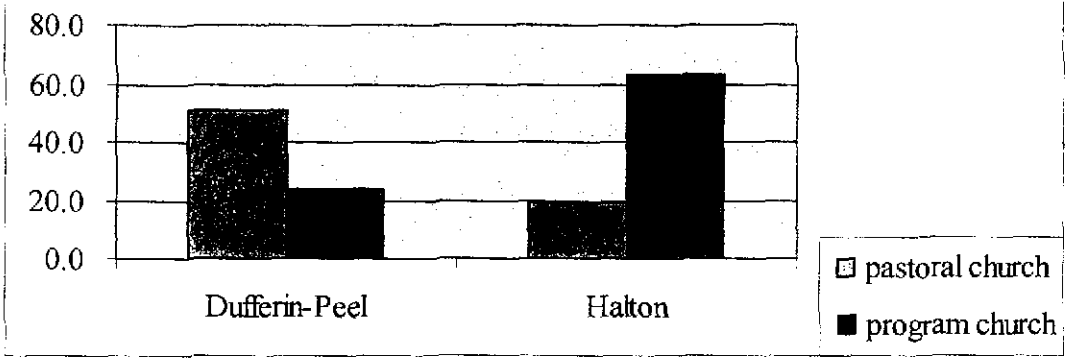
Anyone familiar with the various diagnostic systems, such as Myers-Briggs, True Colors, and the Enneagram, purported to determine one's personality type, will

---

[99] Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*, 35-36.
[100] Nancy T. Ammerman et al, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 32-33.
[101] Steinke, *Healthy Congregations*, 24-26.

acknowledge some usefulness in providing a framework or parameters by which observers may surmise, not only how each type ideally functions, but also how it relates to its environment. I argue that, in much the same way, similar insights may be gleaned as to church's focus and function, as determined by which one of the four congregational types—family/parish, pastoral, program, and corporate—it is deemed to belong.

Figure 4: **Congregational Type**



Question 27. Which of the following congregational 'types' best describes your congregation?

I assert that one of the key findings, in terms of the survey responses, concerns the respondents' identification of their congregational "type" in question #27. On the whole, responses were divided closely between the "pastoral" and "program" churches at 37.8% and 40.0% respectively. However, as shown above by Figure 4, responses by Presbytery clearly indicated a different picture in comparing the faster growing and more urban Halton with the less developed and more rural Dufferin-Peel (see Appendix D). In the case of Halton, 63.2%% described their congregations as a "program" church, while just 18.9% opted for the description of a "pastoral" church. On the other hand, the responses from Dufferin-Peel told quite the opposite story, with only 23.7% "program" versus 51.1% "pastoral." Two more results are noteworthy in regard to the story they tell,

regarding the degree of individual involvement on one hand, and the general outlook of the congregation towards the future on the other. Among those responding in regard to their personal perspective, as expected, fully four out of five strongly agreed with the statement, "My ongoing relationship to and involvement in the church is an important part of my life." However, in regard to their observation as to whether "the congregation's spirit is generally optimistic and positive about the future," the response was less clear cut, being split between 45.5% who somewhat agreed, and 46.4% who strongly agreed. Indeed, in Halton Presbytery, the former prevailed with 52.7%, a rather lukewarm response reflecting, in my estimation, reason for some concern.

Based upon my analysis of statistical data from The United Church of Canada *Yearbook and Directory 2000*, one explanation for Halton's weaker response may be attributed to higher liabilities, both in total and when compared to assets—as represented by total funds raised and the value of property.[102] It is interesting to observe that, while in the banking and financial sector the preferred ratio of debt to equity is 2:1, a much more fiscally conservative regime within church circles is alarmed by the very prospect of such a ratio approaching the threshold of 1:10, much less 1:2. In Halton's case, this scenario has arisen in three of the ten congregations responding, as a direct consequence of new church development, such that—in addition to the challenges associated with becoming established as a congregational entity—new church communities are burdened by the costs of servicing the debt. It is my contention that the implications of this situation impact upon both congregational dynamics, as the focus of this chapter, and the practice of stewardship, as will be examined in the next chapter.

---

[102] The United Church of Canada, *Yearbook and Directory 2000, Volume I: Pastoral Charge Statistics, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1999* (Toronto: The General Council, Division of Communication, Public Relations and Information Unit, 2000), 90-91.

Returning to James Hopewell's seminal study, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, he seeks to engage in a study of local church communities that, through the stories they tell, enables a comparative measurement and assessment of their qualities and attributes. The following consideration of their respective "narrative" and "cognitive" features attempts to briefly differentiate among the dominant themes, concepts, and values that characterize each of Hopewell's categories, by examining in sequence their *motif* and *movement*, as well as their *authority*, *focus of integrity*, and *valued behavior*. Beginning with what he depicts as reflecting a more conservative orientation, the *"canonic"* position stresses "sacrifice" and "union toward subordination," as well as "God's revealed word and will," "Scripture," and "obedience." Proceeding next to the *"gnostic"* position, it stresses "integration" and "subordination toward union," as well as "intuition/esoteric wisdom," a "trustworthy cosmos," and "inner awareness." Continuing with the *"charismatic"* position, it stresses "adventure" and "uniformity towards variation," as well as "personally manifested evidence of God's immanence," the "providence of God," and "recognition of God's blessings." Concluding with what he depicts as representing a more liberal orientation, the *"empiric"* position stresses "testing" and "variation towards uniformity," as well as "data objectivity verifiable through one's five senses," "one's person," and "realism."[103]

Hopewell asserts that, in consideration of the application and function of a congregational world view in the field of congregational study, persons of similar views and beliefs will not only gather together or "congregate," but also will tend to adapt and align their own outlook to be compatible and integrate with others within the local

[103] Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, 69-71.

community. Despite perceptions to the contrary suggesting the presence of a plurality of beliefs—especially within large and/or liberal churches, he maintains that his findings do not support such a wide diversity as to consider a congregation "a mere aggregate of miscellaneous believers."[104] In ***Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada***, sociologist **Reginald Bibby** makes some observations on the social and cultural dimensions of faith, noting that "everyone thinks that their traditions are norm," leading to measures of comfort within one's own group versus discomfort with other groups. Bibby claims that, whatever one's religious upbringing and identity may be, determines what is considered normative. The widespread failure to readily grasp such a basic reality, he claims, has worked to the detriment of the active and inactive alike. Despite evidence that established religious groups retain significant cultural memories and identities among even marginal and inactive affiliates, Bibby contends that over much of the latter twentieth century such bodies unfortunately failed to capitalize on this advantage—misreading inactivity as a measure of apathy and hostility.[105] Indeed, Hopewell discovers certain correlations between members' worldviews and church activity, such as, he argues, may be summarized as follows. First, those persons who attend regularly are more likely—than those attending irregularly and sporadically—to resonate with the mean orientation of the congregation as a whole. Second, pastors and ministry leaders whose own worldview is attuned to that of the congregation are more likely to enjoy a positive and satisfying pastoral relationship. Third, persons whose scores are on the periphery in relation to the congregational worldview are also often marginalized in relation to other aspects of congregation life. Fourth, lay leaders do not necessarily reflect the mean

---

[104] Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, 95.
[105] Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, 33-37.

orientation of the congregation, but often will reflect a more canonic and/or charismatic worldview. [106]

I maintain of congregational leaders that, as they exert influence in defining the norms in regard to the local church, much can be learned via their personal perspective. In terms of personal expectations and the priority given to certain activities, overall the survey yielded the following responses. Indeed, the survey confirms that, in regard to activities deemed to define the purpose of the local church, worship, Christian education, pastoral care, and fellowship lead the way. The survey tended to accord the wider church a lead role and responsibility with regard to such matters as national and global mission, socio-economic justice advocacy, and ecumenical relations. Finally, when it came to a sense of "personal calling" to involvement, survey respondents identified worship, fellowship, and local mission and outreach as priorities.

> **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;**
> **the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**
>
> **We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear;**
> **and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.**[107]

Robert Harvey has written of the difference between *corporate* and *collective* personality as illustrated in the two meanings of membership. He notes that until the Reformation a *member* was considered to be part of a "living organism," being members of one body in which the person found total identification. In this age the member depended wholly on the organism, whereas the organism depended only partly on the member. However with the rise of individualism in the Age of Enlightenment, the member was now considered an individual who had voluntarily joined an association, the

---

[106] Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, 98-99.
[107] John Fawcett, *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* (1782), vv. 1, 3.

group itself becoming optional and no longer representing the source of one's being. Harvey asserts, in that membership was considered as no longer vital to one's personhood but became a secondary consideration, as a prime example of an affected organization, the church became an aggregation of like-minded people.[108] Addressing this trend in general terms of moral commitment and leadership, **John Tomer** describes the *joining-up* process by which the entities of an individual and an organization form a relationship, shaping their future interactions, and playing a critical role in an employee's *organizational productivity*. The process, as described, involves two stages of *selection* and *socialization*, both of which "are designed to produce a good fit between the person and the organization," in respectively stressing one's "compatibility with" and "participation in" the organization.[109] Katz and Kahn refer to "the citizenship meaning of membership in an organization," clarifying that such a concept of membership emphasizes one's part in the system's operations in the fulfillment of "certain role obligations," such that in return "certain citizenship rights" are accorded. They contend that, even while an industrial organization will tend to be organized under an "oligarchical" power structure, citizenship rights are expected to be handled democratically.[110]

In an article, **"The Unsettled Family Pond: A New Direction for Radical Discipleship"**, **William Miller** contends that the church's attention must focus upon the family as "a process, a biopsychosocial system." He asserts that a commitment is needed to nurture all members through "life-cycle changes and conflicts that must inevitably occur," promoting "the emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth, and

---

[108] Robert C. Harvey, *The Restless Heart: Breaking the Cycle of Social Identity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), 37-38.
[109] John F. Tomer, "Organizational Capital and Joining-Up: Linking the Individual to the Organization and to Society," *Human Relations* Vol. 51, Issue 6 (June 1998): 825-46.
[110] Katz and Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, 357-58.

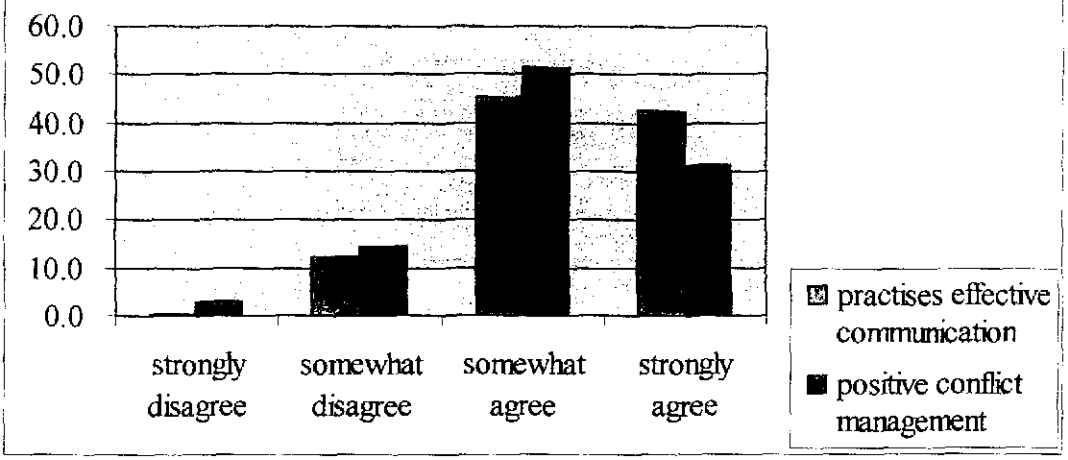
development of each member," as well as of the system as a whole. In the making of a healthy family, Miller cites ten commonly identified features that he maintains can serve as guidelines for the church in refocusing its energy on the family. The listed features include: a *clear hierarchy of power*; a *flexible family rule system*; *acceptance of separation and loss*; *meaningful external networks*; and *realistic family myths*. Also cited are: *clear and open communication*; *acceptance of time and the inevitability of change*; *warmth and spontaneity*; *resolve and commitment*; and a *transcendent value system* allowing for flexibility and creativity. Miller emphasizes that "churches use buildings, budgets, and bureaucracy, but they must not become them," being rather "a community of reconciliation bearing its sins and receiving God's grace." Challenging the church community, he further stresses "our evangelism, like our ethics, must be contextual."[111]

Proceeding from the sociological perspective explored by Harvey, Tomer, and Katz and Kahn, in examining the meaning and implications of membership in a contemporary context, I concur with Miller's contention that the health of local church family depends upon its commitment to nurture all members through inevitable changes and conflicts. I agree that, without such a commitment and the requisite skills that enable such efforts to be successful, otherwise faithful and good intentions will come to naught, in terms of fostering congregational health. Indeed, in my experience, the measure of *dwelling of the spirit* within a local church may be determined by how it purposefully approaches vital matters of communications and conflict. I maintain that, in terms of congregational dynamics, there is no more daunting challenge for the local church than

[111] William L. Miller, "The Unsettled Family Pond: A New Direction for Radical Discipleship" In G. McLeod Bryan, ed. *Communities of Faith and Radical Discipleship* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 119-21.

self-critically to examine how it faithfully conducts itself internally, especially in the domain of communications and conflict management.

Figure 5: **Communication & Conflict Management** (Overall)



Question 55. Effective communication provides information and maintains connection within the congregation.
Question 56. The congregation generally deals with differences and conflict positively and constructively.

As illustrated by the above graph (Figure 5), two survey questions, #55 and 56, seek respondents' observation and evaluation of how their respective congregations measure up in this area. It indicates a stronger affirmation in terms of achieving effective communication within the congregation, as compared with efforts in dealing positively and constructively with conflict. On the whole, 42.2% and 45.1% responded respectively as strongly agreed and somewhat agreed, that congregational communication was generally effective, compared to 31.1% and 51.5% who likewise responded as to whether differences and conflicts were dealt with positively and constructively. In regard to the communications, Dufferin-Peel yielded a somewhat weaker affirmation than did Halton, while on the whole 12.2% responded as somewhat disagreed. In regard to issues around conflict, overall a higher 14.5% responded as somewhat disagreed, significantly reflecting

a higher negative response in Dufferin-Peel, combining those somewhat and strongly disagreed, totaling 20.1%. It is my contention that, on the whole, such results present a not insignificant obstacle to congregational well-being.

In ***Community and Commitment: Religious Plausibility in a Liberal Protestant Church***, **Wade Clark Roof** examines how one's breadth of perspective in weighing a "local" versus "cosmopolitan" orientation may impact upon religious commitment and religiosity. Roof considers the influence of variables determining one's orientation, including education, community size, and one's length of residence, finding that the latter is "the strongest predictor of localism." Concerning the measure of religiosity as affected by localism as well as one's level of education, overall he finds a stronger relationship in objective terms of "belonging" (i.e. church attendance, organizational participation, and congregational friendships), compared to subjective measures of "meaning" (i.e. orthodoxy, devotionalism, and the importance given to one's faith). Roof asserts that, while localism is positively related to religiosity in all instances, the influence of education has a decidedly negative effect upon those measures associated with meaning.[112] This is reflective of both my ministry experience and the observations of others, that the inherent sense of belonging—arising from one's length of residence and ties to the community—exerts greater influence as a determinant of strong and healthy relationships, than the subjective influences to which Roof refers. I also agree that an increasing level of education tends to counteract the tendency to accept without question tenets related to philosophical, political, and religious doctrines or worldviews.

Where the Spirit Dwells

[112] Wade Clark Roof, *Community and Commitment: Religious Plausibility in a Liberal Protestant Church* (New York: Elsevier, 1978), 118-23.

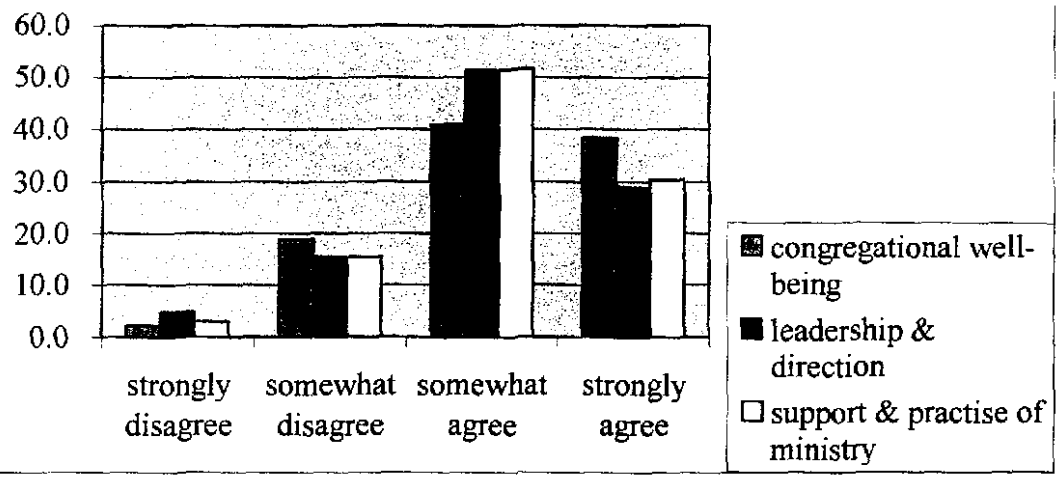
Norman Pittenger speaks to the Holy Spirit as making Jesus Christ a *present reality* in the Christian's experience, constantly working and "up building" within the community for the common good, awakening its members to "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," and conforming them to *the image of the Son* - akin to Douglas Hall's description. Pittenger also notes how *the fruit of the Spirit* is released communally and individually, as well as how the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" reflects *love, joy* and *peace* given without measure. He contends that as it indwells the church, the Holy Spirit makes it become *the church* in daily fellowship and in worship - especially through the sacraments.[113]

In my estimation, contributing towards the fulfillment of the needs and interests of the faith community as a whole, an expressed willingness and preparedness on the part of individual and groups to put the church first is essential. Such a general understanding and commitment is expressed in an affirmative response of over 90% to two related statements, #57 and 58, posed in the survey. A further measure of a healthy dynamic relates the degree towards which members, and especially those in roles of leadership, are prepared to accept their share of responsibility for the well-being and effectiveness of the congregation as a whole. This is illustrated in the graph (Figure 6) below, not only as a general principle, #48, but also more specifically in terms of #50 and 51, acknowledging responsibility to share in the leadership and direction, as well as the support and practice of the congregation's ministry. In regard to the sense of general responsibility for the well-being of the congregation, 38.3% strongly agreed, while 40.9% somewhat agreed, 18.7% somewhat disagreed, and 2.1% strongly disagreed—somewhat surprising given that the former question reflects something of a platitude. The segment responding more

[113] Pittenger, *The Holy Spirit*, 61-63.

positively is only marginally higher than that reflected towards the more concrete responsibilities inferred by the latter two questions. Overall, in the latter regard, as shown by the graph, the response is remarkably similar, at 28.8/30.2% who strongly agreed, 51.3/51.5% who somewhat agreed, and 15.3% who somewhat disagreed. On analysis, there is reason for optimism in the combined total of over 80% for those who are strongly and somewhat agreed in acknowledgement of a broader responsibility.

Figure 6: **Shared Responsibility for Congregational Life and Ministry** (Overall)



Question 48. The well-being and effectiveness of the congregation as a whole is regarded as everyone's responsibility.
Question 50. Responsibility for leadership and direction of the congregation's ministry is broadly shared.
Question 51. Responsibility for support and practice of the congregation's ministry is broadly shared.

Kennon Callahan's ***Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*** is widely regarded as a diagnostic guide in support of the identification of effective and healthy congregations. In outline, Callahan's *twelve keys*, such that he cites in his experience as a consultant "have emerged persistently as the central characteristics of successful missional congregations," are divided into two categories, reflecting both "relational" and "functional"

characteristics. He contends the former category contributes most directly to a church's mission and success, as it stresses the importance of: **1.** *specific concrete missional objectives*; **2.** *pastoral and lay visitation*; **3.** *corporate, dynamic worship*; **4.** *significant relational groups*; **5.** *strong leadership resources*; and **6.** *streamlined structure and solid, participatory decision making*. He maintains, however, that the latter category also merits serious attention in its focus upon: **7.** *several competent programs and activities*; **8.** *open accessibility*; **9.** *high visibility*; **10.** *adequate parking, land, and landscaping*; **11.** *adequate space and facilities*; and **12.** *solid financial resources*. In summary, Callahan contends that the presence of the former are generally "sources of satisfaction," whereas the absence of the latter tend to be "sources of dissatisfaction," maintaining that overall measure of the satisfaction needs to be higher than the dissatisfaction "in order for the congregation to have a sense of confidence and competence about its mission."[114]

Another approach, focusing on the relational aspects of Callahan's twelve keys, is taken by **Christian Schwarz** in a booklet, ***The ABC's of Natural Church Development***, focusing on what he regards as the "eight quality characteristics of growing churches." In brief, these qualities include: **1.** *empowering leadership*; **2.** *gift-oriented ministry*; **3.** *passionate spirituality*; **4.** *functional structures*; **5.** *inspiring worship service*(s); **6.** *holistic small groups*; **7.** *need-oriented evangelism*; and **8.** *loving relationships*.[115]

Finally, concerning the challenges and possibilities arising as result of changes in the "mainline congregational culture", in **"Seven Ways to a Healthier Congregation"**, **Anthony Robinson** prescribes seven ways towards changing the way such churches

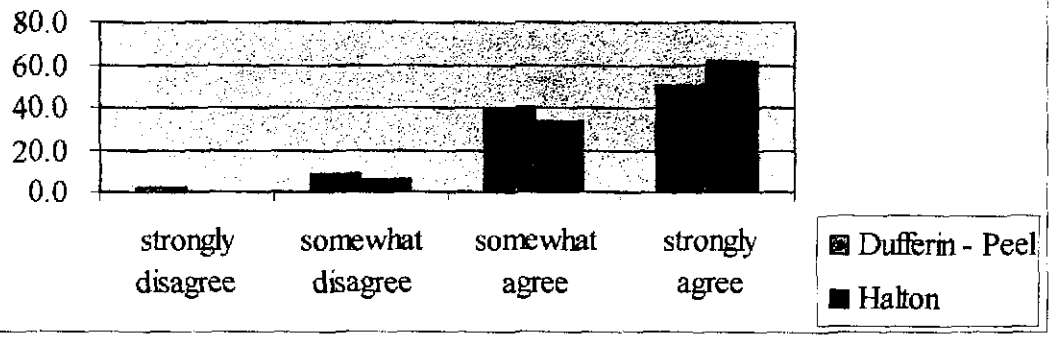
---

[114] Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1983), xii-xiv.

[115] Christian Schwarz, *The ABC's of Natural Church Development* (Winfield: The International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1998), 9-17.

operate. Briefly, these all involve fundamental shifts in our thinking, being, and doing from: **1.** *civic faith to the practice of* transformation; **2.** *assuming the goods to delivering the* goods; **3.** *givers to receivers who are also* givers; **4.** *board culture to ministry* culture; **5.** *community organization to faith-based* ministry; **6.** *seeing the budget as an end to seeing as a* means; and **7.** *passive to active membership* growth.[116] Within the context of the present chapter, Robinson notes that formerly, when the mainline church was the religious establishment, it was assumed that we lived in a Christian society, such that we tended to seek harmony between the church and culture by, in effect, compromising faith's distinctiveness. However, he asserts the church can no longer afford to neglect such attributes that define who we are and what we believe, explicitly identifying worship and teaching as central and all-inclusive in this regard. Of the former Robinson states that when thus gathered together a congregation may be exposed to countercultural perspectives and alternative sources of power, while of the latter he advocates that it must be intergenerational as well as multifaceted in its learning styles.[117]

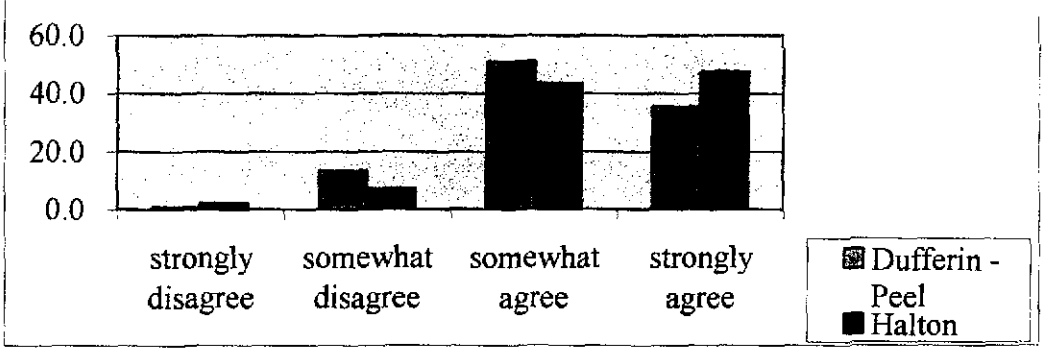
Figure 7: **Variety in Worship Style**



Question 40. As the congregation's opportunity for celebration, praise and thanksgiving, its worship involves many elements and takes many forms.

[116] Anthony B. Robinson, "Seven Ways to a Healthier Congregation", *The United Church Observer* (February 2001), 24-29.
[117] Robinson, "Seven Ways to a Healthier Congregation", 25-26.

Figure 8: **Faith Development Opportunities**



Question 43. The congregation provides many and varied opportunities for persons to grow in both their understanding and practice of faith.

In that Callahan, Schwarz, Robinson, and others have identified worship and Christian development as central and primary expressions of congregational life and activity, the two graphs (Figures 7 and 8) above measure, first, the variety and nature of the worship experience, and second, the provision of faith development opportunities. For purposes of analysis, in both cases I have chosen to compare responses from Dufferin-Peel and Halton, given markedly stronger responses in the latter constituency.

In regard to a variety of worship opportunities, Halton responded with 61.1% strongly agreed and 33.7% somewhat agreed, while Dufferin-Peel responded with 50.4% strongly agreed and 40.3% somewhat agreed. Such response on the part of respondent congregations indicates a measurable initiative favouring Halton, in terms of embracing different, non-traditional forms of worship, which I suggest is more typical of newer, less-established congregations within which there is less inherent resistance..

In regard to faith development opportunities, the response was weaker overall in both Presbyteries, as Halton responded with 47.4% strongly agreed, 43.3% somewhat agreed, and 7.2% somewhat disagreed, while Dufferin-Peel responded with 35.3%

strongly agreed, 50.7% somewhat agreed, and 13.2% somewhat disagreed. Based on these results, I likewise conclude that the provision of faith development opportunities within respondent congregations is more favourably perceived in Halton versus Dufferin-Peel. In large part, I maintain that this results, at least indirectly, from the larger number of program churches in Halton, as well as the availability of more abundant financial and human resources, attested by statistical data reported in the 2000 Yearbook.[118]

As two more conspicuous activities associated with the life and work of the church, there is a widespread tendency to assume that a thriving church fundamentally is measured statistically—according to the numbers, in terms of worship attendance, as well as participation in Sunday School and study groups. Additionally, would-be statisticians in the local church commonly "crunch" numbers in regard to the ratio between baptisms, weddings, and funerals, as well as membership inputs and outputs, as a measure of its health and vitality. In an issue dedicated to the subject of ***congregational vitality***, in an article entitled "It's About Discipleship," Marlis McCollum cites the observations of two Alban Institute consultants, Terry Foland and Ed White, who jointly maintain such vitality is "about more than numbers." In enabling the local church "to become healthier and more robust," both identify as key factors "the spiritual growth of its members," "its participation in outreach activities," and "its cultivation of members' ability to express their faith." Additionally, Foland emphasizes the importance of utilizing its resources well in primary regard to its people and time, in serving not only its own members, but also the community outside its walls. Towards the task of redeveloping and reinventing itself, he stresses, "involving the entire congregation" in the process. For his part, towards

[118] The United Church of Canada, *Yearbook and Directory 2000, Volume I: Pastoral Charge Statistics*, 70-71, 90-91.

the goal of reclaiming a vision of a "disciple-making church," White emphasizes an expectation of members to grow and change—emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and theologically—as followers of Jesus, as evident not only within the church, "but also in the workplace, the home, and the community."[119]

The above approach is reminiscent of the work of Alban Institute founder **Loren Mead** in the area of congregational dynamics, most notably in ***More Than Numbers: The Way Churches Grow***, in which he challenges the popular conception we hold towards church growth. Citing a model first presented by Ted Buckle, Mead proceeds to expand upon the four identified kinds of growth—*numerical*, *maturational*, *organic*, and *incarnational*, all of which he maintains are important in helping the congregation to discern its gifts and strengths, and "to discover and make the most of the call of God to (your) congregation." In brief, while growth of a numerical nature is described in familiar terms, that of a maturational nature discerns the measure of growth, maturity, and nurturing ability in the faith of individuals. Next, growth of an organic nature concerns the congregation as a functioning community, able to maintain itself as well as to engage other organizations, while finally that which is incarnational in nature concerns the aptitude and ability to live out "the meanings and values of the faith-story" in the wider world beyond the church.[120]

> **For God gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly, guarding the paths of justice and preserving the way of his faithful ones.** Proverbs 2:6-8

---

[119] Marlis McCollum, "It's About Discipleship" In *Congregations* (Nov/Dec 2002), 6-9.
[120] Loren B. Mead, *More Than Numbers: The Ways Churches Grow* (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1993), 12-13.

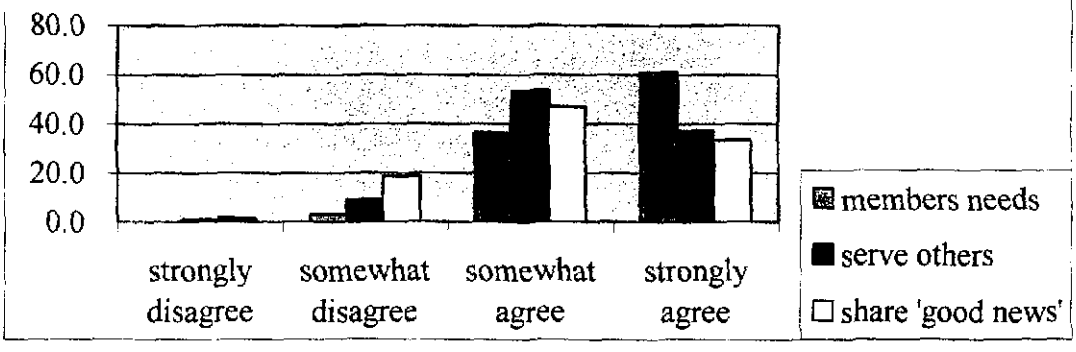
An appreciation of the different kinds of growth, described above, is helpful towards a more holistic understanding of what it means to be a healthy, vital, and faithful church, not only in a local but a wider context. Freed from enslavement to the numerical verification of the success of its ministry, the local congregation rediscovers what it means to be a community of faith – that Callahan refers to as an effective and successful "missional church", dedicated to making a difference both inside and outside its fellowship. I argue how, by inwardly acknowledging that "where two or three are gathered in Christ's name" defines its meaning and purpose, as the Body of Christ the church will rededicate itself to the practice of pastoral care, and to more intently fostering fellowship groups and activities. Similarly, I hold that in being outwardly focused, the church will be actively engaged in mission and outreach initiatives that boldly witness to its faith, in sharing the good news in word and action.

This is supported, at least in sentiment, by the survey response to question #45 of 94.4% affirming the practice of "pastoral care and concern toward all persons in all situations." In my experience the commitment to truly pastoral ministry pays off, in terms of promoting congregational wellness, both individually and collectively. Especially, I assert that when such ministry involves not only the clergy leadership, but also a network of lay visitors, the resulting good will and shared purpose can prove ultimately uplifting to all aspects of the church's ministry.

Nonetheless, along with other respected commentators in the field, as a measure of what, I maintain, represents a healthy mix involving both a congregational and missional focus, in question #35, I sought to inquire as to what congregations understood as the primary intention of their ministry. My inquiry then probed deeper to ask, in question

#36, whether this represented an appropriate balance between an outward and inward focus. As illustrated by the graph (Figure 9) below, response to the former question indicates an unambiguous focus on attending first and foremost to members' needs, over both serving others (outside the church) and sharing the *good news*. Considered as a whole, among respondents 60.9% strongly agreed, and 36.1% somewhat agreed in understanding that the church's intention was to serve the needs of its members. By comparison, 37.0% strongly agreed, 53.5% somewhat agreed, and 8.7% somewhat disagreed with the understanding that the church' focus should be reflected in serving others, while support of the understanding that the church's attention should be focused on what may be described as "evangelism" was even weaker with 33.3% strongly agreed, 46.9% somewhat agreed, and 18.4% somewhat disagreed. The follow-up question elicited such a response that, with 31.5% strongly agreed, 53.0% somewhat agreed, and 14.2% somewhat disagreed, to an extent acknowledges that the balance between an inward and outward focus often leaves something to be desired. Taking these findings into account, I contend that there is much work to do, in the interest of fostering congregational health from the perspective of seeking and committing to such a balance.

Figure 9: **Congregational Intention & Focus** (Overall)



Question 35. The congregation's primary intention is understood: a) to meet the needs of its members b) to serve others c) to share the 'good news'

In "Preaching a Sub-Version," Walter Brueggemann speaks of the possibility of another world - of "God's alternative vision" - such that, he asserts, may be enacted in our imagination, in our practice and in our public policy.[121] Brueggemann speaks of preaching as a *sub-version*, an alternative to the dominant version of reality, undercutting the latter with which it will be in deep tension and proposing a way of life that is not only possible but "peculiarly mandated and peculiarly valid."[122] One of the more daunting challenges confronting local congregations, I have observed, is that of a steadfast determination to embody—in Brueggemann's words—God's alternative vision, in the face of the dominant cultural predisposition to defer and submit to earthly presumptions of reality and common sense—what Walter Wink has referred to as "the powers that be."[123] I maintain that, for the local church to be truly reflective of a *community of faith*, it must consistently live out that faith in the way it relates both within and without in its ministry and mission, as well as in its understanding and practice of stewardship—such as will be examined in the next chapter. In its subversive living out of God's vision, the Spirit's presence will be revealed for all to see in the community's expression of faith and hope.

A Hopeful Future

> **Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.** Isaiah 41:10
>
> **Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you. I have made and I will bear; I will carry and will save.** Isaiah 46:3-4

---

[121] Walter Brueggemann, "Preaching a Sub-Version". *Theology Today* Vol. 51, No. 2, 211-12.
[122] Brueggemann, "Preaching a Sub-Version", 199-200.
[123] Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Galilee, Doubleday, 1998), 1-3.

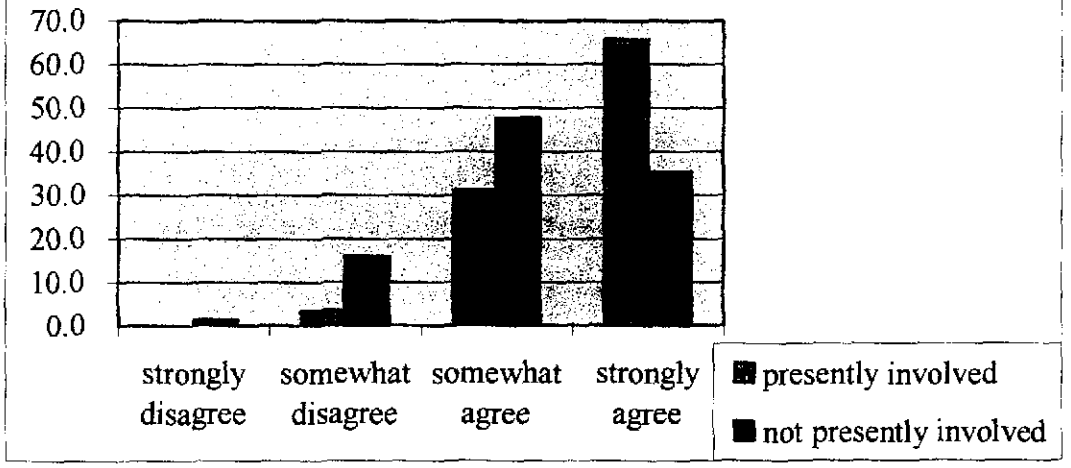
> **Jesus said to him, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." Immediately, the father of the child cried out, "I believe, help my unbelief!"** Mark 9:23-24

Citing Peter Berger's assertion that "human existence is always oriented towards the future," Reginald Bibby describes most people as being "intensely hopeful" even when circumstances suggest otherwise. He maintains that "in the midst of struggle and pain and disappointment, people invariably declare hope," arguing that, in representing something more than simply putting up a brave front, it holds the key to one's healing and will to live. He further cites Berger's assertion of "the essential nature of hope," as it serves to inform and influence how "not only ones live life, but also as one confronts death."[124] Bibby also stresses the importance of differentiating between "surviving and thriving churches." He concedes of the former, which "undoubtedly constituted the majority of churches," that for the most part their in-turned focus upon "ministry to the gathered community" is an unconscious result of necessity and not typically intentional. Turning to the latter case, Bibby commends its approach in having "both a front door and back door to ministry," ministering not only to the gathered community but to others beyond the community, affirming that these churches are not content with survival, "to sit in the safety of their sanctuaries and wait for people to come to them."[125] In lamenting the predisposition of many congregations, not to mention—as expressed in the Introduction—the wider church, to focus on survival, given that the church is called to be representative of faith itself, I affirm the necessity of its adoption of a hopeful future.

---

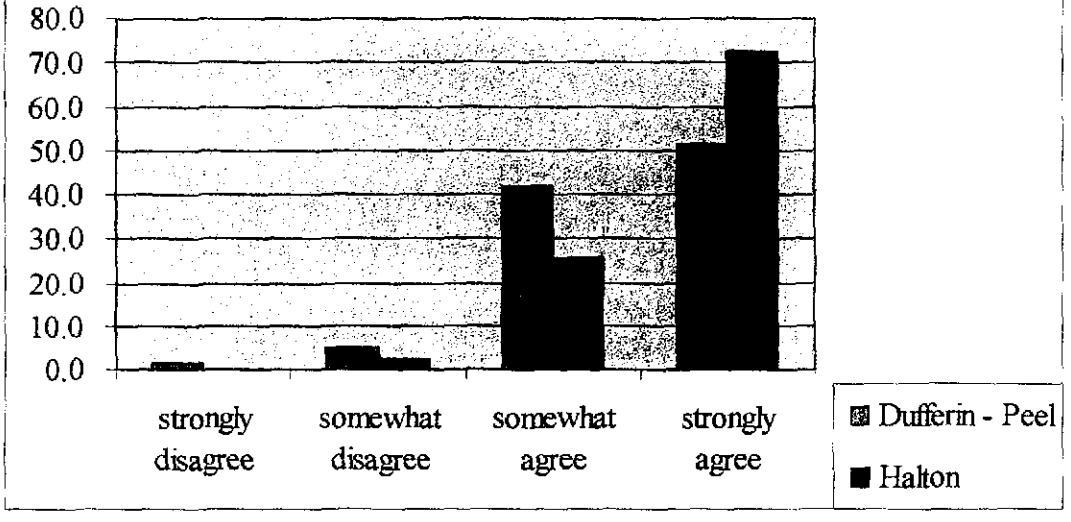
[124] Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, 169-70.
[125] Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, 234-35.

Figure 10: **Inviting & Encouraging Environment** (Overall)



Question 29. The congregation presents an inviting and encouraging environment to: a) those presently involved b) those not presently involved

Figure 11: **Integrating Newcomers**



Question 32. Efforts are made to welcome and integrate newcomers as part of the congregational family.

Quintessential to such adoption, I maintain, is the local congregation's steadfast attention to the principle of providing an inviting and encouraging environment for all people, while demonstrating an ongoing commitment to integrating newcomers. I contend that, based upon the responses to the survey questions #29 and 32, as illustrated

respectively by the graphs (Figures 10 and 11) above, there is significant work to do towards realizing such a goal. In spite of a strongly positive response overall—60.0% strongly agreed and 35.3% somewhat agreed—to the latter statement that commends efforts "to welcome and integrate newcomers as part of the congregational family," there is a sizable spread between the results of the two Presbyteries, amply shown in that Halton's response of 72.2% strongly agreed outdistances Dufferin-Peel's response of 51.4%. However, even more telling is the response to the first statement that affirms the presence of "an inviting and encouraging environment," revealing a significant gap in its application to "those presently involved" versus "those not presently involved." Overall, in regard to the former group, support of the statement reveals that 65.5% are strongly agreed, followed by 31.1% responding as somewhat agreed. However, in regard to the latter group, relative support of the statement drops with 35.2% strongly agreed, 47.6% somewhat agreed, and 15.9% somewhat disagreed. When, in relation to the latter group, responses are considered according to Presbytery, while the results for Halton are significantly more positive compared to Dufferin-Peel—47.8% to 26.7% in terms of those strongly agreed, still it lags far behind the 73.2% recorded in regard to the former group.

Supported by the findings of the survey that, I contend, reveal less than sound practices, I argue that the dynamics of a healthy congregation must embrace openness and inclusivity, such that enables new people and new ideas to be welcomed and encouraged. I wholeheartedly concur with Bibby and others in maintaining that, while not embracing "change for change's sake," nor denying the character and tradition that defines them as communities of faith, thriving churches must guard against becoming ingrown and irrelevant by demonstrating a responsiveness to change that balances the needs of the

church and the world. In commendation of such a proactive approach to ministry and mission within and without, Bibby credits Posterski and Nelson who, in describing the vital nature of *future faith churches*, affirm this bolder course as one that fuses of "soul care and social care."[126]

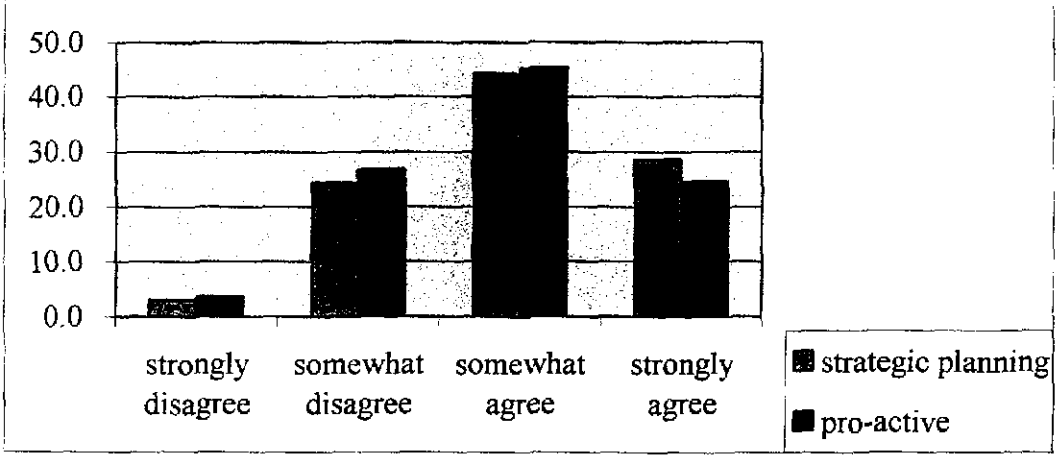
Posterski and Nelson further cite what has become a familiar refrain concerning the demise of the wider church, asserting that, as "spotlights of spiritual vitality," it is local churches that are growing and serving as "models of what others can become." Arguing that denominational loyalty is on the wane, they maintain that in the future denominational leaders best grow accustomed to the role of providing resource "to stimulate the effectiveness of local churches."[127] While I affirm the need to rebuild the church, in a sense "from the ground up," in building upon the spiritual vitality of local congregations as *communities of faith*, my own estimation of the future role of denominations is more positive. In that I have seen the church—in the words of folksinger Joni Mitchell—"from both sides now," towards the realization of such a vital and healthy model of what God calls us to be, I steadfastly maintain that indeed the local and wider church need one another. Many pundits eagerly typify denominational bodies as bloated bureaucracies out of touch with the pulse and life breath of the grassroots constituency, with some justification. Yet, conversely, they are reluctant to similarly confront those incidences where local congregations behave as dysfunctional families, estranged from one another, and resistant to the possibility of embracing the richness and diversity of others' faith journeys. I surely hold that the intimacy and sense of history that

[126] Posterski and Nelson, *Future Faith Churches*, 226-27.
[127] Posterski and Nelson, *Future Faith Churches*, 208-09.

the local church personifies is balanced by the invaluable sense of connection and perspective that in turn the wider church provides.

> **Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.**
>
> Romans 5:1-5

Figure 12: **Anticipation & Preparation for Future** (Overall)



Question 52. The congregation as a whole is actively involved in periodic strategic planning to determine and evaluate its vision and long-range goals.
Question 53. The congregation generally takes a pro-active approach in anticipating challenges and acting upon opportunities.

Given the ultimate focus of my study, which is directed towards ensuring hope for the future in the context of local congregations striving to be communities of faith, I turn again to the survey of congregational leaders. My analysis of the responses to questions #52 and 53, depicted in the graph above (Figure 12), conversely makes a strong case for strategic planning and a pro-active approach in regard to the church addressing future challenges and opportunities. I emphasize that such a case is made conversely, in that to

my dismay the overall response was less-than-reassuring in its anaemic affirmation of an existing process enabling long-range direction and decision-making. In regard to the congregation's active involvement in "periodic strategic planning," responses indicated 28.6% strongly agreed, 44.1% somewhat agreed, and 24.4% somewhat disagreed. Even weaker by comparison, in regard to the congregation's tendency to take "a pro-active approach" to challenges and opportunities, responses indicated 24.6% strongly agreed, 45.2% somewhat agreed, and 26.8% somewhat disagreed. Given the disappointing response elicited in both cases, the apparent apathy towards planning and acting upon a vision for the future serves to confirm why, so often, efforts to promote stewardship development struggle.

In drawing to the conclusion of this chapter's examination of "congregational dynamics," I firmly support Callahan's assertion that "we need more churches that are planning for mission and success, and fewer that are frozen in their own weaknesses and failures." He describes as a "dark malaise," that many churches are so preoccupied with their problems and concerns, pessimistic and uninspired in their outlook "as if there were no open tomb or risen Lord." Rather, he contends that, in contrast to this mood of passivity and despair, the church's best hope for the future lives in competency and mission, as in the world we actively seek to "nurture hope, reconciliation, caring, and justice." To this end, Callahan advocates following a four-step process of "strategic long-range planning," enabling the local congregation to engage in "effective, successful mission," such that: realistically assesses "its present standing and stature in relation to other congregations"; determines "the primary direction for its future"; considers its

strengths in relation to "effective, successful churches"; and commits to those objectives that will "advance its long-range effectiveness in mission."[128]

I maintain that, in consideration of the life and witness of the local church, both presently and into the future, such a systematic and intentional process, as advocated by Callahan, ensures that God's work will be done. If, indeed, a congregation is to fulfill its ultimate meaning and purpose as a community of faith, it must not yield to complacency or become distracted from faithfully responding to God's call. Neither, can a congregation pursue its ministry and mission without clarity about its vision and goals, nor an unambiguous understanding of how its story and worldview informs who it is and how it functions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, its effectiveness and success as the Body of Christ will be proportionate to quality of its relationships, both within and without, bearing witness to "the dwelling of the Spirit." As has been my contention and conviction from the onset, in essence, the serious consideration of congregational dynamics reflects a fundamental commitment to the same principles which encourage the community of faith in its understanding and practice of stewardship. On this basis, I will now turn my full attention to the subject of stewardship.

> **We are pilgrims on a journey, fellow travellers on the road;**
> **we are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load.**
>
> **I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you;**
> **I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.**[129]

---

[128] Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, xxi-xxii.
[129] Richard Gillard, *We Are Pilgrims (The Servant Song)* (Scripture in Song, 1977), vv. 1, 4.

Chapter Five

THE PRACTICE OF STEWARDSHIP: THE WORKING OF THE SPIRIT

This chapter will continue in an examination of the interrelationship between congregational dynamics and the practice of stewardship, in particular consideration of the latter. Despite the shift in focus, I intend that, on the whole, the flow and transition from the previous to the present chapter should be relatively smooth if not seamless, given what I hold to be the close-knit relationship between the two. In keeping with the theme, previously having considered the form and function of the congregation, as I now proceed to examine the challenges and opportunities inherent in its understanding and practice of stewardship, I will also shift from the *dwelling* to "the *working* of the Spirit."

I intend to begin by revisiting some theology, as it relates to *stewardship*, *giving*, and *the Spirit*, by way of setting the context for what will follow. Next, I will focus on *the formation and transformation of stewards*, as made possible by the presence of Spirit. At this point, I will also begin to share of relevant findings and analysis of responses to my congregational leadership survey, continuing my analysis in evaluating the present and anticipating the future, as in turn I consider the understanding and practice of *stewardship*, both *within the church* and *beyond the church*.

Stewardship, Giving, and the Spirit

Earlier, in my examination in chapter three of the *foundational perspectives* informing this thesis, I cited Timothy Ek who, in "Stewardship and Spiritual Health," asserts, "Jesus recognized that giving is a barometer of our spiritual health," links "our growth as Christ's disciples" to how and what the church teaches about giving. Similarly,

in ***More Than Money: Portraits of Transformative Stewardship***, **Patrick McNamara** observes that a congregation's spiritual health is reflected in its response to God's call to commitment. McNamara further maintains, "generosity with one's gifts, material and spiritual, is a measure of how seriously one takes the Gospel and lives it out," both individually and communally.[130] While to some, such a statement may seem to be a harsh judgment upon both congregations and individuals, based on my observation and experience, I nonetheless consider it to speak frankly a truth we need to own and acknowledge—even as it is disconcerting and discomforting. I have contended from the onset of this thesis, churches within the mainline genre to which my denomination belongs do not have a good track record in regard to stewardship and giving. As subjects too often associated with controversy and conflict, rather than risk upsetting anyone by speaking of faith and money in the same sentence, all but a few congregations choose—so to speak—to let sleeping dogs lie. As such, by all-but-avoiding the conversation, we reveal our *dis-ease*, and surrender to despair concerning the possibility of their reconciliation.

An edition of the Alban Institute magazine *Congregations* devoted to the subject of "faith and money," included an article, **"A Soul Decision,"** in which **Dan Hotchkiss** explores "the competing claims of faith and money." In the process, he describes different approaches to and expectations of giving that he attributes to three basic groups found within congregations. Briefly, Hotchkiss identifies: ***practical givers*** as predominant among lay leaders whose support and involvement responds to excitement generated by another's leadership by example; ***spiritual givers*** as a smaller group often including clergy, who, regarding it as a deeply spiritual matter, give generously and unconditionally

---

[130] Patrick H. McNamara, *More Than Money: Portraits of Transformative Stewardship* (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1999), 43-44.

out of gratitude to God; and ***dues payers*** who, regarding their gifts and contributions as a "fee for service," tend to focus on a consumer approach to church involvement and support. Hotchkiss further observes that across the spectrum there are variations and extremes of these typologies, as well as generational distinctions in how we reconcile faith and money, all of which "reflect the condition of our soul."[131] Without disparaging the motivations of any one group—the *dues payers* nonetheless being most suspect, I concur with Hotchkiss' implicit affirmation of the former two groups' approach, in encouraging generous giving, as well as "balancing the competing claims" of faith and money.

Finally, in the lead editorial "UpFront"from an issue of *The Practice of Ministry in Canada* focusing on the "Stewardship of Money," **Harry Oussoren** asserts that "money should not separate us from God, but be a means of grace." Oussoren confronts the power of money in contemporary times as well as throughout history over life itself, both philosophically and practically, maintaining how Jesus himself "recognized clearly that for humans money is a troublesome stumbling block—an obstacle keeping them away from really participating in God's reign." Mindful of the challenges posed, he contends that stewardship programs should help ensure "our money doesn't keep us distant from God," but rather serves as "a barometer of our commitment to Christ's mission in the world"—entrusted to us in fostering abundant life for ourselves and our neighbour. Oussoren proposes that, as such, a faithful approach towards money contributes to the realization of "God's shalom vision," as well as being "a means of grace to help people of faith stay closer to God."[132]

---

[131] Dan Hotchkiss, "A Soul Decision" In *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2001, 19-21.
[132] A.H. Harry Oussoren, "UpFront" In *The Practice of Ministry in Canada*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (January 1993), 3.

A booklet written by **Arthur Van Seters**, former principal of Knox Presbyterian College in Toronto, proposes a hypothesis quite similar to my own. In ***The Doctrine of the Trinity: The Basis for Christian Stewardship***, Van Seters argues, "the Trinity represents God's economy ***oikonomos***, God's way of managing God's household and of interrelating the organization of relationships. The Trinity is affirmed as a community of God's own being, organizing the divine household as a mutuality of giving and receiving."[133] Further to such an interpretation of stewardship from a faith perspective, in an article, **"The Effusiveness of Christian Charity,"** William Willimon writes "the Christian story is a strange account of Jesus as the enactor and proclaimer of a kingdom where charity reigns. And with Jesus, it becomes all-important how the kingdom appears."[134] Willimon also maintains "Christian philanthropy arises from our claims about the nature of God. The parables that Jesus told were meant to depict a God who is, by our standards, effusive, extravagant and therefore odd."[135]

In *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life*, R. Scott Rodin draws attention to our redemption by Christ as faithful servants. In the opening chapter, he warns against what, in the church's tendency to focus on theology rather than ethics, represents a "false start." He proposes that, in order to ensure a right start, several fundamental changes are needed: in the church's terminology and methodology, teaching and preaching, strategies and campaigns. Rodin claims that, for the most part, such approaches fail, because they do not consider the need to change hearts, or to radically change our lives, lifestyles, attitudes, and relationships, but are fixated on fundraising results and balancing the

---

[133] Arthur Van Seters, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: The Basis for Christian Stewardship* (Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1999), 3-4.
[134] William Willimon, "The Effusiveness of Christian Charity" In *Theology Today*, Vol. 49, No. 1, 77.
[135] Willimon, "The Effusiveness of Christian Charity", 76.

budget. He further critiques "the overemphasis on *doing* and the absence of *being*," as worldly and unreflective of the demands of the gospel, leading to ambivalence towards our faith and its call to us to live as stewards. Rodin advocates that, to make a right start, we must commit "to build the right theology of the steward upon which we can develop a credible ethic of stewardship."[136] Rodin further addresses the challenge of motivating people to give, endorsing the all-important role of the Holy Spirit, in contrast to a worldly view ascribing all responsibility to our efforts. To this end, he cites scriptural affirmation that calls upon the faithful to be open to the power of the Spirit working in our lives, especially in terms of giving as the response of "our singular devotion to God." Acknowledging the role of the Spirit through prayer, Rodin asserts, is consistent with his conclusion that the Spirit—and not the effectiveness of a personal appeal—is "the one, true and only right motivator of gifts from out people." He further advocates that, if we accept its vital influence in giving, the Spirit should have a key role in guiding the church's planning. Rodin summarizes his case in asserting:

> If the Spirit is moving the organization beyond its normal expectations in trust, should this not be the primary source of direction regardless of how "financially risky" it may appear to the world? Is not the defining mark of the people of the kingdom of God a single-minded commitment to hear and follow the leading of the Spirit?[137]

Clark Pinnock speaks of the church as "the continuation of *Christ's annointing*," asserting that the presence of the Spirit points to mission. Writing in ***Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit***, he contends that the Spirit is not for our exultation as a private benefit but rather intended to empower witnesses to God's Kingdom, adding that, while Jesus has given his followers a vocation, many are either unclear or have forgotten

---

[136] Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life*, 15-18.
[137] Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life*, 208-11.

their call. Pinnock observes that a major hindrance to mission is the lack of interest in discipleship on the part of many, conceding that it is hard to market mission without the presence of the Spirit to enable and empower. Mission being of the Spirit - and being God's work not ours - he advocates that the Spirit's consideration not as the sustainer of the church, but the driving power of its mission.[138] Pinnock regards the church to be the instrument of Christ to carry on mission in *the power of the Spirit*, noting paradoxically that, while such is the power of Creation, it is also the power of suffering love exemplified in the Cross. He allows that the Spirit is most significant within the church, yet asserts that it is omnipresent and not confined to that body. As such, he upholds that the Pentecost offers the church an opportunity to work freely in community open to God's love through broad expression extending beyond the hearts of individual disciples. Pinnock also emphasizes that the presence of the Spirit allows for the "relationality of a *triune life*," reflected in the created order and central for ecclesiology as a source of fellowship in heaven and on earth, while reflecting the communion of the Trinity, embodying the Easter life and capable of becoming a sign of the coming reign of God.[139]

> **As they offered gifts most rare at that manger crude and bare,**
> **so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,**
> **all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heavenly King.**[140]

Pinnock's advocacy of strengthening the relationship of the Spirit with both the church and its mission is highly suggestive of a process of growth and maturation in faith, one that is inclusive of all matters related to our response to God's activity and initiative in the world. In our openness to the Spirit, new possibilities are revealed for our spiritual

---

[138] Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 141-43.
[139] Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, 116-18.
[140] William Chatterton Dix, *As with Gladness Men of Old* (ca. 1858, alt.), v. 3.

growth and development, as disciples and as the church. This opportunity, I contend, is of particular relevance in regard to the enhancement of congregational stewardship.

Acting on the same conviction, in *The Holy Spirit*, Norman Pittenger speaks of a process of spiritual formation, in contending that the Holy Spirit "is supremely, decisively and most visibly at work in Christian fellowship." Pittenger asserts that in this context the Holy Spirit is intensely present and active, arguing that everything rightly done in the Church is done in the power of the Holy Spirit. He further contends that, while in the absence of such a *truth* the church deteriorates concerned with "domestic housekeeping" of little relevance or purpose, the recognition of the Holy Spirit "reinvigorates, renews and reanimates the institution."[141] **Herbert Lockyer** asserts in ***The Holy Spirit of God*** that by grace we can indeed be transformed into the best God has for us, if we are but willing to become *Spirit-possessed.* Towards this end of determining our willingness, Lockyer asks a series of questions posed within the framework of three larger questions: 1. *does our life present the colour of the fruit?*; 2. *does our life preserve the flavour of the fruit?*; and 3. *does our life possess the form of the fruit?*[142]

> **Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leave shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.** Jeremiah 17:7-8

In *The Steward Living in Covenant*, Ronald Vallet advocates on behalf of a covenant-based understanding of stewardship. Vallet asserts that, as it has come to be perceived in the contemporary context of the church, the prevailing model of stewardship clearly does not work. Rather, he argues that the approach taken towards stewardship

---

[141] Pittenger, *The Holy Spirit*, 80-82.
[142] Herbert Lockyer, *The Holy Spirit of God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1981), 130-31.

ministry must change, calling congregations "to discover, explore, and carry out new means of stewardship."[143] Indeed, Vallet maintains that to be a steward is to be in covenant with God, and that—while not requiring perfection—it does require of the steward to trust in God to fulfill God's promises, as well as to obey God's commands, as one seeking to fully participate in God's plan and mission. Further, he contends that, as a party to this relationship, the church as a whole is implicitly called to be "continually renewing itself in order to be a faithful participant in the covenant with God."[144] The ongoing renewal of which Vallet speaks necessitates a willingness to grow and learn, as well as to hear and trust in God's living Word, as it points us toward faithfulness in response to God's covenant and vision.

Speaking to the subject of the Scriptures, in *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, Westerhoff contends that they contain "a vision of society" quite different from the false reality which commonly informs the practices and ethics that are assumed to be the way of the world. Citing Biblical references, he addresses such issues as the accumulation of wealth and the exploitation of others, abundance and scarcity, individualism and communalism, private property and materialism, forgiveness of debt and the redistribution of wealth. Reaffirming that "God is the owner, we are the trustees," he asserts that that "the Scriptures forbid a sense of absolute human ownership of anything in creation." Contending on the basis of the Scriptures that morality is primarily concerned with obligations and responsibilities, Westerhoff concludes that "to be a moral human being is to be accountable and responsible."[145]

---

[143] Vallet, *The Steward Living in Covenant*, 7-8.
[144] Vallet, *The Steward Living in Covenant*, 4-7.
[145] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 82-83.

Give thanks, my soul, for harvest, for store of fruit and grain,
but know the owner gives so that we may share again.
Where people suffer hunger, or little children cry,
with gifts from God's rich bounty may thankfulness reply.

Give thanks, my soul, for labours, that strength and days employ,
but know the Maker's purpose brings toil as well as joy.
Show forth, O God, your purpose; direct our will and hand
to share your love and bounty with all in every land.[146]

Stewardship by Formation and Transformation

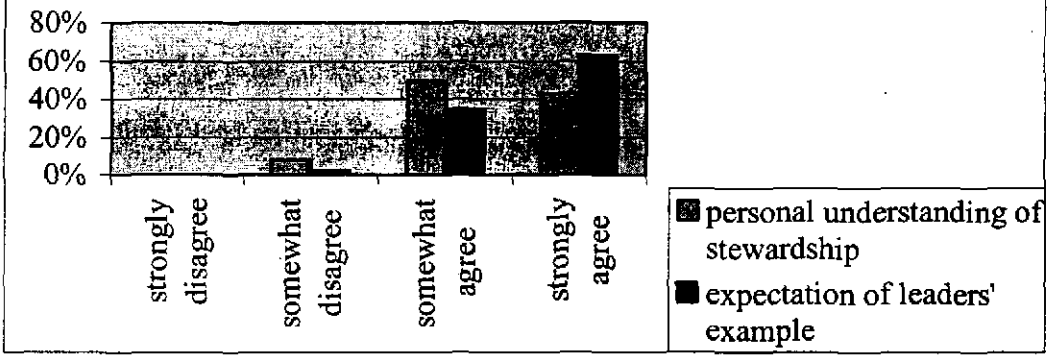
It is not unexpected that, in my survey of congregational leaders, in regard to questions relating to their ***understanding and practice of stewardship***—like those in chapter four relating to *congregational dynamics*, both personally and as representative of their congregation, many responses reflected what, I suspect, they believe to be right and true. In that regard, the findings are often predictable, as well as flattering in terms of confirming my hypothesis. Yet this is not always the case as, especially on careful analysis, seeming anomalies and atypical findings lead to revelatory discoveries. As I share of the results, much will be regarded routinely and predictably; however, some results may surprise readers as, indeed, they surprised me.

An argument may be made that, among the church leaders surveyed, there is a significant disconnect in terms of personal understanding and practice of stewardship, as illustrated below by the graph (Figure 13). Judging by responses to successive questions that I expected to generate similar levels of support, I was disappointed the assertion of #17 concerning what stewardship entails "as the effective response to my faith," elicited as weak a response, in comparison to the affirmation of #18 that in regard to stewardship "leaders are called to lead by example," Overall, while to the latter statement 62.9% strongly agreed and 35.0% somewhat agreed, response to the former statement was 42.7%

[146] William Watkins Reid, Sr., *Give Thanks, My Soul, for Harvest* (The Hymn Society, 1961, 1989), vv. 1, 3.

strongly agreed and 49.6% somewhat agreed. In my estimation, such a gap reflects a curious lack of identity with their leadership role, as well as a serious need for intentional faith development in regard to stewardship education.

Figure 13: **Personal Understanding of Stewardship/ Expectation of Leaders' Example** (Overall)



Question 17. As an effective response to my faith, stewardship involves all of whom I am and all of what I do.
Question 18. Leaders are called to lead by example, especially in terms of their practice of stewardship.

The possibility that such changes might take place necessitates what Westerhoff refers to as ***moral catechesis***, such as teaches us the Gospel truth—that identity comes from who we are and not what we have, that we need not fear nor avoid pain and vulnerability, and that the world is a gift to be appreciated and used in the service of love. Meanwhile, he asserts, such catechesis enables us to learn to possess nothing and no one, to accept joy and sadness, prosperity and poverty, and to accept and affirm our gifts, graces and talents. Our resulting character and conscience as Christians will come to share in "a common memory, common vision, a common authority, common rituals and a common life together."[147] Westerhoff indeed regards the process of catechesis, as

[147] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 91-92.

involving particular attention to the elements of worship and liturgy, in which the presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit is most typically identified. Regarding the **four roles** of catechesis, he asserts that it: **1.** provides the community with a means of initiation and reflection as to faithful stewardship; **2.** serves as a means of proclaiming and responding, taking place explicitly within the service of the Word; **3.** reminds us of its connection with our understandings and ways of life, taking place implicitly throughout the liturgy; and **4.** aids the community to integrate its cultic and daily life.[148]

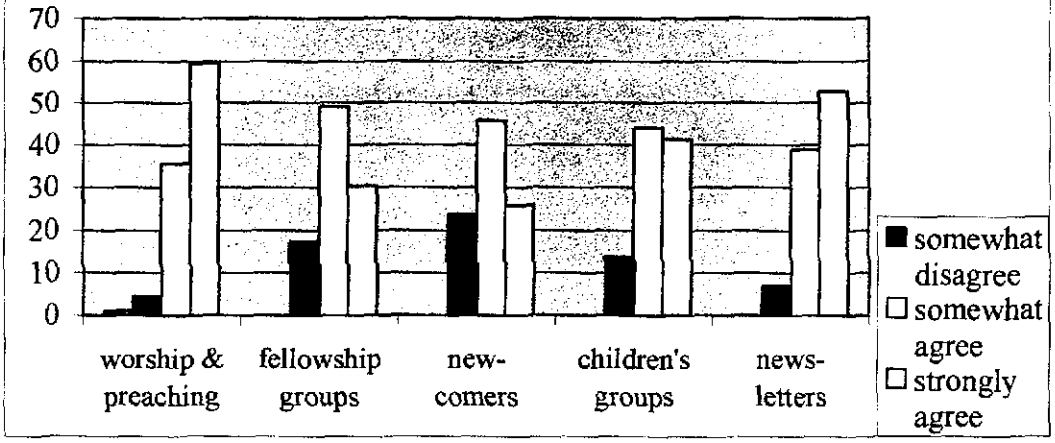
Westerhoff also names **seven principles** or components informing the process of catechesis as specifically related to the making of a steward. **First**, he contends that it is always a *converting and nurturing process*, and **second**, that it is one of "experience, reflection and action." **Third**, he contends that it is "related to readiness and not (a given) time, to appropriateness and not a packaged program." As to a **fourth** principle, Westerhoff points to a *lifestyle* that is inclusive of "our total being as thinking, feeling, willing persons," and involves our *character*, *conscience*, and *conduct*. Principles **five**, **six** and **seven** all stress the *communal* nature of catechesis, related to its being respectively "a personal pilgrimage with companions," "an activity of the whole community," and finally, "a particular sort of common life together" that informs every aspect of its shared life. As such, he concludes that, in tandem, "catechetics and catechesis address comprehensively the ends and the means of *believing*, *being*, and *behaving* in community."[149] In its thoroughness, both in scope and in detail, as well as attending to individual and community aspects of formation, I commend Westerhoff's model of *moral*

[148] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 75.
[149] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 42-47.

catechesis as the seminal, if not pre-eminent, illustration of an intentional stewardship development program addressing the context of a local congregation.

Following in Westerhoff's footsteps, **Donald Joiner** echoes the position of many stewardship consultants in advocating a change in focus and approach to the formation of stewards. He argues, in ***Creating a Climate for Giving***, that by changing our definition to regard the individual as a person, rather than on the basis of what they can give or do, the focus of the church's stewardship ministry can shift from financial campaigns to a genuine concern with helping people to become "transformed disciples." Citing Robert Wuthnow, Joiner contends churches can make a real difference by, for instance, preaching more actively and focusing on the meanings of *stewardship*, helping people to connect their faith to the challenges of everyday life and work, and rediscover its "prophetic voice" in regard to matters of money and materialism.[150]

Fig. 14: **Support of Stewardship Development**: (Overall)



Question 64. In my congregation stewardship development and education is supported through: a) Worship and Preaching b) Study and Fellowship groups c) Newcomers and Membership classes d) Sunday School and Youth Group e) Newsletters, Bulletin inserts, etc.

[150] Donald W. Joiner, *Creating a Climate for Giving* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2001), 36.

Question #64 of the survey explores the various means through which the stewardship development and education is advanced within responding congregations. As demonstrated by the graph (Figure 14) above, it reveals that, overall, among respondents who are both *strongly* and *somewhat agreed*, worship and preaching (94.9%), and newsletters and bulletin inserts (91.3%) lead the way. Sunday School and Youth Group (85.2%), and Study and Fellowship groups (79.3%) lag significantly, but still lead Newcomers and Membership classes (71.5%) that, despite the commendation of many advocates of stewardship development, disappointingly bring up the rear. Such findings reveal that, not unlike the widespread paranoia resisting meaningful dialogue in regard to faith and money within congregations, the fear that raising the subject with newcomers and prospective members might scare them away belies much evidence to the contrary.

In *Imagining a Church in the Spirit*, Ben Johnson and Glen McDonald assert "how persons are received into the church signals to them the church's faith, mission, and sense of purpose." On one hand, churches whose new members have an understanding of their faith and a clear sense of the church's expectations are more likely to become committed. On the other hand, a church that lacks clarity about its mission, fails to "communicate a challenging vision," and regards new members as additional giving units, will struggle with involvement and commitment. Johnson and McDonald critique mainline churches who have long suffered social members "without seeking their spiritual transformation," while commending a scenario where "more intentional congregations conduct new member training that includes the basics of faith, the mission of the church in the world, the church's expectations of new members, and a challenge to faithful discipleship." Yet

still they advocate an even bolder course, which *in the Spirit* counsels initiates to be prepared for challenge of future change in the role of the church and its followers.[151]

Johnson and McDonald assert that, while all are created in God's image, each and every person is unique with all having "different gifts, a variety of potentialities, and contrasting life-shaping experiences." They maintain that, even as we are conformed to Christ, our formation reflects not so much an imitation of his example, as it involves our "being conformed to the person we were created to be." They further contend that our ongoing formation requires a growing self-awareness as well as knowledge of our faith in Christ, such that enables us to participate fully in both the church and the new reality. As members and circumstances change, "the Church alive in the Spirit" must attend to the all-important task of ongoing spiritual formation, that enables it to discern the way of the Spirit, and to live out its faith when confronted by new challenges and opportunities.[152]

In June 1999, I was able to attend the **North American Stewardship Conference** in Toronto. Among the workshops I attended, "The Stewardship Committee" led by **Phil Williams**, then executive director of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, focused on enabling the mission and ministry of a local congregation through the organization and practice of sound stewardship. Williams worked through *a dynamic* aimed at "visualizing stewardship in the life of a church," beginning with the concept of the church as the *foundation*, and the Trinity as the *base of a cup*, within the cup being found the "gifts of the spirit" to be developed through *discipling and learning*. Reaching the *rim* of the cup, the process turns to *organizing* and *enabling* that, in effect, makes of it a "launching pad" for the stewardship of individual persons, and the congregation as a whole. Williams also

---

[151] Johnson and McDonald, *Imagining a Church in the Spirit*, 39-41.
[152] Johnson and McDonald, *Imagining a Church in the Spirit*, 137-38.

spoke to the value of "gifts emphasis," in exploring and encouraging joyful and imaginative giving, through the means of a congregational survey aimed at "gift discovery."[153]

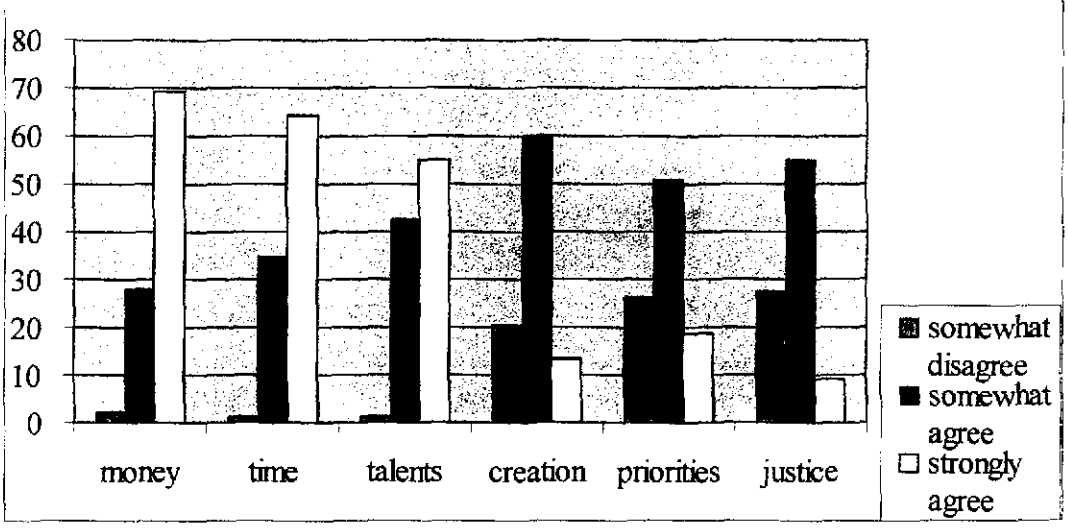
> **Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.** II Corinthians 4:15

Drawing upon the results of the survey once again, as illustrated in the graph (Figure 15) below, from question #63, in regard to what the congregation recognizes the practice of stewardship involves, responses were most *strongly agreed* that it involved money (69.3%), time (64.0%), and talents (54.9%). When combined with responses that were *somewhat agreed*, time (98.7%) and talents (97.4%) actually outscored money (97.0%). Of more interest, comparing the two Presbyteries, Halton had a stronger response than Dufferin-Peel in every case, suggesting to this observer that more intentional stewardship development is taking place in the former. In consideration of the less common understandings of what the practice of stewardship involves, overall the responses of those who *strongly agreed* were much lower. While, according to those responses that *somewhat agreed*, respectively care of creation (60.2%), social/economic justice (55.2%), and setting priorities (50.7%) were accorded a measure of acknowledgement, what I noticed was an unambiguous response of those who *somewhat disagreed* with according wider consideration to include: care of creation (20.4%), setting priorities (26.2%), and social justice (27.6%). Such results suggest there is still much work needed to realize a holistic view of stewardship.

---

[153] Phil Williams, "The Stewardship Committee" (notes from Plenary Workshop at the North American Stewardship Conference, Toronto ON, June 1999).

Figure 15: **Concept of what Stewardship Involves** (Overall)



Question 63. Among the congregation it is acknowledged that one's practice of stewardship involves: a) Money b) Time c) Talents (gifts/abilities) d) Care of Creation e) Setting Priorities f) Social/Economic Justice

I referred earlier in this thesis to the approach taken by James Hopewell who, in his study of congregations, considers the stories they tell as indicator of the worldview, such that informs and guides their life and work of ministry and mission. In a similar fashion, in ***Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money***, **James Hudnut-Beumler** commends the practice of "narrative ethics" as "the appraisal of conduct in the context of the narrative (or story) of an individual's life (or the life of a people)." He advocates narrative ethics, not as self-justification but contextualization—as a way of discerning "moral conduct, character, virtue, and life choices," functioning both retrospectively and prospectively. Among the "meta-plot options, he highlights *conversion* as it focuses on future life "premised on repentance for the lives we've lived," *progress towards holiness* as our future life reflects "the best parts of our lives to date," and *a struggle with sainthood* in that, while we acknowledge ourselves to be incomplete, we regard our life to be "one that holds in tension who we are with what we know the

good to be." Maintaining that the process of narrative ethics acknowledges the intersection of stories, as well as the connection among people, Hudnut-Beumler asserts that "the challenge of being and becoming a *generous saint* is to tell a true story about oneself becoming generous and holy and then to live that story through to completion."[154]

Among the strategies advocated by Durall to create an ongoing positive climate for stewardship is intentionally to engage the congregation in dialogue, enabling the stewardship committee and other church leaders to understand better the prevailing attitudes and beliefs towards stewardship and charitable giving. Tempering expectations of wide participation, he nonetheless emphasizes the importance—even with a limited response—of learning "how parishioners view money in their lives and in the church," eliciting that which is positive and favourable, as well as uncovering questions and misunderstandings requiring remedial action. Durall further asserts that such dialogue clarifies the role and function of the stewardship committee, not to work in isolation but as a liaison between the congregation and those in leadership positions.[155]

Stewardship Within the Church

A highlight for me at the 1999 North American Stewardship Conference was John Westerhoff's opening night address, particularly given its attention to the impact modernism has had and continues to hold over the way we live and think. Already familiar with his contention regarding the necessity of *converting* stewards by a process of catechesis (described earlier), I was most impressed by his assertion that, in the post-modern era, we need to consider stewardship and ministry as one and the same. The next

---

[154] James Hudnut-Beumler, *Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money* (Washington: The Alban Institute, 1999), 104-07.
[155] Durall, *Creating Congregations of Generous People*, 81-83.

morning, Caroline Westerhoff cited the prophecy of Isaiah (40), in asking - even challenging - us if we can commit to *walking the walk, as well as talking the talk.* Distinguishing between *lavish love* and *barren faith,* she closed citing Jesus' exchange with Peter in John 21, repeatedly challenging him - "if you love me, feed my sheep". Proceeding to a plenary workshop on "The Formation of Stewards," she built on John's opening night assertion as to the relation of ministry and stewardship. She opened with two definitions: first, defining ***ministry*** as *the service of God at all times,* and second, defining ***stewardship*** as *the use of all our resources in ministry.* Rather than submitting to definition by function, she advocated the importance of *being in ministry* alongside *doing ministry.* Westerhoff then introduced and expanded upon a list of **six *dispositions***, that reflect the mind of Christ/image of God, and call us to be: *present, vulnerable, hospitable, creative, humble and detached.* In regard to these dispositions, love was cited as the glue that holds them together with thanksgiving being our proper response to them.[156]

> **May we in service to our God act out the living Word,**
> **and walk the road the saints have trod till all have seen and heard.**
> **As stewards of the earth may we give thanks with one accord**
> **to God who calls us all to be disciples of the Lord.**[157]

James Hudnut-Beumler highlights the role and responsibility of a congregation's lay leaders in *Generous Saints,* asserting the need to reorient our perspective to focus on "religious leadership." In living out this perspective, he proposes seven ways of leading, in calling congregations to: 1. reclaim the common text (Bible) as the source of your wisdom; 2. lead the people of God in worship, prayer, and service; 3. lead towards religious goals, not towards physical goals; 4. exercise stewardship to increase talents, not

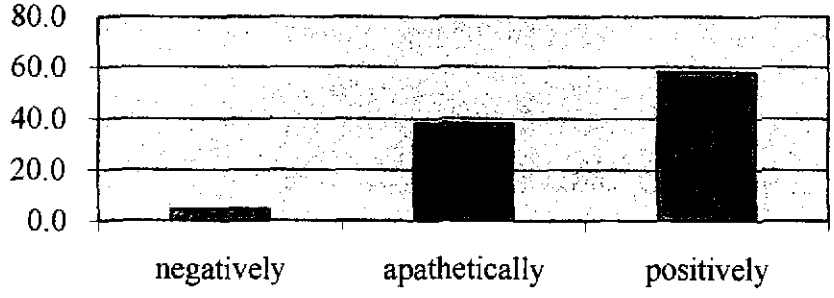
---

[156] John and Caroline Westerhoff, "The Formation of Stewards" (notes from Plenary Workshop at the North American Stewardship Conference, Toronto ON, June 1999).
[157] H. Kenn Carmichael, *Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples* (H. Kenn Carmichael, 1989), v. 4.

merely to preserve them; 5. evangelize; 6. take responsibility for the souls of others; and 7. model discipleship.[158]

I have asserted previously that, based on my observation and experience within a congregational setting, the subject of stewardship typically does not get a warm reception. This state of affairs is confirmed in the congregational survey in that, from question #61, when asked how stewardship is generally regarded within the congregation, as illustrated in the graph (Figure 16) below, *positive* responses (57.7%) prevail, but by no means overwhelm the combination of *apathetic* (37.7%) and *negative* (4.5%) responses. Indeed, the genesis of this less than positive reception may lie in response to the following question #62, that asks why and when the subject of stewardship is typically brought to the congregation's attention. While it is sometimes raised in the absence of any type of crisis (46.0%), a more common scenario points to a crisis of some description, be it of financial nature (19.0%), a need for volunteers (15.2%), or a shortage of both financial and volunteer resources (19.8%). It is not surprising that, under such circumstances, there may be an aversion—or even backlash—to the subject of stewardship.

Figure 16: **Congregational Regard for Stewardship** (Overall)



Question 61. Within the congregation the subject of stewardship is generally regarded:

[158] Hudnut-Beumler, *Generous Saints* , 65-70

John Westerhoff wisely cautions that particular stewardship issues are complex with no simple answers or single 'right' approach, and contends that, without a theological and moral dimension, stewardship can easily become irrelevant and unfaithful.[159] Still, as Westerhoff and others would surely concur, I maintain that, in addition to the theology and morality that informs our understanding and practice of stewardship, it is important to have a plan and approach that is appropriate to the context out of which a local congregation operates, in terms of its size, setting, and story.

In *More Than Money*, Patrick McNamara considers eleven prime examples of congregational stewardship, one of which is represented by **Northkirk Presbyterian Church**, a small suburban church in southern California. McNamara cites, in particular, its vitality and spirituality, as attributed to by it opportunities for gift discernment, prayer, and spiritual growth, he maintains that as a congregation it "provides a powerful motivational dynamic for engagement in ministry and for generous giving to both church and missions." He also commends its high standards in terms of its expectations that new members be "active in ministry and financial support," noting that it "costs" to belong.[160]

The major assignment from a second year course, "Foundations of Stewardship," taught by Ronald Vallet, called for the development of a "year-round congregational stewardship plan." In the process of developing my plan, as someone reputed to have "two left feet," I nonetheless chose to employ the exuberant and joyful metaphor of *dancing* in describing stewardship, in consideration of its creative possibilities. I share a conviction with many others in advocating a holistic approach to stewardship that, by its cyclical and complimentary nature, I contend may be aptly typified as *dance movements*.

---

[159] Westerhoff, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*, 81.
[160] McNamara, *More Than Money: Portraits of Transformative Stewardship*, 127-28.

An outline of the plan I developed follows, in which all such programs, activities, projects, and events relating to stewardship within the church are divided into two broad categories, dealing first with "Invitation, Conversion, and Integration," and secondly with "Celebration and Remembrance, Nurture and Enabling":

A. INVITATION, CONVERSION AND INTEGRATION

- **Newcomer classes** - for all adult newcomers to the congregation, consisting of two sessions organized and scheduled under supervision of *Membership* committee (September and January).
- **Baptism** - regularly scheduled four times annually (Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving) with provision for exceptional circumstances - all candidates and/or parents of children must attend a class with the minister/lay leader and meet other expectations as set by the congregation prior to approval.
- **Church Membership classes** - under the supervision of the *Christian Development* committee, to involve six sessions (February to May) for persons age sixteen and over - a strong stewardship component would be included in the program - culmination in **confirmation/re-affirmation of faith** (Pentecost).
- **Public Relations and Advertising** - the church must maintain visibility through regular and timely exposure in the wider community, always tapping potential by inviting participation and involvement of those outside its current fellowship.
- **Rally Sunday** - kick-off for Sunday School and return from summer holidays provides a prime opportunity to promote stewardship along with evangelism (mid-September).
- **Invite a friend to Church** - an evangelistic opportunity to share of our faith that also serves as good stewardship (several times per year).

B. CELEBRATION AND REMEMBRANCE, NURTURE AND ENABLING

- **Development of *Narrative** Budget** - encouraging involvement of the whole congregation in *visioning*, *goal-setting* and *strategic planning* towards arriving at a congregational annual budget - * a prime exercise in stewardship education telling the story of and dreams for the ministry and mission of the congregation (November to January).
- **Annual Congregational Meeting** - beyond the usual business of decision-making, direction-taking, adoption of the budget and nominations/elections, represents an opportunity for recognition and celebration of the year past, and consecration and covenanting for the year ahead (February).
- **Other congregational meetings and forums** - valuable opportunities for information sharing, discussion/brainstorming and decision-making.
- **Congregational Anniversary service** - celebration of community and ministry, as well as opportunity for re-covenanting.
- **Church Picnic** - an outdoor celebration (weather permitting) with focus on children (mid-June).

- **Church Suppers, other congregational gatherings** - such occasions for fellowship, community-building and celebration encourage us to stewardship.
- **Small Group ministries and studies** - whether it be *interest* groups for women, men, singles, couples, 'empty-nesters', 'quilters' and hobby enthusiasts, or *study* groups examining the Bible as well as various issues and concerns, the emphasis is on opportunities for involvement.
- **Children's and Youth Ministry** - through Sunday School, youth group(s) and other quality activities, this focus is of vital importance to the *growing of stewards*.
- **Volunteer training** - this is a very important task undertaken semi-annually (May and October) in developing the gifts of the laity so as to enable and empower them to share in the ministry and leadership of the church involved in small groups, pastoral care teams, etc.
- **Special Giving** - seasonal (Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving) or emergent in nature (disaster relief), it provides opportunities to bring out the best in terms of generosity.
- **Stewardship development studies** - might offer both basic and advanced studies (March-April and October-November) focusing on the Biblical and theological basis for stewardship, as well as seeking to explore and develop *joyful giving*.
- **Proclamation of the Word** - imaginative and provocative preaching of stewardship is too important to be left to 'stewardship Sundays' - given its *prophetic* nature, it may be profitable to have someone other than the resident minister preach.
- **Celebration of Communion** - celebrated on a frequent and regular (monthly) basis, the emphasis of this sacrament - applicable also to Baptism - should focus on the coming together of the community in remembrance, celebration and anticipation.
- **Intergenerational, participatory worship** - involvement in worship service of all persons and all ages is a key element in its dynamic and transformative experience.

Indeed, some of the strategies envisaged above may be argued to have a stronger connection to the advancement of stewardship than others. However, it is my contention that, within the context of the faith community, all manner of activity that aims to educate and encourage—either formally or informally—persons to become involved or take a greater role in God's design is appropriately deemed to be stewardship development.

Further to the understanding of stewardship in terms of our *remembering to be a household of God* in Jesus Christ, in *Congregations at the Crossroads*, Ronald Vallet regards as a mistake the church's common assumption of stewardship as "a separate

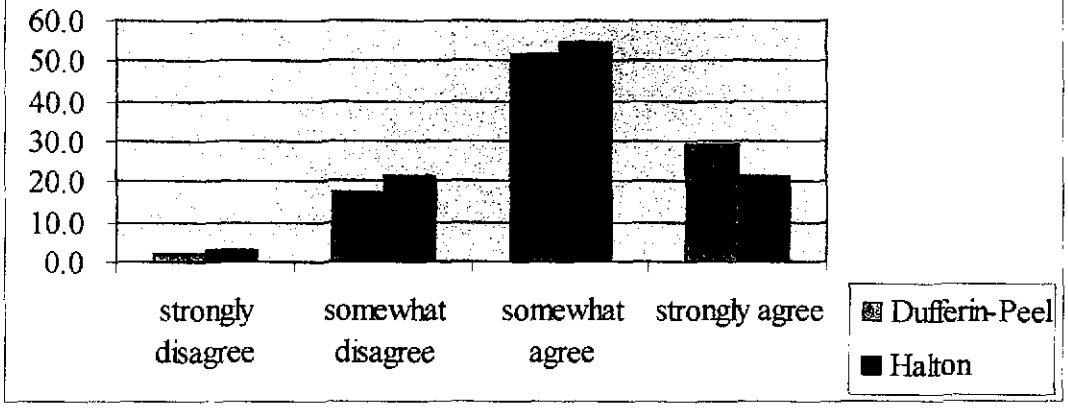
program to fund ministry and mission in the church." He maintains such limited understanding reduces stewardship to *fund-raising* that reflects little more than a survival mentality. Vallet contends that, as a household of God in remembering its identity and sense of call according to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the congregation will come to perceive stewardship both within the church and beyond, realized through "the whole life of the congregation."[161] Kennon Callahan focuses, in ***Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church***, upon the strength of the congregation's "relational characteristics," asserting that "the stronger the congregation's mission, visitation, worship, groupings, leadership, and decision making, the stronger the giving". He also asserts that the first *principle for giving* should be "living is giving," contending that "we live life best as we give our strengths, gifts and competencies in the service of God's mission," adding emphatically that "we are called to serve, not survive."[162]

In my experience the setting of the congregational budget has often been a frustrating and demoralizing—if not painful—exercise. Generally speaking, scarcity thinking seems to predominate in many congregations, leading to the predisposition to delay or avoid coming to a decision on any initiative or change in ministry priorities that may entail an additional expenditure. Anything representing more than an incremental increase in the budget must be justified fiscally, given the oft-cited responsibility to make a sound decision on behalf of a congregation's supporting families. A sense of optimism with regard to the budget, as well as the church's ability to sustain and expand its ministry and mission is a challenge a prevailing "survival mentality." In my contention that the health and vitality of a congregation is premised on such hope that dares to dream, in

[161] Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads: Remembering to Be Households of God*, 109-10.
[162] Kennon L.Callahan, *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 3-4.

question #59, I asked the extent to which such qualities were manifested in the degree of optimism approaching the daunting prospect of setting an annual budget. As shown in the graph (Figure 17) below, the response indicated 25.6% *strongly agreed*, 53.0% *somewhat agreed*, and 18.8% *somewhat disagreed*. Such results confirm that there is both a need and an opportunity to teach about stewardship in regard to the setting of the budget.

Figure17: **Congregational health reflected in setting budget**



Question 59. The congregation's health and vitality may best be reflected in its degree of optimism approaching the annual budget.

We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O God, from thee.

May we thy bounties thus, as stewards true receive,
and gladly, as thou blessest us, to thee our first-fruits give.[163]

A presentation by **Mark Vincent** on "The Giving Project" began, drawing upon a reference to Psalm 138:1, boldly asserting "God is God and money is not." He addressed the context of the consumer-oriented society in which we live, emphasizing Jesus' teaching that "You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24). Vincent asserted that the difficulty with our concept of giving is our focus on "the funding of the church's enterprise as opposed to our understanding of who God is". He also spoke in terms of

[163] William Walsham How, *We Give Thee But Thine Own* (1858), vv. 1,2.

three major strands – *philanthropy, discipleship*, and *prosperity* - by which we talk about stewardship, contending that what is missing in each and every strand is the element of *grace* that might enable life-long giving and generosity. Vincent advocated on behalf of *first-fruits living*, within which one might be encouraged to *first-fruits giving*, adding "we can't not do it!" He further spoke to our need to share of the message of "generous God, generous life," as one that needs to be heard, stressing also the need for one-on-one encounters about faith and giving.[164]

Vincent expands upon this need for intentionality in talking about faith and giving in ***Celebrating God's Generosity: A Curriculum on Christian Beliefs About Money***. Arising from the basis of an earlier book, *A Christian View of Money*, it encourages participants to engage personally in dialogue regarding seven core beliefs about money as they relate to and inform our faith. Briefly, in order, these confront what we believe in regard to: **1.** "money's godlike strength"; **2.** our sharing of God's values; **3.** our use of money to communicate God's values; **4.** Jesus Christ, as the agent of salvation; **5.** "profound conversion"; **6.** "firstfruits living"; and **7.** the benefit of a church family. In prescribing that these beliefs originate within the three realms—of *Yahweh, the* Son, and *the Spirit*, by way of an illustration Vincent depicts their meeting within a region of grace.[165] My own experience of leading this study commends the process as being very productive, yet challenging, within a church culture that formerly had avoided this topic.

The tentative connection between faith and giving can be further defined in the context of the Presbyteries and congregations under study, taking into account statistical

---

[164] Mark Vincent, "The Giving Project" (notes from Plenary Workshop at the North American Stewardship Conference, Toronto ON, June 1999).
[165] Mark Vincent, *Celebrating God's Generosity: A Curriculum on Christian Beliefs About Money* (Waterloo: Herald Press, 1998), 3-15.

data from the 2000 Yearbook of The United Church of Canada. One comparison relevant to the present examination concerns the percentage of households under pastoral care that are represented as identifiable givers. In consideration of the two Presbyteries under study, on average Halton records 73% versus 61% for Dufferin-Peel, a rudimentary but nonetheless telling measure of giving.[166]

Robert Heerspink considers "what make givers tick" in the course of his work ***Becoming a Firstfruits Congregation***. He contends that "teaching stewardship to our parishioners is only half the battle," while the question of where and how to direct their givings remains to be addressed. Heerspink also confronts the refrain lamenting the lack of money such that often puts ministry and mission initiatives on hold, describing how money "becomes the tail that wags the dog," and observing that "*every* church tends to see itself living on the financial edge." He describes a tight relationship between money and mission, citing a similar observation of George Salstrand in description of the relationships between giving and vision, as well as missions and stewardship. Heerspink argues that, contrary to the assumption of most churches that mission follows money, the truth is that money follows mission, because "giving is part of our broader stewardship"—involving the gospel of Jesus Christ. He further states his conviction that "no church can expect to grow in giving if it is not growing in mission."[167] While it is no longer the routine practice in mainline traditions like The United Church of Canada to publish the recorded givings of individuals and families to the local church, it is still common to find in the Annual Report of many congregations a summary of the past year's givings

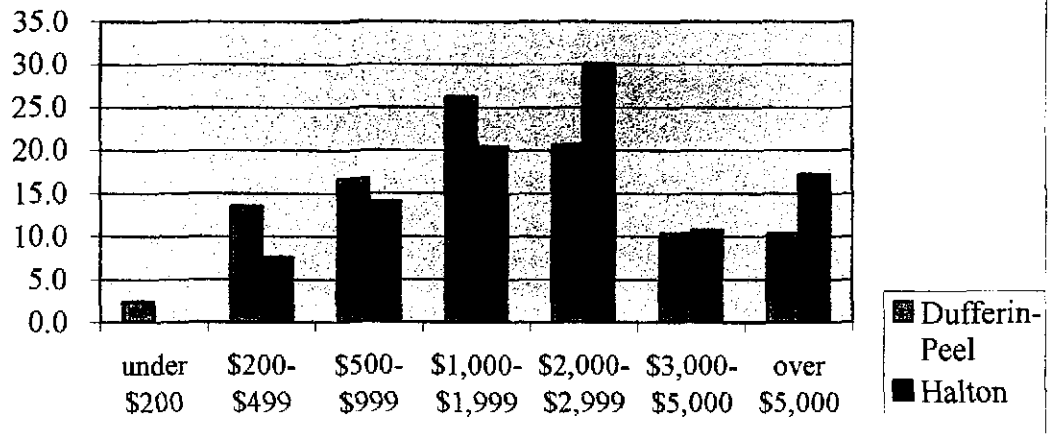
---

[166] The United Church of Canada, *Yearbook and Directory 2000, Volume I: Pastoral Charge Statistics*, 70-71, 90-91.

[167] Robert C. Heerspink, *Becoming a Firstfruits Congregation: A Stewardship Guide for Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1996), 75-78.

according to the amount given. While protecting the privacy and anonymity of donors, still such summaries provide a sense of how the financial support comes in. For example, knowing that five large donors of over $5,000 likely account for upwards of one-third of a small town congregation's finances, while forty of the remaining sixty identifiable donors give less than $500, gives insight into the amount for which the middle group is responsible. Therefore, it was with some anticipation that I looked forward to the question #19's response, as to what congregational leaders gave in terms of total annual charitable givings. Indeed, as shown in the graph (Figure 18) below, overall 13.2% responded as giving over $5,000, while 10.5% responded as giving $3,000-5,000. The two largest responses overall were for those giving $1,000-1,999 and $2,000-2,999 at 23.7% and 24.7% respectively. Breaking down by Presbytery, it is worth noting that the more affluent Halton reflected a higher 17.2% who gave over $5,000, as well as 30.4% who gave $2,000-2,999, while the less affluent Dufferin-Peel had a higher 26.2% who gave $1,000-1,999, as well as 13.5% who gave $200-499.

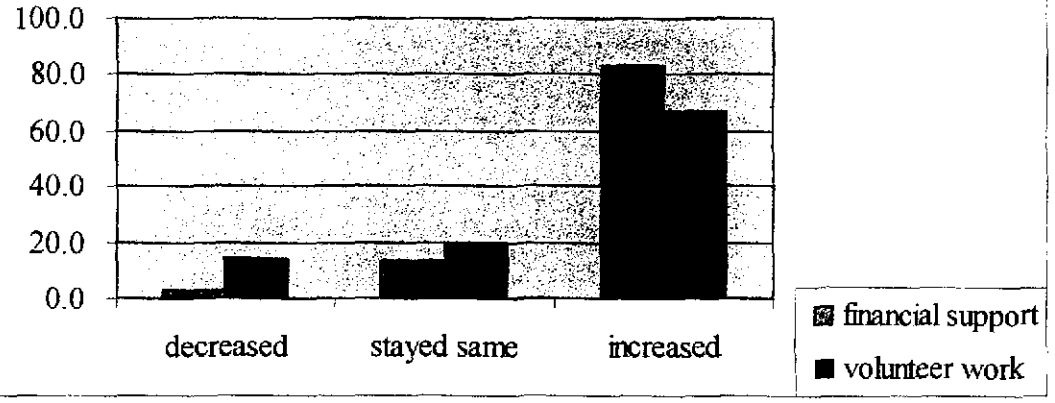
Figure 18: **Annual Charitable Givings**



Question 19. My stewardship was expressed financially in total annual charitable givings to all causes for 1999 of:

Another insight came in response to the combination of two questions #21 and 24, asking the congregational leaders if, first, their church-related financial support, and second, their time given to voluntary activities had *increased*, *decreased*, or *stayed the same* over the past five years. The graph (Figure 19) below shows that, overall, the largest response in both cases indicated an *increase*—noting a higher percentage with regard to the former (83.3%) over the latter (66.8%), while among a smaller response indicating a *decrease*, volunteer work registered 13.8%, compared to 3.0% for financial support. This confirms what many have suspected, concerning the inevitably declining base of volunteers, that reflects the growing prevalence—contended by many as necessity—of two income families, especially in the areas represented by this study that have a higher cost of living.

Figure 19: **Financial and Volunteer Support over past 5 years**
(Overall)



Question 21. Over the past five years the amount of my church-related financial support has:
Question 24. Over the past five years my time given to volunteer work has:

Earlier, I cited Dan Hotchkiss's article in which he identified three groups of givers: *practical givers*, *spiritual givers*, and *dues payers*. Similarly, responding to the rhetorical question of how we may bring "the concepts of faith and money into harmony,"

in **"Money Type and Giving", Robin Bullard Carter** asserts that how we respond depends on our primary "money type." She argues that one's type develops early in life, and determines whether one is comfortable or fearful, a saver or a spender, generous or miserly in regard to money. On this basis, she identifies five types as follows: 1. *mindless*, in avoiding and neglecting money matters; 2. *entitled*, in tending to take money for granted; 3. *balanced*, in maintaining a healthy respect and responsibility towards money; 4. *worriers*, in saving over spending out of concern for having enough; and 5. *obsessed*, in an extreme compulsion to always be prepared for the worst. While cautioning against necessarily characterizing any type as good or bad, Carter maintains it is important to know one's money type, as a means of understanding "how it affects (our) decisions and relationships," and evaluating if indeed we practice good stewardship.[168] Although the focus taken by Hotchkiss and Carter is somewhat different, the considerations they respectively bring to one's *motivations for giving* and *money type* are invaluable.

Linda-Marie Delloff recounts how, through their experience in confronting various challenges relating to faith and money, three congregations engaged in **"Rethinking Abundance."** Delloff refers to biblical examples, as well as our society's popular perception of abundance "in terms of money and purchases: houses, cars, clothing, electronic gadgets, entertainment." She contends that congregations must define and consider the implications of—unexpected as well as anticipated—abundance as it impacts its life and work. She turns to the first two cases, reflecting how, on one hand a natural disaster led a congregation known for its generosity to others to learn about "receiving help gratefully and graciously," while on the other hand a sizable bequest

[168] Robin Bullard Carter, "Money Type and Giving" In *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2001, 12-13.

enabled a congregation of modest means and goals to establish an endowment fund and pursue ministry initiatives. In consideration of the third case, she recalls an established congregation that, in midstream of a capital fundraising campaign, decided to "reexamine its values and priorities" on "how to be church," both inside and outside. Delloff maintains that, while each case reflects different circumstance and results, in all cases the realized abundance involved among other benefits "a recognition of diversity in member talent and a notable increase in lay leadership." In summary, she further asserts, all shared in "the realization that only one part of abundance has to do with financial resources," while rediscovering such a resolve to take initiative, that "constitutes an abundance for which most congregations yearn."[169]

Delloff's insights confirm what, for me, needs to be central in initiating and sustaining the development of a holistic stewardship focus in the context of the local community of faith. As I contemplate the possibility of establishing a church consulting practice directed towards stewardship and congregational development, I prescribe that the need to promote a culture of abundance, in counteracting the myth of scarcity, is of primary and fundamental importance. Likening such vital and essential work to carefully preparing the ground for planting, I hold that the church's prospects for a rich and bountiful harvest cannot help but be greatly enhanced by such attention and intentionality. Real and lasting abundance will result in all aspects of it life, as the church community embraces the full meaning of stewardship.

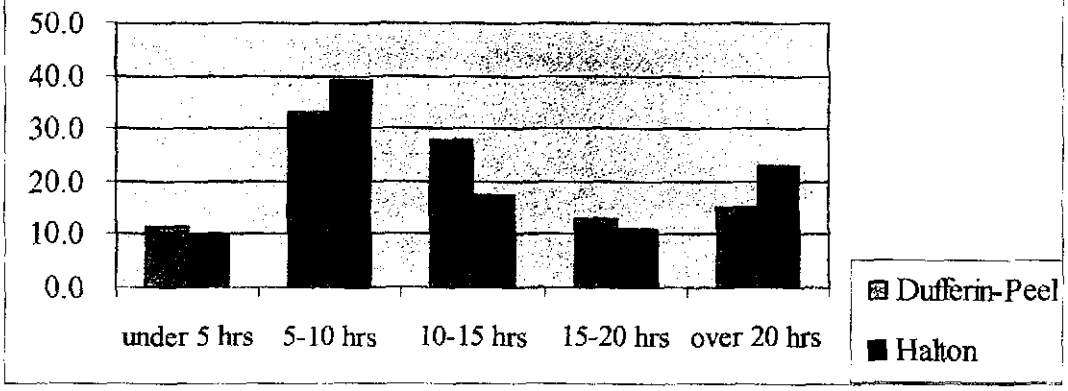
I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10:10b

---

[169] Linda-Marie Delloff, "Rethinking Abundance" In *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2001, 14-16, 27-28.

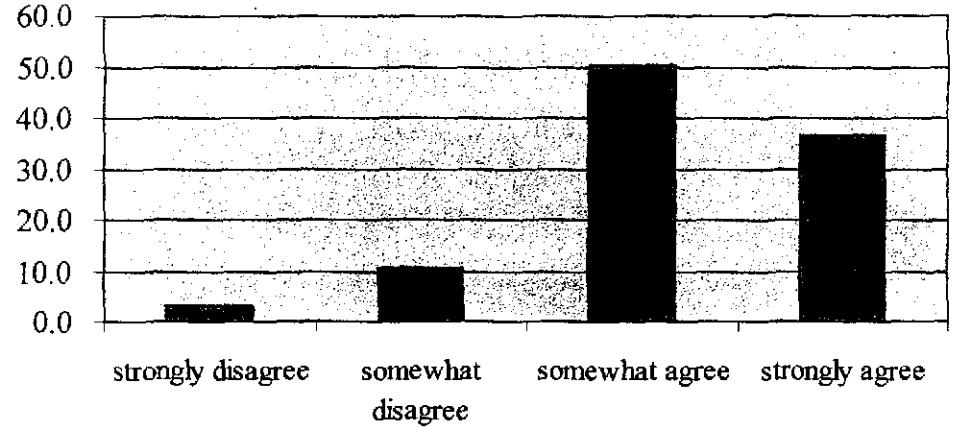
I have already briefly addressed volunteering as an expression of stewardship. In this regard respectively, the response to survey questions #22 and #60 is particularly relevant: the first, in regard to the number of hours given by leaders to voluntary work and service; and the second, in observation of whether the recruitment of volunteers gave serious consideration to the matching of gifts, talents, and abilities with the role and responsibility of the job/task at hand. The initial graph (Figure 20) below shows that, in regard to volunteer hours, overall, the predominant response was *5 -10 hours* with 35.6%, followed by *10 – 15 hours* with 23.6%. These same categories were reflected in similar responses from Dufferin-Peel, while in Halton the predominant response was *5 – 10 hours* with 39.1%, followed—somewhat unexpectedly—by *more than 20 hours* with 22.8%. In regard to the second question, concerning the matching of volunteers with the job, a further graph (Figure 21) below shows that, overall, 36.3% were *strongly agreed*, while 50.2% were *somewhat agreed.* A somewhat smaller gap between the two responses in Halton, with 40.6% and 47.9% respectively, I contend, suggests a perception—at least—that more care was exercised, so as not to just fill positions with "warm bodies."

Figure 20: **Monthly volunteer work**



Question 22. My stewardship is expressed through total regular monthly voluntary work and service of:

Figure 21: **Recruitment of volunteers based on gifts/talents** (Overall)

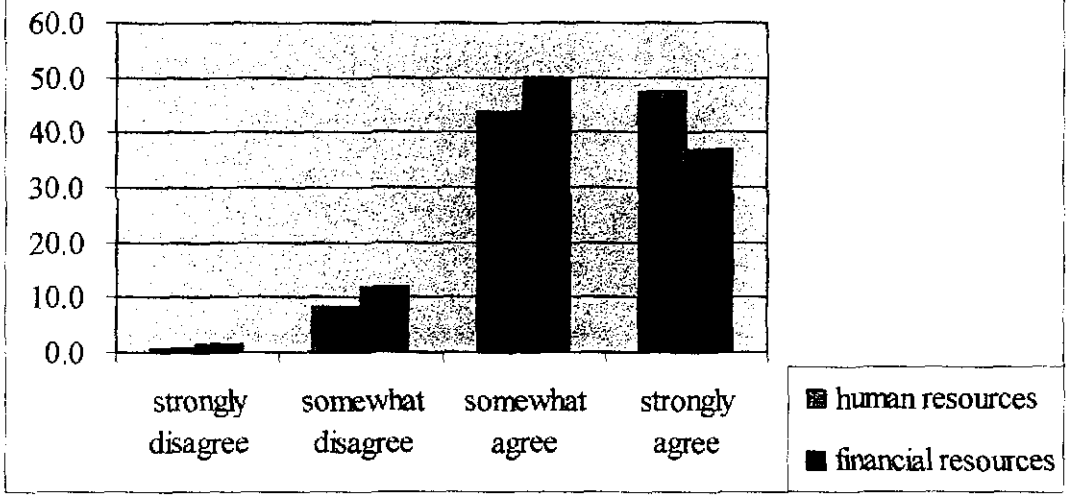


Question 60. In the congregation recruitment of volunteers involves seeking out specific gifts/talents/abilities in people and matching them with the job/task.

In ***Christian Voluntarism: Theology and Praxis***, **William Brackney** observes that, of a member's decision to become active in the church: "joining small groups, taking leadership roles, engaging in educational experiences, and being elected to positions of leadership are all voluntary processes." Brackney asserts that "participation in a local congregation . . . has become selectively voluntary," reflected in the reality that, given the competition for their limited time and interest, today people choose to become involved in a "limited number of religious experiences." He further observes, of congregational ministry, that it is facilitated by "preaching, worship, mission, pastoral care, and stewardship," led by ordered and lay leadership, and provides "a fertile field for the expression of Christian volunteerism." Brackney contends that the mission involvement of church members, both internally and externally, "represents a major arena of voluntary

participation," whether it arises of traditionally denominational or more recently parachurch origins.[170]

Figure 22: **Priority given to Children's and Youth Ministry (Overall)**



Question 42. Children's and youth ministry including Sunday/Church School are given priority in provision of: a) human resources b) financial resources

Earlier, I cited Anthony Robinson who, in an article "Seven Ways to a Healthier Church," maintains that worship and education should be given priority in contributing to congregational wellness. One area where, in my experience, the mainline church often encounters difficulty in "walking the talk" is that of intergenerational Christian Education/Development, especially as related to children's and youth ministry programs. On whether priority is given to providing such programs with sufficient human and financial resources, as shown by the graph (Figure 22) above, I contend that the response on the whole to question #42 is inadequate. The response to #42a, on the provision of human resources, of 47.2% *strongly agreed* and 43.8% *somewhat agreed* raises questions, given the ongoing struggles faced by many superintendents and Christian development

[170] William H. Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism: Theology and Praxis* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1997), 147-55.

coordinators to find persons willing to teach Sunday School or be a Youth Leader. In regard to #42b, on the provision of financial resources in keeping with the priority claimed for such programs, the response of 36.8% *strongly agreed* and 50.0% *somewhat agreed* speaks for itself. On both counts, I argue there is room for improvement, if the church is serious about the growth and nurture of faith in children and youth.

In regard to matters specific to stewardship, Robinson emphasizes that, while we commonly focus on the merits of giving, we need to acknowledge and foster the sense that we are also receivers of God's grace and new life in Christ. He maintains that, especially through the sacraments and other rituals, whereby we are reminded of God's gift of grace, we are better able to recognize ourselves as receivers who give—"as leaders who are themselves being led by God, by the Holy Spirit, by the living Christ." Robinson also asserts that churches must change both their concept and approach with regard to determining the budget. Citing the deficiencies of simply "making the budget" to imaginatively address the meaning and purpose of our ministry and mission, he asserts that churches "need to break with the pattern of letting the budget determine what is possible." To this end, Robinson commends the practice of developing and responding to *five-year plans*, such that leads to church budgets that "are built in response to mission and ministry goals." Further, he encourages giving consideration to the availability of the church's financial resources "as flowing in three streams: support of the annual operating budget, our planned giving and endowment program, and periodic capital drives."[171]

> **As for those who in this present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share, thus storing up**

[171] Robinson, "Seven Ways to a Healthier Church", 26-29.

> **for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.** II Timothy 6:17-19

In the concluding chapter of *The Steward Living in Covenant*, Vallet recalls what it means "to live as a steward in covenant with God," stressing that it involves the call to be an *alternative community* that "relentlessly pursues God's vision of and intent for a justice that is specific and concrete, subversive and uncompromising." In response, he asks how the contemporary church in North America compares, in light of declining participation and involvement, a financial—in essence, spiritual—crisis, and a yielding to cultural norms and values. Vallet contends that what is needed is for the church to transcend demands of the market and members to become "ministry-driven," living in covenant with God as an alternative community. He asserts that, as the church responds to God's vision and intention, indeed much-needed "divine reversals will occur by the power of God."[172]

Stewardship Beyond the Church

It is in response to God's call that we are called to an understanding and practice of stewardship that extends to all relationships and aspects of our lives, both individually and collectively. A holistic consideration of stewardship demands that it not be constrained nor restricted to the context and confines of activities within the congregation. Indeed, what happens outside in the wider community beyond the church doors, I argue, bears a more powerful and influential witness to the world of the faith community's belief and convictions.

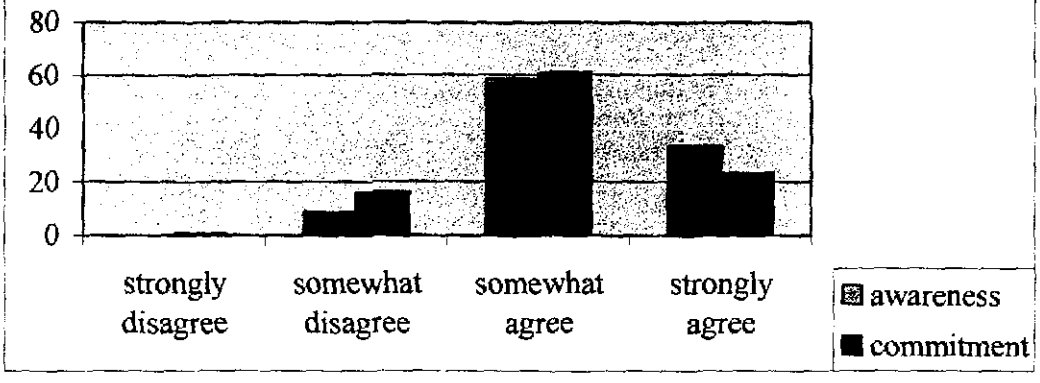
> **But if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.** Galatians 6:8b-10

---

[172] Vallet, *The Steward Living in Covenant*, 223-27.

Returning to the leadership survey, a sense of congregational stewardship beyond its immediate context can be gauged in the response to question #34, regarding the degree of a) awareness and b) commitment the congregation shares in common towards the fulfillment of its mission and purpose. Illustrated by the graph (Figure 23) below, overall there is a measurable difference in those responding as *strongly agreed* in regard to an awareness (33.3%) versus a commitment (23.0%). Indeed, regarding the degree of overall congregational commitment, a significant 15.9% responded as *somewhat disagreed.* Interestingly, a similarly-intended query in question #65, seeking to affirm whether "the congregation's stewardship is informed and motivated by the needs of its ministry and mission," reveals comparatively stronger results with 37.2% *strongly agreed* and 51.3% *somewhat agreed.* In my estimation, such a response indicates a "disconnect" in regard to the congregations' connection between stewardship and the church's wider mission.

Figure 23: **Congregational Awareness/Commitment to Common Mission and Purpose** (Overall)

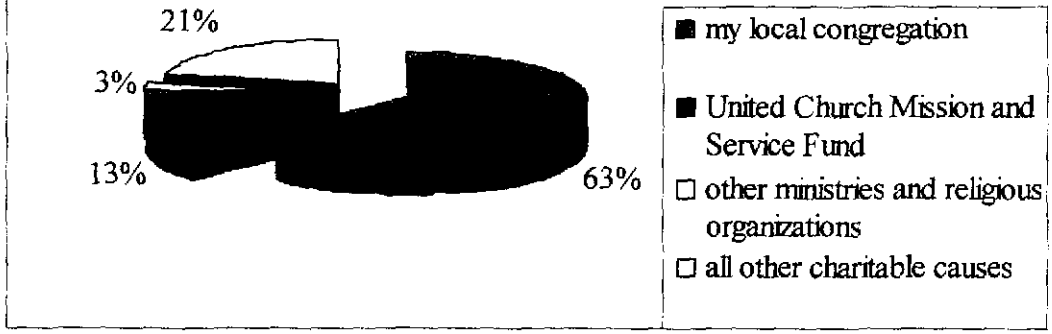


Question 34. Towards fulfillment of its mission and purpose, the congregation shares in common: a) an awareness b) a commitment

This less-than-satisfactory scenario is somewhat confirmed from the personal perspective of the congregational leaders themselves. In response to question #20, as to what percentage of peoples' total charitable givings supported different ministries and

charitable causes, as demonstrated by the graph (Figure 24) below, I can report the following findings. On average of respondents' responses, 63.2% of all givings went to the local congregation, while 12.9% went to the United Church Mission and Service Fund, and 2.6% went to *other* ministries. The remaining 21.4% reportedly went to other charitable causes. Interesting, the response is comparable to question #23, comparing the division of volunteer time between church work and activities (69%), and that devoted to other causes and activities in the wider community (30.4%). On balance, I found the givings results to be somewhat better than I had anticipated, perhaps reflecting the higher giving level expected of leaders. As an addendum to the survey results, from the 2000 Yearbook statistics, a comparison of Dufferin-Peel and Halton Presbyteries reveals that, on average, 53% and 65% respectively of local givers also are supporters to some extent of the wider church's Mission and Service Fund.[173]

Figure 24: **Total charitable givings** (Overall)



Question 20. As a percentage of my total charitable givings, in 1999 I estimate I gave: a) in support of my local congregation b) in support of the United Church Mission and Service Fund c) in support of other ministries and religious organizations d) in support of all other charitable causes

[173] The United Church of Canada, *Yearbook and Directory 2000, Volume I: Pastoral Charge Statistics*, 70-71, 90-91.

In regard to the subject of stewardship beyond the immediate context of the church, and the possibilities for raising both an awareness and commitment in addressing the wider responsibilities of stewardship, I return to the assignment in which I previously considered progressive and ongoing strategies to awaken and foster the local understanding and practice of stewardship as part of a "year-round congregational stewardship plan." While not exhaustive, these further programs, activities, projects, and events addressing "God's Mission to and for the World" represent a start towards expanding the scope of stewardship development in regard to the church's wider mission:

C. <u>GOD'S MISSION TO AND FOR THE WORLD</u>

- **"Ten Days for Global Justice"** - an annual Canadian ecumenical initiative (early February) raising the mission profile, it provides an opportunity for education, reflection and action - also an opportunity to bring in a missionary or other guest bringing a different perspective.
- **Advent/Lenten coin folders** - distributed to families prior to the start of Advent/Lent, it provides a focus and promotes awareness in support of a mission project or charitable cause.
- **Spring and Fall Cleaning** - semi-annual (May and October) *service evangelism* project providing for visibility and goodwill in the local community through assistance offered 'with a smile and a blessing' to seniors and others - provides an opportunity for youth and others to 'do a good deed' for a neighbour or stranger.
- **Denominational Anniversary** - celebrating our connections with the wider church.
- **Vacation Bible School** - sponsored alone or in co-operation with other churches (July/ August), it is a proven and highly visible community outreach.
- **Local/Global Craft Bazaar** - draws people from the community, also raising global awareness - timing coincides with possibilities for Christmas giving (November).
- **Christmas Cheer project** - determined annually by congregation, invites our giving of time, talents & treasure in the 'Christmas spirit' to a local cause/charity.
- **Mission Festivals** - opportunity to raise awareness and recruit interested volunteers in aid of local and global mission projects/programs.

Michele Hershberger, in ***A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises***, advocates on behalf of an expanded responsibility for stewards, one that challenges the church to engage in outreach that enables us to meet and love the stranger "as one who

brings the gift of hospitality" into our home.[174] Douglas Hall further addresses stewardship's rehabilitation and reintegration into the whole life of the church, encouraging a "spiritual, cultural and physical revolution" that might come to pass, through the reconsideration of the "radical character of this ancient metaphor," in light of the demands of this age. In the expansion of the concept by its *globalization, communalization, ecologization, politicization,* and *futurization*, he allows that the church that regards stewardship in such a manner might well encounter opposition, conflict and suffering - in effect responding to the call once again to be *the church.*[175]

It has been my frequent observation that, when confronted by a decision to choose between the ideals of one's faith and the secular values that are widely accepted by society as a whole, many eschew the demands of discipleship for an undemanding nominal belief. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer has described it, there is widespread tendency to opt for *cheap grace* over *costly grace*, such that fails to measure up to exemplary character of a steward in the biblical sense. In ***The Dancing Steward***, an exploration of stewardship lifestyles, **Christopher Levan** contrasts the popular attraction of bingo versus the hard work of encouraging people to attend a protest rally, speaking of our need as the church to develop a passion for expectancy in calling persons to stewardship as real and *living* hope.[176]

Levan further speaks to the stewardship parable *par excellence* in consideration of the "rich young ruler" (Luke 18:18-30), in comparison of his character and situation as a representative of his society with our own as the "privileged ones of North America." Power and wealth are pitted against the quest for meaning and immortality, calling him

---

[174] Michele Hershberger, *A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises* (Waterloo: Herald Press, 1999), 30-32.
[175] Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, 83-84.
[176] Christopher Levan, *The Dancing Steward: Exploring Christian Stewardship Lifestyles* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1993), 139-42.

and us to decide between earthly possessions and spiritual yearning.[177] This is reminiscent of M. Douglas Meek's reference, in *God: The Economist*, to stewardship and the "economy *par excellence*," in which he employs the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In it he contends that, it depicts a *resurrection household* for which the host yearns, in leading him to change and indeed break every rule that otherwise would appear to reflect "proper household management." Meeks allows that, given the tension between our understanding of the old household and its rules versus the new household God is building, many of us may well identify with the older son in being upset that such change is not fair. Nonetheless, like him, as stewards we are invited to dance in a new household that "strange and frightening but utterly joyful dance."[178]

In *Congregations at the Crossroads*, in summary of his proposed *household rules*, Vallet cites a common concern "for the poor, the oppressed, the vulnerable, and the stranger," such that reaches out beyond the members and immediate interests of household/congregation. He asserts that it is on this account, in its willingness to "take risks that the world will consider foolish," that a congregation may become a household of God.[179] The equation of an outward mission focus with a healthy understanding and practice of stewardship is a position, with which I heartily concur as reflecting God's will and intention for the church, and which I further encourage local communities of faith to adopt as, in the Spirit, they boldly engage the challenges and opportunities of living as God's stewards and Christ's disciples in the world.

---

[177] Levan, *The Dancing Steward*, 18-21.
[178] Meeks, *God the Economist*, 182-83.
[179] Vallet, *Congregations at the Crossroads*, 135.

Grant us God the grace of giving, with a spirit large and free,
That ourselves and all our living we may offer faithfully.[180]

[180] Anonymous, *Grant Us, God, the Grace of Giving.*

Chapter Six

THE CONCLUSION

In the "Introduction" to *Restless Gods*, Reginald Bibby advocates on behalf of evidence pointing to "a religious and spiritual renaissance," witnessed in new life both inside and outside traditional groups, "stirring in the churches and in the lives of average people." Bibby cites St. Augustine's *thesis*: "Our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee, O God," adding historian Arnold Toynbee's observation that maintains "the world 'is not limited to that part of it which is accessible to the senses . . . ,'" in asserting that the reason for our present restlessness may well lie in the fact Something is indeed pursuing us. To this end, he recalls the written word as found at the onset of the Bible:

> **In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void: And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.** Genesis 1:1-2[181]

Bibby raises such questions of meaning and purpose, such that he remarks "only the Gods can answer," in asserting that the overwhelming majority of Canadians raise these "ultimate questions" in the course of their living. Citing commentator Tom Harpur's observation that "there are more and more people outside the church who are deeply searching for a center to their life beyond the shopping mall," in turn he concurs with another commentator Doug Todd that the "real spiritual story" is not about the religious or philosophical tradition to which we belong, but "about how we cobble together meaning in our lives." This, Bibby maintains, will be of highest priority for both individuals and society, as we continue to seek answers to our deepest questions, and a window of

---

[181] Bibby, *Restless Gods*, 4-5.

opportunity for churches to connect with the needs of the people.[182] Whether churches will respond is another, highly-debatable, question. My own ministry experience within a mainline tradition that, caught up in set traditions and familiar ways of "being church," more often than not adopts change "kicking and screaming," forewarns that a positive response to even a "win-win" opportunity is far from certain. Unfortunately, some seemingly would rather die than change.

The subject of stewardship has been at the forefront of consideration by the church for more than twenty years. Numerous works have sought to address its many facets and dimensions, from theological and biblical aspects to financial, motivational, and missional considerations. Some have dealt with the subject in a general fashion, well-suited to the aims of stewardship education and development in the context of the wider church. Others, as is the focus of my thesis, have been directed towards matters of particular consequence to congregational stewardship, equipping and enabling local communities of faith. Early in my studies, preliminary research into the subject of stewardship, and that of congregational stewardship in particular, led me to the work of others who have shared a common passion in this regard. Their work is cited over the course of the thesis, as well as acknowledged in the bibliography, in appreciation for both their contribution and intention to promote a wider understanding and practice of stewardship. Among such work, I would presently like to briefly credit those who, in the course of their Doctor of Ministry theses, have covered similar ground.

---

[182] Bibby, *Restless Gods*, 93-94.

Examining stewardship development in the context of an individual/personal perspective, Michael Borko, in "Christian Formation and Re-Formation,"[183] looks at how stewardship and giving patterns are set by early life experience, while Dennis Ritter, in "Learning Biblical Concepts of Stewardship for Living,"[184] advocates on behalf of a four-fold biblical understanding of stewardship. Additionally, attention is turned to the collective focus of stewardship within the congregation as a whole by James Bryan in "Raising the Ebenezer of a Small Church . . .,"[185] and Donald Snyder in "Developing a Comprehensive Congregational Stewardship Program . . ."[186] Finally, David Dethmers in "Teaching Christian Stewardship in a Parish Context,"[187] and Victoria Parrish in "Hanging On by Our Fingernails . . ."[188] challenge the "survival mentality" besetting many struggling churches.

I lamented, at the onset of this thesis, what I feel represents an inexplicably pessimistic and self-defeating approach taken by my denomination, The United Church of Canada, over much of the past twenty years. Indeed, I have been frustrated at times, as a passionate proponent of stewardship, by the negative aura that undermines efforts to create a climate for stewardship and giving, and sows the seeds not of hope but despair, pouring cold water upon the dreams and visions—indeed, the very possibility—of a strong

---

[183] Michael Borko, "Christian Formation and Re-Formation" (D.Min. thesis, Lancaster Theological Seminary, 1996).
[184] Dennis S. Ritter, "Learning Biblical Concepts of Stewardship for Living" (D.Min. thesis, Drew University, 1984).
[185] James Lawson Bryan, "Raising the Ebenezer of a Small Church: The Reawakening of Purpose and Mission for a Small Church" (D.Min. thesis, Drew University, 1986).
[186] Donald James Snyder, "Developing a Comprehensive Congregational Stewardship Program in the United Methodist Church in Quinter, Kansas" (D.Min. thesis, Drew University, 1982).
[187] David Glynn Dethmers, "Teaching Christian Stewardship in a Parish Context" (D.Min. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983).
[188] Victoria Ann Wood Parrish, "Hanging On by Our Fingernails: Analysing Chronic Failure and Survival of a Congregation" (D.Min. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1992).

and growing church. It seems, at times, that some would rather see the church fail than succeed. Yet, I have persevered, because I continue to believe in the church and in its call to be a beacon of light in a broken and hurting world, holding fast to the conviction that, God willing, the church not only has a future to engage, but it is destined to play an important role in that future.

Indeed, this conviction is shared by many, including **Barbara Hargrove** who observed some twenty-five years ago, "the church serves as a symbol of the coming future." Hargrove asserts that the church sees, not only the past our culture recognizes, "but also the hand of a transcendent God" who has moved and continues to move to "indicate a future reality towards which we may move." She maintains that, as a community, the church is called to express that future in its quality of life.[189] I similarly contend that God's activity is expressed in the presence of the Spirit, calling us as live in covenant as stewards within a community of faith.

Distinguishing between "new and adapting congregations" and those "merely holding their own or declining," Nancy Ammerman identifies the former as those who—in their utilization of available resources, decision-making, and internal cultures—are "good candidates for survival," as opposed to those who—unable or unwilling to envision and respond positively to change—are "part of the cycle of organizational decline and death."[190] It is my view that there are too many of the latter, those for which to consider the future, unfortunately, is "to look through a glass darkly." In *Future Faith Churches*, Don Posterski and Gary Nelson argue that, in order to become revitalized and "vibrant

[189] Barbara Hargrove, "The Church as the Coming Future," *Theology Today*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 243.
[190] Ammerman. *Congregation and Community*, 321-23.

with the presence of God," churches seeking to grow must develop "a clear religious identity, a compelling religious purpose, and a coherent sense of direction." They maintain that, rather than participating in their own demise by giving up their distinctiveness, vital congregations will "celebrate the spiritual and religious purpose of the church" that provides a "fertile ground" for spiritual exploration where people may find God and know Christ.[191]

Jurgen Moltmann similarly contends that, by living in covenant with our "passionate God," our whole life stands to be shaped by sympathy and compassion, being at one with God's suffering and rejoicing over the world. He argues that only in grasping the "passionate devotion" of God in Christ can we rediscover our own heart's passion, asserting that such passion is awakened in us through God in Christ becoming human and relating to humanity in love.[192] Yet Moltmann maintains that, resulting of the pieties of transcendence and solidarity, the Christian lifestyle is a creation of the Spirit in which our rebirth foreshows that of the world. Of our role and responsibility, he asserts that we are witnesses—"of the gospel, (and) of the love and the freedom of Christ"—who are called to live "messianically."[193]

Citing once again an opening statement from this thesis, from the time I decided to engage in the Doctor of Ministry program, I have been of "the conviction that one occasionally needs to step back from what is considered conventional and orthodox in order to discern the unconventional and unorthodox leading of the Spirit." It seems to me

---

[191] Don Posterski and Gary Nelson, *Future Faith Churches: Reconnecting with the Power of the Gospel for the 21st Century* (Winfield: Wood Lake Books, 1997), 198-200.
[192] Moltmann, *The Passion for Life*, 23-26.
[193] Moltmann, *The Passion for Life*, 48-49.

that, both in the approach I have taken, and in the many *epiphanies* along the way, what I have learned and hopefully shared over the course of this examination reflects the enriching and exciting possibilities that living in the presence of the Spirit offers us, both individually and collectively as the church.

What I have set forth, drawing upon not only historical and theological, but also ecclesiastical and sociological perspectives, over the course of this thesis is a template of what the church can and must be. Only as the church engages in it life and work, not as a venerable institution but as a vibrant community of faith, can it experience the dwelling of the Spirit. Only, as the followers and disciples of Christ, seeking to fulfill our role and responsibility as faithful stewards, honouring the past, living in present, and witnessing to the future, will we embody the working of the Spirit.

It is my contention that such a transformation must begin in the context of the local congregation—be it a small, rural "family/parish church" or a large, urban "corporate church." As we engage in the makeover of our congregations into communities of faith, attention must be given to developing relationships and a sense of identity, through the realization of what we hold in common as shared experience—as expressed by our beliefs, values, stories, and worldview, as well as celebrating the diversity that brings energy, enthusiasm, vim and vigour to our life together through our God-given gifts and talents. As an affirmation of faith, "The New Creed" of The United Church of Canada expresses such sentiment in a contemporary and relevant manner:

> We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God:
> who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus,
> the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works
> in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God.

> We are called to be the Church:
> to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation,
> to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil,
> to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.
> In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
> We are not alone. Thanks be to God.[194]

It is also my contention that the practice of stewardship, such that involves all of life, must be central to the life and work of the church, in both its local and wider contexts. Conversion to a stewardship lifestyle must be part of the individual's initiation into the community of faith, such that is reinforced in an ongoing call to remember "who we are" and "whose we are," as well as in the expectation of living responsibly for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. In the Spirit and in community, stewardship comes alive; the burden is lifted and joy enters in. In such an environment, I maintain, faithfulness comes naturally and hope abounds.

In a follow-up to *Jacob's Blessing*, Donna Sinclair and Christopher White offer "an encounter with hope," sharing of twelve congregational prototypes in ***Emmaus Road: Churches Making Their Way Forward***. The one prototype that, for me, stands out is *the visionary congregation*, its purpose described as "building for others." In depicting the Emmaus Road as a story of resurrection, White also cites it as a story of the unexpected, of change, and of vision. He asserts "the disciples' encounter with the risen Christ transformed not only their hearts, but their very existence," that as a story it shows "how God supports us through times of tumultuous and even unwelcome change." He contends that, while for many years mainline churches have focused on survival issues—looking inward and forgetting their mission to the wider community—and seeming only to "have

---

[194] The General Council, The United Church of Canada, "A New Creed" (1968, 1998).

become expert at closing churches." White hopefully speculates that "perhaps, like the disciples on the Emmaus Road, a radical re-visioning lies before us."[195]

I have similarly maintained throughout this thesis that, as supported by the findings of the congregational leadership survey, for the most part, the current state of affairs within local congregations is far from satisfactory. Indeed, I contend that, unchecked and unchallenged, it represents a "dead end" in terms of a viable and faithful direction for the future. The need for change and for vision cannot wait any longer. The subject of stewardship must be accorded paramount importance in the life and work of the local church, if indeed they are to fulfill their ministry and mission in response to God's call to be communities of faith. With extraordinary openness to the presence of the Spirit, *dwelling* and *working* though the followers of Christ, both individually and collectively, the subject of stewardship must be addressed holistically and with a "religious fervour," involving all aspects and expressions of what it means to be the church. I argue that in the presence of the Spirit, all aspects of life and ministry within the congregation, must be reckoned as stewardship-related. A concern for the practice of vital, healthy, and faithful stewardship must be intricately interwoven with the ongoing attention accorded to the growth and nurture of identity and relationships within the church. In the development of a vision, as well as the setting of goals and objectives, which give direction to its ministry and mission, as realized through its programs, activities, and groups, I believe and trust that the Spirit can make all things possible.

---

[195] Donna Sinclair and Christopher White, *Emmaus Road: Churches Making Their Way Forward* (Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 2003), 145-46.

Some twenty-five years ago, Wade Clark Roof offered four predictions on the prospects for liberal American Protestantism. Roof foresaw that, despite the prospect of further declines, such churches would prevail as "cognitive-minority institutions," such consciousness leading to the strengthening of "communal ties." In this context of a downsized church, Roof also predicted a shift to a traditional and local outlook reflecting more conservative attitudes and values, inevitably leading to a potential conflict over controversial issues with "both the clergy and progressive-minded laity committed to liberal concerns."[196]

Addressing the contemporary Canadian context, Bibby allows that over a period of some thirty years the "Mainline Protestant *religious family*"—including United Church, Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran (ELC) denominations—witnessed a numerical decline from 41% in 1961 to 21% in 1991, in terms of those Canadians who so identified/affiliated themselves, the statistical impact of which was somewhat softened by population growth. A source of even greater concern, according to Bibby, was the decline over a similar period in weekly worship attendance, falling from 35% in 1955 to 25% in 1975 and 15% in 1990. In real numbers, he observes, this amounted to a significant drop in *mainliners* attending church regularly from 2.6 million to under a million. However, he sounds a hopeful tone, in that over the past decade the slide has halted, citing it as "an extremely important development," especially in light of a general increase in attendance and involvement among young adults—under age 35. Such evidence pointing to "considerable life among the remnants, including younger people," leads Bibby to reverse

[196] Roof. *Community and Commitment*, 214-17.

his earlier assessment, in expressing that "rumours of the death of Mainline Protestantism in Canada appear to have been greatly exaggerated."[197] Despite their failures and shortcomings over this period, Bibby asserts that their history and resources have afforded them the opportunity to regroup and renew. Bibby cites research by Rodney Stark and others, that holds out hope for rejuvenation of established religious organizations, within the Canadian context and focus of his study, maintaining that the name-brand credibility and loyalty among affiliates of major denominations ensures that "it will only be a matter of time before they experience rejuvenation."[198] Tempering Bibby's optimism in regard to this present "window of opportunity," given the church's penchant for "pessimistic realism," as well as its procrastination in regard to adapting willingly to changed circumstances, I am compelled to express real concern that we not squander this considerable—but fleeting—opportunity to turn things around. The urgency of taking action without further delay alludes to a couple further clichés, with apologies extended for those adverse to their overuse, even fittingly. One is that, when all is said and done, you still have to walk through an "open door" to enter a room. The second, which emphasizes the importance of now, is that "time does not stand still."

Jurgen Moltmann, in **The Church in the Power of the Spirit**, seeks to explore the concept of one's being *born again to a Living Hope*, asserting that in a baptismal context it should be understood "eschatologically" in terms of the renewal and rebirth of the world. In leading the individual's orientation from self-concern towards the new creation, he asserts that one's life "in the presence of the Spirit" becomes new, and that as

---

[197] Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, 74-78.
[198] Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*, 66-70.

a result effectively "the Messiah takes form in the individual and in the community, in the soul and in the body."[199] In an article **"Stewards of Hope," Paul Rademacher** notes that as a verb *hope* represents more than a wish or desire, expressing a certain confidence and expectation, such as characterized and shaped the early Christian community. Contending that "implicit in the confidence of expectation is the reference to a source or ground for hope," he also asserts that, characteristically, such hope is objectively focused upon a specific goal or condition. Rademacher cites as its "heroic dimension" the power of hope to motivate, encourage, and sustain in varied situations and circumstances, such as he maintains defines and gives meaning to life itself. Describing hope as "a strange, strange paradox that persists in spite of itself," he contends that indeed it does make a difference in our lives and in the unfolding of the universe.[200]

> **There's a spirit in the air, telling Christians everywhere:**
> **"Praise the love that Christ revealed, living, working in our world."**
> **Still the Spirit gives us light, seeing wrong and setting right:**
> **God in Christ has come to stay. Live tomorrow's life today!**[201]

Indeed, Joseph Suenens affirms the importance of maintaining an abiding and steadfast hope in the Spirit, such as serves as a source of encouragement in sustaining the church, as well as dispelling the pervasive mood of pessimism that might otherwise take hold.[202] The apostle Paul's understanding of the congregation is described by Moltmann as "the place where the Spirit manifests itself in an overflowing wealth of spiritual powers," and where in messianic expectation "the whole people of God will be filled by

---

[199] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 278-80.
[200] Paul G. Rademacher, "Stewards of Hope" in *Teaching and Preaching Stewardship: An Anthology*, 24-26.
[201] Brian Wren, "There's a Spirit in the Air" (Hope Publishing Co., 1969), vv. 1, 4.
[202] Suenens, *A New Pentecost?*, ix-x.

the living and creating power of God." Indeed he contends it was in light of its experience of a "messianic Spirit" that the early church regarded itself as "the creation of the Spirit," who called it into life and gave it "the authority for its mission."[203] Similarly, Walter Bruggemann maintains that "together in the Spirit" the church today must move beyond tensions between *evangelism* and *social action* to "rethink mission in a post-Christian society." In the church's resubmission to the power of the Spirit, he asserts that in our response to the offer of a *new baptismal identity* we are afforded "a chance for an alternative life in the world."[204] This is also my hope and my prayer for the future of the church—most especially The United Church of Canada—that in the Spirit we may rediscover our role and responsibility, as well as identity, as stewards of God's reign as proclaimed in the Gospel. May it be so! Amen.

[203] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*, 294.
[204] Bruggemann, *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, 29-31.

Chapter Seven

AN EPILOGUE

"What we see depends mainly on what we look for – Seek out the positive and you'll find it." *from a Chinese fortune cookie

From the onset, I have advocated that "positive thinking"—far from being a simplistic and discredited mantra unsuited to the discipline of theological inquiry—can be taken seriously, if indeed considered in light of the presence of the Spirit. It is just such a context to which I owe everything to seeking out the positive in faith, especially as I have traveled a long and winding road, marked by unexpected curves and its share of potholes. Since beginning the Doctor of Ministry programme in September 1998, I have experienced disappointment and disillusionment in my ministry, marked by the premature ending of two pastoral relationships. The second setback, while leading to my decision to leave pastoral ministry for a time, in order that I might respond to the calling of the Spirit in discerning my ministry's future nature and direction, did afford me an opportunity to dedicate myself more fully to the completion of this thesis. In anticipation and contemplation of embarking into the field of church consulting—at least part-time, I consider what I have learnt, not only in the course of my studies and ministry so far, but also as regards continuing to believe and trust in God in good times and bad, to be prescriptive in preparation for the important role God has revealed to me. With energy and enthusiasm, passion and integrity, I welcome this opportunity of encouraging and motivating congregational openness to the possibilities of life in the Spirit, in their life and work, and in their practice of stewardship.

Betsy Schwarzentraub speaks of the need for "spirit-ed stewardship for a new century" in ***Afire with God***. She describes the congregation as a "living organism," asserting that, in the form of "interlacing teams," local churches are "part of a continually changing, interdependent system," and that "our ministry is based not on programs but on the activity of God in peoples' lives."[205] This bears a striking similarity to a contention I have made that ministry and stewardship is more than programs. Observing that historically the subject of the Holy Spirit has not been frequently raised in the mainline western church, Schwarzentraub rhetorically asks "what if we took the Spirit seriously, as a real Presence, as the fullness of God's present activity and active presence with us." She responds, asserting that such consideration results in what she describes as "Spirit-ed ministry," leading to a changed sense of both our identity and our ministry. Closely related to our ministry, she describes "Spirit-ed stewardship" as "a living process of growth in both our personal and corporate relationship to God," helping to change our activities as individuals and to transform "each local church into a community of stewards who seek multiple ways to express God's grace in advocacy and action." She further maintains that Spirit-ed stewardship "interweaves Christian identity and ministry in our personal faith journeys and in our congregational community life," challenging us every day to live out our covenant.[206] Indeed, I concur enthusiastically with Schwarzentraub's position as one akin to my own, linking the practice of stewardship to the activity of the Spirit. I further agree in principle and by conviction, that the same Spirit which informs our stewardship is actively involved in both our personal faith journeys and our

---

[205] Betsy Schwarzentraub. *Afire with God:Spirit-ed Stewardship for a New Century* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000), 20.
[206] Schwarzentraub. *Afire with God*, 21-22.

congregational community life. As I implied earlier, such a statement of understanding gives renewed meaning to the phrase "trusting in the Spirit."

Drawing to her conclusion, Schwarzentraub encourages us to embark on a stewardship journey as God's people, such that she describes is not unlike that of Moses' people in the wilderness. Citing Walter Brueggemann's observation that North American Christians are confronted by the pervasive influence of consumerism that "presents a conflict between our attraction to the good news of God's abundance on one hand, and the power of our belief in scarcity on the other hand," she describes the situation as one of living "in a smoldering wilderness filled with burning bushes," all of which God has lit in hope that we'll notice one. She challenges us to choose between continuing to accept society's promotion of the myth of scarcity and trusting in the abundance and wealth of resources God has already given us. Maintaining that ultimately Spirit-ed stewardship can teach and enable us to set our world "afire with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Schwarzentraub encourages us that, as a faithful people, "we need only follow the Spirit, then fan the flames."[207]

The challenge, I agree, is daunting, yet as a faithful people it is one to which we must rise up and meet head-on. Like Moses, we too might feel ill-equipped to take the leadership role that can set a people free. Yet God knows that, like Moses, we are more than capable, if only we are willing to trust in the Spirit, leading us towards the *promised land* flowing with milk and honey. My hope and prayer being that, encouraged by the Spirit, local communities of faith more consistently may embody the ideals of generosity

[207] Schwarzentraub. *Afire with God*, 83-85.

and abundant life associated with the stewardship lifestyle, I am reminded of a recent theme promoting The United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund, inviting potential givers to embrace "thankful living, grateful giving."

In much the same way as this thesis began, citing a children's story in order to illustrate the premise that had led me to the exploration of the thesis' subject, so in this epilogue, I have chosen a story, found in **Kahil Gibran's *The Prophet***, to put a wrap on this endeavour. Simply entitled, "On Giving," it speaks to the importance of a gracious and generous spirit.

THEN said a rich man, "Speak to us of Giving." And he answered:
"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. For what are your possessions but things you keep and guard for fear you may need them tomorrow? And tomorrow, what shall tomorrow bring to the over prudent dog burying bones in the trackless sand as he follows the pilgrims to the holy city? And what is fear of need but need itself? Is not dread of thirst when your well is full, the thirst that is unquenchable? There are those who give little of the much which they have—and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome. And there are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty. There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward. And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism. And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy, nor give with mindfulness of virtue; They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space. Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth. It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding; And to the open-handed the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving. All you have shall some day be given; Therefore give now, that the season of giving may be yours and not your inheritors'.

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving." The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish. Surely he who is worthy to receive his days and his nights, is worthy of all else from you. And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream. And what desert greater shall there be, than that which lies in the courage and the confidence, nay the charity, of receiving? And who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride, that you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed? See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving. For in truth it is life that gives unto life—while you, who deem yourself a giver, are but a witness. And you receivers—and you are all receivers—assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives. Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings; For to be overmindful of your debt, is to doubt his generosity who has the freehearted earth for mother, and God for father.[208]

---

[208] Kahil Gibran. *The Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923, 1996), 19-22.

APPENDIX A

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE, PARTICIPANT CHURCHES, SURVEYS SENT/RETURNED

I. Template - Cover Letter

258 McDonald Blvd.
Acton ON L7J 2R9
519-853-5029 (home)
matton@aztec-net.com

September 27, 2000

I write you as a student in the Doctor of Ministry programme at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton. Having earlier sought and received permission from Dufferin-Peel/ Halton Presbytery to contact you on this matter, the purpose of this letter is to request of your willingness to participate in a survey relevant to my 'project thesis' research.

My current enrollment in D.Min. studies is a consequence of a growing personal interest in stewardship education, as reflected through my involvement in the life and work of the wider United Church. Concerned in that I believe it represents a subject of critical importance to the church's continuing ability to engage in ministry and mission, I also believe that stewardship can most effectively be addressed beginning in the context of the local congregation.

Regarding the particulars of this survey, my intention is to engage persons, who serving in positions of leadership, may provide valuable insight into the dynamics of their local church as well as its understanding and practice of stewardship. To this end, each consenting congregation/pastoral charge will be sent a survey package, being asked in turn to distribute questionnaires involving up to **thirty (30)** persons. It is suggested that, in addition to members of the Official Board/Church Council, other leaders representative of the diversity of your church family might be invited to participate, as determined by you. Upon their completion, within **seven (7)** days of distribution all questionnaires would be returned to the local person responsible for mailing them to me in the envelope provided in the package.

Please read the attached 'information letter' for further details pertaining to this research project. Please bring this request to the attention of your Official Board or its executive as soon as possible, replying as to your consent and willingness to participate by mail, fax, or email no later than **October 25, 2000**. Your prompt attention in this regard will enable me to assemble and mail out survey packages to participating congregations without delay.

Peace and blessings,

The Rev. Robert Matton

II. Participant Churches, Surveys Sent/Returned

Participant Churches	Sent/Returned	Date Returned
Trinity United Church P.O. Box 18 Acton ON L7J 2M2 519-853-2090	25/20	Jan. 29/01
Alton-Caledon Past. Charge P.O. Box 196 Caledon ON L0N 1C0 519-927-5096	22/10	Mar. 7/01
Emmanuel United Church 420 Balmoral Drive Brampton ON L6T 1V9 905-792-3269	25/12	Feb. 20/01
St. Paul's United Church 30 Main Street South Brampton ON L6W 2C4 905-451-1405	30/14	Feb.1/01
Erin United Church P.O. Box 463 Erin ON N0B 1T0 519-833-9727	22/15	Jan. 15/01
St. Andrew's-Ballinafad P.C. 89 Mountainview Road South Georgetown ON L7G 4T9 905-877-4482	25/20	Jan. 19/01
St John's United Church 11 Guelph Street Georgetown ON L7G 3Z1 905-877-2531	30/9	Jan. 23/01
Norval United Church P.O. Box 116 Norval ON L0P 1K0 905-877-6122	25/20	Jan. 29/01
Westminster United Church P.O. Box 34 Orangeville ON L9W 2Z5 519-941-0381	26/22	Jan. 23/01

Appleby United Church 4407 Spruce Avenue Burlington ON L7L 1L9 905-637-2942	30/6	Feb. 19/01
Cooksville United Church 2500 Mimosa Row Mississauga ON L5B 1P7 905-277-2338	20/11	Jan. 29/01
Erin Mills United Church 3010 The Collegeway Mississauga ON L5L 4X9 905-820-9466	30/4	Jan. 30/01
St. Stephen's-On-The-Hill U.C. 998 Indian Road Mississauga ON L5H 1R5 905-278-9245	25/15	Jan. 24/01
Westminster United Church 4094 Tomken Road Mississauga ON L4W 1J5 905-273-9505	25/9	Jan. 30/01
Glen Abbey United Church 1469 Nottinghill Gate Oakville ON L6M 1X7 905-825-5292	30/12	Jan. 28/01
Maple Grove United Church 346 Maple Grove Drive Oakville ON L6J 4V5 905-845-5721	30/9	Mar.12/01
St. John's United Church 262 Randall Street Oakville ON L6J 1P9 905-845-0551	30/9	Feb. 27/01
Nelson-Palermo Past. Charge 2521 Dundas Street West Oakville ON L6J 4Z3 905-827-0530	25/12	Jan. 22/01
Tansley United Church 2111 Walkers Line - R.R. #2 Burlington ON L7R 3X5 905-319-0049	30/9	Jan. 26/01

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON CONGREGATIONAL DYNAMICS/THE PRACTICE OF STEWARDSHIP

Thank-you for your participation in this survey. As a component of my thesis research, your response will be of great assistance towards the goal of building healthy congregations.

The Rev. Robert Matton, D.Min. candidate
McMaster University, Hamilton - Jan. 2001

DEMOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION - The purpose of these preliminary questions is to group respondents, allowing for demographic analysis of the substantive results. Be assured that your answers are confidential and will be employed in aggregate with those of other respondents.

1. Gender — Male___ Female___

2. Age — under 25___ 25-39___ 40-54___
55-70___ over 70___ No Response___

3. Marital Status — Never Married___ Married___ Separated___
Divorced___ Widowed___ No Response___

4. Highest Level of Education (completed) — Elementary___ Secondary___ College___
University___ Post-Graduate___
No Response ___

5. Present Employment Status — Full-time___ Part-time___ Self-employed___
Work-at-home___ Full-time Student___
Retired___ Unemployed___ No Response___
Kilometres from home-to-work____

6. Family/Household Income in 1999 (before taxes) — under $20,000___ $20-39,000___
$40-59,000___ $60-79,000___ $80-99,000___
over $100,000___ No Response___

7. Primary Place of Residence — Own___ Rent___ No Response___
Years at present address____

8. Association with Present Congregation — under 5 years___ 5-10___ 10-15___
15-20___ 20-25___ over 25 years___

9. Association with United Church of Canada — under 5___ 5-10___ 10-15___
15-20___ 20-25___ over 25___

10. Of the following, identify your primary sources of news and information, ranking your **'top five'** from **1** to **5**.

Newspaper___ Magazine___ Books___
TV___ Radio___ Phone___ Internet___
Professional Journal/Publication___
Church/Faith-related source___
Household flyer___ Other_____

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE - Next, in providing a necessary context towards the analysis of your observations and evaluations of the congregation as a whole, it would be helpful to understand your own perspective as a congregational leader.

11. Each of us looks to the church in terms of our particular expectations, interests and preferences, leading us to give a priority to certain activities that define for us the purpose of the ministry and mission of the **A. local church** and **B. wider church**, as well as our **C. personal calling** to involvement. Under <u>each</u> category rank the following activities as a **H**igh, **M**edium, or **L**ow priority:

	A.	**B.**	**C.**
a) Worship services and spiritual growth experiences	____	____	____
b) Christian education and development for all ages	____	____	____
c) Pastoral care, counselling, support	____	____	____
d) Attention to local fellowship and community	____	____	____
e) Ecumenical relations with other denominations/faiths	____	____	____
f) Local Mission & Outreach work	____	____	____
g) National/Global Mission work	____	____	____
h) Advocacy/Education on social/economic justice issues . . .	____	____	____
i) Evangelism & Christian Witness to wider society	____	____	____

12. As a follower of Jesus Christ with which of the following do you identify most strongly?

Local Congregation____
United Church of Canada____
Both Equally____ Neither____

	Strongly Agree	**Somewhat Agree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
13. On the whole I would affirm and support the local congregation's:				
a) moral understandings	____	____	____	____
b) theological position	____	____	____	____
14. On the whole I would affirm and support the United Church of Canada's:				
a) moral understandings	____	____	____	____
b) theological position	____	____	____	____
15. a) Over the past five years my 'spiritual needs' have been fulfilled through association with my church.	____	____	____	____
b) I have sought guidance and support from ministries (publications, T.V., radio) outside my church.	____	____	____	____
16. My ongoing relationship to and involvement in the church is an important part of my life.	____	____	____	____
17. As the effective response to my faith, stewardship involves all of who I am and all of what I do.	____	____	____	____
18. Leaders are called to lead by example, especially in terms of their practice of stewardship.	____	____	____	____

19. My stewardship was expressed financially in total annual charitable givings to all causes for 1999 of:
under $200____ $200-499____
$500-999____ $1000-1999____
$2000-2999____ $3000-5000____
over $5000____ No response____

20. As a percentage of my total charitable givings, in 1999 I estimate I gave:
a) in support of my local congregation . . . . . ____%
b) in support of the United Church Mission and Service Fund . . . . . ____%
(check if your congregation designates a percentage of 'general funds'___)
c) in support of other ministries and religious organizations . . . . . ____%
d) in support of all other charitable causes . . . . . ____%
Total 100 %

21. Over the past five years the amount of my church-related financial support has:
increased___ decreased___
remained the same___ No response___

22. My stewardship is expressed through total regular monthly voluntary work and service of:
under 5 hours____ 5-10 hrs____
10-15 hrs____ 15-20 hrs____
over 20 hrs____ No response____

23. As a percentage of my total volunteer time, in 1999 I estimate I gave:
a) towards church work and activities . . . . . ____%
b) on behalf of other causes/activities in the wider community . . . . . ____%
Total 100 %

24. Over the past five years my time given to volunteer work has:
increased___ decreased___
remained the same___ No response___

OBSERVATION/EVALUATION OF CONGREGATIONAL DYNAMICS - For the balance of the survey from the vantage point of a congregational leader, you are kindly asked to describe what you see in the life and work of your congregation.

25. My congregation would generally be described as: Rural___ Small Town___ Large Town___
Suburban___ Urban___ Mixed___

26. About what percentage of the active congregation have belonged:
a) less than five years . . . . . ____%
b) between five and twenty-five years . . . . . ____%
c) more than twenty-five years . . . . . ____%
Total 100 %

27. Focus and function may be determined by size. Which of the following congregational 'types' (*as defined by average weekly worship attendance) best describes your congregation? If more than one type applies, rank in terms of its most dominant traits:

Family/Parish church____
(under 50*, traditional, typically rural roots)

Program church____
(150-350*, ministry team, outreach programming)

Pastoral church____
(50-150*, community and pastoral care emphasis)

Corporate church____
(350-500*, multiple staff administrative structure)

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28.	The congregation's spirit is generally optimistic and positive about the future.	____	____	____	____
29.	The congregation presents an inviting and encouraging environment to:				
	a) those presently involved	____	____	____	____
	b) those not presently involved	____	____	____	____
30.	Do such common references as a 'church family', 'fellowship', 'community of faith', and 'household of God' describe your congregation in terms of their emphasis on our relationship and responsibility to God and one another.	____	____	____	____
31.	The congregation seeks to build community through regular fellowship activities.	____	____	____	____
32.	Efforts are made to welcome and integrate newcomers as part of the congregational family.	____	____	____	____
33.	Friendships/relationships within the congregation cross normal social and generational boundaries.	____	____	____	____
34.	Towards fulfillment of its mission and purpose, the congregation shares in common:				
	a) an awareness	____	____	____	____
	b) a commitment	____	____	____	____
35.	The congregation's primary intention is understood				
	a) to meet the needs of its members	____	____	____	____
	b) to serve others	____	____	____	____
	c) to share the 'good news'	____	____	____	____
36.	The congregation's ministry is balanced between an outward and inward focus.	____	____	____	____
37.	The congregation relates well to the world-at-large.	____	____	____	____
38.	The congregation relates well to local congregations of other denominations and faith groups.	____	____	____	____
39.	The congregation relates well to the United Church:				
	a) with neighbouring United Church congregations	____	____	____	____
	b) with Presbytery, Conference, General Council	____	____	____	____
40.	As the congregation's opportunity for celebration, praise and thanksgiving, its worship involves many elements and takes many forms.	____	____	____	____

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41.	Robust attendance and participation in Sunday worship is regarded as a primary indicator of the congregation's health.	____	____	____	____
42.	Children's and youth ministry including Sunday/ Church School are given priority in provision of:				
	a) human resources	____	____	____	____
	b) financial resources	____	____	____	____
43.	The congregation provides many and varied opportunities for persons to grow in both their understanding and practice of faith.	____	____	____	____
44.	The congregation seeks to be a close-knit community through its awareness of others' lives and situations.	____	____	____	____
45.	Pastoral care and concern towards all persons in all situations is practised within the congregation.	____	____	____	____
46.	Beyond Sunday worship a variety of other church activities/programs are organized and provided.	____	____	____	____
47.	Congregational activities/programs are generally supported by wide participation and involvement.	____	____	____	____
48.	The well-being and effectiveness of the congregation as a whole is regarded as everyone's responsibility.	____	____	____	____
49.	Efforts are made to regularly and consistently provide for lay leadership development and training.	____	____	____	____
50.	Responsibility for leadership and direction of the congregation's ministry is broadly shared.	____	____	____	____
51.	Responsibility for support and practice of the congregation's ministry is broadly shared.	____	____	____	____
52.	The congregation as a whole is actively involved in periodic strategic planning to determine and evaluate its vision and long-range goals.	____	____	____	____
53.	The congregation generally takes a 'pro-active' approach in anticipating challenges and acting upon opportunities.	____	____	____	____
54.	Leaders are empowered to set direction and take action in accordance with the congregation's vision.	____	____	____	____
55.	Effective communication provides information and maintains connection within the congregation.	____	____	____	____
56.	The congregation generally deals with differences and conflict positively and constructively.	____	____	____	____

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
57.	Congregational groups and associations understand their role and purpose is to serve the needs and interests of the whole church.	____	____	____	____
58.	The presence of the Spirit is revealed in a preparedness to put the interests of the community ahead of individual preferences.	____	____	____	____
59.	The congregation's health and vitality may best be reflected in its degree of optimism approaching the annual budget.	____	____	____	____
60.	In the congregation recruitment of volunteers involves seeking out specific gifts/talents/abilities in people and matching them with the job/task.	____	____	____	____
61.	Within the congregation the subject of stewardship is generally regarded:	Positively____ Apathetically____ Negatively____ No Response____			
62.	On the whole, the subject of stewardship is most typically brought to the congregation's attention:	In times of financial crisis____ When volunteers are needed____ Annually/semi-annually____ Quarterly____ Monthly____ Weekly____ Variably____			

		Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
63.	Among the congregation it is acknowledged that one's practice of stewardship involves:				
	a) Money	____	____	____	____
	b) Time	____	____	____	____
	c) Talents (gifts/abilities)	____	____	____	____
	d) Care of Creation	____	____	____	____
	e) Setting Priorities	____	____	____	____
	f) Social/Economic Justice	____	____	____	____
64.	In my congregation stewardship development and education is supported through:				
	a) Worship and Preaching	____	____	____	____
	b) Study and Fellowship groups	____	____	____	____
	c) Newcomers and Membership classes	____	____	____	____
	d) Sunday School and Youth Group	____	____	____	____
	e) Newsletters, Bulletin inserts, etc.	____	____	____	____
65.	The congregation's stewardship is informed and motivated by the needs of its ministry and mission.	____	____	____	____

Thank-you once again for your assistance. Please return to the person responsible for mailing.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY RESULTS - Survey Response Frequencies

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
DEMOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION							
q1	female	139	58.2	82	57.7	57	58.8
q1	male	100	41.8	60	42.3	40	41.2
q2	.	1	.	1	.		
q2	under 25	3	1.3	3	2.1		
q2	25 - 39	14	5.9	9	6.4	5	5.2
q2	40 - 54	101	42.4	63	44.7	38	39.2
q2	55 - 70	92	38.7	49	34.8	43	44.3
q2	over 70	28	11.8	17	12.1	11	11.3
q3	divorced	7	2.9	2	1.4	5	5.2
q3	married	204	85.4	125	88.0	79	81.4
q3	never married	14	5.9	8	5.6	6	6.2
q3	separated	2	0.8	1	0.7	1	1.0
q3	widowed	12	5.0	6	4.2	6	6.2
q4	.	3	.	3	.		
q4	elementary	4	1.7	4	2.9		
q4	secondary	54	22.9	35	25.2	19	19.6
q4	college	63	26.7	37	26.6	26	26.8
q4	university	71	30.1	41	29.5	30	30.9
q4	post-graduate	44	18.6	22	15.8	22	22.7
q5a		1	.	1	.		
q5a	full-time	88	37.0	52	36.9	36	37.1
q5a	part-time	27	11.3	19	13.5	8	8.2
q5a	retired	87	36.6	46	32.6	41	42.3
q5a	self employed	16	6.7	8	5.7	8	8.2
q5a	unemployed	2	0.8	2	1.4		
q5a	work at home	18	7.6	14	9.9	4	4.1
q5b	.	179	.	108	.	71	.
q5b	0 - 10	21	35.0	11	32.4	10	38.5
q5b	11 - 20	10	16.7	5	14.7	5	19.2
q5b	21 - 30	12	20.1	7	20.5	5	19.2
q5b	31 - 50	10	16.8	6	17.6	4	15.3
q5b	over 50	7	11.8	5	14.5	2	7.7
q6		37	.	21	.	16	.
q6	under 20,000	4	2.0	2	1.7	2	2.5
q6	20 - 39,000	19	9.4	12	9.9	7	8.6
q6	40 - 59,000	44	21.8	29	24.0	15	18.5
q6	60 - 79,000	45	22.3	27	22.3	18	22.2
q6	80 - 99,000	36	17.8	26	21.5	10	12.3
q6	over 100,000	54	26.7	25	20.7	29	35.8

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q7a		4	.	3	.	1	.
q7a	own	228	97.0	136	97.8	92	95.8
q7a	rent	7	3.0	3	2.2	4	4.2
q7b	.	118	.	76	.	42	.
q7b	under 5	22	18.2	12	18.2	10	18.2
q7b	5 - 9	24	19.9	11	16.6	13	23.6
q7b	10 - 14	24	19.8	13	19.6	11	20.0
q7b	15 - 19	10	8.3	6	9.1	4	7.2
q7b	20 - 24	15	12.3	10	15.0	5	9.0
q7b	25 over	26	21.1	14	21.0	12	21.7
q8	.	3	.	2	.	1	.
q8	under 5 years	31	13.1	17	12.1	14	14.6
q8	5 - 10	47	19.9	18	12.9	29	30.2
q8	10 - 15	37	15.7	23	16.4	14	14.6
q8	15 - 20	23	9.7	13	9.3	10	10.4
q8	20 - 25	23	9.7	14	10.0	9	9.4
q8	over 25 years	75	31.8	55	39.3	20	20.8
q9	.	1	.	1	.		
q9	under 5	7	2.9	4	2.8	3	3.1
q9	5 - 10	14	5.9	7	5.0	7	7.2
q9	10 - 15	15	6.3	9	6.4	6	6.2
q9	15 - 20	11	4.6	7	5.0	4	4.1
q9	20 - 25	12	5.0	8	5.7	4	4.1
q9	over 25	179	75.2	106	75.2	73	75.3
q10a	0	14	5.9	8	5.6	6	6.2
q10a	5	10	4.2	8	5.6	2	2.1
q10a	4	14	5.9	11	7.7	3	3.1
q10a	3	60	25.1	38	26.8	22	22.7
q10a	2	48	20.1	35	24.6	13	13.4
q10a	1	93	38.9	42	29.6	51	52.6
q10b	0	98	41.0	51	35.9	47	48.5
q10b	5	49	20.5	30	21.1	19	19.6
q10b	4	40	16.7	27	19.0	13	13.4
q10b	3	37	15.5	24	16.9	13	13.4
q10b	2	15	6.3	10	7.0	5	5.2
q10c	0	142	59.4	90	63.4	52	53.6
q10c	5	38	15.9	21	14.8	17	17.5
q10c	4	29	12.1	14	9.9	15	15.5
q10c	3	20	8.4	12	8.5	8	8.2
q10c	2	6	2.5	2	1.4	4	4.1
q10c	1	4	1.7	3	2.1	1	1.0
q10d	0	24	10.0	13	9.2	11	11.3
q10d	5	5	2.1	3	2.1	2	2.1
q10d	4	19	7.9	8	5.6	11	11.3
q10d	3	59	24.7	32	22.5	27	27.8
q10d	2	76	31.8	43	30.3	33	34.0
q10d	1	56	23.4	43	30.3	13	13.4

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q10e	0	27	11.3	18	12.7	9	9.3
q10e	5	8	3.3	3	2.1	5	5.2
q10e	4	19	7.9	14	9.9	5	5.2
q10e	3	62	25.9	33	23.2	29	29.9
q10e	2	62	25.9	36	25.4	26	26.8
q10e	1	61	25.5	38	26.8	23	23.7
q10f	0	200	83.7	117	82.4	83	85.6
q10f	5	10	4.2	5	3.5	5	5.2
q10f	4	14	5.9	9	6.3	5	5.2
q10f	3	13	5.4	9	6.3	4	4.1
q10f	1	2	0.8	2	1.4		
q10g	0	150	62.8	91	64.1	59	60.8
q10g	5	33	13.8	21	14.8	12	12.4
q10g	4	26	10.9	14	9.9	12	12.4
q10g	3	18	7.5	7	4.9	11	11.3
q10g	2	9	3.8	6	4.2	3	3.1
q10g	1	3	1.3	3	2.1		
q10h	0	194	81.2	115	81.0	79	81.4
q10h	5	15	6.3	11	7.7	4	4.1
q10h	4	17	7.1	10	7.0	7	7.2
q10h	3	11	4.6	5	3.5	6	6.2
q10h	2	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q10h	1	1	0.4			1	1.0
q10i	0	184	77.0	109	76.8	75	77.3
q10i	5	23	9.6	14	9.9	9	9.3
q10i	4	19	7.9	11	7.7	8	8.2
q10i	3	10	4.2	5	3.5	5	5.2
q10i	2	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q10i	1	2	0.8	2	1.4		
q10j	0	219	91.6	131	92.3	88	90.7
q10j	5	9	3.8	4	2.8	5	5.2
q10j	4	8	3.3	6	4.2	2	2.1
q10j	3	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q10j	2	2	0.8			2	2.1
q10k	0	228	95.4	133	93.7	95	97.9
q10k	5	6	2.5	5	3.5	1	1.0
q10k	4	3	1.3	2	1.4	1	1.0
q10k	3	2	0.8	2	1.4		

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE							
qa11a	.	10	.	4	.	6	.
qa11a	low	2	0.9	2	1.4		
qa11a	medium	20	8.7	17	12.3	3	3.3
qa11a	high	207	90.4	119	86.2	88	96.7
qa11b	.	16	.	7	.	9	.
qa11b	low	3	1.3	3	2.2		
qa11b	medium	36	16.1	24	17.8	12	13.6
qa11b	high	184	82.5	108	80.0	76	86.4
qa11c	.	22	.	9	.	13	.
qa11c	low	3	1.4	2	1.5	1	1.2
qa11c	medium	40	18.4	28	21.1	12	14.3
qa11c	high	174	80.2	103	77.4	71	84.5
qa11d	.	30	.	15	.	15	.
qa11d	low	5	2.4	3	2.4	2	2.4
qa11d	medium	53	25.4	35	27.6	18	22.0
qa11d	high	151	72.2	89	70.1	62	75.6
qa11e	.	40	.	21	.	19	.
qa11e	low	47	23.6	24	19.8	23	29.5
qa11e	medium	102	51.3	65	53.7	37	47.4
qa11e	high	50	25.1	32	26.4	18	23.1
qa11f	.	31	.	16	.	15	.
qa11f	low	4	1.9	3	2.4	1	1.2
qa11f	medium	59	28.4	32	25.4	27	32.9
qa11f	high	145	69.7	91	72.2	54	65.9
qa11g	.	49	.	26	.	23	.
qa11g	low	67	35.3	38	32.8	29	39.2
qa11g	medium	98	51.6	62	53.4	36	48.6
qa11g	high	25	13.2	16	13.8	9	12.2
qa11h	.	48	.	27	.	21	.
qa11h	low	59	30.9	38	33.0	21	27.6
qa11h	medium	100	52.4	62	53.9	38	50.0
qa11h	high	32	16.8	15	13.0	17	22.4
qa11i	.	50	.	28	.	22	.
qa11i	low	67	35.4	44	38.6	23	30.7
qa11i	medium	82	43.4	48	42.1	34	45.3
qa11i	high	40	21.2	22	19.3	18	24.0
qb11a	.	52	.	31	.	21	.
qb11a	low	68	36.4	34	30.6	34	44.7
qb11a	medium	80	42.8	54	48.6	26	34.2
qb11a	high	39	20.9	23	20.7	16	21.1
qb11b	.	52	.	28	.	24	.
qb11b	low	55	29.4	32	28.1	23	31.5
qb11b	medium	63	33.7	35	30.7	28	38.4
qb11b	high	69	36.9	47	41.2	22	30.1

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
qb11c	.	57	.	31	.	26	.
qb11c	low	78	42.9	46	41.4	32	45.1
qb11c	medium	72	39.6	44	39.6	28	39.4
qb11c	high	32	17.6	21	18.9	11	15.5
qb11d	.	49	.	27	.	22	.
qb11d	low	85	44.7	50	43.5	35	46.7
qb11d	medium	65	34.2	46	40.0	19	25.3
qb11d	high	40	21.1	19	16.5	21	28.0
qb11e	.	48	.	28	.	20	.
qb11e	low	35	18.3	20	17.5	15	19.5
qb11e	medium	67	35.1	48	42.1	19	24.7
qb11e	high	89	46.6	46	40.4	43	55.8
qb11f	.	48	.	27	.	21	.
qb11f	low	45	23.6	29	25.2	16	21.1
qb11f	medium	75	39.3	47	40.9	28	36.8
qb11f	high	71	37.2	39	33.9	32	42.1
qb11g	.	40	.	24	.	16	.
qb11g	low	32	16.1	21	17.8	11	13.6
qb11g	medium	50	25.1	33	28.0	17	21.0
qb11g	high	117	58.8	64	54.2	53	65.4
qb11h	.	48	.	27	.	21	.
qb11h	low	27	14.1	18	15.7	9	11.8
qb11h	medium	68	35.6	51	44.3	17	22.4
qb11h	high	96	50.3	46	40.0	50	65.8
qb11i	.	56	.	35	.	21	.
qb11i	low	42	23.0	29	27.1	13	17.1
qb11i	medium	76	41.5	45	42.1	31	40.8
qb11i	high	65	35.5	33	30.8	32	42.1
qc11a	.	51	.	29	.	22	.
qc11a	low	19	10.1	10	8.8	9	12.0
qc11a	medium	60	31.9	37	32.7	23	30.7
qc11a	high	109	58.0	66	58.4	43	57.3
qc11b	.	56	.	31	.	25	.
qc11b	low	33	18.0	19	17.1	14	19.4
qc11b	medium	78	42.6	46	41.4	32	44.4
qc11b	high	72	39.3	46	41.4	26	36.1
qc11c	.	54	.	30	.	24	.
qc11c	low	37	20.0	23	20.5	14	19.2
qc11c	medium	94	50.8	58	51.8	36	49.3
qc11c	high	54	29.2	31	27.7	23	31.5
qc11d	.	54	.	30	.	24	.
qc11d	low	27	14.6	15	13.4	12	16.4
qc11d	medium	74	40.0	49	43.8	25	34.2
qc11d	high	84	45.4	48	42.9	36	49.3
qc11e	.	49	.	28	.	21	.
qc11e	low	88	46.3	47	41.2	41	53.9
qc11e	medium	71	37.4	46	40.4	25	32.9

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
qc11e	high	31	16.3	21	18.4	10	13.2
qc11f	.	54	.	30	.	24	.
qc11f	low	31	16.8	18	16.1	13	17.8
qc11f	medium	84	45.4	53	47.3	31	42.5
qc11f	high	70	37.8	41	36.6	29	39.7
qc11g	.	52	.	28	.	24	.
qc11g	low	92	49.2	55	48.2	37	50.7
qc11g	medium	71	38.0	41	36.0	30	41.1
qc11g	high	24	12.8	18	15.8	6	8.2
qc11h	.	52	.	28	.	24	.
qc11h	low	83	44.4	44	38.6	39	53.4
qc11h	medium	62	33.2	41	36.0	21	28.8
qc11h	high	42	22.5	29	25.4	13	17.8
qc11i	.	53	.	29	.	24	.
qc11i	low	96	51.6	57	50.4	39	53.4
qc11i	medium	57	30.6	37	32.7	20	27.4
qc11i	high	33	17.7	19	16.8	14	19.2
q12		2	.	1	.	1	.
q12	?	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q12	both equally	56	23.6	28	19.9	28	29.2
q12	ɔcal congregatio	171	72.2	105	74.5	66	68.8
q12	neither	3	1.3	3	2.1		
q12	United Church	6	2.5	4	2.8	2	2.1
q13a	.	6	.	4	.	2	.
q13a	ɔmewhat disagre	5	2.1	4	2.9	1	1.1
q13a	somewhat agree	93	39.9	58	42.0	35	36.8
q13a	strongly agree	135	57.9	76	55.1	59	62.1
q13b	.	9	.	6	.	3	.
q13b	ɔmewhat disagre	7	3.0	6	4.4	1	1.1
q13b	somewhat agree	94	40.9	60	44.1	34	36.2
q13b	strongly agree	129	56.1	70	51.5	59	62.8
q14a	.	10	.	5	.	5	.
q14a	strongly disagree	3	1.3	1	0.7	2	2.2
q14a	ɔmewhat disagre	26	11.4	15	10.9	11	12.0
q14a	somewhat agree	124	54.1	76	55.5	48	52.2
q14a	strongly agree	76	33.2	45	32.8	31	33.7
q14b	.	10	.	7	.	3	.
q14b	strongly disagree	5	2.2	2	1.5	3	3.2
q14b	ɔmewhat disagre	19	8.3	11	8.1	8	8.5
q14b	somewhat agree	121	52.8	76	56.3	45	47.9
q14b	strongly agree	84	36.7	46	34.1	38	40.4
q15a	.	5	.	3	.	2	.
q15a	strongly disagree	2	0.9	2	1.4		
q15a	ɔmewhat disagre	12	5.1	10	7.2	2	2.1
q15a	somewhat agree	84	35.9	51	36.7	33	34.7
q15a	strongly agree	136	58.1	76	54.7	60	63.2
q15b	.	14	.	6	.	8	.

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q15b	strongly disagree	94	41.8	52	38.2	42	47.2
q15b	somewhat disagre	53	23.6	31	22.8	22	24.7
q15b	somewhat agree	61	27.1	42	30.9	19	21.3
q15b	strongly agree	17	7.6	11	8.1	6	6.7
q16	.	1	.	1	.		
q16	somewhat disagre	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q16	somewhat agree	45	18.9	29	20.6	16	16.5
q16	strongly agree	192	80.7	111	78.7	81	83.5
q17	.	7	.	4	.	3	.
q17	somewhat disagre	18	7.8	12	8.7	6	6.4
q17	somewhat agree	115	49.6	66	47.8	49	52.1
q17	strongly agree	99	42.7	60	43.5	39	41.5
q18	.	2	.	1	.	1	.
q18	somewhat disagre	5	2.1	2	1.4	3	3.1
q18	somewhat agree	83	35.0	55	39.0	28	29.2
q18	strongly agree	149	62.9	84	59.6	65	67.7
q19		20	.	16	.	4	.
q19	under $200	3	1.4	3	2.4		
q19	200 - 499	24	11.0	17	13.5	7	7.5
q19	500 - 999	34	15.5	21	16.7	13	14.0
q19	1,000 - 1,999	52	23.7	33	26.2	19	20.4
q19	2,000 - 2,999	54	24.7	26	20.6	28	30.1
q19	3,000 - 5,000	23	10.5	13	10.3	10	10.8
q19	over $5,000	29	13.2	13	10.3	16	17.2
q20a	.	26	.	15	.	11	.
q20a	0	1	0.5	1	0.8		
q20a	1 - 20	9	4.2	6	4.8	3	3.5
q20a	21 - 40	34	16.0	25	19.6	9	10.4
q20a	41 - 60	51	23.9	35	27.6	16	18.7
q20a	61 - 80	81	38.1	39	32.7	35	48.9
q20a	over 80	37	17.4	21	16.6	16	18.7
q20b	.	39	.	21	.	18	.
q20b	0	57	28.5	38	31.4	19	24.1
q20b	1 - 20	104	52.0	56	46.3	48	60.8
q20b	21 - 40	28	14.0	21	17.3	7	8.9
q20b	41 - 60	11	5.5	6	4.9	5	6.3
q20c	.	26	.	15	.	11	.
q20c	0	168	78.9	97	76.4	71	82.6
q20c	1 - 20	39	18.3	27	21.4	12	13.0
q20c	over 20	6	2.9	3	2.4	3	3.6
q20d	.	26	.	15	.	11	.
q20d	0	22	10.3	15	11.8	7	8.1
q20d	1 - 20	107	50.2	54	42.5	53	61.7
q20d	21 - 40	57	26.8	39	30.7	18	21.0
q20d	over 40	27	12.7	19	15.1	8	9.4
q21	.	5	.	4	.	1	.
q21	decreased	7	3.0	5	3.6	2	2.1

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q21	remained same	32	13.7	24	17.4	8	8.3
q21	increased	195	83.3	109	79.0	86	89.6
q22	.	14	.	9	.	5	.
q22	under 5 hours	24	10.7	15	11.3	9	9.8
q22	5 - 10	80	35.6	44	33.1	36	39.1
q22	10 - 15	53	23.6	37	27.8	16	17.4
q22	15 - 20	27	12.0	17	12.8	10	10.9
q22	over 20 hours	41	18.2	20	15.0	21	22.8
q23a	.	17	.	12	.	5	.
q23a	0	1	0.5			1	1.1
q23a	1 - 20	11	5.1	11	8.6		
q23a	21 - 40	29	13.1	22	17.0	7	7.6
q23a	41 - 60	41	18.5	20	15.4	21	22.8
q23a	61 - 80	65	29.3	35	26.9	30	32.6
q23a	81 - 100	75	33.9	42	32.3	33	35.8
q23b	.	18	.	13	.	5	.
q23b	0	32	14.5	17	13.2	15	16.3
q23b	1 - 20	74	33.6	40	31.1	34	36.9
q23b	21 - 40	50	22.5	28	21.8	22	23.9
q23b	41 - 60	34	15.4	20	15.5	14	15.2
q23b	61 - 80	25	11.3	19	14.8	6	6.5
q23b	81 - 100	6	2.9	5	3.9	1	1.1
q24	.	7	.	7	.		
q24	decreased	32	13.8	22	16.3	10	10.3
q24	remained same	45	19.4	22	16.3	23	23.7
q24	increased	155	66.8	91	67.4	64	66.0

QUESTION	RESPONSE	Total Responses COUNT	Total Responses PERCENT	Dufferin-Peel Presbytery COUNT	Dufferin-Peel Presbytery PERCENT	Halton Presbytery COUNT	Halton Presbytery PERCENT
OBSERVATION / EVALUATION OF CONGREGATIONAL DYNAMICS							
q25	large town	32	13.4	21	14.8	11	11.3
q25	mixed	25	10.5	18	12.7	7	7.2
q25	rural	15	6.3	8	5.6	7	7.2
q25	rural/small town	4	1.7	4	2.8		
q25	small town	64	26.8	61	43.0	3	3.1
q25	suburban	75	31.4	20	14.1	55	56.7
q25	ıburban/large tov	5	2.1	4	2.8	1	1.0
q25	urban	19	7.9	6	4.2	13	13.4
q26a	.	58	.	34	.	24	.
q26a	0	2	1.1	1	0.9	1	1.4
q26a	1 - 20	100	55.3	60	55.5	40	54.6
q26a	21 - 40	51	28.1	38	35.2	13	17.8
q26a	41 - 60	17	9.4	6	5.6	11	15.1
q26a	over 60	11	6.3	3	2.7	8	11.0
q26b	.	55	.	33	.	22	.
q26b	0	1	0.5	1	0.9		
q26b	1 - 20	28	15.1	12	11.0	16	21.2
q26b	21 - 40	56	30.4	41	37.6	15	20.0
q26b	41 - 60	64	34.8	43	39.5	21	28.0
q26b	over 60	35	18.9	12	11.0	23	30.7
q26c	.	60	.	36	.	24	.
q26c	0	24	13.4			24	32.9
q26c	1 - 20	59	33.0	34	32.1	25	34.2
q26c	21 - 40	49	27.5	43	40.4	6	8.2
q26c	41 - 60	36	20.0	27	25.5	9	12.3
q26c	over 60	11	6.2	2	1.8	9	12.4
q27	.	9	.	7	.	2	.
q27	ımily/parish churc	28	12.2	17	12.6	11	11.6
q27	pastoral church	87	37.8	69	51.1	18	18.9
q27	program church	92	40.0	32	23.7	60	63.2
q27	corporate church	23	10.0	17	12.6	6	6.3
q28	.	6	.	2	.	4	.
q28	strongly disagree	2	0.9	2	1.4		
q28	ɔmewhat disagre	17	7.3	13	9.3	4	4.3
q28	somewhat agree	106	45.5	57	40.7	49	52.7
q28	strongly agree	108	46.4	68	48.6	40	43.0
q29a	.	1	.	1	.		
q29a	ɔmewhat disagre	8	3.4	6	4.3	2	2.1
q29a	somewhat agree	74	31.1	50	35.5	24	24.7
q29a	strongly agree	156	65.5	85	60.3	71	73.2
q29b	.	12	.	7	.	5	.
q29b	strongly disagree	3	1.3	2	1.5	1	1.1
q29b	ɔmewhat disagre	36	15.9	29	21.5	7	7.6
q29b	somewhat agree	108	47.6	68	50.4	40	43.5

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q29b	strongly agree	80	35.2	36	26.7	44	47.8
q30	.	13	.	10	.	3	.
q30	strongly disagree	1	0.4	1	0.8		
q30	somewhat disagre	5	2.2	3	2.3	2	2.1
q30	somewhat agree	80	35.4	54	40.9	26	27.7
q30	strongly agree	140	61.9	74	56.1	66	70.2
q31	.	3	.	3	.		
q31	strongly disagree	2	0.8	2	1.4		
q31	somewhat disagre	9	3.8	6	4.3	3	3.1
q31	somewhat agree	89	37.7	59	42.4	30	30.9
q31	strongly agree	136	57.6	72	51.8	64	66.0
q32	.	4	.	4	.		
q32	strongly disagree	2	0.9	2	1.4		
q32	somewhat disagre	9	3.8	7	5.1	2	2.1
q32	somewhat agree	83	35.3	58	42.0	25	25.8
q32	strongly agree	141	60.0	71	51.4	70	72.2
q33	.	5	.	4	.	1	.
q33	somewhat disagre	15	6.4	12	8.7	3	3.1
q33	somewhat agree	98	41.9	48	34.8	50	52.1
q33	strongly agree	121	51.7	78	56.5	43	44.8
q34a	.	14	.	10	.	4	.
q34a	somewhat disagre	19	8.4	12	9.1	7	7.5
q34a	somewhat agree	131	58.2	74	56.1	57	61.3
q34a	strongly agree	75	33.3	46	34.8	29	31.2
q34b	.	13	.	9	.	4	.
q34b	strongly disagree	1	0.4	1	0.8		
q34b	somewhat disagre	36	15.9	19	14.3	17	18.3
q34b	somewhat agree	137	60.6	82	61.7	55	59.1
q34b	strongly agree	52	23.0	31	23.3	21	22.6
q35a	.	6	.	5	.	1	.
q35a	somewhat disagre	7	3.0	4	2.9	3	3.1
q35a	somewhat agree	84	36.1	50	36.5	34	35.4
q35a	strongly agree	142	60.9	83	60.6	59	61.5
q35b	.	9	.	8	.	1	.
q35b	strongly disagree	2	0.9	2	1.5		
q35b	somewhat disagre	20	8.7	10	7.5	10	10.4
q35b	somewhat agree	123	53.5	69	51.5	54	56.3
q35b	strongly agree	85	37.0	53	39.6	32	33.3
q35c	.	11	.	9	.	2	.
q35c	strongly disagree	3	1.3	1	0.8	2	2.1
q35c	somewhat disagre	42	18.4	28	21.1	14	14.7
q35c	somewhat agree	107	46.9	66	49.6	41	43.2
q35c	strongly agree	76	33.3	38	28.6	38	40.0
q36	.	7	.	6	.	1	.
q36	strongly disagree	3	1.3	1	0.7	2	2.1
q36	somewhat disagre	33	14.2	16	11.8	17	17.7
q36	somewhat agree	123	53.0	75	55.1	48	50.0

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q36	strongly agree	73	31.5	44	32.4	29	30.2
q37	.	6	.	5	.	1	.
q37	strongly disagree	5	2.1	3	2.2	2	2.1
q37	somewhat disagre	43	18.5	30	21.9	13	13.5
q37	somewhat agree	121	51.9	62	45.3	59	61.5
q37	strongly agree	64	27.5	42	30.7	22	22.9
q38	.	12	.	9	.	3	.
q38	strongly disagree	4	1.8	4	3.0		
q38	somewhat disagre	38	16.7	19	14.3	19	20.2
q38	somewhat agree	97	42.7	51	38.3	46	48.9
q38	strongly agree	88	38.8	59	44.4	29	30.9
q39a	.	10	.	9	.	1	.
q39a	strongly disagree	6	2.6	4	3.0	2	2.1
q39a	somewhat disagre	26	11.4	15	11.3	11	11.5
q39a	somewhat agree	92	40.2	51	38.3	41	42.7
q39a	strongly agree	105	45.9	63	47.4	42	43.8
q39b	.	21	.	17	.	4	.
q39b	strongly disagree	7	3.2	2	1.6	5	5.4
q39b	somewhat disagre	38	17.4	24	19.2	14	15.1
q39b	somewhat agree	80	36.7	42	33.6	38	40.9
q39b	strongly agree	93	42.7	57	45.6	36	38.7
q40	.	5	.	3	.	2	.
q40	strongly disagree	2	0.9	2	1.4		
q40	somewhat disagre	16	6.8	11	7.9	5	5.3
q40	somewhat agree	88	37.6	56	40.3	32	33.7
q40	strongly agree	128	54.7	70	50.4	58	61.1
q41	.	4	.	4	.		
q41	strongly disagree	1	0.4			1	1.0
q41	somewhat disagre	14	6.0	10	7.2	4	4.1
q41	somewhat agree	105	44.7	52	37.7	53	54.6
q41	strongly agree	115	48.9	76	55.1	39	40.2
q42a	.	6	.	4	.	2	.
q42a	strongly disagree	2	0.9	1	0.7	1	1.1
q42a	somewhat disagre	19	8.2	13	9.4	6	6.3
q42a	somewhat agree	102	43.8	60	43.5	42	44.2
q42a	strongly agree	110	47.2	64	46.4	46	48.4
q42b	.	11	.	7	.	4	.
q42b	strongly disagree	3	1.3	2	1.5	1	1.1
q42b	somewhat disagre	27	11.8	20	14.8	7	7.5
q42b	somewhat agree	114	50.0	60	44.4	54	58.1
q42b	strongly agree	84	36.8	53	39.3	31	33.3
q43	.	6	.	6	.		
q43	strongly disagree	3	1.3	1	0.7	2	2.1
q43	somewhat disagre	25	10.7	18	13.2	7	7.2
q43	somewhat agree	111	47.6	69	50.7	42	43.3
q43	strongly agree	94	40.3	48	35.3	46	47.4
q44	.	3	.	3	.		

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q44	strongly disagree	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q44	somewhat disagre	24	10.2	13	9.4	11	11.3
q44	somewhat agree	111	47.0	64	46.0	47	48.5
q44	strongly agree	100	42.4	61	43.9	39	40.2
q45	.	5	.	5	.	-	
q45	strongly disagree	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q45	somewhat disagre	12	5.1	7	5.1	5	5.2
q45	somewhat agree	85	36.3	52	38.0	33	34.0
q45	strongly agree	136	58.1	77	56.2	59	60.8
q46	.	3	.	2	.	1	.
q46	strongly disagree	2	0.8	1	0.7	1	1.0
q46	somewhat disagre	21	8.9	16	11.4	5	5.2
q46	somewhat agree	82	34.7	49	35.0	33	34.4
q46	strongly agree	131	55.5	74	52.9	57	59.4
q47	.	4	.	2	.	2	.
q47	strongly disagree	9	3.8	7	5.0	2	2.1
q47	somewhat disagre	50	21.3	33	23.6	17	17.9
q47	somewhat agree	114	48.5	65	46.4	49	51.6
q47	strongly agree	62	26.4	35	25.0	27	28.4
q48	.	4	.	3	.	1	.
q48	strongly disagree	5	2.1	3	2.2	2	2.1
q48	somewhat disagre	44	18.7	25	18.0	19	19.8
q48	somewhat agree	96	40.9	57	41.0	39	40.6
q48	strongly agree	90	38.3	54	38.8	36	37.5
q49	.	9	.	6	.	3	.
q49	strongly disagree	12	5.2	6	4.4	6	6.4
q49	somewhat disagre	56	24.3	35	25.7	21	22.3
q49	somewhat agree	101	43.9	63	46.3	38	40.4
q49	strongly agree	61	26.5	32	23.5	29	30.9
q50	.	3	.	1	.	2	.
q50	strongly disagree	11	4.7	7	5.0	4	4.2
q50	somewhat disagre	36	15.3	25	17.7	11	11.6
q50	somewhat agree	121	51.3	71	50.4	50	52.6
q50	strongly agree	68	28.8	38	27.0	30	31.6
q51	.	4	.	4	.		
q51	strongly disagree	7	3.0	4	2.9	3	3.1
q51	somewhat disagre	36	15.3	25	18.1	11	11.3
q51	somewhat agree	121	51.5	70	50.7	51	52.6
q51	strongly agree	71	30.2	39	28.3	32	33.0
q52	.	1	.	1	.		
q52	strongly disagree	7	2.9	6	4.3	1	1.0
q52	somewhat disagre	58	24.4	33	23.4	25	25.8
q52	somewhat agree	105	44.1	60	42.6	45	46.4
q52	strongly agree	68	28.6	42	29.8	26	26.8
q53	.	11	.	6	.	5	.
q53	strongly disagree	8	3.5	5	3.7	3	3.3
q53	somewhat disagre	61	26.8	33	24.3	28	30.4

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q53	somewhat agree	103	45.2	61	44.9	42	45.7
q53	strongly agree	56	24.6	37	27.2	19	20.7
q54	.	5	.	5	.		
q54	strongly disagree	5	2.1	4	2.9	1	1.0
q54	omewhat disagre	23	9.8	12	8.8	11	11.3
q54	somewhat agree	102	43.6	55	40.1	47	48.5
q54	strongly agree	104	44.4	66	48.2	38	39.2
q55	.	2	.	2	.		
q55	strongly disagree	1	0.4	1	0.7		
q55	omewhat disagre	29	12.2	17	12.1	12	12.4
q55	somewhat agree	107	45.1	68	48.6	39	40.2
q55	strongly agree	100	42.2	54	38.6	46	47.4
q56	.	4	.	3	.	1	.
q56	strongly disagree	7	3.0	6	4.3	1	1.0
q56	omewhat disagre	34	14.5	22	15.8	12	12.5
q56	somewhat agree	121	51.5	72	51.8	49	51.0
q56	strongly agree	73	31.1	39	28.1	34	35.4
q57	.	3	.	2	.	1	.
q57	strongly disagree	2	0.8	1	0.7	1	1.0
q57	omewhat disagre	14	5.9	10	7.1	4	4.2
q57	somewhat agree	120	50.8	73	52.1	47	49.0
q57	strongly agree	100	42.4	56	40.0	44	45.8
q58	.	8	.	5	.	3	.
q58	strongly disagree	2	0.9	1	0.7	1	1.1
q58	omewhat disagre	21	9.1	10	7.3	11	11.7
q58	somewhat agree	139	60.2	82	59.9	57	60.6
q58	strongly agree	69	29.9	44	32.1	25	26.6
q59	.	5	.	3	.	2	.
q59	strongly disagree	6	2.6	3	2.2	3	3.2
q59	omewhat disagre	44	18.8	24	17.3	20	21.1
q59	somewhat agree	124	53.0	72	51.8	52	54.7
q59	strongly agree	60	25.6	40	28.8	20	21.1
q60	.	2	.	1	.	1	.
q60	strongly disagree	7	3.0	6	4.3	1	1.0
q60	omewhat disagre	25	10.5	15	10.6	10	10.4
q60	somewhat agree	119	50.2	73	51.8	46	47.9
q60	strongly agree	86	36.3	47	33.3	39	40.6
q61	.	19	.	15	.	4	.
q61	strongly disagree	10	4.5	9	7.1	1	1.1
q61	omewhat disagre	83	37.7	47	37.0	36	38.7
q61	somewhat agree	127	57.7	71	55.9	56	60.2
q62a		2	.	1	.	1	.
q62a	oth vol & fin crisi	47	19.8	26	18.4	21	21.9
q62a	financial crisis	45	19.0	29	20.6	16	16.7
q62a	no crisis	109	46.0	63	44.7	46	47.9
q62a	olunteers neede	36	15.2	23	16.3	13	13.5
q62b		64	.	44	.	20	.

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q62b	variably	33	18.9	27	27.6	6	7.8
q62b	nnual/semi-annu	99	56.6	42	42.9	57	74.0
q62b	quarterly	18	10.3	11	11.2	7	9.1
q62b	monthly	16	9.1	13	13.3	3	3.9
q62b	weekly	9	5.1	5	5.1	4	5.2
q63a	.	1	.	1	.		
q63a	strongly disagree	2	0.8	2	1.4		
q63a	omewhat disagre	5	2.1	4	2.8	1	1.0
q63a	somewhat agree	66	27.7	45	31.9	21	21.6
q63a	strongly agree	165	69.3	90	63.8	75	77.3
q63b	omewhat disagre	3	1.3	2	1.4	1	1.0
q63b	somewhat agree	83	34.7	52	36.6	31	32.0
q63b	strongly agree	153	64.0	88	62.0	65	67.0
q63c	.	6	.	4	.	2	.
q63c	strongly disagree	3	1.3	2	1.4	1	1.1
q63c	omewhat disagre	3	1.3	2	1.4	1	1.1
q63c	somewhat agree	99	42.5	63	45.7	36	37.9
q63c	strongly agree	128	54.9	71	51.4	57	60.0
q63d	.	28	.	21	.	7	.
q63d	strongly disagree	13	6.2	5	4.1	8	8.9
q63d	omewhat disagre	43	20.4	25	20.7	18	20.0
q63d	somewhat agree	127	60.2	80	66.1	47	52.2
q63d	strongly agree	28	13.3	11	9.1	17	18.9
q63e	.	18	.	12	.	6	.
q63e	strongly disagree	10	4.5	5	3.8	5	5.5
q63e	omewhat disagre	58	26.2	33	25.4	25	27.5
q63e	somewhat agree	112	50.7	70	53.8	42	46.2
q63e	strongly agree	41	18.6	22	16.9	19	20.9
q63f	.	18	.	15	.	3	.
q63f	strongly disagree	18	8.1	7	5.5	11	11.7
q63f	omewhat disagre	61	27.6	38	29.9	23	24.5
q63f	somewhat agree	122	55.2	74	58.3	48	51.1
q63f	strongly agree	20	9.0	8	6.3	12	12.8
q64a	.	5	.	4	.	1	.
q64a	strongly disagree	2	0.9	2	1.4		
q64a	omewhat disagre	10	4.3	7	5.1	3	3.1
q64a	somewhat agree	83	35.5	50	36.2	33	34.4
q64a	strongly agree	139	59.4	79	57.2	60	62.5
q64b	.	17	.	10	.	7	.
q64b	strongly disagree	8	3.6	3	2.3	5	5.6
q64b	omewhat disagre	38	17.1	18	13.6	20	22.2
q64b	somewhat agree	109	49.1	71	53.8	38	42.2
q64b	strongly agree	67	30.2	40	30.3	27	30.0
q64c	.	18	.	10	.	8	.
q64c	strongly disagree	11	5.0	8	6.1	3	3.4
q64c	omewhat disagre	52	23.5	33	25.0	19	21.3
q64c	somewhat agree	101	45.7	61	46.2	40	44.9

		Total Responses		Dufferin-Peel Presbytery		Halton Presbytery	
QUESTION	RESPONSE	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
q64c	strongly agree	57	25.8	30	22.7	27	30.3
q64d	.	16	.	10	.	6	.
q64d	strongly disagree	3	1.3	3	2.3		
q64d	somewhat disagre	30	13.5	22	16.7	8	8.8
q64d	somewhat agree	98	43.9	55	41.7	43	47.3
q64d	strongly agree	92	41.3	52	39.4	40	44.0
q64e	.	9	.	8	.	1	.
q64e	strongly disagree	4	1.7	1	0.7	3	3.1
q64e	somewhat disagre	16	7.0	10	7.5	6	6.3
q64e	somewhat agree	89	38.7	54	40.3	35	36.5
q64e	strongly agree	121	52.6	69	51.5	52	54.2
q65	.	13	.	9	.	4	.
q65	strongly disagree	3	1.3	2	1.5	1	1.1
q65	somewhat disagre	23	10.2	14	10.5	9	9.7
q65	somewhat agree	116	51.3	70	52.6	46	49.5
q65	strongly agree	84	37.2	47	35.3	37	39.8

APPENDIX D

I. Region of Peel – Population Growth 2001-2031

Forecasts Approved by Peel Regional Council on March 6, 2003

2001	613,000	325,000	51,000	-	989,000
2002	629,000	344,000	51,000	-	1,024,000
2003	638,000	363,000	53,000	-	1,054,000
2004	645,000	380,000	55,000	-	1,080,000
2005	652,000	394,000	56,000	-	1,102,000
2006	658,000	407,000	58,000	-	1,123,000
2007	663,000	420,000	60,000	-	1,143,000
2008	667,000	432,000	62,000	-	1,161,000
2009	672,000	444,000	63,000	-	1,179,000
2010	676,000	457,000	65,000	-	1,198,000
2011	681,000	469,000	67,000	-	1,217,000
2012	685,000	481,000	69,000	-	1,235,000
2013	688,000	493,000	71,000	-	1,252,000
2014	692,000	505,000	72,000	-	1,269,000
2015	696,000	517,000	74,000	-	1,287,000
2016	699,000	529,000	76,000	-	1,304,000
2017	703,000	541,000	78,000	-	1,322,000
2018	706,000	553,000	79,000	-	1,338,000
2019	710,000	565,000	81,000	-	1,356,000
2020	713,000	576,000	83,000	-	1,372,000
2021	716,000	588,000	84,000	-	1,388,000
2022	720,000	594,000	84,000	7,000	1,405,000
2023	724,000	600,000	84,000	14,000	1,422,000
2024	727,000	604,000	84,000	22,000	1,437,000
2025	731,000	606,000	84,000	29,000	1,450,000
2026	735,000	607,000	84,000	36,000	1,462,000
2027	738,000	607,000	84,000	45,000	1,474,000
2028	741,000	607,000	84,000	54,000	1,486,000
2029	744,000	608,000	84,000	63,000	1,499,000
2030	748,000	608,000	84,000	73,000	1,513,000
2031	750,000	608,000	84,000	82,000	1,524,000

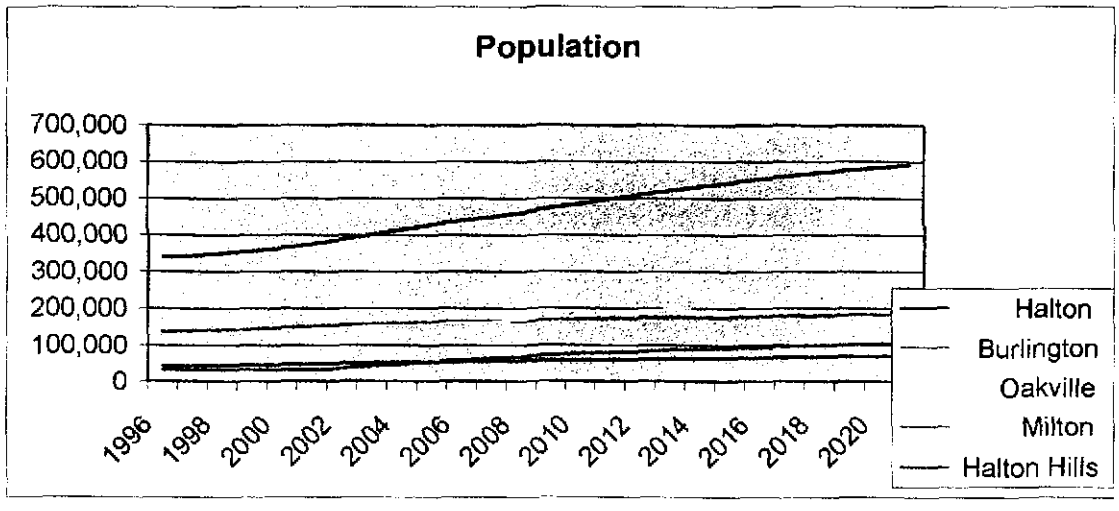
*Note: The unallocated portion of the forecasts represents growth expected to occur between 2021 - 2031 outside settlement areas currently designated in the Regional and local Official Plans.

Analysis: The projections above indicate that, while the pace of Mississauga's growth has indeed slowed, faster growth in Brampton will continue until 2024 before leveling off.

II. Region of Halton - Population Growth 1996 – 2021

Best Planning Estimates – June 2003

	Halton	Burlington	Oakville	Milton	Halton Hills
1996	339,875	136,976	128,405	32,104	42,390
1997	344,746	139,031	130,498	31,893	43,324
1998	350,748	141,912	132,934	31,685	44,217
1999	357,458	144,667	136,037	31,486	45,268
2000	366,255	147,891	140,459	31,422	46,484
2001	375,229	150,836	144,738	31,471	48,184
2002	389,000	154,100	148,800	36,300	49,800
2003	402,400	156,900	152,400	41,800	51,300
2004	415,300	159,400	155,700	47,500	52,700
2005	427,500	161,700	158,700	53,200	53,900
2006	439,000	163,800	161,500	58,700	55,000
2007	449,700	165,800	164,200	63,700	56,000
2008	461,600	167,600	168,900	68,100	57,000
2009	473,800	169,300	174,400	72,100	58,000
2010	485,900	170,800	180,300	75,800	59,000
2011	498,000	172,300	186,400	79,300	60,000
2012	509,900	173,700	192,600	82,600	61,000
2013	521,600	175,100	198,800	85,700	62,000
2014	532,900	176,400	204,800	88,700	63,000
2015	543,400	177,700	210,200	91,500	64,000
2016	553,000	178,900	215,000	94,100	65,000
2017	561,700	180,100	219,000	96,600	66,000
2018	569,800	181,300	222,500	99,000	67,000
2019	577,500	182,400	225,700	101,400	68,000
2020	585,000	183,500	228,800	103,700	69,000
2021	592,300	184,500	231,800	106,000	70,000



Analysis: Based on the above projections, and illustrated by the graph, the fastest growth over the period to 2021 will be in Oakville and Milton, both located in Halton Presbytery.

III. StatsCan 2001: Religion – Dufferin-Peel & Halton Presbytery

Religion	Dufferin Peel		Halton Presbytery	
Total Population by Religion	529,756	% base	872,337	% base
Top 5 Religions	Roman Catholic No religion United Church Anglican Sikh		Roman Catholic No religion United Church Anglican Muslim	
Roman Catholic	177,281	33%	348,559	40%
United Church	52,828	10%	73,357	8%
Anglican	45,783	9%	70,526	8%
Christian undesignated*	16,734	3%	22,531	3%
Religion: Baptist	13,093	2%	17,365	2%
Lutheran	5,204	1%	10,123	1%
Muslim	14,746	3%	45,413	5%
Protestant undesignated*	10,904	2%	15,536	2%
Presbyterian	13,227	2%	17,795	2%
Pentecostal	11,799	2%	11,465	1%
Jewish	1,079	0%	3,341	0%
Buddhist	3,936	1%	12,620	1%
Hindu	22,622	4%	30,167	3%
Sikh	41,692	8%	22,673	3%
Greek Orthodox	3,224	1%	9,066	1%
Mennonite	212	0%	496	0%
Orthodox undesignated*	1,801	0%	9,309	1%
Jehovah's Witnesses	3,854	1%	3,919	0%
Ukrainian Catholic	1,333	0%	6,514	1%
Latter Day Saints (Mormons)	930	0%	1,394	0%
Salvation Army	2,095	0%	1,890	0%
Christian Reformed Church	3,147	1%	1,324	0%
Evangelical Missionary Church	762	0%	781	0%
Christian & Missionary Alliance	1,164	0%	896	0%
Adventist	3,441	1%	2,690	0%
Non-denominational	419	0%	721	0%
Ukrainian Orthodox	212	0%	1,305	0%
Aboriginal spirituality	216	0%	95	0%
Hutterite	0	0%	0	0%
Methodist	696	0%	1,245	0%
Pagan	172	0%	300	0%
Brethren in Christ	315	0%	920	0%
Serbian Orthodox	295	0%	1,939	0%
No religion	68,698	13%	113,371	13%

IV. StatsCan 2001: Population & Dwellings – Dufferin-Peel & Halton Presbytery

Population & Dwellings	Dufferin Peel		Halton Presbytery	
2001 Population	532,132	% base	878,417	% base
Urban Population	458,647	86.20%	869,866	99.00%
Rural Population	73,485	13.80%	8,551	1.00%
Average 2000 household income	$79,841		$84,396	
2001 Dwellings	167,982	% base	293,610	% base
Urban Dwellings	141,784	84.40%	290,437	98.90%
Rural Dwellings	26,198	15.60%	3,173	1.10%
Occupied Dwellings	164,003	% base	288,895	% base
Owned Dwellings	129,593	79%	215,838	75%
Rented Dwellings	34,516	21%	72,872	25%
Single detached houses	100,770	61%	146,006	51%
Semi-detached/row/duplex	37,117	23%	67,798	23%
Apartments	25,952	16%	74,787	26%
Total Area (sq km.)	3,135.00		747.6	
Persons per sq km	169.7		1,175.00	
Dwellings per sq km	53.6		392.7	
Persons per dwelling	3.2		3	

V. Summary Observations

The **GTA Population and Employment Projections** bulletin for **June 2000** forecasted "the population of the GTA is projected to grow by more than 2.6 million people, from 4.78 million in 1996 to 7.45 million by 2031," with the strongest growth expected until 2011. It forecast that, while the city of Toronto itself is projected to grow by more than half a million persons, the regions are anticipated to grow more quickly during this period. As a result, it noted that, while the city will account for 50% of the GTA population in 2001, by 2031 it will represent only 40%. In combination with other projections applicable to the Regions of Peel and Halton, selected census data applicable to the two Presbyteries under study cited in parts **III** and **IV** of this appendix suggests the continuation of a general trend of the past decade, consistent with the observations of the thesis in regard to demographic distinctions between Dufferin-Peel and Halton Presbyteries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Ammerman, Nancy Tatom. *Congregation and Community*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 434 pages.

Ammerman, Nancy T., Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, eds. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998, 256 pages.

Beckstead, Sharon L., ed. *All God's Children Sing: The Children's Music Resource* Winfield: Wood Lake Books, 1992, 102 pages.

Bibby, Reginald W. *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd., 2002, 286 pages.

Bellah, Robert N. et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1986, 355 pages.

Brackney, William H. *Christian Volunteerism: Theology and Praxis*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997, 193 pages.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope: Contested Truth in a Post-Christian World*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000, 153 pages.

_____. *Texts Under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, 117 pages.

Callahan, Kennon L. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1983, 127 pages.

_____. *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church*. San Francisco: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1987, 132 pages.

Conzelmann, Hans. *Acts of the Apostles* in *Hermeneia - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, Translated by James Limburg et al. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987, 287 pages.

Durall, Michael. *Creating Congregations of Generous People*, Bethesda: The Alban Institute, 1998, 104 pages.

Gibran, Kahil. *The Prophet*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher, 1923, 1996, 96 pages.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990, 240 pages.

Grimm, Eugene. *Generous People: How To Encourage Vital Stewardship* (Effective Church series, ed. Herb Miller). Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992, 153 pages.

Hall, Douglas John. *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*. New York: Friendship Press, 1982, 112 pages.

_____. *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986, 248 pages.

_____. *The Future of the Church.* Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1989, 108 pages.

_____. *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991, 456 pages.

_____. *Professing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, 566 pages.

Hartley, Loyde H. *Understanding Church Finance.* New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984, 277 pages.

Harvey, Van A. *A Handbook of Theological Terms.* New York: Collier Books, 1964, 253 pages.

Heerspink, Robert C. *Becoming a Firstfruits Congregation: A Stewardship Guide for Church Leaders*, Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1996, 155 pages.

Hershberger, Michele. *A Christian View of Hospitality: Expecting Surprises.* Waterloo: Herald Press, 1999, 284 pages.

Hinze, Donald W. *To Give and Give Again.* New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1990, 127 pages.

Hoge, Dean, Patrick McNamara and Charles Zech. *Money Matters: Personal Giving in American Churches.* Louisville: WJK Press, 1996, 248 pages.

Hoge, Dean, Patrick McNamara and Charles Zech. *Plain Talk About Churches and Money.* Bethesda: The Alban Institute, 1997, 138 pages.

Hopewell, James F. *Congregations: Stories and Structures.* Edited by Barbara Wheeler. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987, 219 pages.

Hudnut-Beumler, James. *Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money*, Bethesda: The Alban Institute, 1999, 117 pages.

Johnson, Ben Campbell and Glenn McDonald. *Imagining a Church in the Spirit: A Task for Mainline Congregations.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, 160 pages.

Johnson, Douglas W. *Let's Be Realistic About Your Church Budget.* Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1984, 110 pages.

Joiner, Donald W. *Creating a Climate for Giving.* Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2001, 109 pages.

Kalish, Richard A. *The Psychology of Human Behavior*, 3rd ed. Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1973, 486 pages.

Keck, Leander E. *The Church Confident.* Nashville: Abingdon Press 1993, 128 pages.

Levan, Christopher. *The Dancing Steward: Exploring Christian Stewardship Lifestyles.* Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1993, 171 pages.

MacGregor, G.H.C. and Thomas P. Ferris. *The Acts of the Apostles, The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. IX, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954.

McNamara, Patrick H. *More Than Money: Portraits of Transformative Stewardship*, Bethesda: The Alban Institute, 1999, 180 pages.

Mead, Loren B. *The Once and Future Church: Re-Inventing the Congregation for the New Mission Frontier*. Washington: The Alban Institute, 1991, 92 pages.

_____. *More Than Numbers: The Way Churches Grow*. Washington: The Alban Institute, 1993, 113 pages.

_____. *Transforming Congregations for the Future*. Washington: The Alban Institute, 1994, 139 pages.

Meeks, M. Douglas. *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989, 257 pages.

Meeks, Wayne A. The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983, 299 pages.

Miller, Herb. *The Vital Congregation* (Effective Church series, ed. Herb Miller). Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990, 142 pages.

Moltmann, Jurgen et al. *A Passion for God's Reign: Theology, Christian Learning, and the Christian Self*. Edited by Miroslav Volf. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, 112 pages.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Passion for Life: A Messianic Lifestyle*. Translated by M. Douglas Meeks. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978, 128 pages.

_____. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977, 407 pages.

Myers, William R. *Research in Ministry*. Chicago: Exploration Press, 1993, 87 pages.

Pappas, Anthony. *Money, Motivation and Mission in the Small Church*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1989, 125 pages.

Pappas, Anthony and Scott Planting. *Mission: The Small Church Reaches Out*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1993, 137 pages.

Peale, Norman Vincent. *The Power of Positive Thinking*. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1952, 236 pages.

Piper, Watty. *The Little Engine That Could*, New York: Platt and Munk, Publishers, 1930, 1957, 38 pages.

Pittenger, Norman. *The Holy Spirit*. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974, 128 pages.

Rahner, Karl. *The Shape of the Church to Come*. Translated by Edward Quinn. London: SPCK, 1974, 136 pages.

Reumann, John. *Stewardship and the Economy of God.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992, 157 pages.

Richardson, Ronald W. *Creating a Healthier Church.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996, 184 pages.

Rodin, R. Scott. *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life in All Its Fullness.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000, 224 pages.

Roof, Wade Clark. *Community and Commitment: Religious Plausibility in a Liberal Protestant Church.* New York: Elsevier, 1978, 277 pages.

Rupp, George. *Commitment and Community.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989, 117 pages.

Schaller, Lyle E. *The Local Church Looks To The Future.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968, 240 pages.

_____. *Looking in the Mirror: Self-Appraisal in the Local Church.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984, 206 pages.

Schwarz, Christian. *The ABC's of Natural Church Development.* Winfield: The International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1998, 28 pages.

Schwarzentraub, Betsy. *Afire with God: Spirit-ed Stewardship for a New Century.* Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000, 96 pages.

Sheehy, Gail. *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time.* New York: Random House, 1995, 498 pages.

Sinclair, Donna and Christopher White. *Jacob's Blessing: Dreams, Hopes, and Visions for the Church.* Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 1999, 224 pages.

_____. *Emmaus Road: Churches Making Their Way Forward.* Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 2003, 181 pages.

Stackhouse, Max L. *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modern Society.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987, 177 pages.

Stern, Paul C. *Evaluating Social Science Research.* New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 240 pages.

Suenens, Leon Joseph. *A New Pentecost?* Translated by Francis Martin. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975, 239 pages.

Terrien, Samuel. *The Elusive Presence: The Heart of Biblical Theology.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978, 511 pages.

Turner, Gordon B. *Outside Looking In.* Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1987, 133 pages.

The United Church of Canada. *The Manual 2001*. Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1928, 2001, 306 pages.

The United Church of Canada. *Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of The United Church of Canada*. Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1996, 1078 pages.

The United Church of Canada. *Yearbook and Directory 2000, Volume I: Pastoral Charge Statistics (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1999)*. Toronto: The General Council, Division of Communication, Public Relations and Information Unit, 2000, 205 pages.

Vallet, Ronald E. *Stepping Stones of the Steward*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994, 192 pages.

_____. *Congregations at the Crossroads*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998, 240 pages.

_____. *The Steward Living in Covenant: A New Perspective on Old Testament Stories*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001, 251 pages.

Vincent, Mark. *A Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity*. Waterloo: Herald Press, 1997, 136 pages.

Warren, Michael. *Faith, Culture, and the Worshipping Community*. New York: Paulist Press, 1989, 214 pages.

Westerhoff, John W. III. *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society*. New York: Seabury Press, 1983, 148 pages.

Whitehead, Evelyn E. and James D. Whitehead. *Community of Faith: Models and Strategies for Building Christian Communities*. New York: Seabury Press, 1982, 187 pages.

Willimon, William H. *Acts, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching and Teaching*, Edited by James Luther Mays. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988, 197 pages.

Wilson, Marlene. *How To Mobilize Church Volunteers*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983, 156 pages.

Wind, James P. *Places of Worship: Exploring Their History*. Nashville: Association for State and Local History, 1990, 145 pages.

Wink, Walter. *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. New York: Galilee Doubleday, 1998, 224 pages.

Articles in Books, Journals, Magazines, and Newspapers

Block, Isaac I. "Not Just About Money." *The Practice of Ministry in Canada*, Vol. 9, No. 5, Jan. 1993, 21-22.

Brueggemann, Walter. "Preaching a Sub-Version." *Theology Today* Vol. 51, No. 2, 195-212.

Carter, Robin Bullard. "Money Type and Giving." *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2001, 12-13.

Delloff, Linda-Marie. "Rethinking Abundance." *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2001, 14-16, 27-28.

Ek, Timothy C. "Stewardship and Spiritual Health." In *The Abingdon Guide to Funding Ministry*, eds. Donald Joiner and Norma Wimberley, Vol. 3, 19-20 [CD-ROM], Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Gasque, Ward W. "A Fruitful Field: Recent Study of the Acts of the Apostles", *Interpretation* 42:2, April 1988, 117-31.

Hargrove, Barbara. "The Church as the Coming Future." Theology Today. Vol. 34, No. 3, 242-47.

Hotchkiss, Dan. "A Soul Decision." *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2001, 19-21.

Matton, Robert T. "As the Dawn of the 21st Century Approaches, Is the Sun Setting on Our Denomination?" Unpublished article submitted to *The United Church Observer*, (May 10, 1999).

McCollum, Marlis. "It's About Discipleship." *Congregations*, Nov/Dec 2002, 6-9.

Meeks, M. Douglas. "Towards a Trinitarian View of Economics: The Holy Spirit and Human Needs." In *Teaching and Preaching Stewardship: An Anthology*, ed. Nordan C. Murphy, 179-95. New York: Commission on Stewardship, National Council of Churches, 1985.

Oussoren, A.H. Harry. "UpFront." *The Practice of Ministry in Canada*, Vol. 9, No. 5, January 1993, 3.

Powell, Luther P. "Stewardship in the History of the Christian Church." In *Stewardship in Contemporary Theology*, ed. T.K. Thompson, 76-131. New York: Association Press, 1960.

Rademacher, Paul G. "Stewards of Hope." In *Teaching and Preaching Stewardship: An Anthology*, ed. Nordan C. Murphy, 21-27. New York: Commission on Stewardship, National Council of Churches, 1985.

Robinson, Anthony B. "Seven Ways to a Healthier Congregation." *The United Church Observer*, February 2001, 24-29.

Sweet, Leonard S. "Congregation and Community". Theology Today. Vol. 35, No.3, 296-300.

Takahama, Valerie. "The Positive Influence of Norman Vincent Peale." *Toronto Star*, 22 April 2002, D5.

Willimon, William H. "The Effusiveness of Christian Charity", *Theology Today*, Vol. 49, No. 1, 75-81.

Reports, Dissertations, and Other Sources

Bibby, Reginald W. "Anglitrends." Toronto: The Anglican Church of Canada, 1987.

Bibby, Reginald W. "Unitrends." Toronto: The United Church of Canada, Dept. of Stewardship Services, 1994.

Borko, Michael. "Christian Formation and Re-Formation." D.Min. thesis, Lancaster Theological Seminary, 1996.

Bryan, James Lawson. "Raising the Ebenezer of a Small Church: The Reawakening of Purpose and Mission for a Small Church." D.Min. thesis, Drew University, 1986.

Dethmers, David Glynn. "Teaching Christian Stewardship in a Parish Context." D.Min. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1983.

Ferrar, Robert Bascom. "Factors Affecting Volunteerism in Church Related Activities." EDD thesis, University of Houston, 1985.

Parrish, Victoria Ann Wood. "Hanging On by Our Fingernails: Analysing Chronic Failure and Survival of a Congregation." D.Min. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1992.

Reed, Kenneth Randall. "The Development of a Theologically and Pastorally Sound Financial Campaign." D.Min. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1982.

Ritter, Dennis S. "Learning Biblical Concepts of Stewardship for Living." D.Min. thesis, Drew University, 1984.

Snyder, Donald James. "Developing a Comprehensive Congregational Stewardship Program in the United Methodist Church in Quinter, Kansas." D.Min. thesis, Drew University, 1982.

Van Seters, Arthur. *The Doctrine of the Trinity: The Basis for Christian Stewardship.* Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1999, 19 pages.

Vincent, Mark. *Celebrating God's Generosity: A Curriculum on Christian Beliefs About Money.* Elkhart: The Giving Project, 1998, 15 pages.