

PRIORITIES IN AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD  
CONGREGATION

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## PREFACE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Approximately forty percent of the American population will be in church on any given Sunday morning according to a recent Gallup Poll conducted for Christianity Today.<sup>1</sup> Researchers, particularly during the sixties and seventies, have attempted to answer the question, "Why do people go to church?"<sup>2</sup> Do people attend church for social reasons or due to desires for spiritual growth? Do they participate in order to be part of a charitable organization or to worship God? What are the reasons for the church on the corner existing? How does the Church answer these questions? How does the Church see itself? "Most churches scarcely know why they exist."<sup>3</sup>

In 1978, Hoge, Perry and Klever conducted a nationwide survey of Presbyterian ministers and laity as to their views on why their church existed.<sup>4</sup> Specifically they asked for the ranking of given church priorities. Some disagreement was found in this ranking particularly in the areas of evangelism and social action. Differing levels of commitment to the church, age, and theological beliefs were found to be the primary sources of disagreement over the church priorities.<sup>5</sup> In 1979, Hoge and Dixon conducted another study



along these lines this time with Catholic laity.<sup>6</sup> The findings were similar to the Presbyterian study. There was again some disagreement found in the ranking of given church priorities; particularly in the areas of evangelism and social action. The sources of these disagreements remained the same as in the previous study: commitment to the church, age, and theological beliefs.

These findings raise some important questions for the Church. If disagreement as to church goals and priorities was found in both Presbyterian and Catholic congregations, will there be disagreement in other denominations as well? And can any organization be running at maximum efficiency and effectiveness where its members disagree on why they exist or what their goals are? "A definition of goals and an effort at attaining these goals would surely increase the local church's capabilities."<sup>7</sup> Church leadership and laity need to communicate with each other how they see their church. "Through communication a congregation may come to know itself, define its purposes, discover its resources, formulate its goals."<sup>8</sup>

This study may be viewed as a communication study. Is the church a light to the lost, a place to find friends, a place to be nurtured, a place of ministry, or a place of worship? These aspects may be thought of in communication terms. Do the people of the church stress communicating the Gospel to the unchurched? Is the church primarily seen as a place to build interpersonal relationships? Are the aspects

of preaching, teaching, and counseling the highest forms of communication in the church in regard to their importance? Is the church a place where people listen, seek to understand outsiders, and try to meet their needs? Or is the church primarily a place to communicate with God through worship? Perhaps it is a combination of all five aspects of church communication: evangelism, fellowship, nurture, ministry, and worship.

#### Literature Review

It cannot be said that church communication has been ignored. Many articles and books have been written in regard to church and Christian communication, particularly within the past three decades. The literature is primarily prescriptive and fits under three headings: Evangelism, Church Administration, and Church Growth.

The majority of the earlier literature pertaining to Christian communication focused on evangelism. Dillston's Christianity and Communication of 1956, Kraemer's The Communication of the Christian Faith of the same year, DeWire's The Christian as Communicator of 1961 and Nida's Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith of 1960 are a few of the examples of this type of literature.<sup>9</sup> Another book that typifies this period is Luccock's Communicating the Gospel.<sup>10</sup> He covered the topics of preaching techniques, evangelism, and revival campaigns. It is a book for pastors, written by a pastor.

The church administration literature was also written primarily by church workers of one sort or another, who drew from their experiences in an attempt to aid one another in communicating effectively and efficiently with one's congregation. The earliest twentieth century writings on church administration, as far as the author could ascertain, were in the form of periodicals, such as William Leach's Church Management magazine. In 1931, Mr. Leach also began writing books summarizing his periodicals. One of his latest books, Handbook of Church Management, was published in 1958.<sup>11</sup> It covered areas of church administration from committee formation to ministering to those in mourning. His emphasis, like the earlier evangelical books and articles, was on method.

This prescriptive emphasis was heightened in the sixties due to interest in the Management by Objectives approach. The influence of George Odiorne, Peter Drucker, and others was strong at this time within the business world; and many church administration authors took note. Lindgren was one of the first, but certainly not the last, to apply management by objectives techniques to church administration. Lindgren emphasized purpose as the first step in achieving an effective administration within the church. In order to achieve a purposeful church administration, Lindgren listed five goals and principles as follows:

1. Securing an understanding of a commitment to the Christian faith.

2. Coordinating all experiences and activities so they are supportive of one another, as well as of the mission of the church.
3. See every aspect of church life as an opportunity to minister to people.
4. Understanding the surrounding culture and communicating effectively to it.
5. Involving all members of the church in the work of ministering to persons.<sup>12</sup>

Overall, church administration was to serve as a way to provide the resources and power for identifying and achieving such goals.

In 1969, Lindgren restated this in an article as follows:

The first responsibility of the church administrator is to lead the people in seeking to discover the purpose of the church, its reason for existence, what its mission really is; in short, what the goals or ends are toward which the church is trying to move.<sup>13</sup>

Lindgren perceived answering the question "Why do we exist?" as the key to effective administration. He also saw church administration as a dynamic process in which the church administrator was continually recognizing needs, planning, organizing, stimulating, and evaluating--in that order.

A 1972 Christian Ministry article emphasized the process nature of church administration.<sup>14</sup> The church administrator was seen as the organizer, motivator, facilitator, and planner who kept the church on course, keeping the goals of the church in mind in all activities. This view is expressed again and again in the rest of the twentieth century literature on church administration.

In 1973, Kenneth Kilinski wrote the book Organization and Leadership in the Local Church.<sup>15</sup> The first step in effective church administration, according to Kilinski, was that of determining objectives, both primary and secondary. Secondly, the church administrator was to coordinate the resources to accomplish the goals set forth within a budget and organizational structure. Delegation was a vital task to get the people of the church involved and their talents used effectively. Long-range planning was also emphasized by Kilinski. In Kilinski's view, however, the key was always the utmost involvement of the congregation in plans, decisions, and implementations.

Involvement of the congregation was also stressed by Engstrom and Dayton in The Art of Management for Christian Leaders.<sup>16</sup> Management by objectives was to be employed but the emphasis was on motivating the church people. Such was also the case in Roy Carnahan's Creative Pastoral Management.<sup>17</sup> Delegation and motivation promote efficiency, according to Carnahan. Organization according to objectives promotes effectiveness. Said Lloyd Perry in the book Getting the Church on Target, "Our churches need pastor-administrators who can effectively order, forward, and facilitate, the associated efforts of a congregation to realize some defined purposes."<sup>18</sup> This theme of goal orientation and organization in order to maximize the efforts of a congregation was carried over into the third area of the church communication literature, Church Growth.

Church growth has been the most major recent thrust in the church communication literature. The basic question that authors have tried to answer is: "Why do some churches grow and others do not?" Answers have frequently centered around the need for goals. Dean Kelly stated in 1962 that the churches that grow have a clear sense of identity.<sup>19</sup> In 1979, Floyd Bartel became more specific. The kind of church that grows, he said, would exhibit the following growth principles:

1. Motives Principle: A growing congregation has a deliberate commitment to people beyond itself.
2. Purpose Principle: A growing congregation knows clearly why it exists.
3. Climate Principle: A growing congregation has a climate within that accepts and affirms new people.
4. Group Life Principle: A growing church multiplies the number of meaningful groups in the congregation.<sup>20</sup>

Note particularly the second growth principle: A growing congregation knows clearly why it exists.

Goal clarity has been stressed throughout the literature related to the church in the areas of church administration and church growth. Goal clarity was stressed by Lindgren as he applied the management by objectives approach to the church's administration:

The first responsibility of the church administrator is to lead the people in seeking to discover the purpose of the church, its reason for existence, what its mission really is, in short what the goals are toward which the church is trying to move.<sup>21</sup>

Lloyd Perry focused his attention in regard to church administration on the same area by instructing pastors to be administrators who facilitate the efforts of their congregation to obtain specified goals.<sup>22</sup> To accomplish goal clarity within the church, communication must take place.

How does the church communicate across its congregation to establish goals and work toward them? And when and if congregational communication takes place are differences of opinion found as to what the goals should be for the church? A few empirical research studies of the seventies have dealt with such questions. These works are separated from the previous church literature as they go beyond the categories of evangelism, church administration and church growth and take a descriptive approach as opposed to the former prescriptive approach. They will be reviewed chronologically in the following paragraphs.

A 1974 work by Paul Bailey entitled, "Congregational Communication" sought to describe the actual state of a particular church by way of the people themselves.<sup>23</sup> In order to describe the state of communication within a church, Bailey looked at four different areas: The communication network within the church, categorization of communicative activity, the differing concepts of the local church held by members, and the evaluation of the church's communicative performance as perceived by the membership. His objective was to provide an overall picture of congregational communication within a local church. The survey results indicated

a wide range of participation levels along with an equally wide range of concepts and evaluations of the church.

The following year, 1975, William Sadler studied church leader's perceptions of church role and the communication networks within the church.<sup>24</sup> He surveyed several leadership groups from varying denominations: American Baptist, Episcopal, American Lutheran, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, and United Presbyterian. Survey participants were asked what they perceived to be the primary role of the church. Two primary roles were chosen by the majority of the groups surveyed: caring for the needs of the church members and teaching the Gospel. Beyond these two primary roles, however, the perceived role of the church varied not only among the leadership groups but among the individuals participating in this study. These results were derived from a Q-sort of sixteen possible church priorities. Respondents fell into seven clusters: Social Prophets, Prophetic Traditionalists, Social Missionaries, Escapists, Traditionalists, Evangelicals, and Biblicist Missionaries.

A somewhat similar study was conducted by Hoge, Perry and Klever in 1978.<sup>25</sup> These researchers conducted a nationwide survey of Presbyterian ministers and laity in regard to their view of church goals and priorities. A list of twenty possible church priorities was given and the participants were asked to rate them on a scale of one to six, answering the questions: "What do you think the church ought to be



doing?" and "What do you think should be the goals and priorities of the church?" The results were that activities such as religious education and spiritual guidance and counseling were high on the list of priorities for the majority of those surveyed. Disagreement was found, however, in the placing of some activities for the church. Disagreement as to priority placement was particularly noted in the areas of evangelism and social involvement.

These results were compared against the variables of Theological Beliefs, Group Interest Factors, Institutional Interest Factors, Psychological Factors, and Background Factors. Institutional Interest Factors, specifically strong commitment to the church, and one's age were shown to have an effect on the placement of certain church priorities. Theological factors, however, were found to be the source of the major disagreements over church priorities.

In 1979, Dixon and Hoge surveyed three suburban Catholic parishes and asked their laity for preferred models and priorities of the church using Dulle's models of the church, and a revised list of priorities.<sup>26</sup> Dixon and Hoge compared their results to the Presbyterian study. General agreement was found in giving the highest priority to those activities related to congregational nurturing, as in the Presbyterian study. Low priorities were activities related to social action and evangelism. Disagreements were apparent in the prioritizing of papal authority, support for the poor, and social reform. The supposed sources of the differing views

of church priorities were similar to the Presbyterian study, namely, involvement or commitment to church, age, and theological beliefs.

Theological beliefs, church involvement, denominational ties, and clergy-laity differences were seen as determinants of church priority choices in a Gallup poll conducted in 1979.<sup>27</sup> The Gallup organization was commissioned by Christianity Today to poll the American public as to their religious beliefs and practices.<sup>28</sup> In one section of this survey, participants were asked to choose what they believed to be the top priority of Christians out of the following five categories: evangelism, spiritual nurture, social action, strengthening of the local church, and political influence/involvement.<sup>29</sup> The analysis of the results focused on where participants placed evangelism. One of the conclusions was: "People in major denominations give higher priority to other causes than to world evangelism."<sup>30</sup> The highest priority was spiritual nurture or religious education, the same result seen in the Catholic and Presbyterian studies.

#### Theoretic Rationale

This study is expected to build on the foundation already laid by such descriptive works as: "Theology as a Source of Disagreement About Protestant Church Goals and Priorities," by Hoge, Perry and Klever; "Models and Priorities of the Catholic Church as Held by Suburban Laity," by Dixon and Hoge; and the recent Gallup poll commissioned by

Christianity Today in regard to American's religious beliefs and practices.<sup>31</sup> This study is similar in methodology and purpose to these previous studies but the results are expected to add a new dimension primarily based upon the population that will be studied. The population for this study is an Assembly of God congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The study by Dixon and Hoge dealt with Catholic laity; the study by Hoge, Perry and Klever worked with Presbyterian ministers and laity; the poll conducted by Gallup was nationwide but focused on major denominations only. The conclusions of the Presbyterian and Catholic studies were:

We conclude that Catholic laity see their church just as Presbyterian laity see their church. For both, the underlying concern is individual and family support, in both natural and supernatural terms. Church goals which clearly enhance personal and family life (such as religious education and counseling) are given high priority; goals seen as neutral or irrelevant (such as acts of charity or Christian unity) are given medium priority; and goals which might threaten personal and family life (such as social reform or support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights) are given low priority.<sup>32</sup>

The Gallup poll results and conclusions along these lines were similar: "People in major denominations give higher priority to other causes than to world evangelism; most typically to nurture."<sup>33</sup> Will an Assembly of God congregation follow suit?

Does the Assembly of God denomination resemble or differ from the groups previously studied?

In all three of the former studies differences were found between various sub-groups. In the Presbyterian

study,

Persons with a strong commitment to the church, a strong faith in eternal life, having a dualistic view of humanity, and believing in the literal authority of Scripture, stressed evangelism.<sup>34</sup>

In the Catholic study,

Persons with high organizational involvement, holding a dualistic view of human nature, a free-fill image of human behavior, and an emphasis on otherworldliness tended to stress outreach and worship.<sup>35</sup>

In the Gallup poll,

Persons believing in the divinity of Christ, in salvation through Christ, in the literal authority of Scripture, and who read their Bible at least once a month and attended church at least once a month, listed evangelism as the top priority for the church.<sup>36</sup>

The Assembly of God denomination is well known for its evangelical thrust. How will it fit the above descriptions?

An Assembly of God self-study was conducted in the mid-sixties, sampling their constituency as to their beliefs in why their church existed.<sup>37</sup> The results indicated some ambiguity as to their reasons for being. As a result, the Assembly of God denomination declared a three-pronged mission for the church: worship of the Lord, nurture of the people, and evangelism and outreach to the world. Will these prove to be the guiding goals of New Life Center, an Assembly of God church, in 1983?

Will all findings be similar in regard to chosen church priorities as in the Catholic, Presbyterian, and Gallup poll studies? Are the key areas of disagreement with the church

in regard to its priorities and goals, social action and evangelism? Is nurture the highest priority of churches across all denominational lines? Are the sources of chosen priorities theological beliefs, age, and church involvement? The answers to these questions could yield greater understanding as to individual church goals, and communication priorities. "To understand the bustling activities of the Great American Congregation it is helpful to know what its members view as the top priorities of Christians."<sup>38</sup> This study is designed to answer several research questions.

#### Research Questions

1. What are the personal involvement levels of the members in church related activities?
2. Which descriptions of the church are preferred by members of the congregation?
3. What priorities are preferred by members of the church and how do those priorities compare to the preferences of members of other denominations?
4. Is there a relationship between one's involvement and one's preferred priorities for the church?
5. Is there a relationship between one's involvement and priorities and one's preferred description of the church?
6. Do the variables of sex, evangelical stance, age, and leadership position have an effect upon one's involvement levels or preferred priorities for the church?

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Larry Richards, "The Great American Congregation: An Illusive Ideal?" Christianity Today, 21 November, 1980, p.20.

<sup>2</sup>Dean R. Hoge and David T. Polk, "A Test of Theories of Protestant Church Participation and Commitment," Review of Religious Research, 21 (1980), pp. 315-329.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond McLaughlin, Communication for the Church (Grand Rapids; Zondervan Publishing House, 1968), p. 155.

<sup>4</sup>Dean R. Hoge, Everett L. Perry and Gerald L. Klever, "Theology as a Source of Disagreement about Protestant Church Goals and Priorities," Review of Religious Research, 19 (1978), pp. 116-138.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>6</sup>Robert C. Dixon and Dean R. Hoge, "Models and Priorities of the Catholic Church as Held by Suburban Laity," Review of Religious Research, 20, (1979), pp. 150-167.

<sup>7</sup>McLaughlin, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup>Paul J. Bailey, "Communication in the Congregation" (unpub. M.S. thesis, University of Kansas, 1974), pp. 3, 4.

<sup>9</sup>F. W. Dillstone, Christianity and Communication (London: Collins, 1956); Hendrik Kraemer, The Communication of the Christian Faith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956); Harry A. DeWire, The Christian as Communicator (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961); Eugene Nida, Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

<sup>10</sup>Halford E. Luccock, Communicating the Gospel (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954).

<sup>11</sup>William H. Leach, Handbook of Church Management (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958).

<sup>12</sup>A. Lindgren, Foundations for Purposeful Church Administration (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 84-85.

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- <sup>14</sup>S. Leas, "The Uniqueness of the Church as a Management System," Christian Ministry, May, 1972, pp. 8-11.
- <sup>15</sup>Kenneth K. Kilinski and Jerry C. Wottord, Organization and Leadership in the Local Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervon Publishing House, 1973).
- <sup>16</sup>Ted W. Engstrom and Edward R. Dayton, The Art of Management for Christian Leaders (Waco: Word Books Publishers, 1979).
- <sup>17</sup>Roy E. Carnahan, Creative Pastoral Management (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1976).
- <sup>18</sup>Lloyd M. Perry, Getting the Church on Target (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 44.
- <sup>19</sup>Dean Kelley, Why Conservative Churches are Growing (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).
- <sup>20</sup>Floyd G. Bartel, A New Look at Church Growth (Newton: Faith & Life Press, 1979) pp. 10-38.
- <sup>21</sup>Lindgren, "Church Administration as a Dynamic Process," p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup>Perry, p. 44.
- <sup>23</sup>Bailey, "Communication in the Congregation."
- <sup>24</sup>William Sadler, "Church Leader's Perceptions of Church Role, Church Leadership, and Communication Networks within Congregations," (Paper presented at the Religious Speech Association Convention, Houston, Texas, December 1975).
- <sup>25</sup>Hoge, Perry, and Klever.
- <sup>26</sup>Dixon and Hoge.
- <sup>27</sup>"What the Christianity Today - Gallup Poll Found Out About Attitudes Toward Winning The World for Christ," Christianity Today, 18 July 1980, p. 28.
- <sup>28</sup>"The Christianity Today - Gallup Poll: An Overview," Christianity Today, 22 February 1980, p. 12.
- <sup>29</sup>"What the Christianity Today - Gallup Poll Found Out About Attitudes Toward Winning the World for Christ," p. 28.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Dixon and Hoge: Hoge, Perry, and Klever; "The Christianity Today - Gallup Poll: An Overview."

<sup>32</sup>Dixon and Hoge, p. 159.

<sup>33</sup>"What the Christianity Today - Gallup Poll Found Out About Attitudes Toward Winning the World for Christ," p. 28.

<sup>34</sup>Hoge, Perry, and Klever, p. 129

<sup>35</sup>Dixon and Hoge, p. 162.

<sup>36</sup>"What the Christianity Today - Gallup Poll Found Out About Attitudes Toward Winning the World for Christ," p. 28.

<sup>37</sup>"The Fastest-Growing American Denomination," Christianity Today, 7 January 1983, p. 30.

<sup>38</sup>Richards, p. 20.



## CHAPTER II

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In an attempt to answer the research questions a survey was developed using as springboards the previous studies of Hoge, Perry and Klever; Dixon and Hoge; and the Gallup poll of American's religious beliefs and practices. The investigative methods and procedures are detailed in this chapter. The topics discussed include construction of the research questionnaire, the subjects, and data collection procedures.

#### The Research Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of five sections. In the following paragraphs, each section will be discussed individually. A copy of the entire questionnaire may be found in the Appendix.

Section I of the questionnaire consisted of seven questions. The first question determined whether the survey recipient considered the church being studied to be his or her "church home." Declaring the church to be one's "church home" implied a degree of identification with or commitment to the church. Only those recipients who held some form of identification with the church were used in the analysis.

Questions two and three covered the variables of sex and age. Questions four, five, and six were intended to discover the participant's general involvement level within the church. These questions covered attendance patterns, any assigned leadership positions, and how long the participant had been attending this particular church. The Presbyterian and Catholic studies which are foundational to this study also used a measure of church involvement as a variable and found it to often correlate with the priority of evangelism.<sup>1</sup> The Gallup poll, also foundational to this study, used general involvement levels as one of five variables to establish evangelical stance.

The Gallup poll study included general involvement in church as one of five factors to operationally define evangelical stance. The five components of the definition were three beliefs and two behaviors:

1. Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God and is both fully God and fully man.
2. The only hope for heaven is through personal faith in Jesus Christ.
3. The Bible is the Word of God and is not mistaken in its statements and teachings
4. The individual reads the Bible at least once a month.
5. The individual attends religious services at least once a month.<sup>2</sup>

Those who identified themselves as holding to all five of these beliefs and practices were considered to be evangelical in their orientation. The analysis of this poll focused on

this group of evangelicals, contrasting them with all others surveyed. In order to compare this survey's results with those of the Gallup poll, the five evangelical indicators listed above were included in the questionnaire. Indicators four and five were included in Section I of the questionnaire. Indicators one through three were included in Section II.

Sections III, IV, and V were intended to gather data which could be used to answer the first three research questions. Section III was concerned with the respondent's personal involvement in church-related activities. Section IV discovered how the participant would define the "ideal" church by requiring the respondent to rank order five given descriptions. Section V asked the participant to rate each of twenty possible church activities. All three sections were categorized according to evangelism, nurture, ministry, fellowship, and worship. The five general categories have been derived from Dulle's five Models of the Church.<sup>3</sup> They may be defined as follows:

1. Ministry--outreach beyond the church to society, including acts of charity and social reform.
2. Nurture--providing spiritual growth and guidance opportunities for all ages such as Bible classes, support groups, seminars, and counseling.
3. Fellowship--building relationships within the congregation and unity between churches such as by various social gatherings.
4. Worship--the sacraments and praise offered to God by the church in the taking of Holy

communion and time of singing and adoration during each service.

5. Evangelism--bringing the Gospel to the lost at home and abroad, both as a church and as an individual.

The three sections of the questionnaire were closely linked by these five categories.

Sections III and V mirrored each other. They asked basically the same question but from two different perspectives. Section III asked the participant about his or her personal involvement level in given church-related activities. Section V took a similar list of church-related activities and asked the participant to indicate the level of importance of each one for the church. Section III was personal--what I'm doing. Section V was not self-directed--this is what the church ought to be doing. Section V was taken directly from the Presbyterian study conducted by Hoge, Perry, and Klever.<sup>4</sup> It was identical with only one minor exception. Number eight was changed slightly in its wording from "Celebrate frequently the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" to "Celebrate Holy Communion frequently." The author believed the second wording was more familiar in terminology to the congregation chosen for this study.

Section III was developed to parallel Section V as well as to cover all the known activities of the church (according to a review by the pastor of the church surveyed). To best compare these two sections, the following list contains the items taken from the two sections according to the

five general categories of Evangelism, Worship, Nurture, Fellowship, and Ministry.

1. Evangelism

a. Local

Section III

- #12 - Witness by word or deed at work, in neighborhood
- #13 - Support and attend revivals

Section V

- #2 - Preach the Gospel in worship services
- #14 - Engage in personal evangelism locally

b. World

Section III

- #11 - Support Assembly of God Missions

Section V

- #10 - Support mission efforts to preach the Gospel in all lands

2. Worship

Section III

- #1 - Church music program
- #2 - Time of praise/singing during the services you attend

Section V

- #7 - Provide worship which makes free use of music and the arts
- #8 - Celebrate Holy Communion frequently

3. Nurture

a. Youth

Section III

- #9 - Youth programs

Section V

- #15 - Provide religious education for children and youth
- #17 - Develop a special youth ministry

## b. Adults

## Section III

- #3 - Sunday morning Bible classes
- #4 - Wednesday evening program
- #17 - Men or women's ministry
- #18 - Share groups

## Section V

- #16 - Provide for guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual members

## c. Counseling

## Section III

- #10 - Seek advice or receive counseling from church

## Section V

- #19 - Make competent pastoral counseling available to all persons

## d. Morals

## Section V

- #3 - Maintain Christian moral standards among members
- #5 - Assist all members in reflecting on questions of personal morality

## 4. Fellowship

## a. Congregation

## Section III

- #5 - Special get-togethers for fellowship
- #6 - Fellowship before and after the services
- #7 - Developing friendships at the church
- #8 - Meet and greet new people at church

## Section V

- #4 - Make the church a strong fellowship in which all members feel unity and mutual support
- #6 - Open avenues of communication between people
- #18 - Develop understanding between youth and older generations

## b. Unity

## Section III

- #20 - Activities with other churches in the area

## Section V

- #20 - Work for the unity of all Christian believers

## 5. Ministry

## a. Charity

## Section III

- #14 - Provide some form of help for the needy

## Section V

- #1 - Encourage individual members to carry out acts of charity
- #11 - Support and organize local and denominational programs for aiding needy persons

## b. Social Action

## Section III

- #15 - Actively work for social reform as a Christian
- #16 - Study today's issues in light of Biblical teaching

## Section V

- #9 - Study social issues in the light of Biblical teachings
- #12 - Encourage individual members to support social reform
- #13 - Provide church support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights

Note that the two sections, although not identical, were comparable and, thus, facilitated investigation of what activities individuals were most involved in versus what they felt the church should be doing.

Section IV asked the participant to rank five given definitions of the church according to their importance in describing the "ideal" church. The five definitions were based upon the five categories of ministry, evangelism, nurture, worship, and fellowship. The five definitions were also patterned after Dulle's models of the church as seen in the Catholic study.<sup>5</sup> The definitions for this study were as follows:

1. Nurture--The Church is the body of believers led by Pastors who are ordained and called of God to instruct and lead their congregation on His Way, according to His Word, that they may all grow in God's grace.
2. Fellowship--The Church is the body of believers called together as a community; sharing together in the bond of fellowship.
3. Worship--The Church is the body of believers which comes together to worship God.
4. Evangelism--The Church is the body of believers present in this world to share the Gospel with the lost.
5. Ministry--The Church is the body of believers present in this world to serve the needs of mankind and bring God's healing to their body, mind, and spirit.

Section IV along with Section III and Section V were each based upon the five categories of nurture, fellowship, worship, evangelism, and ministry. In the analysis, the results from these three sections were correlated and compared to the other studies.



## Subjects

A message from Pastor James Holder which was printed in New Life Center's weekly newsletter during 1983 describes the congregation studied:

"It is my distinct privilege to introduce you to New Life Center Assembly of God Church. I believe you will discover it to be a Christ-centered church, with a deep commitment of meeting human needs. Our friendly people endeavor to be sensitive to the needs of those worshiping with us. Our services are prayerfully planned to cultivate a worship that unites the heart of man to God. Our commitment as a church is to serve you in your times of sorrow as well as your joys; to supply a link between your crisis and the Christ of every crisis.

New Life Center strives to maintain a total ministry to our community. Our Youth Program is exciting and will help your teenagers to develop mature Christian attitudes. Our Christian Education Department maintains an educational curriculum of in-depth study of the Scriptures on every age level. Our Fine Arts Department adds an inspiring dimension to each service. Allow us the opportunity to minister to you."

New Life Center is an Assembly of God church located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was chosen for this study because it is part of a theologically conservative and evangelical denomination--the Assemblies of God. The Assemblies of God is the largest of the Pentecostal denominations. Their headquarters for both the United States and abroad is located in Springfield, Missouri. The local Assembly of God churches are considered to be independent in many respects from their headquarters. The headquarters does not dictate local church structure or policies. There are, however, some suggested Assembly of God programs for Christian Education.

New Life Center uses these Assembly of God programs for their youth and adults. They include Missionettes and Royal Rangers for the children (equivalent to Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts). There are also Men and Women's Ministries. New Life Center maintains a Sunday morning Bible study for all ages along with Sunday morning and Sunday evening worship services. Wednesday evening is Family Night at the church with a "pot-luck supper" and Bible study. Thus, while Assembly of God congregations are independent, there are similarities between congregations in programs and government. New Life Center seems to be a fairly typical Assembly of God church in this respect.

New Life Center is located between suburbia and downtown Tulsa. Its membership is primarily white, middle-class, young families. Pastor James Holder works with Associate Pastor Vaughn Peak and Youth Pastor Stacy Miller as well as an elected board of elders and deacons from the congregation. Sunday morning attendance at New Life Center is approximately two hundred. A modified church mailing list was used. Those excluded were those out of town, out of state, and one time visitors in an attempt to include only those who considered New Life Center to be their church home. To ensure this, the first question of the survey asked the respondent if they considered New Life Center to be their church home (see Appendix). The total population surveyed equaled 233.

## Data Collection Procedures

On September 4, 1983, Pastor Holder announced to his Sunday morning congregation that a survey would be arriving in the mail at their homes within the next week. He encouraged them to "be faithful" in filling out the forms and returning them promptly. The following Tuesday, September 6, the church's weekly newsletter carried this announcement:

### COMMUNICATION SURVEY

You will be receiving a survey in the mail this week as was mentioned Sunday morning. Please take out the time to fill it out and return it in the envelope provided for you. We appreciate your full cooperation. Thank you!

The first mailing of the survey went out the same day as the church newsletter, September 6, 1983. The survey, a stamped, return envelope, and a cover letter which was printed on church stationery were sent to each potential participant. The cover letter accompanying this first mailing was written by Pastor Holder. It contained statements of his approval, promised confidentiality, and asked for cooperation and a quick response (see Appendix). Two hundred and thirty-three surveys were sent out. One hundred and fifteen were returned. One hundred of those returned were suitable for analysis. The other fifteen had checked "No" to the first question on the survey which indicated that they did not consider New Life Center to be their church home.

On October 25, 1983, the second mailing of the survey was sent out to those who had not yet responded. The survey, a stamped, return envelope and a new cover letter were sent again to the 118 who had not yet responded. The new cover letter contained a note from the author emphasizing the importance of each individual responding. It also contained an excerpt from the original cover letter (see Appendix). Twenty-seven surveys were returned. Fifteen were completed and suitable for analysis. The other twelve were those who did not consider New Life Center to be their church home.

The third and final mailing went out on December 7, 1983. A survey, stamped, return envelope, and a new cover letter were sent to the ninety-seven who had not yet responded. The new cover letter was written by the author and focused on reasons why the participants may have not yet responded (see Appendix). Twenty-one surveys were returned. Only ten were suitable for analysis. The percentage of unusable responses went up from mail-out to mail-out; that is, thirteen percent of respondents to the first mailing, forty-four percent of respondents to the second mailing, and fifty-two percent of respondents to the third mailing did not regard New Life Center as their church home. This suggests that the remaining non-respondents may be, for the most part, people on the church mailing list "by mistake."

Overall responses were received from 163 (70 percent) of persons on the initial mailing list. The 125 usable responses represent 64 percent of the 195 (233 minus 38 who

who did not regard New Life Center as their church home) presumed members--but the percentage of actual members included in the sample may be larger if, in fact, the 70 persons who did not respond include a large number of persons on the roll "by mistake." If 52 percent (same as third mailing) of the remaining 70 nonrespondents are on the roll by mistake, then there are approximately 159 adults who regard New Life Center as their church home and the 125 usable respondents are about 79 percent of the population.

The decision to include only those who regard New Life Center as their church home was based upon assumptions utilized in the analysis. For example, involvement levels were assumed to indicate personal preferences, as opposed to, attendance at another church. Also, the preferred priorities were assumed to be those of the New Life Center congregation, excluding outside viewpoints.

The responses were tabulated, correlated, and compared to the previous studies with the use of computer analysis and statistical tests. All tests were performed with SPSSX programs.<sup>6</sup> Significance was set at 0.05. Results are reported in Chapter III.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dixon and Hoge, p. 162; Hoge, Perry, and Klever,  
p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>"The Christianity Today - Gallup Poll: An Overview,"  
p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Dixon and Hoge, pp. 151-152.

<sup>4</sup>Hoge, Perry, and Klever, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup>Dixon and Hoge, pp. 151-152.

<sup>6</sup>SPSS Inc., SPSSX User's Guide (New York: McGraw-Hill,  
1983).

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

This study was designed to ascertain from a given church congregation the correlation of: levels of involvement in church-related activities, the ranking of church definitions, and the ranking of church priorities. A mail survey was developed and sent out to a section of a local church congregation using a modified church mailing list. (Those excluded were those out of town, out of state, and one-time visitors, in an attempt to include only those who considered New Life Center to be their church home.) The entire sample population equalled 233. After three successive mailings, the survey return rate equalled seventy percent of the sample population. One hundred and twenty-five of those returned were suitable for analysis. Those not included in the analysis were those who did not consider New Life Center to be their church home. The 125 usable respondents approximated seventy-nine percent of the population that regard New Life Center as their church home. The results are detailed in this chapter. The topics discussed include: description of the sample, levels of involvement, ranking of church descriptions, ranking of church priorities, the effects of priorities on involvement levels, the

relationship of church descriptions to involvement and priorities, and the effects of selected variables on involvement levels and perceived priorities.

#### Description of the Sample

Of the 125 respondents, sixty were male and sixty-two were female. (Three respondents did not report sex.) Their ages ranged from seventeen to fifty-and-over. The median age bracket was thirty to thirty-nine. The modal age bracket was twenty-three to twenty-nine. The majority (fifty-two percent) of those responding had attended New Life Center for two years or less, but the range in length of attendance was from less than six months to twenty-three years. Of the respondents, thirty-six percent occupied some leadership position, most often youth work of some sort (Sunday school, children's programs, etc.). Approximately seventy-five percent of the respondents would be considered evangelical according to the criteria established by the Christianity Today Gallup poll study. (See Chapter II, p. 19)

Ninety-four percent of the respondents attended religious services at New Life Center at least once a month; eighty-four percent attended every Sunday; eighty-six percent read the Bible at least once a month; fifty percent read the Bible daily. Ninety-eight percent either agreed or strongly agreed that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, both fully God and fully man. Ninety-eight percent



also either agreed or strongly agreed that the only hope for heaven is through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Ninety-seven percent agreed or strongly agreed that the Bible is the Word of God and is not mistaken in its statements and teachings.

#### Level of Involvement

The participants were asked to indicate their involvement level for each of twenty church-related activities on a scale of one to six with one indicating high involvement and six indicating low involvement. Table I (on the following page) shows the ratings and the overall ranking of these twenty church-related activities according to the mean level of involvement.

The time of praise and singing during the services had the highest overall involvement level. The adopt-a-student program at New Life Center had the lowest overall involvement level. Special groups, such as the Men or Women's Ministry, the church music program, Share groups, and youth programs ranked relatively low as did active involvement in social reform and receiving counseling from the church. Developing friendships at New Life Center and witnessing by word or deed at work and in the neighborhood evoked high involvement levels. The overall average involvement level for each respondent, all twenty church related activities considered, ranged from a low of 5.95 to a high of 1.38. The mean was 3.688.

TABLE I  
LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

Item Number	Text	Mean*	Standard Deviation
2	Time of praise/singing during the services you attend	1.811	1.108
7	Developing friendships at New Life Center	2.861	1.462
12	Witness by word or deed at work, in neighborhood	2.925	1.485
13	Support and attend revivals	3.008	1.620
6	Fellowship before and after the services	3.056	1.574
3	Sunday morning Bible study	3.066	1.970
4	Wednesday evening family nights	3.131	2.061
14	Provide some form of help for the needy	3.202	1.337
11	Support Assembly of God Missions	3.317	1.830
8	Meet and greet new people at New Life Center	3.418	1.656
16	Study today's issues in light of Biblical teaching	3.425	1.659
5	Special get-togethers for fellowship	3.569	1.610
17	Men or Women's Ministry	4.322	1.694
15	Actively work for social reform as a Christian	4.387	1.563
1	Church music program (i.e., instrumental, choir, direct, etc.)	4.415	2.089
10	Seek advice or receive counseling from church	4.630	1.413
9	Youth programs	4.840	1.626
20	Activities with other churches in the area	4.882	1.530
18	Share Groups	4.958	1.544
19	Adopt a student	5.153	1.631

\*1= high involvement; 6= low involvement

The twenty involvement scales were subject to factor analysis (principal axis factoring, varimax rotation). Seven factors (all those with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or more) were initially extracted and rotated. All factors were judged interpretable and retained. (See Table II on the following page.) Factor scores were calculated using the regression method

Factor 1 included activities dealing with developing and/or maintaining friendships at New Life Center. Factor 1 was therefore referred to as Fellowship. Factor 2 included witnessing activities, charitable activities, and the study of today's issues in the light of Biblical teaching. Factor 2 was designated as Lifestyle Witness. The four items loading on Factor 3 all related to receiving nurture from the church. Therefore Factor 3 was designated as Mutual Edification. Factor 4 grouped together missions, revivals, and Sunday morning Bible study. Factor 4 was designated as Outreach. Factor 5 included activities related to the church music program and was designated as Music. Factor 6 was designated as Community Reform as it included activities with other churches and social reform. Factor 7 included only one activity--the adopt-a-student program at New Life Center. Factor 7 was referred to as Adopt-a-Student.

In order to assess the relative importance of these seven factors, those items loading on each factor were examined and the average ranking calculated for the items

TABLE II  
 FACTOR ANALYSIS: LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

Item Number	Factors						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7310	2542	1982	2085	2269	1647	1517
7	6682	3134	2927	2585	1634	1061	1468
8	6250	2508	2238	3034	1132	2732	1014
5	4500	0978	2860	2413	2452	5094	1049
16	0091	6357	0183	0466	-0890	2882	0168
12	3058	5680	0807	2864	-0530	0211	-0416
14	3049	5265	0495	2515	1414	1799	2018
17	2904	-1467	6331	3143	2049	1573	1061
9	2771	0257	5767	0350	-1224	1683	-0296
18	-0354	1608	5272	1458	2480	4376	2491
10	0887	1628	4826	-0485	1864	-0052	0553
11	2327	1699	0190	7604	-0325	0131	0657
13	3354	4210	1781	4686	2965	1267	1354
3	3031	1384	1729	3961	2583	2390	0145
1	1091	-1437	0688	-0070	7836	1519	0391
4	4377	0836	2967	1667	4575	0381	-0122
2	2891	2863	1525	1193	3940	-0942	0456
20	0819	1104	0687	0454	0132	4994	0388
15	2203	3841	1393	-0327	1073	4624	-0255
19	1526	0410	1046	0812	0365	0713	8962

in question. (Thus, for example, Factor 1 had four items [#6, #7, #8, #5] which loaded on it and these four items ranked fifth, second, tenth, and twelfth, for an average ranking of 7.25.) The average ranking for all seven factors showed that factors one, two, four, and five elicited relatively high involvement and factors three, six, and seven elicited relatively low involvement (see Table III).

TABLE III  
AVERAGE RANKING OF INVOLVEMENT FACTORS

Factor	Average Ranking
Outreach	6.33
Fellowship	7.25
Lifestyle Witness	7.33
Music	7.67
Community Reform	16.00
Mutual Edification	16.25
Adopt-a-Student	20.00

#### Church Descriptions

Section IV of the survey contained five descriptions of the church. Those surveyed were asked to rank each definition according to perceived importance in defining the church ideally. (See Table IV on the following page.) The description of the church characterized as Nurture was ranked

number one more frequently by the respondents than any other description. Worship and Evangelism were ranked a close second and third. Ministry and Fellowship fell behind with only fourteen percent of the respondents ranking Ministry first and only six percent of the respondents ranking Fellowship first. Fellowship was ranked fifth by fifty-three percent of the respondents.

TABLE IV  
RANKINGS OF CHURCH DESCRIPTIONS

Descriptions	Rankings				
	1	2	3	4	5
Nurture	36 (32%)*	20 (18%)	26 (23%)	15 (13%)	17 (15%)
Fellowship	7 (6%)	8 (7%)	11 (10%)	29 (25%)	61 (53%)
Worship	28 (25%)	23 (20%)	31 (27%)	24 (21%)	8 (7%)
Evangelism	27 (24%)	31 (27%)	23 (20%)	22 (19%)	12 (10%)
Ministry	16 (14%)	32 (28%)	23 (20%)	24 (21%)	18 (16%)

\*Column percentages

## Priorities

Given a list of twenty possible church priorities, participants were asked to rank each on a scale of one to six (one high, six, low). Table V (see following page) shows the overall mean rating of these twenty church priorities. They were ranked by their mean ratings. Most of the priorities were regarded as important with ratings above 3.5, as the mid-point of the scale. Items twelve and thirteen fell below the mid-point at 3.966 and 4.109, respectively.

Preaching the Gospel in worship services had the highest overall mean score. Providing for guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual members was a very close second. Providing religious education for children and youth ranked third overall. Other high scores were given to fellowship activities and missions efforts. Maintaining moral standards, working for the unity of Christian believers, celebrating Holy Communion, developing a youth ministry, engaging in local evangelism, and providing competent pastoral counseling were given a relatively high average score as well. The four lowest priorities were all socially related. Providing church support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights was given the lowest overall mean score. The average priority rating for each respondent, all twenty possible priorities considered, ranged from a low of 3.95 to a high of 1.00. The mean was 2.434.

TABLE V  
RATINGS OF PRIORITIES

Item Number	Text	Mean*	Standard Deviation
THE CHURCH OUGHT TO:			
2	Preach the Gospel in worship services	1.352	0.616
16	Provide for guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual members	1.537	0.753
15	Provide religious education for children and youth	1.661	0.871
4	Make the church a strong fellowship in which all members feel unity and mutual support	1.852	0.850
10	Support mission efforts to preach the Gospel in all lands	1.934	0.898
3	Maintain Christian moral standards among members in the areas of alcoholic beverage consumption, gambling, sexual conduct, and related matters	2.025	0.944
20	Work for the unity of all Christian believers	2.068	1.232
8	Celebrate Holy Communion frequently	2.090	0.918
17	Develop a special youth ministry	2.092	0.987
14	Engage in personal evangelism locally	2.118	0.958
19	Make competent pastoral counseling available to all persons	2.185	0.991
18	Develop understanding between youth and older generations	2.494	1.053
5	Assist all members in reflecting on questions of personal morality	2.665	1.068
6	Open avenues of communication between people	2.750	1.087
1	Encourage individual members to carry out acts of charity to needy persons	2.797	0.983
7	Provide worship which makes free use of music and the arts	2.833	1.272
9	Study social issues in the light of Biblical teachings	3.085	1.087



TABLE V (Continued)

Item Number	Text	Mean*	Standard Deviation
11	Support and organize local and denominational programs for aiding needy persons	3.142	1.132
12	Encourage individual members to support social reform	3.966	1.359
13	Provide church support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights	4.109	1.333

\*1 = highest priority; 6 = lowest priority

The twenty priority scales were subjected to factor analysis. Six factors (all those with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or more) were initially extracted and rotated. Since all factors were not interpretable, the number of factors was reduced to five and the process repeated. The resulting five-factor solution is reported in Table VI. (See Table VI on the following page.) Factor 1 was designated as Social Reform as it included primarily those items related to some form of social action. Factor 2 was designated Communication as it included items directly related to congregational communication and items indirectly related such as counseling and youth ministry. Factor 3 was designated Morals and included only the two items referring to the maintenance and reflection of good moral conduct. Factor 4 was

designated as Nurture as it included the provision of guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual members and personal (as opposed to public) evangelism. Factor 5 was designated as Evangelism and included missions, preaching the Gospel, Holy Communion, and religious education for youth.

TABLE VI  
FACTOR ANALYSIS: RATINGS OF PRIORITIES

Item Number	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
12	8422	1699	0126	0546	0099
13	7256	1321	1831	0439	0466
11	7152	1255	-0847	-0141	3911
9	4049	3555	1934	-1270	1907
1	3815	2504	0475	0155	1818
7	3699	1591	2281	2028	-1983
20	3279	1408	3044	1456	-0557
18	2504	6764	3375	0404	0598
6	3293	6615	0756	2374	-0715
17	0979	5432	1427	0565	0718
19	2834	5072	0539	3149	-0546
4	2500	4966	2150	-0156	0079
3	0342	2353	6855	0265	1225
5	2348	3149	4641	3111	1432
14	0514	0350	1127	6791	2131
16	1092	3817	1524	4201	1245
10	2226	1485	-1418	4437	5539
2	0485	-1793	1170	0478	4693
8	1007	2282	2676	1174	4137
15	0049	2444	-0295	1487	2881

To assess the relative importance of these five factors, those items loading on each factor were examined and the average ranking calculated for each factor. The average rankings showed that factors four and five were relative high, whereas factors two and three were moderately high and factor one was low (see Table VII).

TABLE VII  
AVERAGE RANKING OF PRIORITY FACTORS

Factor	Average Ranking
Evangelism	4.25
Nurture	6.00
Morals	9.50
Communication	10.00
Social Reform	16.00

Examination of ratings and ranking suggested the current results were similar to prior results from each Catholic and Presbyterian populations. To assess the strength of similarity, a series of Spearman correlation coefficients was calculated on the ranks of those priority items included in two or more of the studies.

All twenty items in the present study corresponded to items in the survey of Presbyterians.<sup>1</sup> The current rank

ordering of the items was correlated with the rankings of Presbyterian laity at 0.732 ( $p=0.01$ ) and with the rankings of Presbyterian clergy at 0.510 ( $p=0.05$ ). The correlation between Presbyterian laity and clergy was 0.558 ( $p=0.05$ ).

Only fifteen items on the current questionnaire (Numbers: 1-4, 6, 8, 10-13, 15-17, 19, 20) corresponded to items on the survey of Roman Catholics.<sup>2</sup> The current rank ordering of those fifteen items correlated to the rankings of Catholics at 0.575 ( $p=0.05$ ). The correlation between Catholics and Presbyterian laity was 0.816 ( $p=0.01$ ); between Catholics and Presbyterian clergy, 0.304.

The results indicated a significant positive correlation between rankings by current respondents and rankings by Presbyterian laity. Results also indicated significant (but weaker), positive correlations between rankings by current respondents and both Presbyterian clergy and Roman Catholics.

#### Effects of Priorities on Involvement

Is there a correlation between one's involvement level and one's perception of priorities for the church. The results seem to indicate "Yes" in some instances. Table VIII (on the following page) lists the correlations of involvement level with priorities. There is a positive correlation between involvement in Fellowship and the perception of Nurture as a priority. There is also a positive correlation between involvement in Lifestyle Witness

and the priorities of Morals and Nurture. There is a positive correlation between involvement in Outreach and the priority of Evangelism. There is a negative correlation, however, between the involvement in Music and the Morals priority.

TABLE VIII  
CORRELATIONS OF INVOLVEMENT LEVELS WITH PRIORITIES

Involvement Factor Scores	Priority Factor Scores				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	.0488	.0190	-.0719	.3357*	-.0415
2	-.0337	.1310	.2742**	.3335**	.1726
3	-.0814	.0063	-.0474	.0142	-.1172
4	-.1518	.0529	-.0456	.0497	.3037**
5	-.1042	-.0037	-.1973	.1078	-.0808
6	.0156	.0539	-.0081	.0871	-.0545
7	-.0685	-.0057	.1388	-.0107	-.0439

\*p = 0.05

\*\*p = 0.01

#### Relationship of Church Description to Involvement and Priorities

Multiple discriminant analysis was used to assess possible relationships between preferred church description and involvement and priorities. Respondents were assigned to groups on the basis of the most preferred church

description. Since only a few (seven) people selected the "Fellowship" description as their first choice, those persons were reassigned to another cell indicating their second choice, leaving four cells: Nurture, Worship, Evangelism, and Ministry. An analysis was then performed to determine if some linear combination of involvement levels and priority scores might significantly distinguish between cells. Results indicated, however, that the four cells did not differ on involvement or priority indices.

#### Effects of Demographics on Involvement

A series of ANOVA's were performed with leadership, sex, evangelical stance, and age as Independent variables and each of the involvement factors as Dependent variables.

As shown by Table IX (see the following page), there was a main effect for leadership accounting for six percent of the variance, a main effect for evangelical stance accounting for two percent of the variance, and an effect for age by evangelical stance accounting for four percent of the variance in Factor 1. Examination of cell means indicated that leaders were more involved than non-leaders. Evangelicals were more involved than non-evangelicals, and as evangelicals aged they became more involved in these Fellowship activities. Non-evangelicals did the opposite. Younger non-evangelicals were more involved than older non-evangelicals.

TABLE IX  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 1 (FELLOWSHIP)

Leader	Evangelical	Evangelical by Age	m	$\bar{x}$
Yes			41	-0.32
No			71	0.19
	Yes		86	-0.09
	No		26	0.31
		Yes		
		17-29	31	0.01
		30-39	24	0.01
		40-49	17	-0.18
		50+	14	-0.36
		No		
		17-29	12	-0.08
		30-39	5	0.38
		40-49	4	0.40
		50+	5	1.10

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	5.72	1	5.72	9.21*	0.066
Sex (B)	0.09	1	0.09	<1	
Evangelical (C)	2.50	1	2.50	4.02*	0.024
Age (D)	0.50	3	0.17	<1	
A x B	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
A x C	0.01	1	0.01	<1	
A x D	0.12	3	0.04	<1	
B x C	2.39	1	2.39	3.85	
B x D	1.98	3	0.66	1.06	
C x D	5.45	3	1.82	2.93*	0.046
Residual	<u>57.73</u>	<u>93</u>	0.62		
TOTAL	76.87	111			

\*p 0.05

As shown by Table X, there was an effect for evangelical stance accounting for eight percent of the variance in Factor 2. Examination of the cell means indicated that evangelicals were more involved than non-evangelicals.

TABLE X  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 2 (LIFESTYLE WITNESS)

Evangelical	n	$\bar{x}$
Yes	86	-0.10
No	26	0.44

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
Sex (B)	1.37	1	1.37	2.31	
Evangelical (C)	6.16	1	6.16	10.38*	0.080
Age (D)	1.75	3	0.59	<1	
A x B	0.15	1	0.15	<1	
A x C	0.02	1	0.02	<1	
A x D	1.53	3	0.51	<1	
B x C	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
B x D	1.15	3	0.38	<1	
C x D	0.97	3	0.32	<1	
Residual	<u>55.20</u>	<u>93</u>	0.59		
TOTAL	68.64	111			

\*p 0.05



As shown by Table XI, there was an effect for leadership accounting for fourteen percent of the variance in Factor 3. Examination of the cell means indicated that leaders were more involved than non-leaders.

TABLE XI  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 3 (MUTUAL EDIFICATION)

Leader	n	$\bar{x}$
Yes	41	-0.45
No	71	0.24

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	11.05	1	11.05	18.75*	0.139
Sex (B)	0.09	1	0.09	<1	
Evangelical (C)	0.37	1	0.37	<1	
Age (D)	4.06	3	1.36	2.30	
A x B	0.06	1	0.06	<1	
A x C	0.11	1	0.11	<1	
A x D	1.23	3	0.41	<1	
B x C	0.06	1	0.06	<1	
B x D	1.07	3	0.36	<1	
C x D	0.06	3	0.20	<1	
Residual	54.83	93	0.59		
TOTAL	74.61	111			

\*p 0.05

As shown by Table XII (see page 52), there was an effect for leadership by age accounting for 11 percent of the variance in Factor 4. Examination of the cell means indicated a general pattern for leaders to become more involved with age and non-leaders to follow the same pattern, although their overall involvement level was not as high. Those age forty to forty-nine, however, broke the pattern.

As shown by Table XIII (see page 53), there was an effect for sex accounting for seven percent of the variance, and for leadership by evangelical stance accounting for three percent of the variance in Factor 5. Examination of the cell means indicated that women were more involved than men. Non-evangelical leaders were more involved than non-evangelical non-leaders. And evangelicals, be they leaders or not, maintained the same average level of involvement.

As shown by Table XIV (see page 54), there was no significant effect for the selected variables accounting for variance in Factor 6.

As shown by Table XV (see page 55), there was an effect for leadership accounting for six percent of the variance, and age accounting for five percent of the variance, and for leadership by age accounting for seven percent of the variance in Factor 7. Examination of the cell means indicated that leaders were more involved than non-leaders. The older were more involved than those younger. Leaders grew more involved with age. Non-leaders maintained approximately equal average levels of involvement with the exception of

those seventeen to twenty-nine who were the least involved.

TABLE XII  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 4 (OUTREACH)

Leader by Age		n	$\bar{x}$		
Yes	17-29	16	-0.12		
	30-39	12	-0.42		
	40-49	9	0.32		
	50+	4	-0.91		
No	17-29	27	0.38		
	30-39	17	0.25		
	40-49	12	-0.59		
	50+	15	-0.01		

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership	2.40	1	2.40	3.89	
Sex (B)	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
Evangelical (C)	0.01	1	0.09	<1	
Age (D)	3.40	3	1.13	<1.84	
A x B	0.16	1	0.16	<1	
A x C	0.56	1	0.56	<1	
A x D	10.86	3	3.62	5.86*	0.116
B x C	0.06	1	0.06	<1	
B x D	0.38	3	0.13	<1	
C x D	2.98	3	0.99	<1.61	
Residual	57.44	93	0.62		
TOTAL	76.92	111			

\*p 0.05

TABLE XIII  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 5 (MUSIC)

Sex	Leader by Evangelical		n	$\bar{x}$		
Male			56	0.22		
Female			56	-0.26		
	Yes	Yes	34	-0.09		
	Yes	No	7	-0.48		
	No	Yes	52	-0.09		
	No	No	19	0.45		

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership	0.58	1	0.58	<1	
Sex	6.62	1	6.62	10.16*	0.071
Evangelical (C)	1.05	1	1.05	<1.61	
Age (D)	3.11	3	1.04	<1.59	
A x B	2.49	1	2.49	3.82	
A x C	3.61	1	3.61	5.53*	0.035
A x D	1.04	3	0.35	<1	
B x C	1.34	1	1.34	2.05	
B x D	1.49	3	0.50	<1	
C x D	2.26	3	0.75	<1.15	
Residual	<u>60.64</u>	<u>93</u>			
TOTAL	83.31	111			

\*p 0.05

TABLE XIV  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 6 (COMMUNITY REFORM)

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Leadership (A)	0.03	1	0.03	<1
Sex (B)	1.72	1	1.72	2.69
Evangelical (C)	1.40	1	1.40	2.19
Age (D)	3.38	3	1.13	1.76
A x B	0.02	1	0.02	<1
A x C	0.11	1	0.11	<1
A x D	1.20	3	0.40	<1
B x C	1.84	1	1.84	2.87
B x D	2.65	3	0.88	1.38
C x D	1.13	3	0.38	<1
Residual	<u>59.71</u>	<u>93</u>	0.64	
TOTAL	73.55	111		

TABLE XV  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 7 (ADOPT-A-STUDENT)

Leader by Age		n	$\bar{x}$
Yes	17-29	16	0.26
	30-39	12	-0.06
	40-49	9	-1.12
	50+	4	-1.33
No	17-29	27	0.29
	30-39	17	0.15
	40-49	12	0.16
	50+	15	0.16

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	6.04	1	6.04	9.03	0.059
Sex (B)	0.02	1	0.02	<1	
Evangelical (C)	0.73	1	0.73	1.09	
Age (D)	6.95	3	2.32	3.46*	0.055
A x B	0.32	1	0.32	<1	
A x C	0.78	1	0.78	1.17	
A x D	8.39	3	2.80	4.18*	0.071
B x C	0.30	1	0.30	<1	
B x D	2.62	3	0.87	1.30	
C x D	0.37	3	0.13	<1	
Residual	<u>62.23</u>	<u>93</u>			
TOTAL	89.85	111			

\*p 0.05

### Effects of Demographics on Priorities

A second series of ANOVA's was performed with leadership, sex, evangelical stance, and age as independent variables and each priority factor as a dependent variable. As shown by Table XVI (see page 57), there was an effect for age accounting for seven percent of the variance in Factor 1. Examination of the cell means indicated that those older considered this factor to be more important than those younger, with the exception of those forty to forty-nine. Those within this age bracket ranked this priority factor lower than all other ages.

As shown by Table XVII (see page 58), there was an effect for leadership accounting for four percent of the variance in Factor 2. Examination of the cell means indicated that leaders placed a high priority on this factor than non-leaders.

As shown by Table XVIII (see page 59), there was no significant effect for the selected variables accounting for variance in Factor 3.

As shown by Table XIX (see page 60), there was an effect for evangelical stance accounting for approximately ten percent of the variance in Factor 4. Examination of the cell means indicated that evangelicals placed a higher priority on this factor than non-evangelicals.

As show by Table XX (see page 61), there was an effect for age accounting for seven percent of the variance in

Factor 5. Examination of the cell means indicated that those older placed a higher priority on this factor than those younger.

TABLE XVI  
ANOVA: PRIORITY FACTOR 1 (SOCIAL REFORM)

Age	n	$\bar{x}$
17-29	43	0.04
30-39	29	-0.13
40-49	21	0.59
50+	19	-0.39

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	0.39	1	0.39	<1	
Sex (B)	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
Evangelical (C)	1.24	1	1.24	1.54	
Age (D)	9.77	3	3.26	4.06*	0.077
A x B	0.08	1	0.08	<1	
A x C	2.30	1	2.30	2.87	
A x D	3.07	3	1.02	1.28	
B x C	0.01	1	0.01	<1	
B x D	1.66	3	0.55	<1	
C x D	0.53	3	0.18	<1	
Residual	<u>74.61</u>	<u>93</u>	0.80		
TOTAL	95.08	111			

\*p 0.05



TABLE XVII  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 2 (COMMUNICATION)

Leader	n	$\bar{x}$
Yes	41	-0.20
No	71	0.15

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	4.23	1	4.34	5.84*	0.040
Sex (B)	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
Evangelical (C)	0.54	1	0.54	<1	
Age (D)	4.58	3	1.53	2.11	
A x B	0.21	1	0.21	<1	
A x C	2.82	1	2.82	3.90	
A x D	2.51	3	0.84	1.15	
B x C	1.09	1	1.09	1.50	
B x D	1.87	3	0.62	<1	
C x D	4.23	3	1.41	1.95	
Residual	<u>67.38</u>	<u>93</u>	0.72		
TOTAL	86.02	111			

\*p 0.05

TABLE XVIII  
ANOVA: INVOLVEMENT FACTOR 3 (MORALS)

Source	SS	df	MS	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	0.49	1	0.49	<1
Sex (B)	2.13	1	2.13	3.36
Evangelical (C)	0.68	1	0.68	1.07
Age (D)	3.49	3	1.16	1.84
A x B	0.81	1	0.81	1.27
A x C	0.86	1	0.86	1.36
A x D	2.19	3	0.73	1.15
B x C	0.06	1	0.06	<1
B x D	1.61	3	0.54	<1
C x D	1.89	3	0.63	<1
Residual	<u>58.95</u>	<u>93</u>	0.63	
TOTAL	71.85	111		

TABLE XIX  
ANOVA: PRIORITY FACTOR 4 (NURTURE)

Evangelical	n	$\bar{x}$
Yes	86	-0.17
No	26	0.50

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	0.00	1	0.00	<1	
Sex (B)	0.46	1	0.46	1	
Evangelical (C)	7.77	1	7.77	13.29	0.097
Age (D)	1.42	3	0.47	<1	
A x B	1.24	1	1.24	2.10	
A x C	0.17	1	0.17	<1	
A x D	2.98	3	0.99	1.68	
B x C	0.33	1	0.33	<1	
B x D	1.03	3	0.34	<1	
C x D	2.02	3	0.67	1.15	
Residual	54.76	93			
TOTAL	73.37	111			

\*p 0.05

TABLE XX

ANOVA: PRIORITY FACTOR 5 (EVANGELISM)

Age	n	$\bar{x}$
17-29	43	0.27
30-39	29	-0.03
40-49	21	-0.07
50+	19	-0.47

  

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$w^2$
Leadership (A)	0.01	1	0.01	<1	
Sex (B)	0.26	1	0.26	<1	
Evangelical (C)	0.22	1	0.22	<1	
Age (D)	7.08	3	2.36	3.65	0.069
A x B	0.04	1	0.04	<1	
A x C	1.56	1	1.56	2.41	
A x D	1.92	3	0.64	<1	
B x C	0.02	1	0.02	<1	
B x D	0.84	3	0.28	<1	
C x D	2.25	3	0.75	1.16	
Residual	<u>60.15</u>	<u>93</u>			
TOTAL	73.54	111			

\*p 0.05

## Summary

What are the personal involvement levels of the members in church related activities? The overall average involvement level, all twenty activities considered, was 3.688 (mean) on a scale of one to six. The average ranking of the seven involvement factors was from high to low: Outreach, Fellowship, Lifestyle Witness, Music, Community Reform, Mutual Edification, and Adopt-a-Student.

Which descriptions of the church are preferred by members of the congregation? Nurture received the highest ranking overall. Worship and Evangelism were a close second and third. Ministry was fourth and Fellowship was last.

What priorities are preferred by members of the church? Of the five factors drawn from the data, Evangelism was the highest followed by Outreach, Morals, Communication, and Social Reform. How do these priorities relate to the preferences of members of the Catholic and Presbyterian denominations? The results indicated a significant positive correlation between the rankings by current respondents and those of the Catholic and Presbyterian denominations.

Is there a relationship between one's involvement level and one's perception of priorities for the church? There was a positive correlation between those involved in Fellowship activities and the Nurture priority factor. High involvement in Lifestyle Witness was also indicative of high priority on Morals and Nurture. Involvement in Outreach

parallels involvement in Evangelism. There was a negative correlation between involvement in Music and placing a high priority on the Moral factor.

There was no significant relationship between one's involvement level and one's preferred description of the church. There was also no significant relationship between one's perception of priorities for the church and one's preferred description of the church.

Do the variables of sex, evangelical stance, age, and leadership position have an effect upon one's involvement levels in church-related activities? Leaders were more involved in Fellowship, Mutual Edification, Outreach, Music, and the Adopt-a-Student program, than were non-leaders. Women were more involved than men in the Music factor activities. Evangelicals were more involved than non-evangelicals in Fellowship, Life-style Witness, and Music related activities. Those over fifty years of age were more involved in Fellowship if they were also evangelical and in Outreach if they were leaders. Those older were also more involved than those younger in the Adopt-a-Student program.

Do the variables of sex, evangelical stance, age and leadership position have an effect upon one's preferred priorities for the church? Age accounted for some of the variance in rating Social Reform and Evangelism as priorities. Those older considered these two factors to be more important than those younger did. Leaders placed a higher priority on the Communication factor than did non-leaders.

Evangelicals placed a higher priority on the Nurture factor than did their counterparts.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Hoge, Perry and Klever; p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Dixon and Hoge, p. 158.



## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

This study was a survey of the members of a local Assembly of God congregation as to their involvement in church related activities, their perception of definitions of the church, and their views on church priorities. Responses to three consecutive mailings of the survey were received from 70 percent of the sample population of 233. Those respondents who did not consider New Life Center as their church home were excluded from the analysis. The 125 respondents utilized in the analysis represented approximately 79 percent of the assumed population that considered New Life Center as their church home. The results were reported in Chapter III. This chapter is divided into three sections: discussion of the results, limitations of the study, and conclusions.

#### Discussion

In this portion of the chapter, the results will be summarized, evaluated, and compared to similar studies in an attempt to answer each of the following research questions:

1. What are the personal involvement levels of the members in church related activities?

2. Which descriptions of the church are preferred by members of the congregation?
3. What priorities are preferred by members of the church and how do those priorities compare to the preferences of members of other denominations?
4. Is there a relationship between one's involvement level and one's preferred priorities for the church?
5. Is there a relationship between one's involvements and priorities, and one's preferred description of the church?
6. Do the variables of sex, evangelical stance, age, and leadership position have an effect upon one's involvement levels or preferred priorities for the church?

These questions will be discussed in order.

#### Involvement Levels in Church Related Activities

Given a list of twenty church related activities, the participants were asked to indicate their involvement level for each on a scale of one to six (one high, six low). Table I shows the overall ranking of these twenty church-related activities according to the mean level of involvement (see Chapter III, p. 35). The mean levels of involvement ranged from a high of 1.8 to a low of 5.153. On a scale of one to six, 3.5 being the mid-point, twelve of the twenty activities evoked medium to high levels of involvement. The remaining eight activities evoked low levels of involvement. This indicated some selectivity.

Selective involvement was also indicated by the range of individual involvement levels (all twenty items considered). These involvement levels ranged from a high of 1.38

to a low of 5.95. Thus, respondents did not maintain equal levels of involvement. Some respondents are more involved than others in the given church-related activities. Overall, involvement levels may best be depicted by the median of 3.737. Thus, fifty percent of the respondents reported involvement levels that are on the medium to high side of the scale and fifty percent reported involvement levels that are on the low side of the scale. (The selected variables discussed later indicated some of the reasons why involvement levels varied.)

The twenty involvement scales were subjected to factor analysis. Seven factors were judged interpretable and retained. The seven factors were designated as: Fellowship, Lifestyle Witness, Mutual Edification, Outreach, Music, Community Reform, and Adopt-a-Student. The average ranking of these seven factors indicated that Outreach, Fellowship, Lifestyle Witness, and Music maintained relatively high involvement levels, whereas, Community Reform, Mutual Edification, and Adopt-a-Student maintained relatively low involvement levels. Each of the seven factors follows, in rank order, with a list of the given church activities that accompany it and a brief explanation.

Outreach. The items included in the Outreach factor were:

11. Support Assembly of God Missions
13. Support and attend Revivals
3. Sunday Morning Bible Study

The mean rank of these items equalled 6.33. The average individual involvement levels for these three activities was within a range of 3.008 to 3.317, on the previously mentioned scale of one to six. All three of these activities could be considered integral parts of the Assembly of God denomination. Revivals are held at least once a year. They are typically a week of meetings or services that feature an out-of-town evangelist. It is a time for renewal and for bringing lost souls to church. The title typifies the event-- Revival. It is an important part of the Assembly of God denomination as is its mission program. Assembly of God missions reach out to 108 other countries, with 1,250 missionaries and a budget of 44 million dollars for foreign missions.<sup>1</sup> "The evangelism priority is at the heart of both the foreign and home missionary work of the Assemblies of God."<sup>2</sup> Evangelical outreach is important to the Assembly of God denomination as a whole, including New Life Center. Both at home and abroad the Assembly of God denomination places its emphasis on Biblical training in its evangelical thrust. Perhaps this is why Sunday morning Bible study is grouped here with missions and revivals.

Fellowship. The items included in the Fellowship factor were:

6. Fellowship before and after the services
7. Developing friendships at New Life Center
8. Meet and greet new people at New Life Center
5. Special get-togethers for fellowship

The mean rank of these items equalled 7.25. The mean invol-

vement levels for each of the above items ranged from 2.861 to 3.569. Developing friendships at New Life Center held the highest overall involvement level of this grouping and was second overall. The high ranking of all of these items together under the factor heading of "Fellowship" seems to indicate a strong value is placed on developing and maintaining friendships at church. Individually, six and seven evoked relatively high levels of involvement, whereas, eight and five evoked moderate levels of involvement. This was perhaps an indication that the development of friendships at New Life Center is not completely satisfied in special get-togethers at church, or is it found in meeting and greeting new people. Also, special get-togethers are limited to a time and a place, and meeting and greeting new people takes extra effort. Therefore, the involvement levels for these two items are not as high as the involvement levels for six and seven.

Lifestyle Witness. The items included in the Lifestyle Witness factor were:

16. Study today's issues in light of Biblical teaching
12. Witness by word or deed at work, in neighborhood
14. Provide some form of help for the needy

The mean rank of these items equalled 7.33. The mean involvement levels for each of the above items ranged from 2.925 to 3.425. Witness by word or deed at work, in neighborhood, held the highest overall involvement level of these items

and was third in the overall ranking. Due to the evangelical stance of some seventy-five percent of those surveyed, the high involvement in this item is not surprising. All three of these items could be seen as reflecting the evangelical stance: sharing the Gospel, living out the Gospel, and using the Gospel as a standard.

Music. The items included in the Music factor were:

1. Church music program
4. Wednesday evening family nights
2. Time of praise/singing during the services you attend

The mean rank of these items equalled 7.67. The involvement in the time of praise/singing during the services was the highest overall. This is not surprising to anyone who is familiar with the rousing hymns of the Assembly of God denomination. A further note is that New Life Center refers to these services as "Worship services" and so the time of praise and singing is often central. The church music program adds to this time of worship. The time of praise and singing involves the entire congregation whereas the church music program involves those in the choir, their leaders, and musicians. The choir and those involved with it meet Wednesday evenings for rehearsal--thus, there is a correlation with those who are involved in the church music program and attendance Wednesday evenings.

Community Reform. The items included in the Community Reform factor were:

- 20. Activities with other churches in the area
- 15. Actively work for social reform as a Christian

The mean rank of these items equalled 16.00. The involvement in these two activities is relatively low. Both deal with activities outside of the church involving the community. Involvement in both of these activities is probably not readily available. For instance, activities with other churches might include sports events such as basketball or softball which are seasonal activities and not widespread in appeal. Thus, the involvement level was low. Actively working for social reform as a Christian also evoked low involvement levels. This will be discussed further in answer to question three of this chapter.

Mutual Edification. The items included in the Mutual Edification factor were:

- 17. Men or Women's Ministry
- 9. Youth programs
- 18. Share groups
- 10. Seek advice or receive counseling from church

The mean rank of these items equalled 16.25. The mean involvement levels for each of the above items ranged from 4.322 to 4.958. Involvement levels were relatively low. Share groups and Men or Women's Ministry are similar in focus. They meet once a week for Bible study, prayer, fellowship, or "mutual edification." This type of group sharing can be similar to receiving counseling from the church and so these are grouped together. The youth program also involves Bible study, prayer, fellowship, etc., for a younger age

group. The common ground for these items is implied in the heading, "Mutual Edification." All of these activities promote interaction which (it is hoped) will build up the participants spiritually as well as provide fellowship. They are formal church programs provided for the congregation. Why then are the involvement levels so low overall? Perhaps these programs are not meeting the needs of the congregation.

Adopt-a-Student. There is only one item included in this factor--Adopt-a-Student. The mean rank of this item equalled 20.00. The mean level of involvement for this activity was the lowest at 5.153. Only a small segment of the congregation is involved in this program. The program works with college students who attend New Life Center while they are in the Tulsa area. Members of the congregation can choose to "adopt-a-student" and take them to church with their family and have them over for Sunday supper, etc. Perhaps only a few people in the church are involved in this program because only a few college students desire to be part of the program themselves. Thus, the need is met by only a few members of the congregation.

#### Descriptions of the Church

Section IV of the questionnaire contains five descriptions of the church. Those surveyed were asked to rank each description according to their perceived importance in



defining the church ideally. The description of the church characterized by Nurture was ranked number one more frequently by the respondents than any of the other descriptions. Worship and Evangelism were ranked a close second and third. Ministry and Fellowship fell behind with only fourteen percent of the respondents ranking Ministry first and only six percent of the respondents ranking Fellowship first (see Table XXI).

TABLE XXI  
CHURCH DESCRIPTIONS RANKED NUMBER ONE

Description	Ranked No. 1
Nurture	32%
Worship	25%
Evangelism	24%
Ministry	14%
Fellowship	6%

The significance of this section is that in ranking given descriptions of the church an individual reveals how he sees the church, and perhaps why he comes to church. The number one description of the church was that of a nurturing body. Thus, many see the church as primarily a place to receive spiritual guidance and teaching. Twenty-five percent

of those surveyed see worship as the most important description of the church. Twenty-four percent see the church's primary purpose to be that of sharing the Gospel with the lost, or evangelism. Fourteen percent believe that the church is present in this world to serve the needs of mankind and bring God's healing to their body, mind, and spirit. Only six percent see Fellowship as the number one description of the church. In fact, fifty-three percent ranked this description last.

Nurture, Worship, and Evangelism are seen as the top three descriptions of the church for those participating in this survey from New Life Center. In 1968, the Assembly of God denomination declared a three-pronged mission for the church: worship of the Lord, nurture of the people, and evangelism and outreach to the world.<sup>3</sup> Members of New Life Center, an Assembly of God congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, hold a mental picture of their church consistent with the ideals of their denomination.

### Preferred Priorities

Given a list of twenty possible church priorities, participants were asked to rate each on a scale of one to six (one high, six low). The mean of the ratings was 2.434. Thus, these twenty possible church priorities were perceived as viable actions for the church to take. Preaching the Gospel in worship services (mean = 1.352), providing for guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual mem-

bers (mean = 1.537), and providing religious education for children and youth (mean = 1.661), were the top three overall choices. The four lowest priorities were all related to social action. Encouraging individual members to support social reform and providing church support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights were given the lowest overall mean scores and were the only two items on the negative side of the scale with means of 3.966 and 4.109, respectively.

The twenty priority scales were subjected to factor analysis. Five interpretable factors were identified: Social Reform, Communication, Morals, Nurture, and Evangelism. The average ranking of these five factors showed Evangelism and Nurture to be relatively high priorities; Morals and Communication to be moderate, and Social Reform to be low. A list of these five factors follows, in rank order, along with the given priorities that accompany it and a brief explanation.

Evangelism. The items included in the Evangelism factor were:

10. Support mission efforts to preach the Gospel in all lands
2. Preach the Gospel in worship services
8. Celebrate Holy Communion frequently
15. Provide religious education for children and youth

The mean rank of these items equalled 4.25. The focal point of this priority factor is the Gospel. Preaching the Gospel in worship services was ranked number one with its mean

rating of 1.352. The high priority of this item may be seen to be reflected in the number one definition of the church, which was:

The church is the body of believers led by Pastors who are ordained and called of God to instruct and lead their congregation in His Ways, according to His Word, that they may all grow in God's grace (Section IV of the questionnaire).

Preaching the Gospel is not only for the sake of the believer but for the unbeliever, as well. Mission efforts are to preach the Gospel in all lands. And the Gospel is not only for the old but for the young. The religious education programs that are provided for children and youth are extensive within the Assembly of God denomination. This item was ranked third overall. Their focus is on Bible teaching--promoting an understanding of the Gospel. The Gospel is also the focal point of the celebration of Holy Communion. Holy Communion is the symbolic affirmation of the message of the Gospel. The high ranking of this priority factor indicated the respondents desire for the church to center itself on the Gospel--the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Nurture. The items included in the Nurture factor were:

14. Engage in personal evangelism locally
16. Provide for guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual members

The mean rank of these items equalled 6.00. This priority factor couples the provision of guidance and growth for church members with the responsibility to promote spiritual guidance and growth in the unchurched. The high priority

placed on this factor continues to reflect the mission of the church, as seen as being two-fold: Nurture and Evangelism. (Note: This is not to the neglect of the Worship factor which was so evident in the definition of the church section and causes the mission of the church to be three-fold rather than two-fold. The Worship factor was not represented in section five of the questionnaire in such a way as to reflect its importance for the church.)

Morals. The items included in the Morals factor were:

3. Maintain Christian moral standards among members in the areas of alcoholic beverage consumption, gambling, sexual conduct, and related matters
5. Assist all members in reflecting on questions of personal morality

The mean rank of these items equalled 9.50. The Assemblies of God denomination is Pentecostal. There is a history of a strict moral code in the denomination. The Assembly of God church as a whole is more liberal today, but there is still an adherence to Biblical standards without fail.

"God's Word, the Bible, is our final rule of faith and practice."<sup>4</sup> The relatively high ranking of this factor indicates that the respondents from New Life Center still believe this is a part of what the church ought to be doing.

Communication. The items included in the Communication factor were:

18. Develop understanding between youth and older generations
6. Open avenues of communication between people
17. Develop a special youth ministry
19. Make competent pastoral counseling available

- for all persons
4. Make the church a strong fellowship in which all members feel unity and mutual support.

The mean rank of these items equalled 10.00. The mean rating for the above items fell within a range from 1.852 to 2.750. All the items deal with a form of communication within the congregation. There is an understanding expressed by the grouping of these items that strong fellowship is based, at least in part, on open avenues of communication, generation gaps being overcome, and people receiving needed counseling. There is also an underlying statement made here that good congregational communication is important, but it isn't the highest priority of the church.

Social Reform. The items included in the Social Reform factor were:

12. Encourage individual members to support social reform
13. Provide church support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights
11. Support and organize local and denominational programs for aiding needy persons
  1. Encourage individual members to carry out acts of charity to needy persons
  7. Provide worship which makes free use of music and the arts
20. Work for the unity of all Christian believers

The mean rank of these items equalled 16.00. Social reform is not considered to be a high priority for the Assembly of God denomination as a whole. Their thrust is evangelism. The underlying premise seems to be that once society is evangelized and is right with God, social reform will follow. Thus, the main mission of the church is to bring the Gospel

to the people with the ultimate concern for their souls. This idea was also reflected in Section IV of the survey in the ranking of the definitions of the church. The definition of the church being "the body of believers present in this world to serve the needs of mankind," was not ranked as high as the evangelical definition of the church.

A brief look at the Assemblies of God mission program will shed some more light on this distinction between social reform and evangelism. "The evangelism priority is at the heart of both the foreign and home missionary work of the Assemblies of God."<sup>5</sup> Building churches in some 108 countries and establishing some 200 Bible schools and more than 1,000 Christian day schools, all with extensive literature ministries, are some of the main projects of the Assemblies of God missions.<sup>6</sup> Social reform is not the main thrust.

#### Priority Preferences of Other Denominations

This study is expected to add on to the foundation already laid by such descriptive works as: "Theology as a Source of Disagreement About Protestant Church Goals and Priorities," by Hoge, Perry and Klever; "Models and Priorities of the Catholic Church as Held by Suburban Laity," by Dixon and Hoge; and the recent Gallup poll commissioned by Christianity Today, in regard to American's religious beliefs and practices.<sup>7</sup> The conclusions of the Protestant and the Catholic studies were as follows:

We conclude that Catholic laity see their church just as Presbyterian laity see their church. For both, the underlying concern is individual and family support, in both natural and supernatural terms. Church goals which clearly enhance personal and family life (such as religious education and counseling) are given high priority; goals seen as neutral or irrelevant (such as acts of charity or Christian unity) are given medium priority; and goals which might threaten personal family life (such as social reform or support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights) are given low priority.<sup>8</sup>

The emphasis is placed upon nurturing aspects. De-emphasis is given to social action. Disagreement in both studies was found in the area of Evangelism.

(Presbyterians) with a strong commitment to the church, a strong faith in eternal life, having a dualistic view of humanity, and believing in the literal authority of Scripture, stressed evangelism.<sup>9</sup>

(Catholics) with high organizational involvement, holding a dualistic view of human nature, a free-will image of human behavior, and an emphasis on other worldliness tended to stress outreach and worship.<sup>10</sup>

The Gallup poll study held similar results:

Persons believing in the divinity of Christ, in salvation through Christ, in the literal authority of Scripture, and who read their Bible at least once a month and attend church at least once a month, listed evangelism as the top priority for the church.<sup>11</sup>

Approximately seventy-five percent of those surveyed from New Life Center fit the evangelical description given by the Gallup poll study. It is not surprising then to note that item number ten of Section V of the questionnaire, "Support mission efforts to preach the Gospel in all lands," is ranked fifth by the Assembly of God congregation and is ranked sixteenth and eighteenth by the Presbyterian and Catholic groups, respectively. Item number fourteen, "En-



gage in personal evangelism locally," is ranked tenth by the Assembly of God congregation and seventeenth by the Presbyterian group. (It was not included in the Catholic study.) In the Gallup poll study, evangelicals ranked "Help win the world for Jesus Christ," as the number one priority for Christians. In this study, fifty-one percent of the Evangelicals ranked it number one, eleven percent of the Protestants ranked it number one, and six percent of the Catholics ranked it number one.<sup>12</sup>

To evaluate the similarity of the rankings of the Presbyterian, Catholic, and Assembly of God congregations, Spearman Correlation Coefficients were computed. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between rankings of the current respondents and those of the Catholic and Presbyterian populations. Also, the differences in the mean ratings vary within only one standard deviation unit in all but two cases ( items two and fourteen); in every case, within 1.3 standard deviation units. This indicates a great deal of consistency in regard to the ratings and rankings of these priorities with only a few exceptions. (See Table XXII on the following page.) Perhaps this could be explained in that all three of these congregations are of the same faith or religion--Christianity. Thus, the ratings and rankings of the priorities are similar. But they are three different denominations with varying doctrine--enough to change the emphasis in certain cases.

TABLE XXII  
PRIORITY RANKINGS BY VARIOUS GROUPS

Priorities	<u>Assembly of God</u>		<u>Presbyterian</u>		<u>Catholic</u>	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Acts of Charity	2.80	15	2.52	14	2.22	10
2. Preach Gospel	1.35	1	1.77	3.5	2.11	6
3. Moral Standards	2.02	6	2.32	8	1.92	3
4. Fellowship	1.85	4	1.76	2	1.97	4
5. Morality	2.66	13	2.47	10.5		
6. Open Communication	2.75	14	2.51	13	2.44	15
7. Worship	2.83	16	3.16	18		
8. Holy Communion	2.09	8	2.39	9	2.13	7
9. Study Social Issues	3.08	17	2.47	10.5		
10. Missions	1.93	5	2.70	16	2.83	18
11. Programs for the Needy	3.14	18	2.65	15	2.31	11
12. Social Reform	3.97	19	3.39	19	3.11	20
13. Rights of the Needy	4.11	20	3.59	20	3.03	19
14. Evangelism	2.12	10	3.08	17		
15. Religious Education	1.66	3	1.45	1	1.74	1
16. Nurture	1.54	2	1.77	3.5	2.20	9
17. Youth Ministry	2.09	9	2.25	7	2.78	17
18. Generation Gap	2.49	12	2.17	6		
19. Counseling	2.18	11	1.86	5	1.80	2
20. Unity	2.07	7	2.52	12	2.39	12

### Involvement Level and Preferred Priorities

The results seem to indicate that there are some significant correlations between involvement levels and preferred priorities. There is a positive correlation between involvement in Fellowship activities and the perception of Nurture as a priority factor. The Nurture priority factor deals primarily with the church providing spiritual growth and guidance. Many fellowship activities center around Bible study and teaching and sharing--nurturing aspects. The Nurture priority factor also relates to personal evangelism. Those highly involved in fellowship activities would perhaps consider the church to be a support group.

There is also a positive correlation between involvement in Life-style Witness activities and both the Nurture and the Morals priority. Life-style Witness activities center around the Gospel: sharing the Gospel, living out the Gospel and using the Gospel as a standard. The Nurture priority factor couple the provision of guidance and growth for church members with the responsibility to promote spiritual guidance and growth in the unchurched. The Morals factor reflects the use of the Bible as a standard for faith and conduct. Thus, the correlation of involvement in Life-style Witness activities and the priorities of Morals and Nurture seems to center around the use of the Bible as a standard for faith and conduct, teaching, training, and evangelism.

There is a positive correlation between involvement in Outreach activities and the priority of Evangelism. Outreach activities and the priority of Evangelism. Outreach activities include Revivals, Assembly of God Missions, and Sunday Morning Bible Study. The Evangelism priority includes preaching the Gospel in worship services as well as in all lands, and celebrating Holy Communion and providing religious education for children and youth. The correlation between these two sets of activities and priorities is perhaps the most obvious when each item is taken one at a time. Preaching the Gospel in worship services is what takes place during Revivals. The support of mission efforts as a priority and as an activity mirror each other. And the provision of religious education for children and youth is the primary focus of Sunday Morning Bible Study.

There is also a negative correlation between involvement in the Music activities and the priority factor of Morals. Those with high involvement levels in the Music factor are more than likely involved in the church choir and have therefore made a commitment to the church (as involvement in the choir demands faithful attendance and rehearsal times). Perhaps those with such a strong commitment to the church find maintaining the moral standards of the congregation to be a relatively unimportant purpose for the church because they see no need for such supervision in their own lives. (It might be likened to the imposition of a ten o'clock curfew for those who are in the habit of going to bed

no later than nine o'clock.)

In attempting to find correlations between sections three and five of the questionnaire, the question raised is, "Does the congregation become involved in what they feel the church should be doing? Do they see themselves as the church?" The congregation does seem to be involved in Evangelism and Outreach to the same degree that they feel the church should be. These are the number one factors in both the involvement levels and the priorities. The involvement levels in social reform are also reflected in the perceived priority of this factor. The parallel items in the Mutual Edification factor for involvement and the Communication factor for priorities, however, appear to be at odds. The overall impression of these two categories, when compared, is that the congregation desires for these opportunities to be offered (i.e., youth programs, counseling) but considers involvement in them to be highly voluntary and perhaps fluctuating.

One final consideration in comparing these two sections is the overall average involvement level versus the overall average priority rating. The mean for the involvement level was 3.688. The mean for the priority rating was 2.434. The point to be made here is that overall involvement levels are lower than church priority ratings. Thus, although the ranking of the activities for the most part parallels with the perceived priority items ranking, the priority ratings maintain a higher level than the involvement ratings. For

example, items such as, "Support Assembly of God missions," can have a mean involvement level of 3.317 and a mean priority of 1.934. Therefore, the respondents seem to be involved as individuals in what they feel the church ought to be doing, but they are involved to a lesser degree in comparison to their desires for the church.

### Involvement, Priorities, and Preferred Descriptions

Multiple discriminant analysis was used to assess possible relationships between preferred church descriptions and involvement levels and priorities. No significant correlations were found. No overt inconsistencies were displayed in the ranking of the descriptions, involvements, and priorities. The lack of significant correlations among these indices may reflect limitations of the descriptions themselves. The categorization used for these descriptions was not the categorization devised in the factor analysis of the involvement levels and priorities.

### Variables

Sex. Whether or not a participant in this survey was male or female only affected one of the involvement indices; Music. Women were more involved in the Music factor activities than men. This was probably due to the fact that Music activities were dominated by involvement in the church choir and there are simply more women than men in the church choir.

Evangelical Stance. Evangelicals were more involved in Fellowship activities and Life-style Witness activities than were non-evangelicals. They also tended to place a higher priority on the Nurture factor than did non-evangelicals.

Recall the characteristics of evangelicals:

Persons believing in the divinity of Christ, in salvation through Christ, in the literal authority of Scripture, and who read their Bible at least once a month and attend church at least once a month.<sup>13</sup>

The evangelicals, hence, were a group with strong foundational beliefs, a devotional life and regular church attendance. This indicates a measurable amount of ego involvement in the Christian faith and some degree of commitment to the church. Therefore, the activities involved in Fellowship and Life-style Witness factors benefit this group. High involvement in the Fellowship activities was indicative of some degree of commitment to the church congregation. High involvement in Life-style Witness was an outgrowth of the strong foundational beliefs and the accompanying ego involvement in the Christian faith and message. Placing a high priority on the Nurture factor falls within this line of reasoning as well, as the items involved in this factor dealt with personal evangelism and looking to the church for spiritual guidance and growth.

Age. Involvement in Fellowship activities, Outreach activities, and the Adopt-a-Student program tended to increase with age when it was coupled with either evangelical

stance or leadership. For instance, evangelicals became more involved in Fellowship activities as they aged, whereas non-evangelicals were more involved when younger. This was perhaps due to the commitment to the church exhibited by the evangelicals. The church, for the evangelicals, was more likely to be a place to build friendships than for the non-evangelicals whose commitment to the church was much less stable. Thus, as evangelicals age they were found to be maintaining more friendships at church due to their regular attendance; while the non-evangelicals maintained fewer friendships at church due to their sporadic attendance.

Involvement levels in Outreach activities were also reflected in age differences and leadership position. Leaders were more involved than non-leaders, and older leaders were more involved than younger leaders. Non-leaders were also more involved as they increased in age. The Outreach activities are traditions of the church: Sunday School, Missions, and Revivals. These activities were ranked number one among the seven involvement factors and are important to New Life Center. The high leadership involvement reflected their importance, as did the increased involvement with age. As members continued to attend New Life Center, some becoming leaders, their involvement in these Outreach activities increased. The importance of these activities was perhaps being stressed to the congregation and emphasized by leadership attendance.

There was one exception to the involvement level pat-



tern just described. Those age forty to forty-nine, broke the pattern as seen in Table XXIII.

TABLE XXIII  
INVOLVEMENT IN OUTREACH AND AGE

Age	Leadership Position	Mean Involvement Level
50+	Yes	-.91
40-49	No	-.59
30-39	Yes	-.42
17-29	Yes	-.12
50+	No	-.01
30-39	No	.25
40-49	Yes	.32
17-29	No	.38

It can be seen that those forty to forty-nine reverse the pattern in regard to leadership. One explanation for this might be the mid-life crisis phase that those within this age bracket can experience. During the mid-life crisis it is common to desire change--thus, they break the norm.

Involvement in the Adopt-a-Student program also increased with age. In this program, members of the congregation could "adopt-a-student" who attended New Life Center

while attending one of the local colleges. It would be suggested that the adoptive parents take the student to church with their family and have them over for Sunday supper, etc. Perhaps the older are more involved because they have or have had children of their own away at college and would enjoy playing the role of a parent or grandparent for these college age young people.

There were also two priority factors which were affected by age. Those older considered Social Reform and Evangelism as higher priorities than those younger. The Social Reform priority factor focused on charity and looking out for the needs of the poor--including their rights, social reform in general, and studying social issues in light of Biblical teaching. It was very "others" oriented. Those fifty years of age and over were perhaps more inclined to place a higher priority on Social Reform as their children were now adults and their energies might be expended outside of the home. Another possibility is that some of those age fifty and over were considering retirement or were retired and were involved with the Social Security system, etc., in a way that hits close to home for the first time. Finally, those age fifty and older have the wisdom gleaned by years on this earth and can have special insight into the cures needed for the ills of society and a greater desire to share.

There was an exception to the older considering Social Reform to be a higher priority than those younger. Those forty to forty-nine rated this priority factor lower than

all other ages. People in this age range may have children in college, elderly parents to care for, etc. If they are financially pressed "social reform" may sound like an added demand on their resources (both money and time), which they cannot afford at this time.

The older place a higher priority upon the Evangelism factor. The Evangelism factor focused on preaching the Gospel, both at home and abroad and teaching the young and celebrating Holy Communion. One aspect of this factor stands out--providing religious education for children and youth. Those older are more likely to have children and recognize the need for Christian education more so than those younger. The other three items in this factor dealt with the Gospel message both in sharing it and in celebrating it. The fact that the older placed a higher priority here than those younger seemed to indicate that its importance, relative to all the other activities of the church, stood out with time.

Leadership. Leaders were more involved in Fellowship, Mutual Edification, Outreach, Music, and the Adopt-a-Student program than were non-leaders. All the activities included within these factors involved church programs of one type or another (Fellowship indirectly). It would seem that leaders would be more involved simply due to the fact that they were leaders and were either heading up these church programs or were supporting them. The two involvement factors which did not exhibit higher leadership involvement

were Life-style Witness and Community Reform. Both of these involvement factors included items of individual responsibility as opposed to formal church programs where leadership would be required. Thus, these were the two factors not evoking higher leadership levels.

Leaders placed a higher priority on the Communication factor than non-leaders. The items included in this priority factor were:

18. Develop understanding between youth and older generations
6. Open avenues of communication between people
17. Develop a special youth ministry
19. Make competent pastoral counseling available to all persons
4. Make the church a strong fellowship in which all members feel unity and mutual support

The fact that leaders placed a higher priority upon this factor than did non-leaders seemed to indicate that the church leadership was more aware of its importance and perhaps felt more responsible for the accomplishment of these items. Items four, six, and eighteen may be taken for granted by the general congregation, as would item nineteen--until you needed it.

Overall, there seemed to be little disagreement over what the priorities of the church ought to be between leadership and laity. The Christianity Today Gallup poll, however, found leadership to be a significant variable in priority placement.<sup>14</sup> For example, fifty-three percent of the Catholic clergy ranked "Help win the world for Jesus Christ," as number one, as opposed to six percent of their laity.

The evangelical clergy, on the other hand, were more closely linked to their laity with seventy-two percent of the clergy ranking this priority as number one and fifty-one percent of the laity also ranking it number one.

Why do the clergy and laity seem to be more in harmony among the evangelicals? The answer to this question seems to lie within the common ground established by their evangelical stance. According to the Christianity Today Gallup poll, evangelicals are:

Persons believing in the divinity of Christ, in salvation through Christ, in the literal authority of Scripture, and who read their Bible at least once a month and attend church at least once a month.<sup>15</sup>

The adherence to certain beliefs and practices seems to have an effect on perceived priorities for the church whether clergy or laity. This is then the answer to the following question: "Why is there such consistent harmony in the establishment of priorities between the leadership and laity of New Life Center?" They are predominately evangelical.

#### Limitations

The methodology of this study was ex post factor. Causation can only be inferred. It is also survey research which is particularly susceptible to sampling error. One further limitation to this study is that a mail survey was utilized and so the researcher could not probe as in the case of an interview. It is hoped that with seventy-nine percent of the population that regard New Life Center as

their church home used in the analysis that a true picture of this congregation has been ascertained. The study was conducted with only one Assembly of God congregation but projections have been made unto the denomination. The assumption was made that New Life Center's utilization of Assembly of God programs and governing policies and procedures laid a foundation for projection unto the denomination. This assumption could be false. Surveys of other denominations as well as other Assembly of God congregations are encouraged to further test the conclusions drawn here.

### Conclusions

How does the congregation see the church? Is the church a light to the lost, a place to find friends, a place to be nurtured, a place of ministry, or a place of worship? These aspects may be thought of in communication terms. Do the people of the church stress communicating the Gospel to the unchurched? Is the church primarily seen as a place to build interpersonal relationships? Are the aspects of preaching and teaching and counseling the highest forms of communication in the church in regard to their perceived importance? Is the church a place where people listen and then meet outsiders and fulfill their need? Or is the church primarily a place to communicate with God through worship?

Members of New Life Center, an Assembly of God congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, describes the church as a place to grow spiritually, a place to worship God, and a place to

initiate evangelical efforts. It is a congregation not satisfied with one description of the church alone. It sees the mission of the church as three pronged: worship of God, nurture of the people, and evangelical in outreach. Is there agreement across the congregation as to what the church should be doing? The average ranking of the five priority factors showed Evangelism and Nurture to be relatively high priorities; Morals and Communication to be moderately high; and Social Reform to be relatively low. The variables that affected the rating of these church priorities to a certain extent were age, evangelical stance and to a lesser extent, leadership position. Do the results differ according to denomination? In comparing the results of this study with those of the previous studies, conducted by Hoge, Perry and Klever and Dixon and Hoge, the results were found to be similar in regard to the ranking of church priorities but notable differences were found in regard to the ranking of evangelical items.

It is hoped that New Life Center will gain a great deal from participating in this study. It is also anticipated that this survey could be adapted for any local church. The results would indicate how the congregation sees their church, as well as the Church universal. It shows where the congregation believes the most time and effort should be spent as well as sheds some light on where there are differences of opinion among the congregation. How people are involved in the church may be compared to what they feel the

church should be doing. Do they see themselves as the church? Finally, the church leadership may compare their view of the church and their desired goals and priorities of the church with their congregation. A survey such as this could enhance future communication between the leadership and the laity. "Through communication a congregation may come to know itself, define its purposes, discover its resources, formulate its goals."<sup>16</sup>

"Few organizations utilize communication more than the church."<sup>17</sup> The church doors are beginning to open up to what may be gleaned from the field of communication. Just as trained communication consultants are used in businesses, they could be used by churches. The church is a unique organization but it is nevertheless dependent upon good communication like other organizations. Communication theory could stretch its own borders by encompassing the church and congregational communication. The church doors are far from wide open at this point to empirical research, but studies such as this one are adding to a rapidly lengthening list.



FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Edward E. Plowman, "Assemblies of God: On the Way Up," Saturday Evening Post, July/August, 1982, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>"The Fastest-Growing American Denomination," p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibidl, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Plowman, p. 73.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Hoge, Perry, and Klever; Dixon and Hoge; "The Christianity Today - Gallup Poll: An Overview."

<sup>8</sup>Dixon and Hoge, p. 159.

<sup>9</sup>Hoge, Perry, and Klever, p. 129.

<sup>10</sup>Dixon and Hoge, p. 162.

<sup>11</sup>"What the Christianity Today - Gallup Poll Found Out About Attitudes Toward Winning the World for Christ," p. 28.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Bailey, pp. 3,4.

<sup>17</sup>McLaughlin, p. 158.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE



- 1. Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, both fully God and fully man. SA A U D SD
- 2. The only hope for heaven is through personal faith in Jesus Christ. SA A U D SD
- 3. The Bible is the Word of God and is not mistaken in its statements and teachings. SA A U D SD

Section III.

Indicate your personal involvement level for each of the following church related activities (whenever they occur). If you are highly involved in the given activity, circle the number one. If your involvement is low or non-existent, you would circle the number six. Numbers two, three, four, and five are provided for the varied degrees of involvement you might have for the given activity.

	High Involvement				Low Involvement	
1. Church music program (i.e., instrumental, choir, direct, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Time of praise/singing during the services you attend	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Sunday morning Bible study	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Wednesday evening family nights	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Special get-togethers for fellowship	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Fellowship before and after the services	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Developing friendships at New Life Center	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Meet and greet new people at New Life Center	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Youth programs	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Seek advice or receive counseling from church	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Support Assembly of God Missions	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Witness by word or deed at work, in neighborhood	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Support and attend revivals	1	2	3	4	5	6



	High Involvement			Low Involvement		
14. Provide some form of help for the needy	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Actively work for social reform as a Christian	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Study today's issues in light of Biblical teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Men or Women's Ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Share Groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Adopt a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Activities with other churches in the area	1	2	3	4	5	6

#### Section IV.

Following are five descriptions of the Church. Read through all of them and then go back and rank them, 1 through 5, according to their importance in defining the Church IDEALLY as YOU see it. You may find all five to be important aspects in defining the Church. You are asked, however, to RANK them, ordering them according to what you see as IDEAL. Place a number one beside what you consider to be the MOST important definition of the Church. Place a number two next to your second choice, and so on.

\_\_\_\_\_ The church is the body of believers led by Pastors who are ordained and called of God to instruct and lead their congregation in His Ways, according to His Word, that they may all grow in God's grace.

\_\_\_\_\_ The church is the body of believers called together as a community; sharing together in the bond of fellowship.

\_\_\_\_\_ The church is the body of believers which comes together to worship God.

\_\_\_\_\_ The church is the body of believers present in this world to share the Gospel with the lost.

\_\_\_\_\_ The church is the body of believers present in this world to serve the needs of mankind and bring God's healing to their body, mind, and spirit.

#### Section V.

Twenty possible priorities for the Church are listed below. What do you think the church ought to be doing? What do you think should be the goals and priorities of the church? After each of the following statements please circle one number indicating how important you think it is.

Read through the list before beginning. Remember, not all of the statements can be the highest priority.

KEY TO RESPONSES: 1 - Very important, highest priority  
 2 - Quite important  
 3 - Somewhat important  
 4 - Somewhat unimportant  
 5 - Quite unimportant  
 6 - Very unimportant, lowest of the priorities

The church ought to:

	High						Low
1. Encourage individual members to carry out acts of charity to needy persons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. Preach the Gospel in worship services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. Maintain Christian moral standards among members in the areas of alcoholic beverage consumption, gambling, sexual conduct, and related matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. Make the church a strong fellowship in which all members feel unity and mutual support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5. Assist all members in reflecting on questions of personal morality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6. Open avenues of communication between people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7. Provide worship which makes free use of music and the arts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8. Celebrate Holy Communion frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
9. Study social issues in the light of teachings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10. Support mission efforts to preach the Gospel in all lands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
11. Support and organize local and denominational programs for aiding needy persons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
12. Encourage individual members to support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

	High					Low
13. Provide church support for the poor and oppressed in organizing for their rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Engage in personal evangelism locally.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Provide religious education for children and youth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Provide for guidance and growth of the spiritual life of individual members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Develop a special youth ministry.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Develop understanding between youth and older generations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Make competent pastoral counseling available to all persons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Work for the unity of all Christian believers.	1	2	3	4	5	6

This is the end of the questionnaire. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated! Please send the completed questionnaire back in the enclosed return envelope.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

September 6, 1983

Dear Participant,

I am asking for your cooperation in a study being done by a member of the Communication Department at Oklahoma State University. The lady conducting the study, Aileen Rediger, has explained her purpose and procedures to me and I believe that the results of this study will be of benefit to the church. You can help us by filling out and promptly returning this questionnaire.

This survey is as secret as your political vote. Your answers will be known only to you. Although we need to know your answer to every question, we do not want to know your name. Please, do not write your name on the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is very simple to take, and takes only about twenty minutes to answer. Please answer every question. Also, answer each question as you really believe, not what you think is the right or the expected answer. There is no grade on this questionnaire, no high or low scores, no right or wrong answers.

No postage is required to mail back the questionnaire. Just use the self-addressed envelope. Take all the time you need in answering the questionnaire. Just be sure to mail it back in the return envelope the same day you get it.

Thank you for your kind help.

Sincerely,

James B. Holder  
Pastor

October 25, 1983

Dear Participant,

This is the second mailing of this survey. We need to hear from you. Your individual response is important. If we haven't heard from you yet, please fill out the following questionnaire today and simply return it in the stamped envelope provided.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Aileen Rediger

To the Congregation:

I am asking for your cooperation in a study being done by a member of the Communication Department at Oklahoma State University. The lady conducting the study, Aileen Rediger, has explained her purpose and procedures to me and I believe that the results of this study would be of benefit to the church. You can help us by filling out and promptly returning this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

James B. Holder  
Pastor

December 7, 1983

Dear Participant,

Have you sent us your completed questionnaire yet? If you have, thank you very much! If you haven't, why not?

Is New Life Center not your church home? If this is the case, please check "No" for question No. 1 of the survey and send it back today in the return envelope provided. Thank you!

Has your spouse filled one out for "both of you?" We still need to hear from you. Your individual response is important. In order for this survey to have the maximum benefit for your church we need to hear from each and every participant. We need to hear from you.

Enclosed is another copy of the questionnaire along with another return stamped envelope. Please fill out the survey today and simply return it in the stamped envelope provided.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Aileen P. Rediger

VITA

Aileen Peterson Rediger

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: PRIORITIES IN AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD CONGREGATION

Major Field: Speech

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in El Paso, Texas, June 28, 1958, the daughter of James A. and Merridee K. Peterson. Married to Martin Scott Rediger on December 19, 1981.

Education: Graduated from Edina High School, Edina, Minnesota, in June 1976; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Interpersonal Communication from Oral Roberts University in May 1980; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1984.

Professional Experience: Teaching Assistant, Department of Speech Communication, Oklahoma State University, August 1980 to May 1983; Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication Arts, Oral Roberts University, August 1983 to May 1984.