LED BY THE SPIRIT?
DISCOVERING THE ETHOS OF CONGREGATIONS THAT REACH OUT

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis which I am submitting to the University of Pretoria for the degree

of PHILOSPHIAE DOCTOR is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a

degree to any other tertiary institution.

Signature _____

Date: _____

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SUMMARY

The present study developed from reports and observations that the Christian church in the postmodern West is in a condition of zero growth and even decline. Preliminary analysis of strategies proposed to address this situation suggests that they tend largely to focus on improving the implementation of traditional/institutional methodologies of church growth. While such strategies have their successes, the continuing decline in numbers of committed Christians highlight the urgent need to find additional approaches to the problem.

Recent research in the field of Congregational Studies (specifically, Sider, Olson & Unruh 2002, *Churches that make a Difference*) has shown that certain congregations are maintaining a high level of visibility in their immediate communities through a strategy of community engagement. Further, rather than such engagement being the result of the application of academically or institutionally derived programs, preliminary reports suggested that such community engagement has roots in a congregational "ethos of care" for the immediate secular community.

A connection was made between such "community-engaging" congregations and the congregation described by Lesslie Newbigin (1989) in *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. In this book, Newbigin identifies a series of characteristics by which a congregation might be identified as being the "hermeneutic of the Gospel in society," a situation, Newbigin maintains, only brought about by the centrality of Jesus in the life of the congregation. In broad terms these characteristics are the same as those determined by Sider, Olsen and Unruh as those of a "holistic" congregation.

The present study was motivated by the idea that identifying and studying such holistic congregations might give some insight to strategies that may be usefully employed by other congregations in expanding the Kingdom of God through community engagement; specifically, by developing a form of the ethos of hermeneutic or holism described by Newbigin and Olsen, Sider, & Unruh.

The research took two forms: an objective *survey*, developed in conjunction with the department of statistics at the University of Georgia, and subjective *interviews* conducted with the pastoral leadership and with individuals and focus groups within the participating churches. All the data from the Survey was compiled and analyzed by a graduate student in statistics at UGA under the strict guidance and supervision of a professor in the department of statistics, and the subsequent report was approved by that person.

The first three chapters of the thesis engage the necessary general description related to background and methodology, the nature of contemporary (postmodern) society and its historical development and the location of the research and the research strategy, respectively. Chapter four provides a *précis* of the interviews conducted with individuals and groups within the ten churches participating in the study. Finally, in chapter five are reported the results of the preliminary survey, used to identify "churches of interest" to the research; the primary survey, being the results of the objective surveys conducted within the participating churches; and the conclusions of the study. Appendices to the study include the Preliminary and Primary Survey instruments, the Interview Questionnaire and the final report from UGA, the "Statistical Analysis of Church and Ministry Involvement Study"

KEY TERMS

Atlanta

Christendom + post-Christendom

Community

Congregation

Congregation as hermeneutic

Congregational ethos

Congregational Studies

Enlightenment project

Hermeneutic

Holism + holistic ministry

Meaningful engagement

Outreach Ministry

Postmodernism

Spirit + Spirituality

Statistical Analysis

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Many people have, in one way or another, left their mark on these pages. While my conscience tells me I would be remiss in my duty if I failed to recognize all of them, the reality is that there are more names than there is space to accommodate them. Without slight to all who have shaped my thinking, I am especially grateful to the late Paul Gaebelein, who told me always to "begin at the beginning, go on to the end, and then stop!;" Stan Wood, who initiated my interest in contemporary church/community studies and introduced me to the works of Lesslie Newbigin; Ron Johnson, who encouraged my research; and Malan Nel, my promoter at the University of Pretoria. In terms of the actual research work, I offer profound thanks to those congregations and individuals who gave freely of their time to participate in the study and to Will Abney, my wife's graduate assistant at the McAfee School of Theology, who willingly allowed himself to be co-opted as data entry clerk.

I am also grateful to members of the University of Georgia Department of Statistics.   Professor Jaxk Reeves provided assistance in developing the Congregation and Community survey instrument and professor Dan Hall and graduate student Michael Roca played an important and significant consulting and advisory role in the analysis and interpretation of the data generated by the instrument ensuring, to the extent possible, that the methodology of interpretation and analysis and the results and conclusions drawn from the investigation and provided as part of this research and contained herein as Appendix 4, conformed to generally accepted principles of statistical investigation. Any additional conclusions or inferences drawn from the research and contained in the body of the thesis, as well as any errors, are the responsibility of the author.

Special thanks go to my wife, Nancy, for supporting me – literally and metaphorically – in the time it took to complete the research and write this thesis. Nancy, my sons Calvin and Aaron and our pets – three miniature Dachshunds (Hobie, Zeno and Rusty), a "Dachsmutt" (Heracles) and Jonah, our ten-year-old iguana, were, in their own way, a welcome respite from the rigors of academia.

Finally I must note that the work on this thesis was, sadly, bracketed by two significant events; the death of my father, Captain Eric Gerald Walford (3/23/23 – 12/7/03) and my brother, Eric Andrew Walford (11/9/46 - ?7/19/05).

> *Lo! Some we loved, the loveliest and the best*
> *That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,*
> *   Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,*
> *And one by one crept silently to Rest. (Khayyam)*

DEDICATION

For Nancy

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Various surveys show that since the early 1960s, church attendance in the United States has fallen by 10-12 percent, and involvement in other forms of church social life (Bible study groups, socials, educational programs, etc.) has declined by between 25 and 50 percent. Actual attendance could be significantly lower, researchers note, because survey respondents tend to overreport involvement in the life of the church. Consistent with what we repeatedly hear, mainline denominations have suffered the greatest declines during this time. Perhaps even more ominous are the results of polls that reveal our attitude to the body of believers. Almost 80 percent of Americans who believe in God assert that participation in a church community is not a necessary part of their faith (Vander Broek 2002: 11).*

Annual Study Reveals America Is Spiritually Stagnant

The annual State of the Church survey, a representative nationwide study of the nation's faith practices and perspectives by the Barna Research Group of Ventura, California was released today, showing that while Americans remain interested in faith and consider themselves to be religious people, little has changed in relation to the religious practices of Americans in recent years (Barna 2001).

Christianity is stagnant in the West and particularly in the United States. A decline in church attendance numbers, long a commonly held belief, is confirmed by research (cf. Hoge & Roozen 1979; Gallup 1988; Roozen & Hadaway 1993; Putnam 2000). Additional research has determined that regardless of the approximately 325,000 Protestant churches, 1,200 Christian radio stations, 300 Christian television stations, and 300 Christian colleges in the United States and the collection and investment in the period between 1985 and 2000 of $500 *billion* in ministry (buildings, missions, schools etc.), the net change in the number of committed Christians in the United States was statistically insignificant and the social influence of the church is marginal at best (Barna 1985-2002, cf. Marler & Roozen 1993: 253). The purpose of this opening chapter is to review the ways the situation is being addressed by the academy and the church, and then to propose an additional field of research intended to explore the potential of identifying

congregations where intrinsic human spirituality appears to have come under the leadership of the Spirit to engage and influence secular community.

<div align="center">1.1 PRINCIPLES, STRATEGY, AND ENGAGEMENT</div>

A survey of the literature suggests that until recently the overwhelming approach has been a focus on religiously- or institutionally-derived strategies of church growth and community engagement. Bayer (2001: 2ff) terms the institutionalization of the Christian religion "Christendom," and Carroll (1998: 2) following Canda (1988: 30-46) defines the religious approach as a "set of organized, institutionalized beliefs and social function."

1.1.1   Institutional or religiously derived approaches: The Christendom Model

In these approaches, declining church growth, falling levels of committed Christians and a general contraction of Christianity in the West are approached as problems that can be solved using existing strategies of institutionalized Christianity to convey religious values, communicate religious beliefs, and promote religious rituals as intrinsic parts of community engagement. Ron Johnson (1999: 307) calls this strategy of engagement the "corporate" model, because it focuses on the internal praxis of Christianity in terms of an organization constructed in corporate fashion, with:

> [B]y-laws, constitutions and structures that narrowly define its mission . . . [The corporate model] view[s] the church as an institution in society which fulfills spiritual functions the way other institutions fulfill business, government, educational, or labor needs.

Locating Christendom as "that part of the world where it is assumed that the Christian faith, whether evidenced by a state church or not, is recognized as the dominant religious and cultural force," Bayer (2001: 9, 10) notes that a persistent belief in the

centrality of Christianity has led to an adherence to a set of images which paint

Christendom as:

- A hierarchical system in which authority flows from the top down,
- A religious structure within which the marginalized are subjects without voice,
- [Having] a propensity to be obsessed with its own growth and institutional health,
- [A point of view where] Salvation [is] seen as within the church,
- See[ing] a need to keep itself well positioned within the dominant society,
- [Having] a need to draw exclusive lines between who is in and who is out,
- [Condoning the] use of biblical texts as a weapon against outsiders,
- [Seeing theology] in terms of handed-down doctrine, *orthodoxy,* and
- Focus[ing] on bringing [people] in so that they might meet God in the church.

(Bayer 2001: 148-156)

But now, Bayer (2001: 7-20) notes, secularism and religious pluralism have

increasingly diminished the central role of Christianity as the dominant religious and

cultural force in Western society.[1] As a result, like it or not Christianity is entering a new

phase of its history in which, Bayer believes, these images are no longer sustainable. A

new paradigm of identity and function must be constructed, reflecting a new ethos.

Bayer (2001: 9 and passim) terms this new paradigm "post-Christendom," and proposes

a new set of images, the counterpoint of those set out above. "Post-Christendom," he

writes (2001: 148-156),

- [Is] a system where leadership and direction are shared by those set apart, trained, and commissioned, and by those of every rank and status,
- [Enjoys] new forms of ecclesial life in which the marginalized become mentors for the whole church,
- [Has] a propensity to focus its life on generating evidences of the reign of God,
- [Has a point of view wherein] Salvation is seen as being in the world,
- Is willing to live on the margins of society,

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[1] The issues of secularism and religious pluralism will be further explored in Chapter Two.

- [Celebrates] evidences of the reign of God wherever and among whomever they appear,
- [Employs] the uses of [biblical] texts as stories, metaphors, celebrations, and testimonies to God's grace,
- [Sees theology] in terms of doing the truth, *orthopraxis*, and
- Focuses on sending [people] out that they might meet God in the world.

In practice, while in general institutional approaches are by definition "Christendom" approaches, coupling church tradition (e.g. prayer, worship, sacraments), with contemporized interpretations of established, pre-existing biblical, traditional (that is, institutionalized) principles, it would be neither accurate nor fair to say that all are equally constrained by an either/or approach to the institutional or Christendom paradigm. As both church and academy embrace new strategies of social engagement, the line between Christendom and post-Christendom has become increasingly blurred in recent years and the resulting strategies often have, to varying extent, a foot in both camps. For example in establishing mission as a fundamental *raison d'etre* for the church Van Engen (1996: 89) identifies four "scriptural words" – *koinonia, kerygma, diakonia,* and *marturia*, which he then further develops in contemporary terms as key features of community engagement. Van Gelder (2000: 151-154) adds to Van Engen's quartet four more – worship, discipling, visioning, and stewarding – again with contemporized interpretation and application. Other proposals focus on developing a single identified characteristic of community engagement by the church. For example Hauerwas (1991) and VanderBroek (2002) explore the potential of Christian community; Carson (2000) and Kallenberg (2002) deal with the expansive issue of proclamation as evangelization; Farnsley (2003) identifies service and addresses it in the specific context of a social welfare system; and Bosch (1991), Van Engen (1996), Knitter (1996), Kirk (2000), and Kostenberger & O'Brien (2001) explore various aspects of the role of

mission. In addition to these rather more technical and formulaic approaches may be added some works intended to translate the sometimes complex issues of community engagement into practice. Rendle and Mann (2003) for example provide extensive information on how to develop church leadership and congregational meeting agendas, control the lengths of meetings, manage meetings, identify ministries, manage conflict, identify issues and the like. By use of anecdotes, examples, outlines, and reported experiences of others Barna (1999) translates general, academic principles of church organization and leadership, worship, education, stewardship, and outreach into practical "habits of effective churches." In terms of specific strategies Gaddy and Nixen (1995) use extensive textual outlines, pictures and examples that help transform the theory of worship into meaningful praxis and Johnson (1994), by means of explanations and examples renders the complexities of communication – especially the fine distinctions between listening and hearing – into practically applicable strategies of ideas transmission between congregations and their leaders, and congregations and their communities.

Even where there has been a consistent movement in academia toward a more comprehensive and contemporary approach in terms of the new paradigm Bayer (2001) identifies (see for example Spong 1998, 2001; Van Gelder 1999; McGrath 2002; Wood 2003); there remains in most proposals a glaring absence of the centrality of the Spirit (Guder 1998: 142-182 and Nel 2003: 12ff & 225ff, are among rare exceptions). Indeed, where Bayer contrasts Christendom with post-Christendom as a change in what may be termed Christian sociology, Canda (1998: 573, see also Sherwood 1998) contrasts the institutional/ Christendom approach with the spiritual, which he describes as the "basic

human drive for meaning, purpose, and moral relatedness among people, with the

universe, and with the ground of our being."   Carroll (in Canda 1998: 2) adds:

> Several authors (Dudley & Helfgott 1990; Ortiz 1991; Titone 1991)
> distinguish between the two concepts as follows: spirituality refers to
> one's basic nature and the process of finding meaning and purpose
> whereas religion involves a set of organized, institutionalized beliefs and
> social functions as a means of spiritual expression and experience.

That spirituality may be derived from institutional programs or strategies is not

argued. Indeed the presence/guidance of the Spirit is almost invariably invoked during

the implementation, if not the development, of such programs. But the Holy Spirit and

spirituality *per se* are not an intrinsic quality of institutionally-derived (or indeed even of

much post-Christendom) curricula of social engagement by the church. At least one

scholar suggests why this may be. In his introduction to one of the rare contemporary

works on the Spirit and spirituality in society, David May (in Marshall 2003: ix) writes:

> Most of us attempt to live Christian lives, yet in the daily rhythms
> sometimes a sense of the thinness of participation occurs. Instead of
> feeling the fullness of Christian faith, we have shallow encounters that
> reveal how pavid our experiences truly are. We may be unable, or perhaps
> more accurate to say, unwilling to figure out what is lacking, but we have
> sensed it. Like an empty chair at the table or a loved one absent from a
> family picture, incompleteness is felt. Awkwardly, we continue moving to
> the music that springs from our Bibles and religious traditions, but we
> glide alone across the dance floor for lack of a partner. Molly Marshall
> has sensed and named the missing partner; it is the Spirit. *While much
> contemporary theological writing focuses a spotlight on the Waltzing God
> and Christ, the Spirit has been relegated to one of the chairs along the
> wall of the ballroom* (emphasis added*).*

1.1.2   Spiritually-derived approaches

Where the institutional approach follows a patterned system of beliefs, values,

and rituals, the idea of spiritual purpose derives from a basic human drive for meaning,

purpose, and moral relatedness among people, with the universe, and with the ground of

our being. To be sure, in some instances, the idea of "basic human drive," expressing as a "self-discovered purpose," has led people away from the church. Harries (2002: x) remarks that there is a "growing number of people who are feeling their way toward a spiritual understanding of life but who do not feel at ease with a great deal of traditional religion." "Spiritual" people often object to any single iteration of religion not only because they believe it limits the possibilities of spiritual experience, but also because they believe it curtails a wider human experience of the world – of other religions, of the occult, of astrology, of self-determined personal beliefs and values. However, many people still *are* finding a sense of spirituality within the church and such spirituality does not always derive from institutional/academic programs in consequence of such programs. Rather, it often seems to arise as part of a congregational dynamic and presents itself as a congregational ethos. Such congregations fit Bayer's (2001: 160ff) "post-Christendom" paradigm which, some differences in detail excepted, is in fact but an echo of the descriptive criteria for the *hermeneutical* congregation supplied by Lesslie Newbigin (1989).

Recognizing that the Christendom model of strategic engagement is no longer tenable, Newbigin (1989: 223, cf. Guder 1998: 142-182) proposes that the new initiative of community engagement must come from the congregation: "Congregations," Newbigin (1989: 233) asserts, "exist for the sake of those who are not members, as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's redeeming grace for the whole life of society."

To be these kinds of congregations, maintains Newbigin (1989: 227-232), they must become the "hermeneutic of the gospel" in society, each congregation exercising its faith by missionally engaging the community in which it is situated. The key factor in

developing such a congregation, notes Newbigin (1989: 227), is the centrality of Jesus in

the life of the community of faith. He writes:

> Jesus […] formed a community. This community has as its heart the
> remembering and rehearsing of his words and deeds, and the sacraments
> given by him through which it is enabled both to engraft new members
> into its life and renew this life again and again through sharing in his life
> through the body broken and the lifeblood poured out. It exists in him and
> for him. He is the center of its life. Its character is given to it, when it is
> true to its nature, not by the characters of its members but by his character.

 In other words, the faith community Newbigin describes is led by Jesus. But in

Newbigin's view, how is that leadership manifested?

> [I]n the Synoptic gospels, the mighty works of Jesus are the work of
> God's kingly power, of his Spirit. So also with the disciples. It is the
> Spirit who will give them power and the Spirit who will bear witness. It is
> not that they must speak and act, asking the help of the Spirit to do so. It
> is rather *in their faithfulness to Jesus they become the place where the*
> *Spirit speaks and acts* (Newbigin 1989: 118, 119, emphasis added. Cf.
> Nel 2003: 242, 245, Guder 1998: 142-182).

The difference between the strategy of Newbigin (1989) and that of

institutionally/ academically-derived approaches is that the latter tends to invoke the

Spirit as assistant to a humanly-determined strategy. The Spirit is co-opted, as it were, to

participate in what humankind qua the institution has planned. In a post-Christendom

congregation, a congregation that is the hermeneutic of the gospel, the Spirit is the

animating principle, or force; the ethos of the congregation *is* the strategy; for by its

nature it embodies the speech and action of the Spirit; it is the vehicle through which the

Spirit speaks and acts; indeed, in its speech and action it *is* the Spirit.   Further, where

Christendom may be characterized as centripetal, with an inward, self-centered focus

impelled and sustained by tradition; the post-Christendom congregation may be

characterized as centrifugal, having a focus outward into the community that is impelled

and sustained by the Spirit.

1.1.3   Holistic Congregations

Centrifugal, "Hermeneutical" congregations of the type described in the preceding paragraphs have also been characterized as "holistic" congregations, and their community engagement as "holistic ministry." Stokes and Roozen (1991: 186) note:

> [H]olism is in many ways a response to the challenge of the multiplicity of social and religious forces that erode a congregation's unity of vision, and it is an affirmation that a congregation's inherited and confessed, formal and informal, web of symbolic meanings, values, and commitments – that is, its culture – always consciously or unconsciously informs pragmatic choices made among the diverse alternatives of program, process, and context with which every congregation is continually confronted.

As will be further discussed in chapter two, Spirit-led, or holistic, congregations are becoming an emerging field of study within the broader context of congregational studies. That such congregations may be developed by following the institutionalized approaches outlined above is not argued. However congregational studies also highlight the fact that the Spirit spontaneously permeates certain congregations even when those congregations are not informed by institutionally-derived or -driven programs of community engagement. The purpose of this study is to focus on such spontaneously motivated hermeneutical/holistic congregations in order to determine if they share something of the same spiritually-driven *ethos*, and if that ethos, as Newbigin asserts, develops out of the centrality of faith in Jesus Christ in the life of the congregation.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem this research addresses is the situation outlined in the opening paragraphs, namely, the stagnancy of the Christian church in the United States of America. The focus of this research is on congregations described above as "holistic." Working from the principle that such congregations have a set of characteristics that

underlie their holistic ethos – an ethos that embodies the speech and actions of the Spirit – the main aim of this research is an attempt to determine those basic characteristics. The major question to which this study seeks an answer is: Is there an identifiable ethos of holistic congregations?

In addressing this problem and given that a "holistic congregation" is one that largely conforms to the profile developed by Newbigin, the following questions are asked:

1. What are the key individual and collective characteristics of members of holistic congregations?
2. How do those individual and collective characteristics differ from those of members of non-holistic congregations?
3. What conclusions may be drawn from identified characteristics in terms of the development of congregational ethos?
4. To what extent are the various characteristics reproducible?

1.3 THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The premise of this study is that there is a distinct ethos of congregations that engage in holistic ministry. The intention of the research is to identify and define the underlying characteristics that engender such an ethos, anticipating that:

If there is an ethos common to congregations that engage in holistic ministry, and if it can be discerned, generalization of that ethos will help other churches make a difference in their communities.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is empirical, inductive, effect-to-cause research. In such research the effect is traced back to a theoretical cause. In this case, a causal link is suspected between successful community engagement by a church and the ethos of that church.

The research began with the identification of a specific geographic area (greater metropolitan Atlanta) as the locus for research. This was followed by the establishment of criteria to determine the requirements for identifying a church as "holistic" in its ministry. (The term "holistic" is explained below and in Chapter 2.) Efforts then focused on identifying the Target group of churches from which the Sample would be drawn. As is further described in Chapter Three, because of the abundance of churches of all kinds in the circumscribed geographic area, the research intentionally identified mainstream protestant denominations as the Target group. Preliminary survey instruments were then developed and sent to randomly selected churches of the Target group in the circumscribed area. From the respondents, a group of ten churches participated in the research: five that maximally exhibited the effect – holistic ministry – (as defined by the established criteria) and five whose ability to be totally holistic was impacted by their minimal community outreach ministries.   To the extent possible, the significant differences between churches at each end of the ministry spectrum were limited to their practice of outreach ministry, while factors of location, congregational size and denomination of holistic churches were largely mirrored in the non-holistic churches.

Actual research was guided by Heitink (1999: 228-231) and Van der Ven (1998: 125ff). Heitink (1999: 229) asserts that research falls under any one, or a combination, of three types – descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory – and that in any given study these types are usually combined either as complementary pairs – for example. as explorative-descriptive, or exploratory-explanatory – or to explain the method of testing, as for example in testing-descriptive, or testing explanatory.   The nature of this study – testing the hypothesis proposed above – therefore must, as Heitink (1999: 231) writes:

[G]ive clarity whether certain relationships, which are thought to exist on theoretical grounds, can be detected in reality or in the human consciousness . . . A sound academic suspicion ensures that this research seeks to falsify specific hypotheses. This is the only way to detect what can withstand criticism.

This being the case, then the differences between the churches studied must be the subject of both *descriptive* and *explorative* research, as follows.

1.4.1   Descriptive

This initial phase of the research set out to answer the question as to "how" communities are engaged by the ten selected churches. Observational in form, it studied the manner in which the participating churches undertook community engagement practices. It noted the differences in each church's overall strategy of engagement as well as the ways individual members and groups participated, or did not participate, in the strategy.

1.4.2   Explorative

The explorative phase asked the "why" questions of community engagement. The intent here was to find the underlying motive(s) that drive Christian individuals and groups to engage, or to avoid engagement with, their communities. The purpose was to attempt to identify the criteria necessary to the ethos that underlies holistic ministry. Tools used in this part of the research were both quantitative and qualitative in form. In terms of the former, data collected were of two kinds. The first related to congregational size and demographics, church location, community demographics, ministries (Sunday school, worship, choir, community), income, staff (numbers, positions/ responsibilities etc.), small group activities, political programs, "12-step" programs (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous) and the like. This information was collected from a combination of sources

such as the church leadership, congregational interviews, and empirical observation. The second kind of quantitative data was derived from congregational surveys which asked typical demographic questions as well as questions about length of attendance/membership, ministry programs, emphases, participation, leadership roles, travel times to church, beliefs and values, and other background information. These surveys were modeled on Ammerman 1997: 377-380 and Sider and Unruh 1999 (see also Chapter Three and Appendix 2, below). Qualitative data was collected through what Ammerman (1997: 371ff) calls "Focus Questions." Focus questions are questions asked during small group interviews and are intended to help gain a picture of the character, or ethos, of the church and its congregation: congregational history, ecology, culture, processes, leadership, resources, theology and so forth. (See Appendix 3.)

The data accumulated through the activities described were kept in two discrete data blocks; one comprising information from the five holistic churches, the other from the five churches whose holism was impacted by reduced community engagement practices.

The next step was analysis of the data block of information from holistic churches to see if the research hypothesis – that churches heavily engaged in community ministry shared a similar ethos or culture – could be substantiated. The two blocks of data (i.e., that of the holistic churches, and that of the non-holistic churches) were then compared to highlight differences, which led to the final step of forming some tentative conclusions based on the findings.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

The research is limited in a number of ways. First, effect-to-cause studies show only the probable frequency of the cause in cases of a given effect, not the probable frequency of the effect in cases of a given cause. (That is, the application of any determined causative principles in the target group is no guarantee that such churches will enjoy the same successes as the sample, rather, it can only be said that they might have a greater tendency for success.) Second, the research was undertaken in a local geographic, not to say metropolitan, area. Because there are subtle (and not so subtle) variances between communities, the applicability of the results outside the target area will necessarily be questionable. Third, the research could only be undertaken in churches agreeing to participate in the investigation and among congregants of those churches willing to answer comprehensive questionnaires and engage in lengthy interviews. Such agreement introduces a bias in the research, the range and extent of which is unknown. Fourth, the objective data accrued are developed from responses to a finite set of survey instrument questions. There is a limit to the time people are prepared to spend responding to surveys and questionnaires, no matter how committed the respondents may be to the research (or their church). This time limit restricts the number, length, type and complexity of questions included. It is inevitable therefore that certain questions that others might consider significant are omitted.   Fifth, a church is an organism; while statistical information will deliver quantitative information – church membership, membership demographics (age, family size, income, race/ethnicity, giving etc.), attendance, participation, growth, budget and the like, such information says little about *affect*, the feelings, moods, emotions and attitudes that drive individuals and

groups. Such qualitative information can only be gleaned through a process of dialog in which the biases of both the interviewer and interviewee may be introduced. Finally sixth; the research is a small-scale, exploratory study limited to a data set of just ten churches; the extent to which any data developed may be extrapolated to other churches is therefore extremely restricted.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Following this introductory chapter, chapter two provides a more in-depth discussion of "communities," "spirituality" and "meaningful engagement," these being the significant terms of the research. Included will be the nature and historical development of contemporary society and the problems it presents vis-à-vis the church; a brief overview of Congregational Studies, the broad genre of this study; a presentation in greater detail of the "congregation as hermeneutic" theory of community engagement presented by Newbigin (1989); and an enlargement on the concept of holistic ministry and the role it holds as the locus of research in examining the proposed hypothesis. Chapter three discusses the geographical location of the research and the research design, methods, and implementation procedures of a small-scale inductive, empirical, effect-to-cause study intended to identify the ethos of those churches that meet the developed criteria of "holistic" churches as compared to a second group of "non-holistic" churches. Chapter four contains the written reports of the interviews held in participating churches and includes something of each church's location, history, congregational demographic, denominational affiliation, active membership, the church's annual budget, the number of engaged community ministries, and the thoughts and opinions of interviewees. Finally,

chapter five summarizes the subjective and objective results of the research, and presents some preliminary conclusions.

1.7 TERMINOLOGY

In general, terms will be explained as they are introduced in the text. However, the terms community, church, hermeneutic, gospel, holistic ministry, and meaningful engagement, already introduced, will be dealt with immediately.

1.7.1 "Community" and "society" are used interchangeably as descriptive of the general population within the limited geographic sphere of one or more churches, but having no significant relationship with any particular church. Where the modifier "faith" or "Christian" is used, it means mean the population with a declared affiliation to the Christian church.

1.7.2 "Church" and "congregation" are used interchangeably as descriptive of communities that gather on the basis of a common faith in Jesus Christ. In addition, other than in the names of churches, the capitalized "Church" is used of the Church Universal, whereas "church" is used of individual churches.

1.7.3 "Hermeneutic" is understood throughout this thesis, in juxtaposition to the Gospel, to mean both *interpretive* and *explanatory* and is used exclusively as the adjective modifying the noun "Gospel." Thus hermeneutic is understood to be the interpretation and/or explanation of the Gospel.

1.7.4 "Gospel" is understood to relate exclusively to that body of literature relating to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the first four books of the New Testament of the Christian Bible, namely Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

1.7.5   **"Holistic Ministry"** is used as defined by Sider, Olson, and Unruh:

> By holistic ministry we mean first of all a wholehearted embrace and integration of both evangelism and social ministry so that people experience spiritual renewal, socioeconomic uplift, and transformation of their social context (2002: 25 n1, cf 16, 17).

> Holistic ministry is further explained in chapter two.

1.7.6   **"Meaningful engagement"** is the consistent practice of all the aspects of Holistic

Ministry that involve work of any give church in its immediate community.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one introduced the purpose of this research as the investigation of congregations meaningfully engaging their communities with a view to determining what role, if any, congregational ethos plays in the subsequent speech and action of the Spirit in and through such congregations to the larger (secular) community. The purpose of the three sections of this chapter is to be a prolegomenon to the research proper. It will explain the understanding of the terms "communities," "spirituality" and "meaningfully engage" in which this study is undertaken and introduce the reader to some of the complexities and challenges contemporary Western society presents the church.

Section one explains "community" in terms of postmodernity, beginning with a discussion of the historical developments leading to the postmodern society, particularly as it relates to understandings of religion. The section continues with a description of the ethos of postmodernity in the United States and concludes with a discussion of the church in contemporary society, including some of the issues that it faces.

Section two follows with an elucidation of the manifestation of spirituality in the postmodern context described in section one.

Section three takes up the issue of meaningful engagement and discusses it in two parts. The first part presents Newbigin's (1989: 222-233) concept of the Congregation as Hermeneutic of the Gospel as a heuristic model of community engagement in the context of the postmodern society, and that society's understanding of spirituality, as presented respectively in sections one and two. The second part shows how "Holistic Ministry" is

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realization of Newbigin's concept and is a logical locus of investigative research into congregational ethos.

2.1   SECTION ONE: THE POSTMODERN COMMUNITY

To begin with, Lakeland (1997: x, xi) points out that "a number of competing and overlapping issues and questions surround the postmodernity debate."   Noting the complexity of the matter, he writes:

> Much of the confusion with which the debate about the postmodern is frequently bedeviled is often negotiated by the observation that there are two postmodernisms, and that postmodernity itself is a dialectical reality. This assertion follows […] from the recognition that "modernity" is a term that we may use to label two quite distinct phenomena. One is the modernism of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, architecture, and literature; the other is the modern world of reason, science, and technological progress ushered in by the Enlightenment.

The following discussion occurs in the context of Lakeland's second identified phenomenon, that of reason, science and technological progress.

While many have undertaken to give a formal or extended taxonomy of the phenomenon of postmodernity from a variety of points-of-view (most recently e.g. Grenz 1996; Lakeland 1997; Powell 1998), the purpose here is simply to describe it as the milieu in which contemporary Western society finds itself and in which the church thus must necessarily function.

Since, as the name *post*modernity suggests, it can hardly be understood apart from its forbear *modernity*, which itself must to some extent be historically contextualized, it is necessary here to provide a brief exposition of the historical development of the phenomenon described as " postmodernity."

2.1.1   Historical Development of Postmodernity

As the name implies, postmodernity follows modernity as the latest in a series of cultural evolutionary developments that began with the Renaissance and continued through the Enlightenment.

Historically, the rate of cultural change has been slowly escalating, though from New Testament times through the late middle ages change was more political than social or technological (Newbigin 1989: 66ff). Social change began when the Renaissance period "rediscovered" ancient Greek and Roman literature and Renaissance humanists believed it was possible to improve human society through classical education in such subjects as poetry, history, rhetoric and moral philosophy (Grenz 1996: 58).

The Enlightenment, a revolutionary understanding and application of philosophy, rationalism, and scientific thought begun by Renee Descartes (1596-1650) and further refined by Isaac Newton (1642-1727), increased the rate of social change. The revolutions in philosophy and science they rendered resulted in a new view of the world and of humanity's place in it.

In terms of theology, one outcome of the Enlightenment emphasis on rationalism was the displacement of the biblically-derived doctrines and teachings of revealed religion in favor of a "natural" religion involving a set of foundational truths – generally believed to include the existence of God and a body of universally acknowledged moral laws – accessible to all rational beings through the exercise of reason (Grenz 1996: 72).

Clearly these views were not sympathetic to the Christian faith. In *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) John Locke (1632-1704, cf. Walker, et al. 1985: 570-1; Grenz 1996: 72) wrestled with the issues of natural theology and determined that

Christianity, once stripped of all its mystery and dogmatic baggage, was, however, the most reasonable form of religion. Conversely, using Locke's empirical approach as a template for rational, theological deliberation, other Enlightenment thinkers (e.g. John Toland [1670-1722]; Anthony Collins [1676-1729]; Thomas Woolston [1669-1733]; Matthew Tindal [1657-1733], cf. Walker, et al. 1985: 579-580) went on to construct Deism, a theological alternative to Christianity in any form. For those thinkers:

> The modern world turned out to be Newton's mechanistic universe populated by Descartes' autonomous, rational substance. In such a world theology was forced to give place to the natural sciences, and the central role formerly enjoyed by the theologian became the prerogative of the natural scientist (Grenz 1996: 67).

The deistic philosophy was, by means of natural science, to reduce religion to its most basic elements – elements that, deists believed, were universal and therefore reasonable. Deists rejected the dogmas that the church had traditionally attributed to divine revelation as a standard for religious truth. All doctrines were evaluated using the criteria of reason, a philosophy that, for most deists, left room for a "first cause" or "creator" of the universe, a system of post mortem punishment and/or reward, and some sense of a personal spirituality (Grenz 1996: 72, Fuller 2001: 2).

Deism itself however soon came under attack from British philosopher David Hume (1711-1776, cf. Walker, et al. 1985: 582). Going right to the root of empirically based "cause and effect" deistic theology, which argued for the existence of a creator as first cause, Hume asserted that:

> Experience gives us all our knowledge, but we receive it as isolated impressions and ideas. All connections between our mental impressions as related by cause and effect . . . are simply the inveterate but baseless view points of our mental habit. […]. What we really perceive is that in our limited observation certain experiences are associated. [. . .]

[T]herefore cause and effect are ruled out; the argument for a God founded thereon is baseless.

Galvanized by Hume's radical skepticism, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804, (cf. Grenz 1996: 77) responded, in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), by asserting that the human mind is not just the receptor of mental impressions but is active in the knowing process. The mind systematizes the raw data it receives in a process of "knowing." Kant hypothesized that the human mind is active in the epistemological process and determined that there was a distinction between what it could experience (phenomena) and what lay beyond experience (noumena). Realizing that this theory of knowing placed strict limits on the deistic philosophy that argued from sense experience to posit transcendent realities such as God and the immortal soul, and recognizing further that empirical knowledge and the character of virtue are not bedfellows and that mere knowledge will not be enough to deal with the moral challenges to human existence, Kant further postulated a theory of Practical Reason, a philosophy grounded in the moral dimension of human existence. Walker, et al. (1985: 629) writes that in *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Only* (1793), Kant "emphasized morality as the prime content of practical reason, and reduced religion to theistic ethics."

In making the active human mind the ultimate agent and authority in the process of knowing and in the life of moral duty, the work of Kant (cf. Grenz 1996: 81) provided the foundation for the final emergence of modernism as a cultural phenomenon, for now reason was privileged over faith and the autonomous self became the central focus of philosophical thought.

> The modern, post-enlightenment mind assumes that knowledge is certain, objective, and good. It presupposes that the rational, dispassionate self can obtain such knowledge. It presupposes that the knowing self peers at

the mechanistic world as a neutral observer armed with the scientific method. The modern knower engages in the knowing process believing that knowledge inevitably leads to progress and that science coupled with education will free humankind from our vulnerability to nature and all forms of social bondage.

Not only did the "Enlightenment project" (Grenz 1996: 03; Sim 2001: 238) open up the possibilities of free enquiry and debate and oppose the traditional powers and beliefs of the church, it brought all received, or traditional, notions and social relations subject to the use of "reason." Further, tremendous social and technological advances followed Newton's scientific revolution, ushering in an "improved" world of order and the promise of mastery over nature and history (Sim 2001: 239). The Enlightenment gave birth to the idea of the "betterment" of the human race, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and the concept of "moral progress," ideas that ultimately grew to maturity as the modern technological society of the twentieth century. "At the heart of this society is the desire to rationally manage life on the assumption that scientific advancement and technology provide the means to improving the quality of human life" (Grenz 1996: 81; cf. Van Gelder 1991).

2.1.1.1 Postmodern Reaction

Philosophical reaction to the Enlightenment project began with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Nietzsche (cf. Sim 2001: 325) attacked the idea of a rational attainment of knowledge as a finite concept of "truth" as articulated by Enlightenment thought, suggesting that there were various kinds of truth:

> The first is those truths that fall under the general rubric of illusions, lies and interpretations (i.e. the various world views of metaphysics). The second is those truths that make the world habitable (i.e. scientific insights which yield practical knowledge of the environment). Both are expressions of the will-to-truth which seeks to appropriate life according to its needs. The difference between them is that the first kind of truth

flaunts its reliance upon a particular perspective, while the second seeks to deny its subjective condition. At heart though, all truth is figurative, a "mobile host of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms . . . illusions which have forgotten they are illusions".

In addition to critiquing the notion of truth, Nietzsche also completed a task unwittingly begun in the Renaissance and continued in the Enlightenment; the deconstruction of the Trinity, and the removal of God entirely from the stage of human meaning.

2.1.1.1.1 The Deconstruction of the Trinity

First articulated by Tertullian (in *Adversus Praxeam*) in his Montanist period (early 2nd century), the meaning of "Trinity" has been debated and restated countless times since.[1] Nevertheless, the concept of the Trinity was a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith from Tertullian's time until Calvin (cf. Walker, et al. 1985: 203-4; 479) published *De Trinitatis Erroribus* in 1531. The Scholasticism of the early Renaissance (11th – 13th centuries CE) placed the Trinity in the center stage of human life as a fundamental Christian philosophy "revealed" through scripture, apprehended by faith, and sustained by church tradition. Philosophical arguments revolved around the nature of God, of Jesus, and of the Spirit, and their Trinitarian relationship, rather than around their reality, which was a given (Walker, et al. 1985: 337-348). Scholasticism also focused on philosophically reconciling ancient Greek and Roman thought with contemporary religious faith and on demonstrating the truth of existing beliefs (ibid. and 324). Theology and philosophy were separate disciplines, to be sure, but the latter was nevertheless subordinate to the former, as Thomas Aquinas makes clear: "if a philosopher

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[1] e.g., at councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (383), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), by John Calvin (*Institutes*, 1536-1559), recently by Walter Kasper (1976); Edward Schillebeeckx (1979), and Lesslie Newbigin (1995a).

arrives at a conclusion which contradicts, explicitly or implicitly, a Christian doctrine, that is a sign that his premises are false or that there is a fallacy somewhere in his argument" (Coplestone 1963: 17). During the early Renaissance the subordination of philosophy to theology was maintained principally because the great thinkers of the time were primarily theologians (ibid.)

Humanism, a literary and cultural movement in the Western Europe of the 14th and 15th centuries, shifted the focus of classical studies. Rather than reconciling them to the church, scholars mined the classics for their intrinsic value in terms of what they had to say about human interests, values, and dignity. Humanity – the human condition itself – became an increasingly important subject of study and philosophy began declaring its independence from theology (Walker, et al. 1985: 405-415). At this point humankind, heretofore worshippers at the foot of the stage whereon the characters of the Trinity held court, began, philosophically speaking, to share the stage with the Trinity. Subsequently the work of Descartes widened the rift between philosophy and theology and Newton's later mechanistic view of the universe further reinforced the division. Humankind was taking over the stage.

The elevation by Kant (cf. Grenz 1996: 72) of the autonomous self – rather than God – as the central focus of human philosophical thought further destabilized the Trinity – and Christian theology – by reversing the positions of philosophy and theology, the latter now becoming subordinate to the former, and "revealed" Christianity was replaced with the rational theology of empirically-derived deism. This move effectively removed Jesus to the wings. While God and the Spirit remained on the stage, their part was now one of supporting cast to the starring role played by humankind (Grenz 1996: 73).

Nietzsche (cf. Grenz 1996: 73ff, 83-98), representative of a society that had largely embraced the promise of "Enlightened" science, art, politics, and technology, and which had no use for God, went a step further: First in *The Gay Science* (1882) and then in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1891) he used fictional characters – a madman in the former instance, the sage Zarathustra in the latter – to articulate an increasingly common belief: "God is dead." With this announcement, God too is removed from the stage, leaving only the Spirit to find its place within the new cast, a cast in which humanity dominated and in which the starring role was played by rationalism. Colin Gunton (1993: 28) succinctly states the situation:

> Modernity is the era which has displaced God as the focus for the unity and meaning of being […] [T]he functions attributed to God have not been abolished but shifted – relocated, as they say today […] God was no longer needed to account for the coherence and meaning of the world, so that the seat of rationality and meaning became not the world, but human reason and will, which thus *displace* God or the world. When the unifying will of God becomes redundant, or is rejected for a variety of moral, rational and scientific reasons, the focus of the unity of things becomes the rational mind.

Strangely, the intellectual difficulty the Enlightenment had with Christian and deistic theology seems largely not to have extended to affairs of the spiritual realm. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826, cf. Fuller 2001: 20) maintained that spirituality had a continued – though changed – role as the capacity "to perceive and feel a conviction of design, consummate skill, and indefinite power in every atom [of the universe]."

2.1.1.2 The Failure of the Enlightenment Project

 Outside the realm of philosophy it was not the theoretical issues of truth, nor the presence or absence of Jesus, God, and Spirit that were important to people so much as

the promise of the Enlightenment in terms of a better, managed society enjoying the benefits of a rationally based science and technology. Indeed, the deconstruction of the Trinity by the reduction of two of its principal characters to apparent insignificance was irrelevant if the trade-off was a generally enhanced human existence, an improvement of life evidenced in shared wealth and the elimination of poverty, improved health leading to longer life, more leisure time, better education and so forth. Belief in a Trinitarian God had served a purpose, but that purpose was now, it appeared, adequately met by the Enlightenment promise.

What the Enlightenment thinkers did not foresee was the duality of the Enlightenment promise, the reality that rationalism and its fruits – science, technology, and individual autonomy – had a dark side (cf. Sim 2001: 239). For example, individual autonomy led to the sense of "community" being overshadowed by an increasing focus on "self" – on individual gain regardless of the cost to others. At the same time peaceful scientific advances were accompanied by advances in weapons and warfare. For example, protection from Polio was offset by the intentional breeding of deadly viruses and the development of germ warfare; technology produced both automobiles and tanks, commercial aircraft and bombers, atomic energy and atomic bombs. The Enlightened world of Science and reason has "seen World Wars One and Two, Nagasaki and Hiroshima, rationally administered 'ethnic cleansing,' Apartheid, systematically managed death camps, various systems of totalitarianism, and ecological mismanagement on a global scale" (Powell 1998: 10).

The postmodern individual looks at these issues, which are not only a part of history but in many respects are descriptive of the current situation and identifies the

negative benefits of the Enlightenment project as the root cause of society's ills (Grenz 1996: 81). As a result, the dominant ideas of Enlightened modernity – the imputed authority of all forms of science, a belief in progress, the heavy reliance on instrumental reason, rationality, and objectivity – are rejected in postmodernity, which has come to view with skepticism the idea of inevitable advancement, or the need to continue exploiting the environment regardless of the long term effect:

> In the postmodern world, people are no longer convinced that knowledge is inherently good. In eschewing the Enlightenment myth of inevitable progress, postmodernism replaces the optimism of the last century with a gnawing pessimism. Gone is the belief that every day, in every way, we are getting better and better. Members of the emerging generation are no longer confident that humanity will be able to solve the world's greatest problems or even that their economic situation will surpass that of their parents. They view life on earth as fragile and believe that the continued existence of mankind is dependent on a new attitude of cooperation rather than conquest (Grenz 1996: 7).

In sum, postmodernity, determining that the dark side of modernity too much overshadows its benefits largely rejects it. How that rejection manifests as a cultural ethos is the focus of the next discussion.

2.1.2   The Ethos of Postmodernity

The "failure" of the Enlightenment project and the absence of Jesus and God as foci of hope has created what Astell (1994) characterizes as a "homeless mind," fragmented through its loss of a center, open to experimentation and eclecticism, celebrating diversity and difference.

Jim Powell (1998: 3, 4) describes how this postmodern philosophy presents itself:

> All the world's cultures, rituals, races, databanks, myths and musical motifs are intermixing like a smorgasbord in an earthquake. And this hodge-podge of hybrid images is global, flooding the traditional mass-media, and also cyber-space – a space ever-blossoming with new

universes and realities, and which is being probed by an ever-expanding population of cyber-punks and cyber-shamans who – like electronic rats burrowing sideways through a vast interconnected series of electronic sewers, cellars, passageways, caverns, gutters, and tunnels – are capable of navigating from cyber-site to cyber-site via an almost infinitely inter-linked catalog of codes. In other words, we live increasingly in a world of interconnected differences – differences amplified and multiplied at the speed of electricity. No longer is there one morality or myth or ritual or dance or dream or philosophy or concept of self or god or culture or style of art that predominates.   The explosion of new communications technologies and the continuing fragmentation of cultures into thousands of little cultures has (sic) forced us to view our world as simultaneously expanding and shrinking.

The Postmodern Western society is one where cultures meet and meld, where religions fall prey to syncretism, where mixed marriages are in greater evidence, where myths and legends and faiths cross social and cultural boundaries and paradoxically become new while remaining old and where music is an amalgamation of East and West and culture within culture. The postmodernist feels free to "let it all hang out," (where "it" is personal self expression devoid of any social or self-imposed censorship), free to "question authority," free to demand instant gratification – instant credit, instant hamburger, instant banking, instant whatever-I-need, free to have sex however, whenever and with whomever they want. Poe (1996: 159) writes:

> The moral approach of the counterculture of the 1960's has entered the mainstream of Western life in Europe and the United States. Grossly stated it is this, 'If it feels good, do it.' In other forms it appears as 'I would never knowingly hurt anyone.' It is a morality that lacks rules and authority but looks for some universal principle or guide to give direction to its chaotic drift, which has led to destructive interpersonal decisions."

It is an interesting paradox (or, better, enigma), that while postmodernity largely rejects modernity as a cultural philosophy, the technological fruits of both movements continue to be encouraged and utilized in postmodern society. Indeed there are very few people who have not in some degree been at least somewhat influenced by, and

appreciative of, such fruits. More and more homes, representing the entire spectrum of the human age demographic in the United States, are having more and more television channels delivered to their homes by cable or satellite. In the quest to fill the ceaseless demand for rapidity, scientists are constantly multiplying the speed of computer processors and advances in Information Technology are such that the postmodern individual is bombarded by more information than they can assimilate. To make it manageable, information reduces to slogans, sound bites, and factoids. In postmodernity technology, fashion, language, entertainment, systems of education, communication methods, medical practices, and transportation systems are outdated and replaced at a dizzying speed. Now, inhabitants of Western society can bank, order groceries and books and CD's and tapes and take advantage of a plethora of other goods and services "on-line," and expect everything to happen at high speed. Only a stalwart few have resisted "quick" this and "express" that, "drive thru" food and drink, banking, dry cleaning, and pharmacy services.

Thus in a Gradual, surreptitious and pervasive manner people both young and old have been seduced by what may be called a "now!" mentality and approach to life. In *Faster: The Acceleration of Just About Everything,* James Gleick (1999: 85) notes that before Federal Express shipping became commonplace in the 1980's, the exchange of business documents did not usually require package delivery "absolutely, positively overnight."   But this is not all.   The promise of the enlightenment and of the technological advances it spawned was one of happiness. Since standards of living in the United States have more than doubled in the last fifty years and people are healthier, live longer, own larger homes, and enjoy many modern comforts like air conditioning, the

expectation is that people should be happier. But British economist Richard Layard (2005) suggests they are not. The reason, he notes, is that that people consider happiness relatively, measuring their happiness by looking at those around them. If they have less than their neighbor, they are "less happy." Their neighbor, on the other hand, is "more happy." In their desire to catch up to their neighbor, the less happy individual works harder to acquire more luxury items. At the same time however, their happier neighbor – who is only relatively happy by comparison to some other less-happy neighbor – is also acquiring more in order to be as happy as some other, better endowed person. This "hedonic treadmill," as Layard (2005: 48) calls it, is increasing individual angst and with it a desire for some form of inner peace.

Clearly the postmodern period is an age of significant change – of worldview, of outlook, of expectations, of approaches to sexuality and inclusiveness, of attitudes towards religion and spirituality, and of what it means to be happy. The ethos of postmodernity is that of a society de-constructed, de-centered, eclectic and catholic. Harry Poe (1996: 4) describes postmodern society as one where "all the rules have changed. To be more precise, there are no rules." It is clearly evident that while this study is not about postmodernity *per se,* any understanding of church/community engagement must be mindful of the increasing presence of postmodernists and the postmodern ethos in both congregations and communities.

2.1.3   Postmodernity and the Church

2.1.3.1 Congregational Studies

The study of congregations has been an ongoing reality since the turn of the 20th century, although it was only in the 1980's that a named field of inquiry called "Congregational Studies" emerged (Stokes & Roozen 1991: 183).

Congregational studies are a form of sociology, intended to give an accurate knowledge of the realities of congregational life so that the nature, form and dynamics of congregations as human organisms may be understood (Stokes & Roozen 1991: 186, 187).   Reasons for wanting such understanding include enabling "more faithful congregational leadership," (Dudley, Carroll, & Wind, 1991, in the *Dedication*), "understand[ing] the relationship between social change and congregational life" (Ammerman et al. 1998: 3), or as a prelude to bringing about change, because:

> [S]uch change is best accomplished when we take seriously and appreciatively, through disciplined understanding [a congregation's] present being – the good and precious qualities that are within them – as a means of grace themselves that enable the transformation of congregations into what it is possible for them to become (Carroll, Dudley & McKinney 1986: 7).

Today, the field of congregational studies is extensive. Ammerman et al. (1998) identify six broad categories under which congregational studies may be assembled: Ecological studies, which focus on the sociology of church and community (e.g. Dudley 1991, 1996, 1997; Ammerman 1997; Wuthnow 1998; Eiesland 2000); Cultural Studies, which focus on the congregation as a community (e.g. Ammerman 1987; Dudley & Johnson 1993; Roof 1993; Becker & Eiesland 1997;) Process Studies, which analyze how congregations organize themselves (e.g. Roof 1978; Halverstadt 1991; Gillespie

1995; Becker 1999); Resource Studies, which essentially deal with the church fiscal resources and management (e.g. Hoge, Zech, McNamara & Donahue 1996; Wuthnow 1997; Mead 1998); and (self-explanatory) Leadership (e.g. Carroll 1991; Hahn 1994; Wimberly 1997) and Theological Studies (e.g. Browning 1991; Anderson & Foley 1998; Guder 1998).   A seventh category collects these six under the heading of General Congregational Studies (e.g. Hoge, Carroll, & Scheets 1989; Wind & Lewis 1994; Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley & McKinley 1998).

As the volumes referenced in the previous paragraph indicate (and there are many more), much work has been done in the area of congregational studies. Of particular interest to this study is the work of Richard Cimino and Don Lattin (1998). While their contribution falls within the context of Ammerman's "Ecological Studies," i.e. the sociology of church and community, what they offer in *Shopping for Faith* (1998) is essentially a distillation of Congregational Studies scholarship from all the categories just listed. The resulting work highlights upwards of thirty-six socio/religious trends of postmodernity. A representative few of the trends they identify are:[2]

- A growing gap between personal spirituality and religious institutions (1998: 11).
- [A] "pick and choose" approach to faith, the desire to "take from it what is wonderful and good." (1998: 23).
- [A] market-based approach by congregations to finding new members and keeping the ones they have, (1998: 56)
- Ministering to the different races and ethnic groups of multicultural America a central concern for religious institutions (1998: 108).
- Continuing efforts to find common ground between religious groups in conflict over abortion, welfare, and other social controversies (1998: 153)

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[2] Bayer (2001: 161, 162) produces lists with similar trends.

Clearly, the study by Cimino & Lattin (1998) is broad ranging, taking in issues of postmodern spirituality, multiculturalism, ecumenism, church "marketing" strategy, politics, medical ethics and the like. While all of what they report is of interest to this research, their comments on congregational trends and spirituality in postmodernity are particularly relevant to the present study. (The focus here being on congregations and congregational trends, Cimino and Lattin's observations regarding spirituality are deferred to the next section.)

First, in their overall assessment of the religious scene in the United States at the turn of the millennium, Cimino and Lattin (1998: 9-30) note that there is growing evidence that one effect of postmodernity is to increase the number of people who are dissatisfied with "conventional" or "traditional" church (e.g. a church that embraces traditional, doctrinal theological interpretations of the Bible, practices liturgical worship services, sings traditional hymns – usually accompanied by an organ. Some – but by no means all – such churches often practice an inward-looking, church-community focus with little lay participation in ministry and outreach, exercising instead multiple clergy-initiated and managed programs) and are looking for a church whose outlook is not only more current (e.g., employs a broader, non-doctrinal theological interpretation of the Bible, practices contemporary worship services with guitars, drums, and "modern" praise songs, and practices community outreach to the local community mainly identified, developed and managed through lay leadership)[3], but that is also non-denominational,

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[3] It should be observed that the exercise of one of these approaches does not pre-suppose the others. For example, there are many traditional churches who practice a contemporary worship style, and many contemporary churches that practice little community ministry, etc.

informal, and has at least some interest in ecology and the environment. This finding is very much in keeping with the ethos of postmodernity discussed earlier.

Next, (*contra* Mead 2001: 77, who maintains that "the church is still owned by its clergy" [cf. Bayer 2001: 8]), Cimino and Lattin (1998: 83) observe a developing "decentralization of power away from the clergy and into the hands of laypeople," and note (Cimino and Lattin 1998: 133) that one result of this decentralization will be that "religious groups and individuals will become more self-conscious and forceful about extending their influence in society, thus forging new links between spirituality and social action". The implication is that with a reduction in ministries that are clergy-identified and managed, there will be a concomitant increase in congregationally-identified and lay-managed ministries.

Third, Cimino and Lattin (1998: 161) note that the "cutbacks in federal assistance to the needy and the shift of the welfare burden to state and local governments will inevitably make religious groups more involved in community development and helping the poor." Currently, for most churches "welfare" consists in the collection and distribution of food and clothing (Cimino and Lattin 1998: 162). The reduction in government funding opens opportunities for the church to offer community service in the form of mentoring, drug addiction counseling and other "step" programs, the pursuit of social justice for the community disenfranchised, job training and placement, childcare, and a multitude of other supportive community ministries (Cimino & Lattin 1998: 162).

Fourth, in keeping with the movement of control away from clergy into the hands of the congregation, Cimino and Lattin (1998: 133) remark that "religious groups and individuals will become more self-conscious and forceful about extending their influence

in society." One increasingly evident outcome of this movement is that issues of politics and social justice are becoming progressively more important as matters of congregational interest and action.

Finally, first noting (Cimino & Lattin 1998: 76ff) that small groups are a primary response to the needs of postmodern Christians because they address their de-centralized (not in church), intimate (in each others' homes), ad-hoc (they do not necessarily meet at a regular time and place) and community (interested friends and associates can meet in the less-threatening environment of someone's home) approach, and because they give a greater role to women and the laity in religious life, Cimino and Latin (1998: 78) further observe that "The emergence of the small group movement will be more than a passing trend because these gatherings are at the fulcrum of forces affecting religion and society in the United States."

The assessment by Cimino and Lattin (1998) of the trend development in postmodern church and community raises two fundamental questions of postmodernism in terms of the church: First, should the church be shaped by, or be a shaper of, society? How this question is answered – and it must be answered in the understanding, as the works of Kraft (1979) and Luzbetak (2002) make clear, that there is a fine line to walk between responding to the pressures of society and maintaining a meaningful doctrine – will be primary to the shape and practice of the church in post modernity.

The second question, equally complex, is a corollary to the first. In view of the fact that society is multifaceted and has a multitude of varying needs, and in view of the fact that the Christian quest is to meet those needs and, at the same time, bring the Gospel to the greatest number of people, the question is: How is the Church to meet the

exigencies of postmodern society without compromising the Christian faith and message?

Another way of framing the question is to ask, to what extent may, or must, the gospel be

contextualized to be a meaningful resource in and for postmodernity? Newbigin (1989:

226) asks:

> How is it possible for the Church to truly represent the reign of God in the
> world in the way Jesus did? How can there be this combination of tender
> compassion and awesome sovereignty? How can any human society be
> both the servant of the people and all their needs, and yet at the same time
> responsible to only to God in His awesome and holy sovereignty? How
> can the Church be fully open to the needs of the world and yet have its
> eyes fixed always on God?

Newbigin proposed that the best way to meet society in terms of the gospel – and

avoid the possibility of compromise – is, as Hunsberger (1998: 279) phrases it, for

"Christians [to] be 'the *hermeneutic* of the gospel – the interpretive lens through which

people will see and read what [the] gospel has to do with them and the world in which

they live.'"   Before turning to Newbigin, however, the question of the Spirit and

spirituality in the postmodern context must be addressed.

2.2   SECTION TWO: POSTMODERNITY, SPIRITUALITY, AND THE SPIRIT

Philosophical, cultural, scientific and technical changes of the size, extent and

variety of those described in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 cannot but have a deep affect on the

society that has experienced (and is experiencing) them. These changes and affects have

been comprehensively addressed elsewhere (e.g. by Williams 1980; Roof 1999; Lippy

1996; Zinnbauer & Pargament 1997).

 It is the effect of these changes in terms of the Spirit and spirituality that is the

focus of this section.

To begin with, it was shown above (Section 2.1.1.1) that the Enlightenment project was successful in philosophically removing Jesus and God from having a meaningful role on the stage of human existence and that for reasons that are not entirely clear the Spirit and the human sense of spirituality largely avoided the attention of Enlightenment philosophers.

In the case of the former, the lack of attention is unsurprising. As long ago as the fourth century C.E. Gregory of Nazianzus (cf. Schaff and Wace 1994:318) termed the Spirit the *Theos agraptos*, the God about whom nothing is written. McDonnell (1985: 191) notes that, "Anyone writing on pneumatology is hardly burdened by the past." "The Third Article of the Apostles Creed has been neglected, contributing to a listless Christianity," writes Molly Marshall (2003: 3), adding that the situation has remained largely unchanged from Gregory's day to the present.   Ditmanson (1978: 209) has reviewed the historical de-emphasis on the Spirit and suggests that the undue prominence given by Montanists and other enthusiasts through the centuries on the presence of the Spirit seemed to the official churches to "lessen the ties between the Spirit and the historical Christ, or between the Spirit and the letter of Scriptures, or between the Spirit and institutional church life, in ways that were both discouraging and theologically frightening."   Confronted by such threats to the unity of the Godhead, by perceived evasions of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, and by a "vague and unregulated spiritualism" (ibid.), "church fathers appropriated biblical texts that might have sustained a theology of the Spirit, turning them instead to a 'doctrine of the Logos, the second person of the Trinity'" (ibid.). If Ditmanson is correct in his assessment, then the profile

of the Holy Spirit during the Enlightenment may have been so low that it simply did not warrant philosophical attention.

The fact that the Enlightenment neglected the Spirit does not mean the Spirit was inactive. The work of the Spirit does not depend on human acknowledgement, nor even on human participation. The "Spirit is always moving ahead, drawing us to new life and receptivity to God's presence with us" writes Marshall (2003: 4). The Spirit is not a separate, independent, less important manifestation of God, but an intrinsic part of a Trinitarian relationship. Where the Spirit is, there too is God and Christ.

> This conclusion is strengthened by a consideration of the relation between the Spirit and God's *action*. Recent biblical and theological studies agree in using the formula: "the Holy Spirit is God in action." The etymology of the biblical words for "spirit" provides a basis for saying this. The Hebrew and Greek words refer primarily to wind or storm. The meaning shifts to the movement of air caused by breathing, and from breath it is a short jump to [the] principle of life or vitality. "Spirit" means that God is a living God who grants vitality to his creation (Ditmanson 1978: 213).

Human spirituality equally seems to have been overlooked by Enlightenment philosophers. This may have been because, as the Jeffersonian comment reproduced above suggests, it was thought that only through the channel of spirituality could the nature and purpose of God be understood. It may equally have been because there was a deep-seated realization that spirituality is an intrinsic part of the human condition. Diarmuid Ó Murchú (1998: vii, cf. Frankfort et al. 1977), noting that spirituality has been a part of the human DNA far longer than institutionalized religion, asserts:

> Our spiritual story as a human species is at least 70,000 years old; by comparison, the formal religions have existed for a mere 4,500 years [. . .] Spirituality is, and always has been, more central to human experience than religion, a fact that is borne out in the growing body of knowledge accumulated by cultural anthropology and the history of religious ideas.

In the foreword to Hay and Hunt (2002) David Hay, noting that he has been engaged in empirical research on the nature of spiritual experience for "rather more than twenty-five years," adds, "The results of my work have strengthened my belief that spiritual awareness is a necessary part of our human make up, biologically built in to us, whatever our religious beliefs or lack of them."

Whether spirituality is part of human DNA or is a result of a conditioning in some way common to all cultures is outside the purview of this discussion. It can only be said that a sense of a spiritual side to the human condition appears to be an almost universal experience of humanity, fundamental to "one's basic nature and the process of finding meaning and purpose" (Canda 1998: 2).

How spirituality manifested itself in pre-history is a subject also outside the scope of this research, but that there was spirituality and that it did seek outlet is evident from the results of the kind of anthropological and ethno-archeological studies to which Ó Murchú refers. In the early history of Western culture spirituality likely first manifested, as in other ancient cultures, as animism (cf. Frankfort et al. 1977, esp. ch 1). Later, spiritually-driven, socially-developed mythological images coalesced into cultic, paganistic forms such as druidism. Subsequently, the Greek and Roman Empires added their own spiritually-derived pantheons to the pagan gods of conquered terrain. Finally, with the rise of Christianity, spirituality in the West was forced to coalesce within the Christian paradigm, finding meaning and purpose as an aspect of religious adherence to Christian dogma. Within the Christian religious realm, experiences and expressions of spirituality that did not conform to church dogma were largely considered potentially "evil," perhaps even heresy, and were condemned (e.g. 2nd-century Montanism [Walker,

et al. 1985: 69, 70], 12th century Joachimism [Walker, et al. 1985: 320f], and the 13th century development from Joachimism, "Spiritualism" [Walker, et al. 1985: 321]).

First the Renaissance and later the Enlightenment loosed the dogmatic grip of the church on what were considered appropriate spiritual manifestations and behavior. Once re-liberated from the confines of the church spirituality experienced a Thermidorian reaction, a radical shift from adherence to institutionalized concepts of religion to individual expressions of spirituality. Early expressions of such spirituality found form in Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, and Mesmerism, then as "spiritualism, the New Thought or Mind Cure movement, and finally Theosophy," which "refined the occult-leaning vocabularies of the [nineteenth] century's earlier metaphysical 'isms'" (Fuller 2001: 11). In more recent years a developing "global" perspective and "global" marketing have increasingly exposed the Western world to Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shintoism, and many other expressions of spirituality as experienced by different cultures, faiths and beliefs (ibid). Further in this regard, Diana Eck (2002: 4, 5) writes:

> In the past thirty years massive movements of people both as migrants and refugees have reshaped the demography of our world. [The United States has] about 30 million [immigrants], a million [more] arriving each year . . . . Just as the end of the Cold War brought about a new geopolitical situation, the global movements of people have brought about a new geopolitical reality: Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims are now part of the religious landscape . . . mosques appear in Paris and Lyons, Buddhist temples in Toronto, and Sikh gurdwaras in Vancouver. But nowhere in today's mass of world migrations, is the sheer range of religious faith as wide as it is today in the United States. Add to India's wide range of religions those of China, Latin America, and Africa. Take the diversity of Britain or Canada, and add to it the crescendo of Latino immigration along with the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Filipinos. This is an astonishing reality. We have never been here before.

Berthrong (1999) calls the resulting display of religious iterations a "Divine Deli," and Richard Cimino and Don Lattin (1998: 23) note that this plurality of spiritual

expression has led to "a 'pick-and-choose' approach to faith, the desire to take from it what is wonderful and good," and predict that this attitude will carry through the early decades of the 21st century. "The same consumeristic and experiential approach popularized via Eastern mysticism will be brought to the spiritual teachings of the West" (ibid.). Cimino & Lattin (1998: 21) note further that "[S]piritual seekers . . . will continue to turn to the East for spiritual direction and inspiration, even though relatively few will formally adopt these Eastern religions as monks, nuns, or formal lay practitioners."   As postmodernity expands, there will be a mixing of elements of different traditions into new hybrid forms as seekers, inspired by spiritual plurality and concomitantly separated by cultural sea changes from their religious heritage, search out new expressions of faith.   Driven by a consumerist approach to satisfy personal need society will demonstrate an increased interest in, for example, Reiki, meditation, Tai-Chi, aromatherapy, Celtic mysticism, paganism, goddess spirituality and American Indian shamanism as well as orthodox Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths. In addition, "This tendency to mix elements of different traditions into new hybrid forms will continue into [the 21st century], as seekers separated from their religious heritage search out new expressions of faith" (Cimino & Lattin 1998: 26).

The resulting spiritual pluralism has the potential to produce a person who:

[S]ees no contradiction in attending a Quaker meeting in the morning, eating a Zen macrobiotic breakfast, sitting for Chinese Taoist meditation, eating an Indian Ayurvedic lunch, doing a Cherokee sweat before Tai Chi, munching down a soy-burger for dinner, dancing in a full-moon witching ceremony with her neo-Pagan Goddess group, and then coming home and making love with her New Age boyfriend according to Hindu Tantric principles (Powell 1998: 2, 3).

Clearly the Enlightenment-induced reduction of the church's control of "authentic" spirituality, added to the various aspects of spirituality brought in by immigrants to the West, and then coupled with the "delicatessen" approach has seen a concomitant rise in individual expressions of spirituality. Richard Harries (2002: ix, x) mentions the report of a 1999 United Kingdom survey that notes in part:

> While 65 percent of the population still believes in God, only 28 per cent were willing to affirm that this God was personal. The other 37 per cent thought of God in vaguer terms such as spirit or life force. At the same time, while 27 per cent of those surveyed were willing to describe themselves as religious, another 27 per cent claimed to be spiritual. What is even more significant is that while 39 per cent said that they were not religious, only 12 per cent were willing to be described as "not a spiritual person." Or, to put it another way round, *88 per cent of the population resisted being called "not a spiritual person"* (emphasis added).

Comparable recent studies undertaken in the United States (e.g. Roof 1999, esp. chas. 4 & 5; Fuller 2001; King 2002; Kosmin & Mayer 2001), similarly indicate that while large numbers of the population are shifting away from institutionalized religion, many of those that remain in the traditional church are contemporizing traditional Christianity, for example by re-shaping their understanding of Christian theology to a wholly Evangelical form (Roof 1999: 26ff). Those that do leave the institution cling to a sense of "spirituality" that often manifests, as has already been shown, as re-worked iterations of old religions – for example, paganism re-invented as neo-paganism. Other iterations of non-institutional spirituality include forms of social activism, such as the various "peace and justice" movements,[4] concerns for global ecology,[5] and so-called

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[4] e.g. "United for Peace and Justice," http://www.unitedforpeace.org/; "Institute for Peace and Justice," http://www.ipj-ppj.org/; "Peninsula Peace and Justice Organization," http://www.peaceandjustice.org/.

[5] e.g. the Amsterdam, Netherlands-based "Greenpeace" movement was founded out of a postmodern concern for global ecology. (cf. http://www.greenpeace.org/international_en/history/

"parachurch" organizations, "voluntary, not-for-profit associations of Christians working outside of denominational control to achieve some specific ministry or social service" (Reid 1990: 863). Cimino and Lattin (1998: 38) note however that spirituality is not just the purview of traditions and movements: "As the entertainment media becomes the primary conveyor of common culture, it will compete with religious groups as the main bearer of spiritual and religious insight, no matter how mundane and homogenized those revelations may be." That is, the media, too, influence spirituality, producing programs that, at least temporarily, fill the spiritual void that many people feel. Such people like the "easy" religions of the media; movies such as *Michael*, about a cigarette-smoking, all too human "angel," starring John Travolta, *The Preacher's Wife*, which tells how an angel softens the heart of a fundamentalist pastor (Denzel Washington), and the classic *It's A Wonderful Life*, in which an angel visits a suicidal Jimmy Stewart and causes him to see his life in a new light. Television shows too (*Touched by an Angel, The "X" files, Joan of Arcadia)* are appreciated for the way they allow people to "get in touch" with their spirituality for thirty or sixty minutes each week without the necessity of making any personal or community commitments. (For a discussion of the religious/spiritual role of movies in postmodernity, see Van Gelder 1999: 39-63.) Similarly, authors produce much contemporary literature written intentionally to appeal to the sense of individual spirituality that has emerged in postmodernity. The scope of such literature is vast. A plethora of "self-help" books appeal to the self-centered nature of postmodernity, and at least two publishing houses, Westminster/John Knox and Abingdon, have published a series of small volumes based on, in the former case, the concept of "wisdom," (Law

1997, *The Wisdom of the Prophets;* Louth 1997, *The Wisdom of the Greek Fathers.* Other titles listed [the author is not named] include *The Wisdom of Mother Theresa*; *The Wisdom of Solomon; The Wisdom of Desmond Tutu).* Abingdon's publications are works based on Celtic Christianity (e.g. De Weyer 1997, *Celtic Prayer*; and De Weyer 1998, *Celtic Praises).* The volumes from both publishers are non-doctrinal, small, lavishly illustrated, but contain minimal text which, as the earlier discussion of the ethos of postmodernity shows, is exactly the kind of material postmoderns appreciate. Similarly appreciated are volumes that offer simple, or quick (and preferably both) solutions to postmodern angst, (e.g. Wilkinson 2000, *The Prayer of Jabez*,)[6] or programmatic solutions to the question of Christian lifestyle (e.g. Warren 2002, *The Purpose Driven Life).*

Sales numbers bear out another aspect of the postmodern ethos: an appreciation by some for literature that tends to disparage the Judeo-Christian tradition (e.g. Von Daniken 1970, *Chariots of the Gods?*; Baigent 1982, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*; Picknett 1997, *The Templar Revelation*), or re-write it (e.g. Brown 2000, *Angels & Demons,* 2003 *The DaVinci Code*; Gardener 2003, *Bloodline of the Holy Grail).* Equally hot sellers are volumes on ecology, a subject, as has been mentioned, that is near and dear to the heart of postmodernity (e.g. Hallman 2000, *Spiritual Values for Earth Community;* McDonough & Braungart 2002, *From Cradle to Cradle*).

From the evidence presented here a number of conclusions may be drawn. The first is that regardless of the attention, or lack of it, given by humankind to the Holy

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[6] In this slim volume Bruce Wilkinson (2000:17) asserts that the ritual, daily utterance of the prayer of an obscure character identified in 1 Chronicles 4:9,10 will assure that "God's great plan will surround you and sweep you forward into the profoundly important and satisfying life He has waiting."

Spirit, this third person of the Trinity continues and maintains a creative and sustaining function as an equally-participating member of the Godhead. Second, it is evident that a spiritual sense is intrinsic to the human condition. Third, such spirituality is reflective of the de-constructed, de-centered, eclectic and catholic ethos of postmodernity noted at the end of the previous section. Next, such spirituality is dynamic, seeking outlet, some form or way of expressing itself as an aspect of human existence; human spirituality seems to quest in some way to satisfy an inner longing for completion, or "self realization." Noting that "The turn in culture is away from life lived in terms of external or 'objective' roles, duties and obligations and toward a life lived by reference to one's own subjective experiences (relational as much as individualistic)," Heelas and Woodhead (2005: 2-4) add:

> The [subjective life] has to do with states of consciousness, states of mind, memories, emotions, passions, sensations, bodily experiences, dreams, feelings, inner conscience, and sentiments – including moral sentiments like compassion. The subjectivities of each individual become a, if not the, unique source of significance, meaning and authority. Here the 'good life' consists in living one's life in full awareness of one's states of being; in enriching one's experiences; in finding ways of handling negative emotions; in becoming sensitive enough to find out where and how the quality of one's life – alone or in relation – may be improved. The goal is not to defer to higher authority, but to have the courage to become one's own authority. Not to follow established paths but to follow one's own, inner-directed . . . life. Not to become what others want one to be, but to 'become truly who I am.' Not to rely on the knowledge and wisdom of others . . . but to live out the Delphic 'know thyself,' and the Shakespearian 'To thine own self be true.'

Within the context Heelas and Woodward describe the evidence further suggests that this drive for a sense of spiritual completion, or self-realization, takes two polar forms: The first form is one in which spiritual fulfillment is thought to be achieved through a strong emphasis on self, such as "self-help" and "self-realization." This

emphasis promotes the idea that through personal effort, one can be spiritually complete without community commitment or involvement. The second form, quite the opposite, is one in which community engagement is thought, or felt, to be intrinsic to a sense of individual spiritual wholeness. In this form the individual feels in some way driven to community action as a way of responding to an inner, spiritual motivation.

Regardless of the form human spirituality takes Marshall (2003: 25) stresses that the Spirit of God and the spirit of humanity, while not identical, are "undeniably related. The Spirit of God evokes the spirits of all that are created, enabling them to participate in the perichoretic movement of God with creation, the dance of the universe [. . . .] All spirit is the gift of God; all spirit is sustained by the vivifying presence of God's own Spirit." Apart from our own efforts, the Spirit "is always moving ahead, drawing us to new life and receptivity to God's presence with us" (Marshall 2003: 3, 4).

For some, that new life and receptivity to God's presence is, Cimino and Lattin (1998: 5) note:

> [O]ften a search for community, a longing for belonging. It can also inspire greater social conscience. Religious individuals of all varieties tend to be more involved in community life. More and more religious congregations find themselves at the forefront of community development, providing charity and social service in an increasingly privatized world.

While community action can be exercised in a number of ways – for example through parachurch organizations – it is the way in which spirituality drives individuals to community service within institutionalized congregations, as hermeneutic of the gospel, that commands the attention of this study.

2.3 SECTION THREE: CONGREGATION AS HERMENEUTIC

2.3.1   Lesslie Newbigin

The development of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin's *hermeneutic* thesis can be traced through the works he published.[7]   In summary, the bishop determined that there were two historical developments that gave rise to the situation he believed confronted postmodern society: religious pluralism and the post-Enlightenment focus on "reason."

2.3.1.1 Religious Pluralism

Newbigin (1989: 3, 14, and Chas. 13 & 14) describes "Religious Pluralism" as "the social condition in which multiple religious group[s] maintain their theological differences while participating fully in the dominant society," and further asserts (Newbigin 1989: 25) that:

> [R]eligious pluralism has been a mark of the world for as long as we have known anything of the history of religions and . . . most people, for the majority of history, have lived in societies where one religion was dominant and others marginal. In such societies, patterns of belief and practice are accepted which determine which beliefs are plausible and which are not. Thus, the dominant religion provides, in and of itself, the "plausibility structure" *for* that society.

Pointing to Berger (1979) as his source for the term "plausibility structure," Newbigin (1986: 10) explains that:

> A "plausibility structure," as Berger uses the term, is a social structure of ideas and practices that create the conditions determining what beliefs are believable within the society in question. Plausibility structures will vary from time to time and from place to place and the "reasonableness" of any belief will be a judgment made on the basis of the dominant plausibility structure.

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[7] A full bibliography of Newbigin's published works may be found in Foust et al. 2002: 252-281, and Hunsberger 1998: 283-304. See also http://www.newbigin.net/searches/non_new.cfm

Newbigin maintains that all human thinking takes place within a plausibility structure that determines which beliefs are responsible and which are not. Concluding that no amount of argument will make the Gospel sound reasonable to those in the reigning (contemporary Western) plausibility structure, Newbigin (1989: 227) surmises that the "only possible hermeneutic of the Gospel is a congregation which believes it and lives it." For Newbigin, the Christian congregation, as a community of truth, has the missionary task of challenging the existing plausibility structure. That Christians should – and can – do so comes from their position as inhabitants of a different plausibility structure. Assuredly, every person living in a postmodern Western society is subject to an almost continuous bombardment of ideas, images, slogans and stories which presuppose a plausibility structure radically different from that which is controlled by the Christian understanding of human nature and destiny. However, those persons rooted in a community of praise and thanksgiving, a community of truth, a community for the world and of the world, a community of responsibility for God's new order, and a community of eschatological hope; those persons inhabiting a Christian community which constantly remembers and rehearses the true story of human nature and destiny can, with effort, maintain a "healthy skepticism" of the reigning (secular) plausibility structure. Such skepticism then allows a member of the Christian community to take part in the life of society without being bemused and deluded by society's own beliefs about itself (Newbigin 1989: 228, 229). But, it is not enough not to be deluded. Nor is it enough to maintain a separate plausibility structure:

> It is in the ordinary secular business of the world that the sacrifices of love and obedience are to be offered to God. It is in the context of secular affairs that the mighty power released into the world through the work of Christ is to be manifested. The church gathers every Sunday, the day of

resurrection and of Pentecost, to renew its participation in Christ's priesthood. But the exercise of this priesthood is not within the walls of the church but in the daily business of the world. *It is only in this way the public life of the world, its accepted habits and assumptions, can be challenged by the Gospel and brought under the searching light of the truth as it has been revealed in Jesus* (Newbigin 1989: 230, emphasis added).

Further, the Gospel "will only challenge the public life of society," Newbigin

(1989: 233) maintains:

> [W]hen a congregation not only believes it, but when they also renounce an introverted concern for their own life and recognize that they exist for the sake of those who are not members as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's redeeming grace for the life of society; when, in fact, they live as the hermeneutic of the Gospel in the secular society they inhabit."

In summary, it is Newbigin's assertion that the Gospel cannot be accommodated as an additional pluralistic element in a society that has pluralism as its reigning ideology and Critical Reason as its dominant plausibility structure. The church cannot accept as its role simply the winning of individuals to a kind of Christian discipleship that concerns only the private and domestic aspects of life. Christian faithfulness to a message that concerns the kingdom of God, God's rule over all things and over all peoples, requires the reclamation by the church of the high ground of public truth. To suggest a phrase, the future of the church lies in its character, and it is to the character of Newbigin's "hermeneutical" church that this discussion now turns.

2.3.2. Characteristics of the Hermeneutical Church

Of course the character of the church referred to above does not lie in the bricks and mortar of the church building and only to some extent in denominational or particular church polity (though polity does play a role in either liberating or limiting congregations). Rather, the character (it might be said the *ethos*) of the church lies in its

congregation. Newbigin (1989: 227-233) suggests a number of markers, or distinctives, that will identify the character of a congregation as being the hermeneutic of the Gospel.[8] Generally, it will be a congregation made up of people who believe in the Gospel and who individually and collectively practice these principles which, he argues (Newbigin 1989: 222-233), are firmly rooted and grounded therein. Specifically, such a congregation will be a community of praise, of thanksgiving, of truth, of involvement in the larger, secular neighborhood, a community that exercises the calling to individual priesthood, a community of mutual responsibility, and a community of hope.

2.3.2.1 Praise

Negative feelings toward the universality of the tenets of Christian faith are not contained in the facts and values argument alone. Reverence, the attitude which looks up in admiration and love to another who is better than oneself, is generally regarded as beneath dignity in modern Western society, which places great store in the concept of "equality." Further, it is a characteristic of Western society to always find the weak point, the "Achilles' heel," the "feet of clay" of the one held up as worthy of praise. In terms of Christianity, this skeptical attitude has critics searching the scriptures for contradictions, errors, discrepancies, and apparent failures on the part of God, Jesus, the church, or anything else that can discredit the faith. Such attacks can only be combated by Christian congregations and then only by congregations that "find their true dignity and their true equality in reverence to one who is worthy of all the praise we can offer" (Newbigin, 1989: 228). To be effective, and to be the true hermeneutical congregation, such praise is not merely offered within the limitations of liturgy, or within the confines of the church's

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[8] Newbigin (1989:227-233) actually identifies six specific markers, one of which is in two parts. For reasons of clarity they are rendered here as seven discrete characteristics.

walls. To be effective, such praise is lived out in the community, in social relationships and in communal activities. Not, as Jesus notes, pretentiously (cf. Mk 12:38-40, Lk. 11:43), but as an expression of indwelling Christian character (Mt 5:13 and pars; cf. Mk 4:21, Lk. 8:16). The congregation should let its light so shine that people marvel at it (Mt. 5:16; cf. 1 Pet 2:12) and, if they do not glorify God, people observing the light may at least seek to know more about what motivates the congregation to act the way it does.

2.3.2.2 Thanksgiving

In keeping with contemporary Western attitudes to praise, Newbigin (1989: 228) notes that thanksgiving too is considered to be an unacceptable act of subservience. In a society that speaks much of individual human rights, demeans charity, and seeks personal justice, the hermeneutical congregation confesses that it cannot speak of rights except the rights of others for, in terms of justice, we ourselves have been dealt with charitably. "Justice would demand our condemnation, but the amazing grace of God is boundlessly kind, for we have been given everything, forgiven everything and promised everything so that (as Luther said) we lack nothing except faith to believe it" (Newbigin 1989: 228). Not only must a hermeneutical congregation's worship be filled with thanksgiving for charity and for relief from true justice (cf. Jn 1:16, 17), its thanksgiving should "spill over into care for our neighbor" (Newbigin 1989: 228) and that not as a moral crusade, but as charity to the community as an expression of gratitude for God's charity to us (Mt 5:43, 19:19, 22:39 pars, cf. Lk 10:29-37).

2.3.2.3 Truth

It was noted earlier that every person in this postmodern Western world is, through advertising, social attitude, the arts, and business practices subjected to constant

reinforcement of the "Market Economy" idea of "self;" self gratification, self promotion, individual advantage, personal gain, personal health, personal wealth. While, as Reno (2002: 27) writes, "we need to see that in Christ we are not called to love strength and power and beauty," we are nevertheless, it seems, constantly encouraged to love those very characteristics as being fundamental to self-fulfillment and self realization. And we are entitled to strength and power and beauty, to self-fulfillment and self-realization, the reigning plausibility structure claims, even if the getting of them is to the detriment of our neighbor. Indeed, not only is our neighbor's disadvantage not a matter for consideration, the concept of having more than, being better off than, having advantage over one's neighbor are all mind-sets being constantly promoted. As was noted earlier, in the face of such an overwhelming social attitude, the reigning "plausibility structure" can only be effectively countered "by people who are fully integrated inhabitants of another" plausibility structure (Newbigin 1989: 228). "Fully integrated" means "fully believing." Only those who believe totally in the Gospel – those for whom the truth of the Gospel is as intrinsic to their faith as breath is to life – can hope to effectively challenge the reigning plausibility structure. Maintaining integration in the separate reality of Gospel living in the face of a constant media and social avalanche of culture and lifestyle information exuding from a society that urges us to the contrary is not easy.

A first step in maintaining separation – and being and remaining a community of truth – is to meet often to remember and rehearse the true story of human nature and destiny (Newbigin 1989: 229). Western society is daily exposed to the seductive pressures of secular humanism. To counteract such persistent and seemingly omnipresent influence requires that a Christian congregation not be casual in its attendance in church,

in gathering in mutually supportive community, and in constant, ongoing participation in the hermeneutic. A second step is, as both congregation and church, to eschew the methods of modern propaganda – manipulation, emotional exploitation, hidden agendas, and "end-justifies-the-means" strategies – for, "if the congregation is to function effectively as a community of truth, its manner of speaking the truth must not be aligned to the techniques of modern propaganda, but must have the modesty, sobriety, and the realism which are proper to disciples of Jesus" (Newbigin 1989: 229).   In other words, modern propaganda methods are not only egregiously false and deceptive; they keep the congregation in the very world toward which it is trying to maintain a healthy skepticism! A community of truth avoids – indeed abhors – prevarication (Mt 22:16 and pars; cf. John 4:23), promotes adherence to law (Mt 13:41; cf. Mt 22:17-21), and lives the truth (Jn 3:21).

2.3.2.4 Place

The hermeneutical congregation will be a community of "place." That is, it will be a congregation that does not live for itself but is deeply involved in the concerns of the immediate neighborhood in which it exists (Newbigin 1989: 229).   While anyone meeting membership criteria can be a part of the congregation, they must do so in the understanding that the congregational role is to serve the community in which the church – the building itself – is located. Newbigin notes as "significant" that, "in the consistent usage of the New Testament, the word *ekklēsia* is qualified in only two ways; it is 'the church of God,' or 'of Christ,' and it is the church of a place" (Newbigin 1989: 229). Combining the two meanings suggests that the church is God's embassy in a specific place. Failure to understand the dual roles of embassy and place may lead either to an

emphasis on place, where the focus becomes the self-image of the people of that place rather than the vehicle, or tool, of God's judgment and mercy for that place, or the congregation may be so wrapped up in its concerns for each member's relationship to God that any involvement in the neighborhood is irrelevant to its concerns.

2.3.2.5 Priesthood

The Church came into the world to carry the message of God's revelation, continuing the work Jesus started and in the power of the same Spirit (Jn 20:19-23). In this instance, "church" means more than "community of believers." Since the earliest days of Judaism the role of "priest" has been to stand before God on behalf of the people and to stand before people on behalf of God (Newbigin 1989: 230, cf. the numerous explications of the function of the priest/priesthood in Leviticus and Numbers). The role of priest found its pinnacle in Jesus, who alone can fulfill and has fulfilled this office to perfection (Heb 4:14).   Through Jesus' death and resurrection we have become participants in His priesthood. Thus the hermeneutical congregation, in addition to being a community of believers, will be a community of priests (Heb 3:1; cf. Rom 15:15, 16). However, this priestly ministry is not "lived out" within the walls of the church building, but in and through engagement with the daily business of the world, where it will challenge the world's habits and assumptions by promoting "gospel" living, illuminating society with the light of truth as revealed in Jesus. The hermeneutical church will be a place where its members are "trained, supported and nourished" in the exercise of priestly ministry to the world (Newbigin 1989: 230).

It is important to understand here that the exercise of priestly ministry to the world is one based on individual talents. God gives different gifts to different members

of the body and calls them to different kinds of service (cf. Rom 12:1-8; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:7-12; 1 Pet 4:9-11).   The hermeneutical congregation will work together to help identify and nurture community gifts and individual, spiritual gifts and so develop ways of using those gifts productively both within the church and in the larger society (see 1 Cor 14 for Paul's analysis of the productive nature of gifts).

   2.3.2.6 Mutual Responsibility

   Newbigin (1989: 231) maintains that part of the problem of contemporary Western society is an "individualism which denies the fundamental nature of our human nature as given by God." To combat the existing nature of "social individualism" in the postmodern Western world, the hermeneutical congregation must be "effective in advocating and achieving its own social order" based on a "relationship of faithfulness and responsibility to one another" (Newbigin 1989: 231). The hermeneutical church must be an organism of mutually responsible community. As such, it "stands in the wider community of the neighborhood and the nation not primarily as the promoter of programs for social change [. . .] but as itself the foretaste of a different social order" – a social order based in gospel truth (Newbigin 1989: 231). Such a congregation, being itself liberated (living in a gospel community liberates it from the restrictions imposed by secular society), will become an advocate for human liberation in general. It follows that the hermeneutical congregation will be, and will be seen to be, the overflow into community of a life in Christ, where God's justice and God's peace are already being experienced.

2.3.2.7 Hope

Finally, Newbigin (1989: 232) claims, the hermeneutical congregation will be a community of hope. Although science and technology move us forward to ever more amazing inventions and developments, they seem to do so in an atmosphere of increasing moral bankruptcy. "Innovations" in accounting methodology led to the Enron debacle, when that organization put corporate bonuses and shareholder profits ahead of ethical business practice. Stem cell research and cloning offer us a tempting future in terms of cures for a wide range of diseases – but at what moral and ethical risk? Homosexuality and gay parenting, genetic manipulation of plants, human organ transplants, and even the freedom considerations of post 9/11 "National Security" raise serious questions of justice and ethics, creating moral and spiritual dilemmas that people are ill-equipped to face.

Increasingly, as people live out the secular market economy, winner-take-all approach to a life that reveres strength, beauty and wealth, they begin to acknowledge a vacuum in their lives and ask questions about the true meaning and purpose of life (cf. Reno 2002: 130f; Cimino & Lattin 1998: passim). Modern Christianity, which in many ways has either "sold out" to the dominant plausibility structure or been sidelined by it, holds little to no spiritual value to such people. It is no wonder that people in the West are drawn to Eastern spirituality, perhaps because of the sense of difference from traditional (read "Christian") responses to the sense of "spiritual vacuum" such people feel, but more likely because "the timeless peace of a pantheistic mysticism is easier to deal with, and less threatening to personal autonomy, than the struggle to achieve the purpose of a personal creator" (Newbigin 1989: 232). For such people, everything they know, everything they have been taught, "suggests that it is absurd to believe in the true

authority over all things is represented in a crucified man" (ibid). But even while secular humanism is rejecting "values" while seeking "facts," human beings, individuals, are seeking some kind of spiritual anchor, an unshakeable vantage point from which to make sense of, to discern the purpose of, life. And here is where the hermeneutical congregation holds out hope. Not the hope of desire, as in the tentative or doubtful "I hope it turns out well," but the confident hope that "what is believed, what is anticipated, what, indeed, has been promised, will come about; that that in which we hope – the 'reconciliation of all things with Christ as head' – is utterly reliable" (Newbigin 1989: 101). The hermeneutical congregation will be an expression of that hope in action, working in the sure and certain knowledge that the Kingdom of God can be made real.

It is important here that Newbigin's use of the future "will be" (see above and 1989: 227-232) be noted, for it indicates that the characteristics he describes are *evidential*. What Newbigin has established are the characteristics of successful churches, rather than strategies that lead to success. That is, that churches exemplifying his criteria of secular engagement have – perhaps unknowingly – keyed in to the strategy of success without necessarily knowing what it is.

To be clear, it is not the systematic *praxis* of these characteristics that makes a congregation the hermeneutic of the gospel, but rather being the hermeneutic of the gospel is *evidenced in the praxis of the characteristics.* Congregations under the Lordship and leadership of Christ will be those through whom and in whom the Spirit speaks and acts (Newbigin 1989: 118,119), performing ministry that has been characterized as "Holistic."

2.3.4   "Holistic Ministry"

In terms of what Ammerman et al. (1998) have termed "Ecological Studies" – the relationship between church and community – there has been in recent years an explosion of interest, particularly from the aspect of understanding the activities of congregations and other religious organizations in the community (Unruh 2001). A plethora of studies[9] have "significantly expanded our knowledge of congregations' involvement in caring for the needy" (Unruh 2001: 1). Such studies "are revealing the complex but complementary patterns of data on the proportions of congregations offering social services, the congregational characteristics associated with social activism, the range and capacity of the services provided, and the resources and collaborations that make them possible" (ibid.).

One such study is an analysis of research undertaken in selected churches in the greater Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area of the United States. Ronald Sider, Philip Olson and Heidi Unruh (2002), following on previous work by Sider (1999) and others (e.g. Kehrein 1992; Perkins 1993, 1995; Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley, & McKinney 1998; Dudley 2001) used resources such as faith-based social service agencies and denominational headquarters to identify 145 churches in the Philadelphia area broadly fitting prescribed community engagement criteria. From the 145, fifteen congregations of various denominations were selected for study, reflecting a wide variety of size, income, location, and exercise of ecclesiastical practice (Sider & Unruh 1999). Rather than simply identifying the characteristics of those churches which, following Stokes and

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[9] e.g. Wineburg 1994; Printz 1998; Billingsley 1999; Mata 1999; Reese 2000; Saxon-Harrold et al. 2000; Ammerman 2001; Chaves and Tsitsos 2001; Cnaan and Boddie 2001; Grettenberger 2001; Parks and Quern 2001; Polis Center 2001; Bartkowski and Regis 2003.

Roozen (1991: 186) they call Holistic churches, they report on *what is being done* in and by those churches in terms of congregations engaging their local community in ways that "make a difference" in that community. Further, eschewing analytically developed "top down" strategies (that is, strategies intended to filter down through hierarchical, institutional structures), they focus instead on analyzing the "bottom up" approach, studying congregations that have spontaneously developed programs and ministries that positively engage their communities.

> Sider*,* Olsen and Unruh (2002: 36) observe:

> [W]e cannot predict where [holistic] churches may be found, or what ethnic group will fill the pews, or whether they will sing hymns or contemporary choruses, or which political party they will endorse, [neither can we] associate holistic churches with a particular kind of ministry. In fact, churches that foster a holistic mission may not agree on all the 'right' priorities for ministry or on the best way to share the gospel,

Even so, there is, throughout Sider, Olsen and Unruh's report strong evidence of one unifying factor: a "radical dependence on the Holy Spirit" (2002: 13) – not as a casually-invoked endorser of a previously determined strategy, but as the animating principle of their holistic ministry (cf. Nel: 241ff).

The kinds of speech and action Newbigin holds as fundamental to effective ministry – that is, speech and ministry produced by faith in Jesus and thus under the direction of the Spirit – appear to be those identified in the churches studied by Sider*,* Olsen, and Unruh. While an implication of their study is that doing what these churches do – duplicating their actions – will produce the same results in other churches, they are careful to point out that while it is important to study models of holistic ministry, "[congregations] shouldn't simply copy them – because then [congregations] won't become what God is calling [them] to be" (Sider, Olsen and Unruh 2002: 249) That is, it

is one thing to set up the machinery of community engagement, quite another to develop the community heart (or ethos) necessary to see the ministry of such engagement through. Nel (2003: 243ff) similarly indicates the importance of churches finding their individual identity and allowing that identity to shape their purpose, rather than allowing a generalized purpose to shape an individual congregation's identity. Rather than sharing the same institutionally-based actions, congregations that successfully engage their communities may instead share something of the same Spiritually-driven *ethos,* an ethos that, as Newbigin asserts, develops out of the centrality of faith in Jesus Christ in the life of the congregation.

SUMMARY

This chapter has shown the development of the phenomenon of postmodernity, its cultural ethos, and some of the challenges it presents to the church. In particular it has shown how Enlightenment thought displaced a radical dependency on the Trinity with a radical dependence on science and technology, and how the subsequent failure of the enlightenment project left Western society adrift from any spiritual anchorage. In taking up the theme of Spirit and spirituality in the contemporary Western culture, it was then argued that spirituality seems intrinsic to the human condition; that large numbers of the population acknowledge in principle a sense of spirituality and that such spirituality seems constantly to seek and obtain inner fulfillment from external expression. It was further maintained that the way spiritual needs are fulfilled depends on the way spirituality is understood and exercised, that such understanding and execution varies widely and that because of the de-centered, eclectic nature of postmodern society,

expressions of spirituality freely cross ethnic, cultural, and social boundaries in what may be a quest for an "authentic" sense of spiritual well-being.

Discussion then turned to Lesslie Newbigin's hermeneutic principle and the characteristics of the hermeneutical congregation were demonstrated to have parallels with the nature of holistic churches as described by Sider, Olsen and Unruh. It was argued, however, that Newbigin's hermeneutic characteristics are those of congregations that have achieved a *fait accompli*, in that they are already the hermeneutic of the gospel. While Newbigin's approach unmistakably re-identifies the church as finding its *raison d'etre* in secular engagement, and while such engagement appears to result in the outcomes observed by Sider et al., it was further argued that such engagement, and such successes, do not develop from programmatic approaches, but rather describe the individual character of churches that, under the Lordship and leadership of Christ, become the place where the Spirit speaks and acts. Finally, it was argued that the ability of the Spirit to speak and act through a congregation develops out of the Christian ethos of that congregation.

The empirical research that is detailed in the following pages was motivated by the idea that in addition to observing the ministry of successful churches, the character of the congregation, too, must be observed with a view to understanding the ethos of churches that gives rise to the development of holistic ministry. The research anticipated that if there is a commonality of ethos, such ethos may be generalized throughout Christian congregations and lead to stronger and more meaningful engagement of contemporary Christianity with the larger, secular community.

For this reason, the criteria identified by Newbigin as characteristic of successful churches are the same criteria used to identify the churches studied in this research. Those criteria have been reduced to the following sentence: "Holistic ministry is a form of group Christian activity demonstrated through high levels of congregational participation in church internal activities coupled with high levels of congregational participation in the identification, organization and management, practice, and/or support of outreach ministry focused mainly on the local community." It is this understanding of Holistic ministry that guides the research that follows.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has two parts. Part one describes the location of Atlanta, the locus of the research, and provides an overview of its history, economy, and demographics. Part two describes how the study proceeded including how the churches included in the study were identified and the basic methodology employed in conducting the surveys and interviews.

3.1. LOCATION OF THE STUDY

3.1.1 Georgia

Georgia is the largest of the fourteen States that make up the region known in the United States as the "South." The State of Georgia lies along the Atlantic Ocean in the southeastern part of the country. Georgia is the twenty-first in size among the fifty States and is the largest State East of the Mississippi. The creation of Georgia as a colony was instigated by James Oglethorpe. In 1732, Oglethorpe convinced King George II of England to grant him (and several of his friends) the land between South Carolina and Florida as a place for English debtors to start a new life. The colony was to be run by Oglethorpe and twenty other "trustees" and, unlike other colonies, was to have no slavery. In order to encourage faster development, the "debtors only" policy was soon dropped, but Georgia remained unattractive to potential developers because of its ban on slavery. In 1750, when the slavery ban was finally lifted, thousands of new settlers moved into the state. Georgia then shifted from government by trustees to become a royal colony, a condition it enjoyed until the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). In 1788, Georgia became the fourth State when it approved the U.S. Constitution, but voluntarily

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gave up that status during the civil war (1861-1865), when it seceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy. In 1870, five years after the end of the war, Georgia was readmitted into the Union.

Georgia's topography ranges from coastal plain in the southeastern third of the state, gradually increasing in elevation through the piedmont and finally, as one moves to the northwest, peaking in the Blue Ridge mountains of the Appalachian range.

3.1.2 Atlanta

Atlanta is the capital of the State of Georgia. The city of Atlanta is located in the central piedmont of northwestern Georgia. The city was founded in 1837 and was first called "Terminus," since it was located at the terminus of the Western and Atlantic railroad line. A few years later it was named "Marthasville," before finally receiving its current name in 1845. It was several more years before it was made the state capital, in 1868.

3.1.3 Economy and Demographics

Outside of the metropolitan area of Atlanta farming and textiles have always been the mainstay of the state. Cotton, tobacco, peanuts, and peaches are major agricultural crops. Georgia leads the nation in chicken farming, and as a textile producer (carpets, clothing, yarn) Georgia ranks second nationally, with North Carolina taking first place.

The city of Atlanta itself, originally a railroad terminus, served first to move crops and farm products to markets. As the city grew, it encouraged commerce and residential living and became a transportation hub for people as well as goods. As the capital city, Atlanta soon became the leading city of the New South and a transportation center for the entire region. Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is one of the busiest in the nation.

Atlanta is now known as a communication center and as the headquarters for many worldwide businesses such as Cable News Network (CNN), Coca Cola, and Delta Airlines. Atlanta is also the headquarters for several federal agencies, and there are a number of very important military bases within the greater metropolitan area.

The population of Georgia is approximately 8.5 million, of Greater Atlanta (the city and its six immediately adjacent counties) 3,033,000, and of the city of Atlanta proper, 416,000.[1]   Georgia's population is racially very mixed. In addition to about 13,000 American Indians (mostly Creek and Cherokee), about one in three Georgians is black and Georgia is home to some 173,000 Asians. The greater Atlanta area also accommodates mounting numbers of Hispanics, mainly from Mexico, but with increasing numbers from Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Costa Rica), Venezuela, and Brazil. Georgia's Hispanic population has grown from about 100,000 in 1994 to more than a half million in 2004. Exact numbers for the Hispanic population are, however, hard to ascertain since many Hispanics are illegal aliens who, because of their status, try hard to be "invisible" to the authorities.

3.2. APPLYING THE RESEARCH

3.2.1. Geographic Boundaries

One of the first issues that arose in the empirical phase of this research was identifying the geographically delimited area in which the study was to be undertaken; chapter one merely identified the area as "greater metropolitan Atlanta" (above, p. 11). Further examination demonstrated that the commonly used terms, "greater" Atlanta and "metropolitan" Atlanta, are not correspondent and even within each term there are many

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[1] Census data obtained from http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

interpretations. Circles around the city encompassing "greater" or "metropolitan" Atlanta vary in size depending on the authority producing them (e.g. city, county, state, and federal government offices, denominational offices, tax offices, etc.) and range in radius from a low of ten miles, incorporating only the inner parts of the surrounding six counties (Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett, DeKalb, Clayton, and Henry) to a radius of some fifty miles, incorporating all of the surrounding twenty counties.

The limited means and resources of a single researcher required a diameter large enough to give a representative sampling of urban, suburban, and rural churches, while limiting the amount of travel necessary for the research. A radius of twenty-five miles was determined to meet these requirements.

3.2.2 Church Identification

On-line denominational church listings and on-line telephone yellow pages listings initially identified some 5,800 churches in the "greater Atlanta" area, but closer inspection demonstrated that, as with the various offices and authorities identified above, the area included as "greater" Atlanta was somewhat arbitrary – in the current instance, including counties and/or cities as far as sixty miles from the center of the capital. Eliminating churches outside the twenty-five mile radius, an intentional focus on mainstream protestant denominations – e.g. Baptist, Episcopalian/Anglican, Presbyterian/Reformed, Methodist, Congregational, and Lutheran – and by conflating multiple listings (in addition to directory listing by denomination, some churches had opted to be concurrently registered under such categories as "Churches, Christian," "Churches, Other," and "Churches, Other Denominations"), the number was reduced to about 560. This count was further abridged by the simple expediency of eliminating any

church whose address could not be electronically verified through the U.S. Mail on-line ZIP code system, an exercise that produced a final tally of 483 churches that offered research potential.

Of the 483 churches thus identified, fifty percent, or 242, were randomly selected to receive a preliminary, seven-question screening survey (see Appendix 1), accompanied by a reply-paid envelope.[2] The survey was addressed to the attention of the pastor and had two purposes. Responses to the first six questions were intended simply to give an overview of each respondent church.   The seventh question however offered survey respondents the opportunity to identify churches in the greater Atlanta metropolitan area that they thought were doing an outstanding job in terms of secular ministries. Any church thus identified, but not included in the first round of survey mailings, was mailed a survey form for completion. At the same time the surveys were in process, denominational leaders, community leaders and leaders of parachurch, governmental, and non-governmental social organizations were polled to identify churches of which they were aware that broadly met the described criteria for holistic ministry. Based on these two sources of information (identification by other churches and by denominational, parachurch, and governmental and non-governmental social organizations), additional surveys were mailed to six churches not included in the first round of surveys. Of these six, three responded. Of the 248 (242+6) screening surveys sent, fifty-one (20%) were returned, but one was incomplete and thus disqualified. Eleven (4.5%) survey letters

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[2] While every effort was made to maintain accuracy in determining church denominations, the pastors of two churches, one Assembly of God, and one Church of Christ, were sent, and returned, preliminary surveys. Although neither church was selected for congregational research, the information they provided was included in the preliminary survey data matrix.

were returned as "undeliverable," the church either having closed, or moved without a forwarding address.

The returned, completed surveys were then tabulated in terms of the following criteria, identified as axiomatic of the holistic ministry principles detailed in chapter two:

1. Levels of worship attendance,

2. Number of separate ministries to the local community,[3]

3. The means by which possible ministries were identified (i.e., by the congregation, or by pastoral leadership),

4. The management and organization of community ministries (i.e., by the congregation or by the pastoral leadership), and

5. The level of congregational involvement in community ministries (members and non-members).

To determine holism, two steps were taken. The first was to assign an ascending-order, numerical value to questions 2, 4, 5, and 6 of the survey.   E.g., question 2, relating to church attendance, was scaled from 1, for checking box one (less than 20%), to 7, for checking box seven (75% +).   Each return was then scored and, working from the assumption that higher church attendance and greater congregational participation are key factors in holism, a higher cumulative value for these questions was considered a preliminary indicator of the church's overall holistic character. The second step was to further analyze each church's score in light of the number of outreach ministries it claimed. The result was a listing of respondent churches, ranked from greater to lesser degrees of holistic involvement (see Table 3.1).   With the ranked list established, the upper end churches were then labeled "holistic and the lower end churches "non-

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[3] Note that the focus was on ministries by the church that relied on the human, or the human and financial resources of the congregation rather than financial support alone.

holistic," with the arbitrary cut-off point being 10 declared outreach ministries. It must however be noted that, at least in terms of this simple analysis, rather than there being a particular distinction between holistic and non-holistic church practice, the difference is more one of degree. That is, although there are clear and distinct differences between churches that rank in the top five and those that rank in the bottom five of the list, the difference between one church and its immediate neighbors on the scale is more subtle.

Although the study planned to include just ten churches, it was further anticipated that an uncertain number of churches would decline to participate for a variety of reasons. As a precaution, eighteen churches from the ranked listing of respondent churches developed were randomly selected as candidates for further study – nine from the upper end of the list (representing ten or more community ministries) and nine from the lower (nine or less community ministries). Before proceeding further, the churches were contacted and their survey response verified.

Each church was then sent a letter outlining the research and asking for their participation in it. All nine churches in the upper range invited to participate in the research were willing to do so. Four, however, already had various pressing issues – new building programs, institutionally-driven agenda, and/or internal crises of one form or another that precluded complete and meaningful participation within the available time frame. Just five of the nine churches from the lower end responded positively but fortunately all five were able to participate without the requirement of any special provision or restriction. In all instances the churches were merely told that the purpose of the research was to "understand the scope and nature of and motivating forces behind

community ministry."   The approximate locations of the participating churches are identified in Table 3.2

3.2.3. Congregational Surveys

In considering how the research proceeded, it is well here to reproduce from chapter one the questions the research sets out to answer, viz.

1. What are the key individual and collective characteristics of members of holistic congregations?
2. How do those individual and collective characteristics differ from those of members of non-holistic congregations?
3. What conclusions may be drawn from identified characteristics in terms of the development of congregational ethos?
4. To what extent are the various characteristics reproducible?

Clearly, questions one and two must be answered before questions three and four can be addressed. The strategy this research took to answer questions one and two was to compare and contrast data from congregations identified as holistic and those identified as non-holistic. This required the development of the survey instrument, the *Church and Ministry Involvement Questionnaire* (Appendix 2).

Initially, the instrument was a compilation of questions from Ammerman (1997: 371-380 and 1998:241-253), and Unruh (not dated), plus a number of additional questions thought to be helpful in identifying individual community-engagement motivation. Consultation with the University of Georgia department of Statistics led to extensive re-writing and consolidation of questions, which helped reduce the unwieldy 200+ initial question group first to a more streamlined forty-seven questions and ultimately to a survey instrument consisting of just twenty-one questions focusing on

those aspects of demographics, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs thought most likely to influence community engagement motivation and practices.

3.2.4 Application

Meetings with the pastoral leadership of the participating churches were then undertaken to explain fully the purpose of the survey, answer any questions related to it, and discuss methods of getting the survey into the hands of – and completed surveys returned from – as many members of the church family as possible. To this end, several different strategies were undertaken intended to produce the highest possible response from each church.   The leading method was to offer the survey form along with worship bulletins to every adult attendee at every service on a given Sunday.   At the commencement of each service the worship leader would refer to the surveys, give some background to the study, and emphasize that to complete and return the surveys was a ministry not only to the researcher but to the church, because survey results would be made available to the church as a tool for future development. (Additional surveys were available for those who became interested in participating in the study once they became aware of its nature and purpose but who had declined to take one as they came into the church.) The same announcement was made the following Sunday, but rather than being handed out with bulletins, surveys were distributed by ushers to congregants identifying themselves as not having received a survey, but willing to complete one.   Additional copies were kept in or near the church office.

A second method of distribution and collection of surveys added to the worship-service method just described by having Sunday school leaders physically hand out survey forms in their classes, allow time for their completion and then gather completed

surveys and returning them to the church office. Although in the case of these first two distribution methods each survey had a "deadline" for return, in order to maximize responses two Sundays beyond the deadline were generally permitted for late returns.

A third method involved an after-worship Sunday brunch held at the church and attended by a representative cross-section of the church family. The advantage was that surveys could be explained, distributed, completed and returned in short order. The downside was that, although the survey was announced in the bulletin and from the pulpit and all members of the church were invited to participate, not all members had an opportunity to complete the survey.   In all instances, completed surveys were collected at the church and returned in bulk for tabulation. The distribution and return numbers for the surveys is shown in Table 3.3.

While the objective data the survey approach provides is important to the process of quantitative analysis it is also, by its nature, somewhat limited in terms of giving an overall representation of a given church's character or ethos. A great deal more information regarding congregational ethos and character can be gleaned through interviews with the pastoral leaders and members and active non-members of participating churches. Therefore, at the same time as survey instruments were being completed, such interviews were undertaken within the congregations studied. While all interviews generally followed the basic qualitative interview question set (see Appendix 3), the interviewer was not severely constrained by the questions.   Rather, every opportunity was taken to explore answers or allusions that gave promise of useful insight to church or congregational praxis vis-à-vis community engagement. All interviews were recorded on magnetic tape and supported with additional, handwritten notes.

TABLE 3.1

RANKED LISTING OF CHURCHES RESPONDING TO PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Survey Question →	1	2	3 (b)	k	q	l	p	a	m	r	e	s	i	c	d	j	o	h	n	g	f	4	5	6	Min Score	NUMBER OF MINISTRIES
Christian Fellowship Baptist	6	6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	5	5	5	21	15(++)
Druid Hills Baptist	4	4	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x		x					6	5	5	20	11
Trinity Presbyterian Church	6	7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x		4	4	4	19	15
East Cobb UMC	5	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x					4	5	6	19	12
Trinity Baptist Church	3	6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							x				4	4	5	19	10
Zion Missionary Baptist Church	6	7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x					3	4	4	18	14
Greater Piney Grove Baptist	6	5	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		3	5	4	17	14
All Saints Episcopal	6	3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x	x		x				5	5	4	17	12
Central Presbyterian	5	5	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x		3	5	3	16	15(++)
Hillside Presbyterian	3	6	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x			x	x			x		4	4	2	16	12
St. Luke's Episcopal	6	6	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x				1	5	4	16	12
Oakhurst Presbyterian	4	4	x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x	5	3	3	15	13
St. James Episcopal	5	7	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x			x				2	1	5	15	11
First Presbyterian ATL	6	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x		x		4	2	3	13	15(+)
Lutheran Church of the Redeem	6	3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x			x		2	5	3	13	14
First Baptist Atlanta	6	4	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x									3	2	4	13	11
Roswell Presbyterian	6	4	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			x							3	3	3	13	10
Second Ponce deLeon Baptist	6	3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x		x			x			3	2	2	10	11
////////////////////////////////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////	////		///////////////
New Jerusalem Baptist	3	7	x	x	x		x			x		x		x								5	5	5	22	7
Marietta Alliance Church	4	7	x	x	x		x					x				x		x				2	6	6	21	7
Eastminster Presbyterian	5	6	x	x		x	x	x						x				x				4	5	5	20	7
New Birth Missionary Baptist	6	7	x	x			x	x	x				x	x	x							3	3	6	19	8
Church at Chapel Hill	4	6	x	x			x															3	5	5	19	3
College Park Presbyterian	3	4	x	x	x				x		x	x	x									4	5	5	18	7
Good Shepherd Presbyterian	5	5	x	x		x			x		x						x					3	5	5	18	6
Morningstar Church Atlanta	3	7		x	x	x					x									x		4	2	5	18	5
Marietta Pilgrimage UCC	3	4	x			x	x	x							x							3	6	5	18	5
New Hope United Methodist	4	5	x			x	x	x			x						x					3	5	4	17	7
Crossview Baptist Church	2	6		x	x						x											4	3	4	17	3
Peachtree City Christian Church	5	3	x	x		x	x	x	x		x			x			x					3	5	5	16	9
St. Andrews Presbyterian	5	4	x	x			x		x		x											3	4	5	16	5
South Gwinnett Baptist	3	6	x		x											x						1	4	5	16	3
Norcross Presbyterian Church	3	5	x			x	x															4	3	4	16	3
Church of Christ - Peachtree Cnr	3	7	x	x		x	x	x	x		x			x								3	2	3	15	8
Chestnut Grove Baptist Church	4	6		x			x	x	x			x	x									3	3	3	15	6
Mountain Park First Baptist	6	5	x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x								3	3	3	14	9
Northwest Presbyterian	4	4	x	x		x	x		x	x							x					4	3	3	14	7
Peachtree Corners Baptist	6	6	x		x	x	x		x		x											3	3	2	14	6
Stone Mountain First UMC	4	4	x	x							x											2	4	4	14	3
Mount Moriah Baptist	5	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x		x						3	3	3	13	9
Heritage Baptist	3	6		x		x	x	x								x						5	1	1	13	5
St Mark UMC	6	3	x	x		x		x		x				x			x					2	3	4	12	7
New Hope Baptist Church	3	7	x	x			x		x				x									1	2	2	12	5
Holt Road Baptist	4	3	x						x				x									1	2	6	12	3
Riverdale Presbyterian	2	5				x						x										1	2	4	12	2
Allen Temple United Methodist	3	3			x				x													6	1	1	11	2
Advent Lutheran Church ELCA	2	7			x							x	x									1	1	1	10	3
Cumberland United Methodist	4	2	x		x				x				x									1	3	3	9	4
Norton Park Baptist	4	2	x	x				x														1	3	3	9	3
Cokesbury UMC	2	3	x	x	x		x	x	x													4	-	-	7	6
Greater Mount Pleasant Baptist	4	1	x	x	x		x		x													1	1	1	4	5
FREQUENCY			45	40	34	29	32	29	30	25	23	19	19	19	17	15	12	13	10	6	4					420
			b	k	q	l	p	a	m	r	e	s	i	c	d	j	o	h	n	g	f					

Legend: (++) = "Substantially more than 15 ministries"
          (+) = "More than 15 ministries"
* Note that in this table, ministries have been ranked left to right in order of frequency of response.

TABLE 3.2

APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF CHURCHES PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY
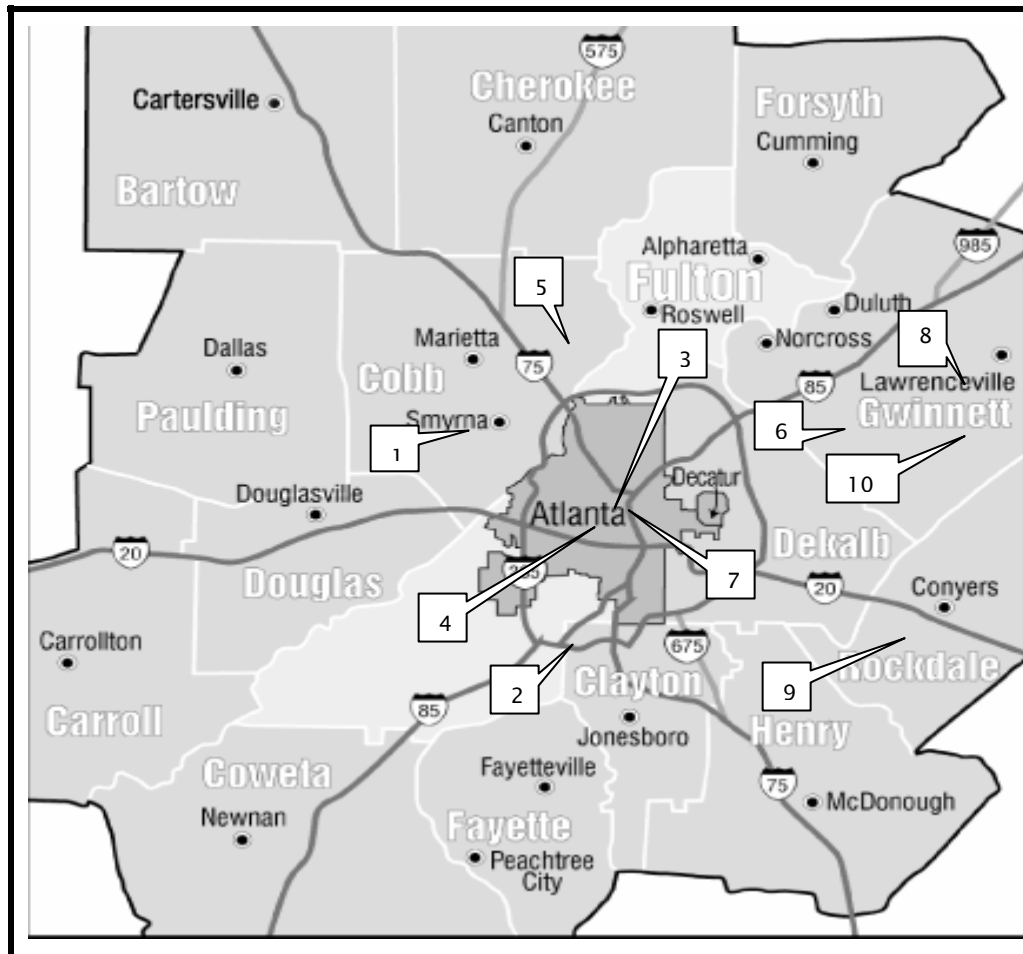
Legend

1. Norton Park Baptist Church
2. Christian Fellowship Baptist Church
3. St. Mark United Methodist Church
4. Central Presbyterian Church
5. East Cobb United Methodist
6. St. Andrews Presbyterian
7. Druid Hills Baptist Church
8. Chestnut Grove Baptist Church
9. Trinity Baptist Church
10. South Gwinnett Baptist Church

TABLE 3.3

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION AND RETURN DATA

Church name	Distributed	Returned	% Return
Christian Fellowship	250	96	38.4
Central Presbyterian	100	82	82
East Cobb UMC	350	109	31
Druid Hills Baptist	165	42	25.5
Trinity Baptist	150	45	30
Holistic Total	**1,115**	**374**	**33.5**
St. Andrews Presbyterian	270	51	18.9
St. Mark UMC	225	67	29.8
Chestnut Grove Baptist	175	37	21
Norton Park Baptist	75	32	42.7
South Gwinnett Baptist	75	25	33.3
Non-holistic Total	**820**	**212**	**25.9**
Combined Total	**1,935**	**586**	**30.3**

CHAPTER 4

[E]mpirical research through quantitative methods has its limitations. Researchers have to restrict themselves to data that are quantifiable and can be expressed in statistics [. . .] If one wants to penetrate to deeper levels of consciousness . . . assistance is needed from qualitative methods. (Heitink 1999: 232)

INTRODUCTION

With the necessary matters of background to, location of, and methodology employed in engaging the study dealt with in chapters two and three, this chapter begins the process of answering the first of the questions posed in chapter one (see page 10), viz.: "What are the key individual and collective characteristics of members of holistic congregations?"

Two strategies were employed to answer this question: a quantitative process comprising statistical analysis of surveys, the results of which are contained in chapter five, and a qualitative process comprising interviews with both randomly selected and invited representatives of the various church families, as well as with their pastoral leadership, the subject of this chapter.

The interviews followed a common set of questions (see Appendix 3) intended to elicit from interviewees their individual and collective understanding of the general character of their church, the nature and extent of any community ministry they or their church engaged, their individual motivations vis-à-vis their faith and ministry, their thoughts and opinions about the nature of "being" and "doing" church and so forth. To obtain as broad a picture as possible the interviewer often followed responsive leads that seemed to offer greater insight to the church's overall character and as a result, interview responses were often wide ranging.

The results of these interviews are set forth below, and the ethos of each church, as understood by the interviewer, is encapsulated in summary form at the end of each section.

Before continuing it is essential to note that the community ministry requirement for a church to be identified as "holistic" requires more than mere financial support of ministry programs. Such support is, of course, important, but also tends to a church that operates "at a distance" – either real or metaphorical – from the community it serves. Thus its congregation is protected from whatever joys and pains personal involvement in ministry may bring.   In contrast, a holistic ministry church is a church whose congregation is not afraid to live where Jesus lived – that is, on the margins of society – and do what Jesus did – that is, minister directly to those in need. A holistic church is, to use an expression offered by one interviewed pastor, the "hands and feet" of the Spirit in society, and all the churches in this study were ranked by the number of community ministries their congregation "engaged," rather than the number they financially supported.

While there is no particular order within the following sections, sections 4.1 through 4.5 of this chapter describe the congregations interviewed as a result of being identified as "holistic," and sections 4.6 through 4.10 interviews with those congregations identified as "non-holistic" according to the criteria developed and explained in the preceding chapter (3.2.2).

4.1   CHURCH BACKGROUNDS AND INTERVIEWS

4.1.1   The Church That Stayed: Central Presbyterian Church.

Ethnicity: White
Denomination: Presbyterian (PCUSA)
Active membership: about 625
Attendance: about 400
Location: Urban Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 20
Operating budget 2004: ± $1.5 million.

4.1.1.1 History and Background

Officially established February 14, 1858 and derived from the split of Atlanta
First, Atlanta's oldest Presbyterian church, Central Presbyterian Church has, like many
long established churches, a fascinating history of rise and fall and rise again; of accord
and discord; of success and failure; of strong and weak leadership; and of crisis and
resolution.   Significant in this history was an early engagement with the community.
Church biographer John Robert Smith (1978: 39) writes:

> [In the mid 1880's] the congregation at Central became a more caring
> congregation. To a degree not previously characteristic of them, the
> people were ministers to each other – and to others. Outreach was fast
> becoming the image that came to mind when people thought of Central
> church. Missionary outreach, especially in the Atlanta area itself, became
> a consuming passion of the people of Central.

It was a passion that in some respects was easy to follow, for most of the
members lived with a few miles of the church. But the city of Atlanta grew, as cities do
and homes in the more desirable sections of the city were sold and demolished to make
room for office and industrial buildings. The church population, once local, began to
move further out from the city. By 1931 there was a clear movement of congregants to
the north east environs and the question of re-locating the church in the same direction

became increasingly pressing. At the same time the low-wage job opportunities Atlanta

offered were attracting more and more people to the city, where they occupied boarding

houses and other inexpensive accommodations in areas ignored by development, slept in

makeshift dwellings, or simply lived and slept "rough."   As the welfare needs of these

people became evident, an increasing majority of the congregation were in favor of

keeping the church in its downtown location. Rev. Dr. Oglesby, then pastor of Central

(1930-1958), articulated the concern of the congregation when he preached:

> There are more people living in the community served by Central than
> ever before [and] the poorer people [being] left behind, and those who
> have come in have a greater need for Christian ministry than ever before.
> The program of this church has been projected to meet the needs of this
> community. These needs cannot be met, and often are not even known or
> understood by, prosperous churches located a great distance away.
> I believe in the downtown church because it offers to its members so many
> satisfying, Christ-like opportunities for service.   There are many
> Christians who seem not to be able to see human needs unless it is a great
> distance away. The downtown ministry does not neglect its ministry to
> those far away, as our benevolences show each year, but it concentrates on
> the needs of its own neighbors (Smith 1979: 81).

Oglesby continued by acknowledging the inconvenience of a downtown church to

its members, but added that "convenience is a small sacrifice we can make for the

ministries of Central church" (ibid.). Evidently the congregation agreed with him and

rallied to his cause for in 1937 they became "the church that stayed," dropping plans for

the church to leave the city and instead engaging their community with increased passion.

That passion for ministry outreach continues to this day. Despite the fact that the

vast majority of congregants live ten miles or more from the church, at any given time

Central has upwards of twenty ministries to the larger, in-town secular community

requiring substantial human resource support from the congregation. Such ministries

include a foot care ministry for the indigent, a variety of AIDS programs, prison

visitation ministries, ministries for sheltering and feeding the homeless and ministries that provide homebuilding aid to Habitat for Humanity, a parachurch organization that builds affordable housing. Nor has this focus on domestic ministry reduced Central's attention on global ministries: it has mission representation and/or support in such geographically disparate countries as Kenya, Palestine, and the Honduras.

But it is the home ministries and congregational ethos that lies behind them in the various churches studied that are the focus of this study and at Central, outreach ministry comes in two guises: ministries that are entirely funded by the congregation – for example, prison and other visitation ministries – and which therefore remain entirely within the purview of the church, and ministries that, under the right conditions, can get additional funding from State and Federal Government sources. Recognizing that certain of its community ministries could be enhanced by the infusion of state and federal government funds and grants intended to support non-governmental social services programs, and recognizing further that under current "separation of church and state" legislation, churches and organizations that promote a particular religion cannot directly receive state or federal funds or grants, Central took the steps necessary to comply with the legislation, and thereby advance its wider ministries, by setting up a non-profit corporation known as the Outreach and Advocacy Center. In addition to being eligible for government funding, the Outreach and Advocacy Center, as an entity separate from the church, is entitled to be politically active. In the past, Central Presbyterian has enjoyed a "special" relationship with the Georgia legislature and Atlanta city government, the seats of both being, literally, across the road from the church. The nearness of both bodies allowed certain friendships to develop and since at one time space in the church building

was used by the legislature on a regular basis for meetings of one kind or another, the church leadership enjoyed a unique access to city and state policymakers. Recent years however have seen changes both in the racial makeup of government leadership and in the complexity of "doing business" with the city and state.   The purpose of the "Advocacy" part of the Outreach and Advocacy Center is two-fold: to make public issues relating to the poor and indigent, with special regard to matters of healthcare, education, and social and criminal justice; and to lobby city and county government on their behalf.

The mere fact that a church would go to the lengths described in order to increase outreach and advocacy ministry efficiency says much about the congregation that supports such ministries – especially considering that the ministries (services) derived from this arrangement still depend heavily on volunteer help, which help in many instances (though by no means all) derives almost entirely from Central.

To give further insight to the congregational motivation that lies behind the community ministry focus of Central Presbyterian, the "Mission Statement" of its Outreach/Advocacy center is reproduced here.

> *Compelled by faith in Jesus Christ and God's call to "do justice," the Central Presbyterian Church Outreach and Advocacy center stands with our neighbors in the heart of the city to respond to basic human needs of the poor and to advocate for public and corporate policies that reflect our human understanding of God's vision of a just society.*
> *Guided by our mission, and in accordance with Central Presbyterian Church's historical commitment to the ministries of offering hospitality to strangers, feeding, healing, and teaching, we affirm our conviction that:*
> - *All people should have access to safe, clean and adequate housing;*
> - *All people are entitled to have their basic nutritional needs met in a way that is consistent with their human dignity;*
> - *All people should have readily available access to quality, comprehensive health care and health education and the opportunity to live in a healthy environment;*
> - *All people should have access to quality, equitable education that meets their lifelong development needs.*

It has already been shown that Central's community outreach ministry has a long history and that it is as dynamic – perhaps more so – as it has ever been. A review of Smith's (1979) documentation of the church's history, with particular reference to the pastoral leadership in terms of ministry, suggests that since the time Rev. Givens Brown Strickler led the church (1883-1896) it has had a consistent focus on the welfare of its immediate community, a focus that it has often shared and continues to share ecumenically with other churches in the downtown area (e.g. the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Trinity United Methodist, and Druid Hills Presbyterian).

4.1.1.2 Interviews

In interviews, the congregation similarly asserts a history of community ministry and maintains that the community focus of the congregation is, and has long been, consistently reinforced from the pulpit. Indeed, the pastoral leadership was repeatedly cited as a fundamental motivator for converting the theory of community ministry into constant practice, not just by highlighting scriptural exhortations to ministry, but by giving frequent prominence to the church's ongoing ministries and the financial and human resource needs of those ministries.

The Central family answers the call to community ministry for various reasons. Although responses to the scriptural commands to "love your neighbor" (Matt 19:19; 22:39), or to "Go into the world" (Matt 28:19), to be "Good Samaritans" (Luke 10:29-37), or to vicariously minister to the Lord Himself; "As you do to others, you have done to me" (Luke 25:25-40) were frequently cited as significant motivating forces, many interviewees frequently pointed out that it was not just the fulfillment of biblical commands to care for others that drove them but that, for these respondents at least, in

doing ministry they in some sense encountered the Holy. Some agreed that the very act

of reaching out put them in the presence of the Holy. One interviewee, who came into

the focus group interview after some hours on the street corner outside the church quietly

protesting the war in Iraq, said that during her protest she felt she was in the presence of

the Holy; that doing what she believed was right and doing it the name of God put her on

Holy ground.   Similarly, a long-term volunteer in Central's foot clinic (part of the

Church's Night Shelter ministry to the homeless) is on record as saying,

> It is a gratifying experience for me to talk to a man about his day, to hear
> him speak of it as a good day full of hope and the belief that he will soon
> find work. As each man expresses his thanks for our work in the clinic, I
> have discovered that his gratitude is a gift to me. And who knows?
> perhaps, in our brief and simple encounter, I have seen something of the
> face of God.

Another reason cited for doing outreach ministry was that of a sense of Christian

"wholeness," or "completeness," derived from the experience; that one was not wholly

Christian if not engaged with the world in some missional way.

For some members of the Central family, exposure to outreach ministry occurs

early. Children's Sunday school classes also often take on an "outreach ministry" focus,

as children are asked to make Valentines cards or make packages of hygiene products in

the knowledge that these gifts are to be given to homeless people. One parent suggested

that including her children in the church's ministries brought the words of scripture to

life, gave those children a more balanced view of what life was all about and impressed

upon them early in life the importance of caring for the less fortunate folk in a

community.

Central has a very active youth group. About fifty young people ranging in age

from twelve to eighteen are engaged in a wide variety of activities. Youth are involved in

outreach throughout their Sunday School curriculum including evening projects for youth which involve work in the outreach center, for example taking inventory, stocking the church's food pantry, creating art for intake spaces, and preparing lunch and snack bags for the needy. Older youth participate in Central's night shelter, providing set up when needed and serving dinner and providing companionship to shelter guests several times a year. Also, the youth group prepares a Christmas Party and Worship service for the shelter guests. Outside of the church, many in the group are involved in local, national and international missions throughout the year. On MLK (Martin Luther King) weekend, the high school students visit a city to study how urban ministry works there and attend special MLK celebrations and worship services. In addition, each summer the group alternates between a national and international mission trip. As part of the church's internal ministries, youth serve as elders, ushers, lectors, and often provide opportunities for the rest of the congregation to participate in mission and service activities.   For example, the youth developed a program to create "kits" needed by Tsunami victims and sponsored a drive for canned goods. The youth have helped at Atlanta Food Bank, project Open Hand (a food service for the sick and homebound), Atlanta Children's Shelter, and the international aid organization Open Doors and they also participate annually in the AIDS and HUNGER walks.

Although there is no separate service for them on Sunday mornings, the youth do have their own worship service Sunday evenings, when they also meet to participate in ongoing youth programs, choir practice, prayer groups and the like.

While not everyone at Central is engaged in community outreach ministry, it was generally agreed among interviewees that it would be very hard, if not impossible, to be

either a young or mature member of Central Presbyterian and not be aware both of its community programs and the necessity of being personally involved, in some form, in supporting them. New members attend a six week orientation class which, in addition to addressing issues of Presbyterian history and polity, speaks to Central's own history, emphasizes its missional nature and makes new members aware that for Central at least, Christian spiritual wholeness is connected in some way with active participation in the life of the church. This does not mean, of course, that all newcomers participate in community ministry. Indeed, only about 15% of Central's congregation is thus engaged. Rather, during a new member's early days at the church they are encouraged to find a ministry in which they feel both gifted and able and then to participate wholeheartedly in that ministry.

Many people moving in to the Atlanta area from other cities and regions and who have a heart for outreach are drawn to Central because of its reputation for community ministry. One interviewee said that during her family's church search when they moved to Atlanta, all the other churches they visited promoted a "look what we can do for you" approach, highlighting adult and youth ministries oriented to the care and welfare of the family. The attraction of Central was that it promoted a "look what you can do for us and for the community" approach, which this family felt to be both more biblical and, in many respects, more intellectually satisfying vis-à-vis their understanding of what it means to be "Christian." Other respondents said such things as, "Christ's love is alive here," and "[Central] makes it easy to be a Christian." (Not to be misunderstood, this respondent added, "I mean, the opportunities offered here and the structures of the various ministries take away any excuse for any inactivity.")

In addition to attracting people, Central's reputation attracts new ministries. Local social service and political organizations as well as other churches in the area, well aware of Central's community ministry expertise, bring outreach possibilities and community needs to the attention of the church, so the church never runs out of outreach prospects. Not that such a situation is likely. During the interviews, new ideas for outreach ministry were constantly being articulated: build or buy more transitional housing to get people off the streets and toward a new life of self-sufficiency; explore more deeply the advocacy possibilities of the Outreach and Advocacy Center; and explore re-education possibilities for the homeless unemployed, are just three of the many mentioned, all limited only by the necessary human and financial resources to back them.

A major and often mentioned frustration for the church is the limited parking in the downtown area. What parking is available is expensive and so those who would do ministry in the church environs must not only drive what can, during the week, average 60 minutes or more into and through city traffic to do it, but must also pay a parking premium. That so many of them do so is testimony to their commitment to the church and its outreach programs.

In a society beset by high-speed technological change, knotty social issues of human sexuality and the ethical and moral dilemmas created by modern medicine (genetics and cloning; transplants; abortion), the congregation at Central keeps itself well informed. Guest speakers – experts in their own fields – are, from time to time, invited to the church to render complex issues into comprehensible terms, allowing folk to make informed decisions about the positions they may want to take, actions they might want to

consider and decisions they might want to make. This is not to say that the general membership at Central is in any way ignorant. To the contrary, it presents as a generally very intelligent, Bible literate, well-educated group that has a more than passing familiarity with Presbyterian history and polity. Further, while the impact of the information is not clear, it is worth noting that forty-two members of the congregation are listed as clergy and some portion of the faculty of Columbia Theological (Presbyterian) Seminary are also on the membership rolls. (It should also be noted that there were no representatives from either group at the interviews.)

Worship at Central is modestly liturgical, participatory (with responsive readings), dynamic, and spiritual. The music and hymns are largely traditional, the organist is a professional and the choir is accomplished.   The pastor and assistant pastor are both highly educated and their preaching is engaging, contemporary, and relevant. Despite the relatively conventional approach to worship, some respondents suggested that while there were other possibilities (i.e. churches) for outreach ministry in downtown Atlanta, the "space" created at Central for experiencing the spiritual – in terms of renewal, uplift, and a sense of the holy – throughout the worship service was in some way unique, though none could identify any particular reason this might be so.

4.1.1.3 Summary

Central Presbyterian Church is a historic church whose congregation has inherited and sustains a Spiritually-driven culture of care for and about its community. It gets excited about community issues, especially as related to matters affecting the marginalized in society; enjoys dynamic and spiritual worship; and is not afraid to speak up for what it believes is right and against what it sees as unjust, unfair, or just plain

wrong. The leadership of Jesus at Central is, as far as the congregation is concerned, a given. All of the church's outreach ministries, both historical and current, were unequivocally located in an interpretation of Jesus not just as Lord or Savior, but as an exemplar of what it means to Central's family to be Christian – a life dedicated to the emotional and physical health and welfare of all within reach and a voice for social justice. The congregation exudes an aura of confidence that it is following the will of God as exemplified in the words and works of Jesus and is thus, to use Newbigin's (1989: 118, 119) words, a "community through whom and in whom the Spirit speaks and acts."

People old and young are attracted to Central specifically because it makes demands upon them; demands of time, of money, of commitment, and of faith. And, while a relatively small percentage of the people are "hands-on" engaged in outreach ministry, such ministries are well-funded by the congregation and are additionally spiritually and prayerfully supported by the church family. The character and ethos of Central is one of obedient adherence to the precepts of Jesus' life, an obedience not guided by slavish submission but rather a willful acknowledgement that through voluntary actions of love and grace the presence of the holy may be made manifest to all who participate in the process.

4.1.2   A Call to Community: Christian Fellowship Baptist Church

> Ethnicity: largely African American
> Denomination: Baptist (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship).
> Active membership: about 1,300
> Attendance: about 700
> Location: Atlanta South side.
> Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 20
> Operating budget 2004: ± $1.09 million.

4.1.2.1 History and Background

Christian Fellowship Baptist Church is unique among the surveyed churches for several reasons. First, it was founded by folks who had been members of a church that, as a result of certain actions, attitudes, and behaviors of its pastoral leadership, was "fracturing." Second, as a large group of the disenfranchised members began to realize their numbers constituted a significant congregation, they sought leadership from among their own, rather than seeking "career professional" pastoral leadership. Third, from the very beginning the new church had a "local" mission focus.

Emmanuel McCall, pastor of Christian Fellowship, is a graduate of Southern seminary. Prior to 1991, he was a member of a congregation that was "splintering" as a result of some critical issues related to the pastoral leadership. Though he was not a pastor at the time, many members of the church were aware of McCall's seminary training and his then-current role as a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board. Because of his training and experience, a number of these folk pressed McCall into the role of pastor of a new church, which became Christian Fellowship Baptist Church. There were 219 folk at Christian Fellowship's first service, held at a chapel in a local private school.

Thirteen years later, church membership has soared to over 1,300 and the church

is a significant force in its local community.

4.1.2.2 Interviews

Christian Fellowship is highly reflective of McCall's personal call to mission. He

observes:

> We have a few who are 'along for the ride,' those folks who are more
> interested in a narrower definition of what it means to be 'church' than
> that exercised by us, but generally they don't ride for very long. The
> pressure from other members to be involved in some ministry is too great
> and they either participate, or they leave to find another church that's a
> better fit. Outside of these, I would say that almost everyone in the church
> is directly, hands-on involved in some ministry practice outside of the
> church, or else financially supports such ministries as the need arises.

McCall is set to retire – which is one reason he was enthusiastic about involving

Christian Fellowship in the study. "I want whomever the new pastor is to have as good a

picture as such a survey will give," he said, adding that under new leadership the church

would undoubtedly want to develop plans for the future and the survey would be a useful

tool for the church and its leadership. "A church needs to understand itself – where it is,

what it's doing," he said, "before it can understand how to get where what it wants, or

needs, to be."

As the "Pastoral Epistle" reproduced below indicates, Christian Fellowship

Baptist Church is a church that was founded on holistic principles. Pastor McCall's

vision of the church was that of an organization that addressed the community and

individual needs of the congregation by creating a deep sense of family and impressing

on that family the importance of mutual responsibility for the spiritual and human welfare

of its members. Believing that a church must have an inner strength based on these

principals before it can take on issues in the secular community, McCall adds that the key

to ministry in the secular community is that it is properly balanced by the congregation's ministry to itself. He further asserts that individual acts of ministry tend, in the long haul and unless reinvigorated in some way, to lead to "burnout."   Responding to the suggestion that in the individual act of ministry to others, one ministers to one's self and is therefore restored, McCall uses a dietary analogy; he points out that a diet of one food, while it may sustain an individual for a while, is inherently defective in that it does not supply all the necessary vitamins and minerals for long term health. So, while an individual or group may feel even a deep sense of spiritual completeness or fulfillment through acts of ministry, it is still important to be ministered to – through, for example, participation in worship and the sacraments, prayer support groups, and recreational activities within the congregational community.

According to many members interviewed, McCall lives his vision: "The pastor is not just visionary and well educated. He . . . reaches out and brings back to us at the church opportunities to grow. He leads by example;" "I have no expectations of rewards (for doing ministry). I think that part of that at least comes from the example our pastor has modeled." "He is a very humble man; he picks up trash around the church, drives a cheap car. We don't do like some other churches and have 'pastor appreciation' days, [and] buy him a new car or whatever. He won't hear of it;" "We kind of need to force him to let us honor him."

McCall, for his part, believes the church honors him through its faithfulness to Matt 25:35-40 and 28:19, 20. "That is what a church *is*," he emphasizes, "it's the message of the Gospel lived out in the wider community."

Pastor McCall's leadership style is strongly credited for the church's successful ministry. "The congregation looks to its pastor to be the spiritual leader and also, in some ways, the CEO;" "He knows how to surround himself with good people who are able to take care of the various responsibilities in the church. I think the pastor models integrity. He is what he says he is. He does what he says he will do;" "He's not the kind of person to tell you 'go do this.' Instead, you go do things because you know that's what he wants you to do. There is something about him that just makes you want to do right. And, he doesn't want to be singled out for recognition for doing stuff."

Interviewees agreed that Pastor McCall led by encouraging people to share in the leadership of the church. Rather than finding leaders, he gives leaders room to find themselves. Though he has established the direction of the church and holds the church fast to its course, he lets others manage the journey.

When asked about their motivation to conduct ministry in the secular community, interviewees advanced several reasons, ranging from the pastor's teaching, through the leadership he models, to the way he conceives and presents his vision for the church. As a result, individual members "have that understanding that you know without a doubt that this is what you should be doing." The location of the church, too, was seen to be significant in its call to ministry. There was agreement that the church arrived at its present location through the leadership of the Spirit. While there were many churches already in the neighborhood, there were none that practiced any consistent form of community outreach; "There was a need for this kind of church in this community at the time we started." One interviewee explained:

> We are in a minority neighborhood right now and in minority neighborhoods you see needs of all kinds every day. Our pastor is

constantly reminding us that many of us weren't always where we are now, in terms of some sort of middle class; that we have come from subsistent situations – situations of need and desperation.

Indeed, there is a common sentiment among many in the congregation, especially the older folk, that their younger days were often marked not only by times of need, but by acts of sharing; "So as we grew up and had more to share, the more we shared. And the church has become a kind of vehicle for us to continue what we learned as children." This "been there" sentiment came through in other ways, too, as members revealed their engagement with the darker side of the human experience. One person noted that he was now involved with the drug rehabilitation program, but adds:

> Fifty two years ago I was a [drug] user. This means I can relate to the people who live under bridges and eat out of dumpsters. I don't see failures; I see bankers and calibration engineers and artists who have fallen on hard times. I remember it was the grace of God that brought me out of the same situation and maybe now the grace of God can act through me to help bring others out.

Other respondents shared previous personal experiences of, for example, teen pregnancy and its associated problems (teen mothers tend to "drop out" of school, depriving themselves of an education and, thus, employment other than at the lowest end of the social spectrum). This experience led some members to found one of Christian Fellowship's early ministries, "Back to School," a day care center for teen mothers who wanted to go back to school. Over the years this ministry has grown out of its original parameters of day care to one that provides school supplies – new book bags, pens, notepads, and clothing – at a "back to school" day for financially strapped families in the local community. All the items are free to needy families and are provided in a "party" atmosphere that includes hot dogs and soft drinks for the children.

The idea of one ministry leading to another was seized upon by several members as explaining the broad range of ministries the church now conducts. They shared how, as they practiced one ministry, they became "attuned" to the need for an additional ministry or ministries:

> I think we had a sense of ministry from the beginning [of Christian Fellowship church]. One of our first tasks was thinking about working outside the church. We asked people what tasks they wanted to take on. Some said "nursing home," some said "children's home," others said "women's shelter," and so on.   Once we got going, ministries continued to multiply and helped us find other things we wanted to do. Like, we just started taking some hygiene products to a local nursing home and found out that some residents didn't have family, so we just set up a system for church members to "adopt" these folk and commit to visiting them regularly and supplying some of their personal needs.

One member amplified this response, noting that new ministries were identified because the church did not merely plan but acted, and further that the church had six WMU (Women's Missionary Union) groups, with at least twenty members (or more) in each of those groups. With each group doing at least three mission projects, there is a constant inflow of ideas for new ministry.

Expanding ministries require human resources. Getting new members involved in ministry happens through a combination of the preached message of community engagement and factors of "peer pressure" already described, simple invitation to people not currently engaged in some form of ministry, and through new Member Orientation classes. New member orientation happens over a period of weeks and representatives of the various ministries come in to the orientation classes and talk about their ministry as a way of encouraging newcomers to be involved.

That the church engages in multiple ministries is emphasized in a number of ways. For example, the New Member Handbook lists all active ministries, and all active

ministries get mention, from time to time, from the pulpit. Some emphases are more

subtle. For example, the church is designed in such a way that the entryway leads to a

roofed and enclosed two-storey atrium, from which access to the various church offices,

fellowship hall, meeting rooms and the sanctuary may be gained. All around the upper-

level balcony in the atrium are banners, hand made by church members, representing the

multiple ministries that engage the congregation, a subtle reinforcement of the church's

ministry orientation. On an individual level, new members are also allocated a Deacon,

who not only acts as a knowledge source for the various aspects of the church, but

actively promotes the church's various internal and external ministries and suggests

ministry involvement opportunities to newcomers. Not all newcomers need to be

persuaded, however:

> Before we attended this church we attended another for thirteen years.
> And it's hard to leave a church family after that many years. The reason
> we came here was that we had some friends who were members and who
> were telling us about this church and how great it was and we were like . .
> . well, to give up where you have been worshipping was a major decision.
> But we came here – we prayed about it – and it was a long drive and we
> had two young children, but we came here and just fell in love with it.
> And, we went to work as soon as we came here. I mean it was just that;
> when you say you're coming to Christian Fellowship, you are going to
> work when you come here, because you meet the right people [and that's
> how the church will grow and how its ministries will expand]. I came –
> and many others here came – to Christian Fellowship because we knew we
> were going to be put to work. It's what we want to do. Too many other
> churches just don't offer the opportunity [to engage in ministry]."

The consensus of interviewees was that the whole idea of ministry is so ingrained

it is expected:

> Community ministry is an intrinsic part of our church's culture. While a
> visitor to the church – someone who's considering membership – doesn't
> have to get involved in ministry, the reality is, if they don't get involved,
> they'll feel uncomfortable. Then, they'll either get motivated by the Spirit
> to *be* involved, or find a less demanding church family.

On the issue of whether the drive toward community engagement came from humanitarian motives, or if the Holy Spirit could be seen or felt as the motivating force interviewees consistently credited the latter. When asked to how the two forces could be differentiated, the consensus was that humanitarian motives were generally short-term, undemanding in terms of their consumption of time and financial resources, and somewhat cyclical. As examples, some major national and international humanitarian organizations were named, with the observation that donations were often made to these organizations annually, or when they wrote letters citing a special need in some location of the world as a result of natural disaster. Requests from such organizations are infrequent, the demands are not onerous, and the time taken to write a check is minimal. Some interviewees added that the knowledge that the same letter is going to many people – perhaps millions – and the sense of "disassociation" from distant disasters, reduced the sense of obligation. In contrast, ministries driven by the Holy Spirit were largely local, often lengthy (in terms of the duration of the ministry), frequently time consuming, and sometimes costly. In the words of one respondent, "It's not just that [community ministry] is driven by the Holy Spirit; it's the Holy Spirit that maintains the ministry through the congregation's support."

There was a strong consensus that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain high levels of ministry unless the congregation spiritually upheld that ministry and further that the spirituality of the congregation derived from its understanding and interpretation of biblically based ministry mandates.

Tracking how the Holy Spirit was manifested in the congregation proved to be harder for folk to articulate:

> Whenever we are doing anything we always pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us and to lead us and that we would be obedient to it . . . we know that when things fall into place the Holy Spirit had to be involved. [In my personal life] if there's something on my mind, and I don't know what to do about it, I pray about it and there's a feeling of a lifting of a burden and I know that I just have to sit back and trust.

One member suggested that the presence of the Spirit was manifested in a sense of peace; another, that she felt the presence of the Spirit when listening to and participating in the praise and worship services:

> I think in addition it comes out of the relationship we have developed with our Maker and knowing that our trust is in Him and our confidence is in Him and we are told to seek His guidance, rather than trying to do things ourselves . . . so if we have a choice of things or are trying to solve a problem, asking God for guidance [is the right thing to do]. Then you can feel [as though] something is pushing you to go one way, though you had in mind to go the other. And if you still try to go the other way, you don't have this sense of peace about it. You know you are doing the right thing when you get a sense of peace.

The feeling of peacefulness as apparent endorsement of a course of action, or a decision, was echoed by many interviewees.

For most, if not all, of the folk interviewed at Christian Fellowship, the door to experiencing this sense of peace was the acceptance of Jesus, an acceptance that was often preceded by a life crisis of some kind, of which many examples were offered ranging from serious injury to dangerous diagnoses, from job losses to financial crises, from family breakdowns to the deaths of family and close friends. In many instances where the Holy Spirit was credited with bringing a sense of peace, the respondent could trace back to a crisis that they believed the Holy Spirit helped them resolve. This, they felt, led to an increasing dependency on the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives. In this regard, many interviewees cited experiences reflective of William James' (1902) "twice born" believers, those who had an early, "easy" faith that was subsequently lost because

of its inability to withstand humanistic rationalism, only to be regained when the concept

of it was transformed from its former perception as a matter of sunshine, sweetness, and

light, to one that is less cheerful, less confident, but also more realistic and substantially

more supportive. For these folks it was a situation where, as Kushner (1989: 36) writes,

"God is no longer the parent who keeps them safe and dry; He is the power that enables

them to keep going in a dark and stormy world." For these people the Holy Spirit is not a

presence periodically invoked to give guidance and support but a kind of permanently in-

built compass and source of inspiration.

Not everyone's openness to, or experience of, the Holy Spirit was crisis-driven,

however. Many interviewees affirmed that they had simply grown up in the church and

that as they had matured in their faith, so they felt the increasing presence of – and a

developing relationship with – the Holy Spirit:

> My relationship [with the Holy Spirit] began early on, when I was
> growing up. My parents were always in church, Mother was a missionary
> in her church for more than fifty years, including when I was growing up.
> My dad is a trustee in the Methodist church. We always went to church
> [twice on] Sunday; We experienced the deaths of people related to us . . .
> [I] had a sister that died when I was real young and we had her body in the
> house; we often went to other people's homes where there had been a
> death and the body was in a casket in the living room; we went to funerals
> . . . [but] we also went to births, too. We saw babies being born and we
> saw people die. And it was those spiritual experiences early on in my life,
> through adolescence and growing up, witnessing the work of God in other
> people, that have helped me deal with the crises in my life.

Another view was that the Holy Spirit manifested itself in the congregation

through "the sound biblical teaching that undergirds this church. The teachings of Jesus

and the instructions he left for us are pretty much embedded in the congregation and that

means it's easier for the Holy Spirit to get us moving."

The multiple ministries of Christian Fellowship – both internal and external – place a significant financial burden on the congregation. While not all ministries require money – for many of them it's just the allocation of personal time to do it – some ministries do need money to function. In this regard, any and all financial matters of the church – and the ministries too – are subject to some form of oversight. Any ministry that might place the church under a financial burden is considered by the church council for approval. When, however, the church council denies funds for a particular ministry, the ministry might still go forward; the interested parties often go ahead and raise the funds themselves, from Sunday school groups, for example, or from the community of men in the church known as the Brotherhood. Such funds, deposited with the church as reserved funds, are then used to make that particular ministry happen. Interviewees maintained that this approach did not contradict the church's mission strategy, rather:

> It affirms it. People know what needs to be done and what's expected of them. Sometimes the church has the funds, sometimes it doesn't. Not having the resources doesn't mean it's not a worthy ministry; it just means we must find the resources elsewhere to get the job done. Either way, the church still has oversight [of the ministry].

It was pointed out that such situations are not common, however; rather, most new ministries are merely extensions of those already in existence.

The idea of ministries constantly expanding to meet newly identified needs raised the issue of limitation. When asked how the congregation saw the boundaries of their ministries, the agreed response was that they were not bounded; rather, they were limitless.   Pointing to their track record of engagement and expansion, all agreed that to consider limits was to limit the Holy Spirit: "With the Spirit, we can do anything."

In terms of raising general funds for the church, one offering is taken up at each worship service on Sunday and it's a general offering – no 'Sunday school offering,' no 'mission offering,' and so on.   Every year, the congregation votes on a budget. Each quarter, every family gets a copy of the previous quarter's financial statement, so that they know what came in and what went out. Ministry or other one-off financial needs that arise after the budget are announced from the pulpit. For example, one young man in the congregation had the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C., to work as a page in the Senate. Neither he nor his family had the funds to take advantage of this opportunity, an opportunity that was an especially significant one in the marginalized community he came from.   When this special need came to the attention of Pastor McCall, he announced the need from the pulpit.

The young man went to D.C.

4.1.2.3 Summary

That the success of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church at engaging its community is due, first, to the vision and passion of its pastor seems self evident, at least as represented by the various groups interviewed. It has been the capacity of the pastor both to attract congregants similarly inclined and for both pastor and congregants to imprint this passion first on early members of the church and then on other folk who have swelled the congregation over the years that has created the sensitivity to mission that the church demonstrates. Second, the ability of the church to engage its community flows in no small part from the ability of the pastor to not merely encourage but to nurture ministry leadership and individual self-motivation. Although one interviewee described the role of pastor as CEO, individuals in the church feel liberated, rather than constrained,

by the necessary organizational and administrative structures that accrue to large organizations, viewing such structures as designed to facilitate, rather than obstruct, ministry. Third, that the church is actively engaged in community ministry is an attraction to many Christians because it gives a structured and useful response to a drive (thought to emanate from the Holy Spirit) to engage humanity in scriptural terms (e.g. Matt 25:35-40 and 28:19, 20). The ethnicity of the congregation and the church's physical location cannot be overlooked. Although the church has striven over the years to be inclusive it remains a largely African American congregation in a largely African American community. This shared identity, coupled with a shared history of the old (and not so old) challenges of repression and disenfranchisement, has led in some ways to a feeling that African American society must 'pull itself up by its own boot straps,' and while not eschewing assistance from outside is itself mainly responsible for addressing the multiple contemporary challenges that face it. Thus, lack of education, poverty, drug addiction, crime, teen pregnancy and a pervading sense of hopelessness are all seen as challenges to the Church, and Christian Fellowship rises to the challenge. To do so often requires sacrificial giving of both time and money, but the ordinary people of the church seem to take pride in their ability to stand the test; they share in many ways a sense of engaging in community ministry *precisely because it is a hard thing to do.*

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                         A PASTORAL EPISTLE
                                               September 8, 1992
BELOVED:
        Occasionally it is necessary for us to review our pilgrimage, to look
at our current state, and to have a vision for the future.  These
reflections are put in print for clarity and review.
        The Lord has blessed us abundantly.  We are filled with awe when we
look at what God has done with this people in the 17 months of our
existence.  Our membership is now 725.  A large number of prospective
persons visit with us each Sunday so that our worship attendance often
exceeds 800.  In our first year (Oct. 1, 1991 – Sept. 30, 1992) we developed
a budget of $350,000.  We have already exceeded that budget, not including
the money set aside for the purchase of this property.  God has blessed us
with a facility that will allow us to be the people of God on mission.  TO
HIM BE THE GLORY IN HIS CHURCH.


A LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE
        The Christian Fellowship Baptist Church (CFBC) came into being as a
fully grown church.  We did not have the luxury of normal steady
development.  Like Adam in Genesis, we didn't know childhood and youth
before becoming adult.  Consequently, some things that normally take place
in healthy church growth must be carefully put in place.


An Illustration
        When a house is built, careful methods are observed.  A foundation is
laid, the framework is built, the structure is added; the electricity, water
and air conditioning systems are installed.  When the structure is
completed, then the decoration begins.  If this process is not carefully
observed, there cannot be a house, and whatever structure will not stand.
The future occupants may be anxious to enjoy their house.  They may have
purchased the furniture and furnishings, but patience is required while the
preparation is being completed.  No one puts carpeting down when the roof is
not finished.  No one hangs pictures on wall studs.  The house must be
completed before it can become a home.


        We are attempting to build CFBC according to biblical and spiritual
blueprints.  It must have a solid foundation.  This is why I have been
preaching through Acts since January.  To this end we have required
extensive training of our staff of Deacons.  This is why we are requesting
all persons in leadership positions, as well as members, to engage in Sunday
morning Bible study.  In addition, our WMU and Brotherhood units do Bible
study and theological reflection in their sessions.  This is required.  We
must know who we are under God and what His will is for us.  We cannot
afford to "do our own thing" according to our desires and imaginations.
Additional training programs for our leadership and membership is planned
for immediate implementation.


        OUR PILGRIMAGE could be likened to the Children of Israel.  First,
they were an Exodus people coming out of Egyptian bondage.  Then they were a
Wilderness people for 40 years.  They were to become a mission people when
they entered the Promised Land.  As a nation they never became the Mission
People God had intended.


        During our first 2 or 3 months we were an Exodus People.  We
celebrated our freedom, the dawn and hope of a new day.  This bound us
together into a loving, caring fellowship.  After we moved to Mays high
school, we became a Wilderness People.  We "feasted on Manna dropped from
Heaven" and "drank water from the rocks", but we wandered while seeking the
promised land.
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On March 29th we entered the Promised land, this facility. We will not possess it until December 15th, but our days of wandering and wondering are over.

A NEEDED FOCUS

Much attention must be given to building the relational aspects of love, trust, mutual respect and care. We are not the same people of the Exodus or Wilderness. Some few who were with us then, have found the travel to the Promised land more than they were able to make and have left us. The Lord has added to His Church those being saved and already saved. Many of these are young adults who are single or building families. Some are single parent families. All are buying and/or furnishing homes, cars, and have limited finances.

We must continue to use every opportunity to become an inclusive congregation. The work of our greeters on Sunday morning and our fellowship period in the worship is not enough to sustain the inclusiveness we must have. EVERY PERSON WHO COMES INTO THE CFBC MUST FEEL THAT THIS IS HIS OR HER CHURCH TOO. We will do our best to include as many people in as many ways as we possibly can.

Some of our new members may come from churches where things were done differently. We must carefully help them understand why we do what we do the way we do it. This is also true for some of the Exodus. Even though they were part of the Exodus, they may not have understood the processes put together in the Wilderness.

TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES ARE BEFORE US

Our Church Council is working on **VISION 2000**, a statement of our goals, objectives and strategies through the year 2000 A.D. You will have a chance to read, adjust and approve this document as our working agenda. It contains the corporate vision, organizational framework and the systematic progress that is planned. Our mission as a church, our relationship to this community, our commitment to the uplift of people are all spelled out.

What more is needed?
* Patience while we develop orderly processes.
* Your commitment to help develop and support the processes.
* A focus of attention on CFBC as the Body of Christ, not our own ego satisfactions or personal agenda.
* Committed and sacrificial financial support to enable us to realize our goals.
* The linkage of the wisdom of age with the energy of youth.
* More humility as we yield ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul concluded his letter to the Church at Galatia (Galatians 6:11) by saying, "See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand"!

The length of this letter reflects my love for this congregation. I **THANK GOD ALWAYS** for having placed me here and having given me this opportunity of service. My greeting was "**Beloved**". I do not say this carelessly or routinely. You are first, loved by God, who also has loved me, and has caused our love in Him to be complete. **SO MAY IT EVER BE.**

Pastor McCall

4.1.3   A Crisis of Community Identity: Druid Hills Baptist Church.

Ethnicity: Mostly White
Denomination: Baptist (Multiple affiliations)
Active membership: about 350
Attendance: about 140
Location: Urban Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 15
Operating budget 2004: ± $540,000.

4.1.3.1 History and Background

Druid Hills Baptist is an in-town church in one of the inner suburbs of Atlanta.

The church building sits in close proximity to the Atlanta communities of Virginia-

Highlands, Inman Park, Candler Park, Midtown, and Little Five Points. The church was

founded in 1914 and the current building was completed in 1929.

While Central Presbyterian Church (q.v.) may, because of its location in a non-

residential neighborhood, be considered a "magnet" church, attracting its congregants

from the environs of Atlanta, Druid Hills Baptist stands within a largely residential area,

surrounded by single family homes, condominiums, apartments, and shops, and most of

its congregation lives locally. The neighborhood of Druid Hills, one of Atlanta's earliest

suburbs, was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, who also designed New York's

Central park and the landscaping around the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

Olmsted expressed his philosophy of suburban living as one where "The homeowner,

returning hot and tired from the city [will pass through a] park to homes well shaded by

handsome, umbrageous, permanently thrifty trees [in a neighborhood with] a pleasing

rural, or, at least, semi-rural, character of scenery . . . to be permanently enjoyed*"*[1].

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[1] www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/~druidhills/

While the pleasing semi-rural character of Druid Hills described above to some extent remains, its population is changing. In the first three decades after the church was founded, its congregation grew steadily, to peak at 3637 in 1947 (Shaw 1987: 95). In 1952, the church still boasted some 3,447 members (ibid.) but then came the 60's and with them much change. The 1960's:

> [S]wept away many prevailing attitudes and traditions. It was an age of rebellion against establishments of home, church, school, and government. Supreme Court decrees brought many long-lasting changes in philosophies and lives, some [of] which led to reform, some to controversy. The Vietnam conflict brought warring emotions to many who watched the body count each day . . . There were peace marches, sit-ins, boycotts [. . .] drugs came into popular use [and] strange forms of worship and a so-called "new morality" filled the vacuum where sometimes belief had been swept away (Shaw 1987: 95).

The dramatic change in social structure and outlook developed during the 60's was reflected in the congregation at DHBC which, by the end of the decade, had seen an equally dramatic decline in its membership. In more recent years changes within the Druid Hills community itself have been felt in the church. Homes once considered inexpensive became, because of the close proximity of the neighborhood to Atlanta, highly desirable and this desirability had and continues to have an effect on many levels.

Competition for Druid Hills homes has driven up prices, attracting wealthier residents. The increased value of such homes has increased the par value of similar homes in the neighborhood driving up the property taxes of those homes. Many of these homes are occupied by fixed-income retirees who, unable to pay the assessments, sell their homes and move further away from the city. Some of these homes are sold as single family homes, others are converted to apartments and some are utterly demolished to make room for low-rise condominium and apartment buildings. Smaller businesses, too, such as restaurants and shops, have located in the neighborhood. The net result is a

change in the demographic of Druid Hills. Once comprised largely of folks in middle-age and retirement – some of whom remain – the neighborhood is seeing an increasing influx of an eclectic mix of people: young couples – many without children – and professional singles, both male and female, of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and professing a wide variety of sexual orientation – straight, gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgendered.

It is the complex nature of this demographic that gave rise to the section title above – Druid Hills Baptist, like the community in which it resides, is indeed a community undergoing a crisis of identity. The membership of the church, always to some degree reflective of its neighborhood demographic and thus once home to a largely ageing, traditional, white congregation, has seen its congregational makeup change toward the more complex population described above – although the church is still not completely reflective of the wider Druid Hills community. Having historically had a conservative, if not somewhat fundamentalist leaning in the past, the new congregational demographic demands a more liberal approach – a shift that, for some members, has been hard to make. It is therefore all the more surprising that Druid Hills Baptist maintains a relatively high level of community outreach.

4.1.3.2 Interviews

Jon Spencer, senior pastor at DHBC since May of 1998, began his time at the church in February 1997 as minister of outreach and discipleship. In that role, which continued a long tradition of community ministry by the church, he was responsible for adding to the existing outreach ministries by "connecting" with the community, becoming aware of community needs, conveying those needs to the congregation, and

developing ministries to take care of those needs. Pastor Spencer readily acknowledges the difficulty he had of conveying the needs of, for example, the Gay, Lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community to what was then a conservative congregation, or persuading that same congregation that it should fund and support an AIDS outreach ministry, or provide English language classes for speakers of other languages. When he became senior pastor, Jon began expanding the church's ministry activities to include various events that would increase its visibility in the wider community, for example entering into partnership ministries with other local churches by serving meals at a homeless shelter two Tuesdays a month and beginning a regular "Movie Night" event for the homeless, held in the church's basement theater with popcorn and lemonade provided. The church also has a "refugee" home, a place for a refugee family to live while it integrates into Atlantan – and American – society.

Some incremental changes were also wrought inside the church. A twice-a-month "alternative" worship experience called "Common Ground" offers a postmodern experiential form of worship; the church provides space for various Christian and non-Christian organizations to meet – several "12-step" ministries convene at the church – and a Performing Arts class meets there most Saturdays. Pastor Spencer consistently preaches, teaches, and writes about community engagement and it is because he does so – and because the church "follows through" – that many folk are, by their own testimony, attracted to the church. "Druid Hills Baptist," asserts one interviewee "has a reputation for genuinely caring about its community."   Spencer further believes that many Christians today are looking for an active, rather than a passive faith. A passive faith, he claims, is one where people simply attend church to get their spiritual needs met. An

active faith, on the other hand, is one where such attendance only supplies part of a spiritual need; the other part is met by meeting the spiritual needs of others. (This dualism is articulated and reinforced in the church's mission, vision and values statement developed in 2002 and reproduced below.) Further, many of the people in the church who agree with this assertion believe that participating in community ministry is in some way "spiritual," puts them on "holy ground," and "authenticates" their faith. "Jesus is the Lord of this church and an authentic faith is one in which doing what Jesus did – to the extent we can – is the only way to be true to him."

Although Pastor Spencer maintains a passion for community ministry, his responsibilities as senior pastor have reduced the time available to him to pursue those ends. In order both to sustain its existing outreach programs and to find other ways of doing community ministry, in September of 2001, DHBC hired a "Minister of Outreach and Administration," Gerry Hutchinson. Pastor Hutchinson's primary role is to help identify fresh and innovative ways to perform community ministry and also to find ways of effectively utilizing some of the unused office and classroom space in the church building. As a result, new ministry opportunities have indeed been identified and, with minimal bureaucratic intervention (where financial and human resources are reviewed) are frequently undertaken. One such new ministry is "Servant Evangelism," where church members literally take to the streets of the neighborhood to some form of ministry and use the opportunity to speak about the church. For example, the press often reports cases where people have died in fires because the battery in their home fire alarm was depleted. Congregants from DHBC now go throughout the church's immediate

neighborhood on the date of time change to and from Daylight Savings and hand out free smoke-detector batteries to help alleviate this problem.

Lest it be thought that all new ministries come from the pastorate, it must be emphasized that members are strongly encouraged to identify new ministries and interviewees agreed that if anyone felt led or called to start or open a new ministry, the pastoral leadership has stressed that members should not feel the need to "seek consent." "You do not need to ask permission to do the work of Jesus Christ," one person quoted pastor Jon Spencer as saying, adding that the church stood willing to help and cooperate, to the extent it could, in any ministry identified by its members. For many of the newer members of the church who are engaged in its outreach ministries it was this attitude that attracted them. Others were attracted by the church's willingness to adopt to the changing demographic, to be diverse, and to be a part of the community in which it exists. It must be said too that while the decades of the 80's and 90's saw a decline in outreach ministry in line with the ageing of the congregation, the introduction of younger folk to the membership of DHBC and the presence of a newer, dynamic leadership has not only reinvigorated the church's outreach ministries but has to some degree energized the older membership which, while not necessarily physically able to participate, largely enthusiastically supports such ministries both morally and financially.

Druid Hills Baptist Church operates as one large, extended family. Like all families, not everyone gets along with everyone else all the time. But, interviewees agreed, "people are always getting together to pray for one another, or for people in need;" people are "concerned for the welfare of others;" food is brought to members who are sick and "there is a 'buzz' that goes around the church when someone is sick, or

injured, or something else happens to them," and the church rapidly responds to their needs.

Returning to the external ministries of the church, interviewees were asked to explain how they understood the difference between a humanitarian and a spiritually-driven motivation to help others. One interviewee responded that "the difference is that in humanitarianism, one wants to do something [to help], does it, and that's the end of it. When it's spirit-driven, one does it; not as a one-time event, but as a long-term commitment." Another interviewee suggested the difference was the same as the adage "give a man a fish and he eats for a day; that's humanitarian. Teach a man to fish and he eats for life, that's ministry." "It's a realization that people are always in need," said a third, "and responding to a spirit-driven, scriptural call to do it." There was consensus in the group that spirituality picks up where mere humanitarian motives end. Humanitarians give what they are able without impacting their lives; spiritually-driven Christians feel impelled to give – time, money, intellect, experience – perhaps not exactly until it hurts, but often certainly to the point where such actions impact their lives in some enduring way, because they feel that this is what Christ wants them to do. "It's a sacrificial act rather than one driven by humanitarian motives. It's doing the will of the Father."

4.1.3.3 Summary

During the course of this study, many stories were presented regarding congregations that had split or fragmented because of differing views of how the rapid social and demographic changes in the wider community should be addressed by the church. As the social and cultural matrix in which church lives has evolved, Druid Hills Baptist too has been no stranger to dissent as it has faced the difficult issue of evolving

with its community, without compromising what it has historically seen as its *raison d'etre*: an uncompromising adherence to Gospel principles and the application of those principles in the daily life of its congregation.

That it has been able to do so is due in no small measure to the centrality of Jesus in the life of the congregation. For the most part of the church's history the centrality of Jesus and the activity of the Holy Spirit were seen in traditional terms, as properties intrinsic to the church family and only capable of complete enjoyment within the walls of the church. In this view, although Jesus and the Spirit might be made evident to the wider community by occasional acts of benevolence, to really enjoy Jesus and to sense the presence of the Spirit one had to be "in" the church.

While the high membership numbers of Druid Hills Baptist demonstrated the effects of this spiritual centripetality in past decades the significant decline in membership in recent years, directly attributable to dramatic social change and cultural shifts in worldview, was clear evidence of a need for new ways for people to "know" Jesus and feel the presence of the Spirit. One of the ways pastor Jon Spencer has gone about this is by asking the congregation to reconsider many of the customary roadblocks to fellowship in the congregation that have developed from conventional approaches to the Gospel. For example, while smoking and alcohol use are still considered generally unhealthy practices, the congregation determined that neither is specifically precluded in the Gospels and that making their use a bar to membership was more traditional than biblical. Perhaps more significantly, from a long history of total opposition to any form of non-traditional sexual expression, the church has shifted to, if not acceptance, then at least a more open tolerance of the Gay, Lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community.

Such openness was determined by a consideration of the "judgment" of others, which is biblically proscribed (e.g. Luke 6:37), as opposed to living the characteristics of Jesus (forgiveness, love, tolerance) considered to be more in keeping with Christian life. Arriving at these new social and religious understandings has often required pastor Spencer to walk a fine line between a new understanding of the Gospel and deep sensitivity to the traditions of the Christian church as understood by the congregation. His tactical leadership has not only led the congregation to discover the need to open its doors to the previously disenfranchised, but has increased its understanding that if the people will not come to the church, then the church must go to the people. As a result, the church has become not only more inclusive in its outreach programs, but also in the kinds of community ministries it provides.

The re-evaluations described came from persistent and prayerful provoked consideration of the question, "what would Jesus want us to do." Out of this came the idea that the church should do what Jesus did – consistently undertake acts of mercy, tolerance, love, and forgiveness – and actively seek and engage those folk living on the margins of society. The centrality of Jesus in the life of the congregation is credited by most of the older, long-term members of the church that have remained in the congregation for helping to avoid partisanship as they have adapted to both the changing social demographic in the wider community and the reflection of that demographic in the church family. Similarly, the Spirit has been able to act at DHBC because the church, under the leadership of Jesus, has not been afraid to identify and address community needs as they have arisen.

Druid Hills Baptist Church

Vision Statement

Because we believe that God works through His people, the church, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and because we believe that each local fellowship of believers has a unique mission relevant to their context, we the members of Druid Hills Baptist Church, see a day when our church will be known as a vibrant Intown community of Christians, committed to ministering to and serving others with compassion and integrity in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we will strive to be a church whose ministries reflect our commitment to sharing the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, whose worship is dynamic and meaningful, whose membership is representative of the diversity of our surrounding neighborhoods, whose teaching leads people into a continuously-deepening relationship with God, and whose leadership demonstrates our belief that all Christians are called to be ministers.

Value Statements

- We emphasize the lordship of Christ. We seek to be completely subject to Jesus, who is the head of the church.
- We place worship at the center of the life of our community. It is our conviction that human beings were created to glorify God and enjoy His presence. Through traditional and innovative forms of worship we seek to honor God and strengthen the church for mission.
- We take the Bible seriously. It is our guide for belief and the living out of our faith. We seek to read, study and thoughtfully interpret scripture as led by the Holy Spirit. We strive to faithfully apply the teachings of scripture to our lives as individual Christians and as a congregation.
- We believe that the Christian life is meant to be lived in close relationship with other believers. We seek to deepen our community by relating to and caring for each other through small groups, Sunday School classes and other opportunities for fellowship.
- We seek to follow Jesus' example by making prayer central to our lives. We believe prayer and its related practices, such as meditation, solitude and devotional reading are vital for Christian growth.
- We seek to freely share the Christian faith with those who are not believers and to invite them to become Christ-followers. Through relational faith sharing we seek to lead those who haven't yet experienced the love of God found in Christ into a relationship with Him and the community of faith.
- We believe that Christians are called to reach out to the poor and work for justice in society. Through a variety of ministry initiatives we seek to live out the teaching that Jesus came to "bring good news to the poor."
- We affirm that all Christians, whether ordained or laypersons are called to ministry. We believe that all Christians have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit and are called into service. We desire to see each member equipped for his/her ministry within the church and in the community.
- We seek to be involved with the community surrounding our church building. We will work to create partnerships with other Christians and people of good will who are working towards the betterment of the community. By doing so, we will "build bridges" into the community.
- We recognize that the God whom we serve is marvelously creative. We understand that while the gospel message never changes, we must be innovative in our way of doing things. One expression of creativity is using the arts as means of communicating the gospel and helping believers grow in their faith.
- We believe that there should be no division within the community of faith based on race, class or gender. We claim the scripture that teaches that "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Jesus Christ." (Gal. 3:28) All Christians are gifted for ministry and all offices within the church are open to those who are called.
- We are a Baptist church and hold to such historic Baptist principles as the priesthood of all believers, the autonomy of the local church, religious liberty and the separation of church and state, and believers' baptism by immersion.

Mission Statement

Love God, Share Christ, Serve People, Grow in Faith

4.1.4   Engaging Suburbia: East Cobb United Methodist Church

Ethnicity: largely White
Denomination: United Methodist
Active Membership: about 425
Attendance: about 315
Location: Suburban Atlanta North side.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 20
Operating budget 2004: ± $516,000

4.1.4.1 History and background

The Methodist Church became the United Methodist Church on April 23, 1968, when the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church joined hands at the constituting General Conference in Dallas, Texas.

Methodism itself was founded by John and Charles Wesley, Church of England priests who had transforming religious experiences in May 1738. In the years following, the Wesleys succeeded in leading a movement in the Church of England that ultimately led to Methodism. Methodism soon crossed the Atlantic as some Methodists made the often long and frequently hazardous voyage to America, where they were met with such enthusiasm that Methodism became, until the turn of the 19th C., the largest denomination in the U.S.

The history of ECUMC dates back to 1837 with the founding of the "Marietta Campground." In the early history of Methodist churches there was only one preacher, known as the "Circuit Rider," to serve many churches. Preaching services were few, travel was difficult and often dangerous (the Cherokee Indians were not removed until 1838) and wild animals still roamed the woods. The early settlers in Georgia were loyal to their God and were not willing for their children to grow up without the blessing of their church about them. Thus in 1837 a location was established – the Marietta Camp

Ground – where all might gather together to refresh the souls of the saints and call sinners to repentance. In 1869 a regular Sunday school for children was begun which led, in 1879, to the chartering of a church. This was soon followed by the establishment of a church building on some acres adjacent to the campground, where the church has remained ever since.

East Cobb UMC began its life as a rural church, part of a community that largely relied on cotton and other farm products for its livelihood. It remained that way until 1942, when the construction of a bomber plant (to support the WWII effort), as well as the required runways and ancillary industry drew the church and its wider community into the larger sphere of Atlanta's suburbia. Further continued industrial and commercial development meant that the East Cobb area became a fully urban area 1970's.

Since it began as a rural church East Cobb UMC, unlike urban churches such as Central Presbyterian and Druid Hills Baptist (q.v.), did not have a large, local community from which to draw its membership. Thus it meandered through the years with only very modest growth but a growth that, again in contrast to the urban churches just mentioned, did not suffer a dramatic decline as a result of urban flight or changing social outlook. The church's official history (Young & Allgood, 1997) reports 149 folk on the roll in 1922; 198 in 1950; 243 in1953; 233 in 1960, and 548 in 1980. The church records an "active" membership of 425 today.[2]

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[2] Young & Allgood (1997) sometimes report numbers as "membership," sometimes as "active membership," and sometimes without qualifying the number provided. The number given for today's active membership is a "best guess" by the senior pastor. The church has some 800 members on the roll.

4.1.4.2 Interviews

The interviews at East Cobb began with a focus group that was almost entirely comprised of folk engaged in community ministry – some for thirty and forty years – and who were anxious to talk about their reasons for doing so when asked. "We do outreach because Jesus tells us to," began one respondent. "That's the main starting point." "We simply want to help people in our community," said another. "It makes us feel good," added a third, a sentiment to which all were in agreement. Asked to identify whether the outreach was driven by spiritual or humanitarian motives, interviewees first discussed among themselves what they thought their various motivations were: "I think it's driven by humanitarian motives at first. It's a response to human need." "I feel like it's more *quid pro quo*, a sense that if I'm ever in the same situation, I'd want people to do the same for me." "It's common sense," said a third, "it makes sense to take care of others;" and finally, "We do ministry because, as Christians, it's just what we do."

It was interesting to listen to the conversation as these energized folk, discussing the variance between humanitarian and spiritual motivations, tried to come to a consensus – which gradually emerged and was articulated as follows:

> We think that humanitarian motives are reactive. Humanitarians wait for things to happen, or, if they are happening, to be made aware of them and then they react to them. There is also a sense of distance and even anonymity to humanitarian aid. Spiritual motives are pro-active; people driven by the Spirit are always looking for what's already happening and Spiritually-driven ministries are often, though not always, very personal, hands on ministries, where you may look into the eyes of those ministered to. And, Spiritual ministries come out of the culture of the Church – we are driven by our sense of being a nurturing community. In a nutshell, to be Christian is to care deeply and persistently. What that means ultimately [in response to the question] is that whether our initial motivation is humanitarian or spiritual, we are *maintained* in ministry purely by the Spirit.

Beyond this community statement, several participants added personal riders, such as, "Outreach ministry makes me more like Jesus;" "It's how I was brought up – scripturally focused, doing what scripture says I should do;" "it's a part of my relationship with Jesus Christ;" "I'm spiritually inclined to do it;" and, "I want to go to heaven!" Some participants said further that while they might be motivated to begin ministering to others for humanitarian reasons, their faith made them do more than they otherwise would; "I am accountable to my congregational family and to the wider Church for following Jesus – a commitment to minister to others is a large part of that accountability." Interviewees were firm in their assertion that the life of Jesus is so extensively written about in the Bible because it was important. This observation may sound somewhat trite, but the underlying principle is that many churches, denominations, and congregations seem to leap from Jesus' miraculous birth to his death and miraculous resurrection. "It often seems as though his intervening life as recorded in the synoptic gospels is just a narrative to get from 'a' to 'b', from birth to passion." As Christians, respondents agreed that the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus are indeed fundamental to their faith, but add that his life was important too, not only as a necessary interlude between the two events, but as an example to all who believe in how they should live their lives. Following Jesus – variously described as "accepting" him, acknowledging His "Lordship" or "leadership," "being like" Jesus, and being a "true disciple" – was almost uniformly given as a fundamental reason for doing ministry, which ministry was then accomplished in some way under the "leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit."

With regard to the continuity of outreach ministry, note that the United Methodist church practices Itinerancy, a Clergy Appointment System that moves and places pastors

(and others in church leadership) for longer or shorter periods depending on, among other things, the individual's gifts and the church's needs. As a result churches get to experience a number of pastoral leaders over the years, a factor that could (and does) impact a church's outreach programs. In the case of ECUMC, members of the first focus group have noticed over the years that when a pastor is a "micromanager," and attempts to be involved in all aspects of the church, fewer ministries seem to come about. On the other hand, when the church is led by pastors who concern themselves more with the spiritual and theological matters of the church and are less involved in the practical aspects, the congregation seems to develop more ministries. This observation only extends however to new ministries. Existing ministries, once started, gain a life of their own and tend to continue regardless of the kind of pastoral leadership.

East Cobb's current pastor is Rev. Charles Thomas, who came to the church in mid 2003. Rev. Thomas believes himself to be a "hands off" pastor, an observation supported by congregational survey results from the church. Speaking for himself and his colleague, associate pastor Jim Powell, Rev. Thomas said, "We constantly encourage people to exploit their spiritual gifts through some form of ministry involvement." Ministry needs are communicated at the church through a variety of means, such as "skits" during worship service. Once such skit, called the "Good News Brothers," involves two lay ministry leaders dressed up in a manner similar to the "Blues Brothers" (from the 1980 movie of the same name), presenting specific ministry accomplishments, as well as current and future needs, as part of a worship service. Other forms of communication include various church meetings, when the current list of outreach ministries, along with that ministry's status and needs, is read to the assembly; and

making ministry activities visible to the greater congregation. An example of the latter is the so-called "shoe box" ministry,[3] where shoe boxes are filled with personal care materials and small items of clothing needed by folk who have suffered some form of natural disaster somewhere in the world. (The most recent Shoe Box ministry was for children in tsunami-struck areas of Indonesia.) These boxes are brought forward during a worship service, and are then prayed over and blessed before being sent on to their various recipients. "Through these and other strategies we hope to emphasize that church membership is not a passive activity." As part of his promotion of ministry in general and outreach ministry in particular, Pastor Thomas stresses that such activities are good ways to experience the Spiritual.

In terms of describing the spiritual aspect that drove them to participate in outreach (or indeed any) ministry, most respondents spoke in terms of *affect*, or emotion: "It feels right." "I get a sense of comfort and completeness." "I experience a feeling of uplift." But, not all respondents felt that way – at least, not every time they engaged in ministry. Several participants agreed with the statement by one that:

> Sometimes [ministry] hurts, but in a good way that I can hardly describe. Its like if you could have dental work, or major surgery, in behalf of someone else. For you it's painful, but you do it because you know that other person will feel better afterwards. You go through the pain for the good that can come to others afterward.

Emotional or affective language was also used by many participants to describe their reasons for coming to church. The words support, restoration, encouragement, community, family, relationship, holy, and spiritual were frequently used. Other reasons

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[3] The "Shoe Box Ministry" is a part of Samaritan's Purse, "a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world." (www.samaritanspurse.org).

for church participation included Bible study ("This is a Bible-centered church"), to attend discipleship classes, to lead or participate in the church's internal ministries (Sunday school, choir, Elder's meetings, committee meetings), for simple fellowship, and to learn more about Methodism.

With regard to this last point, a number of folk in the first focus group disclosed that they had come from a conservative Baptist background. They had left because in their experience at least the Baptist church, while it did a great deal in terms of overseas or "foreign" missions, did not do much in terms of local community ministry. After joining East Cobb UMC they discovered Methodist polity to be more to their liking anyway and have become staunchly supportive of United Methodism and very active in the church's outreach programs.

Further discussion of Methodism elicited the information that about fifty percent in the focus group were "very familiar" with Methodist theology, the balance claiming "some familiarity." Participants agreed that this result was likely reflective of the larger congregation. Similarly, the affirmation of membership being less on account of the theology and more because of the sense of family, the ministry opportunities, the fellowship, and an active Youth Group, was also thought to be shared by the larger membership of the church.

New ministries at East Cobb are identified in a number of ways – out of existing ministries, for example, or through the insight of an individual who discovers an unmet need in the community that he or she believes the church can address. Newly-identified outreach ministries are brought before a "called missions" committee, where the needs – and the human and financial resources required – are outlined. In cases where financial

support is required, all information concerning the ministry is forwarded to an administrative council that determines whether church will financially support ministry. Human resource support for ministries is usually pursued through Sunday school announcements.

East Cobb UMC has a fairly active and dynamic assembly of young persons and one focus group was comprised of young people (aged sixteen to twenty years) and Youth Ministry leaders (aged twenty-five to thirty-two years). As opposed to the traditional 8:30 worship service, attended mostly by seniors and the 11.00 a.m. worship services attended mostly by families, the youth group largely attends a Contemporary worship program which has an average attendance of 40-45. The attraction of the contemporary service is multivarious. Some youth find the presentation of the sermon in the form of a skit, or play, more meaningful than the spoken word alone. For others the contextualization of scripture is found to be more expressive than the simple quotation of ancient text. Most participants preferred praise songs over old, traditional hymns and everyone enjoyed the more casual style – in dress, demeanor, and approach – that the contemporary service offered.   There is also a greater sense of participation, of being involved, in the worship service than is usually experienced in the more traditional worship services, because almost the entire contemporary service requires some response, or contribution, from the congregation

Somewhere between forty and fifty percent of the youth are involved in some form of outside ministry, such as helping in the support of persons in assisted care facilities, participating in blood drives, or supporting a "coats for the cold" initiative, intended to promote the donation of coats for distribution by the youth to the poor and

indigent of the community. These ministries and others are identified through regular

planning sessions held with the youth. During such sessions, all identified ministry input

is welcomed.   This approach is intended to encourage a constant awareness and

sensitivity on the part of the youth to community needs even though not all the identified

needs can be serviced by the youth, or even the church. The constant presentation of

community need, a structure for sifting, categorizing, and validating such needs and an

established strategy for implementing the necessary ministries has resulted in a very

active and dynamic youth outreach ministry program. One key to the success of the

youth ministry was identified by a youth leader as the generally short-term nature of the

ministries undertaken: "Kids these days are easily bored; they want to find [an outreach

ministry], do it, and move on." This observation, a tacit recognition of the transient nature

of interest that exists in the youth of the postmodern world, led to discussion about the

motivation of youth leaders in the church and the strategies they employ among the

young people of the church. Responses relating to motivation included the following:

> I "give," with all the subtexts that word has – time, interest, knowledge, experience, a listening ear and all that – because in doing so I receive. I get a sense of doing what's right, of fulfilling my spiritual purpose, of answering my calling. I came out of a chaotic teenage environment; I needed support, encouragement, clarity, guidance – and the church gave me that. This is how I give back. I can connect with [the youth]. Plus, I have fun!

> I'm involved in youth ministry now as a leader because I was involved as a youth. I participated in community ministry because that's one of the things Jesus did and I'm trying to be like Him. He said "as you do to the least of these, you do to me" That's my motivation. I want to try to be a role model for the youth – it helps them and it helps to keep me accountable.

> There's a sense in which a voice outside a teenager's family has more substance. Kids will often listen more to someone other than their parents. We try to be that someone. Plus, we try to instill a sensitivity to the

spiritual side of our humanity, to say that it's O.K. to be compassionate
and sympathetic and to have, and show, feelings.

It was universally agreed within the focus group that keeping the interest of young persons in the church was not easy. What young people responded to was well known: variety in worship, involvement and participation in the life of the church; constant change; contemporary music; a "modern" approach to church; and contemporized theology were just a few of the "must haves" mentioned. The problem was in finding new and innovative ways to meet these needs while remaining within the financial and human resources available to the church and at the same time holding true to the Gospel message and the strictures of the United Methodist church. There was common agreement in the group that they tried hard to present Jesus in ways that are contemporary, dynamic, and responsive to the young people and yet do not compromise his fundamental message of love, tolerance, grace, mercy, justice, and compassion.

"Spirituality" among the youth was also a difficult concept for the youth leaders to pinpoint. "Teenagers, especially males, have a hard time acknowledging a sense of spirituality because it's equated with being something less than a masculine trait." It was pointed out further that in a society where success is in some ways equated with masculinity and where girls have become more competitive against boys, the girls tend to repress outward shows of emotion that they feel may undermine their efforts. To address these adolescent characteristics, the youth leaders bring their young people together often in an atmosphere of shared faith. During these times the leaders try to impress upon the youth that among people of faith, such defenses are not only unnecessary, but they impede the action of the Holy Spirit. "We encourage them to let down their guard, to become transparent to each other and to be open to the Spirit."

4.1.4.3 Summary

There is a certain sense of complacency at East Cobb UMC with regard to its outreach mission activities. Although the congregation is rightfully pleased with its activities in the larger community, no-one at the church is able to provide a history of the church's community engagement except to say that "it has always been there," and the church's official history is equally unhelpful in this regard. It might at first be presumed from this that outreach ministry is so much a part of the church's daily life that engaging in it is not considered exceptional behavior by either the leadership or the congregation and to a certain extent this appears to be the case.   Certainly anecdotal accounts of the numbers of folk involved in ministry – 90% overall and 50% in practical outreach – tend also to support this supposition.[4] Further analysis of the interview responses suggest a different perspective, however – that East Cobb is not so much complacent regarding its community ministry activity, but rather, as the following paragraph explains, is naively unaware of the fact that it is an example of a holistic congregation.

Where the ethos of some churches in this study may be described for example as "pragmatic" (St. Andrews Presbyterian), "introspective" (South Gwinnett Baptist), "fractured" (Norton Park Baptist), or "exuberant" (Christian Fellowship Baptist), analysis of the various responses, attitudes, and motivations described above suggest that the character of the congregation of ECUMC is "affective," being formed out of a set of what might best be called "emotional principles." Individuals, nuclear families and the wider church community share in a complex, biblically-based emotional and spiritual

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[4] Pastor's Thomas and Perry agree on a more conservative 60% overall and 30% in practical outreach – still a high number when compared to other holistic churches.

relationship with each other and with each aspect of the Trinity. The interviewed groups:

- gave a strong impression of the centrality in the life of the church of the person and work of Jesus, conceived of not only as an object of worship but also as example of a life of faithfulness,
- sustained the study of scripture as an essential part of Christian faith,
- shared a communal attitude of mutual support and encouragement,
- shared an interest in the spiritual restoration of the downhearted, and
- Shared an individual and collective spiritual relationship with the Holy.

Already important in and of themselves, when catalyzed by the Holy Spirit these characteristics appear to bring about a synergism so great the congregation is necessarily driven from the confines of the church into the wider community. Thus outreach mission activity at ECUMC is, as Newbigin predicted, clearly more the result of the centrality of the Trinity – and specifically Jesus – in the life of the church than of a conscious outreach effort by the church. This observation then explains the congregation's naïveté regarding its history of outreach and to its successes in that form of ministry, for in the hermeneutical church it is not the people, but the Spirit in the people, that speaks and acts.

The Spirit is speaking and acting through the youth of ECUMC too. Under inspired leadership, the young people of the church have learned, or are learning, to open themselves up to the Spirit, which works through them as and when it can in ways compliant with their postmodern worldview – their way of thinking, their attitudes, attention span, motivators and the like. Thus the youth are as involved, in their own way, in outreach ministry as are the older constituents of the East Cobb church family. The result appears to be holistic congregation in the truest sense of the word.

4.1.5   The Phoenix: Trinity Baptist Church.
Ethnicity: largely White
Denomination: Baptist (Multiple affiliations)
Active Membership: about 180
Attendance: about 110
Location: Rural East Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 10
Operating budget 2004: ± $176,000.

4.1.5.1 History and background

Trinity Baptist Church began with the attendance and participation of twelve people at a Bible study and prayer meeting, held on May 25, 1983.   The meeting was precipitated by an idea previously shared among these twelve and supported by a group of churches known as the Stone Mountain Baptist Association,[5] that there was a need for a Moderate Baptist presence in this largely rural but developing area. Two of the twelve members of the founding group were on the staff of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and were "national professionals" with regard to knowing the human and financial resources available to new church starts, and were a resource of no little help in the church's early days.

The initial group of twelve grew rapidly and on October 2, 1983 the first worship service was held in the assembly hall of a local school, with some seventy five people in attendance. Since the church did not yet have a pastor, services were led by lay persons. With the young church showing great promise, supporting funds were willingly donated by other local churches as well as denominational organizations including the Baptist Home Mission Board, which alone gave $12,000. Toward the end of 1983, the Georgia

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[5] Stone Mountain is the name given to a natural stone outcrop on the East side of Atlanta, and is the center point of a state park. The name is often extended to organizations and groups whose activities are to some extent located in the region contiguous to the park.

Baptist Convention provided a $25,000 grant toward a property fund for a future church building.

1984 was a busy year for the fledgling church. In January it called its first pastor, Rev. Benny Clark. In April, the church voted to purchase 10 acres of land for a building, in June the congregation officially incorporated as Trinity Baptist Church, in August architectural plans for the land and buildings were approved and in November the first of a set of temporary buildings was installed on the property. November 1986 saw completion of the permanent structure of the church, containing a Sanctuary, classrooms, and offices. With its issues of physical plant and internal organization in place, Trinity Baptist began to turn its attention more towards its community.

By all accounts, Trinity's first pastor, Benny Clark, was a charismatic dynamo. A person with a history and record of successful church starts, Benny, although a Graduate of Southern Seminary, did not fit the typical mold of a "boxed" seminary alumnus. On the contrary, he was uninhibited by tradition and extremely innovative, a natural and strong leader, energetic, and empowering in that he drew the best out of people and encouraged them to be all they could be.

Under Benny's leadership the church continued to grow quickly and soon had as many as 250 in worship, in two services. It was not Rev. Clark's charisma alone, however, that drew people to the church. There was a certain attraction for some folks of a church that offered an escape from what they considered the "fuddy-duddy" traditional, narrow approaches to worship and ministry practiced in surrounding churches. Trinity offered these folks a chance to have a voice in the constitution of a fresh, contemporary congregation that, being new, seemed open to innovation and also offered more

opportunities for folk who had a calling to community ministry. One of the aspects of Pastor Clark's ministry was that he encouraged people not only to identify community ministries but to engage them, and the church soon had a variety of outreach activities in the local community. By 1990 the church had a membership upwards of 300 and was a powerful presence in the surrounding community.

In 1991, Pastor Clark accepted the call to start another church, in another state.

Within a very short period after Benny's leaving, it became evident that the church had relied too heavily on its pastor's charisma to keep membership levels and financial contributions high. Many folk had come to the church because of his personal magnetism and charm rather than for any sense of family and community and when he left, so did they. Thirty to forty percent of the congregation left within the first few months of his departure, taking their supporting funds with them.

Despite the sudden drop in numbers the remaining members at Trinity continued their church activities and community outreach as best as financial and human resources would permit. Although several quite competent pastors came and went over the years, none brought the same charismatic leadership as the church had seen in Pastor Clark. Also, the development boom that had largely initiated the church and been a source of many new members had ended. Unable, it seems, to attract more folk, the church had fallen into the position of being unable to meet its debt and had had to let its pastor go. As a result of these and other factors church membership continued to decline, reaching a low point of forty-three in worship the Sunday after Easter, 1998.

Proverbs 29:18 reads "Without a vision, the people perish." It seemed that Trinity had indeed lost its vision. The makeup of that small group of forty-three was, however,

significant. Some twelve or fourteen of them were part of the group that had founded the church fourteen years earlier and another score had joined the church in its formative years. All of them felt they had a vested interest in the church and in its future as a successful enterprise. Trinity, they believed, simply needed to re-invent itself and rediscover its purpose. This it did largely through the efforts of this small group, led by one Preston Sanders.

Preston was a businessman – a financial consultant – and a long time member of the church. He was also an ordained minister. Though he had no formal theological training, Preston was, as one interviewee said, "the most theologically trained financial consultant I ever knew." After graduating from Mercer in the 1960's, Preston had entered the ministry for a short while. Family circumstances however dictated a career in the financial consulting world. At the end of that career and after seeing the decline in membership at Trinity culminating in the nadir in attendance described above Preston, and others of the small remnant, organized a resurrection of the church. At a "Vision Banquet" in the fall of 1998 he read a series of goals for the church to achieve (see the excerpts at the end of this section). Recognizing that the only way to grow the church was to make the community more aware of its presence, principal among these goals these was a concerted effort at outreach ministry.

Since the church was without a pastor, Preston was called at this time, by congregational acclaim, to be pastor of the church, a position he accepted, initially without compensation. Over the next two years and largely as a result of its consistent community outreach Trinity saw steady growth and by the end of 2000 the church claimed a membership of some 140, with an average 95 in regular attendance at worship.

At this time, pastor Sanders declared his intention to resign, citing "burnout." The search committee established to find his replacement however advised him that again, by almost universal acclaim, the congregation wanted him to stay. He agreed to continuing serving until 2002, at which time the search committee again sought a replacement for him.

In 2003, Trinity hired its current senior pastor, Rev. Rawdon L. (Sonny) Gallman III, the church's former youth pastor and a recent graduate of the McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University's Atlanta campus.

Today the active membership of Trinity numbers about 180 and is continuing to grow. The church has broken ground on a major expansion, has revitalized many of its former ministries, and has identified and engaged in some newer ones.

4.1.5.2 Interviews

As the history of the church outlined above was reviewed with interviewees many agreed that in retrospect, the failure to find new charismatic leadership after the first pastor left was a good thing, for it allowed the church to find stability, focus, and purpose in its congregation, rather than in its pastor. "It's important for the pastor to lead," said one interviewee, "but that leadership has to be balanced and shared with the congregation. If a church collapses when the pastor leaves, as ours did, then that church had far too much vested in its pastoral leadership." "Less power in the pulpit means more power among the people," said another interviewee, adding that "shared responsibility gives a stronger basis and greater stability for doing ministry."   In Rev. Gallman, the church appears to have just what it was looking for. Sonny's strength lies not in a single characteristic of charisma but in the broad qualities of sound theological education and Bible literacy, compassion and empathy, and good organizational skills.

And, rather than holding the reins close, he leads by delegation, sharing responsibility with others while maintaining ultimate accountability and responsibility for the welfare of the church. Interestingly, interviewees did not perceive Pastor Gallman as placing a heavy emphasis on outreach ministry. "I think it's there [when he preaches], but he doesn't really stress it." "I think he knows it's going on, so maybe he doesn't feel the need to accentuate it that much."

Pastor Gallman responds that he probably has not put too much effort recently promoting community ministry, noting that at the present, his attention lies very much on the church's building program. "I think most [congregants] are aware of the community ministries this church is engaged in and that I wholeheartedly support them. I don't think you can be a member and not know this. Also, one of the main reasons we're [adding on a] building is to be able to do more [outreach ministry]."

With or without pastor Gallman's overt backing, Trinity's outreach ministry, along with the church's stability and relatively liberal theology were the most cited reasons for bringing about its new growth. The persistence of the congregation in maintaining over the years the outreach ministry re-initiated during pastor Sanders' leadership has, it was asserted, given the wider community a sense of confidence in the stability of Trinity Baptist as a member of the community: "People know who we are, where we are and that we can be relied on in time of need," said a respondent. "When Benny left, we fell a long way and we fell hard," said another, "but we survived. Many people around and about saw that and respected it, and I think some people saw [the church's resilience] as a reason to join." Others joined because they "had a heart" for outreach ministry and were looking for a place to put that heart to work.

Turning to congregational motivation to do outreach, although none could really respond with any certainty when asked if their desire to do ministry was rooted in their pre-Christian past, some thought it might be their upbringing (for example witnessing frequent acts of kindness and charity) and some thought they may have been the beneficiary of such acts in their formative years. Most however responded that beyond the occasional, purely humanitarian response to some urgent need – earthquake or flood, for example – the desire to undertake community ministry did not come about until after the individual had fully embraced the Christian faith. That is, community ministry developed for these folks as a by-product *of* their faith. But even then, several people remarked that their involvement in outreach ministries might not have come about if the church had not presented a structure through which such ministry might be exercised; "You *want* to do stuff," respondents agreed, "but sometimes someone needs to show you *how*, to give you the tools."

The congregation at Trinity shares its ministry motivations with other holistic churches involved in the study (e.g. "It's biblical," "It helps us to get closer to God," "It shows God's love and compassion"); and shares the same results (e.g. "We ourselves get blessed in the process;" "Sometimes we can see the face of God;" "it feels good," "When we do ministry, we stand on holy ground"). New ministries are similarly discovered, i.e. as expansions of current programs, identified by members, highlighted by the activities of other churches visited or contacted, and through denominational communications.

Outreach ministry, while to some degree initiated by the church's first pastor, seems much more a legacy of pastor Sanders. When asked if the church would have been as engaged in community ministries today had pastor Sanders not emphasized it the

consensus was that he helped the congregation break out of its "narrow view" of possibilities and embrace its potential, and this not just in what the church could do, but who should be doing it. Current members credit this philosophy for the fact that as many as fifty per cent of the congregation is in some way involved in one the of ten to twelve community ministries currently in place.

In addition to its current program, outreach ministries envisioned for the expanded facility mentioned earlier include a large kitchen to prepare meals for the needy (a possible ministry to the homeless is under consideration), a health (and possibly dental) clinic for the indigent, an expansion to the current children's daycare facility, and making meeting space available for various 12-step and self-help programs to address issues of alcoholism, substance abuse, parenting, and to address other community concerns such as job training and work placement assistance.

Although Trinity does not have a large youth group (there are about ten to fifteen youth ranging in age between twelve and seventeen years), these young people are already being exposed to the church's commitment to community ministry by being offered positions on the various outreach committees. The rationale behind this practice is that by giving them a voice in the praxis of the church's outreach ministry, the young people will not only bring a youthful perspective to the program but may be encouraged to actively continue outreach into their adult years.

In a region of the country known for its conservative, if not outright fundamentalist, approach to scripture and tradition, the perennial willingness of Trinity's leadership – pastors and deacons alike – to critically engage these matters and take a more moderate approach to them has attracted a generally well-educated congregation,

with teachers, lawyers, doctors, accountants, statisticians, business managers and other professionals well represented. Pastor Gallman asserts that people come to Trinity because they discover they are valued there for who they are and because the church family is open to and un-condemning of theological differences. He adds that both he and the other leadership in the church are consistently looking for ways to allow those holding theologically conservative and those holding theologically liberal views to live together by, he says, "concentrating on areas of agreement rather than difference," and by promoting a common focus on outreach ministry that is "intentional, purposive, substantial, and planned."

In addition to outreach ministry, Trinity conducts many activities intended to provide fellowship opportunities for its members intended to sustain its familial coherence; various groups with different foci meet during the week both at the church and in people's homes for choir practice, Bible studies, church planning activities, and for purely social purposes such as golf and bowling. Even so, it is outreach that seems to be the heart of Trinity. Pastor Gallman sums up: "Outreach challenges our faith. Are we who we say we are? If so, we are the hands and feet of the Kingdom. The main point [of outreach ministry] is not to grow the congregation of Trinity Baptist, nor even the family of the Church Universal, but simply to be the love of God in the world."

4.1.5.3 Summary

Trinity presents as a signal example of what can be accomplished by one person with vision and faith: a vision of what a church could be, and the faith to carry it through. In some respects what happened to Trinity when its first pastor left was a disaster for its founding members. For example, since it was a church that had subsumed its original

vision – a voice of theological moderation in the community – to the allure of rapid growth and membership respectively initiated and sustained by the personality and charisma of a single individual, when that individual, the central support of the structure, left, the church essentially collapsed. Further, since the tenure of the first pastor exceeded the period of population growth and property development in the immediate area, the influx of people to the area that had fueled the church's initial growth had largely ceased. In the end, though, this was not all bad. It meant that people had to be attracted to the church as an organism, valuing it for its total, spiritual character, rather than as an organization valued for its leadership alone. Once the necessity of a spiritual ethos was recognized it was necessary to determine the particular qualities that would form Trinity's ethos and these were well articulated by Preston Sanders in the "Vision Banquet" of 1998.

Indeed, it is clearly pastor Sanders' groundwork that undergirds Trinity Baptist's congregational ethos today. It is a church that cares both for its congregation and its community, but whose leadership and membership recognize it must care for its congregation if that congregation is to be properly equipped – spiritually, emotionally, financially, to take care of its community.

Excerpts from

TRINITY VISION STATEMENT

Sunday, November 22, 1998

After spending about six months with you as your pastor, or preaching to you, visiting with you, praying with you, or watching and listening to you, I am convinced I know how we go about claiming God's promise for our own. We do it by literally making our mission of "affirming God's love" our very literal reason for being. If we will dedicate every single thing that Trinity does, every single service, every single mission, every single class, every single dollar to that end, God can use Trinity Baptist Church to reach people that no one else is reaching. . .

Our first job is to create the right environment [which means]

1. Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. He is an accurate revelation of the true nature of God . . .

2. We will interpret the Bible through the Holy Spirit . . .

3. All of our emotions, all of our concern, all of our deliberations need to be expressed in terms of faith, hope, and love . . .

4. Every person is affirmed as a child of God . . .

5. Trinity will be a safe place to look for God. Everyone at Trinity will be encouraged to ponder, wonder, doubt, and search.

6. Trinity welcomes diversity; all are welcome here

7. Evangelism and Missions are primary activities of life at Trinity; this will be the

4.1.6   Congregation in Conflict: Norton Park Baptist

Ethnicity: White
Denomination: Baptist (Southern Baptist Convention)
Active Membership: about 200.
Attendance: about 70
Location: Suburban West Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 2
Operating budget 2004: ± $207,000.

4.1.6.1 History and Background

Norton Park Baptist was founded in the middle years of the 1960's. At that time

Norton Park and the area around was a growth district for Atlanta. Freeways and major

arterial road access made the location appealing to young adults working in Atlanta who

found the property prices closer to Atlanta beyond their financial abilities. As a result, a

large numbers of what were then considered "starter homes" were built in Norton Park

and its environs. It was not long before business and industry too took advantage of the

combination of lower land costs of suburbia and the ready availability of a growing work

force in the area. As may be considered typical of such growth patterns, congregations

often develop before church buildings.   Such was the case of Norton Park Baptist.

Beginning with small fellowship and Bible study groups in 1965, the gathering soon grew

to comprise several dozen people and the congregation was chartered in 1967. Efforts

immediately began to raise money for a church building, which was completed in 1968.

As the section heading above has already suggested and as will be shown below,

Norton Park Baptist church is a Congregation in Conflict. Becker (1999: 37) describes

such a congregation:

> The definition of conflict encompasses several elements. First, conflict is
> an intense form of sociation, or interaction. The opposite of conflict is not
> harmony but indifference or anonymity. To engage in conflict assumes a
> degree of connectedness between the parties. Second, conflict involves

two or more parties who perceive their interests to be incompatible and engage in action oriented to the defense of their interests.

Norton Park's pastor, Tony Powers, first arrived at the church as interim in 1997. After serving almost one year, the church called him to the full-time position.

Pastor Powers characterizes his congregation as reluctant to look for ministries outside the church. The reluctance stems from a desire not to be involved in "those kinds" of ministries – a situation that the pastor believes to be a direct outcome of the average age of the congregation coupled with resentment related to a change in the community demographic from Caucasian to a mix of Caucasian, Hispanic, and African-American people (situations further discussed below). But, he adds, this reluctance to be involved in outreach ministry does not impact the overall generosity of the congregation which has on a number of occasions quickly raised what are, for the size of the church, significant sums over and above the regular offerings, either to support particular ministries brought to its attention or to offer relief or assistance for local needs, such as rent assistance, and global needs, such as the collection of upwards of $1000 for the Southern Baptist Convention tsunami relief fund.

4.1.6.2 Interviews

As the introduction above notes, Norton Park Baptist church grew out of a largely new "bedroom" community that served the City of Atlanta. As the community grew, so did the church, although there was some disagreement about the nature of the growth:

> *Bob:* The reason we grew so much [at the beginning] was word of mouth. This person would tell his friend, that friend would tell another. We didn't really do any canvassing.
> *Alice:* Well, we did do some census work, surveys and stuff.
> *Bob:*   Well, I can't say certainly for sure, but the majority of the censuses and stuff we did, I never saw any results of it. Most people came by word of mouth.

Whatever strategy was employed, it seemed to work. The church grew incrementally until by the mid 70's it had more than 400 members on the rolls with a regular attendance of 200 in Sunday school and worship, a situation that continued well into the 1980's and early 1990's. But then the church began a long decline. When pastor Powers came to the church attendance at Sunday school and worship was still in the 120's, but currently Sunday school attendance runs 40 – 50 and worship is down to about 70.

Three main reasons seem to lie behind this decline: the preponderance of senior adults in the church's membership; the absence of a solid group of young to middle aged members; and a certain resistance in the church to adapt to local demographic changes.

More than 70% of the Norton Park Baptist church family is over 60 years of age and many within that group are either charter members or claim involvement with the church since its early years. Explaining this preponderance of "senior adult" church members requires some understanding of the development of the Norton Park community and its neighbors.

In some senses, the Norton Park area of Atlanta is rather unique. Although it began as something of a "dormitory" for the city of Atlanta – a place some distance from their work location for folk employed in the city – the movement of diversified business and industry into Norton Park and its environs meant that people could take jobs that promised greater opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment without the often necessary requirement of leaving the area. Thus many folk who purchased "starter" homes in the area in the 60's and 70's have remained in them because a wide variety of employment opportunities frequently became available in the immediate vicinity. After

thirty or forty years of residence and with roots deeply set in the community, many of these long-term residents stay in their homes even after leaving the workforce, only moving out – to retirement or nursing homes – when illness or infirmity demands it. In the meantime, the growth area of greater Atlanta and the availability of inexpensive homes has extended far beyond the vicinity of Norton Park and the once "starter" homes of Norton Park have, because of their proximity to Atlanta, become desirable commuter homes. This desirability has driven up prices, which to some extent exempts younger folk from this market – and from Norton Park Baptist church. The people who are buying these homes either already have membership in a local church or, because of the ease of travel afforded by the local matrix of freeways and arterial roads, are able to maintain their memberships in the churches of their former communities. Thus, the numbers of members who do leave Norton Park are not being replaced by newcomers to the neighborhood.

Responding to the need for local inexpensive accommodation, many apartment buildings have been constructed in the area. These apartments, combined with local opportunities for low to moderate income jobs are attracting Black and Hispanic population groups in increasing numbers. Once in the neighborhood, it is often these folk, as their incomes rise, that are buying or renting the local homes. Although the change has been incremental the last ten to fifteen years has seen the Norton Park community shift from being an almost 100% White neighborhood to about 60% White, and about 20% each Black and Hispanic.

These numbers in themselves however do not tell the whole story. While the majority of the local population is still White the measurement is in fact reflecting an

ageing White population whose children have "grown and flown," that is, they have reached maturity and moved away from the neighborhood to make their own lives. The Black and Hispanic population, on the other hand, is generally much younger and has children in the local schools. Rightly or wrongly the high percentage of non-White students in the local schools is a major deterrent to White families with school-age children moving into the neighborhood.

The high proportion of senior adult membership, the correspondingly low numbers of younger (aged twenty-five to fifty) folk in the church and the changing local demographic can individually and collectively be directly associated with several significant outcomes in Norton Park Baptist church.

1. Long-term membership and the aging demographic it represents has given rise to an increasing resistance to any change to the formal and informal structures of the church. There is a powerful presence of an idea, stemming from the senior members, that "we formed the church, nurtured it and sustained it," and further that this forming, nurturing and sustaining engaged in over the years endows the senior membership of the church with a sense of ownership of the church.

2. Absent any meaningful numbers of younger adult members, senior members still hold many of the executive positions (deacon, chairman, supervisor etc.). Also, Norton Park Baptist adheres to a congregational polity. Thus, any programs or ministries that may infringe upon or destabilize that sense of ownership of the church by its senior members are frequently vetoed by those members. This situation has led to an undercurrent of conflict in the church between those who

seek necessary changes and those – currently more powerfully placed by both position and numbers – who see almost any form of change as a threat.

3. The limited numbers of younger folk in the congregation also means that many of the church's ministries are rotated among the senior membership. But many of those folk are now declining to serve, citing age, infirmity, or simple disinterest. This has led to fewer and fewer congregants taking on more and more responsibility – several members reported that they "wore two or three hats," for example by being deacons, Sunday school teachers, and sitting on church boards; or being in the choir, on the building committee, and in charge of children's church, or some other combination.[6]

4. The limited presence of young to middle-age folk in the church also has a negative effect on those people of a similar age demographic who do visit the church. Such persons are often looking for Sunday school classes and church activities related to their age group. These same folk often have children whom they would like to get involved in church events. Since there is a very small age-representative core group in the church (two young families, both divorced, and no young couples) and similarly limited opportunities for children and young adults, these visitors leave to find churches with more representative, dynamic, and age related ministries.

5. While some members have attempted to make inroads to the developing Black and Hispanic communities, there has been a certain reluctance on the part of some of the older membership to embrace the idea of racial diversity in the church. The

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[6] One interviewee said there were 70 jobs, or positions, at the church, being shared by 12 people.

consensus is that Norton Park Baptist has been a "White" church from the beginning and that there are plenty of "unsaved" White folk in the community who could be evangelized, rather than reaching into Black and Hispanic communities "we are not familiar with," and who "have their own places and styles of worship."

When asked about the future possibilities of the church (what must the church do to survive the next five to ten years), the first and generally shared response was an amused observation that the church was unlikely to survive that long. When the question was pressed, there was division over whether the church should reflect its community and therefore entertain ideas of a shared Black and Hispanic ministry, or whether the church should attempt to continue its historical focus on the White community. The younger members of the church were in favor of the former strategy of change and engagement, although the problems associated with it – "We'd have to learn to worship differently, or let them have their own worship services;" "We'd have to learn Spanish" – were articulated in somewhat negative tones. The older members preferred the status quo, stating that they liked the church the way it was, even though the evidence strongly suggests that not adapting to change will lead inevitably to the death of the church.

This dichotomy in outlook between the older and younger members of the congregation is not a new development. In 1998, the church had the opportunity to purchase seven acres of adjacent property. Both the former pastor and the younger members of the congregation were in favor of the purchase, but the older members were opposed. Many of these older members cited the reason mentioned earlier; they liked the little church the way it was; purchasing the land might lead to new buildings and other

changes – changes they didn't want. In the event, the land purchase was made, but the action not only made concrete the division between younger and older members, it also resulted in the pianist/organist and her family leaving the church, the ouster of the former pastor and the exodus of many of the younger members, who have not been replaced.

On the question of evangelism, interviewees were united. They believed it meant "taking God's word into the world, in any form you can." Speaking to co-workers, knocking on doors, giving to foreign or local missions and inviting people to the church were all cited as examples of Evangelism. To the comment, "any way in the world in which you go out and tell people about God" another respondent added, "Not just tell them, but show them!"

When pressed further on the matter of evangelism, particularly as community outreach, it was interesting to note that with the exception of the "meals-on-wheels" program which is supported by as many as sixteen or seventeen members of the church, and a fairly dynamic children's and youth ministry during the church's middle years (cited as a "community ministry" in the understanding that if younger people were involved, then it might draw their parents into the church too), no interviewee was able to articulate a single outreach ministry to the secular community that the church had consistently engaged in at any time in its history.   Rather, outreach ministries were articulated in terms of holding events at the church – open houses, seasonal festivals, block parties, Easter-egg hunts, Halloween parties and the like, intended to draw people in. There was also a sense that the church had never had to work at attracting members in the past, so why should it have to now? In an attempt to identify why congregants were not more pro-active in outreach, the question of the sense of freedom congregants had to

identify, organize and manage ministries was raised. Interviewees representing the older membership responded by suggesting they had "done everything, but nothing really worked," and that "if new ideas don't come from the pastor, they don't get done." Representatives of younger members of the church said that while they could identify ministries, they felt that they might be ridiculed in some ways by the senior members. One member said – and other attendees agreed – that they questioned the commitment of a large percentage of the church to a faith in Jesus Christ and that that lack of commitment was reflected in a limited commitment to the church. When this response was clarified it became evident that, at least for this group, the reason outreach ministry was not pursued was because the weight of responsibility for such ministry would fall on those members of the church already overburdened with other church related tasks.

In spite of the lack of a coordinated effort to reach into the community and to attract people to the church, new members do join from time to time. In place of a "New Members Class," these folk are given a "New Member's Packet" (containing the church constitution and by-laws, the Mission Statement, offering envelopes and the church directory) and are assigned a Deacon, whose responsibility it is to ensure that, at least once in their first six months of membership, the new member is visited at their home.

The most vocalized expectation that the church had of its new members was that they would "do the jobs nobody else wants." While this response must be understood in the context of the senior members' of the congregation collective desire to give up some of their responsibilities, it nevertheless puts a heavy – and sometimes undesired – load on the new members, who are given no time to integrate into the church's culture. It is

unsurprising that such folks often leave the church to find another, less demanding Christian family.

4.1.6.3 Summary

The purpose of this part of the research is to describe the "ethos" of the churches studied, and the ethos of Norton Park Baptist church is perhaps best described as one of crisis and dissent.

For some years, Norton Park Baptist has been engaged in an increasingly desperate struggle for survival and almost all its efforts have been focused on that struggle. That is the crisis. Somewhere in that struggle the church seems to have come under the leadership of folk following various kinds of personal agendas, leading to a lack of focus on a particular purpose. That is the dissent. In these processes the congregation has reduced its focus on the Lordship and Leadership of Jesus Christ. Since this Lordship and Leadership is, as has been shown in the conclusion to chapter two above, a necessary requirement for a church wherein the Spirit speaks and acts, it is not surprising that Norton Park's outreach ministry is so limited.

Beyond all this is the air of resignation and dejection in the congregation. The church lacks any creative spark or enthusiasm to do anything more than just survive the next few years and hopes that something will happen to reverse its fortunes.

4.1.7   Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors: St. Mark United Methodist.

Ethnicity: largely White
Denomination: United Methodist
Active Membership: about 800
Attendance: about 625
Location: Urban Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 4
Operating budget 2004: ± $1.25 million.

4.1.7.1 History/Background

The history of urban Atlanta having been largely discussed in the exposition of Central Presbyterian church, and the history and polity of Methodism in the United States similarly reviewed in the section relating to East Cobb UMC (at 4.1.1 and 4.1.4 respectively), this section will focus more or less strictly on the on the development of the church and congregation now known as St. Mark UMC.

This Christian family began life in 1872 as Peachtree Street Mission, just outside the then-city limits of Atlanta, at Peachtree and Sixth streets. It was a mission church of the city's First Methodist Church, itself located at Walton and Forsyth streets. Sometime in the following three years – neither church nor city records are certain exactly when, but 1875 looks most likely – the church moved inside the city limits to a location on Merrits avenue, at which time it became known as "Sixth Methodist Church." Over the ensuing twenty seven years the church moved and renamed itself twice more, finally settling, in 1902, as 'St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church, South,' in a brand new granite building at the corner of 5th Street and Piedmont Avenue.

 Under various pastors the church grew rapidly, particularly after World War I. In 1922, when it became clear that larger facilities were needed for the growing Sunday school program the congregation raised funds to acquire the adjacent property. The next

two decades saw further growth and the 1940's were the era of the church's highest membership, 3,116 persons being on the rolls in 1946. From then on, however, there was a gentle decline. In 1953, the membership stood at 2,618. In 1957, it had fallen further, to 2,415. This decline, which continued until 1963, had more to do with demographic movement and sociological changes than any shortcomings or failures on the part of the church. More and more area homes were being replaced by office buildings and businesses and folk were beginning a movement out of the city that would continue for two or three decades.

By the late 1960's the world was changing so much and so rapidly that the United Methodist Church issued a statement entitled, "A New Church for a New World", which reads in part:

> [I]t is apparent that we are living in a new world characterized by accelerated technology, increased urbanization, an ever-enlarging gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" and by crisis on every hand. In the United States the dehumanizing aspects of long-continued racial and economic injustice are seen in agonizing systems related to housing, education and employment which lock millions of Americans in ghettos – both urban and rural – from which there is no prospect of immediate and complete escape . . . This crucial situation calls for a far more decisive and constructive response from the church than has as yet been provoked (Wiggins 1987: 189).

Under the leadership of Rev. William Tyson, pastor of St. Mark UMC from 1967 to 1969, the church rose to the challenge of a "decisive and constructive response" to and within its urban context by both emphasizing the need for urban ministry and by establishing and executing a wide variety of such ministries to the church's immediate social context. Although church membership declined during Dr. Tyson's tenure (mostly, again, through "urban flight"), the church's focus on its community did not. No

longer one of the city's "big" congregations, the church transitioned into "The Church with a Heart in the Heart of the City" (Wiggins 1987: 195).

Dr. Tyson's replacement, Rev. Melton McNeil, continued the outreach ministry programs begun by his predecessor and added to them. One significant addition was a children's daycare center.

Opened in 1972, the St. Mark daycare center was offered initially as a community service and was thus open to children of parents of any – or no – religious orientation. It was soon realized that St. Mark could do more than offer daycare and its program and philosophy were expanded beyond the mere "care and welfare" of children of working parents to include a comprehensive pre-school program.

Subsequent senior pastors at St. Mark helped maintain a high level of community outreach programs, often teaming St. Mark with other urban churches in an effort to meet increasing social needs. For example, in the middle years of the 1970's, local and federal governments reduced funding for the institutionalization of non-violent mental patients. These folk, unable to find or keep gainful employment to provide for themselves added to the large numbers of homeless and indigent already on the streets of the city and being cared for – to the extent possible – by city churches.

Even though St. Mark was truly committed to its community, its membership decline – which had seen a slight reversal in 1967 – had returned to a situation of persistent loss and by October 1975 was down to 1,054. Older members retired and moved out of the city; younger folk, attracted by the bucolic nature of country living similarly relocated to suburbia and found local churches to attend, reducing their city commute. As suggested earlier such changes in the church are not unusual, but where in

the past new members came into the church in similar numbers to those leaving, changes in social, political, and particularly theological outlook turned people away from the church, often to seek less traditional, more individualized iterations of "spirituality."

Nevertheless, the church continued its outreach ministries and, under Rev. J.B. McNeil (1976), further expanded them. Rev. McNeil "believed that the minister's job was to inspire and to lead and the layperson's job was to actually perform the work and ministry of the church" (Wiggins 1987: 213). This belief extended to the continuous promotion of a kind of community outreach ministry that was "hands on," where the congregation, rather than supporting ministry "at a distance" actually looked into the eyes of those they ministered to. One further ministry St. Mark added to its already long list of community outreach programs was a food program. Initially, St. Mark teamed with another church to provide a daily soup kitchen. Not content with this however the church soon established its own food program, setting hours during which men and women could come to the church door and be given a sack of food – fruit, cheese, canned goods, bread, chocolate, and similar items. Soon, a community ministry planning commission was set up by St. Mark to explore further the ways in which the church could serve its community. Several additional ministries developed from this effort.

The background and history of St. Mark UMC reported thus far was derived from the church's written history, which covers the period between the church's founding (in 1872) and 1987.   Space has permitted only a brief summary, which has necessarily barely scratched the surface of the community ministries this church engaged in the 115 year span reported. Clearly this is a church that has made a difference in its urban

community.   Why, then, is it among the churches reporting a low level of outreach ministries? What has happened between 1987 and these early years of the 21st century?

When these questions were posed to interviewees, the agreed response was directly linked to the church's recent history of shrinking membership. The decline begun in the late 1940's continued, with the brief interruption in 1963 – 7 as noted above, to the point that by the end of the 1980's, with the level of membership hovering around two hundred souls, the church's very existence came into question. The situation was not helped by the re-assignment in 1989 of the church's senior pastor and the appointment of an interim.   Barely able to pay for facilities maintenance the church essentially abandoned all its external ministries programs and concentrated on holding on to its members.

In 1990 Rev. Mike Cordle was assigned to the church. According to interviewees who were at the church at the time Rev. Cordle's weaknesses – not immediately evident – were poor leadership skills and an inability, or reluctance, to establish a consistent institutional organization. His strengths, immediately evident, were his charisma and an engaging personality.

Although not himself Gay, Mike had nevertheless developed an increasing sensitivity to the spiritual needs of the Gay community – a community of some substance in urban Atlanta, but a community that no congregation had yet had the courage to openly embrace. At the same time, the deep need for a non-judgmental acceptance by Christians of Gays had became a topic of increasing interest – even angst – for the congregation at St. Mark, caused by the increasing presence of such persons not only in the wider, secular community but within the St. Mark family itself. This pervading presence ultimately

pressured the congregation to review its understanding of biblical texts.   As a result of

this review, many within the congregation came to a new understanding. Where it had

previously understood Christianity in general – and St. Mark UMC in particular – as a

somewhat selective, or exclusive, community (judgments about sexual morality, alcohol

use, entertainment, lifestyle and the like were used to determine membership) some folk

re-read the gospels and, abandoning their traditional conservatism, embraced the idea of

church as family, an institution that contained people regardless of, sometimes in spite of,

their perceived dysfunctions:

> We acknowledged that 'grace' was a gift of God, not of ourselves and that
> all people were loved by God. It was not our place to 'fellowship' or
> 'disfellowship' someone. Rather, our job was, and is, to be a non-
> judgmental community – open, welcoming – a place for all people to
> come and share in a common relationship of worship and spirituality.

This new perspective challenged the congregation to look for opportunities to

show its character of open-ness, welcome, and non-judgment, to "intentionally" look for

those folk who have in some way been historically disenfranchised or disbarred, from

Christian community. One respondent explains:

> By "intentionality" we mean "to purposely seek out those generally
> ignored at best, rejected at worst by most churches and to empower those
> people to fully become children of God." When the trappings of social
> judgment are stripped away, each individual becomes free to explore the
> nature and purpose of their relationship with their maker.

The initiating motive for "intentionality" – the Gay community in St. Mark's

neighborhood – naturally became the first major beneficiary of it. Recognizing pastor

Mike's sympathetic leanings towards the Gay community, some church members

suggested to him that it was time for the Church universal to become intentional toward

Gays by accepting them as children of God – and what better place to set an example of

acceptance as St. Mark?   With the pastor's agreement, the congregation began a campaign of intentionality to the Gay community, under the banner "Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors."

The campaign had impressive results and the church saw spectacular growth, leaping from 100 in worship in 1992 to over 1,000 in 1998, a rise largely attributable to an inflow of Gay people desperate for acceptance into the Christian community and for an opportunity to engage in authentic worship and ministry. Sadly but predictably, while most members of the church were happy to have Gay folk in their community, many were not particularly enthralled at the prospect of the church becoming known as a "Gay" church and left to find another church family.

A return to high membership numbers at St. Mark was not however accompanied by a return to high levels of community ministry. One explanation offered was that the ministry to Gays and the integration of Gays into the life of the church was the pervasive feature of the church's ministry, largely to the exclusion of all else. Another was the lack of proper institutional organization and leadership from Pastor Cordle.

In fact, one of the church's largest ministries, the day care center, was closed in 1998, the year membership peaked. The center had been initiated by the increase in two-working-parent families and the concomitant demand for reliable child care and had thus been a useful resource to the working community. Over the years, however, corporate America had recognized the benefits of having day care facilities within their respective office buildings, effectively abridging the external need for this service. In the face of reduced demand, the pastoral leadership of St. Mark saw no reason to continue with its day care program.

If the significant factor of the first two thirds of Mike Cordle's pastorship of the church was a return of the church to growth and vitality, that of the last third was of internal conflict and dissent. The effects of pastor Cordle's administrative shortcomings were beginning to be felt and questions of morality, leadership, and management and mis-management increasingly dogged his footsteps. Many in the congregation, upset by the dissent or dissatisfied with the leadership of the church and/or the congregation's response to it, began leaving the church. In 2002, Mike resigned.

Within a short time of Rev. Cordle's departure many of those folk who had been attracted to the church by his charisma and congeniality also left and St. Mark saw a further decline in its membership, to around 600.

For about six months, the church was managed by its associate pastors and lay leaders. Pastor Jimmy Moor came to the church as interim in May 2003 and became senior pastor in October the same year.

What Pastor Moor found was a church that had reduced to a core of folk that fully embraced a "familial" sense of Christian community, took the gospel seriously in terms of its practice of "intentionality," as described above, and experienced spirituality both in its internal relationships as the "family of God" and in aspects of its worship experience. In the two years of his pastoral leadership, Pastor Moor has worked with his staff to strengthen the "usual Methodist institutional structures," a process, as will be seen, that is not yet quite complete. In the meantime, St. Mark's active membership has climbed back to about 800 persons, with about 650 attending any given weekly worship service.

4.1.7.2 Interviews

St. Mark currently has several modest direct outreach programs to its immediate community. Frequent ministries include two "step" programs, comprising three CMA (Crystal Methamphetamine Abuse) seminars (which grew out of one class begun by a church member seeking help for this addiction) and an Alcoholics Anonymous program. Also, members of the church cook and serve a breakfast to between fifty and seventy-five needy folk every Saturday and a dinner for a similar number every Tuesday, and cooks and serves a meal every third Thursday at a homeless shelter sponsored by a sister church, Trinity UMC.   Periodic ministries include a twice yearly (spring and fall) ministry to the neighborhood elderly, doing yard work, lawn maintenance and the like and annual participation in an ecumenical "Atlanta Tool Bank" ministry that undertakes light home repairs and maintenance for the elderly and disabled of the wider Atlanta community. Planned ministries include a resource center to supply clothing and toiletries and over-the-counter medications (e.g. First Aid supplies, Aspirin, ointments, salves and the like) to the homeless and indigent and supply them with information about shelters, employment, and vocational training.

"Hoped for" ministries include converting an existing building to a homeless shelter, and/or to a vocational training center and development of other "long term" opportunities to respond to the practical, as well as the spiritual and emotional needs of the homeless.

Pastor Moor, who was present at the first of two focus groups held at St. Mark, was the first to say that the church could be doing more in its immediate community and other participants agreed, voicing an anxiety to do so. Challenged to try and identify the

roadblocks to community ministry, three factors emerged. The first was that St. Mark was not a "conventional" congregation. Somewhere between seventy and eighty percent of the church family comes from a Gay, Lesbian, bi-sexual or transgendered background. Most had lived, to some degree, "in the closet," if not in their secular world, then almost certainly in their Christian community. Although through its openness St. Mark had encouraged these folk to move "from the darkness into the light," many had been deeply traumatized by their life experience. So much so that while many are beginning to seek active roles in ministry, a large proportion of them did not yet feel sufficiently recovered to do so. (One person remarked, "Because Gay people have been outsiders for so long, they have more empathy and compassion for the less fortunate, so that when they *have* recovered they will do great things for the church and community.")

The second reason relates to what pastor Moor calls "the great wounding" that occurred when his predecessor left the church. Under Rev. Cordle the church had grown and become a dynamic entity, full of hope and promise for the future. His departure created a deep and intense emotional turmoil in the church, from which it is still, to some degree, recovering.

The third reason has already been alluded to and relates to the institutional structure of the church. Although Pastor Moor and his associates have largely addressed the issues of general administration, one place that has yet to be directly tackled is the development of an ongoing internal structure for the identification, authentication, and administration of community ministry. Currently, such matters are dealt with on an informal basis.

Turning to motivation, a wide range of reasons for engaging in community ministry were voiced by participants. For some, it was a response to biblical commands to do so. Others said that the transformation they had felt in becoming both a Christian and a member of the church was too wonderful not to share. Another said it was the sense of spirituality they felt in sharing the gospel by "doing" the gospel, "not preaching it in words, but in acts." One respondent, identifying herself as Lesbian, said that she had been able to become "all I could be: true to myself, true to my faith. I was and am validated here. I want to share that with others." All agreed that St. Mark offered an "authentic spirituality of openness – we are who we say we are, open to all, judging none, a caring family that wants to share its love of God with all people however, whenever and wherever we can."

Most respondents agreed that while there were a variety of reasons to come to St. Mark – its various inreach and outreach ministries, the sense of family and of spirituality, the worship services and the like – these are more likely to be reasons for staying, whereas the principal reason for coming to the church in the first place was its "Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds" philosophy, its acceptance of people who were considered by mainstream society as being "out of the norm."

Questions about Jesus and the Spirit elicited fairly standard responses – "Jesus is the center of this church," "the Spirit is active in this church" – however, with regard to the centrality of Jesus, respondents found it hard to articulate any substance behind the comment, even when pressed. For example, when asked *how* or *in what way* was Jesus perceived as leader, the agreed response was "because without Jesus there would be no church."   With regard to the presence of the Spirit, folk were only a little more

forthcoming. Beyond earlier remarks related to Spirituality – "feeling the presence of the Spirit while doing ministry," and "in our openness to all people" – the presence of the Spirit was in some way assumed to be an integral part of Christian community; "when two or three are gathered together" (Matt. 18:20) and only one respondent could speak to a particular manifestation of this particular quality of the Trinity:

> It has sometimes happened that, say, when I have read a particular scripture passage and have decided to take some action based on it, that same passage will come up in Sunday school, or in worship and I feel it's kind of like a Spiritual affirmation of the course of action I'm going to take.

Worship services at St. Mark are a mix of contemporary and traditional. The choir is accomplished, talented musicians are brought in from time to time to provide special music and on occasion special music is accompanied by interpretive dance. Children are summoned to the front of the church for an age-appropriate message before being dismissed to "children's church" and Signers translate the service for the hearing impaired. Most people appear to enthusiastically participate in congregational responses, hymn singing, and community prayers and the sanctuary is slow to clear after worship services, as people fellowship with one another in lively one-on-one and group conversations.

Membership at St. Mark is relatively open: a person may transfer by letter from another church, join by re-affirmation of faith, or by baptism. Transferees from another denomination do not have to be re-baptized. The notice of intention to join may be made in several ways – by completing a short form and placing it in the offering plate; by going forward at the end of Sunday worship; or by arranging a meeting with one of the church's pastors. A new member is expected to "fully participate in the ministries of the church"

through regular prayer and presence in worship, through financial support of the church and through active participation in the church's internal and external ministries. New member classes are held twice a year, but are not compulsory.

4.1.7.3 Summary

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of St. Mark in terms of its community ministry is that, unlike the other apparently "disengaged" churches studied which seem never to have had a systematic program of neighborhood ministry, St. Mark has an extremely vibrant history of local outreach. While the church's return to growth in the period 1990 to 1998 appears tied to its charismatic leadership, its decline in community ministry seems equally tied. This result of charismatic leadership is repeated elsewhere in this study (see 4.2.5, above). The reasons for St. Mark's current relative retreat from bold community ministry are described above. It is instructive to note the way in which the lack of stability in the church and a deficiency in the area of appropriate structures impacts a church's ability to fully engage its community.

In conclusion it is important to note that St. Mark, identified in this study as a "non-holistic" church, would be better described as a congregation holistic in its larger ethos, but one that has temporarily reduced its outreach in order to recover from trauma and consolidate its resources before returning again to a more engaged ministry to its immediate community.

4.1.8   Incognito: South Gwinnett Baptist Church.

Ethnicity: largely White
Denomination: Baptist (Southern Baptist Convention)
Active Membership: about 150.
Attendance: about 80
Location: Suburban East Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 2
Operating budget 2004: ± $137,000

4.1.8.1 History/Background

While the area of Norton Park Baptist church on the west side of Atlanta was the major growth focus of the metropolitan area in the 1960's (see above), in the 1980's development moved to the east side, with new housing developments attracting new residents and creating demand for more churches to meet the spiritual needs of the growing community. South Gwinnett Baptist Church was begun in 1986 to meet some of those community needs. The church began as a "mission" church of Chestnut Grove Baptist, which is located just about three miles away in Grayson, and was sustained financially and through human resource support by this and other area Baptist churches in its early years. Starting with Bible study groups in individual homes, the congregation began meeting early in 1987 in a warehouse facility, under the guidance of Rev. Mickey Mayfield, a "new church starter" under joint appointment by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Georgia Baptist Convention.   Leadership passed to Rev. Paul Hugger in May 1988 and under his supervision the church soon grew to the point where a permanent facility became a requirement. Using the resources of various local churches, mission boards, and the Georgia Baptist Convention, a plot of land was secured located just a mile from the warehouse the congregation was using and on May 7, 1989 construction of the present church building began. With volunteer labor

from the congregation and with additional volunteer support supplied by churches as far away as Mississippi and Alabama, the church was completed in early 1990 and was dedicated January 21st of that year with 130 members and guests in attendance.

In the early fall of 1990 the church began its missions and outreach with such programs as Mission Friends, Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors, Baptist Young Women, and Women's Missionary Union. Soon the church was supporting missions both nationally and internationally. Sometime in the period 1990 – 1991, however, an increasing degree of dissension and difference began to emerge in the congregation over issues that are not clear, but may have had to do with the church's rapid development. The result was that about half the membership left the church. This was quite a severe blow, not only spiritually and emotionally, but also financially for the remaining congregants, because among other financial obligations the church had an outstanding mortgage that had to be serviced to the tune of some $3,000 per month. At about the same time the church's first full-time pastor, Rev. Hugger, left the church to undergo training in Clinical Pastoral Education.

The financial requirement of servicing the church's mortgage and the loss of substantial membership required that the congregation re-evaluate its priorities in every area. This it did under the aegis of Rev. Dr. David Phillips, who took the helm at SGBC in August of 1992. At the time Dr. Phillips was (and remains) a professor of Old Testament at Luther Rice seminary in Atlanta.

On April 26, 1996 the church adopted a constitution under which it shifted from being a "mission" church of Chestnut Grove Baptist to being a free-standing entity in its own right. The church family steadily grew and in 1999 several families left SGBC to

join with some members of another church to form a new congregation, Antioch Baptist, a mission church of SGBC. Once again South Gwinnett Baptist saw a decline in its membership and once again it recovered, returning to a period of growth, which continues to the present day.

4.1.8.2 Interviews

Although South Gwinnett Baptist Church, as with the other churches in this study, received and returned a preliminary survey and was subsequently randomly selected for further research, such participation almost did not happen. The church is not staffed during the week and messages left with the church's voicemail system were not responded to. Contact was finally made through the expedient of visiting the church on a Sunday, seeking out the pastor, referring to the completed and returned preliminary survey and explaining the motivation and intent of the next phase of the research. Once the pastor had determined that the process – distribution and collection of survey instruments and individual and focus group interviews with members of the church family – was not likely to be too disruptive of church life, he brought the proposal before the Deacons of the church, who gave permission to proceed. Even so, completing work at the church was not easy. The pastor had much to preoccupy him being, as has been mentioned, in full-time employment at Luther Rice. Thus, the research was understandably not the focus of his agenda. As a result, where the pastoral and administrative leadership at all the other churches in the study helped in the research process, for example inviting congregants to focus groups and one-on-one interviews, arranging interview locations, setting up contacts and the like, at South Gwinnett Baptist Church the researcher was largely left to his own devices regarding finding folk to

interview. Thus the interview processes for determining the ethos of this church were rather different than that followed in the other churches studied. For example, on one Sunday, folk leaving worship were asked if they would mind answering some questions about the church. On another occasion people were asked to stay behind after a Wednesday prayer meeting to respond to similar questions. Other information about South Gwinnett was largely gleaned from folk during conversations held in corridors and hallways, through telephone follow-up and from an internally circulated history of the church.

Even though the method of interviewing members of the church family at South Gwinnett was rather less formal than that practiced in the other churches in the study, the results are thought to be compatible with those other churches in terms of the quality, nature and extent of the information collected.

The history of South Gwinnett Baptist presented above follows the usual pattern of growth and decline, agreement and dissent, found in most churches. And, like many churches, South Gwinnett has weathered the various storms that have come its way and that have contributed to a certain inner strength and resilience and to a strong sense of "family." Indeed, it is the impression of being part of an extended family that many respondents gave as reason for joining the church. The congregation of SGBC is a mix of people of all ages, representing all stages of life from young married couples, some with young children, to single and married folk in their middle years and includes a number of older, retired individuals. There are, however, few young people between the ages of 12 and 17. Although attempts are ongoing to involve more youth, some of them quite successful, the church, which has had a youth pastor in the past, currently has a

young couple who have been designated "youth directors" to coordinate and develop such endeavors.

Members speak fondly of the church and refer to the sense of spirituality they get from a variety of activities associated with the diverse proceedings within it: worship, Bible study, fellowship activities and the like. Spirituality was articulated as, for example, a "warm sense of family;" "knowing you're in the presence of people who care;" and "a feeling of belonging." Being in the presence of the holy was expressed as "studying the Word;" "praying in community;" "taking communion;" and sometimes hearing the choir sing a particular anthem, or singing an old favorite hymn during worship. Members also speak of a desire for the church to grow and expressed some frustration that growth was not happening as fast as they would like. Several folk said that they would like to see a more focused effort from the church leadership, creating activities that utilized the church facility and available members of the congregation during the week, as well as at weekends.

Folk cited a variety of reasons for joining the church, among which, as has been mentioned, the sense of "family" was prominent. Other reasons included "having a relative or friend in the church;" "the personality of the pastor;" and "the location of the church." Absent from any interview response was an attraction to the church because of the possibility of being involved in any "engaged" outreach ministries. The greatest expectation the church had of its new members was that they "fit in" to the family by attending regularly and participating in the life of the church.

Although the church has had involvement with outreach ministries in previous years, almost all such involvement has been and continues to be either through the

modest financial support of ministries administered by denominational or institutional organizations (e.g. Disaster Relief, Co-operative Food bank, Georgia Baptist Children's Homes) or through "on site" activities such as maintaining a food pantry and clothes closet and through Fall, Halloween, Christmas and Easter festivals and similar activities held on the church grounds.

According to many respondents the importance of outreach ministry is often promoted from the pulpit and most of the people interviewed said they were very aware of the importance of such ministry as part of the life of the church. Why, then, is the church not more engaged with its community? Some respondents countered that in view of the programs mentioned in the previous paragraph, the church was indeed engaged with its community. When an "engaged" ministry was described – that is, one that requires the active, physical involvement of church members – many respondents suggested that such ministry was not necessary, that the church was already doing "all it could." Others, however, expressed interest and said that the "engaged" form of ministry simply was not routinely promoted or considered. Still others suggested that while they thought more could be done, the church lacked the funds to support them, the church's existing financial obligations largely absorbing its income. Regardless of the availability of funding, however, a number of respondents seemed anxious to be more involved in outreach ministry, although they often could not articulate the shape or form of any such ministry they would like to undertake. Such responses highlighted the fact that the church has no formal structure for the identification and authorization of engaged outreach programs. Thus, any person feeling a call to such ministry has no way to authenticate that call or to put it into practice. Further, while many folk recognized that

in theory they did not need the church's permission to do God's work in the world it was unanimously asserted that in practice, community ministry was an activity derived from the fellowship in the church. Indeed, for some of the folk at SGBC the differentiation between purely humanitarian motives as opposed to those believed to be Spiritually-driven was that the former were activities periodically engaged by individuals who may or may not be under the leadership of the spirit, whereas the latter was the consistent consequence of a faith developed by Christians *in* community and enacted *by* that community *as* community, under the direct control of the spirit.

When asked if the church had a Mission Statement of any kind, many respondents said they did not know. The pastor said that he thought it had one, but was sure that even if asked he would not be able to lay his hands on a copy, or even say what it contained.

Worship at SGBC may best be described as "Baptist Traditional," a style that is informal (and thus avoids formal liturgy), emphasizes extemporaneous prayer, delights in spontaneous preaching, enjoys singing traditional hymns and ends with an altar call to those who wish to make a "decision for Christ," an "affirmation of faith," or a "desire for baptism." In the years between 1988 and 2004, 444 folks have come forward at the conclusion of a worship service for one or another of these reasons.

4.1.8.3 Summary

The character of South Gwinnett Baptist Church is like the two faces of a coin. On the one side is a group that may be described as largely extrovert: it presents as a spiritually alive congregation, concerned for the welfare of all people but with particular interest in its immediate community, anxious to engage that community, but frustrated by a lack of structure and organization to put its faith into practice.   On the other side of the

coin however is a group that is largely introvert: it presents as spiritually reclusive, engages the larger community in a manner that rather distances the congregation from those its outreach ministry serves, is content with slow, steady growth and is generally satisfied with its existing organizational and administrative structures. While both groups believe they are following biblical principles relating to the internal and external function of "church," there is clearly a dichotomy in the way it is thought that function should be exercised. Because these two faces of the church represent two interpretations of Jesus, one might expect such discord to rend the church. Perhaps if it were insisted upon that Jesus be the *sine-qua-non* of the church, that might indeed happen. Although Jesus however is indeed presented as the glue that coheres this church the reality is, in a perhaps subconscious effort to avoid conflict between the two understandings of church function, the congregation has developed a different community focus: a shared sense of "family."

In an earlier section (1.2) it was asserted that it is the centrality of Jesus in the life of the church that creates the environment for Spiritual action. It follows from this assertion that any displacement of Jesus from the center of the church's life – even to avoid conflict within the church – will impact the ability of the community to be the voice and action of the Spirit. This impact is evident at SGBC in the internal functioning of the church which is in a situation of "stalemate," with some members of the church wanting for example to be more engaged in community ministry and some believing the current state of ministry is sufficient. Rather than address this divisive issue, it has been sidelined in favor of "family harmony."   Such glossing however has not made the problem go away. The frequent and rapid emergence of the differences in the church

over the subject of the interpretation of biblical principles vis-à-vis community

engagement during conversations with members of the church family suggests that the

issue thrives in the collective subconscious of the congregation, a situation likely to

continue impeding the speech and action of the Spirit until it is resolved.

Interviews with congregants also indicated that in addition to not actively

engaging its immediate community, the church had even in some ways adopted a posture

that may be best described as passively defensive. The informally produced account of

the church, the South Gwinnett Baptist History (2004) notes:

> The large influx of new residents [into the wider community in which
> SGBC is placed] brought new religious beliefs or, in many cases, no
> religious beliefs. The plurality of faiths resulted in a mixture of morals
> and values. *Baptists needed to develop defensive training . . . to hold on to
> their people* (emphasis added).

The defensive posture the church adopted was the cautious and "distanced"

approach to community ministry described. The idea of Baptists "holding on to [the

church's] people" seems to have been interpreted as an extreme caution in developing

and implementing any direct outreach programs as well as an implied vigilance to avoid

inviting anyone into the midst of the congregation who might in some way cause

members to question the church's conservative views or, worse, cause members to lose

their faith as a result of making theological inquiries outside of the church's traditional,

conformist study practices. The ethos of SGBC is then one, if not of a closed community

of believers, certainly one of only a superficial commitment to an active engagement with

its community. Perhaps the best demonstration of the current ethos of the church is the

way it currently presents itself to the outside world: the church is un-staffed during the

week days, the parking lot bare, there are no signs of activity during the day, the

telephone redirects to a voicemail system (which is not consistently followed up on, a problem, as one member said, that "needed to be looked at") and there is no engaged ministry to the immediate community. In sum, this is a church that exists, but does not live, in its community.

4.1.9   Almost There: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church.

Ethnicity: largely White
Denomination: Presbyterian (PCUSA)
Active Membership: about 590
Attendance: about 250
Location: Atlanta East side.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 5
Operating budget 2004: ± $600,000

4.1.9.1 History/Background

 The Presbyterian Church (USA) has a structure for New Church Development which includes initial administration and oversight from the local governing board, known as the Presbytery. In the case of St. Andrews, a group of Presbyterian women, having determined that there was a need for a "Presbyterian" presence in the city of Tucker, a suburban community on the east side of Atlanta, presented a request to the Presbytery that it consider establishing such a church. After due consideration and with the necessary preliminary steps accomplished St. Andrews was incorporated as a New Church Development project of the Greater Atlanta presbytery in 1960.

In terms of current community ministries St. Andrews operates a before- and after-school program for children from the wider community (age six months and up), several "step" programs for alcohol and substance abuse, and a "meals on wheels" program (limited to church members). Outreach ministries currently engaged by St.

Andrews – in partnership with several other churches – include funding a refugee ministry (with Druid Hills Baptist Church, q.v. above) and supporting a seasonally-operated (September through May) Night Shelter for the homeless. Besides financial backing, members of the St. Andrews family – Sunday school classes, worship groups and occasionally individual families – also support the night shelter by taking turns to cook and deliver food to shelter guests one or two days a week throughout the season and by supplying those guests with "day packs" of food. Additionally, the youth of the church regularly serve at Ronald McDonald house[7] preparing meals for guests. One ministry previously engaged by St. Andrews, but now "spun off" as an organization financially supported by St. Andrews and other local churches, is the "Initiative for Affordable Housing." Where Habitat for Humanity builds single family homes, the IAH deals with multiple housing and renovation projects.

There are also some plans for future ministries. Since the Tucker community is seeing an increase in the presence of Hispanics, an "English as a Second Language" class for local Hispanics and a Spanish language class for those members of the church interested in developing their linguistic ability in this area have been talked about but not yet actioned. Other future outreach plans include developing a ministry to Hispanics – not as a separate ministry within the church ("we do not want a 'landlord/tenant' relationship") but as a shared ministry. The Hispanic ministry will start as a small group within the church, but is expected to grow as the community demographic continues to change.

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[7] An organization that provides temporary accommodation for families of seriously ill children who have traveled from their homes to receive specialized treatment at nearby hospitals.

4.1.9.2   Interviews

The governing body within any Presbyterian Church (USA) is the Session. The Session, which usually meets once a month, is comprised of elders: women and men elected and ordained by the congregation who exercise leadership, government, and discipline on behalf of their particular church. The number of members in a Session varies from congregation to congregation and session meetings are open to all church members. The interviews from which this section of this study is derived were conducted at a specially extended Session meeting attended by some thirty participants. Most of these participants were already members of the church – some for less than a year, some for thirty or more years – and at least one family and several other folk attended the meeting to discuss their potential membership in the church with the Session. All were invited to join in the conversation.

St Andrews participates in enough ministries to fill a brochure (some 36 are listed in the church's "Missions Ministry" guide). With the exception of those mentioned earlier most of these ministries are network ministries with other churches and/or programs financially supported by the church. Asked to consider ministries requiring the direct, physical involvement of congregants, most interviewees agreed that such fully-engaged ministries were mandated by the Gospels – specifically, by the words and actions of Jesus, who was, as one respondent said, a "hands on kind of guy."   When members of the Session involved in these kinds of ministries were asked to reflect on the reasons they did so, however, the Gospel mandate, while important, was not the only motivating factor. Rather, some respondents suggested that outreach ministry was an attempt to correct "things that you've grown up knowing, or believing, to be wrong."

Some said it came out of the culture of care promoted within the church family, a "ministry of caring that begins in the church, but then flows into the larger community." For others, there is a sense of being fulfilled through ministry. Few, however, volunteered that they obtained any form of spiritual satisfaction or a sense of the holy in doing ministry until that particular issue was mentioned.   When asked why this was the case, most respondents agreed that it was because the ministries they undertake are not driven by spirituality or a sense of engaging the holy, but rather by a sense of being drawn to the bad news with a view to fixing it: "The holy comes, certainly, but as a result of being a part of the good news, rather than as a motivating factor."

Although the pastor, Dr. Dave Kivett, had suggested in an earlier interview that conversations about the spiritual in Presbyterian circles were likely to be brief, "because Presbyterians are put off by too much talk of spiritual matters," the interview with the Session proved this not to be the case. One respondent clarified,

> Yes, perhaps outside of the church, or our Christian groups, we are rather reluctant to speak of spirit, or spirituality, or the Holy Spirit; and even here in the wider church community we may be cautious about such talk. But in our Sunday school, or in the Session – in, I suppose, our tighter knit family – we do it all the time.

Part of the reason "Holy Spirit talk" outside the tight knit family context is avoided is, as one respondent said, because, "The Spirit is ethereal and Presbyterians are pragmatists. Our image is one of practical, earthly people – rationalists, if you will." The Holy Spirit does not fit too well into a rationalist worldview and it is therefore not surprising that respondents had a hard time determining the boundary between humanitarian and Spiritually-driven motives for outreach, the consensus being that they were "pretty much the same thing."

A number of interview respondents were surprised to hear from other, longer-term members, that the church now has less engagement with its immediate community than in former years and were equally surprised to discover that the church has a relatively low level of direct community engagement. "We thought we were doing more" (in terms of hands-on ministries) was a fairly uniform observation, which led to some discussion regarding how community ministry ideas were identified at St. Andrews and to whom those ideas should be communicated.

Many respondents were again surprised to hear from others in the meeting that there was a process, or structure, established in St. Andrews to authenticate outreach ideas, determine the Human Resource and financial needs of proposed outreach ministries, and oversee the administration of approved ministries. This structure is called "Mission Ministry" and members are invited and encouraged to bring their ministry ideas to the Mission Ministry, which will take appropriate action. Interviewees suggested that their ignorance of the presence and responsibility of the Mission Ministry probably came, at least to some degree, from their own complacency. "I guess we figure the church is already doing something," one respondent said, "because it is a church. We just don't stop to think that *we* are the church and that if *we* are not engaged, perhaps the church, too, is not engaged." This remark was particularly interesting because both the pastor (in a separate interview) and the Session participants agreed that community ministry is frequently promoted from the pulpit. Also, a "Monthly moment for Mission" meets monthly to promote missions. Nevertheless, it became clear as the conversation progressed that for the most part, folk not on the mission ministry team are largely unaware of all that is going on.

With fewer than twenty percent of the congregation involved in outreach ministry of any kind, a number of folk though that the church could be doing more in terms of such ministries. The pastor felt that a good beginning would be to make the exterior of the church more invitational – that the church could reach out by being inviting.   He also thought the church could "do more physical stuff that appeals to testosterone," building, hammering, repairing, constructing. "But," he added, "there is only so much I can push. The initiative for evangelizing, whatever its form, must come from the congregation."

Asked about their understanding of "evangelism" most agreed with evangelism conceptually, but objected to using the term to describe any form of community ministry because of the way in which it has been appropriated by the conservative/fundamentalist factions of Christianity and because of the subsequent perception of "evangelism" by the secular community: "[Conservatives and Fundamentalists] have caused the word "evangelism" to be synonymous with Bible-thumping, hell-and-damnation Christian thugs and demands for money" remarked one respondent, "rather than as a ministry of the Good News of Jesus, enacted by people of faith."

One respondent, for several years a civic leader of the City of Tucker, where St. Andrews is located, said that he and others on the city council and in other local government offices had long hoped that St. Andrews would become more involved with its immediate, secular community. He added that although he was aware of the Mission Ministry group he felt that the church was often unable to take ministry ideas from the manifestation of the idea to its implementation. Sometimes this failure was due to lack of courage to undertake community ministry, sometimes it was because those responsible

for implementing ministry strategies had no idea how to go about it – a sentiment that several in the Session agreed with.

Invited to offer suggestions for possible evangelistic ministries, many broad ideas were offered by respondents: "do more for the elderly," "some form of ministry to the disabled," "more engagement with the youth of the community," but none could articulate a specific, or well-defined defined, program. "We've never really thought about it," or, "We think about it, but don't act on it; and then we forget it" were typical responses. One respondent indicated that American society has become reclusive and has forgotten how to engage people outside the immediate family or church. (In this regard, a quick poll showed that only about twelve percent of interviewees agreed that they knew any of their immediate neighbors on a more than a casual basis.) Even though none of the interview group could identify a specific ministry they thought the church should be involved in, almost every person present agreed that the church should and could do more and that if the church identified a ministry, they would want to be invited to participate in it. "We are the hands and feet of the Gospel," said one respondent, "and I want to be able to say 'here I am; send me'" (Is. 6:8).

St. Andrews has a small but active youth group comprising about twelve high school and twelve middle school students, with about three in each group not being members of the church.   The group meets on Wednesday evenings for a program called "logos" which includes recreation, Bible study, a "family" dinner, and worship skills development. Parents pay an annual fee to support this program.

The youth participate in the church's outreach by helping at the night shelter during its seasonal operations, by sharing responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of

the church's "food pantry" operation, by participation in the Ronald McDonald house mentioned earlier and by the participation of at least a few in an annual mission trip which follows a three year cycle: In the first year, the mission will be to a place near enough to drive to. The second year, the mission will still be in the contiguous U.S., but far enough away to require air travel. Year three is an overseas mission trip that might go anywhere in the world.

In terms of activities within the church community, as often as possible one or more members of the youth take an active role in the worship service and at least one young person is invited to serve on the Session for one year.

Although the actual numbers of young people involved in the life of the church is relatively small given the size of the congregation, their presence in both outreach and inreach ministries is sufficient to belie their actual numbers. Young people are somewhat ubiquitous at St. Andrews, which enhances the sense of being in an extended family.

"Family," meaning "a community that is genuine in the way it represents itself and in the way that it cares for each of its members" was the most common noun the congregation used to describe itself. The sense of family is maintained by the congregation through attendance at worship services and Sunday school, Wednesday evening services, involvement with various committees, participation in special church and community celebrations (church anniversaries, annual "cookouts," church picnics etc.) and involvement in the "kitchen teams" that support the church's various food-related ministries. Indeed, the idea of "family" was the most cited reason for joining the church, outweighing denominational motivations by a ratio of four to one among the Session. Other folk said they were looking for a smaller church family, or a more

liberal/less conservative church and some cited simply a "sense of welcome" in the congregation. Another significant source of new members has been through the pre- and after-school programs of the church.

Notably absent as a motive for joining the church was its ministry activity. Although several people in the interviewed group were currently involved in at least one of the church's community ministries, no person gave any form of the church's current ministries as a primary reason for their union with St. Andrews, although one person did remark that hearing about the church's various ministries during her new member classes helped reinforce her decision to join the church.

About twenty five persons joined the church in 2004 and attended the new member classes. In addition to advising folk about the church's ministries, other topics discussed in these classes, which are four weeks long and held about twice a year, are the church's Mission Statement, Presbyterian polity, basic Calvinist theology, Sunday school options, church organization, and membership roles and responsibilities. These last are succinctly stated by the pastor as, "Worship regularly, serve eagerly, give generously, grow spiritually, live worthily."

Regular worship attendance is strongly encouraged, and the sanctuary is cited as the place most people have an encounter with the sacred. Other places mentioned include the kitchen (particularly when preparing meals for the homeless shelter) and, on occasion, in Sunday school classes. Two worship services are offered each Sunday and these are generally traditional, usually with some form of special music (by the choir or from an individual), time-honored congregational hymns sung from an established hymnal, community prayers, an offering, and a sermon that usually has a contemporary issue (or

issues) as its focus. Although the youth have expressed an interest in having more praise songs in the worship service, there are currently no plans to move in this direction.

4.1.9.3 Summary

The case of St. Andrews is interesting and in many respects hard to describe. Its adherence to denominational policies of governance and administration makes it an excellent example of a "corporate model" church, with a Chief Executive Officer (the pastor), several vice-presidents (associate pastors), a board of directors (the Session) and the necessary administrative support. That this form of organization works is demonstrated in the large numbers of Presbyterian congregations in the United States and, at first glance*,* St. Andrews is almost everything one might expect in and from a church. As with Central Presbyterian church (q.v.), the congregation is warm and inviting, Christian education is organized and focused, worship is spiritual and uplifting, the youth are involved in the life of the church, and the church offers abundant opportunity for participation in a wide variety of ministries. Unlike Central, however, St. Andrews, despite appearing to have all the appropriate structures, is not a "holistic" church as that term is used in this study. The difference between the two churches seems to lie in the fundamental communication ethos each employs.   Interview responses from the Session at St. Andrews suggest a prevailing congregational sense, or understanding, that the institutional structures of Presbyterian polity include both provision for the identification of all kinds of ministry and the establishment of organizational infrastructures of, for example, authentication and management, attendant upon suggested ministries. The thinking that seems to follow from this is the idea that having an outreach ministry blueprint is *prima facie* evidence that such ministries exist. Contrast this passive

approach with the active strategy of Central Presbyterian. Here is a community whose leadership acknowledges the institutional structures but recognizes that simply having such structures is not enough; their presence – and the ministries they support – need not only to be constantly and routinely communicated to the congregation, but be accompanied by an invitation to participate. All things considered, however, St. Andrews is a church that, with very little additional effort, could become fully holistic.

4.1.10 Introspective: Chestnut Grove Baptist Church

Ethnicity: largely White
Denomination: Baptist (SBC)
Active Membership: about 500
Attendance: about 400
Location: Suburban East Atlanta.
Number of Engaged Community Ministries: About 2
Operating budget 2004: ± $ 480,000

4.1.10.1 History[8]/Background

Founded in 1850, Chestnut Grove Baptist Church is the eldest of the congregations in this study. Nine men (their names are not recorded) who had been meeting in a brush arbor decided to begin a church in the Grayson community and named it Chestnut Grove Baptist Church. Their first purchase was two acres for $5 on which was constructed a log building that was used for both church and school. After some twenty - three years, the church had outgrown its building, which was sold and moved and another built in its place. Although the congregation met only monthly, it wanted to make sure the children and adults could learn more about the Bible, so in 1886 the church organized its first Sunday school, called Evergreen. The congregation grew steadily, though slowly and through the years more land adjacent to the church building was acquired. Baptisms

in those early years were performed in a nearby stream on the church property. In early1911, amid some skepticism from those who wondered why a church that met just once a month would need it, a new building measuring 60' by 60' was begun and was completed August 26th of that year. It was thought to have been the largest church building in the county at that time. In spite of its size, it was not until 1948 that the church began to have weekly services. As the congregation subsequently expanded, so did the number of buildings and facilities necessary to accommodate it. In the 1980's, increasing local development saw Gwinnett county grow from a sleepy farming community to a significant suburb of Atlanta and Grayson itself once, according to the city motto, "Gwinnett's best kept secret," has itself been no stranger to housing development through the 1990's and into the new century. The increase in population brought about by such development has been reflected in the size of the congregation, which in 2001 moved into its new sanctuary, built adjacent to the older buildings, all of which – including the 1911 sanctuary, now the youth center – are still in use.   It should also be noted that as the church has grown, it has "spun off" several "mission" congregations which have later become autonomous churches. One such church, South Gwinnett Baptist, is included in this study (see 4.1.8).

Although there are already several Day Care centers in Grayson and its immediate area, the leadership at Chestnut Grove has undertaken to open such a center at the church. The reason for this move is that while the church has been somewhat sheltered from the population growth in the area – new-home building has been in locations away from the church – several scores of acres immediately adjacent to the church are now slated for

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[8] Adapted from the church's web site, http://www.chestnutgrove.org/History.htm

development. The Child Care/pre-school center plan then is to open the facility for the use of the children of congregants initially with the idea of later opening it up to the wider, immediate community as it develops, as part of an outreach ministry. Longer term plans include an after-school care facility.

In 1981 Pastor Tommy Jordan was called by Chestnut Grove Baptist from an eleven year pastorate in Griffin, a town about thirty miles southeast of Atlanta. Prior to his coming, the church seems to have rotated through pastors on a fairly steady basis – one or two did not even stay for a full year, though two years seems to have been the rule. Thus Pastor Jordan's longevity – twenty-four years – is a record at the church. A graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Tommy Jordan is theologically conservative, as is his largely white collar/professional congregation.

4.1.10.2 Interviews

Although Chestnut Grove has a long history, it presents more as a relatively new church. This has come about because of the rapid population growth in the neighborhood in the last five to ten years. Indeed, one interviewee remarked that church membership just six years ago was only about 200 and leaned 80/20 in favor of "very old, senior membership." As Atlanta's population expansion has saturated the favored northern corridor (interstate 75, GA 400, interstate 85), attention has increasingly turned to Georgia 78, an arterial road leading east into Gwinnett and on to the university city of Athens/Clarke county, GA. Christian people moving in to the neighborhood looked for a new church to call home and many chose Chestnut Grove. The active membership of perhaps 200 in 1998 has thus grown to something in the order of some 500 today and the

continued influx of refugees from the inner metropolitan area guarantees a degree of sustained growth for the immediately foreseeable future.

Chestnut Grove Baptist church meets for food, fellowship and Bible study on Wednesdays and for Sunday school, fellowship and worship on Sundays. On Sundays there are two worship services; an early, traditional service, which attracts a generally older demographic and a later service that takes a more contemporary approach and which attracts a younger demographic. In a nod to modern technology, in both services hymns, praise songs and sermon texts are projected on a board, although with regard to the latter there remains an insistence on individuals bringing their Bibles to worship and Sunday school.

The pastor reported that in his early days at the church, his preaching was extemporaneous and anecdotal, but that while anecdotes work for a while, there comes a point where longer term members have "heard it all before." Thus his preaching is now often a "series study." To prepare, the pastor reads one or two books a week in addition to magazines and newspapers and tries to interpret and preach biblical texts in light of contemporary issues. As will be further discussed below, outreach ministry is not a topic that receives much attention from the pulpit.

With further regard to worship, since there is no separate service for youth young persons tend to favor the second, contemporary service. Indeed, the lack of a dedicated service for youth has become a slight bone of contention for them. "Many of us came to this church and some of us persuaded out parents to come to this church, because we felt a sense of good friendship in the youth. We're good pals and we want to worship together in our own service." Young people in the church number about sixty, with about

thirty active. The declared feeling among the youth is that if they had a worship service of their own, there would "probably" be more participation from the inactive youth. The situation is not likely to be resolved soon, however, since the pastor believes that Sunday church attendance has inadvertently become a time of family segregation as families are broken up by sending members off to various Sunday schools, or activities such as choir practice. If particular worship groups are also set up, he claims, it could become possible for a family not to be with each other in the period between arriving and departing the church on any given Sunday. "We need to not let that happen. Families must at least worship together, even if other church activities keep them apart the rest of the time."

Where the major attraction of the church for youth polarizes around friendship, for the adult membership across the age demographic the main reason is Chestnut Grove's conservative theology. Subscribers to the "2000 Baptist Faith and Message," the distinguishing document of the fundamentalist and conservative Southern Baptist Convention (S.B.C.),[9] congregants maintain that it is a focus on the "blood of Jesus" that should be the major activity of the church. "All we are and everything we do come down to a belief that we are saved in the blood of Jesus. The S.B.C. promotes it, our pastor preaches it and we believe it." The centrality of Jesus extends through the congregation's understanding of the difference between humanitarian and spiritual motives to aid those in need: "It's only spiritual if it's driven by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus." In this regard and, indeed, in every respect Chestnut Grove is a church of the "Christendom" model identified by Bayer (2001, see above p.2) and to a very large extent finds its identity in resisting pressure to contemporize its theology. There are, for example, no

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[9] www.sbc.net

women deacons, nor any plans to ordain women to that ministry "in the foreseeable future."   Within the same conservative theme, the church again points to the 2000 "Baptist Faith and Message" regarding the Bible:

> The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

That there is a demand for a church that exercises a conservative theology and sociology is evident in its steady growth, which is sustained at least in part by an aggressive visitor follow-up policy. Folk who do visit Chestnut Grove and make their visit known through visitor cards placed in the offering plate are, as often as possible, visited the same evening as their first visit to the church, and certainly within a few days. The purpose of these visits, usually made by the pastor, sometimes by a deacon, is to thank people for coming, to find out a little more about them, to answer questions they may have about the church and to invite them to visit the church again.

Folk who express an interest in joining the church first attend a two hour "orientation" session intended to provide an overview of the church's history, theology, and religious affiliations and the expectations the church has of its members in terms of participation in the life of the church and in its financial support.   Those who subsequently join then attend a "New Member's Class" which lasts five or six weeks, before moving on to a Sunday school class appropriate to their ages and interests. The

consensus of expectations for existing members was that they would welcome new people into the church and support the church's programs.

In response to the church's recent rapid growth it was determined by the church leadership that a new, comprehensive articulation of the church's *raison d'etre* was required and a "Mission Statement development" committee was set up to draft a new statement of purpose. The statement was brought up for a congregational vote some twelve to eighteen months ago and was unanimously adopted. "Adopting" however is not the same as "owning;" the statement is not published as part of the weekly bulletin, is not posted on the church's internet site and while most of the interviewees had an idea of its content, none were confident in their articulation of it. It reads, in fact, "into All the World, Sharing God's Love."

The congregation as represented by interviewees looks very much to its pastoral leadership for guidance in a broad range of matters – the nature, purpose, and interpretation of scripture, the church's theological position, the attitude to be taken toward other religious traditions and beliefs and toward the secular community, the character and form of Christian behavior, and the like. Lessons in these matters are taught from the pulpit which is, according to the pastor, the locus of strong biblical preaching and life guidance. Questioned about leadership and authority, interviewees agreed that while much power was vested in the pastor, and while the congregation usually deferred to him, the church enjoyed a congregational polity. There was common agreement that, despite having made him "back down" over certain issues, the pastor was called by God and generally acts under God's guidance.

The altar is the central point for prayer needs and concerns. During worship, folk needing prayer for themselves or wanting to pray in behalf of others go forward to the altar, where they are joined by others who pray with and over them. Several respondents said that for them this was the most spiritual part of their Christian fellowship, although others highlighted music, moments of silence, or the singing of certain hymns. Several of the youth declared that they felt a strong sense of spirituality during the last annual mission trip, which was to children of a poor neighborhood in a distant city.

A strong emphasis on "the blood," i.e., the atoning death of Jesus, as the central focus of church life is evidenced in a reduced focus on community ministry. The church does engage in outreach ministry, some of it quite extensive, such as contributing in the support of a local pregnancy counseling center and sending a "truckload" of food each week to support the downtown homeless shelters, but such ministries are managed almost entirely through the church's local Southern Baptist Association. One worship service a year heavily promotes this ministry and invites a special offering toward Association support. Outside the Association, the only community ministry away from the church is the annual summer camp/mission program enthusiastically engaged in by the youth. Other than these activities and promotions, outreach ministry in any form away from the immediate vicinity of the church grounds is not an emphasis and very little in this regard happens. Indeed, the numbers of folk consistently engaged in weekly or monthly hands-on ministry in the secular community is negligible.

One reason interviewees offered for being so disengaged from community ministry is the commuter-nature of the congregation. Folk spend much of their week-day either going to or coming from work, which leaves little time for direct engagement in

community outreach. Further, the pastor maintained – and congregational interviews supported – that the main reason for supporting association ministry efforts, which diverted ministry funds and human resources from the immediate community, was the perception that Grayson and its adjacent area is a "wealthy" neighborhood and thus does not supply the same ministry opportunities as an urban church.

Community outreach ministry outside of those managed by the Association is also impacted in the way such ministries are identified and funded by the church. As a rule if a new, local outreach ministry possibility is seen by a congregant, it is brought first to the pastor and then, subject to his approval, to the board of deacons. If the deacons subsequently support the concept in principle, the individual is empowered/authorized to do further research, such as evaluating the financial and human resources required. The idea is then brought before the deacons again. If approved, any necessary funding toward support of the ministry must be raised within the congregational community. The belief is that if the particular outreach ministry identified is intended to be engaged by Chestnut Grove, then the Spirit will make available the funds and human resources necessary. Indeed, this is the strategy by which the new church day-care center was instituted.

By and large, local outreach ministries are limited to activities at the church intended to draw people in, such as Easter egg hunts and seasonal festivals. Since the church abuts the local athletic fields and supports Grayson Athletic Association, as an outreach effort the church has located two mailboxes at the grounds, one supplying church information, another to receive community prayer requests.   Even when interviewees were asked if they would like the church to be more active in the local community, the strongly affirmative answer was given in terms of strategies intended to

attract people to the church, such as "Movie Nights," where a film such as "The Passion of the Christ" would get free screening in the fellowship hall, or an "Everything you wanted to know about the Church but were afraid to ask" community information forum would be held in the same location; no strategies were voiced that would require congregants to go into the community.

Activities and events that energize the congregation are particularly those outside the range of usual or routine endeavors of the church. Four years ago, raising funds for the new sanctuary energized the church family. Today, raising funds for a balcony in the sanctuary to raise seating capacity in view of future growth is a major energizer. Other examples given were "helping out folk – especially church members – who are sick, or bereaved, or in some other way need congregational support in the form of food, fellowship, and comfort."   The seasonal activities outlined above too are cause for heightened enthusiasm. Indeed "any activities that involve food and fellowship" get congregants excited and motivated and draw high levels of congregational participation.

4.1.10.3 Summary

Chestnut Grove Baptist church is passionate about its faith and its faith community. Almost everything it does goes toward building up the congregation in the terms of biblical principals as previously determined by the S.B.C. Its interest in the wider community is not to be doubted – it cares about the plight of humanity and gives generously to its outreach ministry arm, the local Association. The prevailing attitude however is that such giving largely fulfills any ministry obligation the church may have. Thus, there is no serious attempt, nor any strategy or established organizational process (other than as described above) to identify or engage ministry in the immediate

community. Instead, the church's efforts focus more on further educating or edifying the congregation in terms of faith, not works. Works (community ministry) are seen as an expression of faith, but are not to be confused in any way with salvation "in the blood of Jesus." The focus of worship and Sunday school is on building up the body of faith through (correctly) understanding scripture, with an emphasis on works *within* the community of faith, rather than to the larger, secular community.   Perhaps because ministry to the wider community on the community's grounds is perceived to be fraught with danger – danger of being "led astray," or put in a situation where one's faith was questioned – the church prefers to establish ministries intended to draw outsiders in to the "safe" ground of the church and to minister to them in an environment that can be better controlled for error or potential apostasy.

In a world laden with stress and anxiety, the certainty and conviction with which unquestioned and unquestionable salvation is advanced at Chestnut Grove offers a welcome option for those who prefer not to intellectualize their faith. Thus the scriptures are not questioned and the vicarious execution of the exemplary ministries of Jesus displaces any pressing urgency to "Go into all the world . . ." (Mark 16:15). The result is a church whose ethos is essentially introspective, a church that exists more for its members rather than for the larger, immediate community in which it resides.

CHAPTER 5

Van der Ven . . . gives full attention to the hermeneutical and critical perspectives
[of research], and uses both quantitative and qualitative methods . . .

(Heitink 1999: 232)

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter addresses the last three of the four questions that have guided this study, namely question 2, "How do (the individual and collective characteristics determined in response to question 1) differ from those of members of non-holistic congregations?;" question 3, "What general conclusions may be drawn relating to the ethos of 'holistic' churches;" and question 4, "To what extent are the various characteristics reproducible?"

The chapter is in four parts. The nature of the data elicited from the preliminary survey is the subject of part one. Part two discusses the results of the primary survey. Part three summarizes the interviews with congregants and leaders of the participating churches and the inferences drawn from those interviews. Finally part four, the conclusion of the study, discusses the possibilities and limitations on the reproducibility of holistic church characteristics.

The following facts should be noted:

1. The preliminary survey instrument was developed entirely by the author.

2. While the primary survey instrument was developed in consultation with staff of the UGA department of statistics, its final form is again the responsibility of the author.

3. All the data generated by both survey instruments was compiled and analyzed by a graduate student in statistics at UGA under the strict guidance and

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supervision of the department. The conduct of analysis of the data generated by the primary survey, including selection of the best type of analytical tools and the methodology employed in generating the report, were determined by UGA., which also approved the final report.

4. The results reported below are based on the subsequent Statistical Analysis of the Church and Ministry Involvement Study developed by the University of Georgia, Department of Statistics (contained in Appendix 4).

5. All the inferences drawn from these results are entirely those of the author of this thesis.

Before turning to the results, one final observation is necessary. While two of the churches studied – St. Mark UMC and St. Andrews Presbyterian – were identified as non-holistic, both the objective and subjective evidence suggest it would be truer to say that they exercised "incomplete" holism: that is, that the underlying structures and congregational ethos evident in all the holistic churches were equally evident in these two churches, but were not being fully utilized. St. Mark UMC for example has been very active in the field of community ministry in the past and still has all, or almost all, the structures necessary to the practice and even has a vision of community ministry for the future. Indeed, the congregation may well argue that it is in fact engaging the community by being pro-active in its ministry to the Gay, Lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered population of its neighborhood, a focus which brings with it a conscious withdrawal from broader community engagement. St. Andrews similarly appears to have the infrastructure necessary to outreach ministry, but the church's leadership has not effectively communicated the presence of that infrastructure to its congregation, nor is it

the consistent practice of the church leadership to convey outreach ministry to the congregation as a matter of the necessary praxis of the church's theology. The inference is that St. Andrews could be a completely holistic church by paying attention to these two issues.

The quasi-holistic nature of St. Mark and St. Andrews churches as just described, if known earlier, might have resulted in their survey data being excluded from analysis, since their near-holism will undoubtedly have skewed the overall results of the study. However, the true nature of these churches did not become clear until the survey data was compiled and analyzed and interviews held with the respective congregations – events that occurred some weeks after the surveys were completed. In the event, the information elicited through interviews in both these churches is, in fact, quite instructive regarding the "fine line" that is possible between holism and non-holism.

5.1 PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Although not the major focus of the research, the preliminary survey provided categorical data permitting respondent churches to be ranked on a scale of holistic community engagement. It was noted above that the primary purpose of the preliminary survey was to find out the nature and extent of the practice of "holism" in a number of churches in the Greater Atlanta area and to identify churches for further research.   A set of questions was developed (Appendix 1) intended to provide information about respondent church size, attendance, number of outreach ministry practices engaged, percentage participation by congregants in the church's ministries, the predominant source of ideas for secular ministries, and the locus of responsibility for the maintenance of such ministries.

The information elicited from the preliminary survey provided results for holistic churches that may be considered somewhat intuitive:

- The number of outreach ministries increases with congregational size.

- The percentage of congregational involvement in outreach ministry increases with congregational size.

- Lay leadership involvement in the identification and management of outreach ministry increases in line with the number of ministries engaged.

Beyond these three rather elementary conclusions little can be said. For more in depth information regarding the churches actually involved in the study, attention must turn to the results of the surveys and interviews conducted with the participating congregations, beginning with the Primary Survey.

5.2 PRIMARY SURVEY

5.2.1   Background information

Since entry of the basic data gleaned from returned surveys was to be performed by non-professionals (i.e., persons unfamiliar with the various analytical programs available) the raw data was first keyed-in to a prepared spreadsheet in Microsoft® Excel™ format.

The first task toward analyzing the data was therefore to convert it from the Excel™ files into a variety of more flexible analytical tools appropriate to the particular investigative and diagnostic tasks undertaken. These included Statistical Analysis Software (SAS),[1] Minitab,[2] and S-plus.[3] The next step was to "purify" the returned data by removing surveys with un-interpretable responses to a single question. For example, if

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[1] SAS Institute Inc. Website: www.sas.com
[2] Minitab Software, Inc .Website: www.minitab.com
[3] Insightful Corporation. Website: www.splus.com

a respondent reported being both male and female, or being in multiple age categories, that survey was not included in the study. This was done to protect the integrity of the data from either a possible incorrect recording of the survey or meaningless data. It then remained to reduce the plethora of analytic possibilities to those avenues of research considered most likely to produce characteristics of congregational ethos. The preliminary intent was to determine if there were any significant differences between the survey responses among the five high ministry churches, because survey questions whose responses are not significantly different between churches may be useful indicators of what makes a church holistic.

To this end it was thought best to summarize the responses to survey items separately by church and then also within the two blocks of five churches representing the upper and lower end of community ministry, as previously explained. The intention was to analyze the survey responses in such a way that the "ethos" of a holistic church might be encapsulated and then see if there was some consistency across the top five churches in this "ethos." To be sure, this was a somewhat vague and imprecise goal, requiring some work to determine first, which survey items would most likely be relevant in characterizing "ethos," next which relationships among survey items are interesting and relevant to this idea and finally the statistical method(s) that would be helpful in this task. With regard to this last point, the method suggested by the University of Georgia Department of Statistics was Factor Analysis because, as Hall (2005) writes:

> [F]actor analysis is a method [. . .] appropriate for a situation in which a relatively large number of variables are measured [and] where there is substantial redundancy or overlap among those variables. The idea underlying factor analysis is that there are a small number of independent underlying constructs, or "factors", which are each being measured in several different ways by the observed variables. A classical example

would be scores in Olympic decathlon events. We might think that the scores in the high jump, long jump, 100 meters, javelin, etc. are measuring (in some sense) a few underlying factors: sprinting speed, jumping ability, endurance, throwing ability, and perhaps strength. In this example, the hypothesis is that there are 5 underlying factors, but the 10 variables (the scores in the 10 events) are measuring these 5 factors in overlapping, partially redundant ways. Factor analysis tries to boil down the variance and correlation structures in a data set to a small number of such independent factors.

Hall notes further that there are two basic types of Factor Analysis (FA), exploratory and confirmatory, and explains that in exploratory FA an *a priori* model, or theory, as to how many underlying factors there are is not posited. Instead, the data itself is used to generate the FA model, through the selection of enough factors to adequately explain the data and the subsequent attachment of interpretations to those factors. In confirmatory FA, on the other hand, the starting point is an *a priori* assumption that there are k factors and subsequent analysis then tries to see if the data support that theory. That is, one tries to see if the k-factor model is consistent with the data and whether the k-factors obtained from the data have the sorts of interpretations expected. For example, it might be thought that decathlon scores are based on the $k=5$ factors defined above (sprinting speed, jumping ability, etc.), so the 5-factor model is fitted to the data to see if it fits well and that the factors really do look like they correspond to sprinting speed, jumping ability, etc.

The caveat however is that while it might be tempting to use the exploratory method of FA and let the data generate the FA model, in fact exploratory FA tends to work quite poorly. That is, while it will often lead to a FA model involving fewer factors than the original number of variables and while those factors may be interpretable, the evidence from studies of exploratory FA is that it very often fails to identify the true

model that generated the data. Instead, it may lead to another model that is also consistent with the data, but which has no real validity. Confirmatory FA, however, tends to work much better; that is, if a model can be posited, FA is fairly good at saying whether or not the data are consistent with that model.

> In terms of the current study, one way to try to characterize the "ethos" of any one of the churches would be to identify a set of survey items (the variables) which may be measures of some underlying factors such as "engagement of the congregation in church programs," "conservatism," "evangelism," and so on, and then try to run a FA on these variables (Hall 2005).

Hall alludes to the importance of identifying variables, that is, hypothesizing a set of factors that might correspond to a certain set of survey items and then running a confirmatory FA on them. In fact, in the present study, hypothesizing was not entirely necessary. Sider et al. (2002: 16) write:

> Holistic congregations can take many forms, but they share certain attributes in common: a *holistic understanding of the church's mission*; *dynamic spirituality*; *healthy congregational dynamics*; and *holistic ministry practice* (emphasis added).

A review of the survey instrument demonstrated, as will be shown, that the four attributes identified by Sider et al. lent themselves well as broad headings to blocks of information contained therein. Since it is posited, however, that the common beliefs held by a congregation may contribute significantly to that congregation's ethos, a fifth attribute, *Shared Beliefs*, was proposed for the purposes of this study. These five attributes, or variables – i.e. holistic understanding of the church's mission, dynamic spirituality, healthy congregational dynamics, holistic ministry practice, and shared beliefs – will be referred to as the "Core Variables." Table 5.1 shows the core variables and the question groups they are associated with.

TABLE 5.1

QUESTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH "CORE VARIABLES"

	Core Variable / # factors	Broadly identified by responses to
	Holistic understanding of the church's mission/ 16	Survey question 20
	Dynamic spirituality/ 13	Survey question 14
	Healthy congregational	Survey question 19

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	dynamic s/ 8	
	Holistic ministry practice/ 13	Survey questio n 18*
	Shared Beliefs/ 13	Survey questio n 21
	* But note that questions 18a and 18b, which relate to worship style, were removed as factors as not being significant to holistic ministry practice.	

5.2.2 Procedure

While some questions, such as question 16 (the perception of training in a number of areas) required individual approaches, the balance of question responses in the Church & Ministry Involvement Questionnaire largely fell into one of three categories:

1. Questions such as gender, employment status, church vs. Sunday school attendance, and yes/no questions. These invited categorical responses. In some cases, the responses were combined into categories reflecting specific underlying construct. These responses were analyzed first and chi-square tests were typically used to determine if the five churches in each block held consistent responses.

2. Questions involving ranked data including age and time-related questions. These were the second set of responses addressed and a Kruskal-Wallis test was employed in these situations to determine differences between median age groups.

3. Questions with a series of sub-questions, (i.e. questions 14, 18, 19, 20, 21 – the "core variable" questions). These required a more in-depth approach. First, a measurement of internal consistency (coefficient alpha) was employed to determine the degree to which items within each question correlated with one another. If necessary, a sub-question or two was removed if it was deemed to be inconsistent with the others. Second, an analysis of variance was performed on the mean response to determine consistency between churches. Next, each of the holistic churches was scored for each core variable to give a mean and the scores were then compared across the five holistic churches to see if there was some consistency.

Subsequent to the analyses described, the additional variables of responses to questions 1 (age), 2 (gender), 3 (marital status), and 10 (single main reason the respondent remains involved with the church) were each separately added to the core variables mix to see if, and to what extent, they impacted the previously developed scores/means. The additional variable related to being informed about local, national and international events, (identified as the attribute "Social Awareness," comprising responses to questions 5 and 6 on the survey), was similarly analyzed, the objective being to discover if there was any relationship between community ministry and knowledge of current events. Question 16, relating to training opportunities, was likewise reviewed for any relationship between such specialized training and outreach ministry. The same procedure was then followed for the non-holistic churches.

Before going directly to the results, it must be pointed out that one of the shortcomings of the survey developed and used in this study emerged as analysis began. This shortcoming was the difference in information a question was intended to provide and the way the question was understood and the response it elicited. A prime example is question 13, "Do you routinely engage in outreach ministries?" The high level of "Yes" responses (77% in holistic churches) is as much a result of the unqualified nature of the word "routine" – which can be interpreted as any one of daily, weekly, monthly, annually, or indeed any regular and repetitive cycle – as it is of a natural human desire to over-report those actions perceived to be "good." This fact was highlighted during interviews with holistic congregations in which it was discovered that far from the high levels of congregational involvement in community ministry suggested, in essence the so-called 80/20 rule applied – that is, that 20% of the people did 80% of the work. Indeed,

even this number overstates the case since during the interviews only one holistic church reported engagement in outreach ministry to the immediate community at levels greater than 15% of the active membership. This point is raised because very often, with regard to the questions discussed below, the differences between holistic and non-holistic churches, while "statistically significant," appear very small. In light of the fact that even very low numbers of congregational participation in community ministry made a church "holistic," it would thus be a mistake to read "very small" as "not a contributing factor."

5.2.3 Results

A glance at the reports (Appendix 4) will show that survey responses were consistently inconsistent among the five churches in each group, meaning that no particular characteristic, or set of characteristics, emerged to suggest that any single holistic church would work as a paradigm of holism, nor that any characteristic or set of characteristics of any single non-holistic church could be supported as a paradigm for non-holism. Thus the next step was to determine the characteristics that holistic churches contained as a group, and that appeared to be absent in the non-holistic churches, as a group.

To make this determination the individual mean responses to each survey question, as obtained from holistic churches, were assembled into a mean for all holistic churches. The result was then compared to a similarly-derived mean for the non-holistic churches. Table 5.2 summarizes the responses by both groups of churches to all the survey questions and highlights those where there are statistically significant differences.

TABLE 5.2

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM HOLISTIC CHURCHES

Question	Topic	Summary Holistic Churches	Significant Difference to non-holistic churches
1	Age	The preponderance of church members are aged 46 or older	No
2	Gender	60% of Respondents are female	No
3	Marital Status	Low "Domestic partner" numbers vs. non-holistic churches	**Yes**
4	Employment	45% in f/t employment; 35% retired	No
5	News Access (print)	Low subscription rate vs. non-holistic churches	**Yes**
6	News Access (T.V.)	66% watch daily	No
7	Residency	57% of respondents reported living in the "general area" for 20+ years	No
8	Duration of church membership	With the exception of Druid Hills Baptist, the majority of folk (nearly 90%) have been members of their church for 10+ years	**Yes**
9	Commute time to church	44% drive 15-30 minutes to church	No
10	Reasons for remaining involved with church	"Individual fulfillment" is the dominant reason for remaining involved with the church	No
11	Church Attendance	66% attend both SS and worship services	No
12	Participation in ministry outreach last 12 months	78% of respondents claim participation in outreach during the last 12 month period.	**Yes**
13	Routine engagement in outreach	82% claim to be "routinely engaged"	No
14	Reasons for doing outreach	High mean responses	**Yes**
15	Reasons for not doing outreach	About 60% are not involved in outreach ministry	No
16	Specialized training opportunities	Relatively high number of respondents claim training available in 6 of the 8 areas	No
17	Pastoral Leadership style	Pastoral leadership is more likely to be "hands off," delegating responsibilities to lay leaders.	**Yes**
18	Phrases describing the church	The median responses indicate a general agreement that the phrases describe the church	No
19	Church organization	Median response is on the "excellent" side of "good"	**Yes**
20	Congregational Priorities	Median responses fall on the "high" side of "medium priority."	**Yes**
21	Beliefs	Question 21b, g, h, j highlighted	**Yes**

These highlighted questions were then further examined to see what information they provided toward an assertion of holistic character. Questions 9, 10, and 16, while not identified in the comparison as statistically significant, have been added to the following discussion because, as will be shown, they provide information germane to the analysis.

Question 3: Marital Status.

A far higher percentage (71.3 vs. 53.8) of folk in holistic churches report being married and a higher percentage of folk (15.9 vs. 1.7) in non-holistic churches report being in a "domestic partnership." When "domestic partnership" is collapsed into "married," however, the difference ceases to exist.

Question 5: News Access.

This question (and the one following in the survey, having to do with Television news access, in which there was no statistically significant difference) was included in the survey to see if a general awareness of local, state, national and world affairs impacted community ministry. A result showing a high correlation between news access and ministry may have indicated that increased awareness of need increased the impetus for action. The actual result – 36% of respondents from non-holistic churches report subscriptions to both newspapers and national news magazines, versus 25% from holistic churches – is ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations.

Question 8: Length of time attending current church.

More than half (56%) of the respondents from holistic churches report being members of their churches for more than ten years, as opposed to 40% in the non-holistic churches. Exactly what the correlation is between length of membership and outreach

ministry is not clear, but may be grounds for believing that the stable financial and human resource platform a long-term congregation provides is a key underlying element of such activity.

Question 9: Commute time to church.

Although it appears that a higher percentage (44% vs. 28%) of holistic church members drive 15 to 30 minutes one-way to church it should be noted that one of the five holistic churches – Central Presbyterian – is located in the heart of downtown Atlanta and three others – Druid Hills Baptist, Christian Fellowship Baptist and East Cobb UMC – are located in urban areas, whereas of the non-holistic churches only St. Mark UMC is urban, while all the others are suburban. That there is, however, reason to believe certain members of holistic churches will drive further to go to church was borne out in subsequent interviews, wherein such people asserted that their membership of the church was primarily predicated on the church's outreach ministry activities rather than the proximity of the church to their home.

Question 10: Single main reason to remain involved with church.

1. Although the three most common responses from holistic and non-holistic churches are the same, there is a considerable statistical difference between the percentages of responses for each question, as table 5.3 shows. This question permitted only one response out of eleven. While the majority of non-holistic responses (70%) clustered around responses c, (I grow spiritually at this church), d, (I feel the presence of the Spirit in this church) and f, (I feel this church is under the leadership of Jesus), those same responses from holistic churches garnered only 54%, with the largest part of the balance going to responses a, (Church social

TABLE 5.3

Q. 10: SINGLE MAIN REASON TO REMAIN INVOLVED WITH CHURCH

Response #	Response Description	Number of Respondents: Holistic Churches	Number of Respondents: Non-Holistic Churches
C	"I grow spiritually at this church"	75 (22%)	49 (25%)
D	"I feel the presence of the Spirit in this church"	57 (16%)	48 (25%)
F	'I feel this church is under the leadership of Jesus"	55 (16%)	40 (21%)
Total		187 (54%)	137 (71%)

ministry/ community outreach, 10%) and j, (The Church's Theological or Religious orientation, 8%), in holistic, as opposed to 6% and 5% respectively in non-holistic churches.   With particular regard to "Church social ministry/ community outreach," these responses, sufficiently different to be statistically significant, suggest the presence in the holistic church congregation of a slightly larger number of folk for whom outreach ministry is their major reason for remaining involved with the church.   Taken by itself this result may not be particularly meaningful, but it may have some bearing when combined with other characteristics of holistic churches.

2. More folk in non-holistic churches (70% vs. 54%) report "fulfillment" (a combination of Q.10 responses c, d, and f) as their reason to remain involved with their church.   Holistic congregants have slightly higher responses to reasons related to "denomination" (combined b, g, and j, 16% vs. 10%) and to "outreach" (combined a, e, i, and h, 16% vs. 12.4%).

3. In an attempt to see if different combinations of responses might yield additional information, responses were first grouped under motivations linked to "denomination" (b, g, j), "outreach ministry" (a, e, i, h), "fulfillment" (c, d, f) and "other" (f); and then as "church-oriented motivations" (a, b, e, g, i, j), "personal" (c, d, f, h) and "other" (k).   Such combinations, however, did not highlight any significant differences.

Question 12: Community Outreach participation in last 12 months.

The statistical differences between holistic and non-holistic churches in the responses to this question are unsurprising since they were the basis on which these

churches were selected for study. What is surprising is that while the Holistic congregations responded 78% "yes," an anticipated response, respondents from the non-holistic churches also claimed, at 67%, a relatively high degree of outreach. A reason such a high level of engagement could be asserted by these churches was clarified in subsequent interviews, as follows: All of the non-holistic churches surveyed hold seasonal festivals that are open to the secular community. Although these events, held on the church grounds, are intended to draw folk in, they are claimed as "outreach" activities and it is the significant demands these events make on the human resource of the congregation that lead to the elevated response to this survey question.

Question 14: Reasons for doing outreach ministry.

Analysis of responses to the varied reasons for doing ministry posed here is necessarily more subtle. The nature of this question is such that all respondents are likely to respond more toward "very important" than to "not at all important." That they do not indicate that they are *all* "very important," and the extents to which they fall away from that category are possible clues to an underlying ethos. In this regard, holistic and non-holistic churches have similar low responses to "very important #1," but then holistic churches tend to cluster more around "very important #2", whereas the non-holistic churches shift, albeit only slightly, toward "somewhat important #3." The reduced stress non-holistic churches place on importance of individual reasons probably has much to do with the vicarious method by which outreach ministry in such churches is executed, with the concomitant thinking that the third party, as "expert" in ministry, has the best idea of the degree of importance that should be ascribed to each discrete reason. In addition, analysis of other survey responses and information about church ministry motivation

gleaned from interviews suggest that outreach ministry, especially to the local community, is not a high priority in non-holistic churches.

Question 16: Specialized Training.

This question was asked against the background of certain knowledge that none of the churches offered any formal training in any of the areas detailed on the survey. The intent was to discover the perceived level and extent of informal training available in the church intended to prepare congregants for various activities associated with outreach ministry. More than 50% of respondents in holistic and non holistic churches indicate that training in most of the areas listed (and others that are not) is available. The exceptions are Lay Leadership for non-holistic churches (a marginal response, in that the "yes" and "no" responses are about equally divided) and Lay Leadership and Ministry to the Homeless for holistic churches (which show a definite leaning in favor of "no" responses). In light of subsequent congregational interviews which seem to show that non-holistic churches intentionally de-emphasize community ministry, a question that emerges is, "Why do congregations not focused on community ministry nevertheless claim to have available to them training directed toward such ministry?" Again, subsequent interviews with these congregations clarified the issue: First, any formal Sunday school teaching or pulpit preaching that has as its core an emphasis on the topics listed is considered "training" in that topic; second, the Bible itself is understood to be in some respects a document that provides training on every aspect of engagement of the community of the "saved" with the secular world. Thus reading and studying the Bible, individually and in groups, is considered in a way to be receiving training in all fields of human endeavor, including outreach ministry.

Question 17: "Hands on" or "Hands off" pastoral leadership.

Although the variance between them is statistically significant, both holistic and non-holistic church respondents claim high degrees of "hands off" ministry (73% and 82% respectively).   Even though this is of course a subjective response, reflective of a perception rather than a reality, there is some evidence that the pastors of holistic churches are slightly more engaged with the various activities of their congregations than pastors of non-holistic churches. Exactly how this engagement is exercised is not clear, but subsequent interviews with the pastoral leadership of the various churches indicated that although among the holistic congregations outreach ministry programs enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy, the pastor was generally very conscious of, and even directly involved in, some ministries and strongly promoted congregational involvement in all the ministries of the church. Such promotional activities may be what give rise to the perception of a higher degree of pastoral management in these churches.

Question 19: Rating organizational issues.

This question suffers from the same inherent problem as question 14 in that respondents might consider themselves being unfaithful or disloyal if, even considering the anonymous nature of the survey, they make any claims about the church that may be seen as negative. Nevertheless, differences in responses from holistic and non-holistic churches are evident and may suggest some slight variation in underlying character or ethos. Mean responses for the holistic churches cluster around "good," with responses evenly balanced on either side; for the non-holistic churches, mean responses edge slightly more toward "fair," with a slight preponderance of responses on the "fair" side of the mean. When combined with responses to question 17, the implication is that holistic

churches are slightly more organized and under slightly higher pastoral oversight than non-holistic churches.

Question 20: Congregational Priorities.

As with Questions 14 and 19, in which the desire to put one's church in the "best light" might influence responses, the nature of the sub-questions here invite human nature to intervene. The fact that once again, however, there are consistent differences between holistic and non-holistic churches in terms of responses suggests that there is some underlying character difference between the two types of congregations, although the exact nature of that difference is not clear. What can be said is that the mean response for holistic churches and the responses in general, cluster in an area slightly higher than those for the non-holistic churches. That is, the holistic churches tend to apply a "statistically significant" tendency toward higher priority of the listed ministries overall than do the non-holistic churches. This finding is supported by responses to question 21b (see below), which suggests that non-holistic churches rely more heavily on a ministry of words than a ministry of action and is further supported by evidence gleaned from interviews, which suggests that while non-holistic churches have an interest in community ministry, such ministry is not considered as high a priority as is such ministry to members of the church's Christian community.

Question 21: Questions about beliefs.

This question posed some analytical difficulties. Although it was identified as a "core variable" question (Table 5.1), the internal consistency of the sub-questions was extremely weak. This meant that rather than summarizing responses into a mean, each response to each sub-question had to be studied individually. Thus, rather than a "trend"

developed from responses, only responses to discrete questions could be analyzed. Such

analysis determined that there were four questions with statistically significant

differences between holistic and non-holistic churches: sub-questions b, g, h, and j.

Sub-question b: "The way to share God's love is by telling them about Jesus," vs. "the way to share God's love with people is to demonstrate it with caring actions."

When responses 4 and 5 are combined, fully 79% of holistic-church respondents

agreed with the second statement as opposed to 62% of non-holistic church respondents.

Conversely, 14% of holistic-church respondents agreed with the first statement (1 and 2

combined) as opposed to 25% of non-holistic churches. The responses here indicate a

very strong divide between holistic (actions) and non-holistic (words) churches in terms

of attitudes toward and strategies to engage ministry. Clearly both types of churches use

both strategies, but the stress each type of church puts on each strategy is significantly

different.

Sub-question g: "Poverty is largely due to a person's immoral lifestyle, laziness, or drugs," vs. "Poverty is largely due to social, economic, and political factors, racism, and lack of good jobs."

Of holistic churches, 45% agreed wholly with the second statement as opposed to

32% of non-holistic churches. If responses 4 & 5 are combined the percentages are 77%

vs. 63% respectively. That there is a significant difference in attitude between the two

church types when it comes to considering reasons surrounding indigence is very evident.

Sub-question h: "Christian ministry should be directed mainly to other members of the Christian faith," vs. "Christian ministry should be directed to all members of society."

Again, 68% of holistic churches agreed with the second statement as opposed to

61% of non-holistic churches and if responses 4 and 5 are combined, the percentages are

92% vs. 84% respectively. Although the difference is small, non-holistic churches have a statistically significant reduced interest in ministry outside the Christian community, in favor of ministry to those who are "in the family."

> **Sub-question j: "Any church's social action should be directed to all who are in need in the world," vs. "Any church's social action should be directed primarily toward its local community."**

Some 38% of holistic churches agreed with the first statement, as opposed to 30% of non-holistic churches. If responses 1 and 2 are combined, the numbers change to 62% and 48% respectively.

This is an interesting result in light of the fact that holistic churches predominantly focus on community ministry, whereas non-holistic churches tend to shun hands-on, community ministries in favor of those they can support at a distance or through a third party. One reason the response may appear the way it does is the way the question might have been interpreted; a holistically-minded respondent, not wanting to imply that ministry to the local community excludes global ministry, will choose the response "all who are in need in the world" because "all" necessarily includes the local community.

5.2.4   Characteristics identified from Surveys: Preliminary Conclusions.

Nine congregational characteristics were deduced from the questions discussed in section 5.2.3, as follows:

5.2.4.1   Church Membership

Although the actual meaning is obscure, long-term (10+ years) membership seems to play some role in the development of holism, at least as it applies to outreach. At least two possibilities may be considered: first, that long-term membership provides a

stable "platform" from which to conduct community ministry; second, that it can, in some cases, take several years for a congregation to reach a level of comfort within its own community before it feels in some way prepared to reach outside of itself.

5.2.4.2   Ministry Emphasis and Opportunity

The holistic churches stress the importance of outreach and offer extensive opportunities for persons to engage in such ministries. People attracted to or desirous of engaging community outreach ministry were drawn to join a church that offers such ministry opportunities even though doing so meant, in some cases, driving considerable distances, or for lengthy periods.

5.2.4.3   Pastoral Oversight

Although pastors of holistic churches are largely perceived to be "hands off," they are only slightly less so than their non-holistic peers. Another way to say this is that pastors in holistic churches tend to a slightly higher managerial oversight than those in a non-holistic setting, although such management tends to present itself less as formal management and more as what may be termed "concerned interest."

5.2.4.4   Ministry Structures

The holistic churches are rather better organized, especially in terms of structures for identifying, authenticating, and administering outreach programs.

5.2.4.5   Ministry Training

The holistic churches offer somewhat more in terms of specialized – albeit informal – training in a broad range of areas than do the non-holistic churches. Considering the lack of holistic ministry in non-holistic churches, this result is not surprising.

5.2.4.6   Local Outreach and Personal Involvement

The holistic churches place a high priority on the importance of outreach ministries to the local community and on the need for individuals to become personally involved in such ministries.

5.2.4.7   Congregational Support

Members of the holistic church families believe that "actions speak louder than words" and where they cannot themselves be actively involved in community ministry, they enthusiastically support others in the congregation in their efforts to do so.

5.2.4.8   Focus on Poverty

The holistic congregations believe strongly that poverty is usually not a voluntary condition and will engage in, support and encourage a variety of programs intended to help the poor.

5.2.4.9   Ministry to All

The holistic congregations believe that ministry is a global need, but that emphasis should be placed on the immediate community and should be applied regardless of the religious affiliation or lack thereof on the part of recipients.

To provide a complete picture of the characteristics of holism in terms of the churches studied, the results of the objectively determined characteristics of holism just described must be reviewed in the light of the subjective analysis detailed in chapter four and summarized in the next section.

5.3. SUBJECTIVE RESULTS

Jesus […] formed a community. This community has as its heart the remembering and rehearsing of his words and deeds, and the sacraments given by him through which it is enabled both to engraft new members into its life and renew this life again and again through sharing in his life through the body broken and the lifeblood poured out. It exists in him and for him. He is the center of its life. Its character is given to it, when it is true to its nature, not by the characters of its members but by his character.
[I]n the Synoptic gospels, the mighty works of Jesus are the work of God's kingly power, of his Spirit. So also with the disciples. It is the Spirit who will give them power and the Spirit who will bear witness. It is not that they must speak and act, asking the help of the Spirit to do so. It is rather in their faithfulness to Jesus they become the place where the Spirit speaks and acts.
(Newbigin 1989: 118, 119 cf. above p. 8)

Chapter one of this study describes the findings of Bayer (2001) regarding "Christendom" and "post-Christendom" churches. A primary observation developed through the interview process was that churches discovered to be "non-holistic" exactly fit Bayer's "Christendom" model and holistic churches similarly fit his "post-Christendom" description. The focus of this study being community outreach, the question of course is what are the characteristics that lie behind these descriptions? Some basic information relating to this question has been provided by objective data derived from surveys conducted in a range of churches, as noted above. The purpose of this section is to add to those data the subjective material provided through interviews conducted in those same churches. These interviews identified the following core characteristics.

5.3.1 Characteristics identified through Interviews: Preliminary conclusions and commentary.

5.3.1.1 Centrality of Jesus.

All the churches studied consistently underscored the centrality of Jesus, but the way such centrality was understood differed significantly between the holistic and non-

holistic congregations. The holistic congregations largely comprise folk whose lives are lived with constant reference to the life words, actions and instructions of Jesus. While fully acknowledging his redemptive death, holistic folk take Jesus' life – understood as a life of preaching, teaching, and healing and largely lived on the margins of society – not only as exemplary of how their own lives are to be lived, but as conduct to be urgently engaged through ministries in and to the wider community. For such folk "salvation" results in a drive to action. The non-holistic congregations, on the other hand, while acknowledging the words and actions of Jesus' life as important and instructive, nevertheless put much greater emphasis on his atoning death ("the blood") and resurrection and the redemption they enjoy through faith in him, a perspective that materializes, in terms of church praxis, as a significantly reduced emphasis on local outreach ministry.

There is a caveat to this observation, however, in that not all members of all non-holistic congregations believe that community ministry should receive reduced emphasis. Some of them want their churches to engage the community and feel in some ways that their churches and their individual lives are incomplete in their function when they fail to do so. The problem for them is that their non-holistic church homes do not provide the necessary structures for such ministry (see 5.3.1.10) and the balance of their churchs' theology and practice is sufficiently meaningful for them to remain where they are rather than move to a church where their desire to participate in outreach ministry might be fulfilled. Some folk in these churches, still desiring to do something for their community, seek relief of their ministry yearnings by joining secular organizations such as community associations, neighborhood watch or beautification committees and the like;

activities that feed their inner desire to engage their community without the necessity of finding a different church home.

5.3.1.2 The Holy Spirit

While the initial desire by an individual to engage outreach ministry has many sources (see 5.3.1.3), there is consensus that the kinds of ministries identified and engaged, the resources necessary to support it and the strength to remain engaged with it were aspects directly attributable the Holy Spirit. For example, the first aspect, identification, would commonly be experienced through a time, or moment, of "insight," when an individual or group, such as a Sunday school group, would become aware of a particular need in the secular community. Resources, strategies and funding then become available in ways that are easily explained in purely rational terms, perhaps, but are nevertheless ascribed in some way to the intervention of the Spirit. Finally persons who engage in outreach ministry describe a sense that ministry in some emotional way "completes" them, that they are made "whole" through their actions. These feelings are often so sufficiently rewarding that they overcome tiredness or negativity, supplying ministry providers the strength to remain engaged long beyond the period that might be expected if the motivation were purely humanitarian.

5.3.1.3 Motivations for Ministry

In most cases, people report being driven to outreach ministry by one or more of the following:

- **Doing what Jesus did:** a belief that Jesus' life of ministry is a model to follow.

- **Biblical mandate**: following the various examples of and commands to ministry contained in the gospels.

- **Following the leadership of the Spirit**: The leadership of the Spirit manifests in two ways. First, in a sense that in some way the individual has been "led" to a life of ministry; second, that such ministry may be identified as being under the leadership of the Spirit when it transcends a brief, occasional and easily fulfilled sense of human responsibility (the so-called "humanitarian" motivation) to become a long-term ministry engagement which is demanding on a number of levels (for example, taking time away from family and/or social life) and whose specific purpose is to be a hermeneutic of the gospel.

- **Altruism/ a desire to serve:** a natural or intrinsic desire to be of service to others. Some people who fell into this category added that "service" to others was a characteristic instilled in their formative years.

- **Repaying the church**: This motivation was largely articulated by folk who were reformed, or reforming, from substance abuse as a result of help and counseling provided by the church, or by folk accepted into the church despite their different sexual orientation. It should be noted though that although the sense of repayment may have been the initial motivator, it is the leadership of the Spirit that is credited with maintaining the desire and individual ability to remain engaged long-term with the outreach ministries of the church.

- **Experiencing the Holy**. Some folk engaged ministry because they felt that by doing so they were standing on sacred ground and experiencing the holy; and while they felt the experience was in some ways frightening, they also felt sanctified, or set apart, by their work.

It is particularly interesting to note that these characteristics, central to outreach ministry in holistic congregations, are shared by some respondents in non-holistic church families. Why this does not result in non-holistic churches becoming holistic was addressed in 5.3.1.1

5.3.1.4 Purpose

For holistic congregations, community ministry is not done to bring people into the church. Rather, the purpose is to be the "good news" of the gospel as a theology of action rather than of words, exercised by giving shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and a voice to the indigent and the intention is to bring relief to souls rather than bring souls into the church. That some people come into the church as a result of this work is a pleasing consequence, but the essential purpose of community ministry is, for holistic congregations, to "be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's redeeming grace for the whole life of society" (Newbigin 1989: 233). The holistic perspective on community ministry is to address the essential physical and emotional needs of individuals and trust that by grace the Spirit will in some way manifest through these actions and bring to salvation those whom it will. Thus saved and unsaved are equally housed, fed, and given voice in, by and through holistic congregations. The contrary view, generally held by non-holistic churches, is to focus only on the winning of souls, with the corollary understanding that saved souls will be equipped by the Spirit to help themselves out of homelessness and hunger, rejoin mainstream society and thereby once again have voice in the community.

5.3.1.5 Unrestricted Outreach

Individuals in Holistic congregations believe that acknowledging Jesus as Lord is also acknowledgement of a call to the service of all people in need, in all places of the world, without restriction. The intrinsic rewards of local ministry, however, (see section 5.3.2) result in a high local manifestation of such ministry.

5.3.1.6 Active Outreach

Active Outreach is a key feature of holistic congregations. It is the realization of intentionality in ministry and manifests as the active seeking out of those in need. Passive Outreach, in contrast, avoids looking for those in need, but is willing to help those who, as it were, come to the church door looking for aid. It is the difference between merely helping the needy that are encountered haphazardly and actively and intentionally seeking out those in need.

5.3.1.7 Holism and Congregational Support

It is quite clear that the adjective "holistic," with particular reference to a church and its community ministry, is somewhat complex. As has been noted elsewhere in this study, a commonplace of reference to any division of labor in social organizations is that often, 20% of the people do 80% of the work. Churches are not exempt from this rule: in fact, in only one of the congregations interviewed did it appear that more than 15% of the congregation were actually directly caught up in outreach ministry at any given time (East Cobb UMC is the exception, with interviewees reporting as many as 50% thus involved, although the church's pastors agree on a much lower, but still significantly high, 30%). This does not mean that the balance of the congregation is disinterested, however. Rather, the 15% are doing what many of the 85% are unable to do because of

age, family or time commitments, or other activities or obligations that preclude their direct involvement. Indeed, some are already involved in other ministries of the church. What most of the 85% do contribute is a shared belief in the importance of community ministry and an environment of approval, praise and enthusiastic prayerful and financial support for it. Thus, although community ministry manifests as a function of the few, it is in fact an expression of the holistic nature of the larger congregation.

5.3.1.8 Overburdening

One negative aspect of the 80/20 rule is "burnout." Regardless of congregational prayer and financial support, there can come a time when folk engaged in ministry (and this observation is not limited to outreach) feel stretched to the limit. This usually occurs when the same ministry is consistently engaged by the same small percentage of the congregation, or when the same people are asked to fill multiple roles. A way holistic churches have found to ease the burden is to involve more people through personal invitation (see 5.3.1.12). Also, holistic churches have found a way to balance the ministry *of* an individual with ministry *to* the individual, for example by providing variety in the ministry experience by rotating individuals through various aspects of a particular ministry, by rotating people through a variety of ministries, by requiring that they take a sabbatical from ministry, or some combination.

5.3.1.9 Pastoral Leadership

The role of the pastor in terms of ministry to the local community by each of the ten churches is, overall, quite varied. In terms of holistic churches, for example, in one instance outreach ministry has been the direct result of the pastor's initial efforts. In another, the pastor has re-awakened a dormant desire or nurtured an incipient inclination

by the congregation of interest in the welfare of the secular community. In a third case, rather than leading the congregation, the pastor's actions in community ministry give further expression to the already existing will and action of the congregation. One commonality pastors of holistic churches share is a constant promotion and reinforcement of the importance of community ministry as both a biblical mandate and a social responsibility. Within the context of holistic churches it should be noted that, in most cases, when the motivation for community ministry has been, as it were, "let out of the box," it tends to stay out.   That is, once a congregation engages the idea, a change in pastors, while it may bring a change in emphasis, or focus, tends not to inhibit existing outreach ministries.

On the other hand, the mindset of folk attracted to non-holistic churches is, by and large, to defer to the leadership of the pastor and it has already been noted that in non-holistic churches a reduced emphasis on ministry in the immediate community has largely been derived from a theological position related to a particular understanding of the centrality of Jesus in the life of the church. Pastoral and/or church leadership adherence to this view tends to passively impede ideas and actions related to ministry within the secular community that may emerge from members of the congregation, a situation compounded by the lack of specific structures within the church that would facilitate such ministries.

5.3.1.10 Organizational Structure

Holistic churches recognize that unrestrained engagement in community ministry can take a church in multiple directions and rapidly drain financial and human resources. While the organizational processes for ministry engagement varied among them in detail,

holistic churches generally have some kind of oversight board/committee for the "authentication" of identified ministries, as well for limiting outreach to those forms of community ministry adopted by the congregation. Authority for funding and oversight of such congregationally endorsed ministries generally falls under the purview of the same group, which will have a congregationally-approved annual budget. So-called "Maverick" ministries – outreach programs outside of those routinely adopted and funded by the congregation as a whole, are funded and resourced through the groups that identify such ministries: Sunday school classes, "brotherhoods," and the like.

5.3.1.11 Qualifications

The combined knowledge of the holistic churches studied suggests the importance of only electing a person or a group to jobs they are qualified to do. While it may seem obvious that people put in positions of responsibility must have the necessary financial, organizational, management, physical, or other skills to be effective in their various roles and equally obvious that if unqualified or inexperienced persons are put in positions of responsibility, the ministries may languish and perhaps altogether fail, it is important on the other hand to give people the opportunity to exercise what they think may be their spiritual gifts (see 5.3.1.13). What these apparently contradictory positions have caused the holistic churches studied to put in place is a method of holding both ministry practitioners and ministry leaders accountable for their actions and intervening if those actions appear to be contrary to the mandate specific to the ministry engaged.

5.3.1.12 Inviting Participation

It is the clear experience of holistic churches that open invitations to a congregation to engage in ministry rarely work. More often what is needed is a personal

request to be involved, accompanied by the reason(s) the person approached is thought to be ideal for a particular role. Volunteers, on the other hand, are almost invariably utilized and allowed to find their own place within the ministry, the general assumption being that the Spirit has motivated them and thus that the Spirit will help them to find their position within a particular ministry. Both instances remain subject to the rules of accountability (5.3.1.11).

5.3.1.13 Spiritual Gifts

Holistic churches have recognized that spiritual gifts are not always the same as professional career training. Being an accountant by training, for example, is not necessarily a spiritual gift to be dedicated to the service of the church any more than is being a skilled plumber or a competent painter. These are things people do for a living, but are not necessarily gifts of the spirit. Instead, a trained accountant may be a gifted carpenter; a journeyman plumber might be gifted with an extraordinary singing voice; and a skilled painter might be gifted with excellent organizational skills.   In holistic churches, people are encouraged to open themselves up to self-exploration of undeveloped interests in the expectation that somewhere among those interests is one, or perhaps more than one, that can be nurtured by the Spirit for the use of the church.

5.3.1.14 Ecumenism

Holistic congregations are sufficiently comfortable and self-assured with who they are and what they are as a church and as a community that they are not afraid to cross denominational or religious boundaries if doing so amplifies their community efforts. In such instances, issues of theology, doctrine, religious practice and other often divisive matters are set aside in favor of a common focus on the welfare of folk in the

immediate secular community. Non-holistic congregations, on the other hand, tend to stick fairly closely to groups and associations sharing a common theological perspective and practice.

5.3.1.15 Young People

While all ten churches acknowledge the presence of youth within their congregations by having ministries oriented toward them, holistic congregations tend to be proactive in involving their youth in the church's wider ministries, both in a capacity that allows the young people to be made aware, through their representative presence on various boards and committees, of what is going on in the church and similarly, in some cases at least, in an advisory capacity to let the various boards and committees know what is going on with the youth of the church. Further, specific outreach ministries oriented to the postmodern characteristic of contemporary youth are developed both by the young people themselves and by youth ministers, to keep the young people involved in their own way with the church's various activities in the community.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The intention of this study was to identify and define the underlying characteristics of five congregations that engage in holistic ministry anticipating, as the research hypothesis in chapter one states, that "If there is an ethos common to congregations that engage in holistic ministry, and if it can be discerned, generalization of that ethos will help other churches make a difference in their communities."   This study has demonstrated that there are indeed a number of factors, the application of which may contribute to an ethos of holism in a given church. It remains here to make a few concluding remarks.

5.4.1   No Observed "Postmodern" Problem

It was thought at the outset that the developing attitudes of contemporary society captured in the expression "postmodern" would be a major factor impacting the holistic nature of the church. The study suggests differently. There is a general absence of a "postmodern problem" – within the strict terms of outreach ministry – in the churches studied.   To be sure, the church is increasingly having to make accommodation for postmoderns in its faith community; East Cobb UMC, for example, has adapted to the transient attention of its youth group by designing short-term outreach ministries. Accommodations in general though, rather than impacting outreach ministry, focus more on adapting the traditional structures of faith and worship to the postmodern character without alienating the more conservative members of the church family.   These adaptations usually emerge in one of three ways: by having completely separate services each week that speak to the differing needs of conservative and postmodern (usually referred to as "Traditional" and "Contemporary" services), by holding Traditional and Contemporary services on a rotating schedule, or by mixing a little "Contemporary" worship in with "Traditional," or vice versa. Accommodations in terms of faith are a little harder to quantify, but the study shows a strong case could be made that a willingness to revisit traditional approaches to the overall nature of being and doing church for the dual purpose of increasing the church's relevance to postmoderns and constructive usefulness in and to society is fundamental to holism.   For example, historically many churches have traditionally developed a standard, or set of standards, related to human behavior to determine who is "in" the fellowship of the saved and who is not. Such standards, by which and through which it is believed an individual's "true"

adherence to the Christian faith can be determined, include tobacco and alcohol use, a history of divorce, the kind of attire worn to church, non-traditional sexual mores, whether or not an individual has a "correct" understanding of the scriptures, the kind of employment individuals engage in, regularity of attendance in church, and whether or not the individual practices true tithing. Churches that employ these standards claim biblical support, which is often found in a narrow interpretation of a single, frequently obscure text. Where the development and application of standards of this kind have been part of their history, holistic congregations – and their pastoral leadership – have revisited them and, if not abandoning them altogether, at least embrace a softer interpretation of the texts in question, being guided more by an inclusivist interpretation of the New Testament as a whole rather than by a narrow, exclusivist application of particular texts.

5.4.2   Desire versus Ability to "Engage" Community

The study was undertaken in the belief that as a general rule, churches failing to engage their communities were not failing as a matter of desire, but rather of ability; they wanted to practice community ministry but in some way lacked an element, or elements, of congregational ethos critical to that end. This study has demonstrated the naïveté of that belief by illuminating the reality that there are in fact churches for whom community ministry, while sometimes a matter of some importance to at least a portion of the congregation, is not a matter intrinsic to the overall theology or doctrine of such churches and thus their practice. For these churches community engagement, or the lack of it, is a non-issue; their focus is elsewhere. Nevertheless, that there are some churches that wish to be more involved in community ministry but lack some particular element or elements of holism is demonstrated in the cases of St. Mark UMC and St. Andrews Presbyterian,

both churches being on the brink, as it were, but in some way lacking the catalyst to bring holism into being.

5.4.3   Interpreting the Life of Jesus

The words and works of Jesus are clearly what place him at the center of a holistic church's faith and life. Among holistic congregations, Jesus' atoning death on the cross is seen as the crowning moment of a life of care and compassion for humankind. During his life, he ministered to those sections of society that would have him – usually the poor and the marginalized, occasionally a few of the upper levels of society – but his ultimate act of ministry embraced all of humankind, a clear demonstration that he believed all people mattered. It is the idea that if all people mattered to Jesus, then they must matter to people who believe in Jesus that motivates outreach ministry. As a result, holistic congregations are not passively content in the knowledge that they are saved through faith. Rather, they believe that salvation is active, that salvation is a call to follow Jesus – not as a metaphorical following, indicating regular prayer, worship and Bible study – but as a call to action. Their understanding of salvation impels them to do what Jesus did – minister where they can and when they can to the best of their ability.

5.4.4   A Congregational "Culture of Care"

A congregation does not become holistic through the work of a few of its members. While it is true that only a few members of the congregation are actually engaged in the church's ministries, those involved individuals and the ministries themselves are upheld by congregations characterized by a culture of genuine concern for the welfare of all people in all places.   This culture of care, it should be noted, comes from the aggregation of people in whom there exists an intrinsic quality of compassion

that goes beyond casual humanitarian concern for and alleviation of the needs of the less fortunate to a deep and abiding interest and effort toward permanent improvement in their lives. Also, people who have this intrinsic quality are usually drawn to faith communities where it can be exercised.

5.4.5   Spirituality as Congregational Action

It is obedience to the felt need of "living a life like Jesus," confirmed by sincere willingness to engage in and/or support ministry to all people in all places that creates the environment in which the Spirit materializes as the life and action of the congregation. The presence of the Spirit manifests itself in multiple ways: for example in congregational openness to new ministries; in confidence that financial and human resources will be found to meet expanding need; and in sustaining the human spirit of those who might otherwise be overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them by the ministry they practice. Thus there seems no doubt that faithfulness to the call to action – perceived by holistic church families as central to their religious convictions – creates a visible point of reference for the work of the Spirit, and that the visibility of the Spirit then further stimulates the congregation to even greater effort.

5.4.6   Pastoral Leadership

Although it has been noted that once a church begins the practice of outreach such outreach becomes self-sustaining, the level of a pastor's interest strongly influences the nature and extent of the ministry. During every interview conducted in the churches studied, the pastor was credited with shaping the church's theology and ministry. Indeed, every church appeared in many ways to be an extension of the character of the pastor. That this should be so is somewhat intuitive, since each pastor has to meet the specific

theological and practical requirements of the congregation. However, this study suggests that in holistic churches the pastor's character *vis-à-vis* the congregation is shaped in a situation of mutual reciprocity: Once called and installed, interaction between pastor and congregation begins an ongoing process whereby the character or ethos of the congregation forms and reforms. In due course, the pastor becomes the embodiment of the church's ethos, and through formal preaching and teaching, administrative meetings with lay leaders and informal attitude and conversation within and among the church family, leads the congregation in the direction the ethos determines.

5.4.7 Applicability of Conclusions

To affirm that the traits or qualities identified above are in some way fundamental to an ethos of holism or that they have universal application would be presumptuous; there are surely others, perhaps more intrinsic to holism than these, which the design of the study failed to reveal. When it comes to application experience tells us that what works in one socio-religious environment often will not work in another. Nevertheless, it is believed that the characteristics noted above do, to some degree, paint at least a broad description of the qualities that underlie the ethos of holistic churches and present some promising avenues that churches wishing to become – or become *more* – holistic might profitably explore. It is the sincere hope of this writer that those pastors called to lead their congregations to an enlarged ministry in the greater secular community – who seek, indeed, to embody the Holy Spirit in making the Kingdom of God a reality – and the faith communities with whom such pastors labor will find the results of this study of some small benefit, to the greater glory of God.

GRAYSON, GEORGIA, MAY 13, 2005.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CHURCH & MINISTRY SCREENING SURVEY

Name of person completing survey _____ Position:_____

1. WHAT IS THE <u>APPROXIMATE</u> POPULATION OF YOUR CHURCH FAMILY (MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS)?

1☐ less than 50   2☐ 51 – 100   3 ☐ 101 – 200   4☐ 201 – 500   5☐ 501 – 1000   6☐ 1000 +

2. <u>EXCLUDING THE SUMMER VACATION PERIOD</u> (MID MAY THRU MID AUGUST), ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE CHURCH POPULATION ATTENDS AT LEAST ONE WORSHIP SERVICE A WEEK?

1☐ less than 20%   2☐ 20-30%   3☐ 30-40%   4☐ 40-50%   5☐ 50-60%   6☐ 60-75%   7☐ 75%+

3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES *TO THE SECULAR COMMUNITY* DOES YOUR CHURCH <u>CONSISTENTLY</u> ENGAGE IN? (check all that apply)

a☐   Sponsoring or providing low income housing, or rent assistance.

b☐   Sponsoring or providing food or clothing for the needy, e.g. through Atlanta Union Mission, Atlanta Community Food Bank, or other local, charitable organizations.

c☐   Taking the gospel to non-Christians through organized evangelism programs.

d☐   Sponsoring or providing "step" programs, e.g. for alcohol, drug, or nicotine addiction

e☐   Sponsoring or providing job training, G.E.D. training, adult literacy programs

f☐   Making peaceful protests (e.g. against war, injustice) in public places

g☐   Sponsoring or providing legal aid services

h☐   Some form of **AIDS** outreach or fellowship

i☐   Prison ministries

j☐   Promoting social or political change through community organizing or advocacy

k☐   Providing emergency financial assistance to persons in crisis.

l☐   Participating in parachurch ministries, e.g. Habitat for Humanity, Campus Crusade, World Mission

m☐   Visitation to the elderly and shut-ins of the secular community

n☐   Maintenance/repair of homes/apartments of the elderly and disabled

o☐   Providing transportation and/or shopping service to the elderly and shut ins

p☐   Some form of ministry to teens (sports, academics, pregnancy counseling, literacy programs, etc.)

Describe up to three other ministries to the secular community that your church <u>consistently</u> provides

q☐   _____

r☐   _____

s☐   _____

4. ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR CHURCH FAMILY OVERALL IS ENGAGED IN THE MINISTRIES CHECKED ABOVE?

1☐   Less than 10%   2☐ 10 – 20%   3☐ 20 - 30%   4☐ 30 – 40%   5☐ 40 – 50%   6☐ More than 50%

5. THE IDEAS FOR SECULAR MINISTRY IN THIS CHURCH COME <u>MOSTLY</u> (circle a *single* number that best answers the question):

From the pastoral leadership of the church   1   2   3   4   5   6   From the congregation

6.   THIS CHURCH'S MINISTRIES TO THE SECULAR COMMUNITY ARE (circle a *single* number that best answers the question):

Directed mainly by the pastoral leadership   1   2   3   4   5   6   Directed mainly by lay leaders

7. PLEASE NAME A CHURCH IN GREATER ATLANTA THAT YOU THINK DOES AN EXCEPTIONAL JOB OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Church name _____ Denomination_____

APPENDIX 2

CHURCH AND MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE[4]

Dear Friend in Christ:
Grace and peace to you!

As you may well know, in many places the Christian church is in a major decline. The fundamental purpose of this questionnaire is to provide an improved understanding of people like you, your church, and your involvement with the church's ministries, so that we may understand better how to increase the effectiveness of the church. Your answers will be anonymous; do not write your name on the survey. Please return your completed document as soon as possible.

We hope that you enjoy filling out this questionnaire and reflecting on your church and its ministries. Your response is very important, because you are the only one who can tell us about your unique opinions and activities, and give us clues to expanding the Kingdom of God through the activities of churches and congregations across the country, and around the world.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Instructions.

1. The survey is anonymous – please do not write your name on it!
2. The survey is intended to reflect an INDIVIDUAL, not a family. (Each adult family member is invited to complete a survey of their own.)
3. Please answer the questions in the order they appear – don't "skip ahead" and then come back.
4. Please read each question and the listed possible answers *before* selecting a response.
5. In the instances where you are asked to pick a number in a range to indicate whether you agree with one statement more than another, please circle only one number, e.g. Correct   1   2 ③ 4 5 6   Incorrect 1   2 ③ ④ 5 6
6. Where responses need to be written in, please write clearly, and as concisely as possible.
7. Finally, please remember your church was selected for survey because of the <u>way things are</u> in your church, NOT the way you <u>wish things were</u>. So, please be as accurate as possible in your answers.

Please return completed survey to the church office <u>*as soon as possible*</u>

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[4] Adapted from Ronald J. Sider and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Congregations, Community Outreach and Leadership Development Project,* and Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*. Used by permission.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. WHICH AGE BRACKET ARE YOU IN?   1   20 or under   2   21-30   3   31-45   4   46-60   5   61 or above

2.   ARE YOU: 1   Female   2   Male

3.   ARE YOU 1   Unmarried, in a Domestic Partnership 2   Single (divorced, widowed, separated, never married) 3   Married

4.   ARE YOU: 1   Employed full-time 2   Employed part-time   3   Unemployed 4   Retired

5.   DO YOU HAVE A SUBSCRIPTION TO :
   1. a newspaper? 1   YES   2   NO
   2. a national news magazine (e.g. Newsweek®, Time®, U.S.News®)?   1   YES   2   NO

6.   HOW OFTEN DO YOU WATCH THE NEWS ON TELEVISION?
   1   About every day   2   3-4 times a week   3   1-2 times a week   4   Less than once a week 5   Never

II. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CHURCH

7.   HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THIS GENERAL AREA?
       1   Less than one year   2   2-4 years   3   5-9 years   4   10-19 years   5   20+ years

8. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ATTENDING THIS CHURCH?
1   Less than one year   2   Two to Five years   3   Six to Ten years   4   More than Ten years

9. HOW LONG DOES IT USUALLY TAKE YOU TO GET TO CHURCH?
   1   Under fifteen minutes   2   Between fifteen and thirty minutes   3   Over half an hour

10. PLEASE INDICATE THE <u>SINGLE MAIN REASON</u> YOU REMAIN INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHURCH (MARK ONE RESPONSE ONLY)

   a _____ Church social ministry/community outreach   b. _____ The church's denominational affiliation
   c. _____ I grow spiritually at this church   d._____ I feel the presence of the Spirit in this church
   e. _____ The church reaches non-Christians with the Gospel f. _____ I feel this church is under the leadership of Jesus
   g. _____ The church is committed to promoting social justice   h. _____ Opportunities to do ministry
   i. _____ Church evangelistic program   j. _____   The Church's Theological or Religious orientation

   k. _____ Other (please write in your reason) _____

11. DO YOU <u>USUALLY</u> ATTEND: 1   Sunday School only 2   Worship Service only 3   Both Sunday School and Worship Service

III. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

12.   HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANY COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY PROGRAMS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?
   1   **NO** *Skip to question 15*   2   **YES** (go to question 13)

13.   DO YOU ROUTINELY ENGAGE IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES?
   1   **NO** *Skip to question 15*   2   **YES (go to question 14)**

14. For each of the following "reasons for doing outreach ministry," please circle a *single* number between 1 and 6 on each line, showing how important each reason is for your involvement in outreach ministry.

Reason	Very important		Somewhat important		Not at all important	
a. Showing compassion to individuals in need………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Helping make society more just……………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Helps me experience God in a deeper way………………………….	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Bringing persons served by outreach ministries to the Christian faith…	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Bringing persons served by outreach into church as potential members..	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Obeying a sense of call or direction from God……………………….	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Showing thanks for what God has done for me………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Doing what is expected by church	1	2	3	4	5	6

leaders…………………………...

i.	I'm following the leadership of the Spirit…………………………….	1	2	3	4	5	6
j.	I feel called to do it as a Christian duty ……………………………..	1	2	3	4	5	6
k.	It gives me a sense of Spiritual fulfillment …………………………..	1	2	3	4	5	6
l.	It gives me a sense of being true to my faith ………………………..	1	2	3	4	5	6
m.	I feel "gifted" in those areas of ministry………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
n.	I believe It's what Jesus wants me to do…………………………….	1	2	3	4	5	6

15.   CHECK THE SINGLE, MOST IMPORTANT REASON YOU HAVE NOT SPENT TIME INVOLVED IN YOUR CHURCH'S OUTREACH MINISTRIES

1   I'm too busy with work, family, and activities outside the church   5   I live too far away

2   These ministries don't seem important   6   The church's ministries are not well organized

3   No one has asked me to get involved   7   I don't think I'm gifted or called in this area

4   I was involved in the past and got burned out   8   Other (please write

in)_____

16.   DOES YOUR CHURCH OFFER TRAINING IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS? *(Check all that apply)*

1   Lay leadership (for example, how to lead a Bible study) 5   Community or economic development ministries

2   Evangelism   6   Race reconciliation or cross cultural relations

3   Social Justice issues   7   Peaceful demonstration/ passive resistance

4   Ministry to the homeless   8   Other (please write in) _____

IV. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CHURCH

17.   WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN YOUR CHURCH IS *HANDS ON* (ENGAGED IN ALL THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH) OR *HANDS OFF* (ALLOWS LAY MEMBERS AND LEADERS A FREE HAND IN ORGANIZING AND MANAGING FUNCTIONS SUCH AS COMMUNITY OUTREACH, BIBLE STUDIES, PRAYER GROUPS, ETC.)?

1   Hands On   2   Hands Off

18.   BELOW IS A LIST OF WORDS OR PHRASES THAT MIGHT BE USED TO DESCRIBE A CHURCH. ON EACH LINE, PLEASE CIRCLE A *SINGLE* NUMBER FROM 1 TO 6 ACCORDING TO HOW MUCH YOU THINK EACH PHRASE DESCRIBES YOUR CHURCH.

Very much describes this church   Does not at all Describe this church

a.	traditional …………………………………..	1	2	3	4	5	6
b.	Contemporary…………………………………..	1	2	3	4	5	6
c.	like a family ………………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
d.	an agent for social change…………………..	1	2	3	4	5	6
e.	refuge for members ………………………….	1	2	3	4	5	6
f.	evangelistic ………………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
g.	empowering ………………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
h.	respected by other churches and the	1	2	3	4	5	6

community   .

i.	compassionate ………………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
j.	community partner …………………………	1	2	3	4	5	6
k.	cares for people outside the church………….	1	2	3	4	5	6
l.	tries hard to live up to gospel principles………	1	2	3	4	5	6
m.	A Spiritually vital and alive community…………	1	2	3	4	5	6

19.   HOW WOULD YOU RATE HOW YOUR CHURCH DEALS WITH THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
a. Keeping people informed about the various ministry groups and opportunities					
b. Keeping people informed of community outreach needs………………….					
c. Giving people opportunities to make input into decisions affecting the church .					
d. Dealing with disagreements and conflicts………………………………..					
e. Cultivating people for leadership positions………………………………					
f. Encouraging members to identify ministry opportunities…………………..					
g. Involving people in the church's various ministries……………………….					
h. Empowering lay leadership to manage outreach ministries………………....					

20.   PLEASE IDENTIFY THE PRIORITY YOU BELIEVE YOUR CONGREGATION PLACES ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES:

	1.High priority	2.Medium priority	3.Low priority
a. Outreach and ministry to people who do not attend church………………………………..			
b. Evangelism in the local community……………………………………………………...			
c. Sponsoring/providing social service ministries to meet basic needs (food, shelter) ………….			
d. Spreading the gospel through organized evangelism programs…………………………….			
e. Welcoming age, ethnic, and/or income diversity in the church………………………………			
f. Aggressively promoting social/political change through community organizing or advocacy……			
g. Sponsoring community development programs (e.g. job training)…………………………..			
h. Training members to share their faith with friends and			

strangers…………………………...

i. Giving emergency assistance to persons in crisis (e.g. help with rent)………………………

j. Financially aiding denominational or other agencies' ministry programs……………………..

k.   Working with youth to help them develop values and life skills……………………………..

l. Educating the church on social concerns…………………………………………………

m. Encouraging members to participate in short-term mission trips……………………………

n. Networking with local nonprofits, civic groups and other churches…………………………

o. Promoting member ministry to the hungry, homeless, etc……………………………………

p. Providing health programs – Parish nurse, fitness classes, weight loss programs, "step" programs for addictions (e.g. nicotine, drugs, gambling)…………………………………..

─────────────────────────V. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR BELIEFS─────────────────────────

21.   FOR EACH SET OF STATEMENTS BELOW, PLEASE CIRCLE THE *SINGLE* NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR BELIEFS. "1"MEANS YOU AGREE ENTIRELY WITH THE STATEMENT ON THE LEFT, "2" MEANS YOU AGREE SOMEWHAT WITH THE STATEMENT ON THE LEFT, "3" MEANS YOU ARE UNDECIDED, "4" MEANS YOU AGREE MORE WITH THE STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT, AND "5" MEANS YOU AGREE ENTIRELY WITH THE STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT.

a. The task of the church is to work to change society.	1	2	3	4	5	The task of the church is to work to change the lives of individuals.
b. The way to share God's love with people is by telling them about Jesus.	1	2	3	4	5	The way to share God's love with people is by demonstrating it with caring actions.
c. Government is responsible for meeting the needs of the poor.	1	2	3	4	5	The church is responsible for meeting the needs of the poor.
d. Christian faith should focus on growing in one's relationship to God.	1	2	3	4	5	Christian faith should focus on promoting peace, wholeness, and justice in society.
e. The church should focus on helping people here and now.	1	2	3	4	5	The church should focus on preparing people for eternal life after death.
f. Churches should care mostly for people's social and emotional well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	Churches should care mostly for people's spiritual well-being.
g. Poverty is largely due to a person's immoral lifestyle, laziness, or drugs.	1	2	3	4	5	Poverty is largely due to social, economic, and political factors, racism, and lack of good jobs.
h. Christian ministry should be directed mainly to other members of the Christian faith.	1	2	3	4	5	Christian ministry should be directed to all members of society.
j. Any church's social action should be directed to all who are in need in the world.	1	2	3	4	5	Any Church's social action should be directed primarily toward its local community.
k. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual realm that can only be attained after death	1	2	3	4	5	The Kingdom of God could exist on earth if only everyone would live by gospel principles.
l. Christians should always practice grace, tolerance, love, forgiveness, and mercy.	1	2	3	4	5	Grace, tolerance, love, forgiveness, and mercy must be tempered by Justice.
m. Christians should minister to all who are sick, hungry, homeless or otherwise needy.	1	2	3	4	5	Christians should minister only to those who first accept Christ as their savior.
n. Christians should follow the leadership of the Spirit.	1	2	3	4	5	Christians should follow the direction of their Church leadership.

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little about the history of your church. (Does the church have a formal written history?)

2. What do you see, or what have you heard about as being, the major accomplishments of this church?

3. How has the church changed in the last decade, and why?

4. What motivated folk to join this church? What does the church expect of its new members, and how are they made aware of these expectations?

5. Does the church have a "mission statement?" If so, what is it? How old is it? How much congregational participation was there in its development? Does the church live up to its mission? If so, in what way? If not, why not?

6. What does the church expect of its members, and why? How do members know those expectations? What are the expected levels of participation and investment in the congregational and secular communities? What activities energize the congregation?

7. What is the church's attitude toward ministry to the immediate community? How active is the church in "get your hands dirty" community ministry? What motivates the congregation in this regard?   (If the church is not engaged in community ministry, what are the reasons?)

8. Does this church partner with other churches for any reason? If so, which other churches, and why?

9. What structures exist in the church for the identification, authentication, and administration of outreach ministry? How are the financial and human resources for ministry obtained?

10. Describe what you see as the difference between humanitarian motivations and spiritually-driven motivations to help others.

11. How are Jesus and the Holy Spirit portrayed within this community? Where would you go, or in what activities would you engage, to experience a sense of "holiness" or "spirituality?"

12. How do you "engage the sacred?" What language do people in the church use to describe their understanding of the sacred?

13. Who makes the decisions in the church, and how? What role does the pastor play in leading the church? What is the church's administrative structure? Who do you think has "control" in the church, and why?

14. What do you see as the major issues facing your church,? The Church in the U.S? In the world? What language is mainly used within this congregation to talk about these issues – theological, or political?

15. Describe the nature of any youth/young persons group activities in the church, including any activity in outreach ministry.

16. What else would you like me to know about your church?

APPENDIX 4

Statistical Analysis of Church and Ministry Involvement Study

Client: Steve deClaissé-Walford

Advisor: Daniel Hall, Phd.

Student Consultant: Michael Roca

The University of Georgia

Executive Summary:

This analysis of a survey created and administered by Mr. deClaissé-Walford reveals a number of statistically significant differences between churches with high numbers of ministries (holistic) versus churches with low number of ministries (non-holistic).

Table of Contents

Introduction

This study is an analysis of survey results with the intended goal of discerning differences between churches with high numbers of ministries versus churches with low numbers of ministries. These two groups of churches are accordingly referred to as 'holistic' or 'non-holistic'.

Preliminary Survey

The Church and Ministry Screening Survey was sent out to 247 churches with 50 analyzable responses. This survey, which was answered either by church workers or the minister directly, asked seven basic questions regarding church size, attendance, ministry engagement, as well as the number of types of ministries present at that church. This information was then utilized by the client to determine the churches used for the primary phase of the study.

Primary Survey

The Church and Ministry Involvement Questionnaire was administered to congregants of five churches determined to be holistic (high number of ministries) and five churches determined to be non-holistic (low number of ministries). This survey, which contains 21 questions, asked congregants about their demographics, church and ministry involvement, opinions of their respective church, and personal beliefs.

These results are analyzed in this study for the purpose of identifying distinct differences between the two groups of churches.

Methodology

Preliminary Survey

The Church and Ministry Screening Survey is compiled with simple histograms and counts. While this compilation does not directly answer the intended purpose of the survey, it can give the reader a general idea of the church population considered for the primary portion of the study.

Primary Survey

The Church and Ministry Involvement Questionnaire is first sorted by whether or not the corresponding church was holistic or non-holistic. These two groups were then analyzed for statistically significant differences by a number of statistical methods described below. If differences were found, then the holistic and non-holistic churches were analyzed separately with the same test to determine statistically significant differences within each group.

Statistical Analysis Test	Problems Analyzed With This Method*
Chi-Square Test for Independence	2, 3, 3alt, 4, 4alt, 5, 10alt1, 10alt2, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17
Kruskal-Wallis Test	1, 6, 7, 8, 8alt, 9, and all sub-questions of 21
Coefficient Alpha and ANOVA	14,18,19,20,21
(not possible)	Original responses to 10, 15

*alt refers to an analysis involving a combination of the original survey responses

<div align="center">**Description of Statistical Testing Methods**</div>

Chi-Square Test for Independence

Every statistical test makes some assumptions about the data being assessed. For this test, the data is assumed to have been randomly collected (that is, every respondent has the same probability as any other respondent of choosing a particular response irrespective of the other respondents). Further, the respondents must fall into exactly 1 of several categories (i.e. church or type of church) and exactly 1 of each question response (i.e male versus female).

This test makes the initial hypothesis that there are no significant differences between the chosen categories (church or church type) and tests to see if there is sufficient evidence to state that a statistically significant difference actually does exist.

The strength of this association is measured by the "p-value". For this analysis, a cut-off of 0.05 was employed. Thus, if the p-value on any particular question is below 0.05, then we can go forward and claim significant differences between the categories. Otherwise, the responses are either marginally different (p-value between 0.05 and 0.10) or there is not enough evidence to indicate any significant differences.

This test was employed specifically for questions with responses of a categorical non-ranked nature. For example, question 12 ("Have you participated in any community outreach in the last 12 months") is either a "yes" or "no" and, further, "yes" is not greater than "no" and vice-versa.

Kruskal-Wallis Test

This test makes 4 assumptions about the data being analyzed. The first two are independence both within and between the various samples. The question responses must also be ordinal in nature (that is, response 2 is greater than response 1, etc.). Finally, either the population distributions are identical or some populations yield larger values than the others.

With this last assumption of the data in mind, the test assumes that the population distributions are identical (i.e. the histograms are of a similar shape) and tests to see if at least 1 population (be it church or church type) yields larger values than the other populations. The resulting p-values are utilized in the same way as the above chi-square test.[1]

Coefficient Alpha

Many questions in this survey are a composition of several sub-questions that are graded on a Likert-type scale. For example, question 14 asks the respondent to answer in terms of '1 = "Very important"' to '6 = "Not at all important"'. In these questions, it is important to measure the internal reliability of this scale. If a question has a strong measure of internal consistency, then the individual sub-questions correlate strongly both with each other as well as the total.

The coefficient alpha is a very commonly used measure of this internal consistency. This value ranges between 0 and 1 and has an accepted cut-off of 0.7. Thus, if the coefficient alpha for a specific question is above 0.7, then the question is considered to have a fairly strong internal reliability and it is more likely that the sub-questions collectively measure some kind of underlying construct.[2]

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

After the data for the Likert-type scale questions were averaged to gain a single value for each respondent, an analysis of variance was performed on these means to determine differences between churches and church types.

This test makes a number of assumptions about the data, including similar variances. However, ANOVA is fairly robust to data that does not meet those conditions and is thus commonly employed.

This test hypothesizes that the mean responses to the question are the same for all the churches and tests to see if at least one is significantly different from the others. The p-values are used as in the above tests.

Hotelling-Lawley Trace

Hotelling's T2 is a common, traditional test using two groups separated by an independent variable. The Hotelling-Lawley Trace is a related variable with the same significance level.

Methodology

This analysis consists of the following steps:

1. Compare survey responses between holistic and non-holistic churches.
2. If there is insufficient evidence to claim differences between these two groups of churches, then that particular question is likely not an important factor in the performance of outreach ministries. These questions are followed with the results of the statistical test, summary statistics and histograms.
3. If significant differences do exist between the two groups of churches, then there is enough evidence to suggest that that the holistic and non-holistic churches responded differently to this particular question.
4. However, further investigation can help to reveal if the churches within the two groups are significantly different from each other. This tells us the consistency of the churches within these groups.[3]

This data was prepared and analyzed using standard statistical software including Statistical Analysis Software (SAS), Microsoft Excel, and Minitab.

Results

These results first cover the preliminary survey, which was used to select churches for the primary survey. The primary results first compare results between the holistic and non-holistic churches. Then, comparisons are made within each group to check for consistency.

Preliminary

The preliminary results below describe the statistically significant associations between the seven preliminary survey questions.

Summary of Comparisons Between Preliminary Survey Questions					
(For details, please see appropriate page of the appendix)					
Comparison	Test	Spearman	p-value	Significant Correlation?	Comment
Question 3 and Question 1	Spearman Correlation	0.64013	<0.0001	Yes	Intuitively Expected
Question 3 and Question 4	Spearman Correlation	0.33816	0.0163	Yes	
Question 3 and Question 5	Spearman Correlation	0.35076	0.0135	Yes	
Question 5 and Question 6	Spearman Correlation	0.55077	<0.0001	Yes	

Primary Between Holistic and Non-Holistic

This section makes comparisons between the two groups of churches. Questions with significant differences are bold-faced.

Summary of Comparisons Between Holistic and Non-Holistic Churches				
(For details on alternative interpretations of survey results, please see the appropriate page)				
Question	Test	P-Value	Significant difference between churches (P < 0.05)?	Comments
1	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.7101	No	
2	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.2217	No	
3	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**<0.0001**	**Yes**	**Significant differences in marital status**
3 alt	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.3984	No	
4	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.9525	No	
4 alt	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.9095	No	
5	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**.0020**	**Yes**	**Significant differences in newspaper and magazine subscriptions**
6	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.3477	No	
7	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.1367	No	

8	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.0623	Marginal	
8 alt	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**.0233**	**Yes**	**Significant differences in length of time attending their current church (with collapsed responses)**
9	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.2373	No	
10		Not Possible		
10 alt1	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.0923	Marginal	
10 alt2	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.6533	No	
11	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.7916	No	
12	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**.0089**	**Yes**	**Significant differences in community outreach ministry program participation in the last 12 months**
13	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.9870	No	
14	**Coefficient Alpha, ANOVA**	**Alpha=0.88, p<0.0001**	**Yes**	**Strong internal consistency and significant differences in reasons for doing outreach ministry**
15	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.8285	No	
16		Not Possible		
17	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**.0200**	**Yes**	**Significant differences in pastoral engagement in church ministries**
18	**Coefficient Alpha, ANOVA**	Alpha=0.92, p=0.36	No	
19	**Coefficient Alpha, ANOVA**	**Alpha=0.89, P<0.0001**	**Yes**	**Significant differences**
20	**Coefficient Alpha, ANOVA**	**Alpha=0.87, P<0.0001**	**Yes**	**Significant differences**
21	Coefficient Alpha	Alpha=0.16		Very weak internal consistency
21a	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.9651	No	
21b	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**<0.0001**	**Yes**	**Way to share God's love with people is by telling them about Jesus vs caring actions**
21c	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.6850	No	
21d	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.6709	No	
21e	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.1055	No	
21f	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.2187	No	
21g	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	**.0007**	**Yes**	**Poverty due to the individual's internal vs external factors**

21h	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.0026	Yes	**Christian ministry should be directed at other Christians vs everyone**
21j	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.0283	Yes	**Church social actions should be directed toward all vs local community**
21k	**Hotelling-Lawley Trace**	**<0.0001**	Yes	**Kingdom of God is a spiritual realm that can only be attained after death vs here on earth**
21l	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.4491	No	
21m	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.2190	No	
21n	Hotelling-Lawley Trace	.8291	No	

Primary within Holistic and Non-Holistic

If the previous set of analyses indicates significant differences between the holistic and non-holistic church categories, then a comparison is made to see if at least one church is significantly different within each set of churches.

Summary of Comparisons Within Holistic and Non-Holistic Churches						
(For details on alternative interpretations of survey results, please see the appropriate page)						
Question	Test	P-Value for holistic churches?	At least 1 church is significantly different (P < 0.05)?	P-Value for non-holistic churches?	At least 1 church is significantly different (P < 0.05)?	Comments
3	Chi-Square	<0.0001	Yes	<0.0001	Yes	
5	Chi-Square	<0.0001	Yes	<0.0001	Yes	
8alt	Kruskal-Wallis	0.057	Marginal	<0.0001	Yes	
12	Chi-Square	0.863	No	0.668	No	No significant differences within both both church categories
17	Chi-Square	0.022	Yes	0.267	No	
19	**Coefficient Alpha, ANOVA**	Alpha=0.89, <0.0001	Yes	Alpha=.89, P=.0079	Yes	
20	**Coefficient Alpha, ANOVA**	Alpha=0.86, <0.0001	Yes	.Alpha=0.88, P<0.0001	Yes	
21b	Kruskal-Wallis	0.535	No	<0.0001	Yes	
21g	Kruskal-Wallis	<0.0001	Yes	<0.0001	Yes	
21h	Kruskal-Wallis	0.333	No	0.698	No	No significant differences within both both church categories
21j	Kruskal-Wallis	<0.0001	Yes	0.076	Marginal	
21k	Kruskal-Wallis	0.260	No	0.204	No	No significant differences within both both church categories

Conclusions

Preliminary

The preliminary survey gives us a number of characteristics of the population from which the 10 churches were pulled. Of the 50 churches considered, the most common congregation size was 1000+ with only 4 churches having less than 100. Excluding the summer vacation, churches most often reported 40-50% of the population attending at least one worship service a week. The most common ministries reported were 'other' (17.6% of all ministries), providing food or clothing for the needy (11.1%), and emergency financial assistance (9.3%). It may also be of interest that the 50 selected churches also most commonly reported about 20-30% of their respondents engaging in ministry.

The individual questions of the preliminary survey were also compared with each other to check for correlation between the questions. It was found that the number of ministries has a small, but statistically significant, increasing association with congregation size, the percent of the congregation that is engaged in secular ministries, and the degree to which lay leaders propose ideas for secular ministry.

Likewise, a positive association also exists between the degree to which lay leaders propose ideas for secular ministry and the degree to which lay leaders lead these secular ministries. This also continues to be true after controlling for church populations.

Primary

Overall, about 11 questions yielded significant results. These include marital status, newspaper and magazine subscriptions, length of time of church attendance, recent community outreach participation, organizational abilities, and a number of personal beliefs. Please see the appropriate page of the appendix for details on individual questions.

References

[1]Conover, W.J. 1999. *Practical Nonparametric Statistics, 3rd ed*. New York. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

[2]Hatcher, Larry. 1994. *A Step-by-Step Approach to Using the SAS System for Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc.

[3]Guenther, William. 1964. *Analysis of Variance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Appendix

Preliminary Survey

1. WHAT IS THE <u>APPROXIMATE</u> POPULATION OF YOUR CHURCH FAMILY (MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS)?

1☐ less than 50   2☐ 51 – 100   3☐ 101 – 200   4☐ 201 – 500   5☐ 501 – 1000   6☐ 1000 +

Mean	4.32
Median	4
Mode	6
Minimum	2
Maximum	6
Count	50
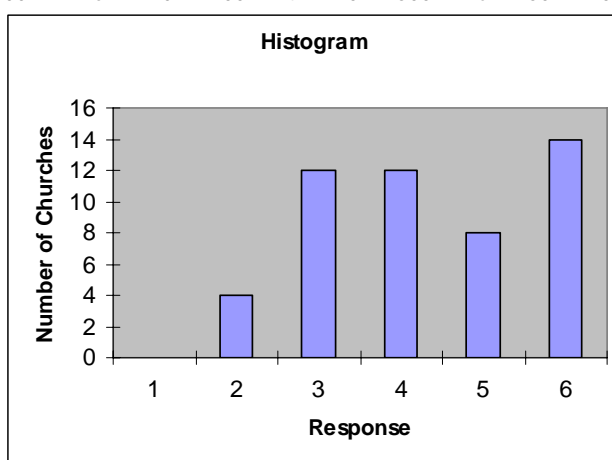
Response	Number of Churches
1	0
2	4
3	12
4	12
5	8
6	14

Histogram

2. <u>EXCLUDING THE SUMMER VACATION PERIOD</u> (MID MAY THRU MID AUGUST), ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE CHURCH POPULATION ATTENDS AT LEAST ONE WORSHIP SERVICE A WEEK?

1☐ less than 20%   2☐ 20-30%   3☐ 30-40%   4☐ 40-50%   5☐ 50-60%   6☐ 60-75%   7☐ 75%+

Mean	4.82
Median	5
Mode	4
Minimum	1
Maximum	7
Count	50
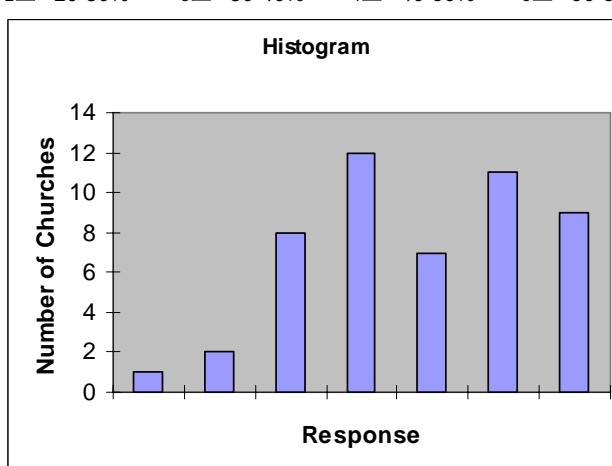
Response	Number of Churches
1	1
2	2
3	8
4	12
5	7
6	11
7	9

Histogram

3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES *TO THE SECULAR COMMUNITY* DOES YOUR CHURCH <u>CONSISTENTLY</u> ENGAGE IN (check all that apply)

3.1 How many ministries do the churches consistently engage in?					Number of Ministries	Number of Churches
Mean	7.74				1	0
Median	7				2	2
Mode	3				3	10
Minimum	2				4	0
Sum	387				5	5
Count	50				6	4
					7	7
					8	1
					9	4
					10	3
					11	3
					12	4
					13	1
					14	3
					15	3

Histogram — Number of Churches vs. Number of Ministries
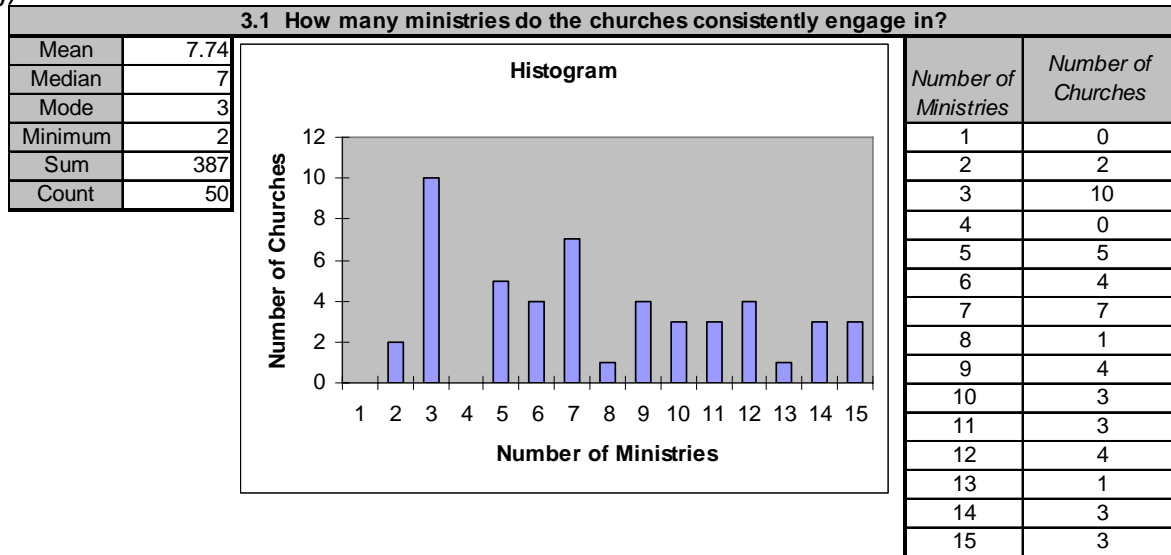
	3.2 Which ministries are the most common?		
Label	# of Churches	% of ministries	Ministry
q,r,s	68	17.6%	Other
b	43	11.1%	Sponsoring or providing food or clothing for the needy, e.g. through Atlanta Union M
k	36	9.3%	Providing emergency financial assistance to persons in crisis.
p	30	7.8%	Some form of ministry to teens (sports, academics, pregnancy counseling, literacy
l	29	7.5%	Participating in parachurch ministries, e.g. Habitat for Humanity, Campus Crusade,
a	27	7.0%	Sponsoring or providing low income housing, or rent assistance.
m	27	7.0%	Visitation to the elderly and shut-ins of the secular community
c	20	5.2%	Taking the gospel to non-Christians through organized evangelism programs.
d	20	5.2%	Sponsoring or providing "step" programs, e.g. for alcohol, drug, or nicotine addiction
e	18	4.7%	Sponsoring or providing job training, G.E.D. training, adult literacy programs
h	15	3.9%	Some form of AIDS outreach or fellowship
i	15	3.9%	Prison ministries
j	12	3.1%	Promoting social or political change through community organizing or advocacy
o	10	2.6%	Providing transportation and/or shopping service to the elderly and shut ins
n	9	2.3%	Maintenance/repair of homes/apartments of the elderly and disabled
f	4	1.0%	Making peaceful protests (e.g. against war, injustice) in public places
g	4	1.0%	Sponsoring or providing legal aid services
Total	387	100.0%	

4. ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR CHURCH FAMILY OVERALL IS ENGAGED IN THE MINISTRIES CHECKED ABOVE?

1☐ Less than 10%   2☐ 10 – 20% 3☐ 20 - 30%   4☐ 30 – 40%   5☐ 40 – 50%   6☐ More than 50%

Mean	3.1
Median	3
Mode	3
Minimum	1
Maximum	6
Count	50
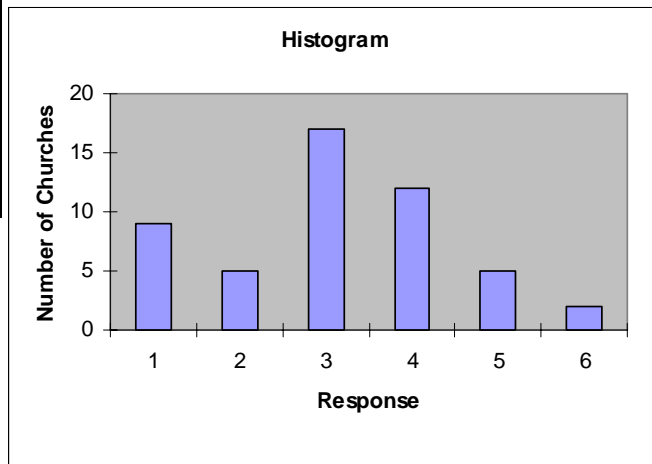
Response	Number of Churches
1	9
2	5
3	17
4	12
5	5
6	2

5. THE IDEAS FOR SECULAR MINISTRY IN THIS CHURCH COME MOSTLY (circle a *single* number that best answers the question):

From the pastoral leadership of the church   1   2   3   4   5   6   From the congregation

Mean	3.50
Median	3
Mode	5
Minimum	1
Maximum	6
Count	49
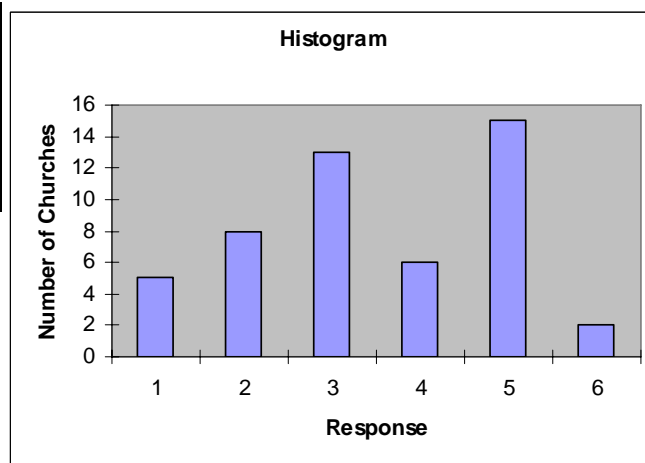
Response	Number of Churches
1	5
2	8
3	13
4	6
5	15
6	2

6. THIS CHURCH'S MINISTRIES TO THE SECULAR COMMUNITY ARE (circle a *single* number that best answers the question):

Directed mainly by the pastoral leadership   1   2   3   4   5   6   Directed mainly by lay leaders

Mean	3.78
Median	4
Mode	5
Minimum	1
Maximum	6
Count	49

Histogram
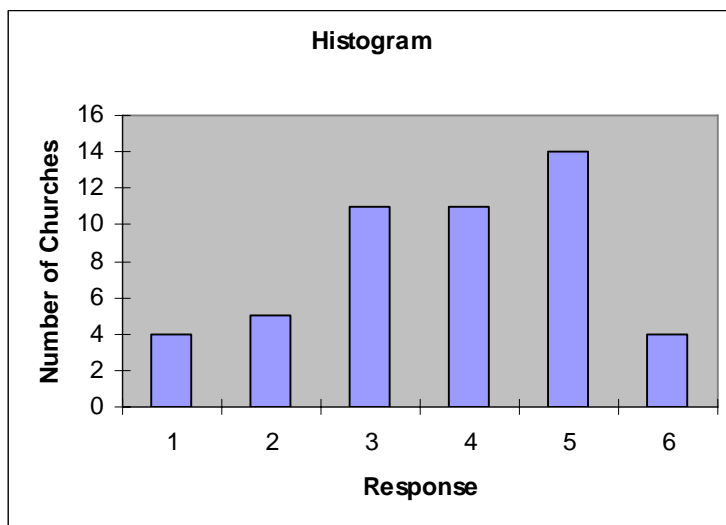
Response	Number of Churches
1	4
2	5
3	11
4	11
5	14
6	4

7. PLEASE NAME A CHURCH IN GREATER ATLANTA THAT YOU THINK DOES AN EXCEPTIONAL JOB OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Church	# of mentions
Central Presbyterian	5
Antioch North Baptist	2
Oakhurst Presbyterian	1
Oakhurst Presbyterian	1
Woodstock First Baptist	1
Trinity United Methodist	1
Techwood Baptist Center	1
St. Luke's Episcopal	1
St. Jude's Episcopal Smyrna	1
St John Lutheran Atlanta	1
Rescue Atlanta (Assembly of God)	1
Oakhurst Baptist	1
North Ave. Pres/ St. Luke's Epis.	1
Norcross First UMC	1
Mount Paran Church of God	1
Milford Church of God	1
Hebron Baptist	1
First Presbyterian Atlanta	1
First Iconium Baptist	1
Covenant Presbyterian	1
Christian Fellowship ap CBF)	1
Central and Oakhurst Pres.	1

Preliminary (Comparisons Between Questions)
Relationships between Responses to Church & Ministry Screening Survey

	Q1	Q2	Q3TOTAL	Q4	Q5
Q2	-0.19099				
Q2	0.1840				
Q3TOTAL	0.64013	0.06262			
Q3TOTAL	<.0001	0.6657			
Q4	-0.06397	0.06570	0.33816		
Q4	0.6589	0.6503	0.0163		
Q5	0.20137	0.01190	0.35076	0.18133	
Q5	0.1653	0.9353	0.0135	0.2124	
Q6	0.03507	0.18849	0.04310	0.06933	0.55077
Q6	0.8109	0.1946	0.7687	0.6359	<.0001

An appropriate statistical method of determining relationships between ranked responses is the Spearman correlation coefficient. The above 6x6 table of Spearman correlation coefficients indicates a number of linear relationships. The church population sizes as well as two of the measurements of congregant power within the secular ministries (questions 4 and 5) are positively associated with the number of ministries. Further, this degree of association is strongest between the number of ministries and the size of the church (which could be intuitively expected).

Q3vsQ1: Association between number of ministries and church size
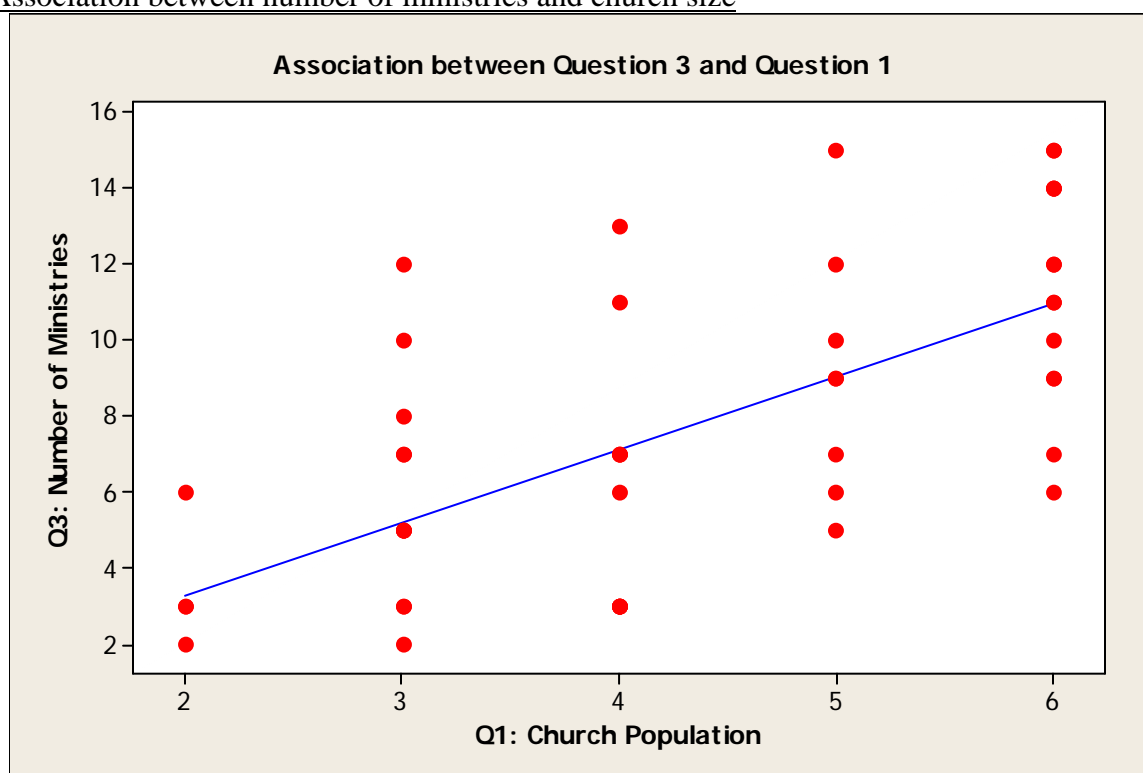
There is a strong statistically significant positive association between the number of ministries and the size of the church congregation. Of all the associations mentioned here, this is the strongest association. This association is somewhat intuitive since larger congregations can afford to engage in more ministries.

Q3vsQ4: Association between number of ministries and congregation involvement in ministries
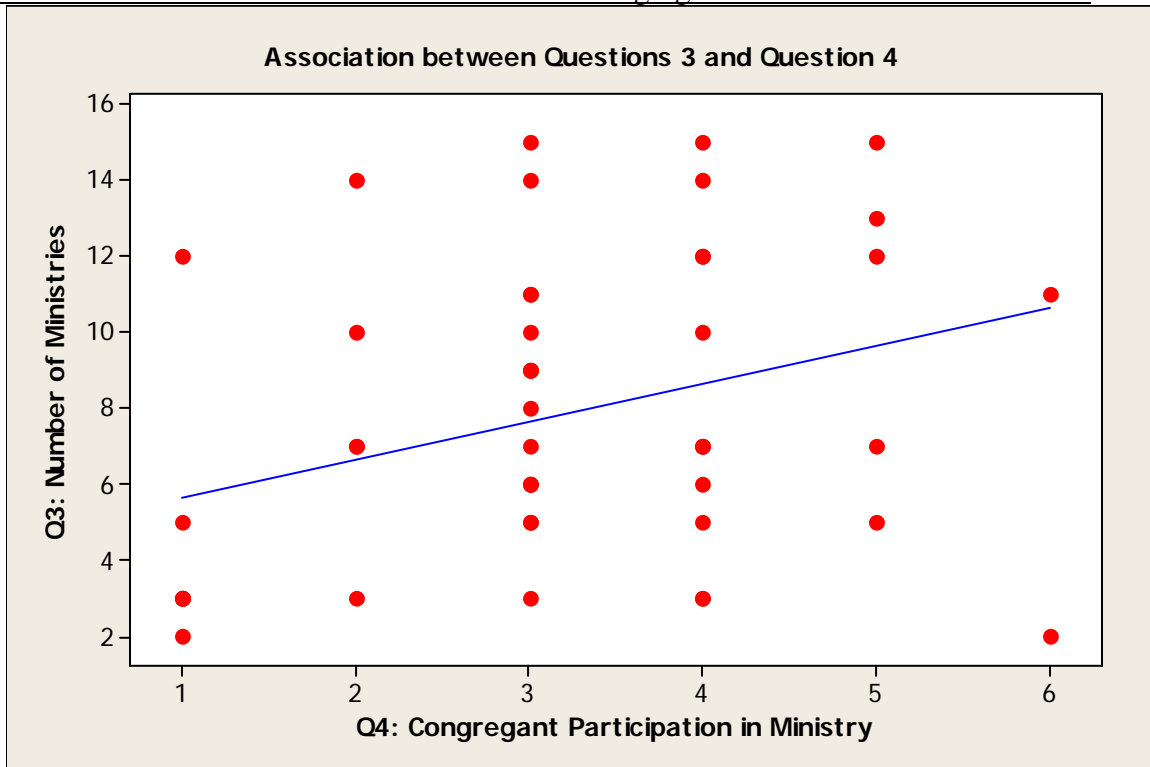
Association between Questions 3 and Question 4

Q3: Number of Ministries (y-axis, 2 to 16)

Q4: Congregant Participation in Ministry (x-axis, 1 to 6)

There is a small statistically significant association between the number of ministries and the percent of congregation involvement in ministries. This association still exists after controlling for church populations.

Q3vsQ5: Association between number of ministries and the degree to which lay leaders propose ideas for secular ministry
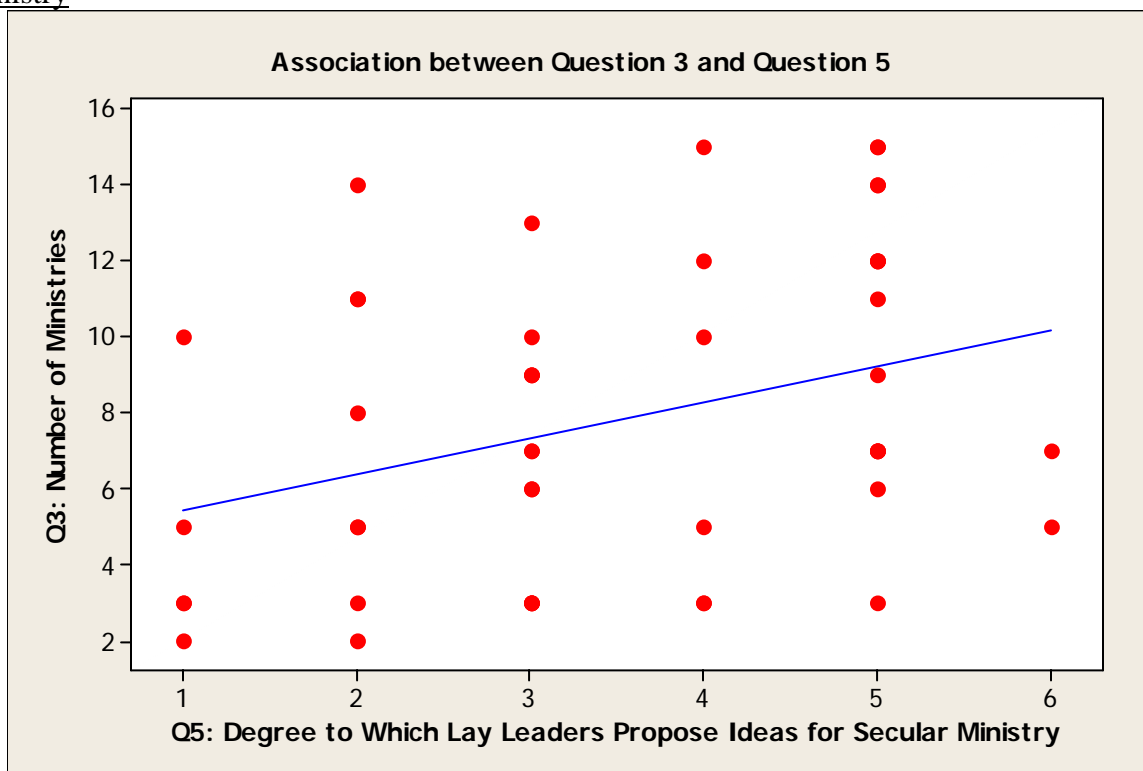
There is a small statistically significant association between the number of ministries and the degree to which lay leaders propose ideas for ministries.

Q5vsQ6: Associations between degrees of congregant-made ideas for secular ministry and lay leadership of secular ministry controlled for church population sizes
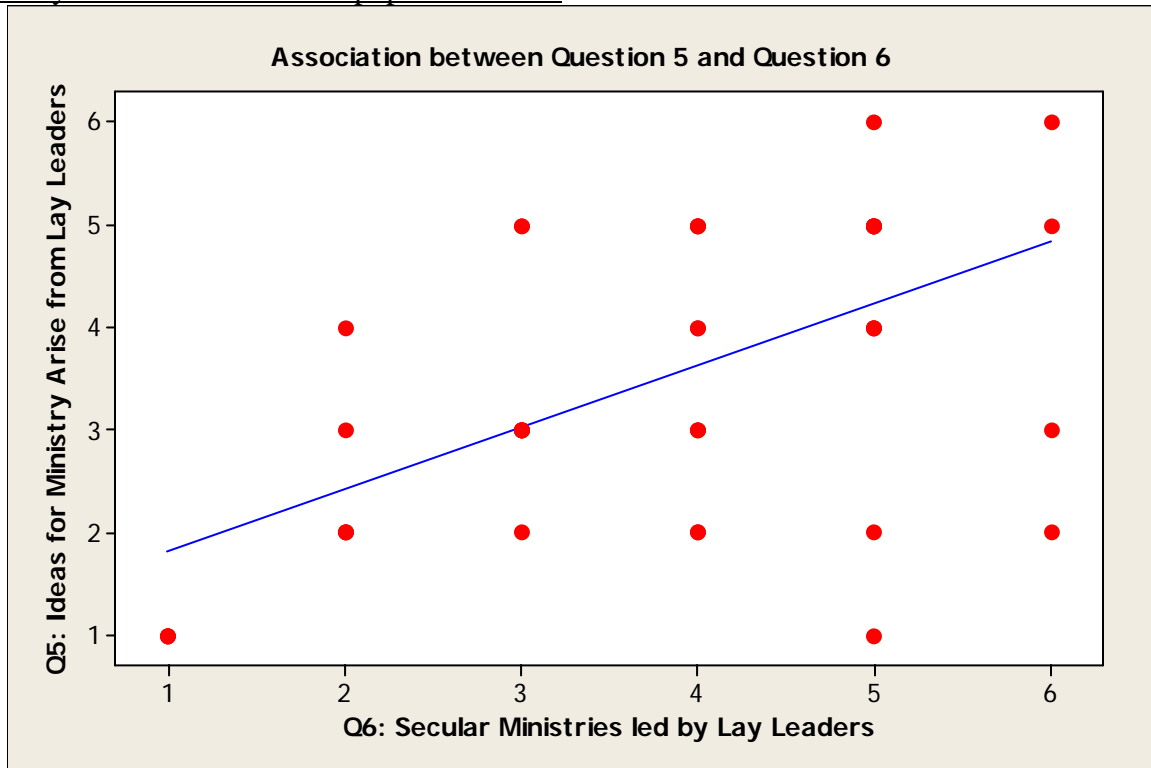
There is a strong statistically significant association between the degree to which lay leaders propose ideas for ministries to the secular community and the degree to which lay leaders lead ministries to the secular community. This could make intuitive sense as both questions relate to the power of the congregation within these ministries.

Primary Between Holistic and Non-Holistic

Q1:

Q1: Which age bracket are you in?
I. Demographic Information

Panel variable: Holistic
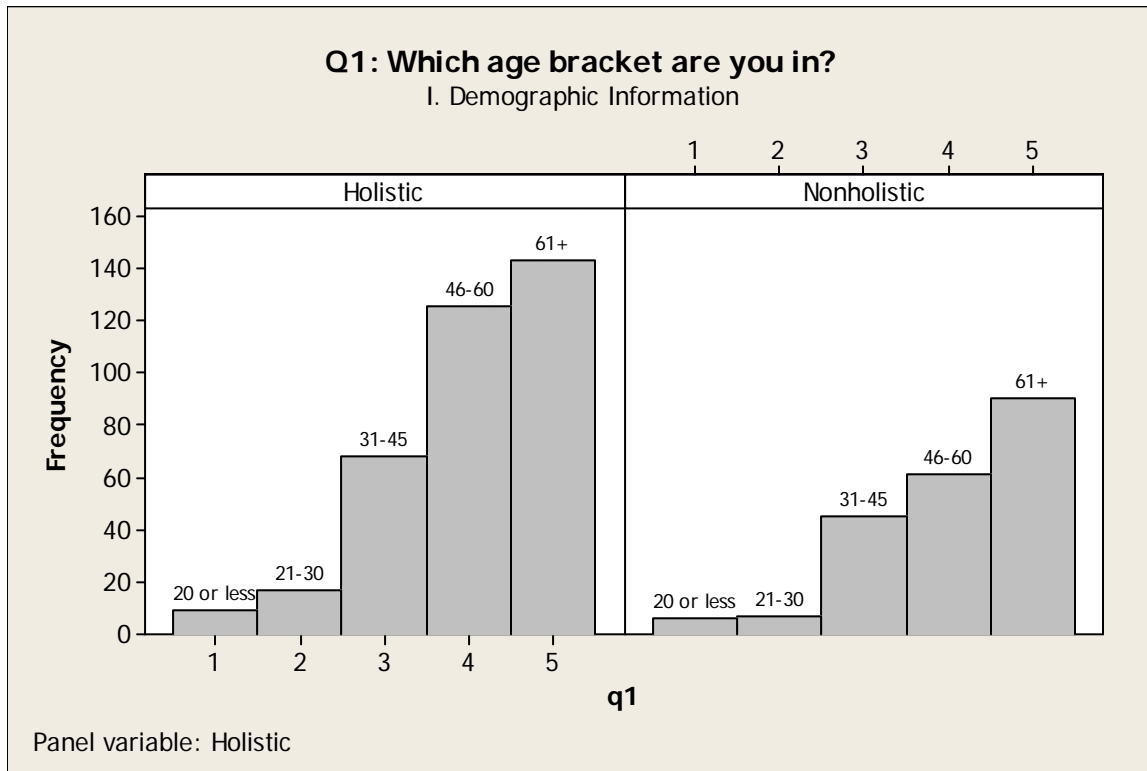
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q1

                  1      2      3      4       5  Missing      All

Holistic          9     17     68    125     143        0      362
Nonholistic       6      7     45     61      90        1      209

All              15     24    113    186     233        *      571
* of Total     2.63   4.20  19.79  32.57   40.81        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences do not exist between the two groups of churches. Regardless of church, 41% of respondents are 61 or above and 33% are between 46 and 60 years of age.

Q2:

Q2: Gender
I. Demographic Information

Panel variable: Holistic

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q2

                  0      1  Missing     All

Holistic        195    128       39     323
Nonholistic      98     81       31     179

All             293    209        *     502
% of Total    58.37  41.63        *  100.00
```

Result: Significant differences do not exist between the two groups of churches. Overall, 58% of respondents are female.

Q3:

Q3: Marital Status
I. Demographic Information
Panel variable: Holistic
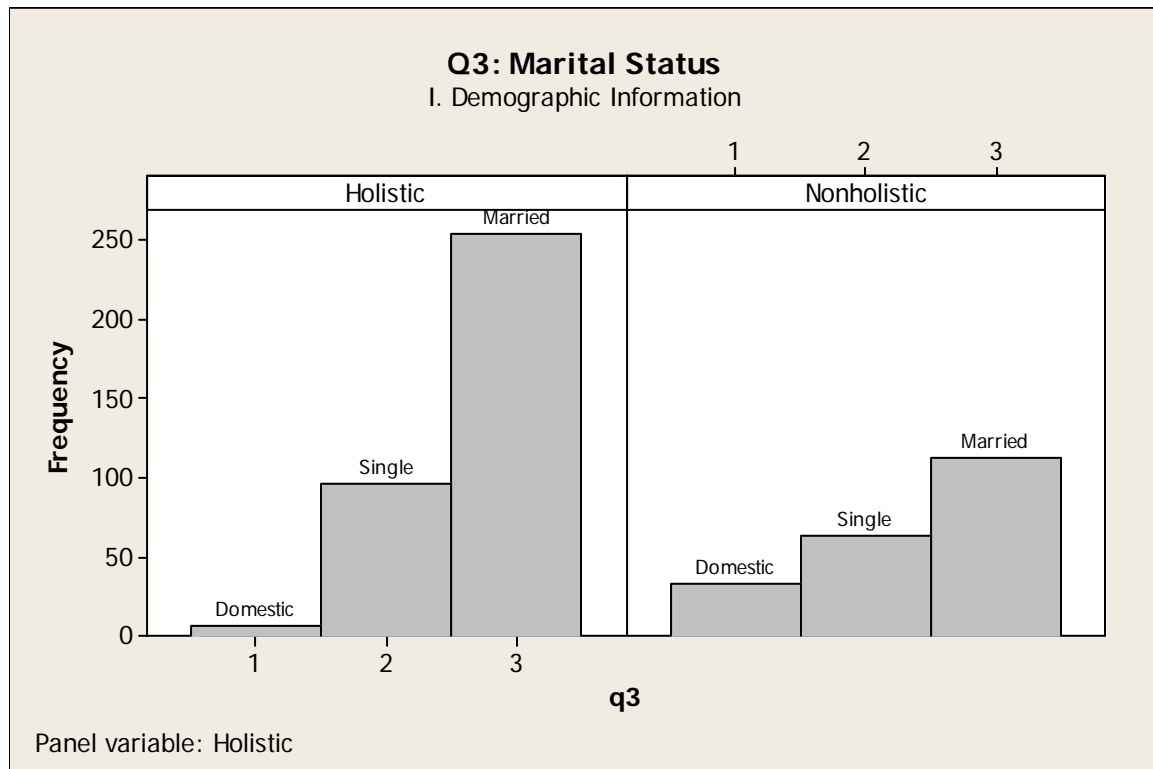
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q3

                1       2       3  Missing     All

Holistic        6      96     254        6     356
Nonholistic    33      63     112        2     208

All            39     159     366        *     564
% of Total    6.91   28.19   64.89       *  100.00
```

Result: Significant differences in marital status exist between the two churches. It should be noted that 15.9% of respondents in the non-holistic churches reported being "Unmarried, in a Domestic Partnership" as opposed to 1.7% of respondents in the holistic churches.

Q3 (with combined cells):
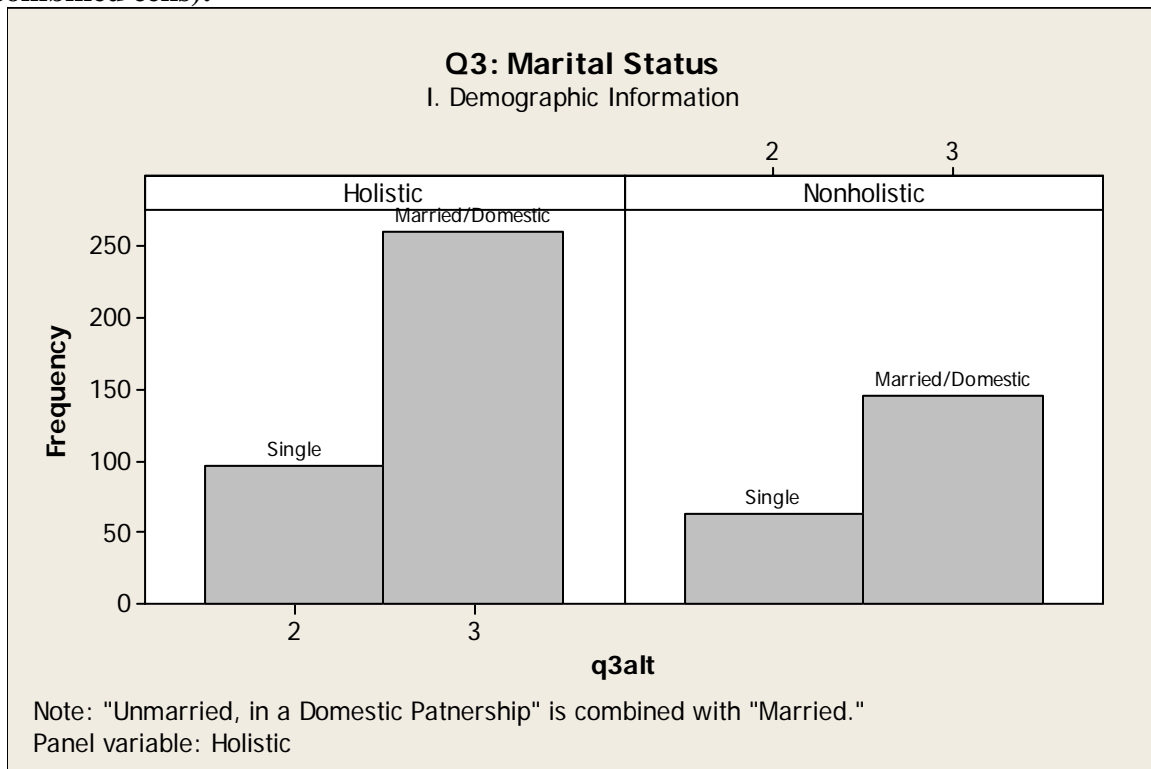

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q3alt

                 2      3  Missing     All

Holistic        96    260        6     356
Nonholistic     63    145        2     208

All            159    405        *     564
% of Total   28.19  71.81        *  100.00
```

Result: When the "Unmarried, in a Domestic Partnership" and "Married" categories are collapsed together, significant differences in marital status cease to exist. When combined this way, 73% of congregants from the holistic churches reported being either married or in a domestic partnership versus 70% for the non-holistic churches. When the results from this analysis are combined with the previous version of question 3, a difference of results is seen. How this is understood is up for interpretation.

Q4:

Q4: Employment Status
I. Demographic Information

Panel variable: Holistic
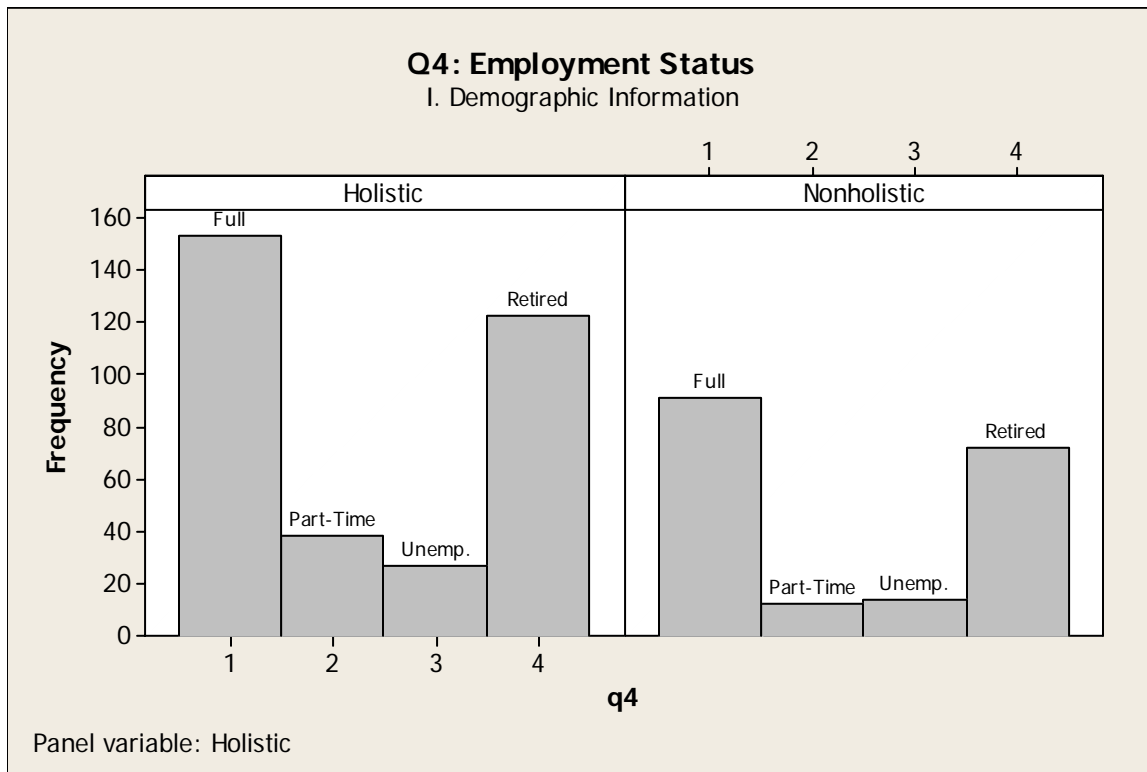
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q4

                  1      2      3       4  Missing      All

Holistic        153     38     27     122       22      340
Nonholistic      91     12     14      72       21      189

All             244     50     41     194        *      529
% of Total    46.12   9.45   7.75   36.67        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences do not exist between the two groups of churches. Overall, 46% of respondents report full-time employment and 37% are retired.

Q4 (with combined cells):

Q4: Employment Status
I. Demographic Information
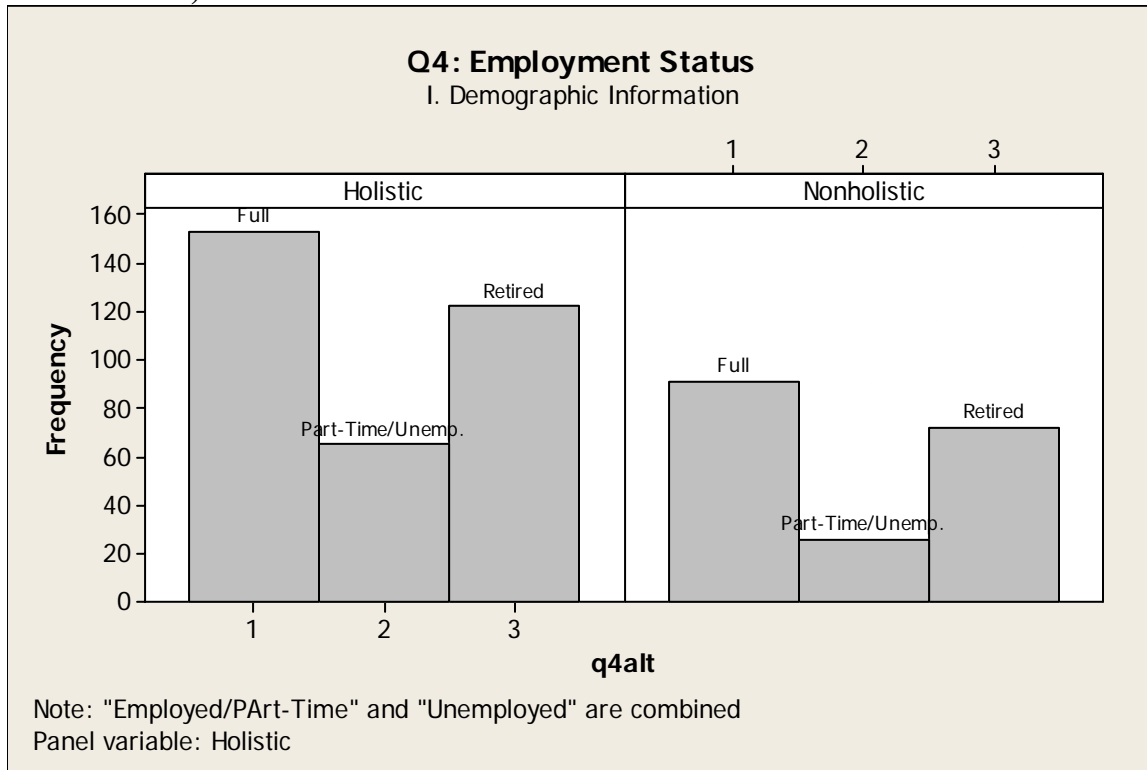
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q4alt

                   1      2      3  Missing     All

Holistic         153     65    122       22     340
Nonholistic       91     26     72       21     189

All              244     91    194        *     529
% of Total     46.12  17.20  36.67        *  100.00
```

Result: Significant differences still do not exist between the two groups of churches.

Q5:

Q5: News Access
I. Demographic Information
Panel variable: Holistic
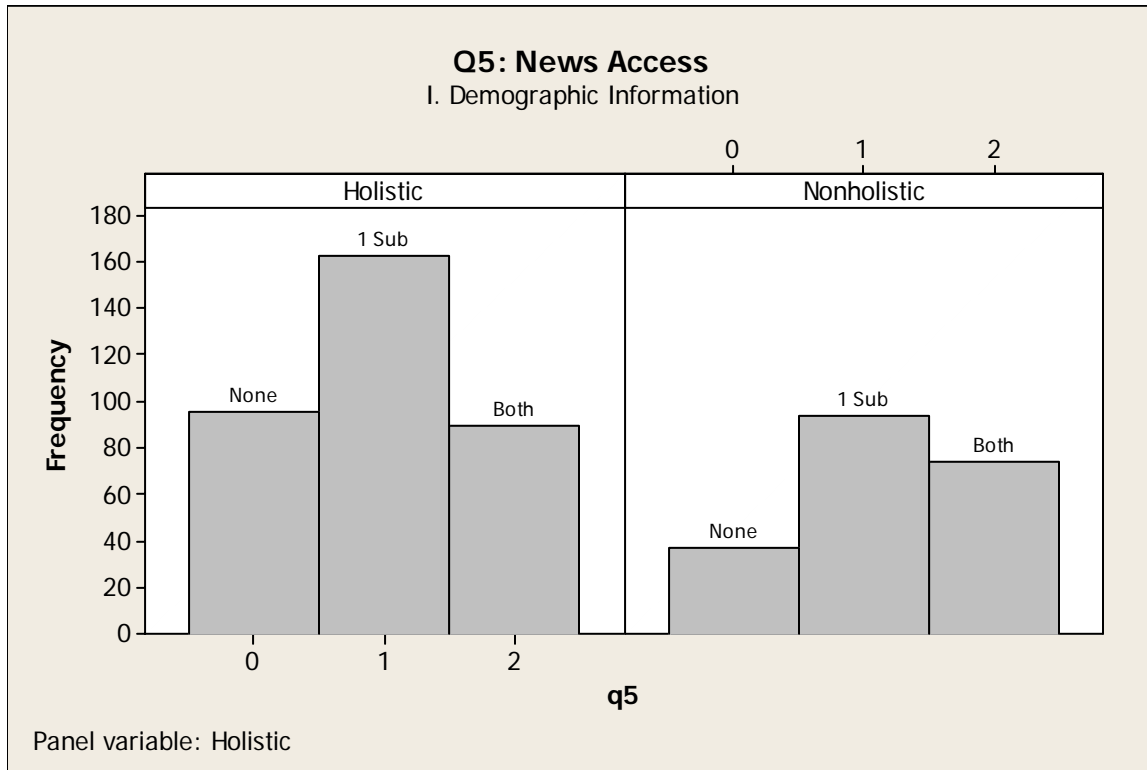
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q5

                    0       1       2  Missing     All

Holistic           95     162      89       16     346
Nonholistic        37      94      74        5     205

All               132     256     163        *     551
% of Total      23.96   46.46   29.58        *  100.00
```

Result: The holistic and non-holistic churches have significantly different ratios of news access. It may be of interest to the reader that 36% of respondents from non-holistic churches report subscriptions to both newspapers and national news magazines versus 25% from the holistic churches.

Q6:
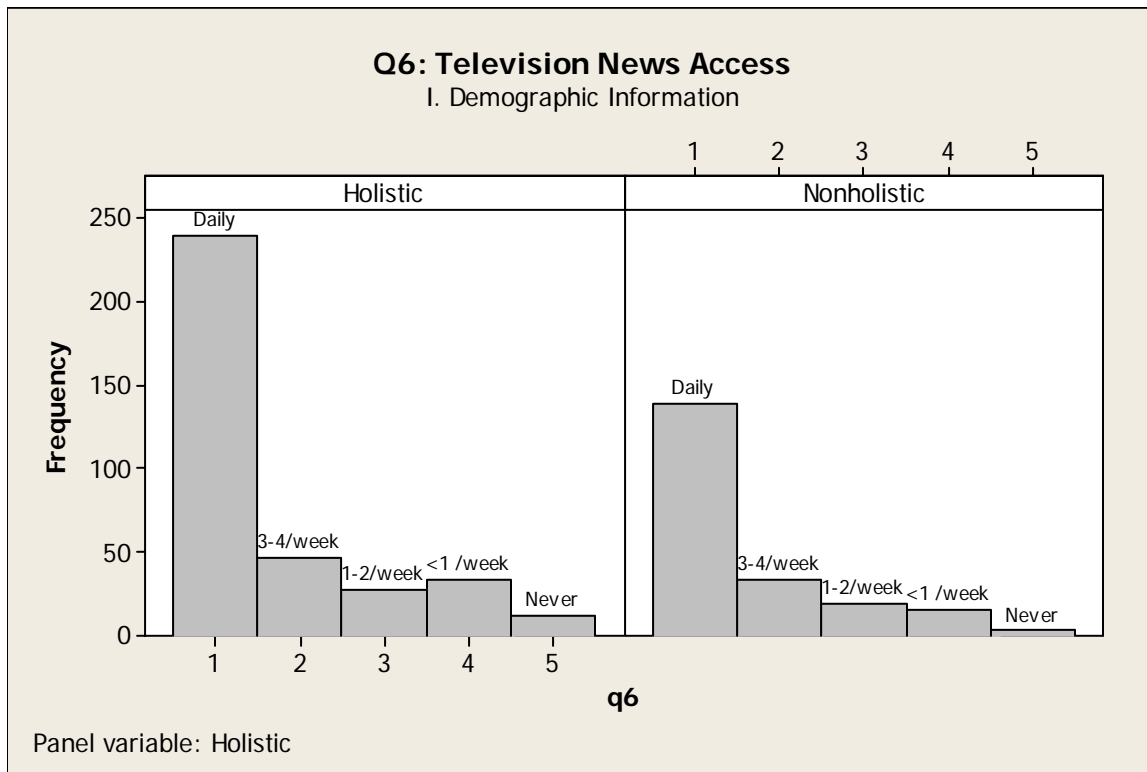
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q6

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Holistic	239	47	28	34	12	2	360
Nonholistic	139	33	19	15	3	1	209
All	378	80	47	49	15	*	569
% of Total	66.432	14.060	8.260	8.612	2.636	*	100.000

Result: Significant differences do not exist between the two groups of churches. Overall, 66% of respondents watch television news daily.

Q7:

Q7: Length of Time Lived in General Area
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church
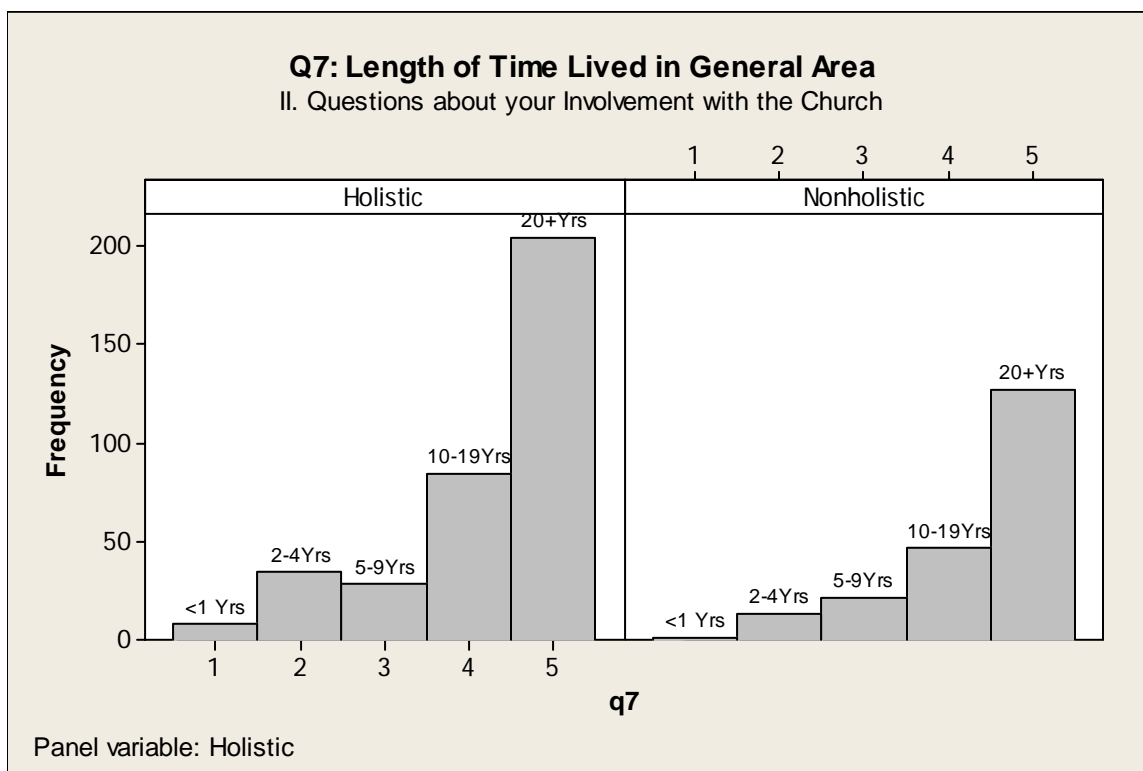
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q7

                1       2       3       4        5  Missing       All

Holistic        8      34      28      84      204        4       358
Nonholistic     1      13      21      47      127        1       209

All             9      47      49     131      331        *       567
% of Total  1.587   8.289   8.642  23.104   58.377        *   100.000

Pearson Chi-Square = 5.408, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.248
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 5.977, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.201
```

Result: Significant differences do not exist between the two groups of churches. 58% of all respondents have lived in the general area for 20+ years.

Q8:

Q8: Length of time Attending Current Church
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church

Panel variable: Holistic
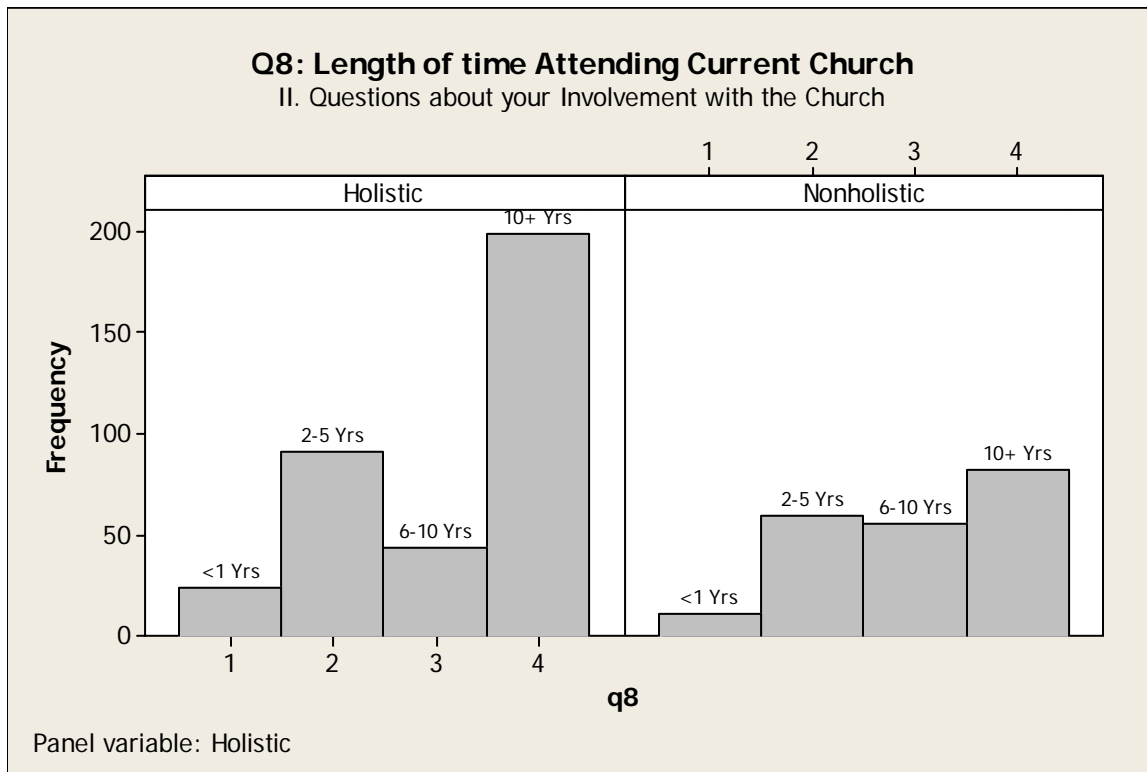
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q8

                    1        2        3         4  Missing       All

Holistic           24       91       44       199         4       358
Nonholistic        11       59       55        82         3       207

All                35      150       99       281         *       565
% of Total       6.19    26.55    17.52     49.73         *    100.00
```

Result: Marginally significant differences exist between the holistic and non-holistic churches in the reported length of time attending their current church. 56% of respondents from the holistic churches have been attending their church for 10+ years versus 40% of respondents from the other group.

Q8 (with combined cells):
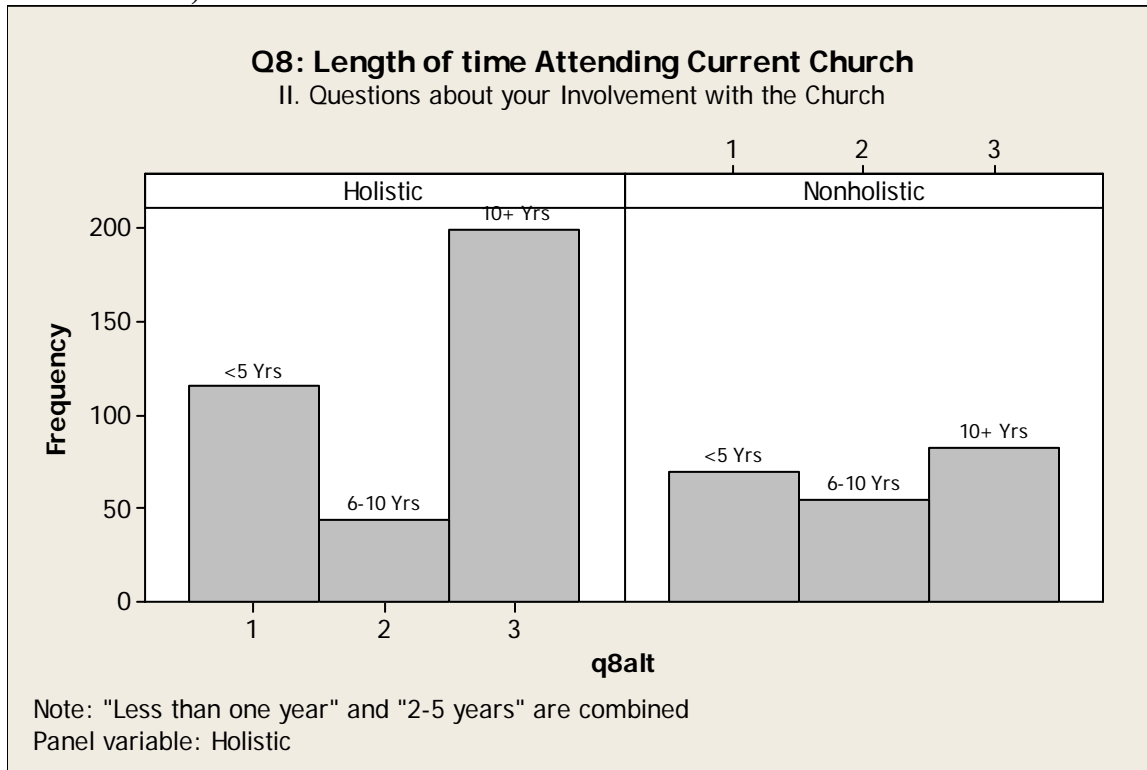

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q8alt

                  1      2      3  Missing      All

Holistic        115     44    199        4      358
Nonholistic      70     55     82        3      207

All             185     99    281        *      565
% of Total    32.74  17.52  49.73        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences exist between the holistic and non-holistic churches when the first two categories are combined.

Q9:

Q9: Commute Time to Church
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church

Panel variable: Holistic
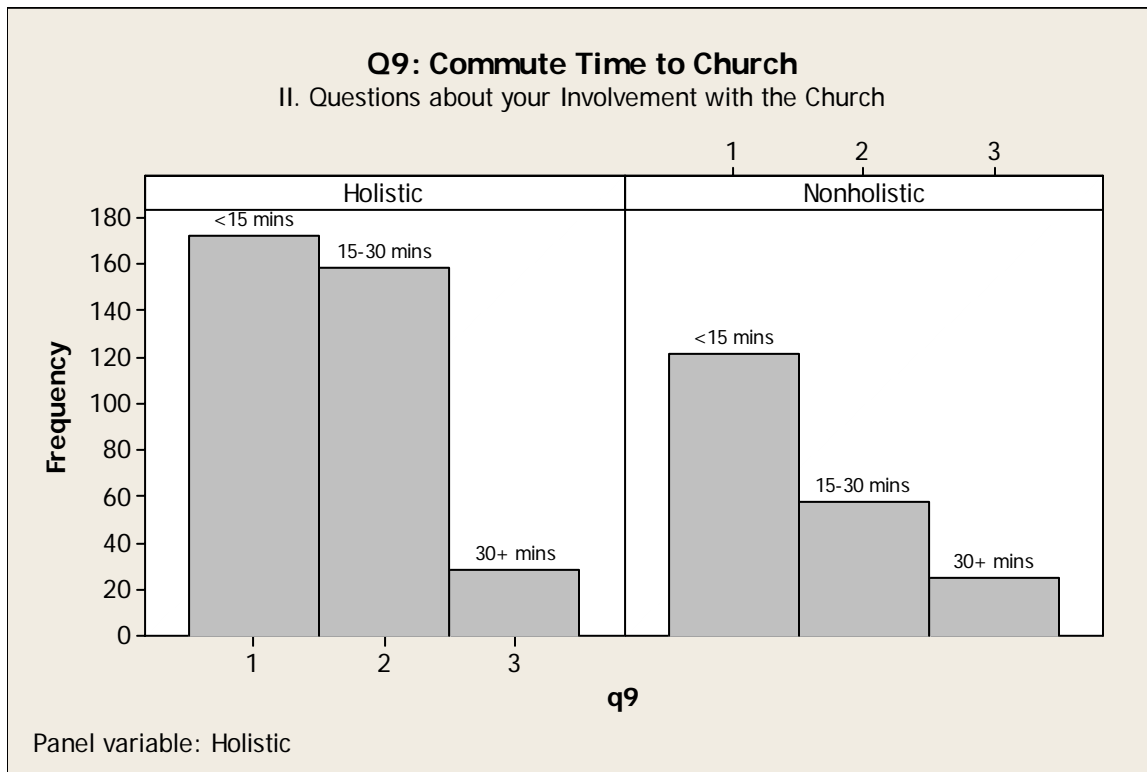
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q9

                   1      2      3  Missing      All

Holistic         172    158     28        4      358
Nonholistic      121     58     25        6      204

All              293    216     53        *      562
% of Total     52.14  38.43   9.43        *   100.00
```

Result: The two groups of churches did not report significant differences in commute times. 48% of congregants in the holistic churches reported commute times of less than 15 minutes versus 59% for the non-holistic churches. This works out to 52% of all respondents reporting short commute times.

Q10:

Q10: Single Main Reason to Remain Involved with the Church
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church

Panel variable: Holistic
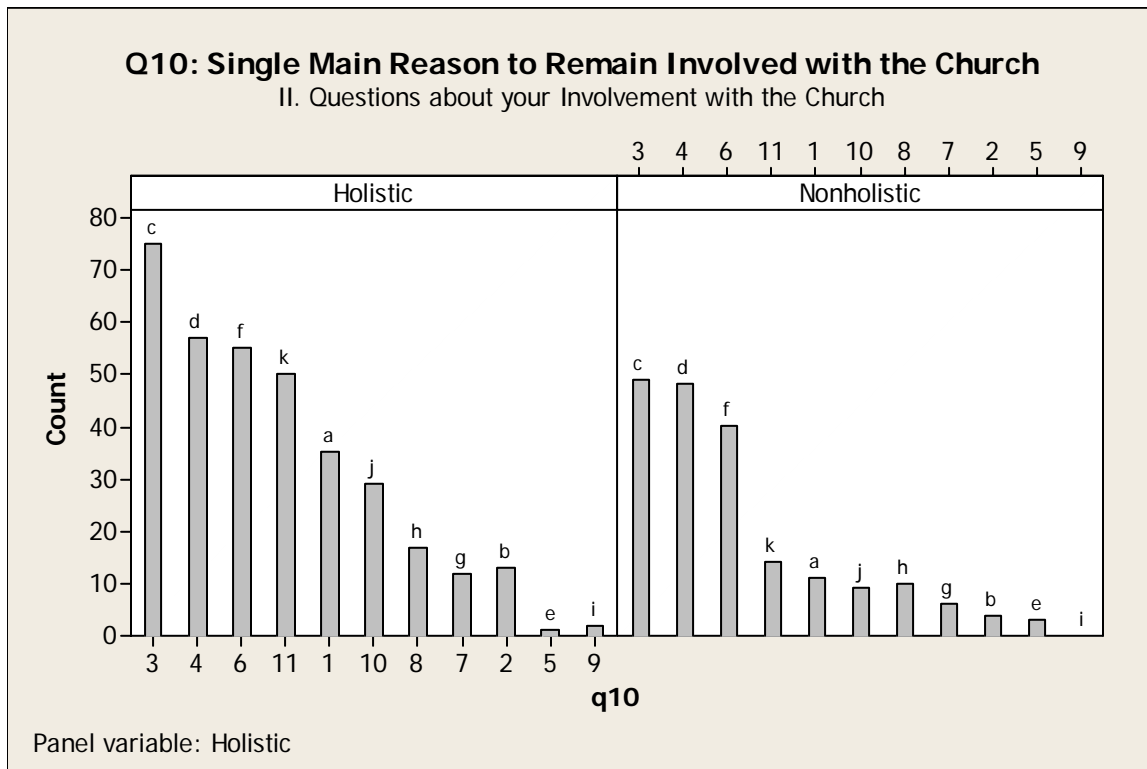
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q10
                   1       2       3       4       5       6       7       8       9
Holistic          35      13      75      57       1      55      12      17       2
Nonholistic       11       4      49      48       3      40       6      10       0

All               46      17     124     105       4      95      18      27       2
                8.519   3.148  22.963  19.444  0.741  17.593  3.333  5.000  0.370

                  10      11  Missing     All
Holistic          29      50      16      346
Nonholistic        9      14      16      194

All               38      64       *      540
                7.037  11.852       *  100.000
```

Result: Although the responses in this form are too spread out for a proper statistical analysis, it should be noted that the 3 most common responses are the same for the two groups of churches. These are:

Response #	Response Description	Number of Respondents from Holistic Churches	Number of Respondents from Non-Holistic Churches
C	"I grow spiritually at this church"	75(22%)	49(25%)
D	"I feel the presence of the Spirit in this church"	57(16%)	48(25%)
F	"I feel this church is under the leadership of Jesus"	55(16%)	40(21%)

Q10 (Alternative Response Combination I):

Q10: Single Main Reason to Remain Involved with Church
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church

Note: Alternative Combination I
Panel variable: Holistic
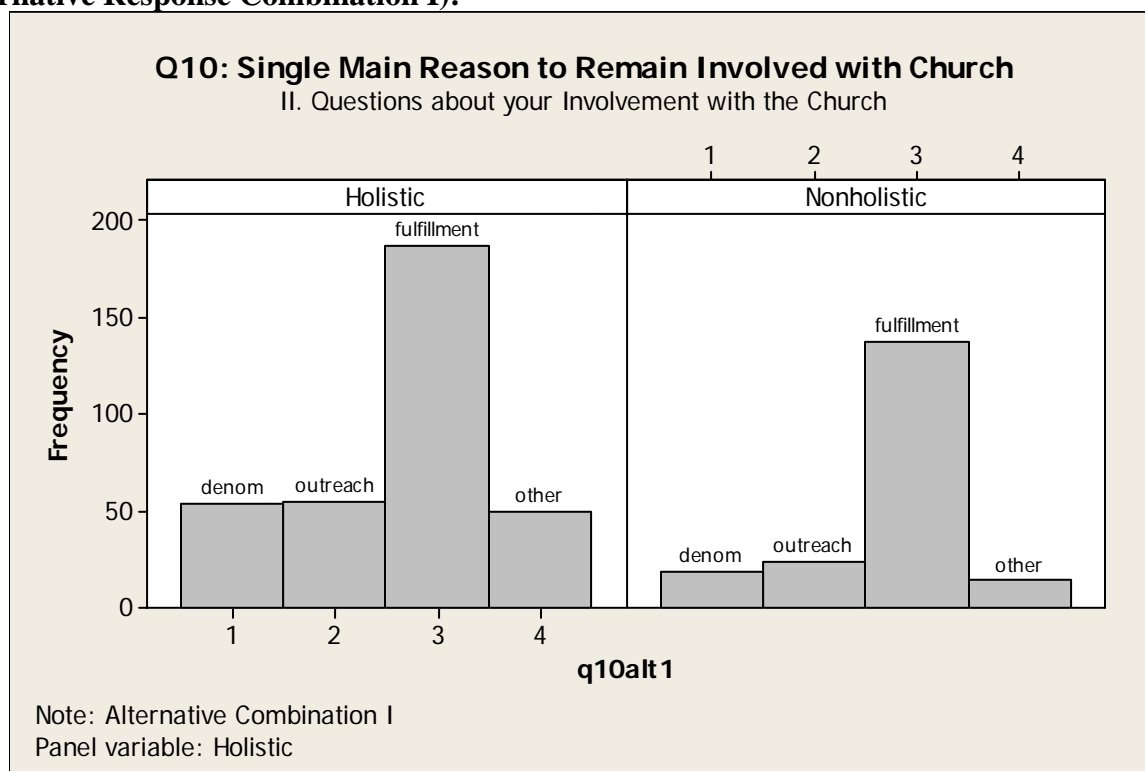
1. Motivations related to the church's **denomination**, theology, or social agenda (b, g, j)
2. Motivations related to **outreach** ministries generally (a, e, i, h,)
3. Motivations related to individual **fulfillment**: e.g. spiritual growth (c,d, f,)
4. **Other** motivations (k)

Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q10alt1

```
                 1        2        3        4  Missing       All

Holistic        54       55      187       50       16       346
Nonholistic     19       24      137       14       16       194

All             73       79      324       64        *       540
% of Total   13.52    14.63    60.00    11.85        *    100.00
```

Result: The two groups of churches did not report significant differences in reasons to remain involved with the church. When responses are combined in this manner, 60% of respondents reported "individual fulfillment" as their primary motivation to remain involved with the church.

Q10 (Alternative Response Combination II):
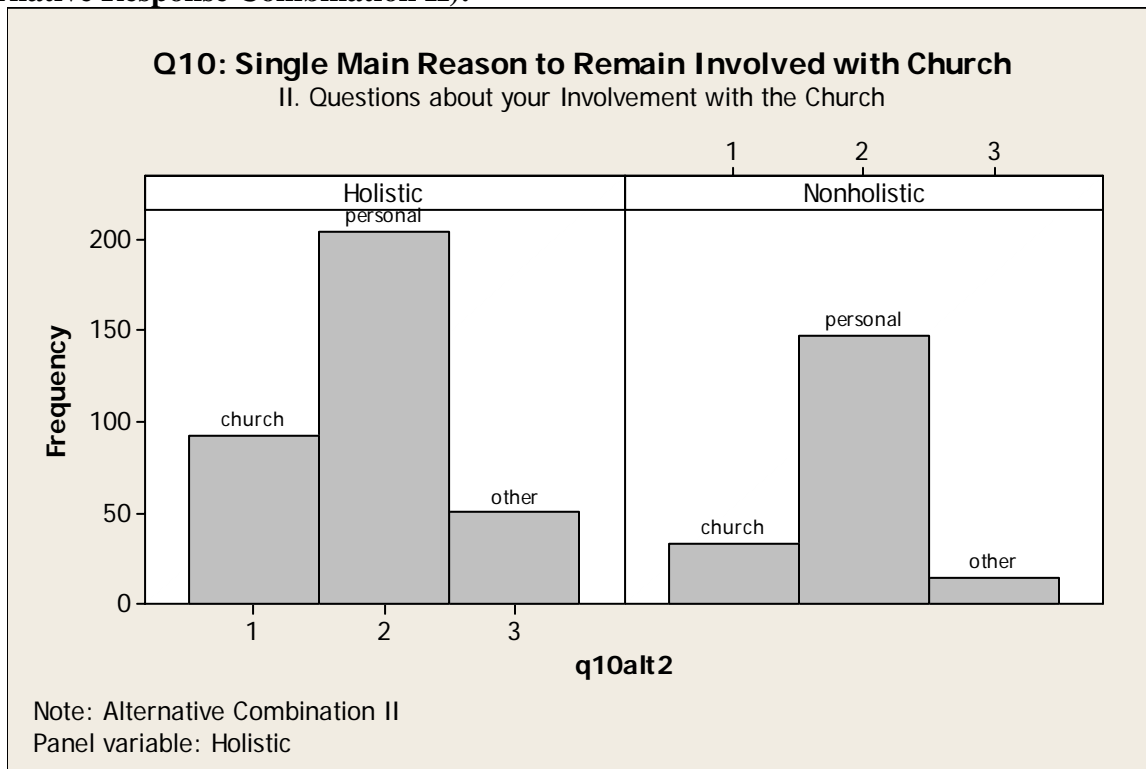
1. Involvement driven by **church**-oriented motivations (a, b, e, g, i. j)
2. Involvement driven by **personal** motivations (c, d, f, h).
3. **Other** motivations (k)

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q10alt2

                    1       2       3  Missing      All

Holistic           92     204      50       16      346
Nonholistic        33     147      14       16      194

All               125     351      64        *      540
% of Total      23.15   65.00   11.85        *   100.00
```

Result: The two groups of churches did not report significant differences in reasons to remain involved with the church. When responses are combined in this manner, 65% of respondents reported "personal motivations" as their primary reason to remain involved with the church.

Q11:
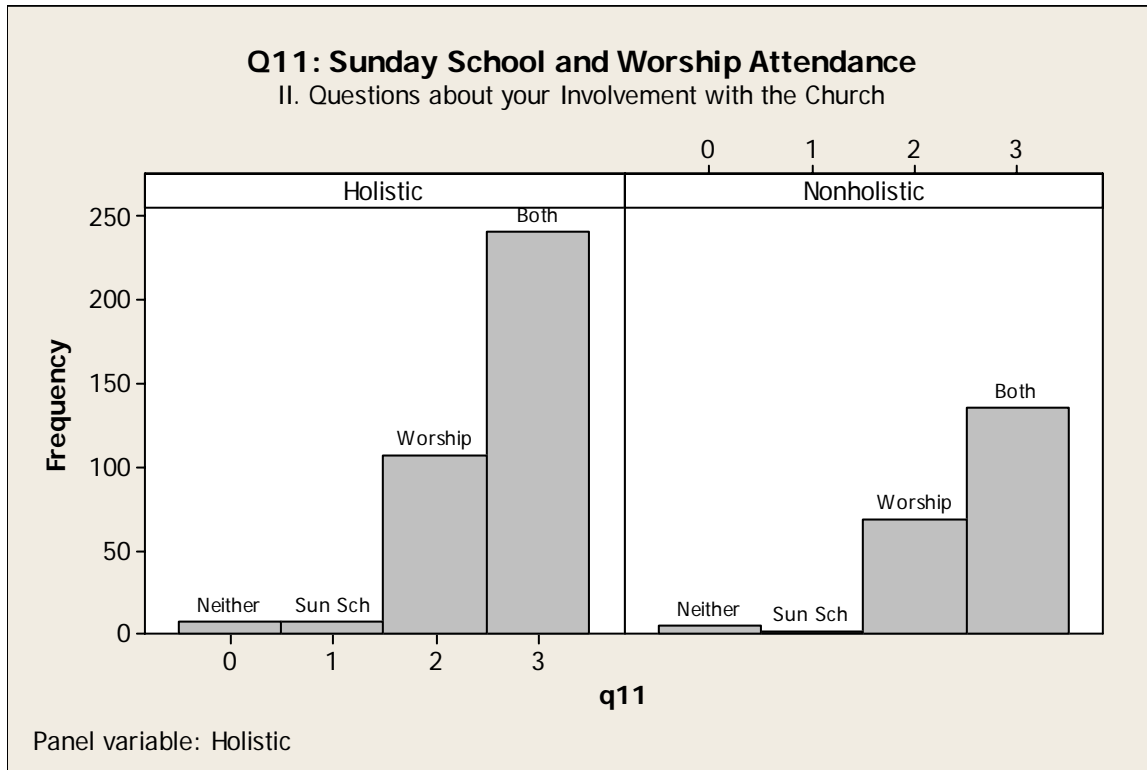
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q11

                     0     1      2       3  Missing      All

Holistic             7     7    107     241        0      362
Nonholistic          5     1     68     135        1      209

All                 12     8    175     376        *      571
% of Total        2.10  1.40  30.65   65.85        *   100.00
```

Result: There are no significant differences in regard to Sunday school and worship attendance between the two groups of churches. 66% of all respondents report 'usually' attending both Sunday school and worship service.

Q12:
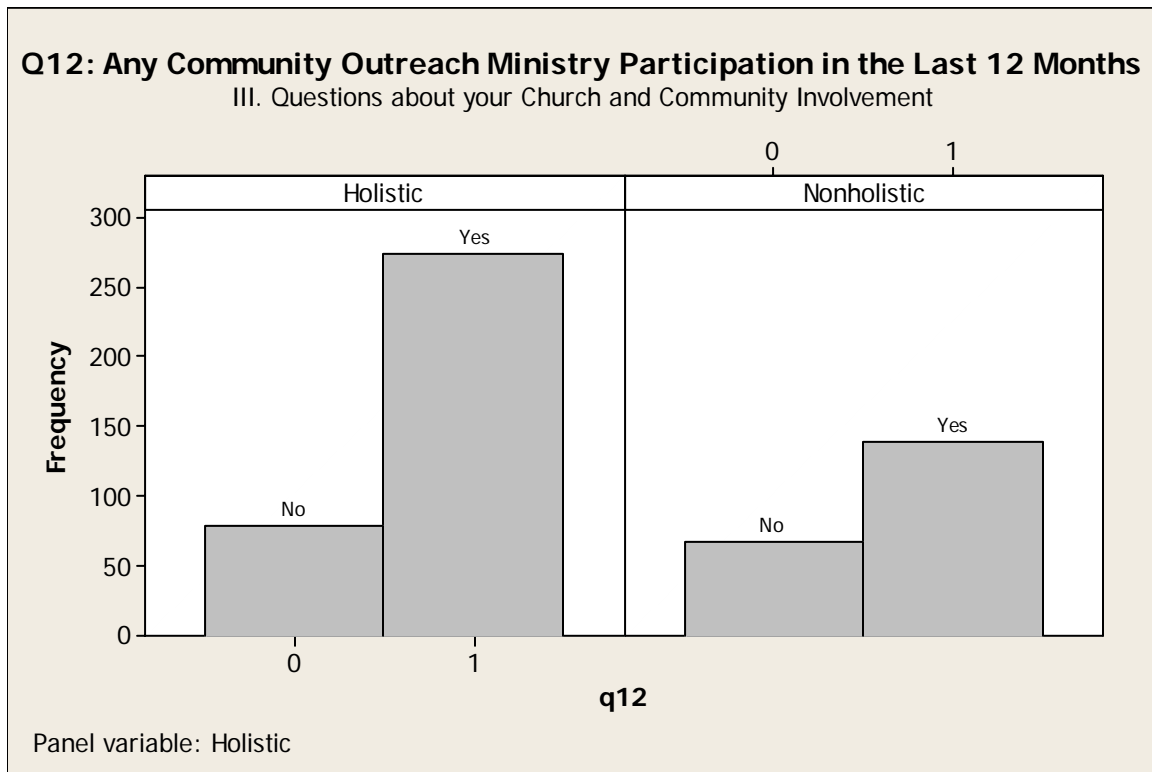

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q12

                    0       1  Missing      All

Holistic           79     273       10      352
Nonholistic        67     139        4      206

All                146    412        *      558
% of Total       26.16  73.84        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences exist between the two churches. 78% of congregants from the holistic churches participated in community outreach ministry programs in the last 12 months versus 67% for the non-holistic church group.

Q13:
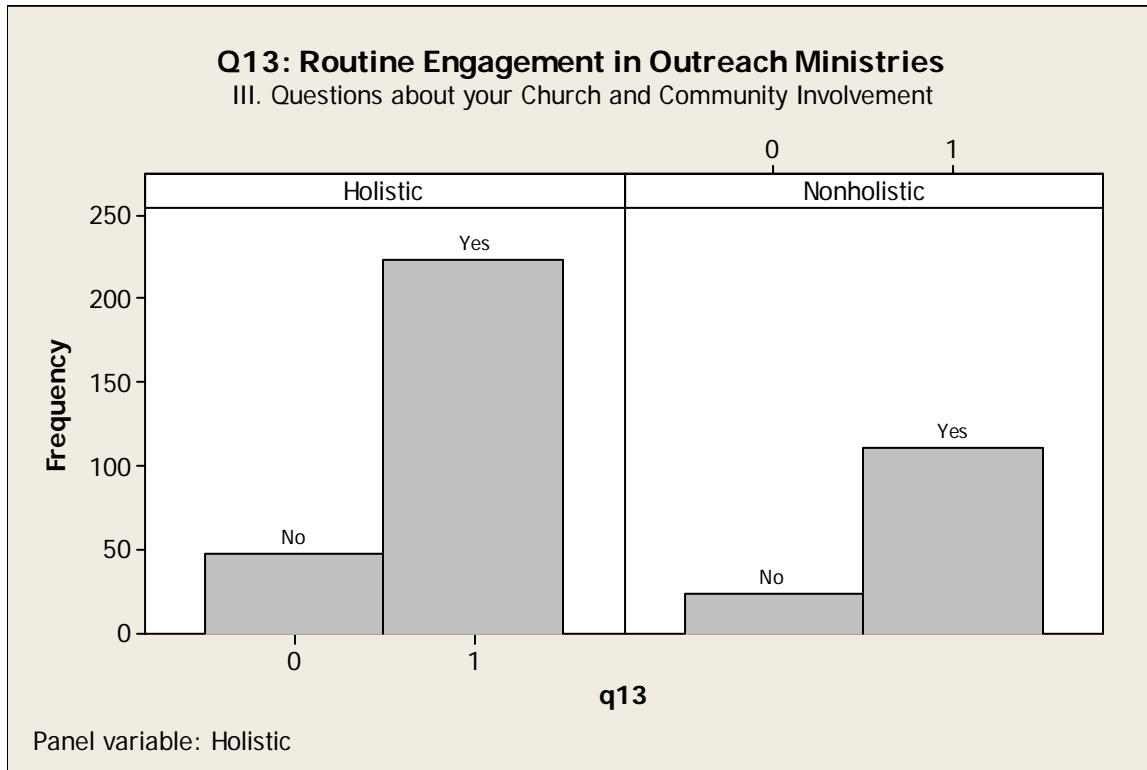

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q13

                    0       1  Missing      All

Holistic           48     223       91      271
Nonholistic        24     111       75      135

All                72     334        *      406
% of Total      17.73   82.27        *   100.00
```

Result: No statistically significant differences exist between the two groups of churches. 82% of respondents routinely engage in outreach ministries.

Q14:

Q14: Mean Response to "reasons for doing outreach ministry"
III. Questions About Your Church and Community Involvement
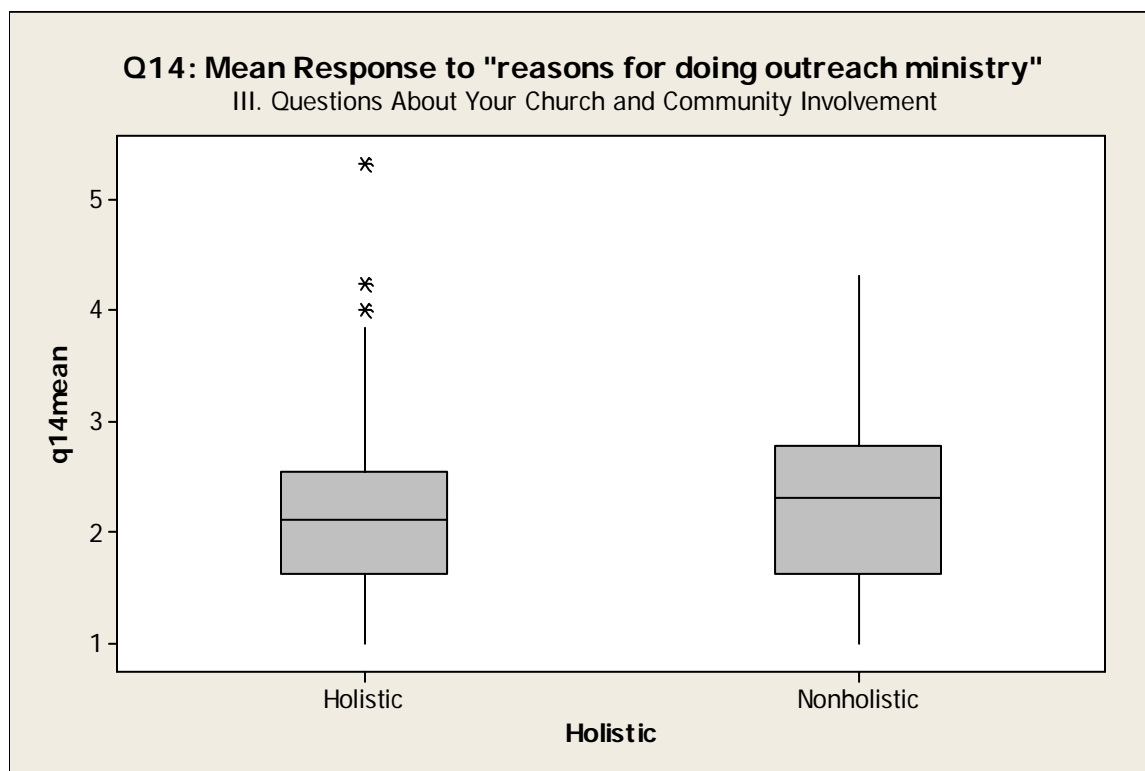
```
                        Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                        Variables              Alpha
                        Raw                 0.875907
                        Standardized        0.890031

                                     Sum of
Source                  DF          Squares     Mean Square   F Value    Pr > F
Model                    9       29.7137747       3.3015305      6.62    <.0001
Error                  329      164.1251495       0.4988606
Corrected Total        338      193.8389242

            R-Square     Coeff Var     Root MSE     q14mean Mean
            0.153291      32.04557     0.706301         2.204051

Source                  DF         Anova SS     Mean Square   F Value    Pr > F
church                   9      29.71377473      3.30153053      6.62    <.0001
```

Result: Given the high coefficient alpha reliability estimates (> 0.7), the responses are consistent between questions. That is, all the sub-questions are sufficiently correlated with one another or with the total. Analysis of variance indicates the two groups of churches have significantly different responses. With mean responses of 2.17% and 2.27% respectively, congregants from holistic churches are slightly more likely than congregants from non-holistic churches to rate the stated reasons on the survey as 'very important'.

Q15:

Q15: Single Main Reason time was not Spent in Church Ministries
III. Questions about your Church and Community Involvement

```
                   1         2         3         4         5         6         7         8
Holistic          74         2         5        24        11         8        25        58
Nonholistic       38         0         8        14         7         7        18        29

All              112         2        13        38        18        15        43        87
% of Total    34.146     0.610     3.963    11.585     5.488     4.573    13.110    26.524

              Missing        All

Holistic          155        207
Nonholistic        89        121

All                 *        328
% of Total          *    100.000
```

Result: Although no significant tests can be done on the data due to high spread and low counts, it should be noted that the 3 most common responses are the same for both the holistic and non-holistic churches.

Response	Response	Number of Respondents from Holistic Churches	Number of Respondents from Non-Holistic Churches
1	I'm too busy with work, family, and activities outside the church	74 (36%)	38 (31%)
8	Other	58 (28%)	29 (24%)
7	I don't think I'm gifted or called in this area	25 (12%)	18 (15%)

Q16:

Q16: "Does your church offer training in the following areas?"
III. Questions about your Church and Community Involvement

Panel variable: Holistic
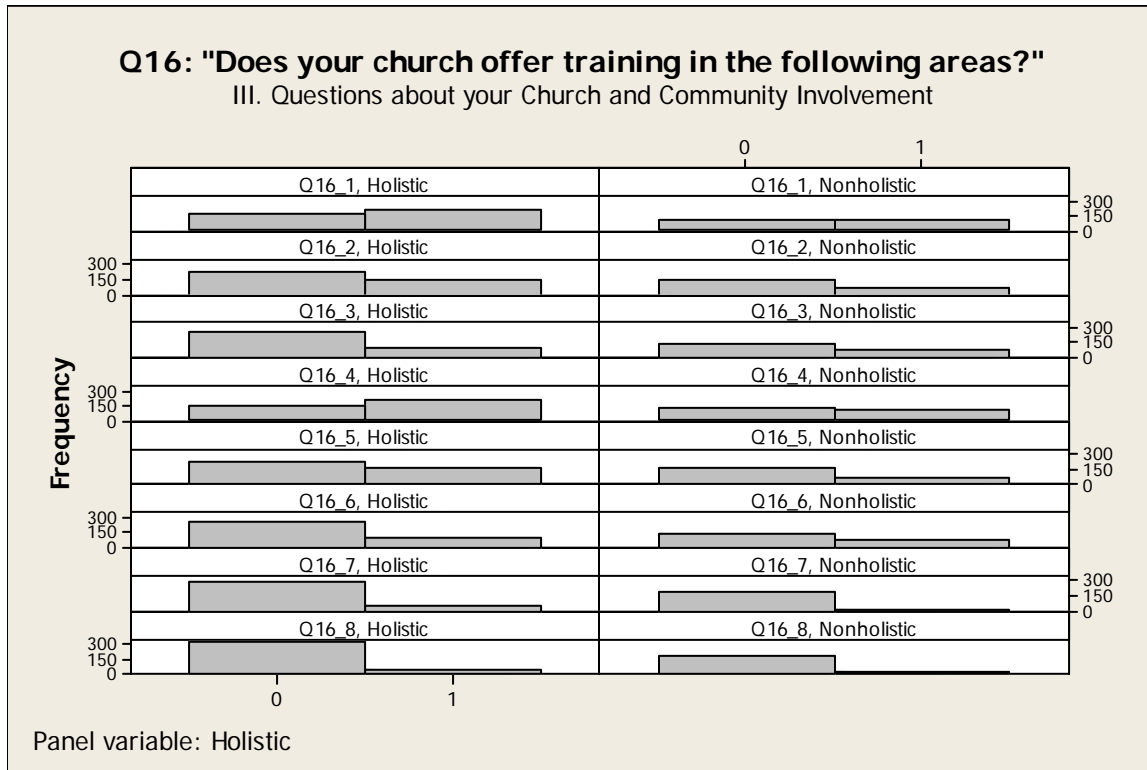
```
Q16_1   Count   Percent     Q16_2   Count   Percent     Q16_3   Count   Percent
    0     269     47.44          0     367     64.73          0     387     68.13
    1     298     52.56          1     200     35.27          1     181     31.87

Q16_4   Count   Percent     Q16_5   Count   Percent     Q16_6   Count   Percent
    0     270     47.54          0     365     64.26          0     395     69.54
    1     298     52.46          1     203     35.74          1     173     30.46

Q16_7   Count   Percent     Q16_8   Count   Percent
    0     498     87.68          0     521     91.73
    1      70     12.32          1      47      8.27
```

Result: The above histogram shows the overall set of responses to each of the training areas for the holistic and non-holistic church groups.

Q17:

Q17: "Hands On" or "Hands Off" Pastoral Leadership of the Ministries
IV. Questions about your Church
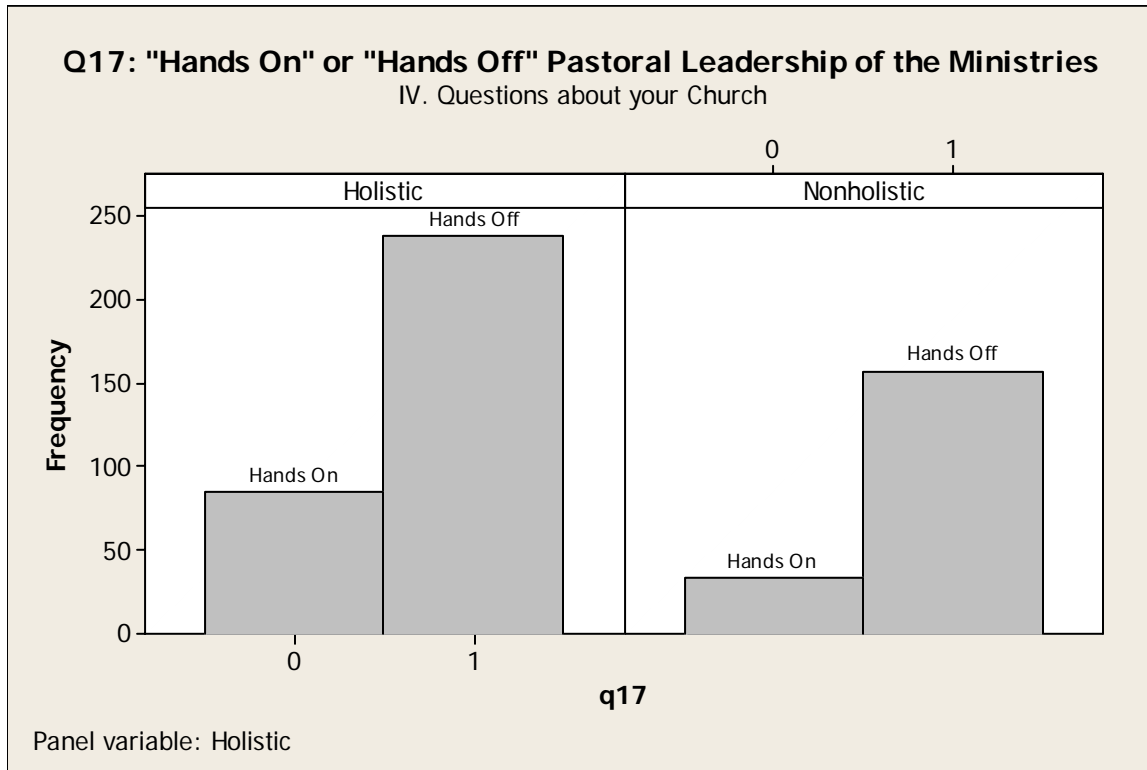
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, q17

                    0       1  Missing      All

Holistic           85     238       39      323
Nonholistic        33     157       20      190

All               118     395        *      513
% of Total      23.00   77.00        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences do exist between the two churches. 74% of respondents from holistic churches report 'hands off' pastoral leadership versus 83% in the non-holistic church group.

Q18:

Q18: Mean Response
IV. Questions about your Church
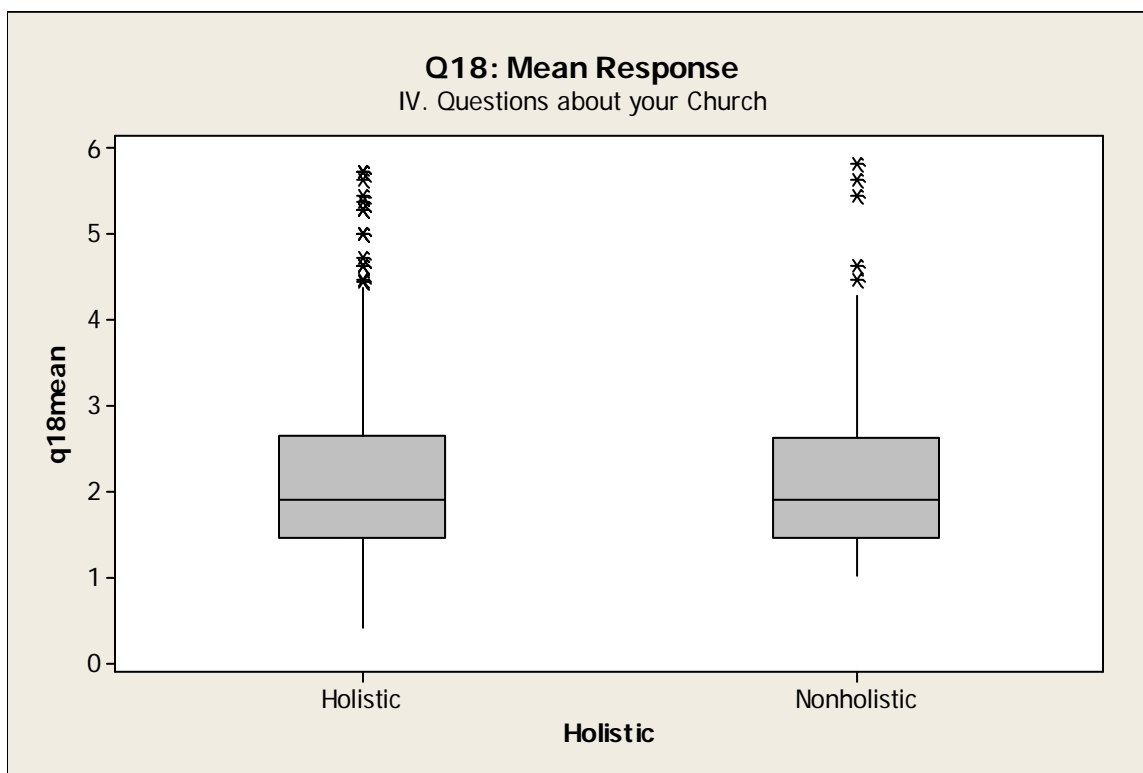
```
                              Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                         Vari abl es               Al pha
                         Raw                     0. 923342
                         Standardi zed           0. 929380

                                      Sum of
         Source              DF       Squares     Mean Square    F Val ue   Pr > F
         Model                1    0. 7500988      0. 7500988       0. 83   0. 3630
         Error              562   508. 6266158      0. 9050296
         Corrected Total    563   509. 3767146

                 R-Square     Coeff Var     Root MSE     q18mean Mean
                 0. 001473    44. 29802     0. 951330        2. 147569

         Source              DF       Anova SS    Mean Square    F Val ue   Pr > F
         hol i sti c          1    0. 75009882    0. 75009882       0. 83   0. 3630
```

Result: While the sub-questions display a strong amount of internal consistency, there are no significant differences between the two church groups. Note that sub-questions 1 and 2 have been removed since they reflect a different underlying construct than the other sub-questions. With a mean response of 2.14, the phrases in the survey were more likely to 'very much describe this church' than not.

Q19:
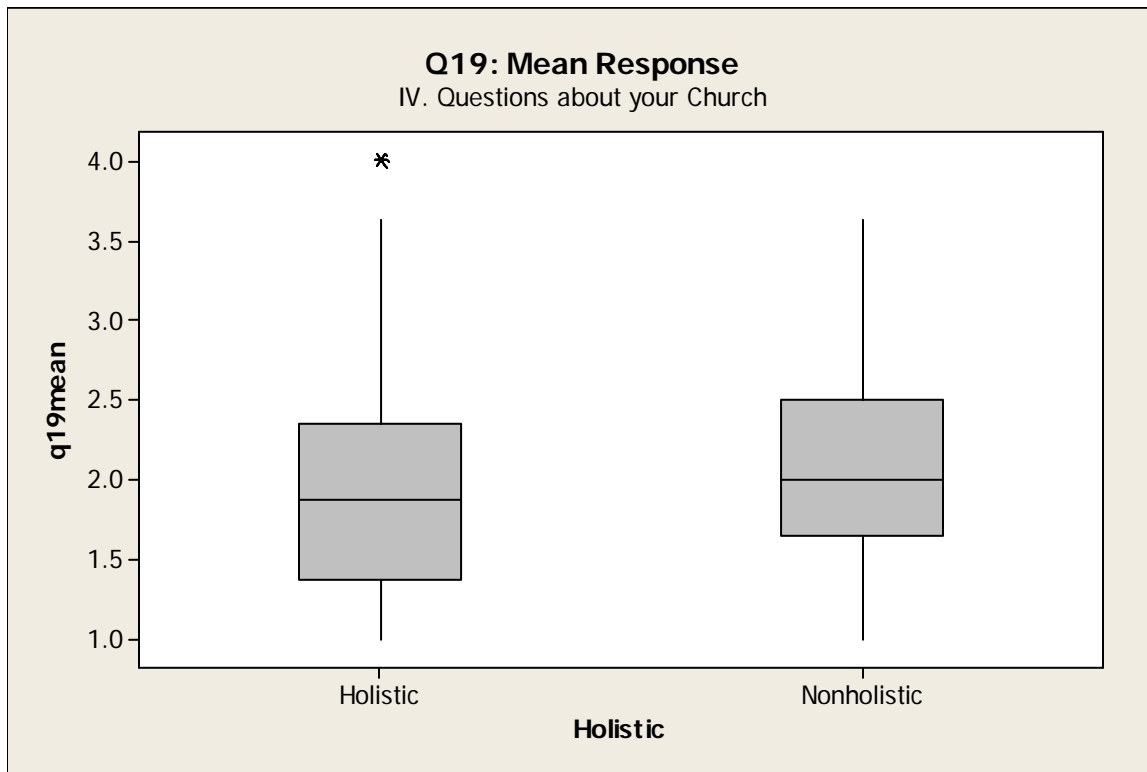

```
                              Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                              Variables                   Alpha
                              Raw                       0.888514
                              Standardized              0.889193

                                            Sum of
           Source                  DF       Squares      Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
           Model                    9    25.4047574       2.8227508       7.50    <.0001
           Error                  555   208.8239859       0.3762594
           Corrected Total        564   234.2287433

                 R-Square     Coeff Var      Root MSE     q19mean Mean
                 0.108461      31.15144      0.613400         1.969090

           Source                  DF      Anova SS       Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
           church                   9    25.40475744      2.82275083      7.50    <.0001
```

Result: Not only do the sub-questions display a strong amount of internal consistency, but there are also significant differences between the church-groups. The holistic churches are more likely to rate the church's organizational skills as 'excellent' than the non-holistic churches (with means of 1.92 versus 2.05, respectively)

Q20:
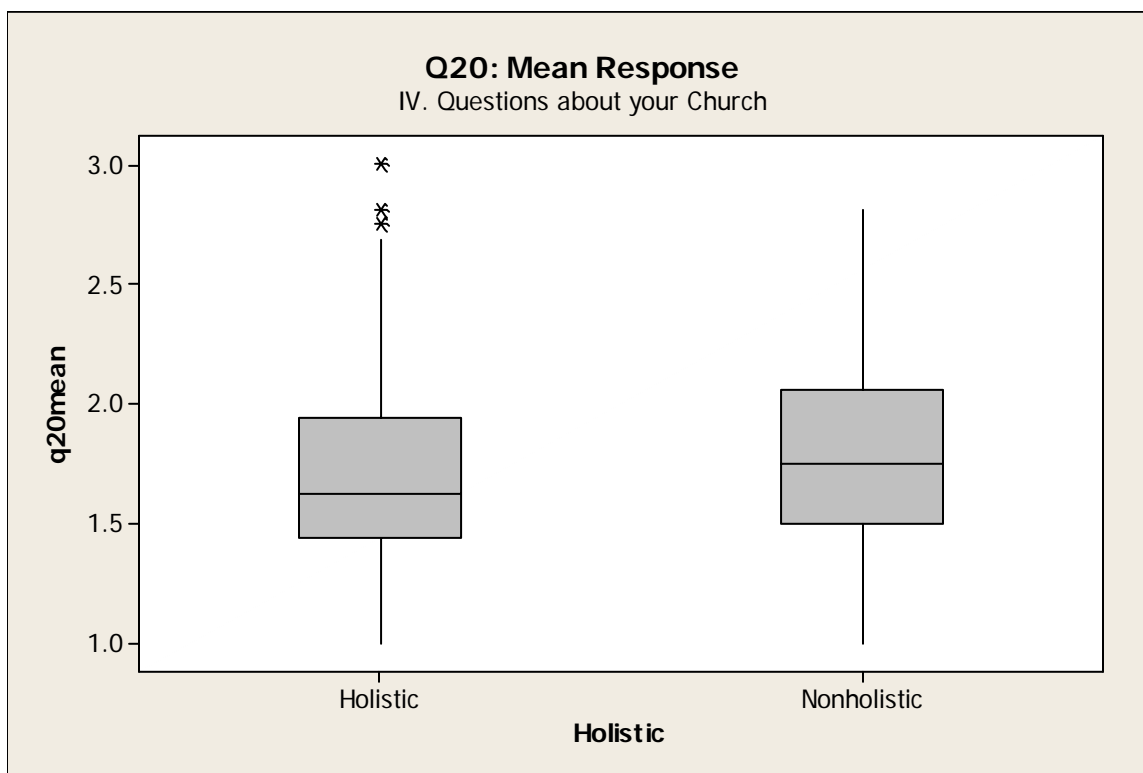

```
                              Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                      Variables                Alpha
                      Raw                     0.868975
                      Standardized            0.871106

                                     Sum of
          Source           DF       Squares       Mean Square     F Value    Pr > F
          Model             9    20.62808240      2.29200916       18.57     <.0001
          Error           554    68.39010819      0.12344785
          Corrected Total  563    89.01819059

               R-Square     Coeff Var      Root MSE      q20mean Mean
               0.231729     20.35977       0.351351        1.725715

          Source           DF       Anova SS      Mean Square     F Value    Pr > F
          church            9    20.62808240      2.29200916       18.57     <.0001
```

Result: Not only do the sub-questions display a strong amount of internal consistency, but there are also significant differences between the church-groups. Respondents from the holistic churches are very slightly more likely to rate the stated priorities as 'high priority' than the non-holistic churches (with means of 1.70 versus 1.77, respectively).

Q21:
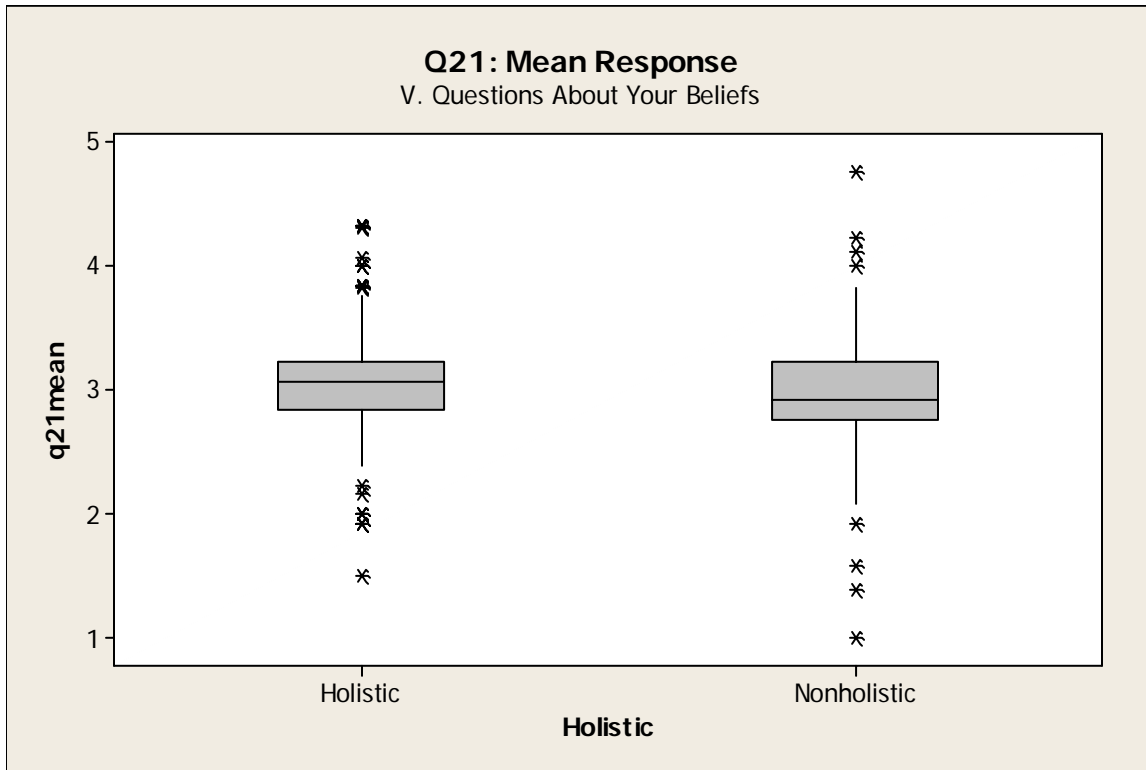

```
                                  Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                           Variables              Alpha
                           Raw                 0.161469
                           Standardized        0.187763


                                    Sum of
    Source                DF       Squares      Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
    Model                  9    3.58939607      0.39882179       2.57    0.0067
    Error                516   80.05280572      0.15514110
    Corrected Total      525   83.64220179


               R-Square    Coeff Var     Root MSE    q21mean Mean
               0.042914    13.04306      0.393880        3.019841


    Source                DF      Anova SS      Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
    church                 9    3.58939607      0.39882179       2.57    0.0067
```

Result: The internal consistency between the sub-questions in 21 is extremely weak; in other words, there is very little correlation between responses to the sub-questions. As such, using the results of this question to compare the two groups of churches would not provide very useful results.

Q21B:
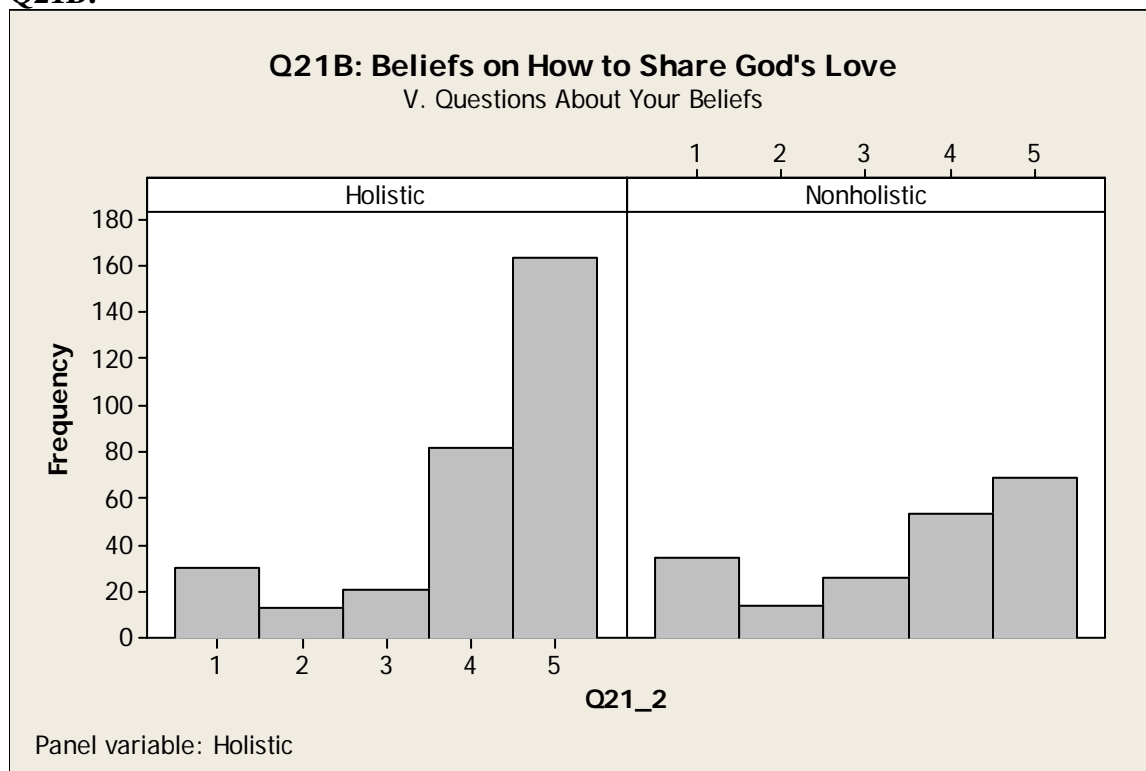
Q21B: Beliefs on How to Share God's Love
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Holistic

b. The way to share God's love with people is by telling them about Jesus.   1 2 3 4 5   The way to share God's love with people is by demonstrating it with caring actions.
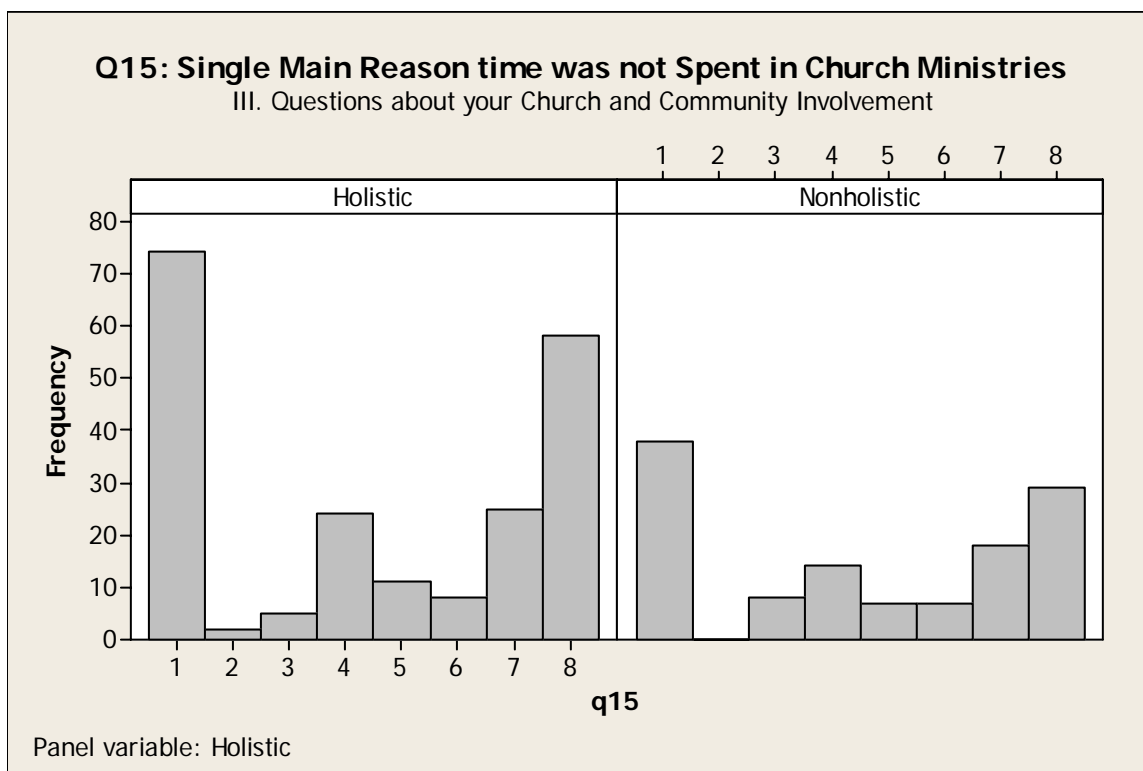
```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, Q21_2

                      1      2      3       4        5  Missing      All

Holistic             30     13     21      82      163       53      309
Nonholistic          34     14     26      53       69       14      196

All                  64     27     47     135      232        *      505
% of Total        12.67   5.35   9.31   26.73    45.94        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences exist between the two church-groups in their response to this question. It may be of interest that 79% of respondents from the holistic churches chose response 4 or 5 (caring actions) versus 62% of respondents from the non-holistic churches.

Q21_7
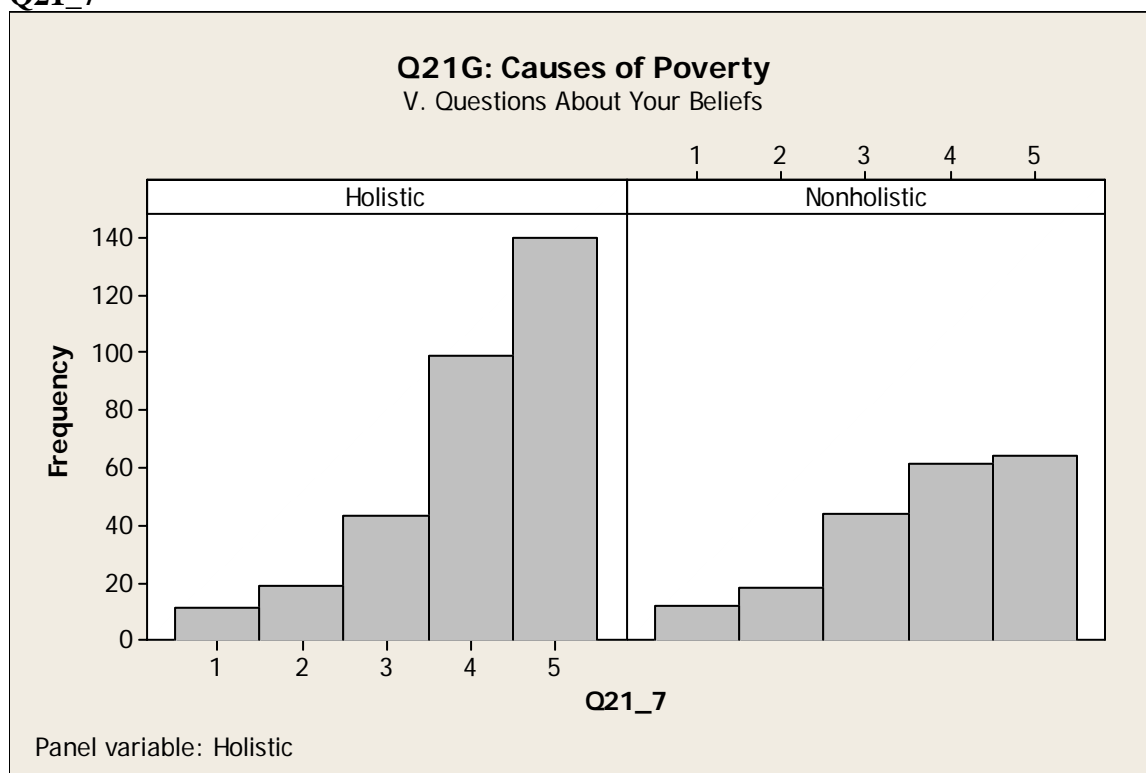
Q21G: Causes of Poverty
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

g. Poverty is largely due to a person's immoral lifestyle, laziness, or drugs.

1 2 3 4 5

Poverty is largely due to social, economic, and political factors, racism, and lack of good jobs.

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, Q21_7

                   1      2      3      4      5  Missing      All

Holistic          11     19     43     99    140       50      312
Nonholistic       12     18     44     61     64       11      199

All               23     37     87    160    204        *      511
                4.50   7.24  17.03  31.31  39.92        *   100.00
```

Result: Significant differences exist between the two church-groups in their response to this question. It may be of interest that 77% of respondents from the holistic churches chose response 4 or 5 (social, economic, etc.) versus 63% of respondents from the non-holistic churches.

Q21_8
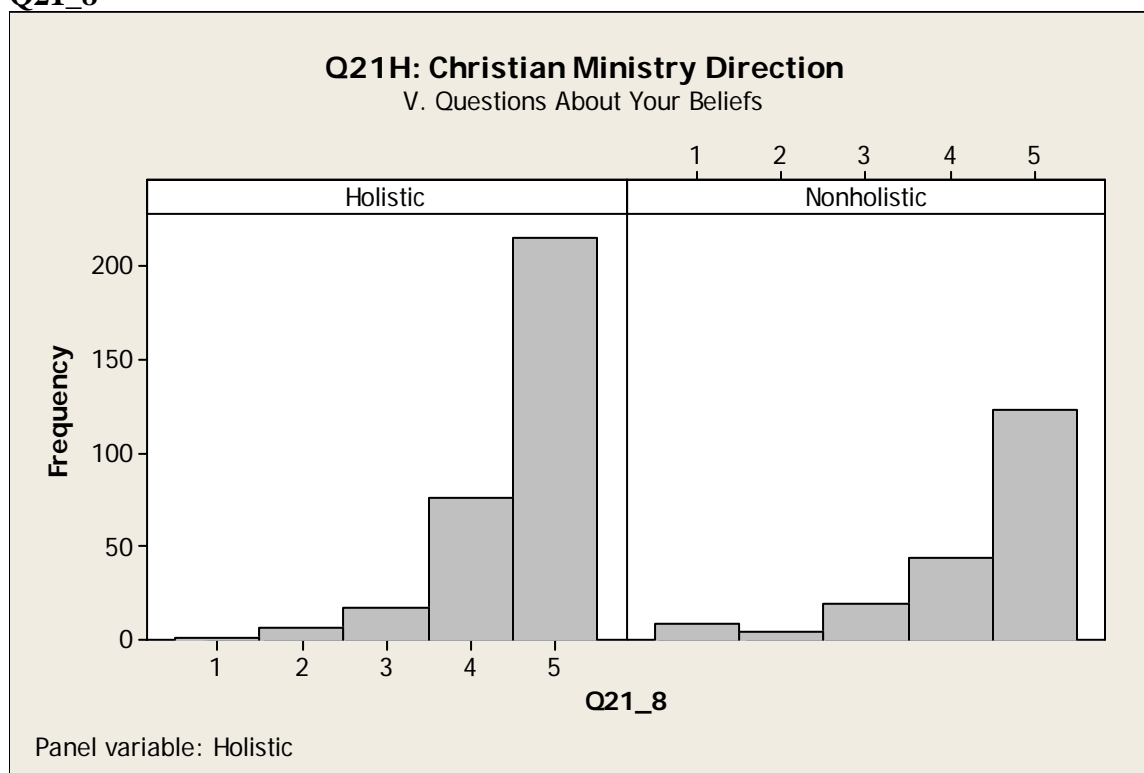
Q21H: Christian Ministry Direction
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Holistic

h. Christian ministry should be directed mainly to other members of the Christian faith.   1   2   3   4   5   Christian ministry should be directed to all members of society.

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, Q21_8

                  1       2       3        4        5  Missing       All

Holistic          1       6      17       76      215       47       315
Nonholistic       9       4      19       44      123       11       199

All              10      10      36      120      338        *       514
              1.946   1.946   7.004   23.346   65.759        *   100.000
```

Result: Significant differences exist between the two church-groups in their response to this question. It may be of interest that 92% of respondents from the holistic churches chose response 4 or 5 (all members of society) versus 84% of respondents from the non-holistic churches.

Q21_9
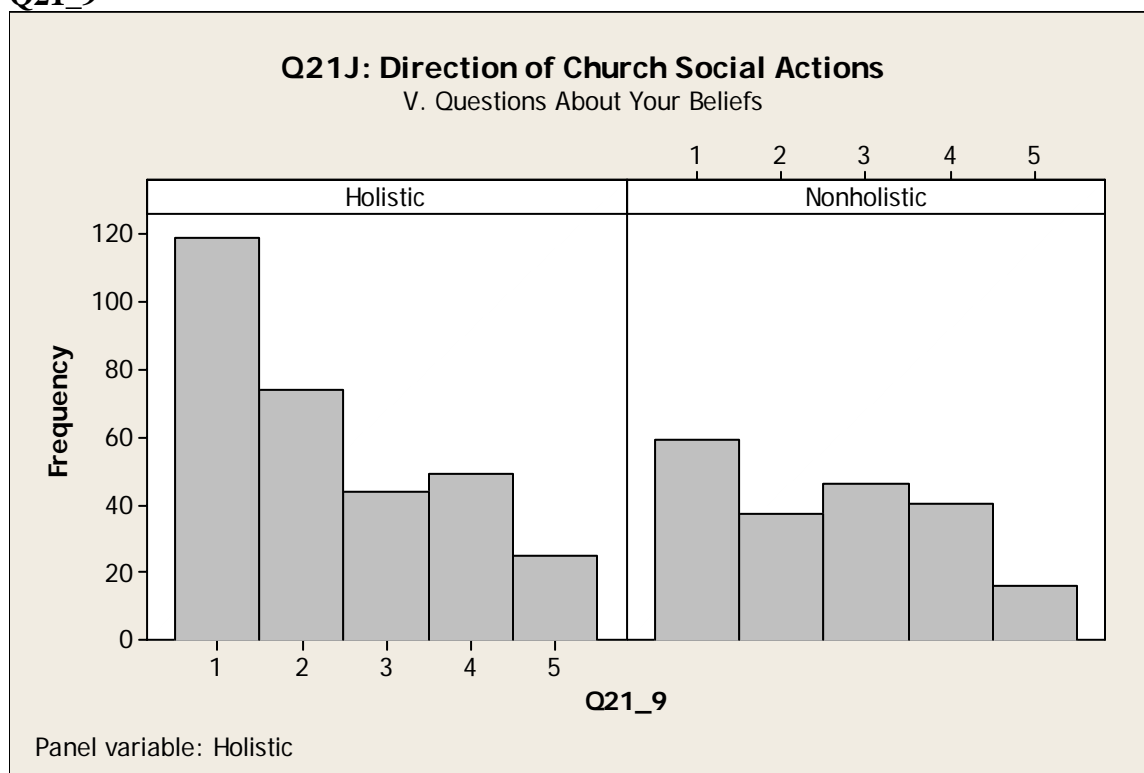
Q21J: Direction of Church Social Actions
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Holistic

j. Any church's social action should be directed to all who are in need in the world.   1   2   3   4   5   Any Church's social action should be directed primarily toward its local community.

```
Tabulated statistics: Holistic, Q21_9

                    1       2       3       4       5   Missing       All

Holistic          119      74      44      49      25        51       311
Nonholistic        59      37      46      40      16        12       198

All               178     111      90      89      41         *       509
                34.97   21.81   17.68   17.49    8.06         *    100.00
```

Result: Significant differences exist between the two church-groups in their response to this question. It may be of interest that 62% of respondents from the holistic churches chose response 1 or 2 (all who are in need) versus 48% of respondents from the non-holistic churches.

Q21_10:
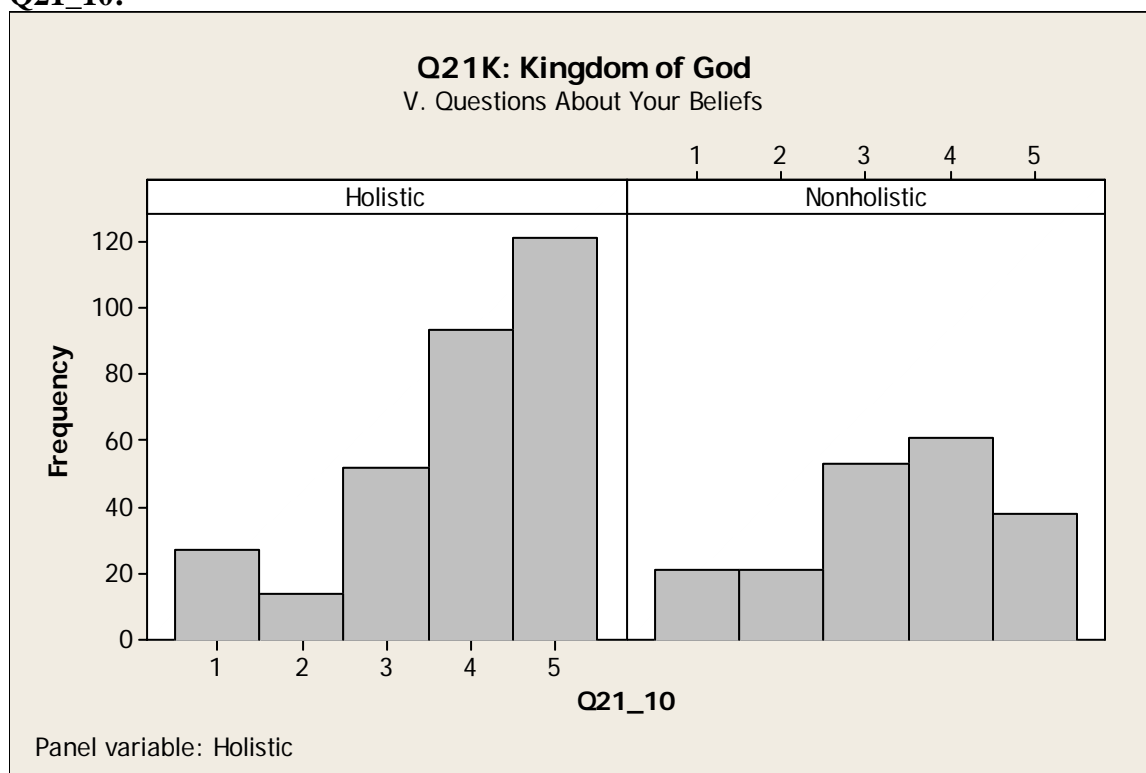
Q21K: Kingdom of God
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

k. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual realm that can only be attained after death   1   2   3   4   5   The Kingdom of God could exist on earth if only everyone would live by gospel principles.

Tabulated statistics: Holistic, Q21_10

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Holistic	27	14	52	93	121	55	307
Nonholistic	21	21	53	61	38	16	194
All	48	35	105	154	159	*	501
% of Total	9.58	6.99	20.96	30.74	31.74	*	100.00

Result: Significant differences exist between the two church-groups in their response to this question. It may be of interest that 70% of respondents from the holistic churches chose response 4 or 5 (could exist on earth) versus 51% of respondents from the non-holistic churches.

Primary within Holistic and Non-Holistic

Question 3: Holistic

Q3: Marital Status
I. Demographic Information

Panel variable: Church_Name
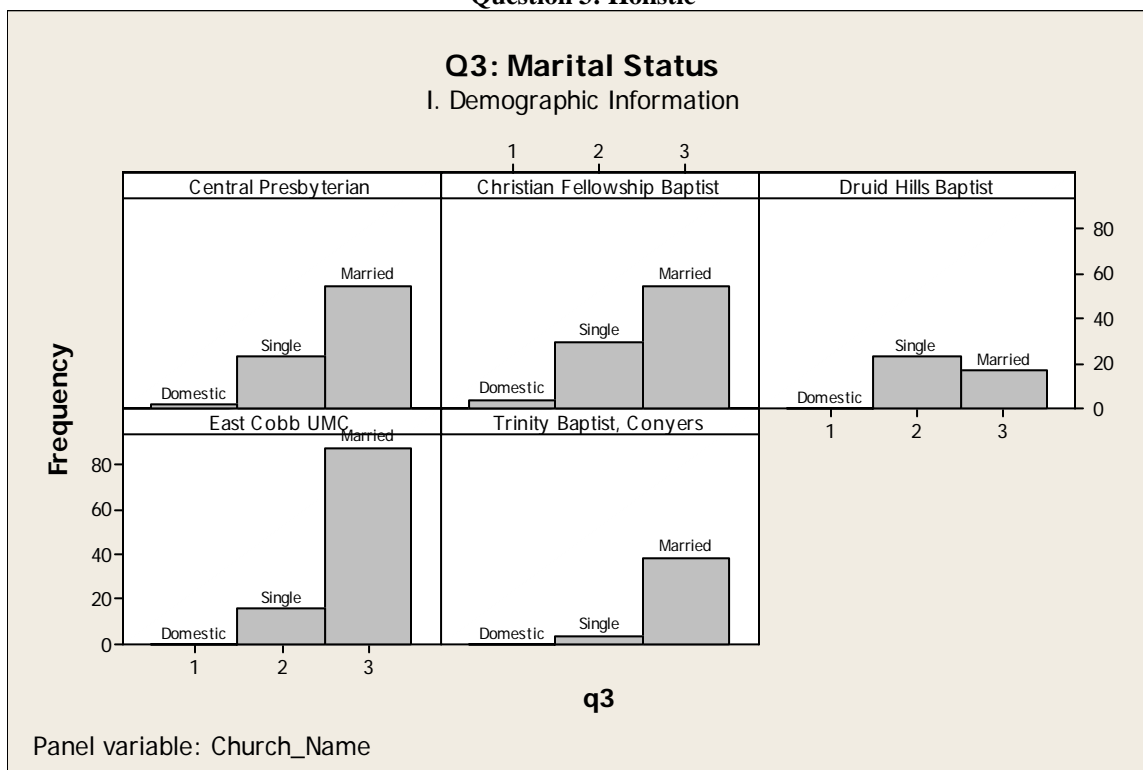
	Domestic	Single	Married	Total
Christian Fellowship Baptist	4	30	55	89
Central Presbyterian	2	23	55	80
Druid Hills Baptist	0	23	17	40
East Cobb UMC	0	16	88	104
Trinity Baptist, Conyers	0	4	39	43
Total	6	96	254	356
%	1.68%	26.97%	71.35%	

Frequency Missing = 6

Statistics for Table of church by q3

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	8	43.9067	<.0001
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	8	45.3456	<.0001
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	19.8353	<.0001

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different; however, low domestic counts hinder proper analysis.

Question 3: Non-Holistic

Q3: Marital Status
I. Demographic Status

Panel variable: Church_Name
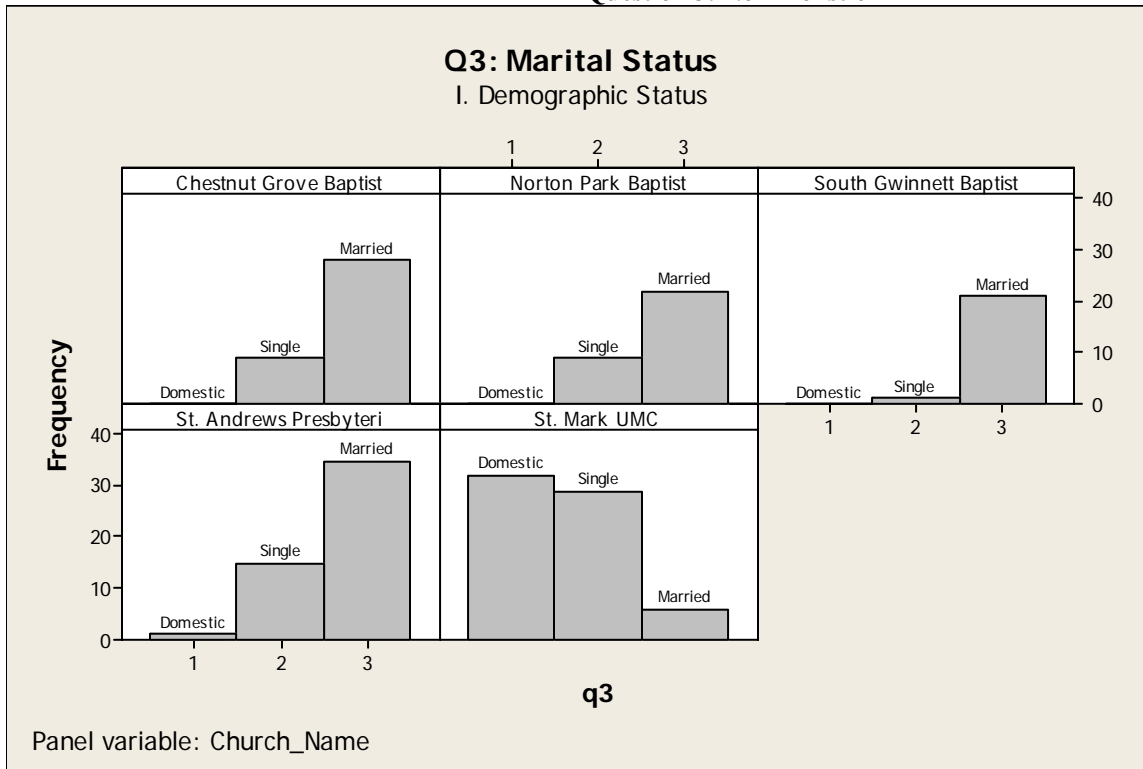
```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q3

                             1      2      3  Missing      All

Chestnut Grove Baptist       0      9     28        0       37
Norton Park Baptist          0      9     22        1       31
South Gwinnett Baptist       0      1     21        1       22
St. Andrews Presbyteri       1     15     35        0       51
St. Mark UMC                32     29      6        0       67

All                         33     63    112        *      208
% of Total               15.87  30.29  53.85        *   100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 111.649, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 128.378, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
```

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Question 5: Holistic

Q5: News Access
I. Demographic Information

Panel variable: Church_Name
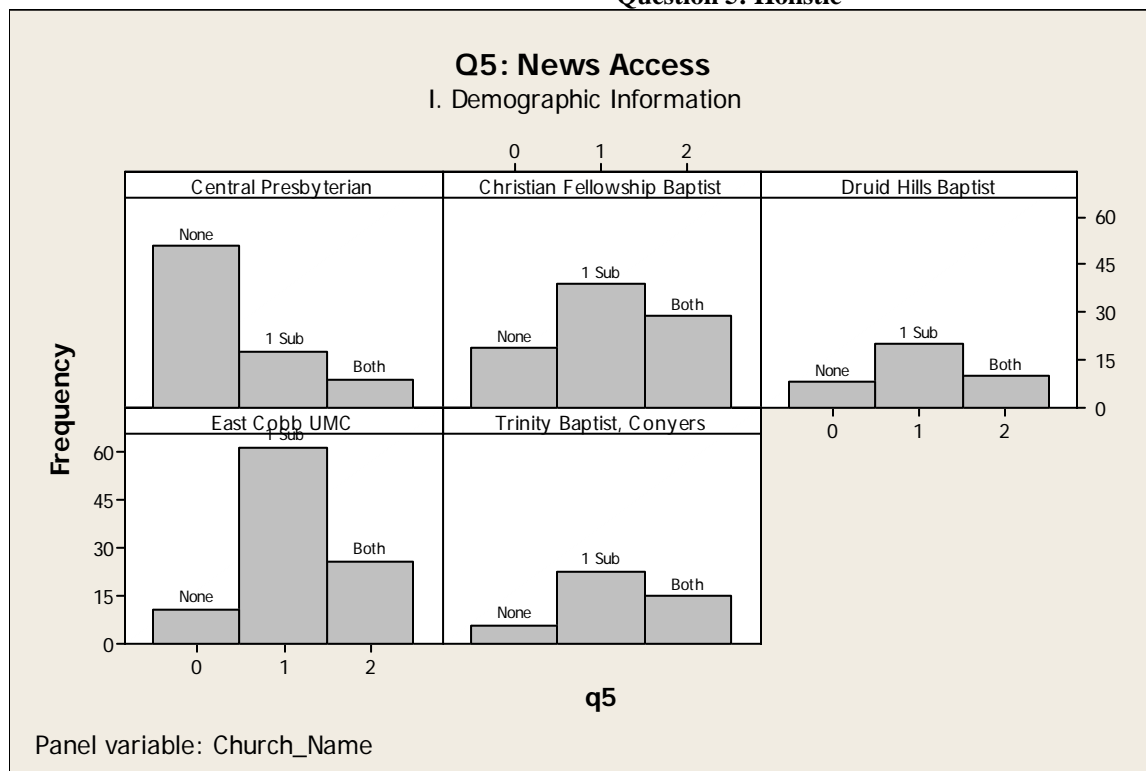
```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q5

                                  0      1      2   Missing      All

Central Presbyterian             51     18      9         2       78
Christian Fellowship Baptist     19     39     29         6       87
Druid Hills Baptist               8     20     10         2       38
East Cobb UMC                    11     62     26         5       99
Trinity Baptist, Conyers          6     23     15         1       44

All                              95    162     89         *      346
%                             27.46  46.82  25.72         *   100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 79.704, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 74.793, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
```

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Question 5: Non-Holistic

Q5: News Access

I. Demographic Status

Panel variable: Church_Name
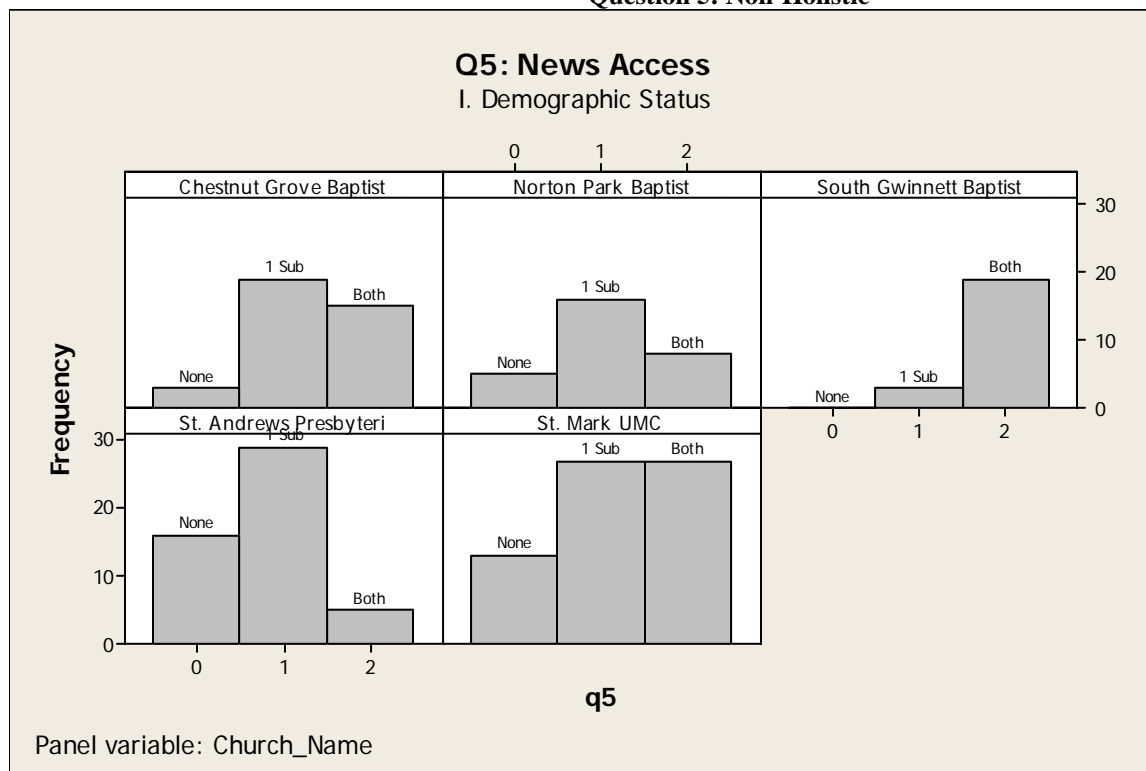
```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q5

                          0      1      2  Missing      All

Chestnut Grove Baptist     3     19     15        0       37
Norton Park Baptist        5     16      8        3       29
South Gwinnett Baptist     0      3     19        1       22
St. Andrews Presbyteri    16     29      5        1       50
St. Mark UMC              13     27     27        0       67

All                       37     94     74        *      205
% of Total             18.05  45.85  36.10        *   100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 45.245, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 49.987, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
```

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Question 8alt: Holistic

Q8: Length of Time Attending Current Church
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church

Note: "Less than one year " and "2-5 years" are combined
Panel variable: Church_Name

```
Kruskal-Wallis Test: q8alt versus Church_Name

Church_Name                   N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Central Presbyterian         78   3.000     199.7   1.95
Christian Fellowship Baptist 91   3.000     188.1   0.92
Druid Hills Baptist          40   3.000     174.5  -0.32
East Cobb UMC               104   3.000     169.6  -1.16
Trinity Baptist, Conyers     45   2.000     154.4  -1.74
Overall                     358               179.5


H = 7.29  DF = 4  P = 0.122
H = 9.18  DF = 4  P = 0.057  (adjusted for ties)

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q8alt
                             1      2      3  Missing     All

Central Presbyterian        20      5     53        2      78
Christian Fellowship Baptist 20     20     51        2      91
Druid Hills Baptist         15      3     22        0      40
East Cobb UMC               39     12     53        0     104
Trinity Baptist, Conyers    21      4     20        0      45

All                        115     44    199        *     358
% of Total               32.12  12.29  55.59        *  100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 22.112, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.005
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 21.371, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.006

* NOTE * 1 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different when the first two categories are combined.

Question 8alt: Non-Holistic
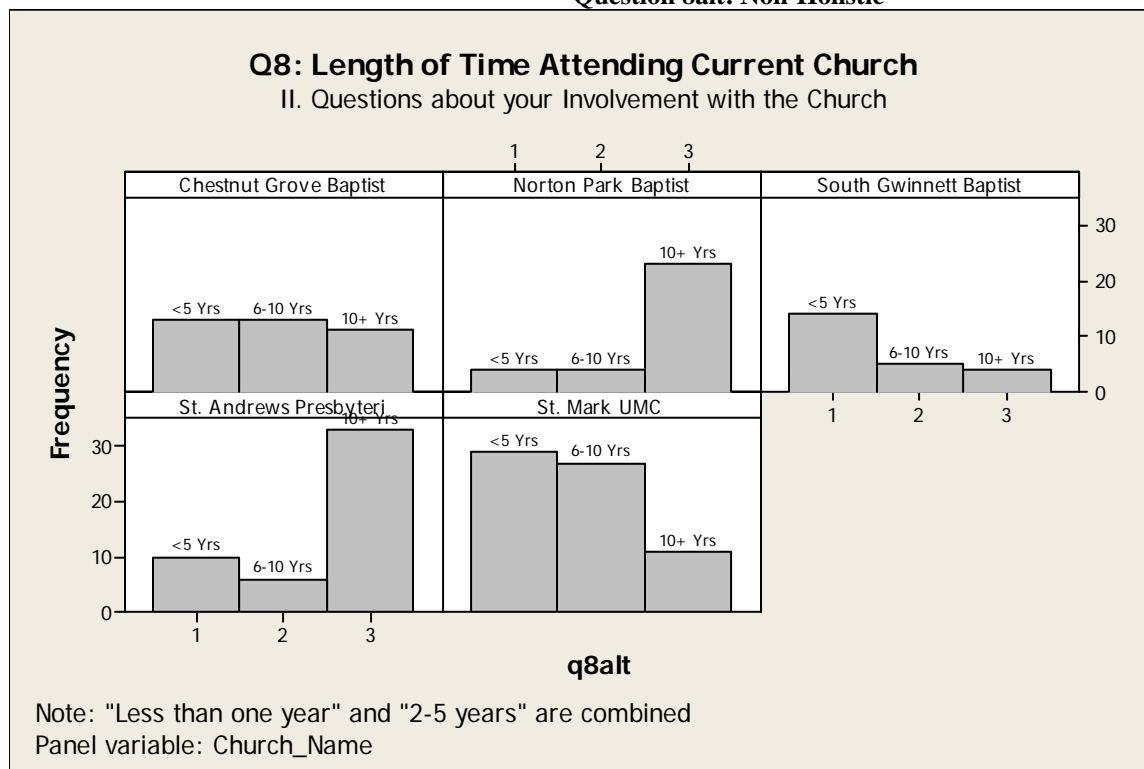
Q8: Length of Time Attending Current Church
II. Questions about your Involvement with the Church

Note: "Less than one year" and "2-5 years" are combined
Panel variable: Church_Name

```
Kruskal-Wallis Test: q8alt versus Church_Name

Church_Name               N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Chestnut Grove Baptist   37   2.000      96.4  -0.85
Norton Park Baptist      31   3.000     140.8   3.71
South Gwinnett Baptist   23   1.000      71.9  -2.73
St. Andrews Presbyteri   49   3.000     131.4   3.66
St. Mark UMC             67   2.000      82.2  -3.62
Overall                 207             104.0

H = 38.00  DF = 4  P = 0.000
H = 43.16  DF = 4  P = 0.000  (adjusted for ties)

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q8alt

                          1      2      3  Missing      All

Chestnut Grove Baptist   13     13     11        0       37
Norton Park Baptist       4      4     23        1       31
South Gwinnett Baptist   14      5      4        0       23
St. Andrews Presbyteri   10      6     33        2       49
St. Mark UMC             29     27     11        0       67

All                      70     55     82        *      207
% of Total            33.82  26.57  39.61        *   100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 57.078, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 58.250, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.000
```

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Q12: Holistic

Q12: Any Community Outreach Ministry Participation in the Last 12 Months
III. Questions about your Church and Community Involvement

Panel variable: Church_Name
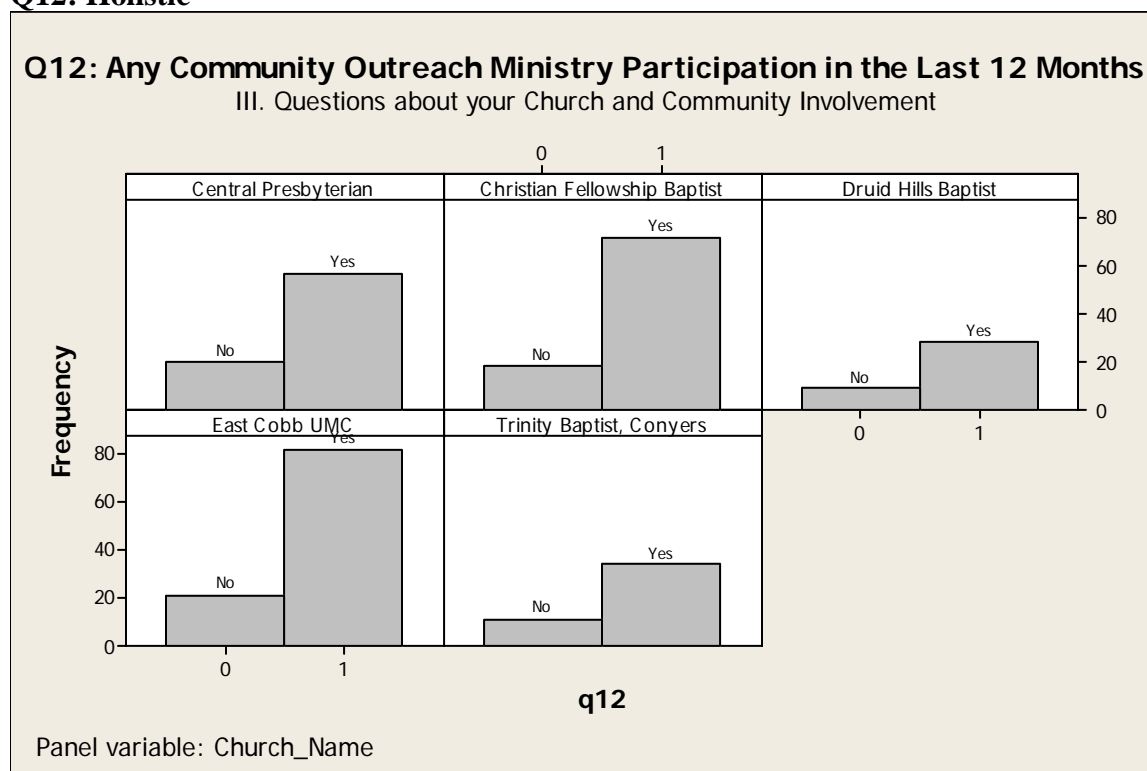
```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q12

                                0    1  Missing  All

Central Presbyterian           20   57       3    77
Christian Fellowship Baptist   18   72       3    90
Druid Hills Baptist             9   28       3    37
East Cobb UMC                  21   82       1   103
Trinity Baptist, Conyers       11   34       0    45

All                            79  273       *   352
% of Total                  22.44 77.56      *   100

Pearson Chi-Square = 1.289, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.863
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 1.281, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.865
```

Result: Overall, 78% of all respondents reported participating in a community outreach ministry program in the last twelve months. No significant differences between churches were found.

Q12: Non-Holistic

Association between Question 3 and Question 1
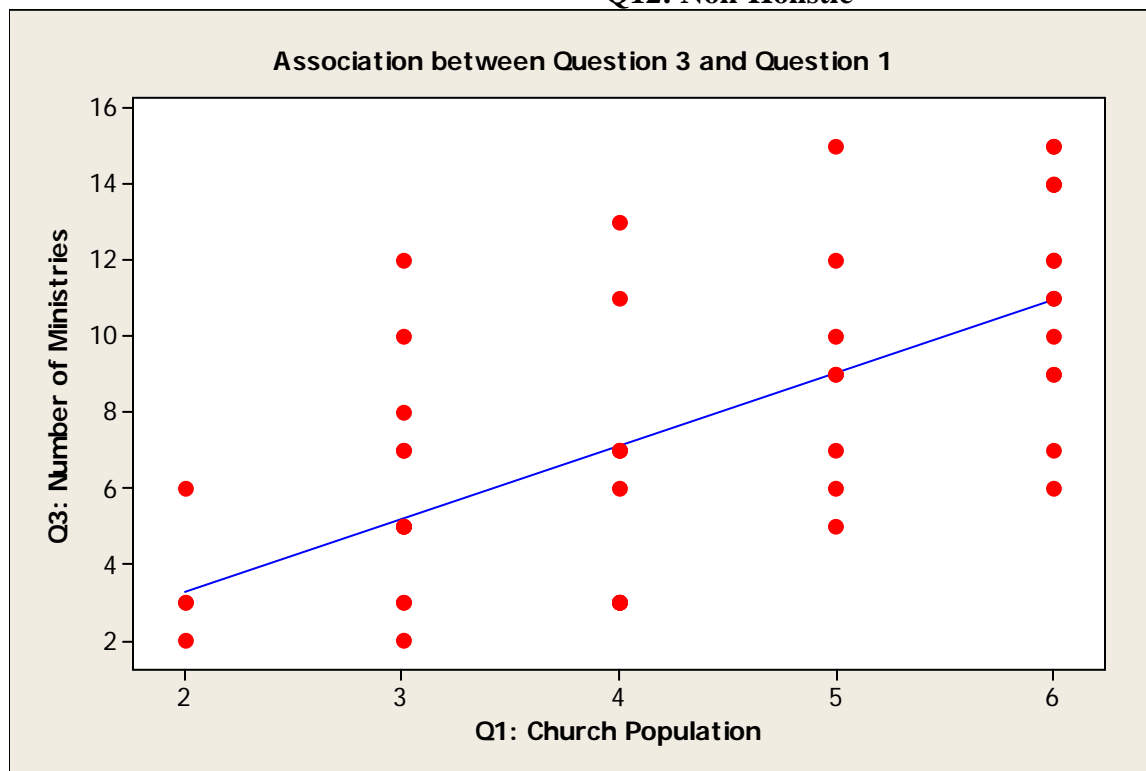

```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q12

                               0      1  Missing      All

Chestnut Grove Baptist        14     23        0       37
Norton Park Baptist           12     18        2       30
South Gwinnett Baptist         8     14        1       22
St. Andrews Presbyteri        14     36        1       50
St. Mark UMC                  19     48        0       67

All                           67    139        *      206
% of Total                 32.52  67.48        *   100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 2.384, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.666
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 2.369, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.668
```

Result: There are no significant differences within these churches

Q17: Holistic

Q17: "Hands On" or "Hands Off" Pastoral Leadership of the Ministries
IV. Questions about your Church

Panel variable: Church_Name
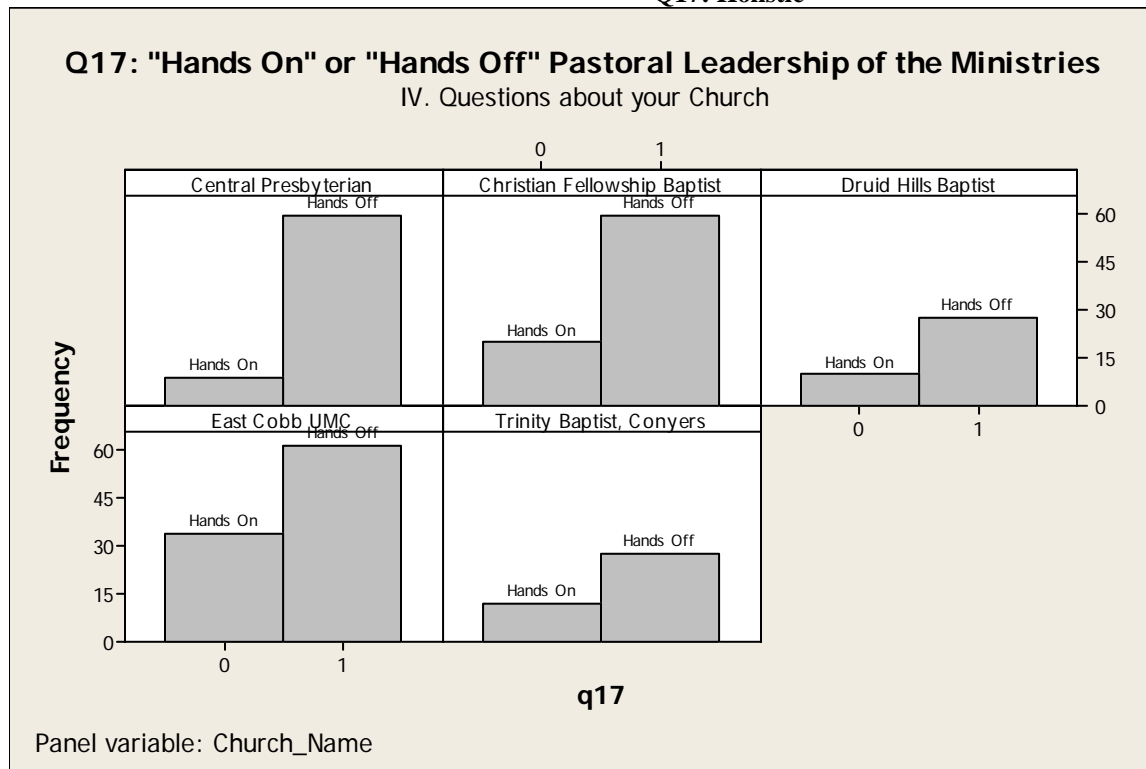
```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q17

                                0      1  Missing      All

Central Presbyterian            9     60       11       69
Christian Fellowship Baptist   20     60       13       80
Druid Hills Baptist            10     28        2       38
East Cobb UMC                  34     62        8       96
Trinity Baptist, Conyers       12     28        5       40

All                            85    238        *      323
% of Total                  26.32  73.68        *   100.00


Pearson Chi-Square = 10.720, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.030
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 11.435, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.022
```

Result: Although 73% of respondents reported their pastoral leadership as being "hands off" in the ministries of the church, statistically significant differences were once again found.

Q17: Non-Holistic

Q17: "Hands On" or "Hands Off" Pastoral Leadership of the Ministries
IV. Questions about your Church
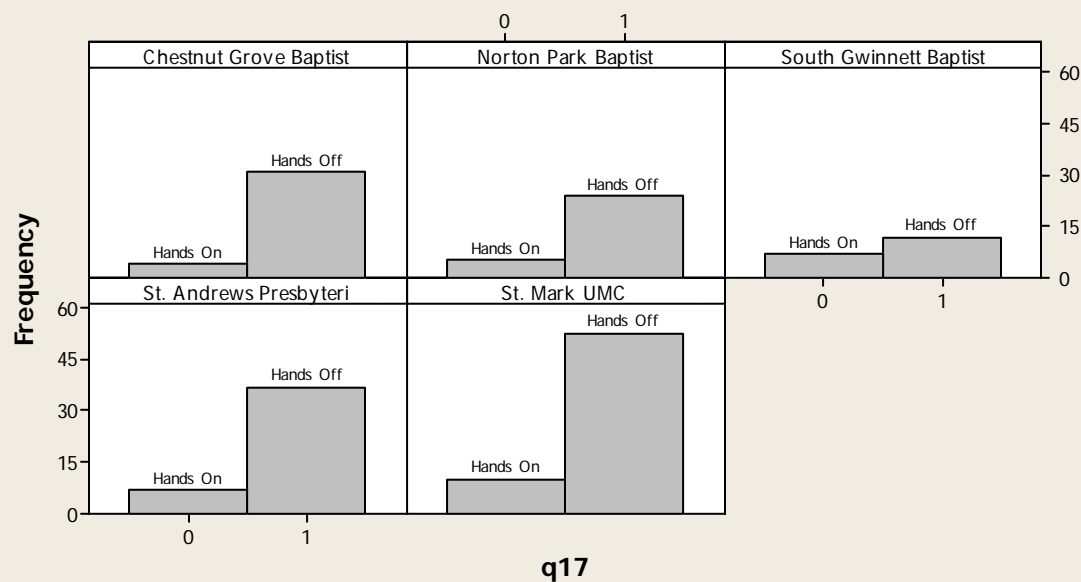
Panel variable: Church_Name

```
Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, q17

                          0      1   Missing      All

Chestnut Grove Baptist    4     31         2       35
Norton Park Baptist       5     24         3       29
South Gwinnett Baptist    7     12         4       19
St. Andrews Presbyteri    7     37         7       44
St. Mark UMC             10     53         4       63

All                      33    157         *      190
% of Total            17.37  82.63         *   100.00

Pearson Chi-Square = 6.045, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.196
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 5.201, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.267
```
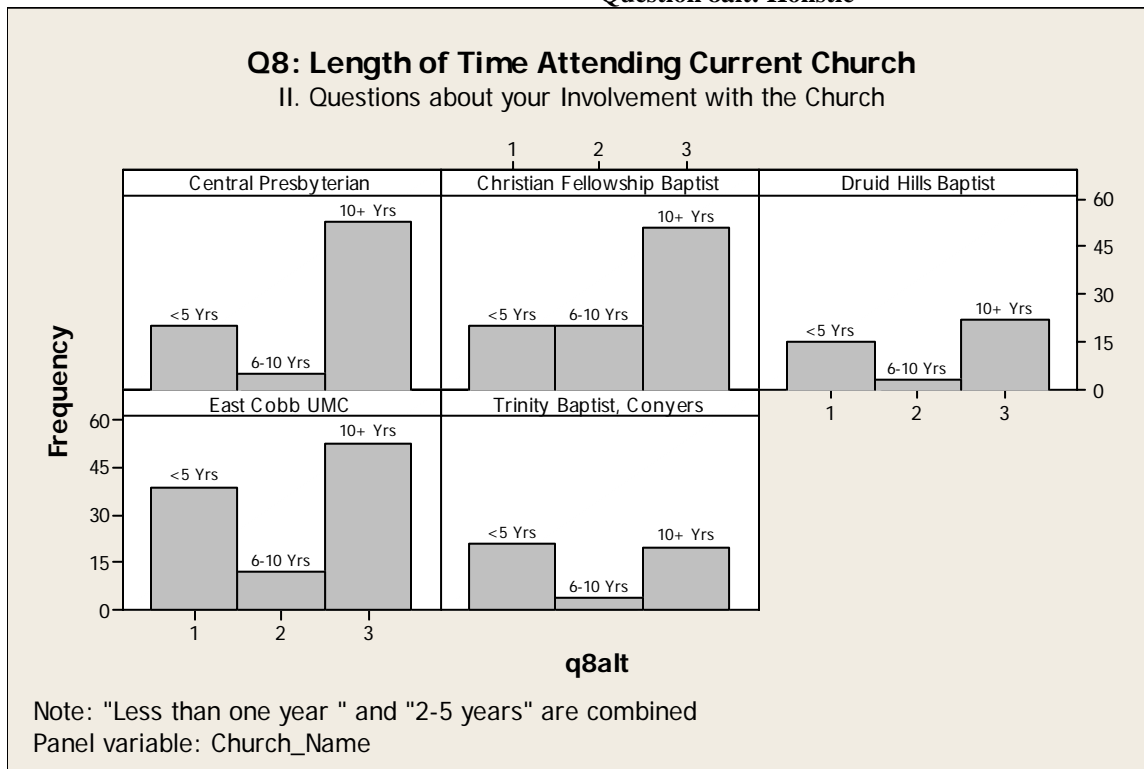
Result: There are no significant differences within these churches

Q19: Holistic

Q19: Mean Response
IV. Questions About Your Church
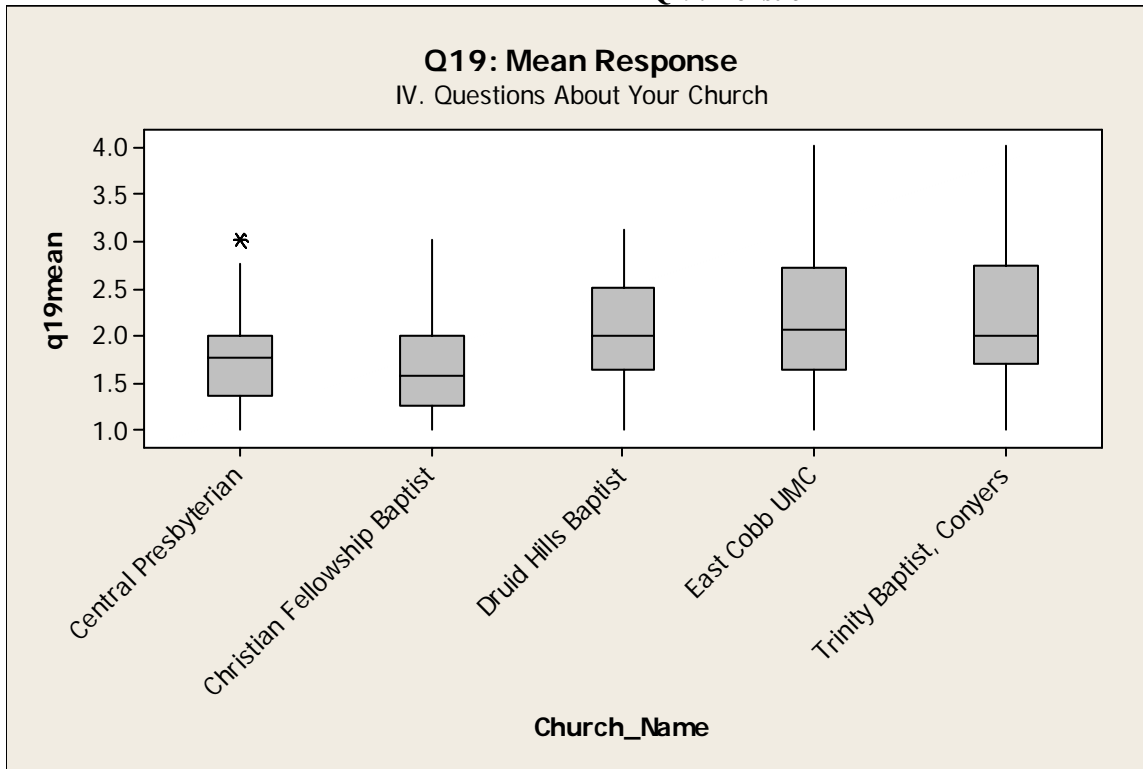

```
                        Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                        Variables              Alpha
                        Raw                    0.896739
                        Standardized           0.898142

                                      Sum of
Source                  DF            Squares     Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
Model                    4         18.2962797      4.5740699      11.64     <.0001
Error                  352        138.3707932      0.3930988
Corrected Total        356        156.6670729


             R-Square      Coeff Var      Root MSE      q19mean Mean
             0.116784      32.62409       0.626976        1.921819


Source              DF          Anova SS     Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
church               4       18.29627968     4.57406992      11.64     <.0001
```

Result: While the subquestions in question 19 have sufficiently consistent responses, significant differences in responses still exist between the churches.

Q19: Non-Holistic

Q19: Mean Response
IV. Questions About Your Church

Panel variable: Church_Name
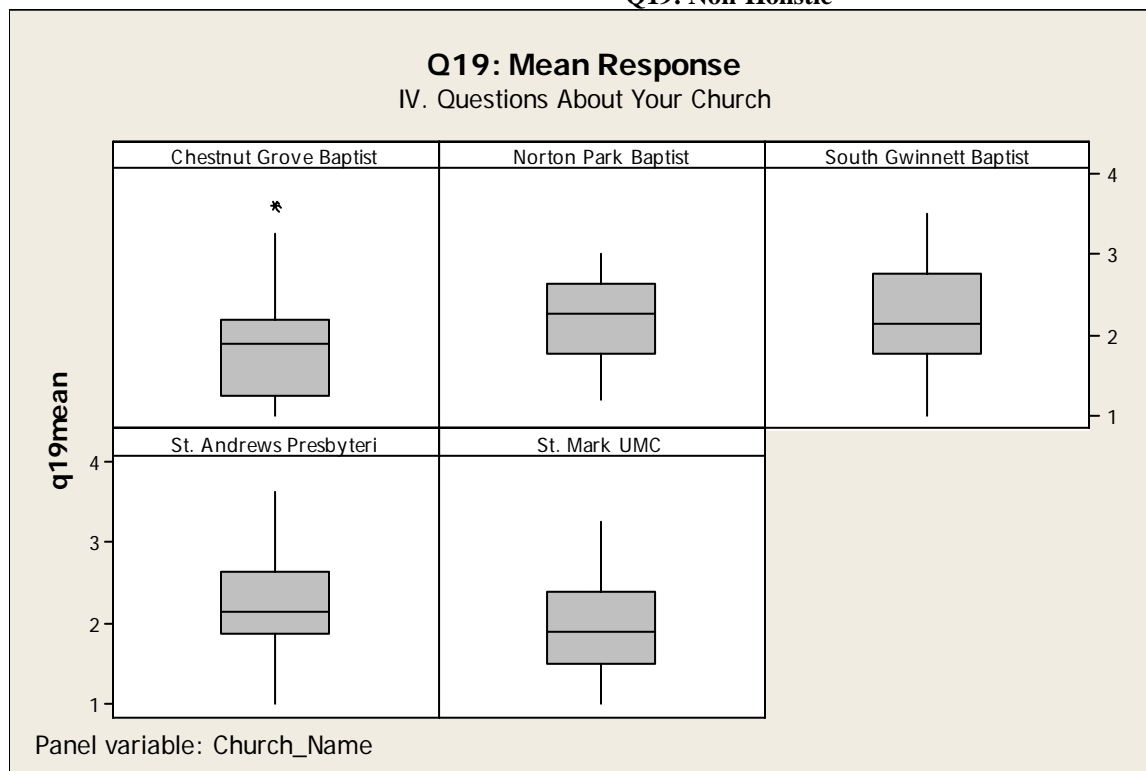
```
                          Cronbach Coefficient Alpha
            Variables                Alpha
            Raw                   0.897728
            Standardized          0.898007

                      The ANOVA Procedure

                              Sum of
Source                 DF     Squares      Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
Model                   4    4.94155465    1.23538866      3.56      0.0079
Error                 203   70.45319264    0.34706006
Corrected Total       207   75.39474729

            R-Square     Coeff Var      Root MSE     q19mean Mean
            0.065542     28.73434       0.589118       2.050223

Source                 DF     Anova SS     Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
church                  4    4.94155465    1.23538866      3.56      0.0079
```

Result: At least one church is significantly different.

Q20: Holistic

Q20: Mean Response
IV. Questions About Your Church
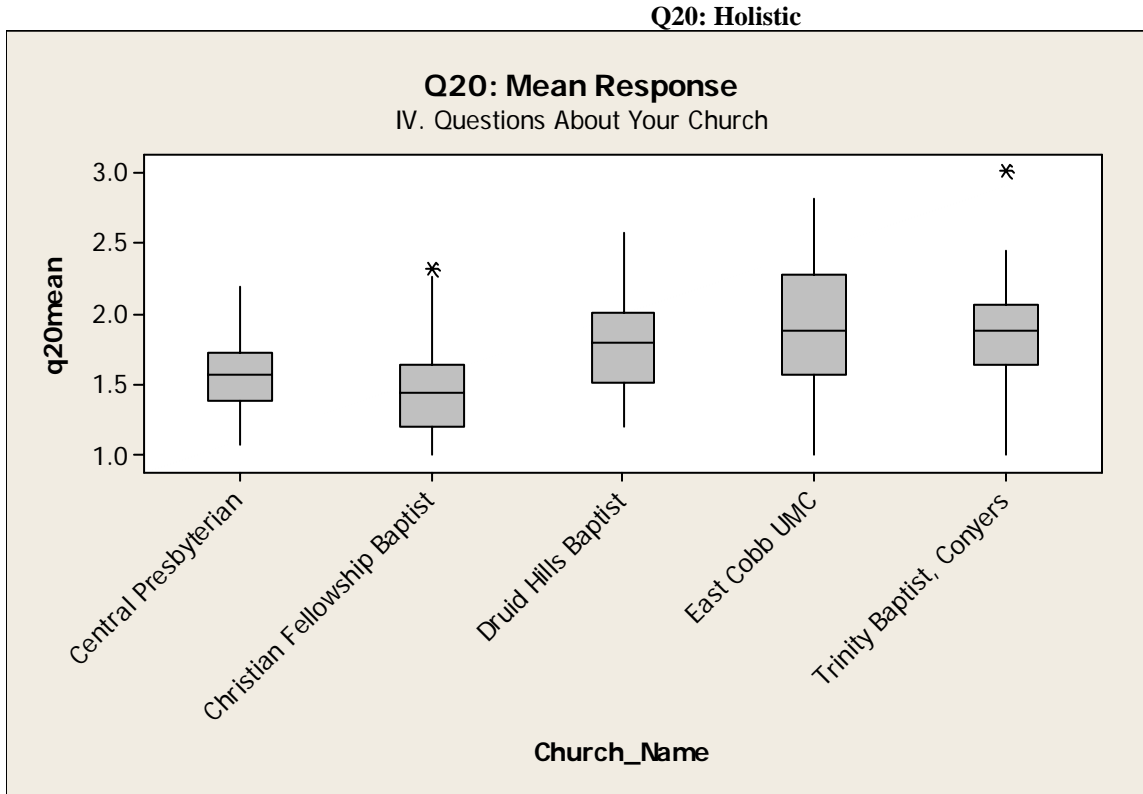

```
                      Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

                  Variables                 Alpha
                  Raw                     0.866349
                  Standardized            0.868863

                                     Sum of
Source                    DF         Squares      Mean Square    F Value   Pr > F
Model                      4      12.43883421      3.10970855     25.00    <.0001
Error                    351      43.65427608      0.12437116
Corrected Total          355      56.09311029

            R-Square     Coeff Var      Root MSE    q20mean Mean
            0.221753     20.74227      0.352663       1.700214

Source                    DF        Anova SS      Mean Square    F Value   Pr > F
church                     4      12.43883421      3.10970855     25.00    <.0001
```

Result: While the subquestions in question 19 have sufficiently consistent responses, significant differences in responses still exist between the churches.

Q20: Non-Holistic

Q20: Mean Response
IV. Questions About Your Church

Panel variable: Church_Name
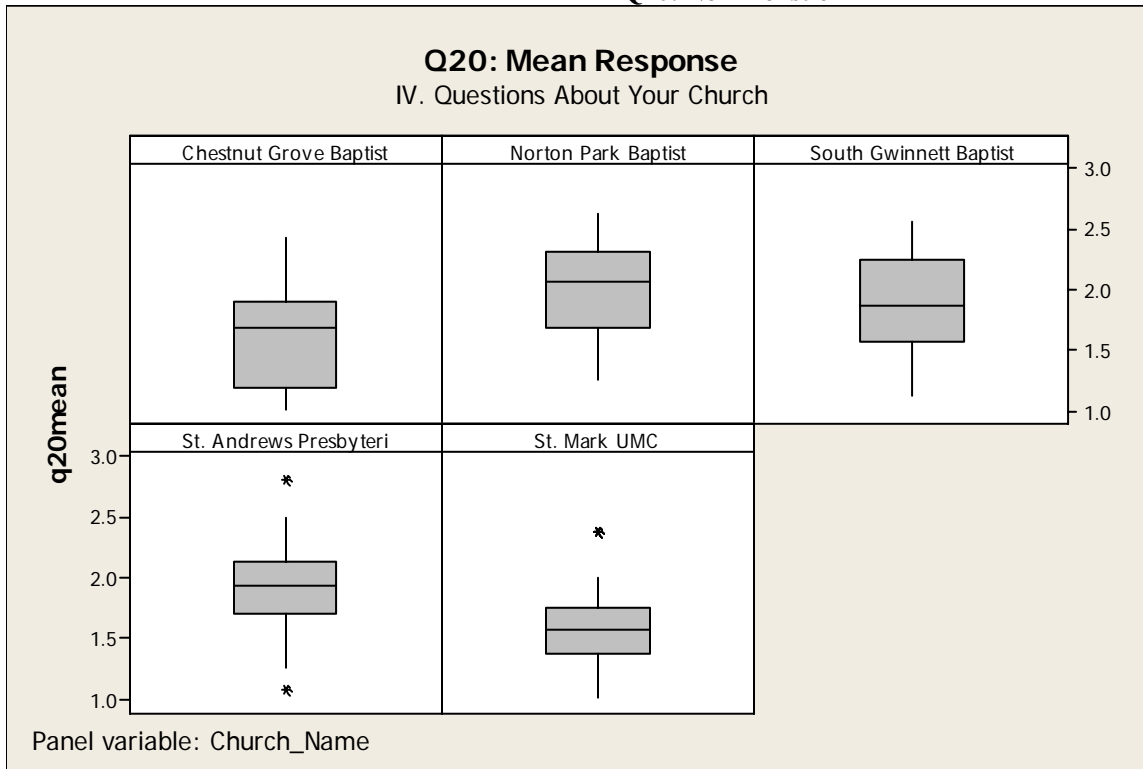
```
                          Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

            Variables                Alpha
            Raw                      0.878054
            Standardized             0.878954

                          The ANOVA Procedure

                            Sum of
Source            DF        Squares      Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
Model             4         7.56151587   1.89037897     15.51      <.0001
Error             203       24.73583211  0.12185139
Corrected Total   207       32.29734797


           R-Square      Coeff Var     Root MSE     q20mean Mean
           0.234122      19.72872      0.349072       1.769360


Source            DF        Anova SS     Mean Square    F Value    Pr > F
church            4         7.56151587   1.89037897     15.51      <.0001
```

Result: At least one church is significantly different.

Q21B: Holistic
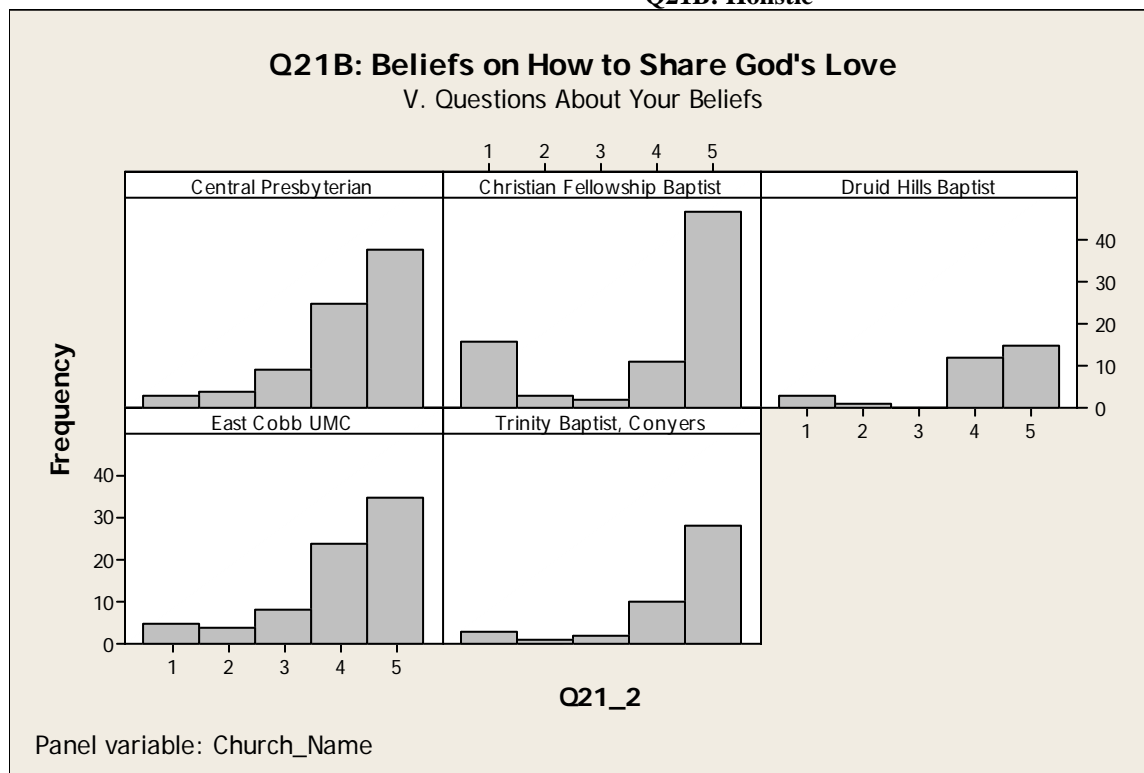
Q21B: Beliefs on How to Share God's Love
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

b. The way to share God's love with people is by telling them about Jesus.　　1　2　3　4　5　　The way to share God's love with people is by demonstrating it with caring actions.

```
Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_2 versus Church_Name

Church_Name                    N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Central Presbyterian          79   4.000     151.7  -0.38
Christian Fellowship Baptist  79   5.000     156.2   0.14
Druid Hills Baptist           31   4.000     153.9  -0.08
East Cobb UMC                 76   4.000     147.0  -0.90
Trinity Baptist, Conyers      44   5.000     173.4   1.48
Overall                      309             155.0

H = 2.61  DF = 4  P = 0.624
H = 3.14  DF = 4  P = 0.535  (adjusted for ties)

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_2
                               1       2       3       4       5  Missing  All

Central Presbyterian           3       4       9      25      38        1   79
Christian Fellowship Baptist  16       3       2      11      47       14   79
Druid Hills Baptist            3       1       0      12      15        9   31
East Cobb UMC                  5       4       8      24      35       28   76
Trinity Baptist, Conyers       3       1       2      10      28        1   44

All                           30      13      21      82     163        *  309
% of Total                 9.709   4.207   6.796  26.537  52.751        *  100
```

Result: By the Kruskal-Wallis test, there is no significant difference between the responses of the five holistic churches.

Q21B: Non-Holistic
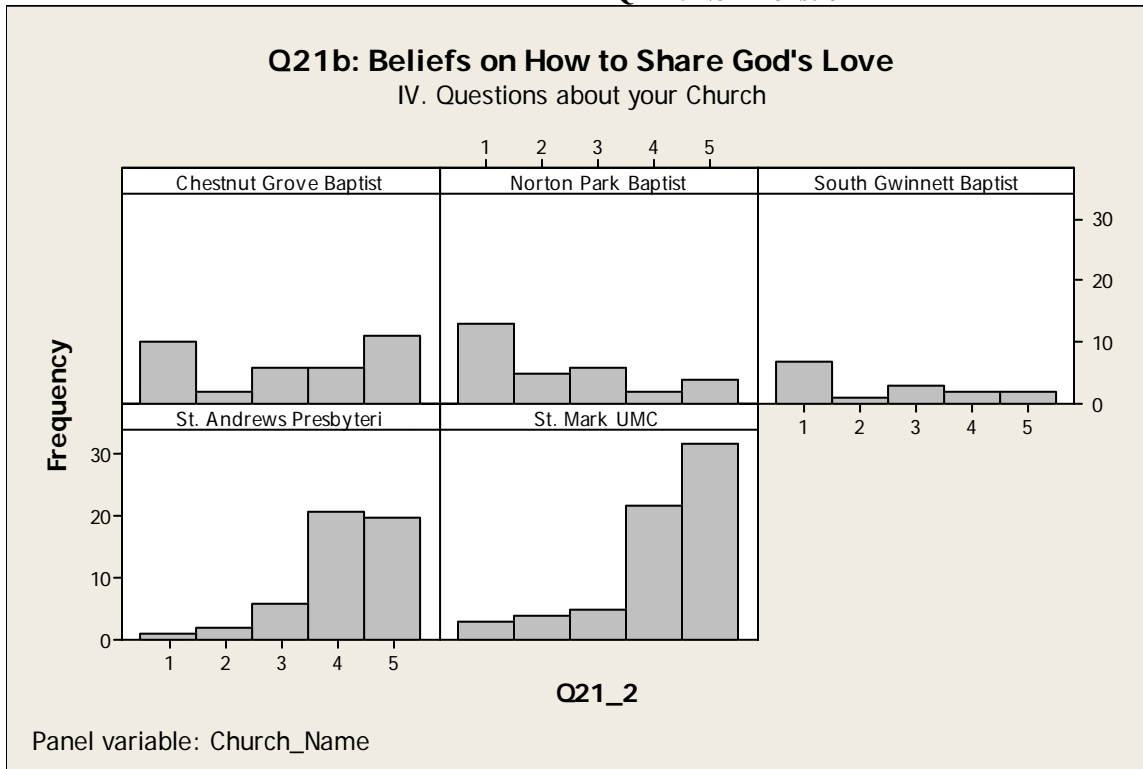
Q21b: Beliefs on How to Share God's Love
IV. Questions about your Church

Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_2 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Chestnut Grove Baptist     35   3.000      86.1  -1.42
Norton Park Baptist        30   2.000      55.1  -4.55
South Gwinnett Baptist     15   2.000      58.3  -2.86
St. Andrews Presbyteri     50   4.000     116.6   2.62
St. Mark UMC               66   4.000     120.2   3.81
Overall                   196                98.5

H = 41.47  DF = 4  P = 0.000
H = 44.65  DF = 4  P = 0.000  (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_2

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Chestnut Grove Baptist	10	2	6	6	11	2	35
Norton Park Baptist	13	5	6	2	4	2	30
South Gwinnett Baptist	7	1	3	2	2	8	15
St. Andrews Presbyteri	1	2	6	21	20	1	50
St. Mark UMC	3	4	5	22	32	1	66
All	34	14	26	53	69	*	196
	17.347	7.143	13.265	27.041	35.204	*	100%

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Q21G: Holistic
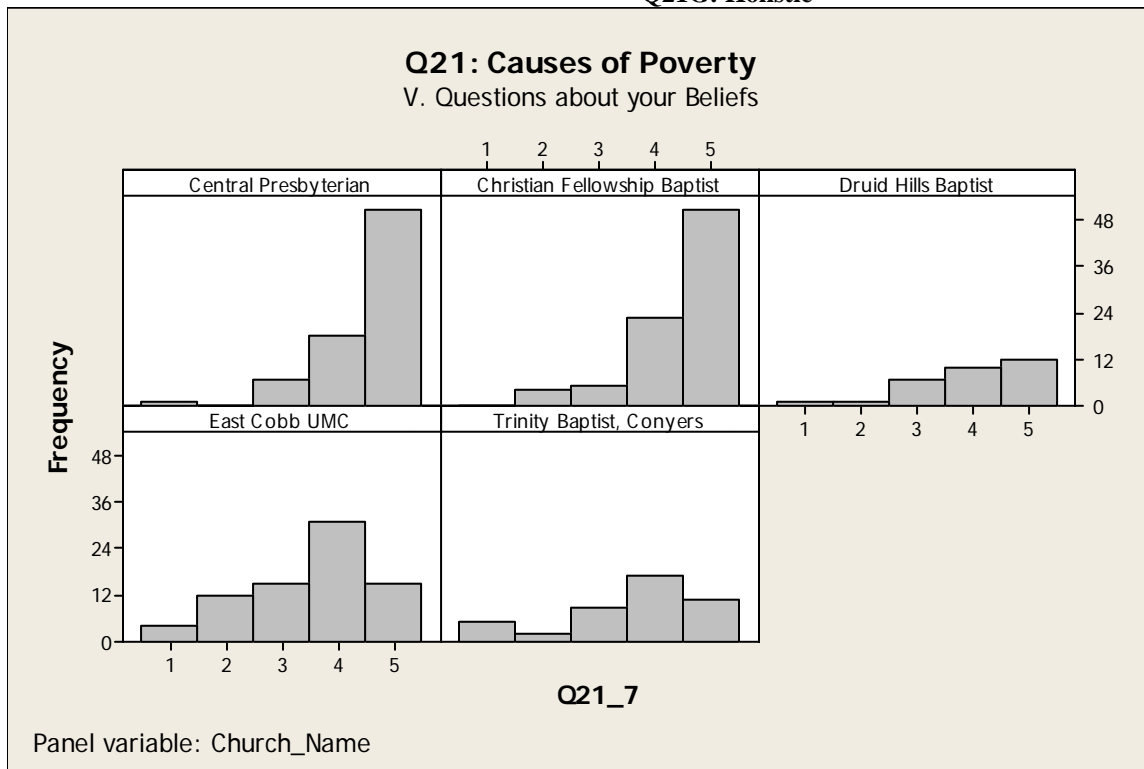
Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_7 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                     N   Median   Ave Rank      Z
Central Presbyterian           77    5.000     194.2     4.22
Christian Fellowship Baptist   83    5.000     187.2     3.62
Druid Hills Baptist            31    4.000     146.2    -0.67
East Cobb UMC                  77    4.000     110.5    -5.16
Trinity Baptist, Conyers       44    4.000     120.4    -2.86
Overall                       312               156.5

H = 50.55  DF = 4  P = 0.000
H = 57.79  DF = 4  P = 0.000  (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_7

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Central Presbyterian	1	0	7	18	51	3	77
Christian Fellowship Baptist	0	4	5	23	51	10	83
Druid Hills Baptist	1	1	7	10	12	9	31
East Cobb UMC	4	12	15	31	15	27	77
Trinity Baptist, Conyers	5	2	9	17	11	1	44
All	11	19	43	99	140	*	312
	3.526	6.090	13.782	31.731	44.872	*	100

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Q21G: Non-Holistic
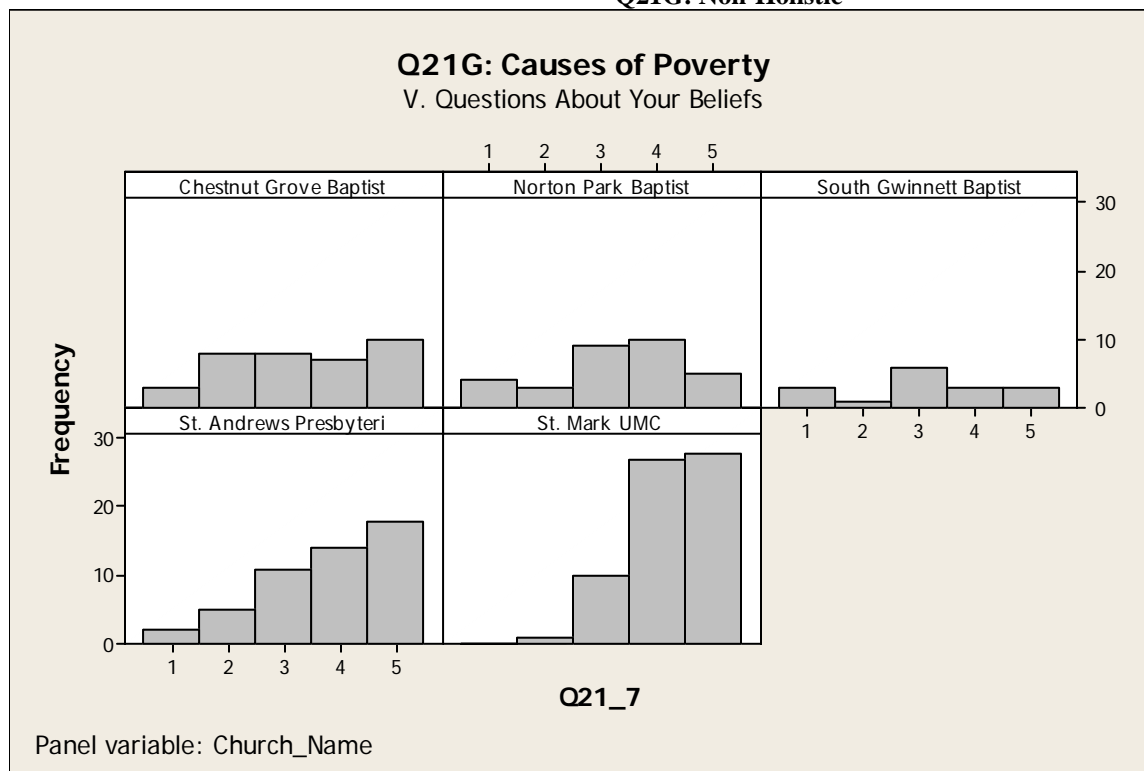
Q21G: Causes of Poverty
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_7 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name               N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Chestnut Grove Baptist   36   3.000      83.9  -1.85
Norton Park Baptist      31   3.000      79.0  -2.20
South Gwinnett Baptist   16   3.000      73.3  -1.93
St. Andrews Presbyteri   50   4.000     103.7   0.52
St. Mark UMC             66   4.000     122.3   3.85
Overall                 199             100.0

H = 20.43  DF = 4  P = 0.000
H = 22.06  DF = 4  P = 0.000  (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_7

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Chestnut Grove Baptist	3	8	8	7	10	1	36
Norton Park Baptist	4	3	9	10	5	1	31
South Gwinnett Baptist	3	1	6	3	3	7	16
St. Andrews Presbyteri	2	5	11	14	18	1	50
St. Mark UMC	0	1	10	27	28	1	66
All	12	18	44	61	64	*	199
	6.030	9.045	22.111	30.653	32.161	*	100

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Q21H: Holistic
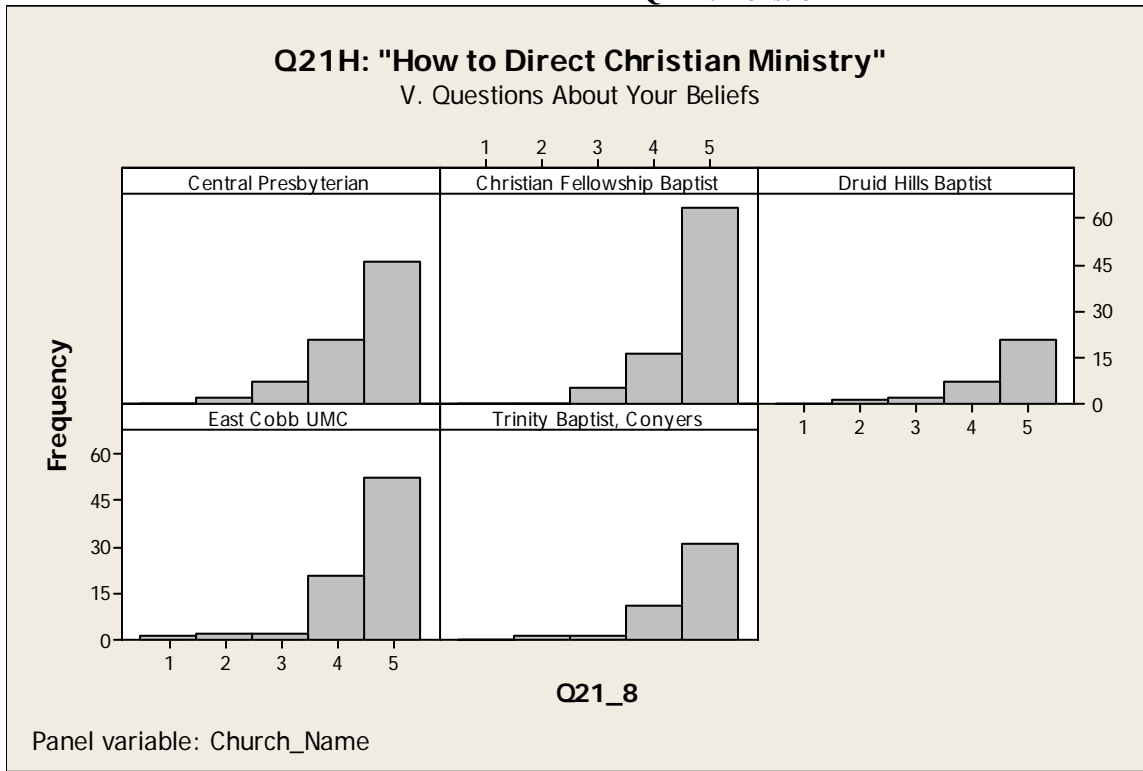
Q21H: "How to Direct Christian Ministry"
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

h. Christian ministry should be directed mainly to other members of the Christian faith.   1   2   3   4   5   Christians ministry should be directed to all members of society.

```
Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_8 versus Church_Name

Church_Name                   N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Central Presbyterian          76   5.000     144.8  -1.46
Christian Fellowship Baptist  85   5.000     169.3   1.34
Druid Hills Baptist           31   5.000     156.2  -0.12
East Cobb UMC                 79   5.000     156.7  -0.15
Trinity Baptist, Conyers      44   5.000     162.6   0.36
Overall                      315               158.0

H = 3.06   DF = 4   P = 0.547
H = 4.59   DF = 4   P = 0.333   (adjusted for ties)

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_8

                               1       2       3       4        5  Missing  All

Central Presbyterian           0       2       7      21       46       4   76
Christian Fellowship Baptist   0       0       5      16       64       8   85
Druid Hills Baptist            0       1       2       7       21       9   31
East Cobb UMC                  1       2       2      21       53      25   79
Trinity Baptist, Conyers       0       1       1      11       31       1   44
All                            1       6      17      76      215       *  315
                           0.317   1.905   5.397  24.127   68.254       *  100
```

Result: By the Kruskal-Wallis test, there is no significant difference between the responses of the five holistic churches.

Q21H: Non-Holistic
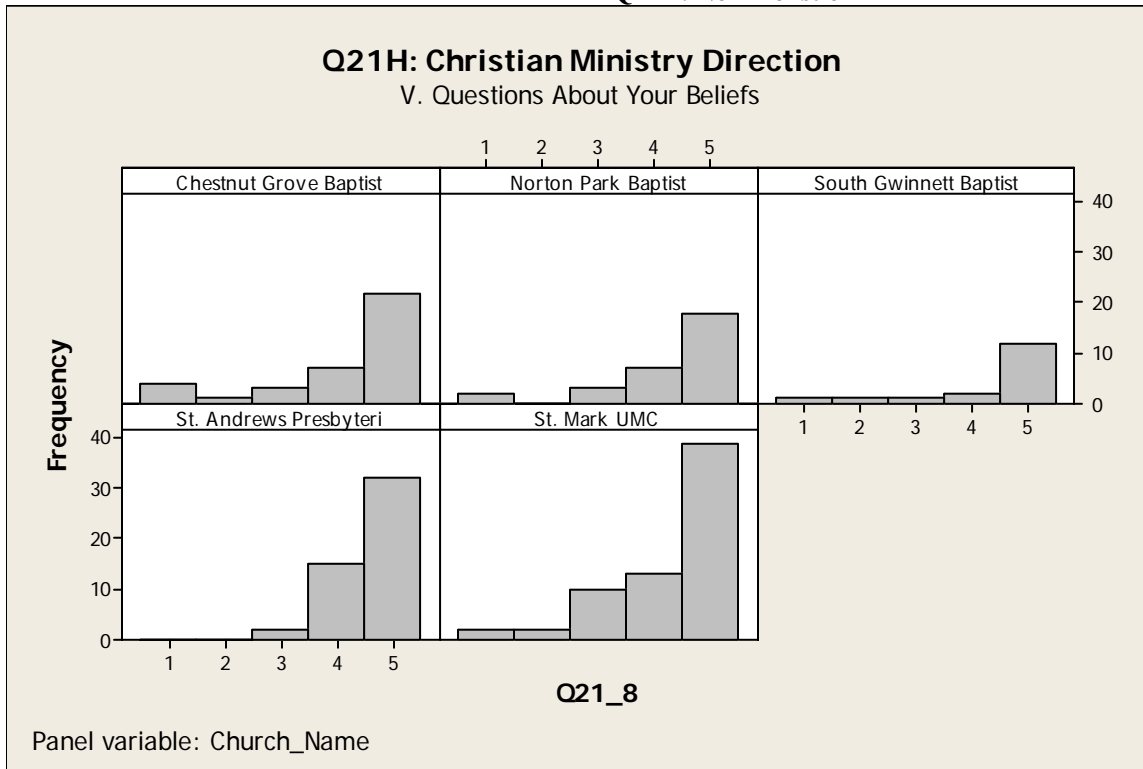
Q21H: Christian Ministry Direction
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_8 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Chestnut Grove Baptist    37   5.000      95.1  -0.58
Norton Park Baptist       30   5.000      98.2  -0.19
South Gwinnett Baptist    17   5.000     106.1   0.46
St. Andrews Presbyteri    49   5.000     107.7   1.08
St. Mark UMC              66   5.000      96.3  -0.64
Overall                  199             100.0

H = 1.66  DF = 4  P = 0.798
H = 2.20  DF = 4  P = 0.698  (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_8

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Chestnut Grove Baptist	4	1	3	7	22	0	37
Norton Park Baptist	2	0	3	7	18	2	30
South Gwinnett Baptist	1	1	1	2	12	6	17
St. Andrews Presbyteri	0	0	2	15	32	2	49
St. Mark UMC	2	2	10	13	39	1	66
All	9	4	19	44	123	*	199
	4.523	2.010	9.548	22.111	61.809	*	100.000

Result: There are no significant differences between the churches.

Q21J: Holistic
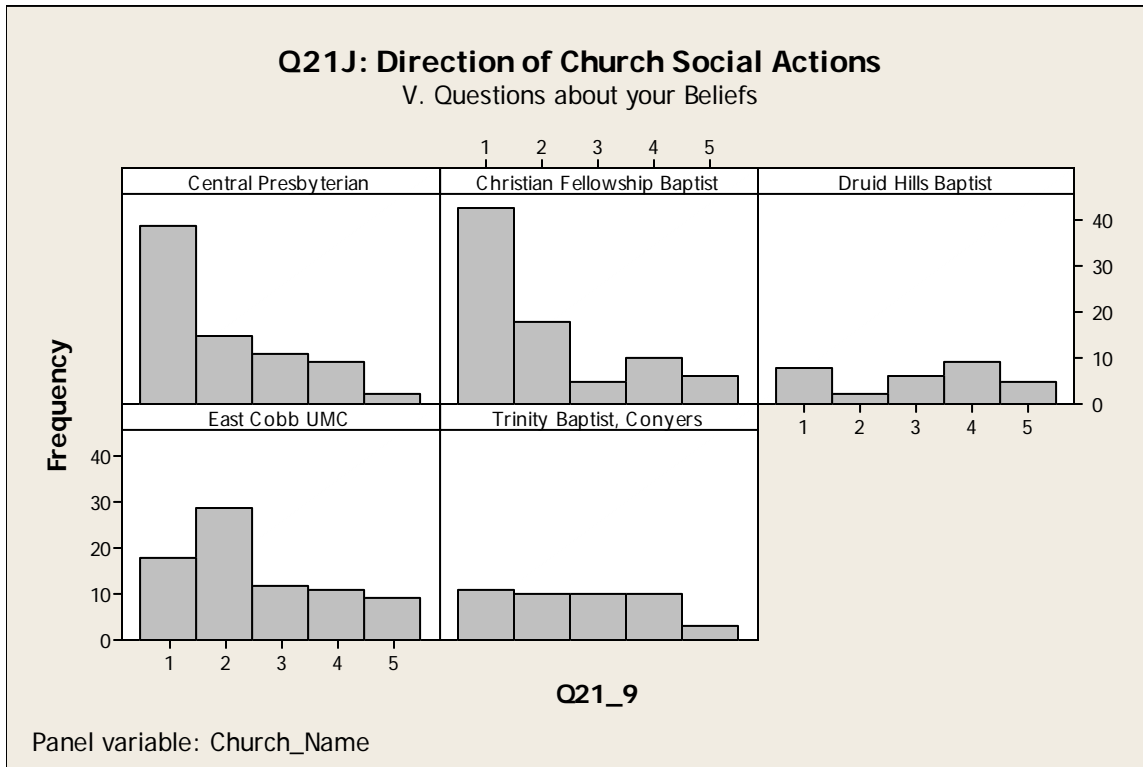
Q21J: Direction of Church Social Actions — V. Questions about your Beliefs. Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_9 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                    N   Median   Ave Rank      Z
Central Presbyterian          76    1.000      131.8   -2.70
Christian Fellowship Baptist  82    1.000      132.8   -2.72
Druid Hills Baptist           30    3.000      198.0    2.69
East Cobb UMC                 79    2.000      174.4    2.11
Trinity Baptist, Conyers      44    3.000      179.5    1.87
Overall                      311               156.0

H = 23.83  DF = 4  P = 0.000
H = 25.81  DF = 4  P = 0.000  (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_9

```
Rows: Church_Name    Columns: Q21_9

                              1        2        3        4        5  Missing All

Central Presbyterian         39       15       11        9        2        4  76
Christian Fellowship Baptist 43       18        5       10        6       11  82
Druid Hills Baptist           8        2        6        9        5       10  30
East Cobb UMC                18       29       12       11        9       25  79
Trinity Baptist, Conyers     11       10       10       10        3        1  44

All                         119       74       44       49       25        * 311
                         38.264   23.794   14.148   15.756    8.039        * 100
```

Result: At least 1 church is significantly different.

Q21J: Non-Holistic
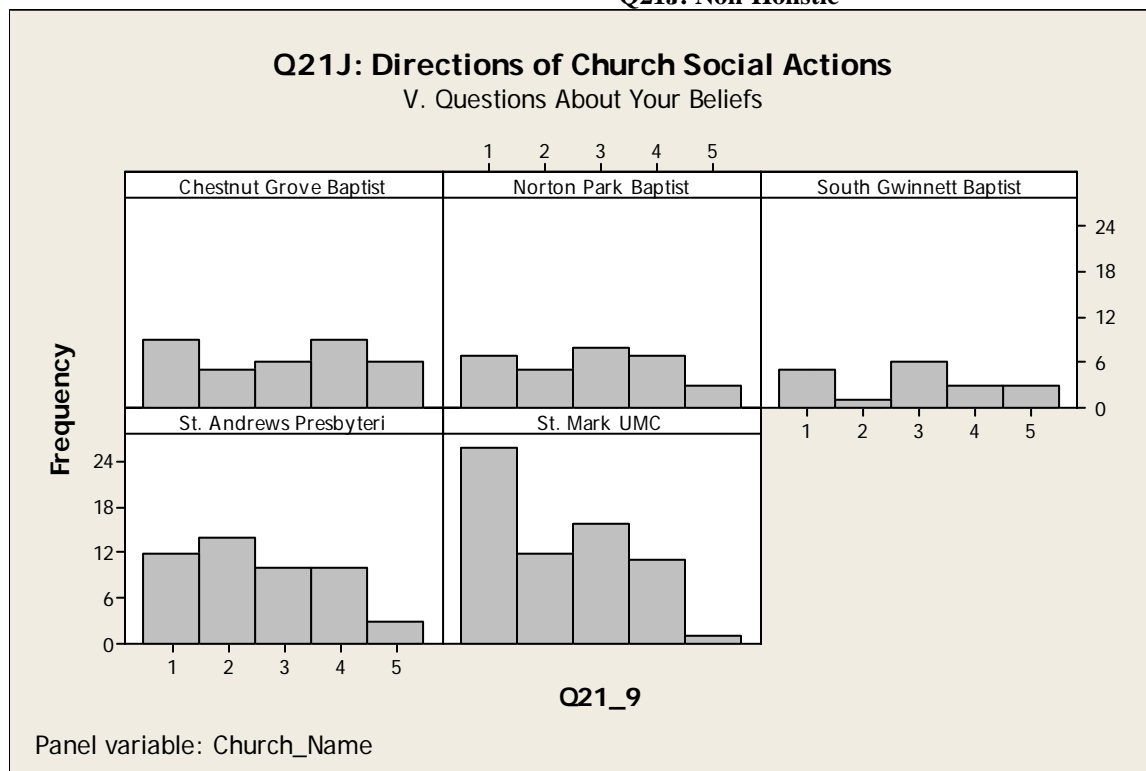
Q21J: Directions of Church Social Actions
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_9 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                N   Median   Ave Rank      Z
Chestnut Grove Baptist     35    3.000     113.8    1.63
Norton Park Baptist        30    3.000     108.8    0.97
South Gwinnett Baptist     18    3.000     111.3    0.92
St. Andrews Presbyteri     49    2.000      98.8   -0.09
St. Mark UMC               66    2.000      84.9   -2.53
Overall                   198               99.5

H = 8.01   DF = 4   P = 0.091
H = 8.47   DF = 4   P = 0.076   (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_9

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Chestnut Grove Baptist	9	5	6	9	6	2	35
Norton Park Baptist	7	5	8	7	3	2	30
South Gwinnett Baptist	5	1	6	3	3	5	18
St. Andrews Presbyteri	12	14	10	10	3	2	49
St. Mark UMC	26	12	16	11	1	1	66
All	59	37	46	40	16	*	198
	29.798	18.687	23.232	20.202	8.081	*	100

Result: At least 1 church is marginally significantly different from the others.

Q21_10: Holistic
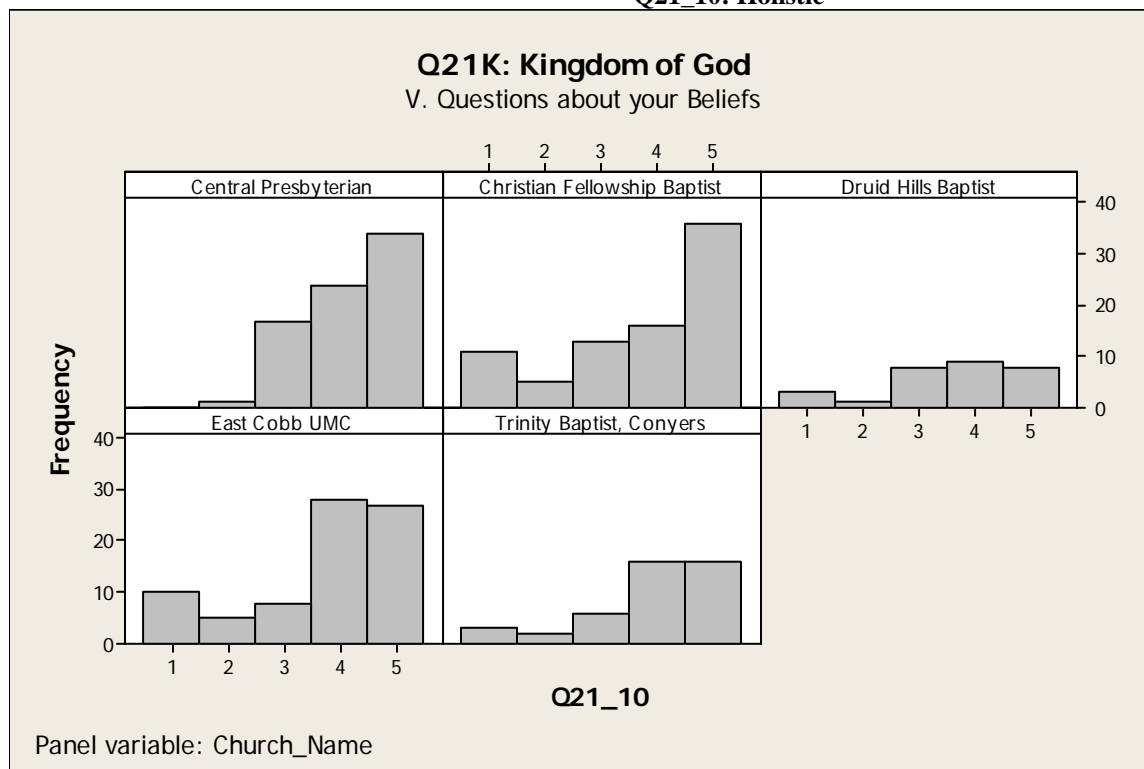
Q21K: Kingdom of God
V. Questions about your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_10 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                      N   Median   Ave Rank      Z
Central Presbyterian            76    4.000      170.3   1.84
Christian Fellowship Baptist    81    4.000      152.3  -0.20
Druid Hills Baptist             29    4.000      132.8  -1.35
East Cobb UMC                   78    4.000      146.7  -0.84
Trinity Baptist, Conyers        43    4.000      156.0   0.16
Overall                        307               154.0

H = 4.78   DF = 4   P = 0.311
H = 5.28   DF = 4   P = 0.260   (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_10

	1	2	3	4	5	Missing	All
Central Presbyterian	0	1	17	24	34	4	76
Christian Fellowship Baptist	11	5	13	16	36	12	81
Druid Hills Baptist	3	1	8	9	8	11	29
East Cobb UMC	10	5	8	28	27	26	78
Trinity Baptist, Conyers	3	2	6	16	16	2	43
All	27	14	52	93	121	*	307
% of Total	8.795	4.560	16.938	30.293	39.414	*	100

Result: No significant differences exist between the churches.

Q21_10: Non-Holistic
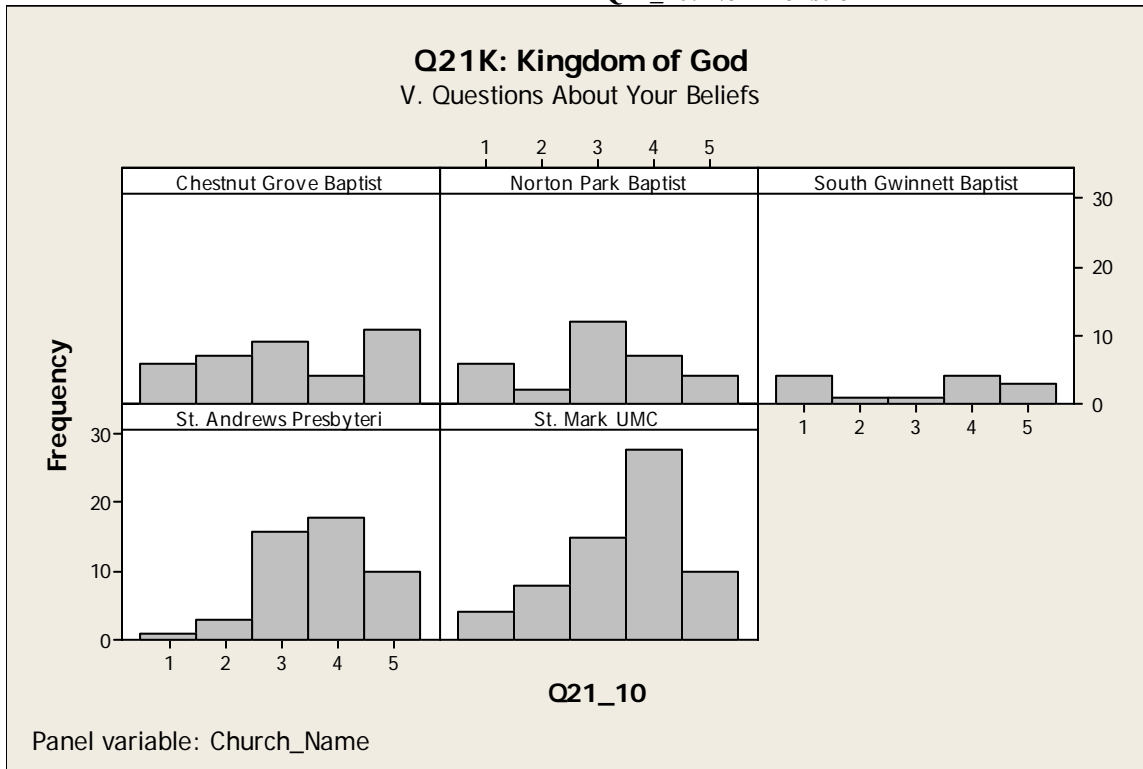
Q21K: Kingdom of God
V. Questions About Your Beliefs

Panel variable: Church_Name

Kruskal-Wallis Test: Q21_10 versus Church_Name

```
Church_Name                N  Median  Ave Rank      Z
Chestnut Grove Baptist     37   3.000      90.4  -0.85
Norton Park Baptist        31   3.000      82.0  -1.68
South Gwinnett Baptist     13   4.000      90.4  -0.47
St. Andrews Presbyteri     48   4.000     109.0   1.64
St. Mark UMC               65   4.000     101.8   0.76
Overall                   194             97.5

H = 5.57  DF = 4  P = 0.234
H = 5.93  DF = 4  P = 0.204  (adjusted for ties)
```

Tabulated statistics: Church_Name, Q21_10

```
                            1       2       3       4       5  Missing   All
Chestnut Grove Baptist      6       7       9       4      11        0    37
Norton Park Baptist         6       2      12       7       4        1    31
South Gwinnett Baptist      4       1       1       4       3       10    13
St. Andrews Presbyteri      1       3      16      18      10        3    48
St. Mark UMC                4       8      15      28      10        2    65

All                        21      21      53      61      38        *   165
% of Total             10.825  10.825  27.320  31.443  19.588        *   100
```

Result: No significant differences exist between the churches