

"HOW WELL IS WOODLAWN AT AGE 50?"

A HEALTH CHECK-UP AND ACCURATE PICTURE

OF

WOODLAWN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

(Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES OF CHURCH GROWTH

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## INTRODUCTION

The assignment to write a term paper providing "an accurate picture of my church"<sup>1</sup> comes at a very fitting, if not the most convenient, time for me. In 1979, the congregation I serve, Woodlawn Evangelical Lutheran Church-School of West Allis, Wisconsin, is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its official founding. Thus it is an appropriate time to take stock of this middle-aged congregation to review where we've been, to determine how well we're doing at the present time, and to formulate some solid church growth-oriented goals and plans for the future.

In January 1978 I went through Dr. Robert Munger's seminar #706, "Church Renewal and Training of the Laity for Ministry" at Fuller and the term paper which I subsequently wrote for that seminar entitled We Are His Workmanship - which is also the theme for Woodlawn's 50th anniversary observance - contains information and data very similar to that which I've been instructed to gather and analyze for this current effort assigned by Prof. C. Peter Wagner. Accordingly, I do not plan to cover the same ground I went over last year. Especially in the first two sections of this term paper, which have to do with the community in which Woodlawn is located, West Allis, Wisconsin, and which offers a brief history of our congregation, I will refer regularly to last year's paper which is on file for reference in the Continuing Education Office at Fuller.

Last year we mimeographed enough copies of We Are His Workmanship to supply at least one copy to each of the 250 families belonging to Woodlawn. We plan to proceed in the same fashion with this year's church growth seminar term paper, so that the members of Woodlawn who so graciously permitted me to pursue my D. Min. studies at Fuller and provided a generous amount of financial support for my studies will be able to gain at least a second-hand understanding of some basic church growth principles and practices by perusing this paper.

The title of this paper, How Well Is Woodlawn at Age 50?, was selected because images and concepts closely connected with physical health are commonly used in church growth literature and by the leaders of this burgeoning movement. C. Peter Wagner, for example, in his Your Church Can Grow<sup>2</sup> describes the seven vital signs of a healthy church. To give his readers a look at the opposite side of the picture Wagner more recently has written a book, Your Church Can Be Healthy, scheduled by Abingdon for April, 1979 publication, which describes eight common church diseases and offers concrete steps for remedying them.

Accordingly, we felt that picturing our congregation as a 50 year old, middle-aged living organism in need of a thorough health check-up would be worthwhile and right in line with church growth thinking and terminology. And just as a doctor does after he gives his patient a rigorous series of tests to determine just what's wrong and what kind of prescription or medical advice is required for dealing with the malady, so we intend to recommend a regimen for renewal after we

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. class notebook for MN 705 under section Reporting Church Growth, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, (Glendale, California: Regal Books a division of B/L Publications, 1976).

check out Woodlawn on the basis of proven church growth principles and procedures.

I. How Well is West Allis, the Community in Which Woodlawn Congregation Is Located?

In last year's paper, We Are His Workmanship, referred to above, we devoted 11 pages to a community survey which described West Allis' location, climate, historical highlights, its character, churches and problems. The latter category, problems, fits in best with the question posed in this section. Therefore we'll give just a brief summary of community survey details with greater emphasis on the problems which threaten the good health and well-being of West Allis.

A. Location

West Allis is located at the western edge of Milwaukee County in the heart of the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area. Technically, West Allis is a suburb of Milwaukee, but if someone were to view the community from the air, he would be hard-pressed to distinguish West Allis from the city of Milwaukee. Home lot sizes would be very similar and factories, not usually associated with suburban settings, would be readily apparent, the largest of them being the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company and Kearney and Trecker Corporation. Because of its proximity to Milwaukee the City of West Allis has excellent motor, rail and air transportation access to all sections of the United States. The Milwaukee County Airport, General Billy Mitchell Field, is no more than 15 minutes away from any part of West Allis via the I-894 expressway which runs through the west central part of our community. Woodlawn's three acres of property adjoin this busy freeway. West Allis has an average elevation of 670 feet above sea level and our church-school site is located on one of the highest points in the city.

B. Climate

Seasonal temperature extremes in West Allis are tempered somewhat by Lake Michigan which is only a few miles away. The normal mean temperature in West Allis ranges from 20 degrees in January to about 70 degrees in the summer months. Rainfall average is nearly 30 inches per year and the average annual snowfall is 46 inches. When we built a new \$200,000+ church in 1971, on which we still owe about \$100,000, we decided to include an air-conditioning system, even though such installations are unusual in our church body, at least in the upper Midwest where well over half of our 1100 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregations are located. This was a very wise decision, right in line with church growth principles, even though at that time I had never heard the name McGavran. People are attracted to our air-conditioned church and even though we still suffer a significant summer attendance slump due to vacations etc. it surely would be much worse if people had to suffer through stifling services with distracting noise from the adjacent expressway and busy Lincoln Ave. caused by opening windows to stir up some air movement. For a \$12,000 investment in air-conditioning equipment back in 1971 Woodlawn avoided a growth-inhibiting climate problem. We are well aware that unchurched people who are accustomed to basking in air-conditioned comfort in stores, theatres, homes, and cars are not likely to come to or come back to a church where they would have to sweat and swelter on steamy, sweltering Sundays in humid July and August and where the preacher would have to compete with honking horns or hotrod cars racing down the freeway ramp that runs past our building.

Another observation can be made in connection with our West Allis climate. The winter of '78-'79 in Wisconsin was brutal and had many detrimental effects on the church. On the weekend of Sunday, January 14, 1979, for example, a blizzard coming on the heels of a heavy snowstorm on New Year's Eve-Day all but wiped out our church attendance. That week our church attendance was just 182 (117 on Sunday and 65 on the following Wednesday). A few weeks later when we had better weather we had 587 in church. Our average for January and February this year was 437. In 1978 the weekly church attendance average was 476. Obviously our bitter cold and blizzardy Wisconsin winters present us with peculiar problems for church growth that are not likely to plague churches in sunny (smoggy) Pasadena and southern California or across our nation's Sunbelt.

As a result of this year's record snowfall and inadequate snow removal equipment hired by the church our church parking lot became more and more restricted after every snowfall. After my two weeks of study at Fuller this February I looked at our parking lot with church growth eyes and saw an extremely sad situation. We were suffering from a classic case of sociological strangulation brought on by the snow. Our parking lot, not very big in the first place, was approaching postage stamp size. The snow was forcing us to go against Robert Schuller's number one criterion for successful retailing, surplus parking.<sup>3</sup> As Wagner stated in his lecture on sociological strangulation,<sup>4</sup> unless you have satisfactory surplus parking with empty spaces in the lot at your peak time, 10:30-11:30 a.m., you are building up irritation in spoiled, pampered Americans who do not take kindly to a lack of parking space and you are surely losing out on prospective members from the outside as well as angering and alienating current church members who will simply stay away from church for several weeks until they think the parking crunch is likely to lessen. My point is that our Arctic-like climate can exacerbate an already serious parking problem and is something we must be prepared for from November through mid-April in West Allis. In chapter four of this paper I'll describe what we did about parking after my Pasadena visit in February sharpened my church growth vision and what we intend to do about parking in the future.

### C. History

The Village of West Allis was officially incorporated in June 1902 with a population of 1,018. The community derived its name from Edward P. Allis who spurred the growth of the area by bringing in his machinery manufacturing company, the largest in the world at that time and still well known today as the Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Company. The Wisconsin State Legislature's 1892 decision to make a 180 acre site in West Allis the permanent location of the annual State Fair also contributed much to the city's development since the fair triggered better transportation facilities from Milwaukee to the fairgrounds. These improved street car and interurban lines in turn encouraged manufacturing tycoons like Allis and Kearney and Trecker to set up their factories in West Allis. From its founding in 1902 to the present time West Allis has been aptly described by the motto: "A City of Homes and Diversified Industries." In 1954 West Allis more than doubled in size by annexing an area of more than six square miles (Woodlawn is located in that area which before 1954 was known as the Town of Greenfield; Woodlawn's own name comes

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<sup>3</sup> Robert H. Schuller, Your Church Has Real Possibilities, (Glendale, California: Regal Books Division, G/L. Publications, 1974). In this book Schuller offers his Seven Principles of Successful Retailing, surplus parking being one of them.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Class notebook for MN 705 under A Pathology of Church Growth, p. 8

from the name of a subdivision in that Town of Greenfield and at one time what is now 92nd St. was known as Woodlawn Avenue). The following excellent summary of the history and development of West Allis is found on page 6 of a "Comprehensive Plan" prepared by the West Allis City Planning Department in May 1966:

*. . . the impetus for the City of West Allis was the industrial complex created within the city after the turn of the century. Although there had been Honey Creek, and later the North Greenfield Settlement, the real growth didn't occur until the industrial boom around 1900, precipitated by the initial movement of the Edward P. Allis Co. from Milwaukee. This event also established the character of the city, marking it as an industrial city composed primarily of wage-earners who work in the factories of West Allis, West Milwaukee and Milwaukee. Although industrial forces have largely shaped the nature of the community, it is questionable whether these forces would have been given a chance to work had it not been for the arbitrary location of the State Fair Park site and the consequent transportation improvements that accompanied this event.*

#### D. Community Character

Can we draw a profile of the average West Allis citizen? In the past it was easy to describe the average working citizen as basically "blue collar" because in 1950 more than 71% of the total employed were involved in manufacturing. By 1970 the percentage of total jobs connected with manufacturing had declined to 38.4% while the wholesale and retail trade occupations jumped from 9.6% of all jobs in 1950 to 21.3% in 1970 and so-called services jobs increased even more from 8.7% in 1950 to 21.5% in 1970. West Allis, in other words, is not known as a posh suburb inhabited by the Milwaukee area intelligentsia; it is not a community where people with Ph.Ds are likely to locate. High society is not the strong suit of West Allis. A few years ago Bob Hope appeared at the State Fair in West Allis with singer Frances Langford. As part of his comic routine he leaned over, smelled Miss Langford, and inquired about her fragrant perfume. She replied: "That's 'Evening in Paris.'" Whereupon Hope invited her to smell his sleeve. She recoiled at the obvious bad smell and Hope pounded home the punch line: "That's 'Afternoon in West Allis.'" Most West Allis citizens would admit the truth of that joke and thoroughly enjoy it as well. West Allisians can laugh at themselves and are not people to put on airs. However, they are predominantly white and seem stubbornly determined to keep their community that way. Less than 1% of all residents belong to racial minorities, a percentage that is reflected also in our church and school where no more than a dozen of our members and students could be classified in the racial minority category.

#### E. Churches

A Milwaukee Sentinel article on 17 March 1979 provides an up-to-date picture of church membership in Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup> We live in a state and in a community where Roman Catholicism and the Lutheran faith are strongest numerically, without any serious rivals for members. The aforementioned article points out that about half of Wisconsin church members are Roman Catholic while Lutherans make up about 30% of the state's religious population. If you look at the total population of the state, Roman Catholics claim 33% of the people and Lutherans about 20% of the total state population. In 1978 about 67% of the state population were churchgoers (surely there would be many fair weather Christmas-Easter Christians in that number) compared to the national average of 66%. There is no question that Wisconsin and West Allis are above average in church affiliation. On p. 9 of the "Community

<sup>5</sup>cf. Appendix

Analysis" produced by the Fuller Evangelistic Association there is a helpful table providing the percentages of unchurched people in the respective states. Only 7 states - Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and the District of Columbia have lower percentages of unchurched citizens than Wisconsin's 25.6. West Allis is a heavily churched community. 47 churches represent nearly every variety of religious belief in our country except the Jewish faith and there are, of course, no black or Chicano churches here either. There are more than half a dozen large Roman Catholic parishes, each with more than a thousand families. Woodlawn's near neighbor, Mary Queen of Heaven, though it is one of the smaller Roman Catholic churches in West Allis, has about 1100 families compared to Woodlawn's 250. Our own Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is well represented in West Allis with four parishes, including Woodlawn, and three of the four conduct parochial elementary schools. The presence of these sister congregations in West Allis has some church growth implications. We have voluntarily set up some parish boundaries so that we do not infringe on the territory of these other WELS churches. We surely do not want to steal sheep or seduce members away from these churches that are in full doctrinal agreement with us. Thus Woodlawn has for fifty years seen itself as a neighborhood church, restricted to a relatively limited area of West Allis, rather than as a community-wide church that would reach out aggressively for new members throughout West Allis and even beyond the boundaries of our suburb. That has been our congregation's attitude in the past. Whether we should continue with that somewhat constricted and limited vision of our mission is another question, one we intend to explore further later in this paper.

#### F. Problems

I've lived in West Allis for the past 17 years and most of my life has been spent in the area of metropolitan Milwaukee. While many people would classify West Allis and Milwaukee as culturally backward, stolid and square, I have no serious complaints about our community and unless the Lord clearly calls me to serve elsewhere I fully intend and will be pleased to remain in West Allis in the service of my Savior and Woodlawn Congregation for the rest of my life. West Allis offers the best of two worlds - the conveniences and advantages of a big city and the neighborliness and informality of a small town. We're only minutes away from major league sporting events, a world famous zoo, an excellent county park system, the spectacular view of a bustling harbor and lakefront on Lake Michigan, a performing arts center offering the beauty of ballet and the steadily improving Milwaukee Symphony, and we shouldn't forget the tours provided by Milwaukee's most famous industries - Pabst, Schlitz, and Miller's. At the same time this area is justifiably proud of its cleanliness, its relatively low crime rate, its remarkably corruption-free government and a skilled hard-working citizenry that only partially fits the "Laverne and Shirley" T.V. stereotype of being made up mostly of dimwitted neanderthals who live only to go bowling and to belt down a bunch of beers.

However, in this earthly version of paradise there are some very real problems. A few quotations from my paper last year for Professor Munger pinpoint some of these problems. A Milwaukee Journal article by John Stevens on 7 March 1978 stated that "there are portions of West Allis with aging homes, which lead to aging neighborhoods and gradual deterioration of the city. Then there are still a few open spaces left, ripe for development." The same writer wrote in a 28 February 1978 article: "A just-released draft of a comprehensive study of land use, including suggestions for what this city could do with its remaining land until 1990, paints a somewhat dreary picture of a city in decline. . . . Future large scale city growth is hampered for several reasons, the study says, because the area is mostly developed, and because the city is landlocked with the exception of the area west of the Zoo Freeway and several parcels in the south central and north

central portions of the city." In a West Allis Post article published on 8 March 1978 the former Community Editor, Kurt Rogahn, wrote in similar gloomy fashion: ". . . while the population here is declining in actual numbers, the number of households in West Allis is on the rise. The statistics indicate also that the reason for this is that the size of individual families is declining, though there may be more families in West Allis. While a few years or a few decades ago the average family here may have had four or five family members, the average family today may have 2.8 persons. . . . West Allis is no longer adding great numbers of new homes for younger families to move into - hence, young families begin to move away, to communities (farther away from Milwaukee in more distant suburbs or little towns 30 or 40 miles from the city - my comment, R.J.S.) where there are homes for them to live in. . . . West Allis is steadily becoming composed of an aging population; one that is increasingly becoming unable to bear the cost of running the community. And while the population has declined, the number of families has increased, making constant the need for a certain level of services on the part of local government to the populace. In other words, though the population is declining, it isn't necessarily going to mean that the city can start laying off refuse collectors, city plumbing inspectors, or police." Rogahn concludes his article with this prognostication: ". . . the future seems no bed of roses for any of us."

Hand in hand with the problem of an aging population (27% of West Allis residents are retired, up by 6% since 1970) is a steadily declining population. According to Wisconsin Department of Revenue estimates the population has dropped from 71,781 in 1973 to 67,957 in 1977. The latest population estimate provided by City Hall reveals even more decline: 66,791 as of January, 1979. In the Appendix the article from the 6 February 1979 Milwaukee Journal describes one of the results of this population drop, the closing of three West Allis public schools. That article reports that "enrollment in the district has plummeted from a peak of more than 14,000 students in the 1969-'70 school year to the present 10,000. Moreover, administrators have projected the enrollment to drop to a low of 6,932 students by the 1987-'88 school year if current birth trends continue."

Additional problems which may plague West Allis in the future are brought out in Milwaukee Journal (5 April 1979) articles which have been reproduced in our Appendix, Mayor Barlich's room tax proposal points up a financial problem that is not unique to West Allis or that unusual in this age of rising costs and runaway inflation. The defeat of a modest integration plan for the third time in three years by the West Allis-West Milwaukee School Board may or may not be a symptom of a serious social problem in the community. In section D. Community Character we noted that less than 1% of West Allis' citizens are members of racial minorities. Does this mean that West Allis is inhabited by a bunch of bigots who are conducting a conscious campaign to keep out blacks or Hispanics? In a personal meeting on 16 March 1979 at his office I asked West Allis Mayor Jack Barlich that question and he vehemently denied that the rejection of a voluntary integration plan with the Milwaukee Public Schools was a sure sign of deep-seated racial prejudice among West Allis citizens. He personally opposed the plan because he felt the busing of students would be a waste of taxpayers' money and in conflict with energy conservation goals. It is debatable whether the presence of so few minority citizens in West Allis should be described as a problem. Indeed, from the church growth point of view and the homogeneous unit principle which we will describe in more detail in the next chapter, the predominance of white Protestants and Roman Catholics might be seen as a plus rather than as a serious problem.



Although the preceding paragraphs pinpoint a number of problems that presently confront West Allis and which may become even more serious in the future, none of the problems is likely to inhibit or halt the growth of Woodlawn Congregation, unless we were desperately casting about for convenient excuses to explain away our non-growth or numerical decline. Even if the population continues to plummet and to grow proportionately older, there are still plenty of unchurched people in our community whom we can and should be reaching and winning for Christ with aggressive outreach efforts. The "pool" of unchurched people in West Allis is not close to drying up. I am convinced of this primarily as a result of weekly visits to West Allis Memorial Hospital as a part-time chaplain for the Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministry. Week after week I encounter unchurched Protestants at the hospital who fit the description of unchurched people given by Edward A. Rauff in a follow-up study of Prof. J. Russell Hale's book, "Who Are the Unchurched?" In the March/Easter 1979 issue of the Milwaukee Lutheran an article about Rauff's research and study of the unchurched contains this observation: "Another surprise was the absence of guilt in people while they were unchurched. The typical answer to this question, 'How did you feel about yourself when you were outside the church?' was 'I never thought about it.'"

The biggest problem in West Allis although city officials and most of the citizens fail to recognize it, is that too many precious souls are unchurched and never seriously think about their perilous spiritual predicament without access to God's Word and Sacraments and personal fellowship with the Savior. Woodlawn Lutheran Church and School has, by God's grace, the answer to that problem and we should be seeking with greater zeal to share that answer with those in West Allis who desperately need to learn the way to salvation.

## II. How Healthy Has Woodlawn Been Through Its First Fifty Years?

Several times I've referred to the paper I wrote for Professor Munger's Fuller Seminar on Church Renewal in January 1978. That paper, "We Are His Workmanship," contains a sizeable section on Woodlawn's past history and degree of health. Rather than to repeat all those details I will hit some of the highlights of that history and add a few church-growth insights in an attempt to assess the health (or lack of it) of Woodlawn over the years. In its 50 year history Woodlawn has been served by five pastors. Accordingly we will give a capsule history of the congregation in line with those five pastorates.

### A. Harry Shiley, 1928-1940

Although preliminary work was carried out by Pastor Luther Voss of neighboring Good Shepherd's Congregation, Woodlawn Congregation started to move ahead with the arrival of seminary graduate Harry Shiley in July 1928. The first service was attended by 12 adults and 15 children. Pastor Shiley did double duty for the infant congregation, serving both as pastor and as the teacher-principal of the school which opened on 4 September 1928 with 35 pupils spread out over 8 grades. Formal organization of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod mission congregation known as Woodlawn took place on 13 July 1929 with seven charter members, none of whom is alive today. One of those charter members, Mr. Gustav Bartell, served for many years as congregational president. When Pastor Shiley left Woodlawn in May 1940 Woodlawn had 400 souls, 235 communicant members and 48 pupils in the

parochial school. (As this paper was being completed, we received word that Pastor Shiley had died on the 22nd of May, at the age of 76. The funeral was conducted on May 25 at Calvary Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, the church Pastor Shiley was serving at his retirement.)

#### B. Harold Schwertfeger, 1940-1948

Like Pastor Shiley, Pastor Schwertfeger also for a time doubled as pastor and teacher for Woodlawn. His period of ministry during which World War II occurred saw a slight increase in church and school membership. When he preached his farewell sermon in October 1948 the statistics stood as follows: 440 souls, 266 communicants and 63 pupils in the Christian day school. On 21 July 1948 Woodlawn put into use a new two manual Hammond electronic organ which is still functioning adequately after 30 years of service in three places of worship. However, as part of Woodlawn's anniversary observance we are planning to purchase a new 13 rank Verlinden pipe organ at a cost of \$22,500.

#### C. Reinhard Schoeneck, 1949-1958

In II Corinthians 12:9 St. Paul reports that God said to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul went on to say: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." I believe that passage sums up Pastor Schoeneck's pastorate very well. Although it was a difficult period in his life, a time of physical weakness and infirmity, the power and vibrancy of Christ made this a vital and exciting period in Woodlawn's history. Plans were made and key actions were taken in that decade that have had far-reaching consequences for the good health and growth of the congregation. In 1954 Woodlawn became a self-supporting congregation, no longer financially dependent on the Wisconsin Synod, and in that same 25th anniversary year a special Building and Planning Committee, with extraordinary authority which made them accountable only to the voters' assembly, was organized. Spurred on by this committee Woodlawn purchased our present 3 acre piece of property on the corner of S. 99th Street and W. Lincoln Avenue in 1955. The land selection surely has been a key factor in the health and growth of Woodlawn and is a definite plus as we plan for the future. It has provided excellent visibility and easy accessibility along busy Lincoln Avenue and adjacent to the I-894 expressway. We have almost no identity problem with unchurched people due to our happy location very close to what has become the business and commercial center of West Allis.

#### D. Adalbert Schultz, 1958-1961

Schultz' brief pastorate was highlighted by the dedication in October 1960 of a new school. As I pointed out on page 8 of last year's paper, "the decision by the congregation to build a new school before the building of a church is very significant, for Woodlawn has always placed Christian education in a high priority position in its program and expenditure of funds. . ." Church growth experts might be inclined to second guess Woodlawn's decision, since we had to worship for a full eleven years in a less than desirable location, a temporary chapel in the lower level (a psychologically more attractive word than basement) of the school before our new church was built. However, the decision was nearly unanimous to proceed with the school first and it was spurred on by the fact that a decrepit barracks

which was being used for some classes on the original 96th Street site had been condemned by the State.

#### E. Robert Kolander, 1947 - Present.

For a great many people Woodlawn and Mr. Robert Kolander are synonymous, since he has served the congregation fresh from graduation from Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota for more than thirty years in various key capacities: classroom teacher, school principal, organist, choir director, evangelist, and in many other areas of ministry as well. The continuing good health and successful academic program of our Woodlawn Lutheran School are due in large measure to the God-given leadership abilities and dedication of this kind, friendly and humble Christian gentleman.

#### F. A Summary of Woodlawn's First 32 Years

When I was called to serve Woodlawn in March 1962 a neighboring pastor sent me a letter giving me his candid impressions of the congregation at that time and the prospects for future growth. Excerpts from his letter which we included on page 9 of last year's "We Are His Workmanship" paper I believe are worth repeating also in this paper as follows:

*The 32 year history of Woodlawn Congregation is not a completely happy one. Although located in an expanding area of West Allis, Woodlawn Congregation was, until rather recently, handicapped by a decidedly sub-standard church and school plant. Perhaps you remember it. The chapel was most unattractive (exterior and interior). An overflow room just off the nave of the church formed one classroom; a condemned wooden barracks was the second classroom. The site was much too small, and the location was poor. This was one factor which severely restricted Woodlawn's growth. (My statistical reports go back to 1950; since then Woodlawn's communicant membership has increased by only 15%, from 266 to 306).*

*My acquaintance with the congregation goes back only eight or ten years, but what progress the congregation has made in that time has, under God, been accomplished through the humble efforts of some talented and dedicated laymen. The Lord has blessed Woodlawn with some gifted men, and consecrated, too. Two-thirds of the men present at this evening's meeting, I should guess, were in the 25-45 age bracket. The principal, Mr. Robert Kolander, is as co-operative as they come.*

*Despite the unimpressive growth rate, Woodlawn has made substantial progress. After many years of mission status, they went self-supporting. They purchased a beautiful site for relocation. Last year they dedicated their new school-church auditorium building. I was informed at the call meeting that they now plan to sell the old parsonage (a frame bungalow next to the old chapel-school combination) and build a new parsonage on the site. After that will come the final step in their long-range plan: the building of a new church. I am convinced that Woodlawn has a beautiful mission field - completely residential, with literally hundreds of new homes in the area surrounding them, and new homes being built*

constantly. The congregation has the potential for growth. Another of our West Allis congregations (Good Shepherd), with a considerably less promising mission field, doubled its size in five years. But what Woodlawn Congregation needs is leadership.<sup>6</sup>

#### G. Reuel J. Schulz, 1962 - Present

The letter writer quoted above said of Woodlawn: "The congregation has the potential of growth." During the 17 years I have been privileged to serve as Woodlawn's pastor the Lord graciously has permitted that potential for growth to be fulfilled with significant, albeit modest and unspectacular, growth in membership, finances, and physical facilities. It must be admitted that over the years most of our membership growth has been biological (babies born to our members) and transfer (Wisconsin Synod Lutherans moving into our area) growth. We have never had significant conversion growth, winning the unchurched of our West Allis area to the Christian faith. The membership graphs in the Appendix of last year's paper and in the Appendix of this paper clearly reveal just one significant spurt in Woodlawn's membership, when our new church was built in 1972. In spite of our less than zealous attitude toward evangelism, witnessing to and winning the unchurched for Christ, God has given us a larger than average-sized church membership with at least fair potential for future growth. Our current membership of 719 souls, 536 communicants, and 250 families with an average weekly church attendance average of 476 in '78 (down from 490 in '77) puts us well into the large church category along with approximately 14,500 of the nearly 300,000 Protestant churches in the U.S., according to a graph on p. 13 of our MN 705 notebook in the Church Growth Eyes section. To my surprise and amazement Woodlawn is in a rather elite (numerically at least) group of churches that make up 5% of all U.S. Protestant churches. Of course, most U.S. churches are very small, 50% averaging no more than 75 in Sunday worship attendance.

#### H. Summary

By no stretch of the imagination is Woodlawn a "super" church. However, I think it is fair to say that it has enjoyed average good health in its first fifty years. Under the capable leadership of Pastor Shiley and with excellent facilities (for that time) supplied by the Wisconsin Synod, the Woodlawn Church-School mission got off to a good start during the 1930s. For a variety of reasons the next two decades, from 1940-1960, saw a leveling off take place. The buildings for church and school served well in the first decade, but they gradually deteriorated and inhibited growth with limited seating for worship and with ramshackle barracks discouraging some parents from sending their children to the parochial school. The initial location on 96th Street about a block North of Lincoln Avenue was not nearly as desirable as our present much more visible site. To their credit the lay leaders of Woodlawn recognized the symptoms of church sickness developing in the 50s and took decisive action to keep the congregation healthy and growing. They purchased a choice piece of property, erected a new school in 1960, a new parsonage in 1965, and a new church directly connected to the school in 1972. During these building programs there was gradual membership growth and after the

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<sup>6</sup>Reuel J. Schulz, We Are His Workmanship, a course paper prepared for the Fuller Theological Seminary's "Church Renewal and Training of the Laity for Ministry" seminar #706 conducted by Dr. Robert B. Munger, May 1978, on file in Fuller's Continuing Education office, p. 9.

church was completed, the aforementioned jump in membership took place as the Appendix graphs vividly illustrate. Thus as the 1970s are closing out, fifty-year old Woodlawn enjoys reasonably good health. We at Woodlawn have much going for us. Our gracious God has been very good to us. With a 250 family church, a 100 pupil Christian day school, very functional facilities on a busy, cross-roads kind of location in the commercial center of our community, and, most important of all, with a traditional deep-seated concern for sound doctrine and Scripturally faithful preaching and teaching, Woodlawn of West Allis, Wisconsin has every reason to face the future, the rest of this 20th century and its next fifty years, with supreme confidence derived from our total trust in the Triune God. He who brought Woodlawn to life in the first place and gave us good health along the way for our first fifty years surely will not fail or desert His people in the future. How can we help but be healthy with the Great Physician at our side as He promised: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

### III. Does the Current Condition of Woodlawn Congregation Call for a Check-up and Diagnostic Study?

God surely has blessed Woodlawn with good health in the past, indeed, for most of its fifty years. In the last two years, however, there have been some worrisome signs of illness showing up in our statistics that have to cause us some concern and cry out for careful, prayerful study, analysis and pragmatic diagnosis based on sound church growth concepts and principles. For example, the growth history graphs in the Appendix reveal that the decade of the 1970's was a time of good growth for Woodlawn in communicant membership and church attendance. We've not included Sunday school statistics. Following Professor Wagner's advice we have given the composite membership growth figure without the Sunday school figures since our Sunday school does not draw any significant number of adults or teen-agers, a situation that is most regrettable, but is common throughout our Wisconsin Synod where Sunday school is associated almost exclusively with pre-teen children and most adults, even the most faithful members, are not accustomed to spending more than the hour for worship in church on Sundays.

The upturn in membership and worship attendance that developed in the 70's decade at Woodlawn seemed to be due primarily to the building of our new \$200,000 church. After twelve years (1960-1972) of worship in our school basement the change to an air-conditioned, carpeted sanctuary with faceted-glass windows, padded pews instead of metal chairs on bare concrete floors, and an atmosphere much more conducive to reverent worship triggered some good growth. The 47% decadal rate of growth, while just under fair in the rating given on page 12 of the "Reporting Church Growth" section of our notebook, would undoubtedly not have been reached were it not for our new church. However, in 1978 and so far in 1979 we have been going backwards. Our communicant membership dropped from 566 to 534 in '78 and our weekly worship (a combination of Sunday services and a week-day service which serves primarily as an alternate worship opportunity for those who can't come on Sundays) went down from 490 to 476. Why the decline? Although we can point to some stepped up activity in dealing with delinquent members that resulted in their removal from membership most often because they were despising the means of grace, God's Word and Sacrament, staying away from worship and Holy Communion, we cannot attribute the loss in membership solely to that cause and since such delinquent, fringe members rarely if ever came to church, their loss would have little or no effect on the weekly church attendance average. A better reason or excuse for the decline can be attributed to a sister congregation (Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church) in the adjoining suburb of New Berlin beginning their own Christian day school in September 1977. This resulted in the loss for Woodlawn, but surely not

for our Lord's Kingdom, of some solid Lutheran Christian families, concerned about their children receiving a Christ-centered education who joined our church even though they lived in New Berlin, because we had a parochial school. When Star of Bethlehem opened their school, these Woodlawn members residing in New Berlin naturally transferred to that sister congregation.

A healthy church, however, ought to be able to cope with and overcome losses like the above with a steady infusion of new members. In the last year and a half Woodlawn has not been attracting enough new members to offset the aforementioned losses, so it seems obvious that now is an excellent time, considering our current, less than dynamically growing condition, to put our congregation through a check-up and a diagnostic study. How does one go about conducting a congregational check-up? What's the best way to make a diagnostic study of our situation at Woodlawn? In an article entitled "Evangelism and Church Growth" in the August-September 1976 issue of Evangelism Explosion News Dr. C. Peter Wagner by means of an interview format describes the following three prerequisites that must be met by a church before it can grow or continue to grow:

*E. E. News: Dr. Wagner, what causes churches to grow?*

*Wagner: Before I comment on the principles that cause churches to grow, I would like to point out that there are three prerequisites that must be met by any church before it can grow. If a church does not have these three ingredients, there is very little chance that it will grow.*

*First of all, it must have a pastor who has the gift of leadership and is willing to pay the price for growth. The pastor must set the style and the vision for the growth of the church. Strong leadership is a must.*

*Secondly, the church must have willing people. It must be a congregation who want the church to grow and are willing to sacrifice to see it happen. As far as I know, a pastor has never done it by himself. Pastors with the greatest sense of vision cannot do it if the people are not willing to grow.*

*The third prerequisite is that the church must not have a terminal illness. Some churches are simply in a condition of terminal illness and no matter what they do, they can't grow.*

*Following that, I don't have any particular packaged set of principles that I tell a church to use. I think that I would approach a church much like a physician would approach the diagnosis of the health of your body. He would test your vital signs. At the church growth center, we have isolated seven vital signs of a healthy church which I will mention a little later.*

*A doctor would measure your vital signs and quantify them. He would put them together and make a diagnosis of your health. He would then move on to write a prescription or suggest certain exercises or other kinds of things that you could do to either maintain the good health of your body or to restore your health if your body is not healthy.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> An interview with Dr. Peter Wagner, Evangelism and Church Growth in Evangelism Explosion News (published by Evangelism Explosion, Inc., P.O. Box 23820, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33307) August-September 1976 issue, pps. 6 & 7.

The prerequisites mentioned in the above article tie in well with and actually are included in the "seven vital signs of a healthy church" which Wagner explores and explains in his Your Church Can Grow, published by Regal in 1976. When the Southern Baptists' Home Missions magazine devoted their entire December 1977 issue to their 425 fastest growing churches and the reasons why they've grown, their editorial staff organized the material around Wagner's seven vital signs and they included several lists of fundamental growth principles espoused by several other church growth experts, men like Arthur Flake, Lyle Schaller, C.B. Hogue, Robert Schuller, M. Wendell Belew, John Havlik, Jack Redford, Oscar Romo, Robert Kilgore, Winfield C. Arn and the movement's octogenarian, but still very active and productive, founder, Donald McGavran. These 10 lists can be found at the end of this section of the paper.

For this self-study and diagnosis of Woodlawn I've decided to measure our congregation, as the Home Missions magazine did for the Southern Baptist churches, primarily according to Wagner's seven vital signs. However, we will also touch on a few of the church growth principles advocated by some of the other church growth experts mentioned above as well as taking a look at some of the common illnesses that can afflict churches to see which ones, if any, Woodlawn is suffering from.

### THE SEVEN VITAL SIGNS

#### A. Pastoral leadership

According to Wagner "Vital Sign Number One of a healthy, growing church is a pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyze the entire church into action for growth."<sup>8</sup> Although self-effacing shyness and modesty have never been strong personal characteristics, I still find it hard to stand back and be objective about my performance as Woodlawn's pastor in the past 17 years. Our growth rate in the past decade, less than fair at 47%, gives me no reason to see myself as a possibility thinker like Robert Schuller or a dynamic leader drawing masses of people to our church by the power of a magnetic personality or through the church influence of smooth-running organizational and administrative machinery. When I entered the public ministry in 1959 I saw myself primarily as a preacher, teacher, counselor, and visitor of the sick. In my seminary training I had gained the impression that administration and planning for the future, as well as goal-setting, would lie on the periphery of my ministry. The concept of training and equipping the laity for ministry as called for in Ephesians 4:11,12 (at least in the modern English translations) received very low or even no priority in the conduct of my ministry.

*"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. . ." Ephesians 4 11, 12.*

My first parish in the State of Washington brought out some bad habits that I've found hard to shake over the years. From 1959-1962 I served two tiny churches in Ellensburg and South Cle Elum with a combined communicant membership of about 70.

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<sup>8</sup> C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, Glendale, California: Regal Books, a division of G/L. Publications, 1976) p. 57. In subsequent footnotes referring to this book we will direct the reader to this footnote #8 and give the pages where the six remaining vital signs are mentioned in Your Church Can Grow.

Accordingly I quickly developed the habit of doing all or by far most of the ministering for my members, from the cutting of the church lawn to cranking the mimeo machine and even starting a fire in the proverbial pot-bellied stove prior to instruction classes. In Washington that misguided philosophy of ministry did no great damage except to the members who were deprived of their ministry opportunities by my paternalistic, one-man performance. But at least the ministry was carried on, although in retrospect we should have been and could have been more involved in evangelism outreach.

When I came to Woodlawn in 1962 I brought my bad (pastor does all or most of the ministry) habits from Washington. And just like it's hard for an old dog to learn new tricks, so this 45 year old preacher finds it difficult to put church growth and renewal principles into practice. Probably the weakest area of my ministry is the training and equipping of the laity for ministry, although this is a weakness, I fear, that is widespread and even traditional throughout our Wisconsin Synod denomination. I know better; my reading and study of church growth principles and procedures have given me valuable insights into what I should be doing to facilitate growth at Woodlawn. But it's one thing to know what should be done, it's quite another to break the chains of custom, habit, and synodical tradition to put church growth principles which apply to pastoral leadership into dynamic practice.

Thus in connection with this first vital sign related to healthy churches and church growth, there is considerable room for improvement. As Woodlawn's pastor I definitely see exciting possibilities for growth and will continue to try to transmit that kind of possibility thinking throughout the church, to the rest of our staff, to our church leaders and officers, and to the average lay person in the pew, but I have no illusions about transforming myself into a dynamic leader overnight by aping the actions of a Robert Schuller or Jack Hyles. In summary, what Wagner has said about the do-everything pastor describes my experience with chilling accuracy:

*. . . the only pastor who could possibly do all the work would be the pastor of a small church, but if that church is growing it soon will be a church too big for any one person to do all the work involved. The larger a church grows, the less a share of the total work load the pastor himself can assume.*

The challenge I face as Woodlawn's pastor, at least as I see it, is to train and equip our well-qualified laity to take on a larger share of the ministerial work load, especially in areas like administration and evangelism outreach, and to add some personnel, at least on a part-time basis, to our pastoral staff to better accomplish the volume of work the Lord has assigned to Woodlawn.

#### B. The Laity

According to Wagner the second vital sign of a growing church is "a well-mobilized laity."<sup>10</sup> The first two vital signs are closely connected. Therefore many of the comments I made relating to my pastoral responsibilities apply to the

<sup>9</sup> cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 57

<sup>10</sup> cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 69



apply to the laity as well. Woodlawn has a good nucleus of faithful laypeople who surely want to see their church grow so that many more precious souls may be added to Christ's Kingdom. The problem is that we have a tradition both in our local congregation and in our national church body of minimal lay involvement in ministry, with the exception of housekeeping chores like ushering, counting the collection, writing checks, and keeping the property in good condition. These surely are important tasks, but they have little to do with direct ministry to souls in need.

Wagner again hits the nail on the head as far as Woodlawn is concerned when he writes:

*I believe that attending Sunday school (that means teen-adult Bible study for us) should be made almost a requirement for church membership. And I also believe that one of the primary objectives of the Christian education program of the church should be to enable every single person in the church, within one year after conversion in the case of adults or sometime before the 25th birthday of second generation Christians, to come to terms with his or her spiritual gift - to know precisely what it is and to be using it effectively.*

There are many gifted people at Woodlawn who are not using their god-given talents and abilities where they could further the cause of Christ and the Gospel. In some cases, they may not recognize their gifts or they downplay their potential for being involved in meaningful ministry due to false or misguided modesty. In other cases, Woodlawn is failing to challenge and excite to enthusiasm our gifted Christians who have so much to contribute to the Kingdom if their gifts were tapped and properly channeled. Undoubtedly Woodlawn's most glaring weakness in this area of the laity is the number of Class II Workers active in our congregational life. We have only a handful of volunteer workers who head out away from the church actively reaching out to the unchurched in the community who need Christ. An active, growing, reproducing church will have 50% of the members functioning as Class I workers who serve the existing church as Sunday school teachers, choir members, ushers, property trustees, flower committee members, visitors of the sick; 20% of the members will be Class II workers as described above and the remaining members will be the so-called "consumers". At the present time Woodlawn has far too many members who are merely "consumers," whose gifts are not being used for Kingdom work, and we have way too few workers, most of whom are Class I.

### C. Bigness

According to Wagner "the third vital sign characteristic of growing churches in America is that they are big enough."<sup>12</sup> Woodlawn is a "big" church. That statement, made also in chapter two of this paper, may surprise many of Woodlawn's members. Most of us at Woodlawn don't see our congregation as big. I think there are two reasons for this mistaken perception.

First, we live in an area of very large Roman Catholic parishes which dwarf Woodlawn by comparison and many of our own Wisconsin Synod sister congregations are numerically bigger. Second, there is a good spirit of close fellowship among the inner core of 50-75 leaders and thus they view their church as almost having somewhat of a rural or at least a small town quality about it. Surely that's a

<sup>11</sup> cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, pns. 78,80.

<sup>12</sup> cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 84.

spirit we want to preserve and extend even as we grow bigger.

But the fact remains: Woodlawn is a "big" church. Wagner leaves no doubt about it when he writes:

*According to Lyle Schaller's research, a full 95% of the churches in America average under 350 for Sunday morning worship. Half the churches in the country have 75 or less out on Sunday morning. This means that if you have 100 out on Sunday morning you are well above average, and if you have 400 (which Woodlawn has), you are a big church by comparative standards.* <sup>13</sup>

Is Woodlawn big enough? Yes, it is, in the sense that we have the people power, the location, physical facilities and a solid Scriptural doctrinal position to do a good job of meeting the spiritual needs of our members and the unchurched around us. In another sense, however, Woodlawn is not big enough. We dare not be complacent or smugly self-satisfied with our current condition. There are alarming signs of decline in our community and in our church statistics, so we ought to be moved, God enabling us, to grow bigger and bigger. To coast or to say we're big enough and need no new members would be a dreadful mistake and in a decade or less Woodlawn could and would be in big trouble and would be "big enough" no longer.

#### D. Celebration + Congregation + Cell = Church

Wagner's "fourth vital sign of a healthy, growing church can be best expressed by this simple formula: Celebration + Congregation + Cell = Church."<sup>14</sup> It is safe to say that a significant majority of the members of Woodlawn look to their church primarily for celebration or worship. As conservative Lutherans we have a time-honored liturgical tradition that is closely tied to the liturgical church year. There are no exuberant "Amens" or "Hallelujahs" uttered by the hearers during our sermons, but in our somewhat formal, staid (some would say starched and stuffy) sober-faced, Teutonic way we joyously sing praises to the Lord, humbly confess our sins and gratefully receive absolution, listen with delight to our excellent choir or Christian day school pupils as they sing anthems to the glory of our gracious God, drink deeply from the fountain of the Word by means of Scripture readings and Bible-based sermons, and receive the Sacrament of the Altar often as our Savior offers us His true body and blood. Yes, Woodlawn makes much of worship or "celebration" as Wagner prefers to call it.

However, Woodlawn is not as strong in the congregation and cell categories. Of course, we do have some congregations or fellowship circles, such as the Woodlawn Choir, the Ladies' Society, (which because of its limited size more closely resembles a cell) and the Christian Education Association or parent-teacher group. Woodlawn also has a youth group, softball and basketball teams, and a couples' bowling league which offer what Wagner and Larry Richards in his book, A New Face for the Church, say "congregations" should supply, namely face

<sup>13</sup> cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 90.

<sup>14</sup> cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 97.

to face fellowship and the fostering of warm, friendly interpersonal relationships with fellow Christians. Although we have experimented with small groups or cells at Woodlawn according to Richards' definition: "Eight or twelve believers gathered to minister to each other, to grow in their sensed love and unity, and to encourage one another to full commitment to Christ,"<sup>15</sup> and the results have been largely favorable, many of our people seem hesitant about too great a degree of closeness and familiarity, as encouraged by cell groups. These categories of cell and congregation, then, are not much in evidence at Woodlawn. In the final chapter of this paper we will disclose the solution we will soon be trying to "warm up" Woodlawn, to increase the spirit of friendship and Christian fellowship which so often even faithful Christians have a difficult time feeling and frankly expressing toward one another.

#### E. The Homogeneous Unit Principle

According to Wagner "the fifth vital sign of a healthy, growing church is that its membership is composed of basically one kind of people."<sup>16</sup> This vital sign, also known as the "homogeneous unit principle," has stirred up considerable controversy because it appears to place the leaders of the Church Growth school of thought on the side of segregation, the continued separation of the American people according to race and income. Wagner and his colleagues have had to spend much time in debates, articles, etc. stressing that they are reporting what is true of healthy, growing churches, not what ought to be true. Their research has led them to the above conclusion. That does not mean that they advocate segregation or approve of prejudice or racial fears which lead "birds of a feather to flock together." Rather their dispassionate, objective study has led them to enunciate the above principle.

Surely Woodlawn illustrates the truth and validity of the homogeneous unit principle. Our congregation definitely is composed of basically one kind of people. When the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod was founded in Milwaukee in 1850, it was made up of German immigrants. That identity has remained strong for more than 125 years both in our Synod and for the past 50 years in our Woodlawn Lutheran Church and School, which for the first 25 years of its existence was a WELS mission congregation. That close connection with our German forebears can be detected in the surnames of Woodlawn's pastors, including the author of this paper. Shiley, Schwertfeger, Schoeneck, Schultz, and Schulz - that list of Woodlawn's ministers speaks for itself in identifying our homogeneous unit and a list of Woodlawn's Christian day school teachers over the years would make the same point.

For the paper that I wrote last year for Dr. Munger I gave out a survey-questionnaire to the members of Woodlawn and I received 223 responses, a good representative cross section of our membership. I repeated the procedure for this paper with an abbreviated, one-page questionnaire (last year's was four pages) with even better results, 247 responses. Those two surveys also shed some light on Woodlawn's primary homogeneous unit. For example, Woodlawn's mem-

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 108 a quote from Lawrence O. Richards, A New Face for the Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. footnote #8 Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 110.

bers, for the most part, came from and have managed to maintain, with God's help and blessing, stable homes and families. Most are married; only 4 of those responding to our surveys were separated or divorced. As another example of family solidarity and respect for those homey values we can point out that 195 of 247 respondents or 78.9% live in single family dwellings. It's safe to say that most of these people own or are in the process of purchasing their own homes. To illustrate the solid neighborhood nature of our church membership we discovered that 77.8% of our survey respondents lived within 3 miles of our church and a solid 94.2% lived no more than 6 miles from our church-school facilities. That figure, incidentally, shows us not only that most of our people live nearby, but that we undoubtedly could and should be reaching out farther into our metropolitan area to broaden our base, to extend our congregational borders, to move beyond being merely a neighborhood church and developing more of a community and area-wide consciousness, inviting the thousands of unchurched people within reasonable driving distance of Woodlawn to make Woodlawn Lutheran their church home and our Christian day school the school where their children can be thoroughly trained and taught in the Christian faith and can be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The salary statistics in this year's survey demonstrate Woodlawn's mostly middle class identity with 37.6% in the \$10,000 - \$20,000 bracket. The large number of people below \$10,000 income, namely 39.1% is undoubtedly due to the number of unemployed wives or widows who filled out our questionnaire. As far as education is concerned, Woodlawn has 37.1% of its members who have finished high school and 21.1% of its members without a high school diploma. Just 13.3% graduated from college and 7.2% have gone on to post graduate studies.

For me the most gratifying result of this study of Woodlawn's homogeneous unit was the discovery of a deep loyalty on the part of our people toward our ultra-conservative Lutheran denomination, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and their agreement with our giving Christian education in our day school a high priority status.

In last year's survey out of 223 respondents in answer to the question: "Why did you come to Woodlawn?" the answer that was given more than any other, by 169, was "Because Woodlawn is in the Wisconsin Synod." Similarly, in answer to the question, "What has kept you coming to Woodlawn?", 202 checked both "preaching" and what our preaching and teaching are based on, namely: "our doctrinal stand based solidly on the inspired, inerrant Scriptures." That same question prompted 135 to answer "Christian education" and 131 gave the similar reply: "parochial school."

The above statistics and percentages give a pretty clear profile of Woodlawn's so-called "average member" and a good idea of our homogeneous unit. Of course, we agree with Wagner that while we recognize the validity of this principle and realize that we should capitalize on this vital sign for the future growth and good health of our church, we also are pleased that beyond our basic "one kind of people," German-American, middle class, stable families, average in income and education, we also have a varied mix of people, who, though small in numbers have been warmly welcomed into our church and school and surely have not been made to feel that they are different, outsiders, sticking out like a sore thumb. Admittedly we have only a handful of such members who would be classified in the "minority" category, but they fit in well at Woodlawn and we would warmly welcome many, many more of them to join us in learning about our precious Savior of sinners, our Lord Jesus Christ.

## F. Evangelization

Wagner states that "the sixth vital sign of a healthy, growing church is that it is using an evangelistic method that works."<sup>17</sup> As I indicated earlier in this paper, Woodlawn has increased in membership primarily as a result of biological and transfer growth with our parochial school serving as a magnet for Christian education-minded parents who happen to move into our area. With little or no effort on our part we have gained some solid, God-fearing families simply because we offer a Christian elementary school education and also belong to the conference of congregations that runs the largest Lutheran high school in our country, Wisconsin Lutheran High School of Milwaukee, which happens to be only five minutes away from Woodlawn. We have not increased much as a result of conversion growth, which surely is the best and most gratifying kind of growth since it involves the winning of unchurched, religiously rootless people to the Lutheran Christian faith. Without question Woodlawn is weakest in the area of personal evangelism, a weakness that is common in our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. I make that statement with assurance, a certain sense of authority and some degree of shame because I have served for the past six years as the chairman and co-chairman of our WELS Commission on Evangelism. Woodlawn and WELS are weak in personal evangelism for a variety of reasons. Some people and pastors in our circles associate evangelism with impertinent, obnoxious, never-take-no-for-an-answer Jehovah's Witnesses, overzealous Mormons or sneaky, spiritual snake-oil salesmen who are determined to argue, to pressure, or otherwise to manipulate with unscrupulous psychological trickery an emotional "decision for Christ" from gullible and unsuspecting visitees. We in WELS also suffer from a pastor-does-it-all tradition which has reserved for the laity mostly housekeeping chores around the church and has stifled the vital concept of an outreach ministry by lay witnesses and evangelists. Unconsciously or subconsciously many WELS pastors and people, also we at Woodlawn, think that it's enough to build a church, to put up a bullet-in board with the time of services and the word WELCOME on it, and then to wait for the unchurched to wander in off the streets to see what we have to offer them. Many of us are uncertain, unsure of ourselves in the area of verbal, person-to-person witnessing, tongue-tied when it comes to expressing our Christian faith, and, yes, even downright afraid to tell others of Christ for fear of ridicule, rejection, or receiving the terrible label, "religious fanatic."

Woodlawn has not been totally inactive in evangelism. Several years ago we made use of a Kennedy-type evangelism method, sans Reformed theology and its pressing for a decision, which was developed within our WELS. This helpful tool known as the "Talk about the Savior" (TAS) program, was used with some good results. Several of our lay leaders, including Principal Robert Kolander, received on-the-job personal evangelism training from me and we were blessed with increased enrollment in our Bible information course as a direct result of our personal visits to unchurched prospects. Today we can point to several members of our congregation who came to Woodlawn via the personal evangelism route as the Holy Spirit worked through the Word, the good news of the Gospel as well as the sin-exposing doctrine of the Law, which we were privileged to communicate to them. Periodically, we have also blanketed our area with several thousand evangelism type leaflets which extended an invitation to our church and the spiritual, Scripture-based services we offer through our worship hours, Bible classes

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<sup>17</sup>Cf. footnote #8, Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 135.

and Christian day school. In the Appendix packet you will find a sample leaflet we distributed on 6 May 1979.

For the most part, however, Woodlawn's performance in the personal evangelism field has been disappointing. I have come to see this work as the most difficult in the church; it's so easy to put it off, to wait for a better, more advantageous time, to say "manana" we'll get a good evangelism program in operation. That's where Woodlawn is at now. The pastor and many of the lay leaders know what we should be doing, but we haven't yet put a personal evangelism program in an appropriate high priority place on our church program. Which leads us to -

### G. Priorities

Wagner says that "the seventh - and last - vital sign common to healthy, growing churches in America is that they have their priorities straight."<sup>18</sup> In its fifty year history Woodlawn has given high priority to the pure preaching and orthodox teaching of God's Word from the pulpit and in the classroom. Along with its larger church body, the Wisconsin Synod, Woodlawn has been very conscious of doctrinal integrity in total conformity with the Holy Scriptures. Elmer L. Towns has written on the subject of doctrinal purity as follows:

*Pure doctrine is not the ultimate or only purpose of a church; it is the means to an end. The objective of a church is the Great Commission. But correct doctrine is the only foundation on which evangelism and the Christian life prosper. The Bible is the foundation of the church, and no local church could be built without correct adherence to doctrine. However, when a cohesive group of people are held together by pure doctrine, they tend to major on minor variations of dead orthodoxy, leading to sterile sermons. In turn, this may lead to unjustified church splits.*

*A church may compromise its doctrine and conscience by continued affiliation with a dying denomination or affiliation with unscriptural organizations. A church may compromise its doctrine by allowing outside speakers who hold an unscriptural stand. Doctrinal compromise makes it impossible for a church to fulfill its obligation to the Scriptures and carry out evangelism; therefore, a group of people have a Scriptural basis to form a new church. This should be done only when it can demonstrate that the present church has broken fidelity with the New Testament.*<sup>19</sup>

I agree with much of what Towns wrote above, but I disagree that pure doctrine should be considered a means to an end. I see pure doctrine and the Savior's Great Commission as twins, as full partners and equals. They complement each other. We should be filled with zeal to preach the Gospel to every creature, to make disciples of all nations, beginning in our own neighborhood around Woodlawn Church, West Allis and surrounding community. But we must be equally concerned and conscientious that we do not dilute our doctrines or compromise our

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. footnote #, Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 147.

<sup>19</sup> Elmer L. Towns, Getting a Church Started in the Face of Insurmountable Odds with Limited Resources in Unlikely Circumstances, (no publishing location listed: Impact Books - A Division of John T. Benson Publishing Company, 1975) p. 166.

Christian confession of the pure Gospel with the excuse that such compromise and dilution will enable us to reach a larger audience.

This August Billy Graham is scheduled to conduct a crusade in Milwaukee. No one can fault Graham for his zeal in getting out the Gospel, but in my judgment he proclaims a flawed Gospel and falls short of preaching the whole counsel of God because he must side-step "hot potato" issues and doctrines like Baptism and Holy Communion. His doctrinal position, while admirable, evangelical and conservative in many respects, nevertheless takes on a watered-down, least common denominator appearance because of his determination to get in his corner such diverse groups as Roman Catholics and Pentecostals, liberal main line churches and the so-called evangelicals who provide the main base of his support. Last October I wrote an article for the Milwaukee Journal in which I detailed some of the key doctrinal differences that divide Graham and myself and I explained why I would not be leading our Woodlawn Lutheran Church en masse to Milwaukee County Stadium for Graham's crusade. I've included that newspaper column in the Appendix of this paper.

It may seem that in the foregoing paragraph relating to Graham I strayed from my subject and got off the track. Not at all! Doctrine, pure doctrine, is a high priority matter in my life, in the life of Woodlawn and in our WELS. Towns' observations above about church-splitting struck an especially responsive chord with me because our church body back in 1961, after more than a century of close association and Christian fellowship, suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS) due to deep-seated, fundamental doctrinal differences which had developed in the 1940's and 1950's to cause divisions between us. We in WELS prize pure doctrine as a precious gift from our gracious God so that when the LC-MS began to permit and even promote false teachings which called into question the inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, we had no choice but to split (we carefully used the term suspend fellowship, not terminate, in hopes that a reunion might take place in the future) with them in obedience to Romans 16:17. Since 1961 our WELS has enjoyed a significant church growth, having churches in only 17 states in '61 and moving up to 48 states in '78. I am seriously thinking of writing my doctoral dissertation on this aspect of our Synod's history, how our splitting from the LC-MS was used by the Lord to stimulate our substantial growth, moving WELS from a very small body located mostly in the Upper Midwest to what it is today, still relatively small (400,000+ members), but nevertheless a national, country-wide church body.

Surely there is a danger that concern for pure doctrine can become an all-consuming obsession and can degenerate into a dead orthodoxy. So much energy can be expended in detecting and denouncing religious errors (and there is no shortage of them in today's world) that little or no time and energy are left for eager, zealous evangelism. Here, as in so many areas of our Christian lives, a healthy balance is called for. We can and should do both; we dare not do one at the expense of the other. In our Lutheran Hymnal there is a well-known hymn written by Nikolai F.S. Grundtvig in 1817 and translated by Ole G. Belsheim in 1909, which describes the God-pleasing balance between zeal for pure doctrine and a corresponding eagerness to evangelize with that pure Gospel:

*God's Word is our great heritage  
And shall be ours forever;  
To spread its light from age to age  
Shall be our chief endeavor.  
Through life it guides our way,*

*In death it is our stay.  
Lord, grant while worlds endure,  
We keep its teachings pure  
Throughout all generations. 20*

Indeed, our chief endeavor should be to spread the bright light of God's Word, but if we fail to keep its teachings pure its light of life and salvation will be dimmed and become misleading.

In the past twenty years Woodlawn has been much preoccupied with building and it could be argued that evangelism outreach was pushed to a back burner position as we went from one building program to another. First there was the building of our school in 1960, than a parsonage was put up in 1965, and in 1972 our new church was erected. Each of those projects drew off the energy of our leaders and drained away a substantial amount of our offerings. In fact, we still owe more than \$100,000 on our church and will be paying out about \$1500 a month for the next eight years to wipe out the mortgage. But those expenditures were necessary and have brought many blessings to Woodlawn, not the least of which is a substantial number of new members who came to us in the years just after we built our church. Surely a healthy, growing church should not use building projects as an alibi for not engaging in evangelism outreach. Evangelism should always be in a high priority position, no matter what other projects a church gets involved in. This has not always been true at Woodlawn and even at the present evangelism outreach gets more lip service than actual practice. There is, as we've already indicated, a crying need for many more Class II lay workers at Woodlawn whose primary interest is directed toward winning the unchurched outside our sanctuary. This is surely a key to Woodlawn becoming an active, healthy, growing, fruitful and reproducing church.

In chapter 11 of his Your Church Can Grow, Wagner asks: "Are Your Priorities in Order?" He then quotes extensively from Dean Kelley's Why Conservative Churches Are Growing because Kelley deals at some length with the matter of priorities. I also appreciated Kelley's work for his conclusions about doctrinal strictness correspond very closely to my own convictions and to the practice of Woodlawn and the WELS. Kelley describes his main hypothesis as follows:

*A group with the evidences of social strength will proportionately show traits of strictness; a group with traits of leniency will proportionately show evidences of social weakness rather than strength. 21*

Kelley's whole book, but especially the above summary statement, has been very helpful and reassuring to me. Our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is looked upon as an extremely strict, ultra-conservative church body, even to the right of the Missouri Synod. Our loyalty to the Lord Jesus and His inspired, inerrant Word has led us to take such controversial stands as opposition to lodge (Masons, Eagles, Elks, etc.) membership and the Scouting organization, as well as steering clear of the ecumenical movement and what we see as its agree to disagree, watered-down, least common denominator theology.

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<sup>20</sup> Hymn #283, The Lutheran Hymnal, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941). Music by Fritz Reuter, 1916.

<sup>21</sup> Dean M. Kelley, Why Conservative Churches Are Growing (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972) p. 86.



When you hold to unpopular, strict positions it's easy to surrender to self-pity and to blame your strictness for any failure to grow and effectively evangelize outsiders. Kelley reminded me that strictness is a sign of social strength and that leniency, in order to try to win more people to your faith, is ineffective and self-defeating. No longer am I tempted to apologize or gloss over our doctrinal position which we see as being strictly faithful to the Scriptures.

For my Church Growth course case study in February 1979 I made an in depth investigation of Pasadena's Lake Avenue Congregational Church, where Prof. Wagner is a member. I discovered for myself through that study what Wagner pointed out in Your Church Can Grow.<sup>22</sup> There, indeed, is a church that has its priorities straight and firmly grounded in the minds of most of their members. Their three principles: "(1) commitment to Christ, (2) commitment to the body of Christ and (3) commitment to the work of Christ in the world" couldn't be simpler, but they are well worth imitating and I plan to promote those same three principles both from the pulpit as well as in meetings of our lay leaders to help us keep our priorities in God-pleasing order.

One final comment on priorities is appropriate. I especially appreciate Wagner's distinction between the concepts of social service and social action and his observation that "to the degree that socially involved churches become engaged in social action, as distinguished from social service, they can expect church growth to diminish."<sup>23</sup> We at Woodlawn and in the WELS couldn't agree more. We have a Special Ministries Department in our church body and Woodlawn supports the Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service. These are agencies that extend aid and services to people with special needs and problems, like the deaf, blind and retarded, the unwed mother, the troubled family, and the aging Christians who need specialized intensive nursing care. But such social services, which we gladly support with our prayers, interest, and offerings, are a far cry from militant, often arrogant, social action such as marching with Cesar Chavez or picketing a baseball stadium out of sympathy and support for the strike of major league umpires.

As I think of proper, God-pleasing priorities for Woodlawn and the visible Christian church at large, I contend that Matthew 28:19,20 sums it up very well. For in His well-known Great Commission our Savior, it seems to me, gave equal emphasis to the making of disciples and to the vital matter of teaching and preaching the whole counsel of Christ, without addition or omission. Not only are we to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), but it is also highly significant that the Lord concludes His written revelation to mankind with the stern warning against adding to or taking anything away from His inspired, inerrant Word (Revelation 22:18,19).

Thus it might be said that Woodlawn, in line with the spirit and traditional stand of our parent church body, the Wisconsin Synod, through which the Lord brought about our birth as a congregation of believers 50 years ago, has a two-fold or twin top priority which could be expressed like this - to share God's Word with as many people as possible and at the same time to make sure that the Word we spread and share is free from false teaching. Indeed, this twin priority is also found in the purpose and first two objectives of our Wisconsin Synod. In that document, adopted by our Synod a few years ago in a regular convention, we tell the world that "the continuing purpose of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

<sup>22</sup> Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

(and of Woodlawn as well as a WEIS church), as a gathering of Christians, is to serve all people in God's world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of the Holy Scriptures." The first two objectives of our WEIS are: (1) "To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people" and (2) "To uphold the Truth of God as fully revealed in the inspired, infallible Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions."

Thus I submit that our priorities, at least in principle and in writing, are straight and Scripturally sound, but the point where we are undeniably weak is the putting of those excellent principles into actual, consistent practice. May this paper, which I plan to duplicate and distribute to every family at Woodlawn, help us to get straight on our priorities and to put especially the principles relating to personal evangelism into practice!

### EIGHT COMMON CHURCH DISEASES

In his lectures on "A Pathology of Church Growth" Prof. Wagner offered his insights into several illnesses that often afflict American churches. He has also made this enlightening information available in his new book, Your Church Can Be Healthy, which was scheduled to be published in April, 1979 by Abingdon. I propose to give a brief description of these diseases as derived from my class notes and then to determine which of them could threaten the health of Woodlawn.

#### H. Ethnikitis

This disease, in which a church with one kind of people is located in a community with a different kind of people, does not pose a problem for Woodlawn at the present time. Woodlawn's members are racially, culturally, socially and economically very compatible with the non-member people around us in West Allis. There are no barriers like those just mentioned which unchurched people would have to hurdle to come into our midst. If blacks, Hispanics, Orientals or other people of different race or culture were to move into our area in significant numbers, we surely would seek to adopt a "mission" philosophy of ministry and would try for, in medical parlance, a total transfusion of ethnic lay and pastoral leadership.

#### I. Old Age

Although Woodlawn is 50 years old in 1979, we do not seem to be suffering from the church disease of old age. The immediate community around us is not disintegrating or deteriorating unduly. It is still vital and vibrant for the most part. We do not at present have a disproportionate percentage of senior citizens in our church. However, that percentage is growing in West Allis (27% according to the latest research) so we must watch this development carefully and be prepared to adapt our services accordingly.

#### J. People Blindness

This malady prevents church members from seeing the important cultural differences between groups of people living in geographical proximity to one another. In my judgment Woodlawn does not have to deal with many serious differences which

would erect barriers to the reception and acceptance of our message. Surely we should always be sensitive to the danger that the message we transmit may not be received for a variety of reasons. I'm pretty certain that Woodlawn would be able to steer clear of "sociological tissue rejection." Just as the human body chooses death to receiving incompatible tissue (heart or kidney transplants) so some church people would rather see their church die rather than to incorporate people not of their race or culture. I'm quite confident that Woodlawn would not succumb to that disease, which is triggered by cultural prejudice and/or racial bigotry.

#### K. Hyper - cooperativism

This disease definitely does not threaten us directly at the present time. Our church body does not belong to the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. We believe that the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) will lead to further doctrinal deterioration among Protestants. As I indicated earlier in this chapter we in the WELS suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in 1961 on the basis of Romans 16:17 and other passages which prohibit church fellowship with false prophets who permit or promote errors in their churches. On the local level our congregation could not in good conscience cooperate in the Billy Graham crusade this August in Milwaukee although we've been bombarded and inundated by the pro-Graham propaganda and even Dallas Cowboy coach Tom Landry is coming to town to recruit the sportsfans for Graham. I am not a member of the West Allis Clergy Association.

We take these positions, not just to be different, nor do we do it with a spirit of self-righteousness or superiority, but out of deep concern for doctrinal integrity and full loyalty to the Scriptures. We have to reject not only the ecumania of the liberal mainline churches, but also the unionism espoused and practiced by conservative evangelicals like Graham, Bill Bright, Oral Roberts, and Pat Robertson. Thus it was very interesting to learn that it is a false premise to believe that the more you cooperate interdenominationally the more you evangelize. We reject hyper-cooperativism, however, not on purely practical or pragmatic grounds - that is, it doesn't really make for better or greater evangelism - but because we believe God forbids and condemns it in His Word.

#### L. Koinonitis

In his lecture on this disease, Prof. Wagner described this as a subtle malady, because koinonia (fellowship) is such a good thing, something church leaders want to promote and encourage in their respective churches. However, when fellowship becomes inflamed, exaggerated or obsessive, to the neglect of other vital church functions, it becomes koinonitis, i.e. the overdoing of a good thing. Wagner reported that this disease can develop in various types of churches, such as holiness churches where a sanctification gap can easily develop and no effective ministry or evangelism bridge is maintained with the outside world of "unholy" people. It can also crop up in charismatic churches where people lacking the baptism of the Spirit or who cannot speak in tongues soon begin to feel like inferior members or second-class Christians as a result of the clique mentality exhibited by those who claim they've received the full charismatic outpouring. Wagner also warned that the church renewal movement which

features writers like Keith Miller and Bruce Larson, can be easily susceptible to koinonitis since it seems to lay very little stress on evangelistic outreach. Since Woodlawn does not fit in these three aforementioned categories of churches, koinonitis doesn't seem to pose much of a threat to our church except for the fact that we do have a congregation and parent church body with a relatively high group consciousness. We've already mentioned our stand against Scouting, fraternal lodge membership, and the ecumenical movement. Therefore people who are new to our church or who may visit us at first may feel uncomfortable or may inadvertently say something inappropriate in favor of those organizations and philosophies like someone coming into a Seventh Day Adventist church who would innocently speak about Sunday school or a coffee break.

In general, we would like to warm up the fellowship factor at Woodlawn and we feel at this time that we have little to fear from koinonitis, although we must beware of fellowship saturation brought about by sheer quantity of people. There surely are some people among our 250 families who are not getting all the Christian friendship and cordial fellowship we'd like them to have because they've been lost in the shuffle. We also are well aware of the fact that because we have two services every Sunday (8 and 10:30 a.m. from September to May and 8 and 9:30 a.m. from June through August), we have to some extent two congregations in one church and some members who rarely or perhaps never see other members who habitually go to a different service.

#### M. Sociological Strangulation

If I had to pick one lesson that made the most impact on me from my reading and class work in the seminar, "Principles and Procedures of Church Growth," I believe it would have to be the insights I received about our church from the concept called "sociological strangulation." There is no question that on too many occasions we have had too many people flowing through our system with the result that our growth has been grotesque and undoubtedly has also suffered considerably. We do not meet, and have not for too long, Robert Schuller's number one criterion for a healthy, growing church - surplus parking. This past winter especially our parking lot became a bad and extremely harmful joke. Heavy snows in early January were not adequately cleaned away and thus constricted our already too small parking area so that when I returned from my studies at Fuller in mid-February, I counted just 35 cars in our parking lot for an attendance in excess of 200. The strangulation was increased this past winter by the fact that the heavy snows restricted parking to just one side of the street in the area around our church. The comic strips I've put in the Appendix on the subject of parking at church are not really that funny. No wonder our church attendance plummeted this past winter and remained low even on Sundays when the weather improved. Even our own members, to say nothing of the unchurched, were not about to put up with the hassle of finding a parking place or walking several blocks to church in Wisconsin's bitter cold weather. After I returned from Pasadena this February and recognized the dreadful sociological strangulation from which Woodlawn was suffering in our parking lot problem, we made arrangements to have a front end loader come to our property to clear out the excess snow from our parking lot at a "peanuts" cost of \$80.00. Never again will we be "penny wise, but pound foolish" when it comes to our parking lot plowing and snow removal. I shudder to think of how much in offerings were not contributed by members and visitors because our deplorable parking situation kept them away from our services. It surely was much in excess of the \$80.00. The Appendix also contains a newspaper clipping reporting that this winter's snowfall was the fifth deepest

ever in Milwaukee.

Sociological strangulation does not pose as much a threat to Woodlawn in connection with our sanctuary size as that described above in connection with parking. For most of our services we stay within the 80% of capacity rule of thumb recommended by Prof. Wagner. We should not have to physically expand our sanctuary for some time, because we still have the option of adding another service to the two which we already conduct, as well as the week-day evening service offered all year long.

#### N. Arrested Spiritual Development

In my judgment this disease also poses a definite threat to the health, spiritual welfare and future growth of Woodlawn. Although we have a solid commitment in the congregation to thorough Christian education on the elementary school level with our own Christian day school and a good percentage of our young people continue their Christian training at our Wisconsin Lutheran High School, there appears to be a drastic drop-off in spiritual maturation that develops, for some already in the early teen years, and for others in the late teens. We do not have a tradition of Sunday school for all ages in our Wisconsin Synod circles, so a sad stunting of individual spiritual growth sets in very soon with too many of our members, even those who are regular weekly worshipers. Sufficient numbers of capable, top-notch Class I and Class II workers cannot be developed in a congregation like ours where it's extremely difficult to attract significant numbers of adults and teens to Bible study sessions. At Woodlawn there is a crying need for E-O evangelism to stimulate internal growth and to combat the disease of arrested spiritual development. Our composite membership graph in the Appendix does not include Sunday school figures because so few adults and teens attend Sunday school.

#### O. St. John's Syndrome

This disease derives its name from the Revelation of St. John, especially chapter 2:4 where Jesus said to the church of Ephesus: ". . . I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." That first love at Ephesus had occurred about 40 years earlier during Paul's stay in the city. Under the influence of that first love for the Gospel St. Luke reports concerning the Ephesian Christians in Acts 19:10 - "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks," and likewise in Acts 19:20 Luke declares: "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." After forty years the flame of that first love for the Gospel had dimmed and the Ephesians' zeal for evangelism, for sharing the Word with others, had also diminished. In second and third generation churches it is likely that there will be a disproportionate number of nominal church members, who merely go through the motions of membership attending church without fail on Christmas Eve and Easter, but rarely if at all at other times; having their children baptized and confirmed, not because they recognize and appreciate the spiritual blessings of the Means of Grace, but because they are enslaved to tradition and view the Sacraments superstitiously as rites of passage for their offspring or even as mystical good luck charms that can't do the kids any harm.

On page 12 of the section "A Pathology of Church Growth" in the seminar

notes Prof. Wagner drew a bell curve to illustrate St. John's Syndrome. In his illustration he has a church peaking in membership at age 30. Woodlawn's peak, at least up to this time, came at approximately age 48. In the last year or two alarming indicators of decline are showing up and St. John's Syndrome seems to be at least part of the problem. We at Woodlawn who are later generation Christians, who have had the priceless Gospel of Christ served to us on a silver platter Sunday after Sunday all of our lives, so that we're tempted to take it for granted and be surfeited with it, must be on our guard against this growth-restricting syndrome. Here we have another reason to redouble our personal evangelism efforts at Woodlawn so that a fresh supply of converts, of first generation Christians, can combat St. John's Syndrome in our midst.

#### P. Other Possible Problem Areas

In the December 1977 issue of Home Missions, published by the Southern Baptists, which I referred to above, there are several lists of church growth principles. Since I will be providing a copy of this paper for every family at Woodlawn, I felt that including those lists without comment or amplification on my part might be thought-provoking and fruitful for further study by our lay leaders as we continue to seek out growth-inhibiting factors and problem areas and with our Lord's direction to overcome them. Here then are the lists that appear in the above magazine on pps. 8 - 20:

#### Flake's Formula by Arthur Flake

1. Know your possibilities.
2. Enlarge the organization.
3. Provide the space.
4. Enlist and train workers.
5. Go after the people.

#### Seven Characteristics of Growing Churches by Lyle Schaller

1. Bible preaching. (People today are hungry for biblical preaching.)
2. Emphasis on evangelism. (More than an attitude or rhetoric.)
3. Changing membership fellowship circle. (Many congregations can be described in terms of two circles. The larger, outer circle represents the membership. . . . The smaller, sometimes much smaller, inner circle represents the fellowship group. In growing churches, the fellowship circle is as large, usually larger, than the membership circle.)
4. Opportunities to commitment.
5. Imported leadership.
6. Specialties in ministry. (In addition to the traditional ministries.)
7. Minister who likes people.

#### Five Principles by C. B. Hogue

1. Biblically based concepts.
2. Bold evangelism.
3. Broad involvement of people.
4. Burning passion of pastor.
5. Basic faith.

Seven Principles of Successful Retailing  
by Robert Schuller

1. *Accessibility.* (The best product will not be bought if people can't get their hands on it!)
2. *Surplus parking* (Number one criterion.)
3. *Inventory.* (Large enough to meet almost every conceivable human need. insures fantastic future.)
4. *Service.* (That means trained laity.)
5. *Visibility.*
6. *Possibility thinking* (Asking the right questions and making the right decisions.)
7. *Good cash flow.* (Don't be afraid of debt, but know what debt is.)

Five Things Typifying Growing Churches  
by M. Wendell Belew

1. They are churches with a purpose.
2. . . . churches which have leadership which speaks with authority.
3. . . . churches which have developed a strategy for growth.
4. . . . churches which know their communities.
5. . . . churches which have called for involvement; people involvement.

Six Commonalities of Growing Churches  
by John Havlik

1. Pastors who have a vision of growing an evangelistic church and effectively communicate their vision.
2. Pastors who genuinely like people.
3. Pastors who have genuine concern about other people's relationship to God.
4. People who as a matter of life-style witness/visit naturally and with security.
5. Churches that are pluralistic by choice. . . open to all kinds of persons with varying life-styles . . . no racial, cultural or language barriers.
6. Pastors and staffs able to administrate a process of empowering, equipping and enabling believers for loving, Christ-like evangelistic ministry.

Principles of Church Growth  
by Jack Redford

1. Holy Spirit basic to all that is done.
2. Bible foundational.
3. We must build bridges to people.
4. We must maintain the redemptive note.
5. Gifts of Holy Spirit must be recognized and used.
6. Love must permeate all.
7. Motivation is essential.
8. Flexibility is crucial.
9. Priorities are defined.
10. Experience should be applied to increase effectiveness.
11. A committed human leader must be present.
12. Participation planning on all levels is essential.
13. People are basic.

New Testament Growth Principles  
by Oscar Romo

1. Penetration.
2. Spiritual nurture.
3. Leaders from among the people.
4. Communicate in the language of the people.
5. Economic stability.
6. Adequate facilities.
7. Multiplication.

Factors in Church Growth  
by Robert Kilgore

1. Pastor: Strong personality, unusual ability to relate, compelling drive; great native ability, enlarged by consistent and current Bible study. Sermons biblically centered and well prepared. Long tenure. Speaks and acts with constituted authority, exerted with gentleness. Very effective administrator.



2. Church: Located in a growing and thickly populated area. Appeals to larger geographical community of people of similar culture. Has exceptional programs directed by individuals of above average expertise.
3. Neighboring churches: Minimum competition. They are either in insufficient number, have limited programs and leadership, or have had divisive fellowship problems.
4. People: Enthusiastic. Willing and able to work. Success oriented. Fellowship warm and continuing. Family and social life center around church.

#### Ten Steps For Church Growth

by Donald McGavran and Winfield C. Arn

1. Build a conscience concerning growth.
2. Identify needs and opportunities.
3. Establish faith goals.
4. Involve and train laity.
5. Rightly discern "the body."
6. Rightly discern the community.
7. Develop effective strategy.
8. Invest resources for growth.
9. Give priority to effective evangelism.
10. Use spiritual resources.

The above lists certainly add weight to my conviction that Woodlawn needs a continuing check-up and diagnostic study of our organization, philosophy of ministry and actual operations. We have enjoyed a gratifying measure of growth and good health in our first fifty years, but that growth will not continue automatically. With insights gained from our study of church growth principles and with our gracious God showing us the way, Woodlawn should be able to move ahead as a healthy, growing church. Which brings us to -

#### IV. What Prescription and Regimen Would a Church Growth Specialist Recommend for This Middle-Aged Church?

In The Radical Nature of Christianity Waldo J. Werning quotes Prof. Wagner as follows: "the indispensable condition for a growing church is that it must want to grow"<sup>24</sup> and then Werning goes on to lay down several principles and prerequisites for church growth:

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<sup>24</sup> Waldo J. Werning, The Radical Nature of Christianity - subtitled Church Growth Eyes Look at the Supernatural Mission of the Christian and the Church (South Pasadena, California: Mandate Press, 1975) p. 158

The hinge that swings the door of church growth is implicit faith in God and complete dependence on the Holy Spirit. This will lead to the "geometric progression" of 2 times 2 equals 4, times 2 equals 8, times 2 equals 16, times 2 equals 32, etc., etc., etc.

True church growth will find:

1. Your church will discover the abundant theological and Biblical foundations upon which church growth rests.
2. Your church will analyze its situation by clearing away the "flaws," getting at the facts, and considering the dynamics by which the church grows.
3. Your church will discover and apply trusted reproducible principles of growth, set goals, and establish priorities.
4. Your church will see new possibilities for growth in your unique environment.
5. Your church will formulate bold, exciting, and attainable growth plans with participants to help formulate and put into action.

Your church will grow by God's grace because members will want it to grow in obedience to God's will and because you are using strategy and methodology in making disciples. Then nongrowth will be called nongrowth, and growth will be accepted as a gift of God.<sup>25</sup>

In the preceding sections of this paper we've tried to analyze our situation at Woodlawn and get at the facts that pertain to our potential for church growth. We've attempted to pinpoint problem areas and challenges we'll be facing in the future. Although I won't presume to speak for all the members of our church, I am confident that most if not all of us in leadership positions at Woodlawn conform to Wagner's "indispensable condition for a growing church." We surely "want to grow!" We want to preach and teach the priceless Gospel of Jesus Christ to hundreds, yes thousands more than we are presently reaching. We want to expand our evangelistic outreach to the unchurched. We want to share the wonderful blessings of a Christ-centered, Bible-based elementary school education with many more children than the 100 who are currently being exposed to our Woodlawn Lutheran School each day.

In this final section of my paper I will lay out what we either are doing or planning to do to stimulate church growth at Woodlawn. I've tried to come up with a regimen or prescription, based on my findings and diagnosis in the previous sections, which I believe will contribute to the health and well-being of Woodlawn as we move through and beyond our 50th year. I've tried to imagine what would be the recommendations Woodlawn would receive if we were visited and carefully studied by church growth specialists like Donald McGavran, C. Peter Wagner, Robert Schuller, Winfield Arn, Lyle Schaller, Waldo Werning (from a

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 159

Lutheran perspective), et al. I believe, on the basis of their writings and my participation in Prof. Wagner's course and seminar this past February, that the aforementioned specialists would endorse the following actions as an appropriate regimen or prescription for Woodlawn:

#### A. Reorganization Experiment

In January 1980 Woodlawn is scheduled to begin an experiment that could have far-reaching effects on our growth. Our voters' assembly has approved the temporary adoption of a church organization system promoted, publicized, and promulgated by the Reverend Donald A. Abdon, a Lutheran (LC-MS) clergyman who conducts Parish Leadership Seminars around the country. His congregational organization chart can be found in the Appendix of this paper. Without going into exacting detail concerning his system, we would stress the following points which Abdon promotes and which makes us confident that this kind of reorganization will help Woodlawn's growth. Abdon insists that "Evangelism IS the mission of the church . . . evangelism IS the task of the church. All other aspects of church life and activity support this task and are the means for carrying out this task. . . By Biblical definition evangelism is the fundamental Christian mission of bringing the Gospel to all people, both within the church and outside it."<sup>26</sup>

In addition to Abdon's<sup>26</sup> prominent emphasis on evangelism, we also feel his organizational system will assist Woodlawn's growth because he stresses the need for lay ministry and parish fellowship and has boards which are responsible for those areas of the church. Abdon also offers some excellent, detailed job descriptions in his material and that is an area where Woodlawn has been very weak in the past. Michael Tucker inadvertently described Woodlawn's past performance in choosing leaders and then setting them adrift to carry out their duties with very little direction when he wrote as follows:

*That is not the way most churches choose leaders. The Christian Education Committee or Personnel Committee or Nominating Committee gathers and tries to find names to 'fill the slots.' Anyone who is regular in attendance, not involved in any overt sin that any committee members know about, and will take the job - can have it. Usually no training is offered, no job description is written, no challenge is issued. The available one is simply told that 'the Lord led' the committee to ask him to take the job. If he doesn't take it, no one else will. Besides, not much commitment is involved. 'Here is the manual produced by the denomination. Just read this and all your questions will be answered.'*

*The alternative to the above chaos is the time-consuming method of developing leaders. At Temple we began by writing job descriptions for every position in the church, using this format: name of the position, person to whom responsible, general responsibilities, specific responsibilities, qualifications, authority, and relationships. When we have an opening for a leadership position we spend time praying for God's person for that position. If no one seems to appear we must consider the possibility that God wants the position abolished.<sup>27</sup>*

<sup>26</sup> Donald A. Abdon, Training and Equipping the Saints, (no location given: Parish Leadership Seminar, Inc., 1975) p. 2 cf. also quotation in the Appendix.

<sup>27</sup> Michael R. Tucker, The Church That Dared To Change, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1975) pps. 25,26.

Tucker's reference above to the importance of utilizing job descriptions and the systematic training of lay leaders struck home forcefully for me. I've come to recognize that this is a key area where Woodlawn has been very weak. Under our reorganized system of lay leadership we're certain that this lack of direction will be corrected with detailed, specific job descriptions.

### B. Goals

Again and again in the Church Growth literature the importance of pragmatic goal-setting is stressed. It makes for accountability and gives leaders something out front by which they can measure progress or decline. Carefully thought out, realistic goals help to dispel the fog that McGavran refers to in his "magnum opus," Understanding Church Growth. McGavran describes this suffocating fog that often envelopes both entire mission fields and individual congregations as follows:

*A strange combination of factors keeps mission from perceiving church growth and mission-minded people from measuring what has occurred and planning for more. These factors render the phenomenon as invisible as if blotted out by a physical fog. Mission leaders and missionaries, surrounded by this opaqueness, carry on programs, do assigned work, raise budgets, administer departments, baptize converts, teach school-children, and recruit new missionaries. But only occasionally - when the cloud lifts, - do they glimpse briefly the state of church growth.<sup>28</sup>*

There's no question that good goals, practical, measurable and realistic, can disperse that immobilizing fog so eloquently described by McGavran. However, goal-setting is not as easy as it sounds. Surely it would be easy enough for me as Woodlawn's pastor to announce that next year we're going to add 25 new families to our church and 50 pupils to our parochial school. But those goals, which are not nearly far-fetched or unrealistic as they may sound to some of our members, are not likely to be realized unless the whole church buys into them, gets behind them, prays for their fulfillment, and generously contributes time, talent and treasures as their God-assigned part of the growth process. In the book that he co-authored with Donald McGavran, the well-known Church Growth consultant Win Arn has the following to say about goal-setting:

*Goals to be effective must be "owned" by all involved. For example, a pastor who tells his congregation, "Our goal for the next year is 400 house calls, 100 new families in the Sunday School, and 150 new church members" is establishing goals, but they are his goals, not necessarily those of the congregation. Unfortunately, what often happens in such a situation is the congregation will give verbal agreement to the goals, but will not involve themselves in their accomplishment. Why should they? They have not bought them. They do not "own" them.*

*As the weeks progress and the goals become more elusive, the pastor tends to "whip" the congregation into action. However, this "whipping" only brings alienation and tension, and soon the pastor is convinced he should leave for a more fruitful field.*

*There is a better way!*

*Goals must be "owned" and this "owning" takes place as the members*

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<sup>28</sup>Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970) p. 68

share in establishing these goals. In the case of "Suburban Church," the pastor should first establish a "climate" for growth, a climate created by helping his people see the reasons for, and opportunities of, growth. A next step would be to invite the various groups of the church to participate in a growth effort. After discussion and prayer each group would establish its faith-growth goals. The accumulated goals would represent the overall church-growth goals for that period. Recognition, encouragement, and progress reports would be an important part of the effort.

As the weeks progress, people would be working toward the accomplishing of the goals because the goals are theirs. They "own" them because they had a part in their establishment. The church grows, the people are happy as they see "their results," and the pastor feels God has called him to many years of rich harvest and service.<sup>29</sup>

On the subject of goals and how members of the church need to "buy" into them and come to "own" them, I enjoyed the description given in a lecture last February as to how Robert Schuller "sold" his "Crystal Cathedral" project to the members of his Garden Grove Community Church in Orange County, California. For several months Schuller stirred up the interest and curiosity of his people by repeatedly announcing "T.E. is coming!" More and more members began asking: "What's this T.E. that Rev. Schuller is talking and writing about?" When the curiosity-point was just right, Schuller rented the Anaheim Convention Center for a congregational dinner, including top-notch professional entertainment. Finally the magic moment arrived. Schuller mounted the podium and dramatically cried out: "T.E. is here! TERRA EXCAVARE! (Latin for "break ground!") At each member's table was a tiny golden spade. Schuller directed his people to unscrew the handle of their spades and the ball point pens that appeared were then used to write out pledges that made it possible for Schuller's \$14 million dollar glass edifice to become a reality and to rival Disneyland, Universal Studio tours, Knotts Berry Farm, and the Queen Mary in Long Beach as a must-see tourist attraction. I guess it's my ultra-conservative staid Lutheran background that makes me feel uneasy and suspicious of such gimmicks as Schuller's "T.E." campaign. To me it smacks of psychological manipulation and Hollywood hype. But it can't be denied that Schuller's communication schemes are successful. There's no question that thousands of people have "bought" Schuller's dream and see themselves as "co-owners" of his grandiose Crystal Cathedral.

Accordingly, on a much more modest scale - Schuller would surely scold me for my lack of possibility thinking - I am experimenting with a T.E. type approach, which I call N<sup>2</sup>O. For several months I've been putting little interest-grabbers in our weekly church bulletin, such as "N<sup>2</sup>O will be here before the snow flies." Interest has been building and on September 16, 1979, I plan to reveal the meaning of N<sup>2</sup>O in our regular Sunday services. In our 50th anniversary year Woodlawn decided to purchase and install a small Verlinden pipe organ at a cost of \$22,500 to replace our 30 year old electronic Hammond. This project was to be over and above our regular annual budget of \$155,585. Since we fell short of our \$150,000 budget in 1978, our goal of paying for the organ in

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<sup>29</sup> Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn, How To Grow A Church, (Glendale, California: Regal Books, G/L Publications, 1973) p. 157.

our 50th anniversary year seemed doubtful, if not out of the question. As we near the half-way point of the year we are near the half-way point in paying for the organ, but we started with about \$3,000 already in a new organ fund. At any rate, I'm reasonably certain that by September 16 our New Organ fund will need a push. On that Sunday all our singing will be a cappella; NO ORGAN will be used in order to remind our members how important a part the organ plays in our worship and to stimulate interest in our NEW ORGAN. Get it? - N<sup>2</sup>O. Special pledge cards will probably be handed out to all our families to make a final push to have the organ fully paid for by the close of 1979. We hope this N<sup>2</sup>O campaign or Schuller-inspired communication device or gimmick, if you want to call it that, will enable all our people to "buy into" this special fund-raising effort and make them feel that they are "co-owners" of our new organ, as they really are, with the understanding, of course, that we are God's workmanship and that our new organ, like every other good thing in our lives as Christians, is both a gift from Him and given by us back to Him from the wealth He has loaned to us to His praise and glory!

Without question, goal-setting must play a more prominent role at Woodlawn in the future if we are to enjoy good church growth. And those goals must not be imposed from above by the pastor or an oligarchy (rule by a few leaders), but must proceed from a broad consensus of a good cross section of the church membership representing all age groups and organizations.

#### C. Diagnostic Clinic

Woodlawn has been very generous and supportive in connection with their pastor's interest in continuing education and church growth studies. The church picked up the entire tab for my books and tuition when I spent six 3 week summer sessions at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin in pursuit of a Master of Sacred Theology degree. They have paid much of the expense connected with my Doctor of Ministry degree studies at Fuller Seminary. However, as helpful and stimulating as it may be for me personally to digest the material in the seminars and courses, Woodlawn will move ahead and enjoy church growth only if I succeed in passing along the gist of the insights and lessons I've learned at Fuller to Woodlawn's leaders and the majority of our members. I intend to do this in several ways. This paper, as I've already mentioned, will be duplicated and distributed to every family. It should show the members of Woodlawn how their pastor has been spending much of his spare time in the past several years.

I also plan to utilize some of the materials developed and produced by the department of Church Growth of the Fuller Evangelistic Association to conduct a church growth diagnostic clinic with about 20 of Woodlawn's key officers, the members of our Church Council and our Stewardship Committee. In an early May meeting we gave each leader a "Worker Analysis" report to fill out to help them detect the weakness I see in Woodlawn's work force, namely, not nearly enough Class II workers. I could describe that weakness to them, but it surely will sink in more emphatically as they work through that diagnostic tool to see for themselves the imbalance in Woodlawn's work force.

In the meantime I intend to delve more deeply into church growth studies. Next month, from June 4-8, I am scheduled to participate in a Church Growth Institute, coordinated by Dr. Waldo J. Werning and conducted at Concordia Theolo-

logical Seminary, a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod school at Fort Wayne, Indiana.. In August of 1981, God willing, I hope to go through the Church Growth II Seminar and Course with the intention of sharing the lessons I learn not only for the benefit and greater growth of Woodlawn, but also of our church body, the Wisconsin Synod, through my position as co-chairman of our synod's Commission on Evangelism. This is an extremely busy and exciting time in my life and I consider it a high privilege to learn as much as I can about the Church Growth School of Thought and then to share what I've learned both within Woodlawn and throughout the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

#### D. World Christians (WELS and Woodlawn)

Waldo Werning, just mentioned above, on the basis of Acts 1:8 describes what he calls "World Christians" as follows:

*Acts 1:8 proposes the 'World Christian' view that adopts church growth concepts of M-0, M-1, M-2, and M-3 mission activity. Jerusalem is M-0 and M-1. M-0 is internal growth (biological and spiritual). M-1 is the mission in our immediate community to friends and neighbors of our culture (expansion or growth in numbers; extension or formation of new congregations). Judea and Samaria are M-2, bridging to new cultures around us. 'Even to the remotest parts of the earth' is M-3, bridging to new language, racial, or ethnic groups by sending missionaries to distant areas. The local congregation is to be geared in such a way that all members are involved, through their prayers, witness, and gifts in M-0, M-1, M-2 and M-3. This involvement effectively makes them World Christians.<sup>30</sup>*

Surely it is our intention with the implementation of sound church growth principles and procedures to make more and more members of Woodlawn conscious of the joyous privilege that is theirs - to be World Christians, deeply involved in witnessing and mission work both through personal contacts and by means of prayer and financial support.

#### E. The Seven C's

Near the end of section III, part D of this paper we promised to disclose our plan to "warm up" Woodlawn, to increase the friendship and fellowship factor in our church. Although it is probably not the full answer, we believe that the Seven-C's system of lay ministry adopted by the voters of Woodlawn in March 1979, will be very helpful in this area of our church life. Sometimes it's hard to trace back where ideas came from, especially when one reads many books on one subject like church growth. However, I think our Seven-Cs idea may have come from Michael Tucker's use of elders. Tucker states:

*Our elders have no policy-making authority or responsibility. They simply minister to people. Each elder has twelve to fourteen family units under his care. He is responsible to minister to these people. He calls them regularly and shares prayer requests with them and asks for their request. He is available for counsel and advice. His group*

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<sup>30</sup> Waldo J. Werning, Vision and Strategy for Church Growth, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 23.

*of families meets only a few times per year as a group.*<sup>31</sup>

Our Seven-Cs Servants will function in ways similar to Tucker's elders. The seven Cs stand for Communities of Christian Concern - A Congregational Communication and Contact Corps. Instead of twelve or fourteen families we want to make our Seven-Cs Servants responsible for no more than eight to ten families. To cover the congregation we'll need about 25 servants, of whom we already have 14. The system shows promise of injecting more personal warmth within Woodlawn and improving communication. A preliminary and still tentative job description for our Seven Cs Servants can be found in the Appendix.

#### F. School and Staff

There are some church growth experts who seem to take a dim view and a negative attitude toward Christian day school education because they contend that it can sap the strength and resources of a church to the extent that it turns inward and pushes evangelistic outreach to the unchurched to a very low priority position. Surely there is that danger, both at Woodlawn and throughout our Wisconsin Synod which has a growing network of parochial schools on the elementary and high school level. The leaders of the WELS for some time have been concerned about maintaining what they call "Kingdom balance," so that one area of the Lord's Kingdom work does not grow and prosper to the detriment of another area. It would be foolish, for example, to build and staff impressive parochial schools and simultaneously to permit one's missions and evangelism programs to go into hibernation, because before long there would be neither enough pupils nor sufficient financial resources to keep the schools in operation. The solution, as in so many aspects of church life, is not an either-or, but rather the answer is to found with a balanced both-and.

In Woodlawn's case, not for a second would I suggest that we cut back on our Christian day school operation or even consider eliminating it in favor of evangelism outreach. For fifty years our parochial school has been one of Woodlawn's greatest strengths and a source of abundant blessings. What I am suggesting is that we expend more money and manpower to reach the unchurched people in our community to bring them and their children in contact with the priceless Gospel of Christ both in our church worship and in the daily Bible instruction offered in our Woodlawn Lutheran School.

My church growth studies have firmed up my conviction that Woodlawn should have at least one full-time staff person devoting all his time and attention to outreach, organizing and training a solid nucleus of Class II volunteer lay workers at Woodlawn for personal witnessing to the unchurched and following up prospects who visit our services or who are uncovered by continuous canvassing of our community and leaflet distributions in our area. A sample of a leaflet we distributed in May 1979 can be found in our Appendix packet. The leaders of Woodlawn seem to agree with my belief that such a staff person for evangelism is needed and it is likely that a move in this direction will come when our 1980 budget is drawn up with at least a part-time evangelism worker included.

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<sup>31</sup> Tucker, The Church That Dared To Change, p. 17



### G. Evangelism

I have found personal evangelism work to be the most difficult aspect of church life. Many laypeople feel inadequate and unprepared to witness; they are filled with fears: fear of the unknown, fear of being branded a fanatic, fear of being classified with the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, fear of making fools of themselves. And once a program of lay evangelism is established, such as Woodlawn was able to do several years ago, it is difficult to sustain the effort in spite of the gratifying experience Christian witnesses have when they share their faith and talk about their Savior. But in spite of the difficulties, I am convinced that, except perhaps for maintaining purity of doctrine and remaining true to the inspired, inerrant Holy Scriptures, this is the greatest challenge confronting our local Woodlawn church and our larger church body, the WELS today, the challenge of training and equipping our laity for personal witnessing and sharing the Gospel with the millions of unchurched Americans who live and work and play all around us.

In their Ten Steps for Church Growth, McGavran and Arn had the following to say about evangelism:

*Scripture teaches two kinds of evangelism. The first is attraction. The quality of believers' lives is such that people are drawn to the church. Many times movements to Christ develop because non-Christians see the attractive quality of life in believers. As responsible members of the church radiate the joy of Christ and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, people are attracted.*

*The second kind of evangelism is proclamation. The Son of man came to seek and to save; the seventy were sent forth to tell; the Apostle Paul proclaimed the Gospel. Proclamation is an important type of Biblical evangelism.*

*A caution must be voiced in regard to evangelism by attraction. Some churches are so friendly, warm, and loving that people are attracted to them rather than to Christ. Christians have their treasures in earthen vessels. Christ is our treasure; we are clay pots. We proclaim not ourselves but Christ. No matter how good we are, we are still earthen vessels. We should be proclaiming the treasure in the earthen vessels, that is, Christ in us, the hope of glory.*

*Remember too that while 'unintentional evangelism' (what evangelism by attraction essentially is) is good, it is limited. The only people we touch are those few with whom we are in close contact. We cannot be responsible members of the Body unless we practice 'intentional evangelism.' Our purpose must be to win those who are living without the treasure. <sup>32</sup>*

In another book which they co-authored and from which we've already quoted, How To Grow a Church, McGavran and Arn offer some practical suggestions as to how ministers should promote and practice evangelism in their congregations:

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<sup>32</sup> Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, Ten Steps for Church Growth, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), p. 55.

McGavran: The minister in our churches must not do the evangelism by himself. His duty is rather to train other Christians to do it. The minister by himself can do a rather small amount. He should not count on preaching such good sermons that he will pull in non-Christians to hear him. That isn't happening today and doesn't seem likely to happen. The minister must think about his sermon as perfecting those who are already Christians. He should become one who trains Christians to do evangelism. If he does not know how to win men and women, he should learn. The minister's first task is to grow skillful in personal evangelism, then take his people one by one, and let them learn by doing. The minister teaches evangelism or calls someone in who can teach it. My conviction is that somehow the ministry must lead the laity in evangelizing.

Arn: I had an exciting conversation a few days ago with a minister who had discovered how he can lead his laymen into evangelism. In the past he had taught many courses in evangelism, but the people never evangelized. Now he is using a reproduction method where he takes two laymen with him for a home visit. After these laymen are trained, they train other laymen. The minister is training others, not by telling them how, but by actually showing them how.<sup>33</sup>

At Woodlawn we have tried with modest success to train and equip some of our laypeople for witnessing. Much more needs to be done in this direction. Until just a few years ago I had not clearly understood that part of my pastoral responsibility. And since I received my seminary training under a much more paternalistic pastoral system, I find it difficult in my mid-forties to take precious time to train our laypeople for ministry and evangelism instead of doing it for them. Or most often, certain things simply are not done at all. With our new Board of Evangelism we hope to give this aspect of church work the high priority it deserves.

#### H. Possibility Thinking

Although I vehemently disagree with the fabled Robert Schuller of Crystal Cathedral fame in a number of key points, such as holding a solid uncompromising Scriptural doctrinal position and the question of steering clear of controversy in the pulpit, something I cannot do in good conscience when a text from God's Word calls for an uncompromising condemnation of specific sins, such as homosexuality and wholesale abortion on demand, still Schuller has some valuable lessons to teach me and other members of Woodlawn about the deadening effect of negativism and what he calls "impossibility thinking." Especially when budget deficits become commonplace we are tempted to retrench, to shy away from anything new, to have the knee jerk reaction - "we can't afford it; we're not meeting our current budget!", whenever any innovations are suggested. Indeed church growth surely will not take place at Woodlawn if our leaders would fit Schuller's following description of impossibility thinkers:

*Impossibility thinkers are people who immediately and instinctively*

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<sup>33</sup> Mc Gavran and Arn, How To Grow A Church, pps. 86, 87.

react to any positive suggestion with a sweeping assortment of reasons why it can't be done, or why it is a bad idea, or how someone else tried it and failed or (and this is usually their clinching argument) how much it will cost! They are people who suffer from a perilous mental malignancy I call the impossibility complex. They are problem imaginers, failure predictors, trouble visualizers, obstacle envisioners and exaggerated-cost estimators!

Their attitude produces doubt, stimulates fear and generates a mental climate of pessimism and fatigue. They are worry creators, optimism deflators, confidence squelchers. The end result? Positive ideas buried, dreams smashed and projects torpedoed.

The solution? Somehow, Protestantism must experience a revival of possibility thinking! The belief that we are co-workers with an Almighty God who can accomplish anything that would be a great thing for His cause in this world! <sup>34</sup>

If Woodlawn is to experience God-pleasing and God-powered church growth it must have an optimistic pastor and hundreds of confident laypeople who firmly and passionately believe that "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37) and who joyously exclaim with St. Paul: "I can do everything through him (Christ, who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13-NIV).

#### I. Parking

We've already mentioned Woodlawn's parking predicament several times in this paper. It seems like such a routine, unspiritual subject, hardly worth the attention we've devoted to it. However, Schuller, who classifies parking, indeed, surplus parking, as his #1 criterion for church growth, and Prof. Wagner have convinced me that this should be a high priority item. Indeed, there's no good reason for Woodlawn to have a parking problem. With almost three acres of property we have much greater potential for parking than we're presently utilizing. We can literally double our off-street parking spaces by relocating some of our playground equipment, by adding a modest amount of blacktop surfacing in several strategic spots, and by painting in directional lines and arrows to make maximum use of the available parking area. In the past, without lines, the available space was obviously underused. All this would cost several thousand dollars, but I will be recommending that it be put in our 1980 budget along with a generous amount of money allocated for snow removal so that our larger parking area will give maximum service even in the snow-clogged winter months. If this is done we should have, along with our on street parking, surplus parking space on most Sundays.

#### J. Pastoral Leadership

A study like the one we're carrying on for this paper causes a pastor to do considerable soul-searching and self-analysis. It has helped me recognize some of my God-given strengths and gifts, but it also exposes numerous areas where my ministry at Woodlawn has been weak and faltering. That's why I can

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<sup>34</sup>Robert H. Schuller, Your Church Has Real Possibilities, (Glendale, California: Regal Books Division, G/L. Publications, 1974) p. 47.

readily identify with the confession of a Rev. Aaron Jaeger of Illinois who was interviewed by Bernard and Marjorie Palmer for their book, How Churches Grow. Jaeger stated:

*'I knew I was weak in the area of administration', he said, 'so I began to study secular books on management. I learned how to select people for certain responsibilities and how to delegate authority. I used to be one of those guys who had to run everything. I tried to make every decision for every group in the church. And I had my share of problems because of it. Now we've got more harmony than I've ever had in a church I've served, and things are going forward better than ever. There may not be any connection between the two, but I'm convinced. there is.'*

*In short, Jaeger learned to be a leader. Any pastor who lacks such skills can do the same. If you would have an exploding church, it is imperative that you become a leader.*<sup>35</sup>

Jaeger's confession is one I also must make. I too am weak in administration and the delegating of authority. I too used to define pastoral leadership as my trying to run everything. This not only was hard and taxing on me and my family, but it also robbed Woodlawn's laity of ministry opportunities. I have come to recognize that many things that I've spent large amounts of time and effort on at Woodlawn can be done as well, and sometimes even better, by capable, consecrated Christian laypeople who are eager to serve their Savior. A case in point is Woodlawn's recent leaflet distribution in our surrounding area. I spent very little time on that effort. It was turned over to our Stewardship Committee and their capable chairman, Lionel Ames, who took it from there and did an excellent job with only minimal input and direction from me. Mr. Ames, incidentally, is responsible for drawing up the membership and attendance graphs that appear in the Appendix of this paper.

On this subject of pastoral leadership Dan Baumann adds an appropriate note of caution. When you read book after book about so-called "super" pastors who have managed to build up churches with thousands of members by means of a dynamic personality, a powerful preaching style, superior teaching ability, well-oiled organizational structure, or other spectacular tools or skills, there is a strong temptation to ape these masters, to make yourself over in their image. Thus Baumann's warning is very fitting:

*One of life's greatest temptations is to emulate successful people. In part, this is fine. It may cause you to stretch. If, however, it creates a pathological dissatisfaction with yourself, then it is unfortunate. God's will for you is still to be you! However, be the best you possible; that is what faithfulness is all about.*

The goal in church life is not to parrot Falwell's superaggressive leadership, Kennedy's superb neighborhood evangelism, Swindoll's teaching style, Getz's balance between instruction and fellowship, Schuller's possibility thinking, Stedman's 'body-life' service, Cosby's penetration of the community, or MacVittie's twofold commitment. Rather, it is to learn what you can from each. Let the overarching principles take root in your soul. Maybe God will provide a vision, consistent with your personality, that you can

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<sup>35</sup> Bernard and Marjorie Palmer, How Churches Grow, (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1976), p. 166.

implement. A superficial transporting of programs from someone else's church to yours is a hazardous practice which courts disaster for people and pastor alike. Ideas must soak through your personality and be thoroughly digested before they can be shared.

Some things are not for you. Do not feel guilty about that. Thank God for men and churches dissimilar from where you are; then move onto do the work God has uniquely equipped you to perform.<sup>36</sup>

That comment by Baumann was very helpful to me. It made me realize that Reuel Schulz is Reuel Schulz and that I should not try to be someone I'm not. I'm no Billy Graham, Stuart Briscoe (whose booming Elmbrook Community Church has burst forth in spectacular style in the past decade in our area) or Robert Schuller. God has surely given me some good gifts and I'll have plenty to do developing and using those gifts without trying to remake myself into a poor Wisconsin Synod version of Billy Graham or anyone else.

#### K. Luther's View of the Ministry

As a Lutheran pastor I believe the best way to bring this paper to a fitting close would be to draw some words of wisdom from the great Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, which he in turn derived from his diligent, painstaking study of the Holy Scriptures. Luther obviously knew nothing about the homogeneous unit principle, sociological strangulation, koinonitis, the need for surplus parking - unless there was a traffic jam of donkey carts outside the church at Wittenberg - or other late 20th century church growth principles and procedures discovered and developed by men like McGavran and Wagner, but Luther lived in and with the Word so his comments on the subject of the pastoral ministry remain right-up-to-date as timeless truth also for modern American ministers like myself who want to do everything possible to facilitate growth in the church.

For example, Luther has these words of warning for ministers who may get the big head if church growth occurs in their churches, as if their genius brought it about:

*The Gospel is not delivered unto us that we should thereby seek our own praise and glory and that people should praise us who are its ministers, but that the benefit and honor of Christ may be glorified and the Father be praised in the mercy He renders us in Christ, His Son, whom He has delivered for us all and in whom He has given us all things. Therefore the Gospel is a doctrine in which we should by no means seek our own glory. The Gospel places heavenly and eternal things before us, things which are not our own, which we have neither made nor merited. . . . Therefore he who seeks his own glory in the Gospel speaks of himself, but he who speaks of himself is a liar, and there is unrighteousness in him. On the other hand, he who seeks the glory of Him who sent him is true and there is no unrighteousness in him (John 7:18). . . . From these considerations we are able to understand that God, in His special grace, places the cross and various afflictions on the teachers of the Gospel for their own benefit and for the benefit of the people. In no other way could He suppress and knock down the beast called vainglory.<sup>37</sup>*

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<sup>36</sup>Dan Baumann, All Originality Makes a Dull Church, (Santa Ana, California: Vision House Publishers, 1976) pps. 120,121.

<sup>37</sup>Ewald M. Plass, compiler, What Luther Says, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959) 3 volume anthology. This quotation from Vol. II, #2946, pps. 937, 938.

Indeed, Luther held a high view of the ministry. In 1530 he addressed himself to some parents, praising the work of a minister, because he wanted those parents to prepare their sons for that high office. Luther said:

*... Figure it out for yourself. Whatever benefit a good ministry and pastoral care produce, your son, who faithfully administers this office certainly also produces. Daily many souls are instructed, converted, and baptized by him; they are brought to Christ, are saved and redeemed from sin, death, hell, and the devil; and through Him they come to eternal righteousness, to eternal life, and to heaven.<sup>38</sup>*

Luther once penned the following prayer that can be found on the walls of hundreds, even thousands, of Lutheran vestries and has set the tone for the ministry of many Lutheran pastors:

*Lord God, Thou hast placed me in Thy church as a bishop and pastor. Thou seest how unfit I am to administer this great and difficult office. Had I hitherto been without help from Thee, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore I call on Thee. I gladly offer my mouth and heart to Thy service. I would teach the people and I myself would continue to learn. To this end I shall meditate diligently on Thy Word. Use me, dear Lord, as Thy instrument. Only do not forsake me; for if I were to continue alone, I would quickly ruin everything. Amen.<sup>39</sup>*

I also am very conscious that if I tried to continue alone, even with a library full of church growth books and a facile command of church growth principles, I too would quickly ruin everything. I recognize that there's so much more for me to learn from God's Word. And that the real author and producer of God-pleasing church growth is the Holy Spirit as He works through the Word which the members of Woodlawn and I are privileged to share with others.

#### CONCLUSION

In this paper we have determined that Woodlawn Evangelical Lutheran Church-School, a congregation connected with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, in its fiftieth year is enjoying reasonably good health! The West Allis community in which Woodlawn is located has some serious problems as a close-in, immediate near neighbor suburb of the City of Milwaukee. Its population is aging, with a disproportionate percentage of its people in the retired category and a closely-related serious shortage of affordable housing for young couples.

Nevertheless, the prognosis for Woodlawn is anything but gloomy. Woodlawn has many God-given strengths. Its people place a high value on Christian education for their children by means of our parochial school. Sound, ultra-conservative, Scripturally-faithful doctrinal standards dominate the preaching from the pulpit and the classroom teaching as well. The people are very loyal to the doctrinal position espoused by Woodlawn and the Synod of which it is a member.

Even without much emphasis on evangelistic outreach in its first five decades, Woodlawn has been blessed by the Lord with significant numerical growth that has put it in the top 5% of American churches. It is by no means a "superchurch", but

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., #2941, p. 936

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., #2903, p. 926

it has a solid nucleus of leaders and members to work with, not merely to fight off decline, but to aggressively move ahead to win more and more unchurched people for Christ from our immediate community and from the adjoining metropolitan area as well.

If we at Woodlawn have and maintain the fervent desire to grow, as we surely should, not for personal glory or self-aggrandizement, but for the sake of blood-bought souls who may be won for citizenship in Christ's Kingdom through our church and school, then Woodlawn should be enjoying even better health and God-directed success when our 75th or Centennial anniversary arrive A.D. 2004 and 2029, respectively. But it will take the application of tested and proven church growth principles and procedures and the placing of evangelism outreach in a much higher position of priority by both pastor and people. May the Lord motivate and enable all present and future members of Woodlawn to follow the prescriptions and abide by the regimen we've recommended in this paper as they have been drawn from Scripturally-faithful church growth studies and instructors!

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

# Church membership off 1 1/2%

Wisconsin's church and synagogue membership dropped 1 1/2% in 1978, the Wisconsin Conference of Churches has reported.

However, the ratio of church members to Wisconsin's population remains above the national average.

The total of all churchgoers in 1978 was 3,146,177. For 1977, it was 3,151,146. The 1978 total represented 67.62% of the state population. The national average is about 66%.

None of the denominational fluctuation percentages was spectacular except the Southern Baptist Churches, whose 6,919 members represent a rise of 28% from the 1977 figure. Southern Baptists are the largest non-Catholic group in the nation.

Roman Catholicism continued to claim the most adherents in the state, 1,549,120, or 49.24% of the church membership and 33.30% of the Wisconsin population. The four Wisconsin dioceses and the Milwaukee Archdiocese gained 8% over the 1977 figure.

Lutherans make up 30.36% of the state's religious population and 20.53% of the total state

population. The Lutheran total was 955,161 for 10 denominations, a gain of two-tenths of 1%.

Of these the American Lutheran Church is the largest, with 350,273; the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod is second, with 249,156; the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is third, with 221,177, and the Lutheran Church in America is fourth with 118,300. The rest of the Lutheran membership is divided among seven smaller bodies, the newest of which is the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, an offshoot of the Missouri Synod.

The third largest denomination in the state is the United Methodist, with 164,616 members, a drop of 7% from the 1977 total. They represent 5.23% of religious population and 3.54% of the state population.

The fourth largest is United Church of Christ, with 102,106 men, women and children, representing 3.25% of the religious population and 2.19% of the total population.

The others, in order, are Presbyterians, 48,241; Episcopalians, 30,530; Wisconsin General Baptist Convention, 31,500; Assemblies of God, 19,941; American Baptists, 18,133, and Congregationalists, 10,239.

The total of the Baptist "family," including 10 bodies, is 73,767.

Wisconsin's estimated Jewish population is 30,000, or .97% of the religious population and .66% of the state total.

The smallest body is Brethren in Christ, with one pastor, one congregation and 15 members in the state.

In the "miscellaneous" column — churches not affiliated with a denomination — are 230 congregations with 68,600 members.

Though the Roman Catholics have the largest population, the Lutheran bodies have the highest number of churches in the state. The 10 Lutheran denominations have 1,594 congregations, served by 1,853 pastors.

Roman Catholicism, however, has the largest number of clergy — 2,374. Of these, 1,560 priests serve 1,004 parishes. The statistical table does not include bodies like the Unification Church (Moonies), Children of God, Church of Scientology, Transcendental Meditation, Eckankar, Divine Light and Hare Krishna, which have sprung up in recent years.

MILWAUKEE SENTINEL

Religion News

Saturday

March 17, 1979



## West Allis Will Close 3 Schools

West Allis — The West Allis-West Milwaukee School Board voted Monday to close three elementary schools at the end of this year.

Pupils from the three schools — La Follette, 720 S. 92nd St.; McKinley, 1020 S. 72nd St., and Parkway, 2930 S. Root River Pkwy. — will be transferred to schools closest to their homes under the plan approved by the board.

The saving should be about \$313,000 a year, according to Dale Aleckson, director of business services for the district. He added that the district also would save \$83,000 from a bond fund established to repair McKinley School.

Only three teachers would lose their jobs as a result of the closing, officials said. The other teachers will be transferred to the elementary schools accepting the pupils from the closed schools.

Parents of pupils from McKinley and Parkway School had lobbied intensively to keep their schools open. But in the end, many board members felt the district's continuing enrollment declines led them to no other choice but to close some schools.

Enrollment in the district has plummeted from a peak of more than 14,000 students in the 1969-'70 school year to the present 10,000. Moreover, administrators have projected the enrollment to drop to a low of 6,932 students by the 1987-'88 school year if current birth trends continue.

The decision came after more than two years of studying the issue by board members, administrators and a citizen committee and a joint citizen-administrator committee led by Supt. Sam Castagna.

2/6/79  
Milwaukee Journal

# Integration Plan Again Defeated

By John Stevens  
of The Journal Staff

**West Allis** — For the third time in three years, the West Allis-West Milwaukee School Board has rejected a voluntary integration plan with the Milwaukee Public Schools.

The vote, which was 6 to 2, with board members LeRoy Herda and Paule Kolff favoring the plan, came as no surprise.

A year ago the board rejected a much weaker plan, which essentially would have involved changing the name of a vocational program in health careers that the district was already cooperating on with the Milwaukee Public Schools.

The vote turning down that less comprehensive plan was 6 to 4.

The plan proposed this year would have allowed a maximum of 25 minority pupils from Milwaukee, in first through sixth grades, to enroll in West Allis-West Milwaukee schools. It would also have provided that the same number of West Allis-West Milwaukee pupils, in the 10th through 12th grades, could enroll in Milwaukee Public Schools.

The plan was entirely voluntary; neither Milwaukee nor West Allis-West Milwaukee pupils would have been required to participate.

This year, while there was some public discussion, espe-

• Turn to Schools, page 8, col. 2

*Milwaukee Journal*  
4/5/79

# West Allis to Consider Room Tax

**West Allis** — Faced with rising costs and rising inflation, it is tough for a city to make a buck these days or, for that matter, even break even.

And with voter sentiment the way it is, any attempt to substantially raise property taxes is not exactly looked upon with a favorable eye, especially here with citywide elections only a year away.

So, it was almost inevitable that the city would begin to look for ways to keep the coffers filled without emptying the votes from an incumbent candidate's column.

Mayor Jack Barlich thinks he has found the way: a room tax.

The idea of the tax isn't new. Barlich said that Milwaukee, Wauwatosa and Glendale have such revenue raisers. A few months ago West Milwaukee approved the idea.

Barlich introduced the idea to the council Tuesday.

In a letter to the council, Barlich said that with 287 rooms in West Allis and a 75% occupancy rate, the city could raise about \$120,000 annually.

With a 50% occupancy rate, Barlich said, the city would still raise about \$50,000 per year.

Barlich emphasized that the tax would not be paid by the property owners in the city, and it would help stabilize taxes for the people least able to pay.

The council approved a motion authorizing the city attorney to draft an ordinance enacting the room tax for council introduction April 16.

*Milwaukee Journal*  
4/5/79

# Schools Integration Plan Again Defeated

From Page 1

cially at Plan Council meetings and at some School Board meetings, consideration was much more low keyed than it has been.

A few citizens spoke at the meeting in favor of the plan, but most comments came from opponents.

The reasons each side gave were the same as they had been: Opponents felt the plan would lead to a metropolitan school district, waste taxpayers' money on busing and not contribute to the goal of conserving saving energy.

Proponents said the plan would lead to increased understanding between the races, offer district students a chance to participate in the Milwaukee Public Schools'

specialty schools and perhaps even halt formation of a metropolitan district.

Board members, quite vocal in expressing their opinions during the final votes in past years, were unusually quiet this time.

# The Milwaukee Lutheran — March/Easter, 1979

## Study Reveals Why Church Dropouts Come Back

What makes a person who has been unchurched for five years or more decide to join again? This is the question Edward A. Rauff, Director of the Lutheran Council's Research and Information Center set out to find the answers to, in a project funded by the Aid Association for Lutherans and the Glenmary Research Center.

Prof. J. Russell Hale of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg recently wrote a book, "Who Are the Unchurched?" for which he gathered his material in six counties considered the most unchurched in the country. Their unchurched ranged from 50 per cent to 70 per cent of the population, while the national average is 40 per cent. Rauff used these same counties for his three-month follow-up study, because of their diversified nature, and added one of his own.

Polk County in Oregon is a rural area; Orange County, California is metropolitan; Ingham County in Michigan is college/metropolitan;

Waldo County in Maine is country Eastern; Boone County in West Virginia is poor and tough; Marion County in Alabama is unintegrated Southern White; and Sarasota County in Florida is

More than 100 people were interviewed personally, and in depth. They were people who had recently rejoined a church, and whose names were given to Rauff by their pastor. Rauff found out that while many mainline churches had few or no new members who had been unchurched, the evangelical churches had lots of them.

Rauff found that the answers for returning to a church differed widely in various counties, so he did not list them in any order.

A feeling of family responsibility was stated frequently. Parents concerned that their kids go to Sunday School, then get involved themselves. Couples go to a church-sponsored "marriage encounter" and find it so helpful that they decide the church itself can speak to them deeply.

Second is the experience of a personal crisis or loss, when people find themselves responsive to the church's message in a way that they are not when everything is going along swimmingly well.

Third, people influenced by those who lived Christian lives, often in a non-verbal witness. They saw a co-worker, a neighbor, a relative, a friend who was happy, able to cope a little bit better, who didn't fly off the handle and watched his language. One day they asked, "Why are you different?"

Another group was the result of organized evangelism — brought in by people who knocked on their doors.

Several said they found in the church "a living fellowship" — a place where they found an extended family. These were the lonely people who were seeking friends.

Then there were those who did not find God very real to them in prior years, but said, "When I went to this church they made God real for me."

Rauff said one of his greatest surprises was that the evangelical churches are consciously and unconsciously reaching unchurched people. Many of the mainline churches not only are not reaching unchurched people, but also don't seem to be trying.

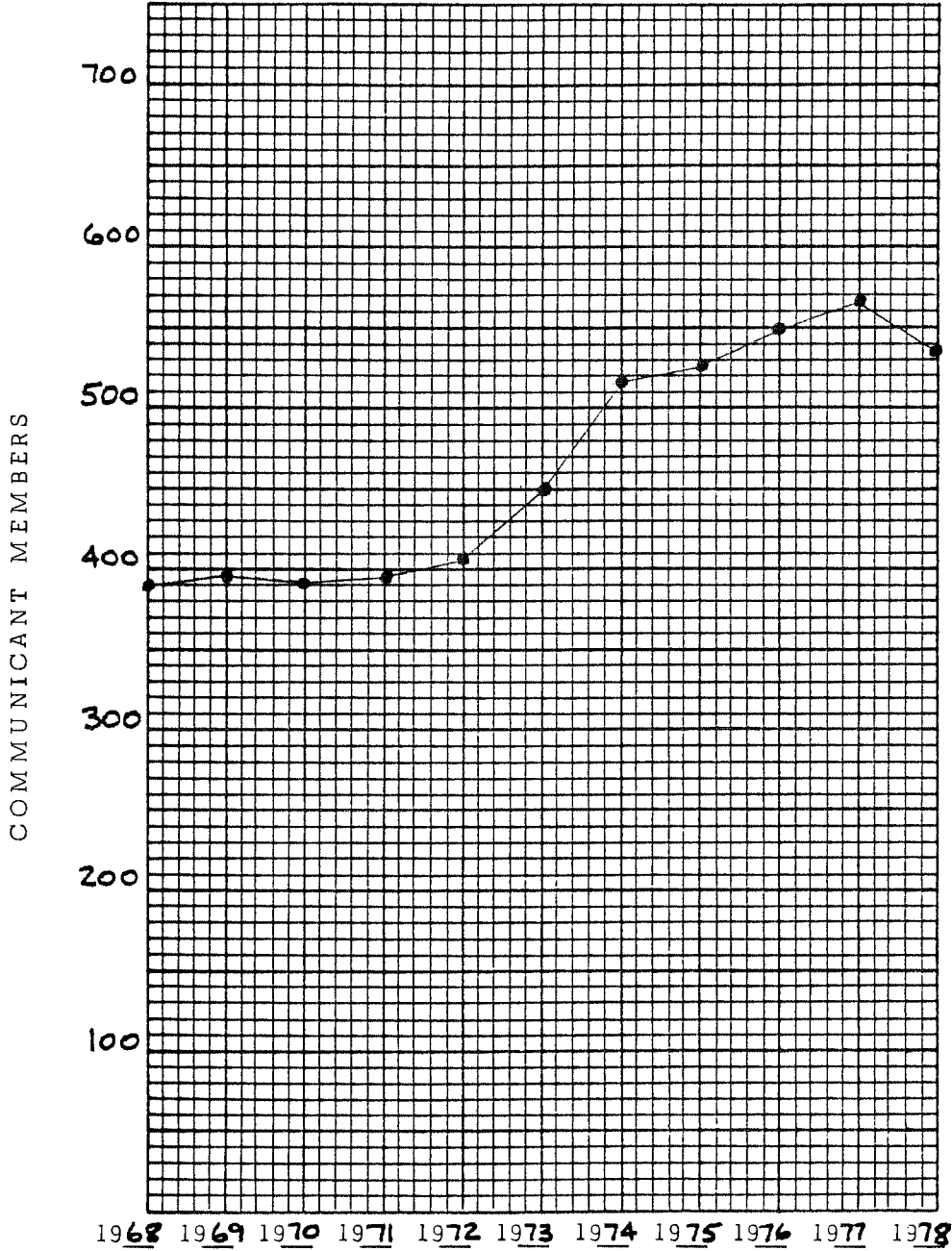
Another surprise was the absence of guilt in people while they were unchurched. The typical answer to this question, "How did you feel about yourself when you were outside the church?" was, "I never thought about it."

In summing up his experiences, Rauff wrote: "I sense a certain groping, a realization among people in mainline denominations, that they've — I don't want to say they've become spiritually bankrupt — used up their capital. They're coasting. I would hope they could recover what they are. They've got the hymns, the liturgy, the tradition, the history. But they've put who they are aside to follow other things that have been more important to them. There's absolutely no reason they cannot regear themselves to reach



COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
388	395	391	396	407	449	518	525	549	566	534

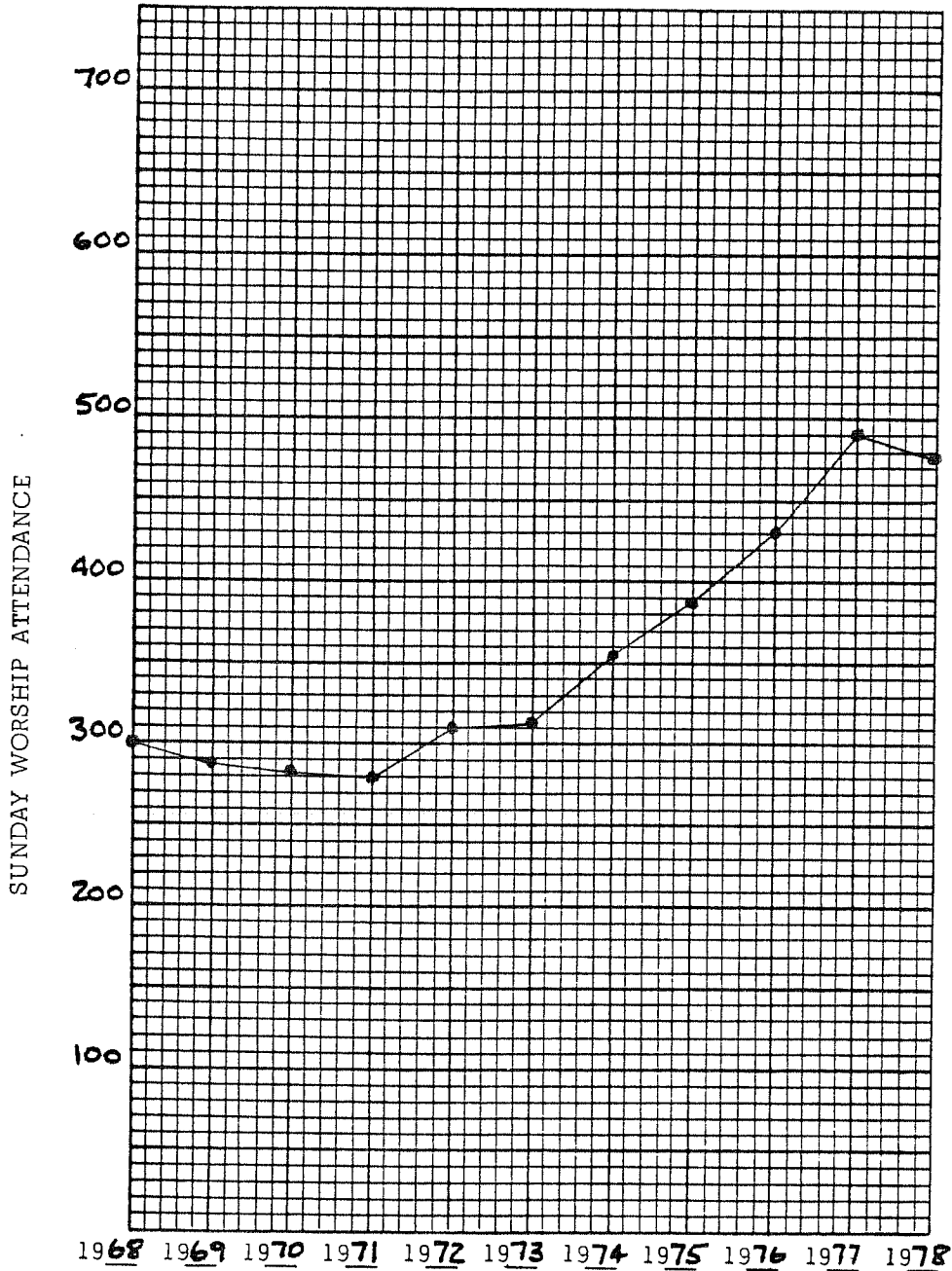


CALCULATED DECADAL GROWTH RATE

$$\begin{array}{cccccc}
 \underline{534} & - & \underline{395} & = & \underline{139} & \div & \underline{395} & \times 100 = & \boxed{35\%} \\
 \text{(ending} & & \text{(beginning} & & \text{(difference)} & & \text{(beginning} & & \text{(decadal rate} \\
 \text{year)} & & \text{year)} & & & & \text{year)} & & \text{of growth)}
 \end{array}$$

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
300	288	282	279	310	313	355	388	430	490	476

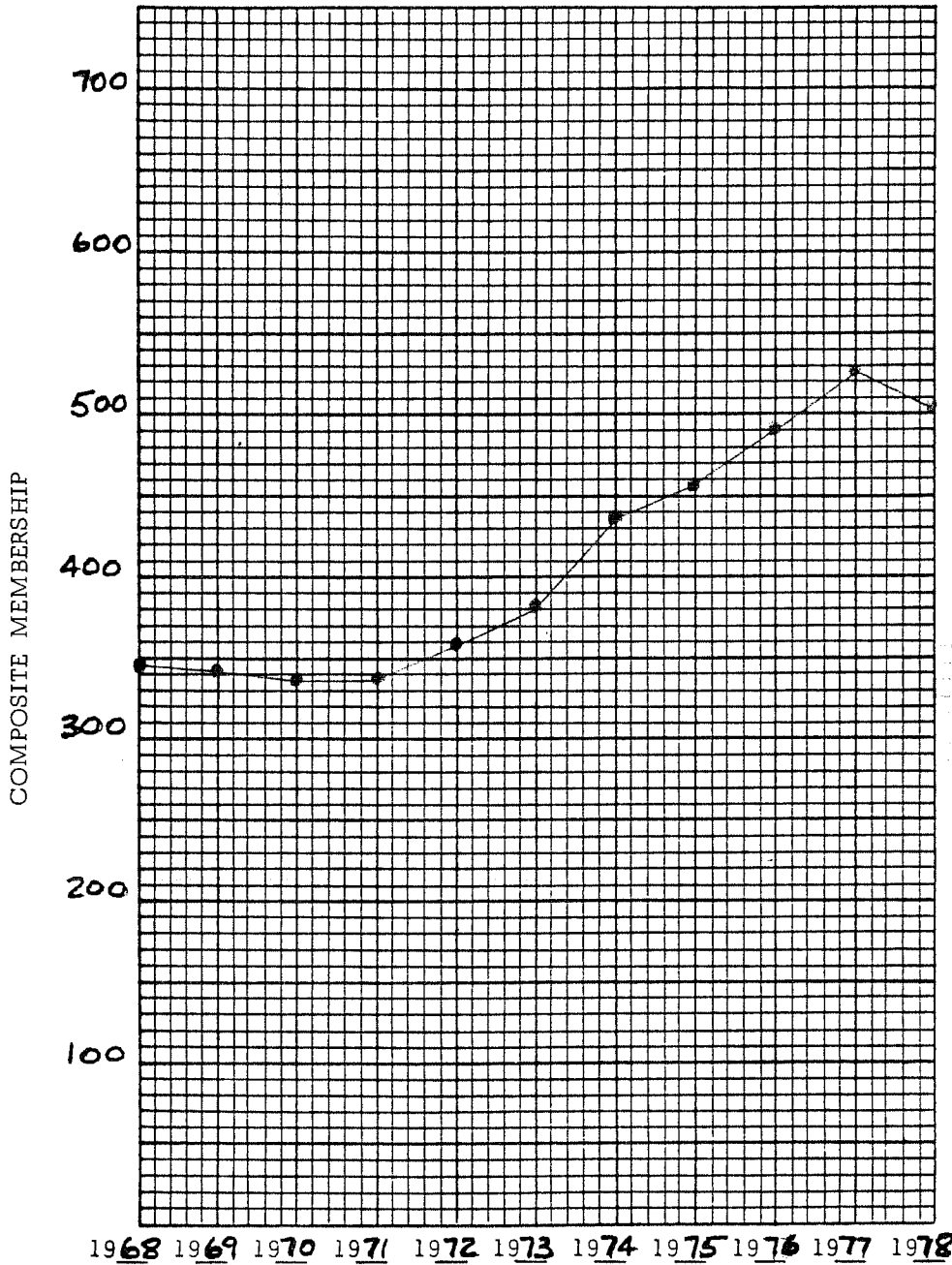


CALCULATED DECADAL GROWTH RATE

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \underline{476} & - & \underline{288} & = & \underline{188} & \div & \underline{288} & \times 100 = & \boxed{65\%} \\
 \text{(ending} & & \text{(beginning} & & \text{(difference)} & & \text{(beginning} & & \text{(decadal rate} \\
 \text{year)} & & \text{year)} & & & & \text{year)} & & \text{of growth)}
 \end{array}$$

COMPOSITE MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
344	342	337	338	359	381	437	457	490	528	505



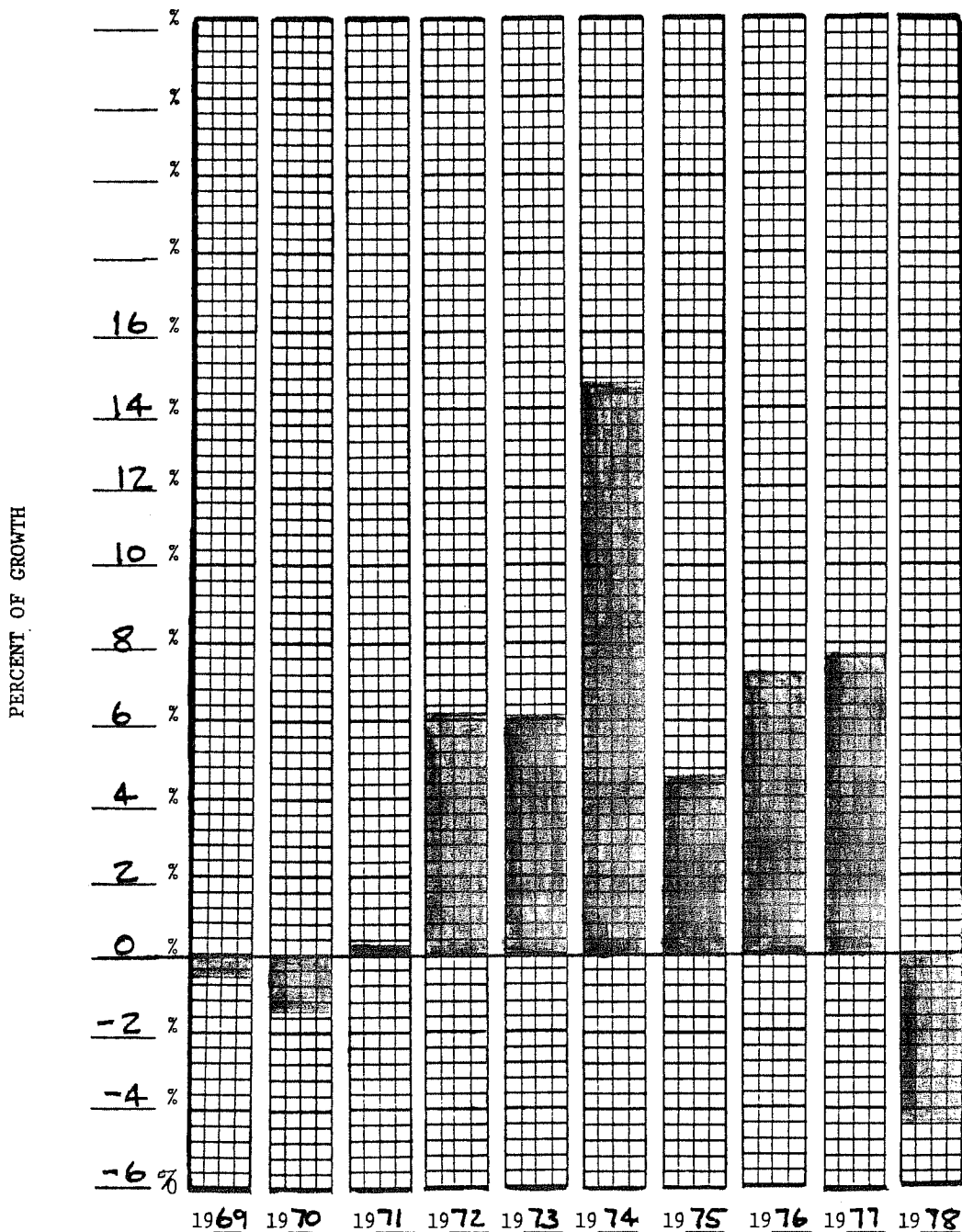
CALCULATED DECADAL GROWTH RATE

$$\frac{505 - 344}{344} \times 100 = 47\%$$

(ending year)      (beginning year)      (difference)      (beginning year)      (decadal rate of growth)

According to the "rule of thumb" on Page Two, the decadal growth rate of our church has been \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNUAL COMPOSITE GROWTH RATES



CALCULATE YOUR ANNUAL COMPOSITE GROWTH RATES.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \underline{342} & - & \underline{344} & = & \underline{-2} & \div & \underline{344} & \times & 100 & = & \boxed{-0.6\%} \\
 \text{(second} & & \text{(first} & & \text{(difference)} & & \text{(first} & & & & \text{(annual rate} \\
 \text{year)} & & \text{year)} & & & & \text{year)} & & & & \text{of growth)}
 \end{array}$$

1. Use the above formula with your composite membership for each year, thus giving you ten sets of figures.
2. Set your vertical percent scale on the left edge of the graph so that the entire range is included.
3. Mark off at the proper place in each column the percent growth rate for each year giving you ten vertical growth rate bars. For clearer visual effect, shade in each bar.
4. Is your annual growth rate increasing or decreasing? Why?



Would you (every communicant member of Woodlawn) please fill out this brief survey. It should take only a minute or two. It will help me in writing a paper about the make-up of our church. Please return it to the desk in the front office. You don't have to sign it. Deadline is March 25. Thanks!

Pastor Schulz

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY 247 RESPONSES

1. Sex: (94) Male (144) female

2. What age group do you fit in? (Please check one)

13-14 years	(1)	0.4	22-29 years	(30)	12.2	60-64 years	(14)	5.7
15-17 years	(14)	5.7	30-39 years	(47)	19.2	65-69 years	(15)	6.1
18-19 years	(8)	3.2	40-49 years	(35)	14.3	70-79 years	(21)	8.6
20-21 years	(10)	4.1	50-59 years	(48)	19.6	80-89 years	(2)	0.8
						90 - years	(0)	245 Total

3. What general employment group do you fit in? (Please check one)

Unskilled labor	(11)	4.4	White Collar	(28)	11.1	Homemaker	(64)	25.4
Semi-skilled labor	(15)	5.9	Professional	(55)	21.8	Other	(27)	10.7
Skilled labor	(21)	8.3	Retired	(31)	12.3			252 Total

4. What is your salary per year? (Please check one)

Less than \$5,000	(50)	28.5	\$10,000 to \$15,000	(32)	15.4	More than \$20,000	(18)	8.7
\$5,000 to \$10,000	(22)	10.6	\$15,000 to \$20,000	(46)	22.2	Retired on Social Security	(30)	14.5
								207 Total

5. What educational level did you achieve? (Circle last year completed)

	<u>Elementary</u>			<u>Jr. High</u>		<u>High Sch.</u>			<u>College</u>				<u>Grad. School</u>				
Gr.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	240
	1	2	1	20	6	9	12	89	16	18	17	32	10	3	3	1	Total
%	.4	.8	.4	8.3	2.5	3.7	5.0	37.1	6.7	7.5	7.1	13.3	4.2	1.3	1.3	0.4	

6. Approximately how far do you live from the church? (Please check one)

Less than 1 Mi.	(96)	39.3	4-6 Mi.	(40)	16.4	10-12 Mi.	(10)	4.1	20 or more	(1)	0.4
1-3 Mi.	(94)	38.5	7-9 Mi.	(2)	0.8	13-19 Mi.	(1)	0.4			244 Total

7. How many people in your immediate family?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	13	75	23	51	47	16	6	4	
235 Total	%	5.5	31.9	9.8	21.7	20.0	6.8	2.5	1.7

8. Marital status: (Please check one)

Married	(186)	75.9	Divorced	(4)	1.6
Widowed	(10)	4.1	Unmarried	(45)	18.4

9. Number of children at home & Ages.

Number of children	1	2	3	4	5	6
	25	40	37	8	4	2

Age	<u>Infant</u>	<u>1 yr.</u>	<u>1-1/2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
	10	6	5	10	20	12	16	8	13	9	14	16	6	10

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
	17	5	13	11	10	14	8	10	15	5	1			240 Total

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY (continued)

10. What type of residence do you live in? (Please check one)

Single Family dwelling (195) 78.9    Apartment (35) 14.2    Condominium (0)  
Mobile home (2) 0.8    Other (15) 6.1    247 Total

11. How did you come in contact with Woodlawn? (Please check one)

I was raised in the church (54)    I married a member of the church (18)  
Through a friend or neighbor (43)    I heard people talking about the church (10)  
other (115)    238 Total

12. How long have you been attending Woodlawn? (Please check one)

Less than 1 year (6) 6.9    2-3 years (17) 6.9    4-5 years (34) 13.8  
1-2 years (17) 6.9    3-4 years (12) 4.8    6-10 years (19) 7.7  
10-20 years (70) 28.3    over 20 years (72) 29.1    247 total

13. Which of the following do you attend on a regular basis (Check those that apply to you)

Morning worship (231)    Evening Worship (44)    Bible study (25)

14. What is the major reason you have kept coming to Woodlawn (Please check one)

People are friendly (32)    Convenient location (30)    It's always been my  
home church (50)  
Meaningful worship services (155)    Preaching program (40)    other (11)

# In My Opinion

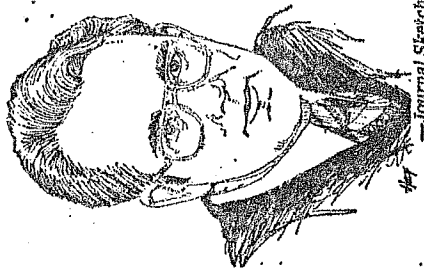
In the coming months Milwaukee will be inundated by a massive media blitz manned by experienced, polished professionals. The Billy Graham team has come to town! Every church will be contacted; every cleric will be expected to promote and participate in this long awaited crusade. The impression will be given that all Milwaukee area churches and clergy have been waiting for years with bated breath to jam the Arena and County Stadium to welcome Graham.

At the risk of incurring the wrath of a significant segment of our community, I feel constrained to express my opinion and reservations about the '79 crusade. Although I've watched Graham many times on TV, I don't plan to join the masses who most assuredly will fill the stadium. Nor will I urge my parishioners to attend, although some of them probably will jump at the chance to

hear an excellent, eloquent, dynamic speaker for a change.

My lack of enthusiasm for Graham's coming has to do with doctrine, the teachings of the Bible. Although he preaches powerful sermons that seem to be biblical and to glorify the name of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Savior of sinners, Graham makes some crucial compromises as part of the price of his popularity. In my opinion, he is a heterodox prophet, a confusing mixer of biblical truth and serious errors.

Indeed, Graham undermines a basic scriptural truth that is dear to the hearts of conservative Lutherans, who make up a sizable percentage of Milwaukee's Christian community. We believe that sinners are saved by God's grace, through God given faith in Christ alone, without any human works, with no contribution whatever by helpless, spiritually impotent sinners. This belief about sal-



Rev. J. Schulz

# Billy Graham's Forthcoming Crusade Fails to Ignite Fervor Among Some Milwaukeeans

vation is not only solidly biblical; it also gives all glory where it belongs, to the Triune God.

When Graham, at every service I've ever seen, coaxes and cajoles people to accept Christ, to make a decision for Christ, to get up from their seats and walk the aisle to surrender themselves to Jesus, he subverts this basic biblical truth of salvation by grace. He leads people to believe that they do after all have to make an indispensable contribution to their own conversion and salvation.

Although it may surprise those Protestants, some Lutherans among them, who hail Graham as a heroic defender of the truth, in this vital teaching of the sinner's conversion Graham has much more in common with Roman

Catholicism than with the orthodox Lutheran faith. In his book, "A Catholic Looks at Billy Graham," Jesuit scholar Father Charles W. Dullea came to the conclusion that "... on the question of faith, which for Graham is an Him."

*The Rev. Reuel J. Schulz of Milwaukee is pastor of Woodlawn Ev. Lutheran Church.*

Of course, it's a free country. Roman Catholics and Billy Graham can believe and preach what they wish. At the same time I appreciate the opportunity to share with readers of The Journal one of many reasons why some Milwaukee Christians will refuse to be manipulated or pressured by the upcoming flood of revivalistic propaganda and will not be boarded by Billy's much ballyhooed bandwagon.

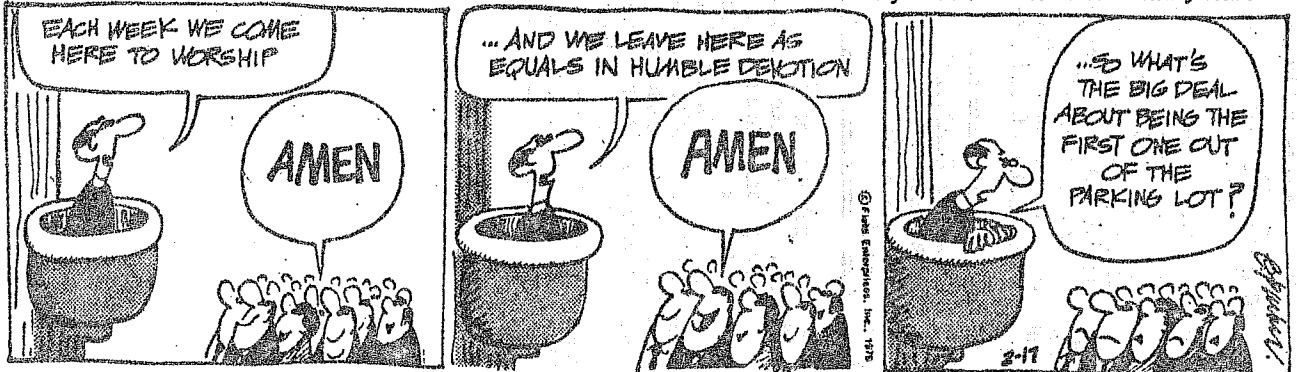
PASTOR REUEL J. SCHULTZ

Milwaukee Journal  
Oct. 31, 1978

Saturday, February 17, 1979

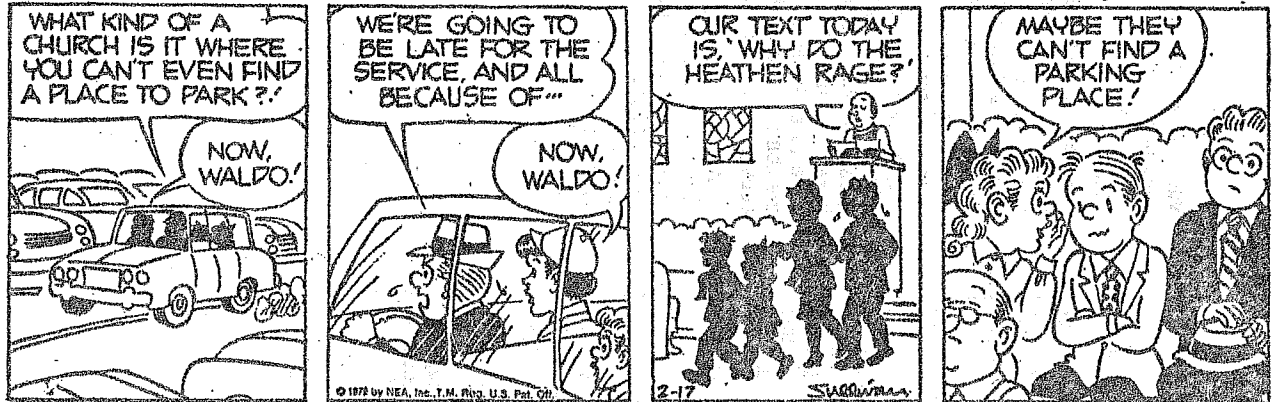
THE WIZARD OF ID

By Brant Parker and Johnny Hart



PRISCILLA'S POP

By Al Vermeer



## Madison Sets Snowfall Record

A snowfall of eight-tenths of an inch Friday gave Madison a new seasonal snowfall record.

Friday's snow gave the capital city a total of 76.1 inches for the 1978-'79 winter, breaking the old record set in 1885-'86 by two-tenths of an inch.

Milwaukee got an unmeasurable trace of snow Friday and has a season total of 82.9 inches, fifth highest on record. The Milwaukee record is 109.8 inches set in 1885-'86.

## The Weather

National Weather Service

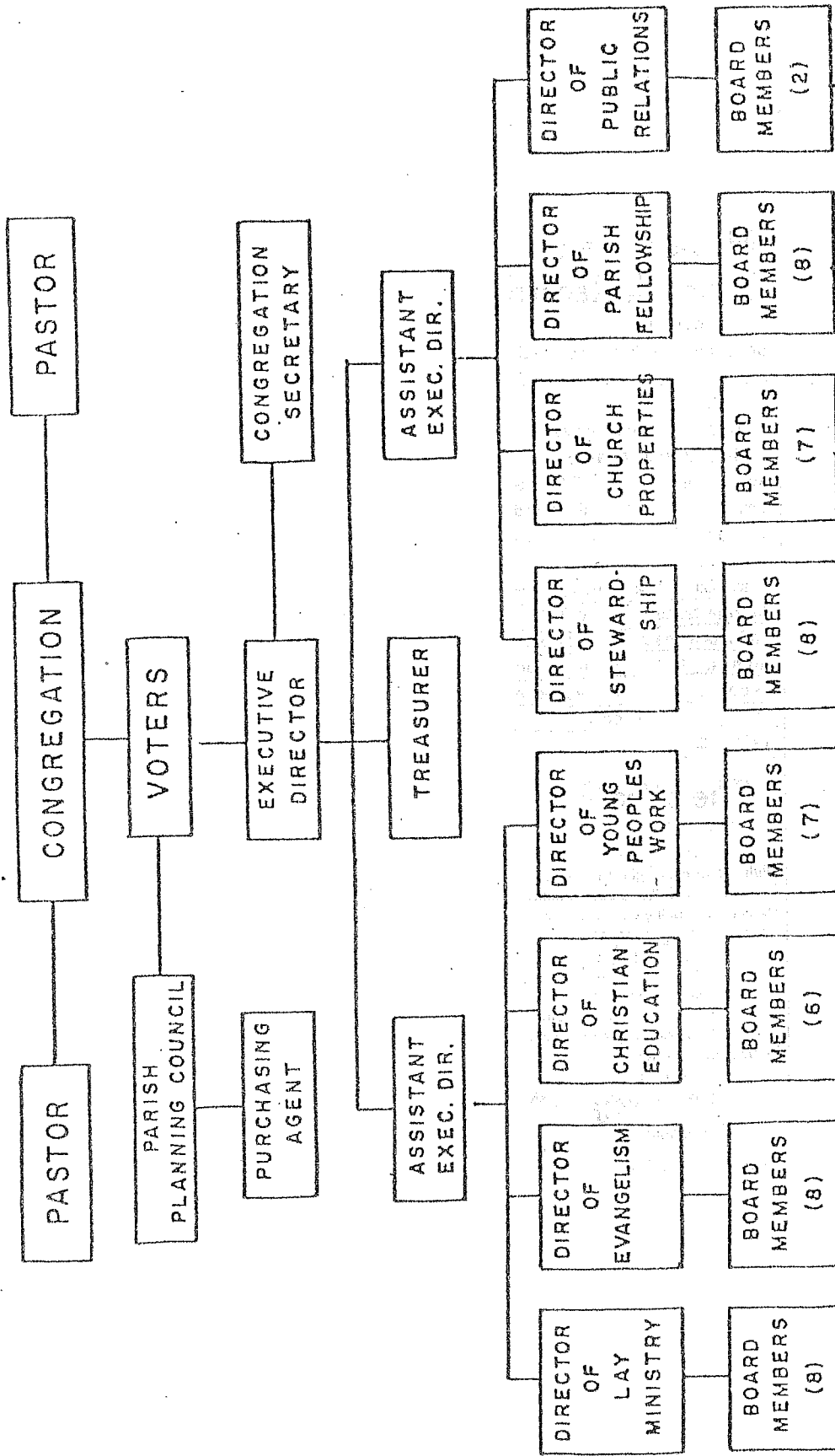
Milwaukee — Cloudy tonight, slight chance of light rain or snow late; low in mid-30s. Cloudy Sunday, chance for rain; high in upper 40s.

Hour	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Temp.	38	38	38	38	39	42	42	43

Wisconsin — Cloudy tonight and Sunday, chance of light rain south, snow north; lows tonight in the 30s; highs Sunday in the 40s.

Weather map, Page 10.

*A summary of  
Milwaukee's  
'78-'79 snowfall.*



THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO SPECIFIC BOARDS ARE GROUPED UNDER COORDINATORS ON EACH BOARD TO FORM A JOB DESCRIPTION FOR EACH COORDINATOR. THE COORDINATORS THUS BECOME FIELD SUPERVISORS IN IMPLEMENTING THE BOARD'S ASSIGNED TASKS.

THESIS:

EVANGELISM

IS

THE

MISSION

OF

THE

CHURCH

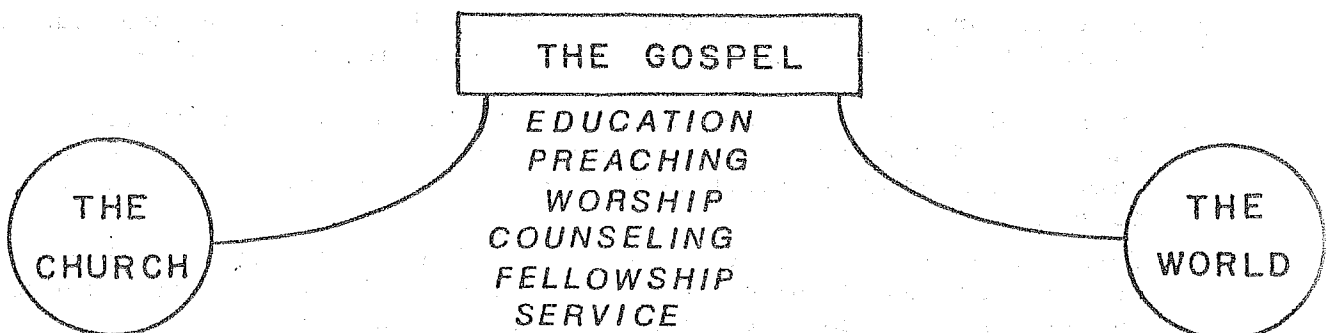
ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF CHURCH LIFE AND ACT-  
IVITY SUPPORT THAT TASK AND INTERRELATE  
WITH IT.

## EVANGELISM IS THE TASK

ALL OTHER TASKS AND EFFORTS  
IN THE CHURCH ARE

THE MEANS

FOR CARRYING OUT THAT TASK



## COMMUNITIES OF CHRISTIAN CONCERN

### Congregational Communication and Contact Corps

#### Description of Responsibilities for 7-C Servants

1. Serve as a lay minister for a group of 8-10 family units.
2. Convey Christian concern for the individuals and families under your care. (Remember birthdays, Easter & Christmas cards, weddings, baptisms.)
3. Cultivate a spirit of warm community and Christian fellowship in your group.
4. Keep informed by phone, group meetings in homes or at church, or by personal home visits concerning the cares and worries as well as the joys and recreational interests of the families in your unit.
5. In times of sickness and crisis express the love of Christ and your love and concern by keeping the pastor informed and by contact with the troubled and bereaved through mailing greeting (get-well) cards and devotional pamphlets, and wherever possible personal visitation.
6. Serve as a channel of communication and clarifier of congregational actions and decisions as well as a receiver of critical feedback and complaints.
7. Assist the stewardship committee in its annual efforts to inform the congregation about the proposed budget and to receive the members' commitments of their God-given time, talents, and financial treasures.
8. Encourage by word and personal example the participation of all members of your unit in weekly worship, frequent reception of Holy Communion, personal Bible reading and Bible study sessions offered at Woodlawn.
9. Check the information boxes (Woodlawn's main method of communication) assigned to the members in your unit every week and see to it that the material is picked up by the members, mailed out - at Woodlawn's expense - or delivered in person.
10. Attend meetings (bi-monthly or quarterly) of the 25-30 7-C servants as scheduled by the Pastor, Principal, and proposed Board of Lay Ministry.
11. Encourage parents to make good use of Woodlawn's Christian educational agencies: Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, Christian day school, Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Wisconsin Lutheran College.
12. Promote regular attendance at Woodlawn's bi-monthly voters' meetings, and be present in person if at all possible to keep well informed about Woodlawn's work and to contribute to the decision-making process in the congregation.
13. Be alert for potential leaders and church officers, pointing them out to current leaders and urging them to serve as nominees for office.
14. In case of congregational crisis requiring immediate attention (such as snow-clogged sidewalks, unexpected financial reverses, vandalized buildings, storm damage or fire) contact and convey the required communication to your units.
15. Refer difficult cases (marital break-ups, family conflict, school problems, sudden death, etc.) which you feel you're unqualified and unprepared to handle, to the pastor, principal, or congregational president.



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