

Chapter Four

Looking to AD 2015: 10,000 New Churches

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Jesus issued the challenging call, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field*” (Luke 10:2). It is a call to pray and a call to release more labourers into the harvest.

How many labourers are gathering the Master’s harvest? Is the Christian movement in Canada growing? Why are growing sections of the Church doing so and why are other segments in decline? Which denominations are growing and by what means? Perhaps most importantly, what can be done to disciple the nation as all denominations, missions and congregations give priority praying for and releasing labourers for church planting that the Lord may grant a great harvest?

The purpose of this chapter is to overview the effectiveness and great prospects of harvest force commissioned by the Lord of the harvest to be labourers in His vineyard.

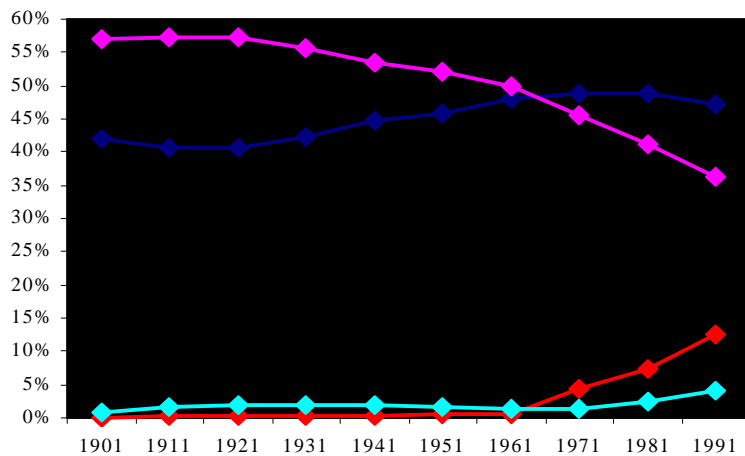
The Long View

Figure 8 depicts long-range trends in religious affiliation² in Canada, as a percentage of population, during the 20th century to 1991. In general terms, we see long-term trends of:

- ✍ Growth in Roman Catholicism affiliation, which overtook a declining Protestantism in the mid-sixties, peaking in 1981 and declining slightly during the last decade.
- ✍ A steady decline in Protestantism,³ increasing in seriousness in the 1960s and showing no sign of slowing.
- ✍ Rapid growth, beginning in the 1960s, in the percentage of Canadians claiming, “no religious affiliation.”
- ✍ An increase in the growth of other religions beginning in the 1970s.

Early in the century few Canadians held publicly to atheism or agnosticism and, at least nominally, identified with Christianity. Eastern religions began to arrive in the latter

Figure 8
Canadian Religious Affiliation (1901-1991)¹

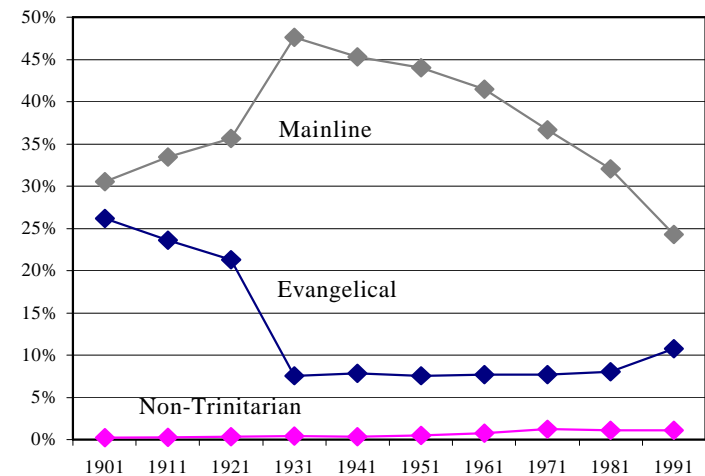


third of the century, building slowly. Secularism, encouraged by public policy, has shown strong increases toward the end of the century. Whatever else can be said for the 1960s, the decade heralded an era of change, with effects far beyond the perimeters of that decade.

A breakdown of the Protestant line of Figure 8 is depicted in Figure 9. Difficulties in offering a simple, accurate Protestant picture of the first third of the century arise due to the change of some mainline Protestant denominations from essentially evangelical convictions to more liberal views. The formation of the United Church in Canada in 1925 from streams of Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist sources appears somewhat awkwardly in the 1921-1931 decade.

Despite difficulties depicting the first third of the century, the trend from 1930 onward is clear. Mainline Protestantism continues to slide, the most painful decade coming most recently. Evangelical influence remains stable and low for most of the century, turning upward only in the final decade

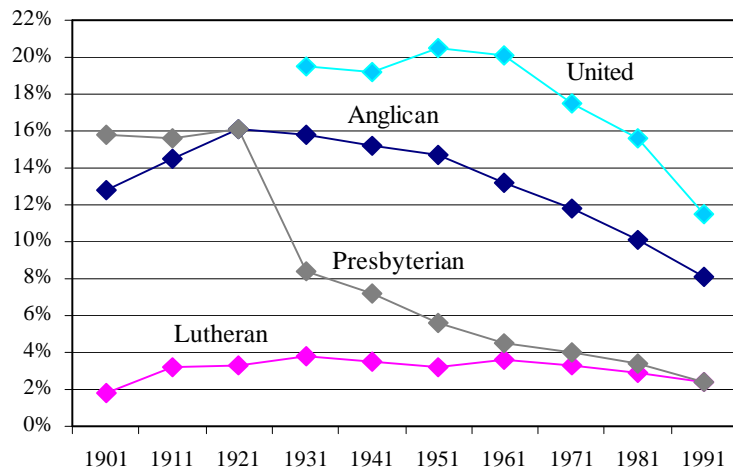
Figure 9
Canadian Protestant Affiliation (1901-1991)⁴



depicted. Figure 10 sheds further light on the fortunes of mainline Protestantism during the century.

The overall picture of long-term decline is a frustrating one for mainline Protestantism. This trend must be stopped if mainline Protestants are to re-engage our culture and figure significantly in the harvest force of the 21st century. The

Figure 10
Canadian Mainline Affiliation (1901-1991)⁵



United Church of Canada has declined most rapidly, followed by the Anglican Church and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Only the Lutheran tradition has maintained stability and some overall growth. It would appear that the larger the denomination, the more difficult and essential it is to reverse decline.⁶

A Closer Look at a Recent Decade

Table 16 shows deep cause for concern as Christians take stock of the harvest force available to disciple the people groups of Canada and beyond.

Table 16
Canadian Change in Religious Affiliation
(1981-1991)⁷

Affiliation	1981		1991		% Change	
	Number	%	Number	%	+	-
Total Population	24,083,495	100.0%	26,994,045	100.0%		
Catholic	11,402,605	47.3%	12,335,255	45.7%	1.6%	
Roman Catholic	11,210,390	46.5%	12,203,620	45.2%	1.3%	
Ukrainian Catholic	190,590	0.8%	128,390	0.5%	0.3%	
Other Catholic	1,630	0.0%	3,235	0.0%		
Eastern Orthodox	361,560	1.5%	387,395	1.4%	0.1%	
Protestant	9,914,580	41.2%	9,780,710	36.2%	5.0%	
United	3,758,015	15.6%	3,093,120	11.5%	4.1%	
Anglican	2,436,375	10.1%	2,188,115	8.1%	2.0%	
Presbyterian	812,105	3.4%	636,295	2.4%	1.0%	
Lutheran	702,905	2.9%	636,210	2.4%	0.5%	
Evangelicals	1,926,115	8.0%	2,907,925	10.8%	2.8%	
Non-Trinitarian Cults	260,930	1.1%	289,360	1.1%		
Jewish	296,425	1.2%	318,070	1.2%		
Eastern Non-Christian	305,890	1.3%	747,455	2.8%	1.5%	
Islam	98,160	0.4%	253,260	0.9%	0.5%	
Buddhist	51,955	0.2%	163,415	0.6%	0.4%	
Hindu	69,500	0.3%	157,015	0.6%	0.3%	
Sikh	67,710	0.3%	147,440	0.5%	0.2%	
Other Eastern Non-Christian	18,565	0.1%	26,320	0.1%		
Parareligious Groups	13,450	0.1%	28,155	0.1%		
No Affiliation	1,783,530	7.4%	3,386,365	12.5%	5.1%	

The percentage of Canadians willing to identify with Christianity declined 6.7% during the decade. While Roman Catholic affiliation declined 1.6% during the decade, mainline Protestant affiliation declined a deeply disturbing 7.6%. At the same time Canadians accepting “no religious affiliation” increased a dramatic 5.1%.

Since eastern religions grew 1.4% during the decade, presumably largely though immigration and birth, it is possible the growth of “no religious affiliation”⁸ may be

accounted for largely through defections from mainline Protestantism. Defections from mainline Protestantism are more likely than defections from Catholicism for two reasons. First, Catholicism declined far less than “no religious affiliation” grew. Secondly, Dean Kelley has demonstrated how conservative movements grow more effectively over time.⁹ Catholicism has tended to remain more conservative than mainline Protestantism, therefore the more liberal movement—mainline Protestantism—is more likely to sustain defections over time.

Table 17 summarizes recent trends in the number of mainline Protestant congregations in Canada.

Table 17
Mainline Protestant Congregations (1980-1995)

	1980	1985	1990	1995
Anglican Church in Canada	3,316	3,210	3,033	2,390
Evangelical Lutheran Church ¹⁰	658	648	659	650
Lutheran Church – Canada	356	360	346	325
Presbyterian Church in Canada	1,015	1,041	1,023	1,004
United Church of Canada	4,265	4,205	4,081	3,909

The primary encouragement for the Canadian harvest force was an “against-the-flow” growth of 2.8%, compared to overall population growth (within evangelical denominations)¹¹ The proportion of evangelical denominational growth from biological and conversion growth and the proportion of Biblically orthodox members defecting from more liberal mainline Protestant denominations is not currently known. It must be remembered that this 2.8% growth in the evangelical harvest force merely tempers the massive loss to the Body of Christ of 9.3%¹² during the decade to the deeply disturbing overall loss of 6.5%.

Who is Committed to Evangelism?

Canadians were asked in a 1996 Angus Reid poll to respond to the statement, “I feel it is very important to encourage non-Christians to become Christians.” This question must be recognized as vitally important, in that only those who respond positively can form the core of the labourers available for discipling the nation. The response of Canadians to this question by region, age group and denominational background is reflected in Figures 11, 12 and 13.¹³ Greater clarity of purpose in the Canadian harvest force is to be found in the Maritimes and Prairie provinces and in conservative Protestant denominations. Particularly disturbing, is the growing weakness in commitment to evangelism shown by age group among Canadians under 55 years of age, reflecting, in all likelihood, the post-modern agenda of pluralism and the denial of absolutes including the very concept of truth.

It is vital that Christian leaders emphasize the role of Christian apologetics in the Body of Christ to address this erosion of belief in the existence of truth in a cultural environment that denies all universal absolutes but tolerance.¹⁴ This, precisely, is our task in discipling the nation to Christ.

Figure 11
By Region

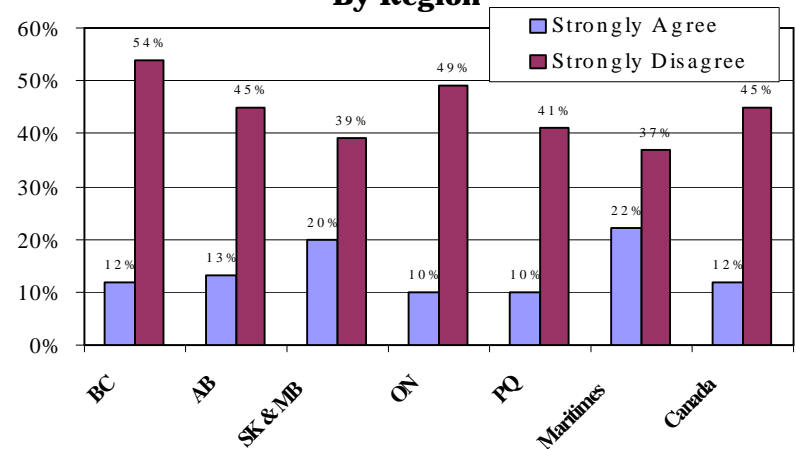


Figure 12
By Age

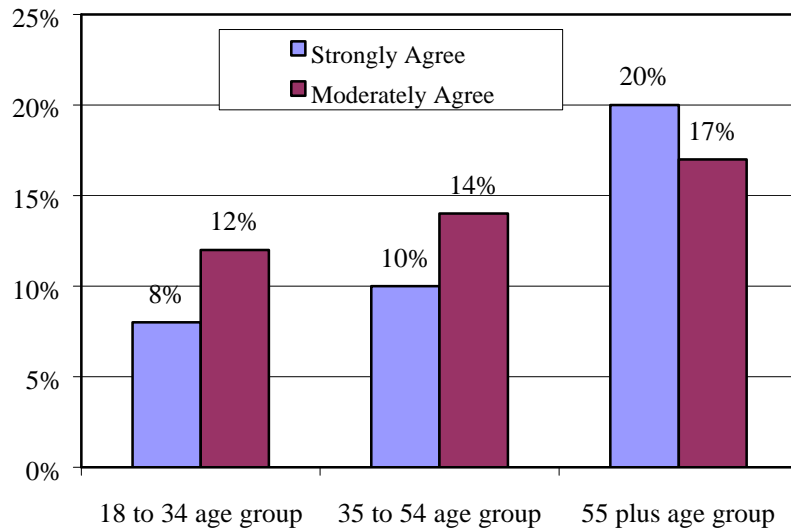
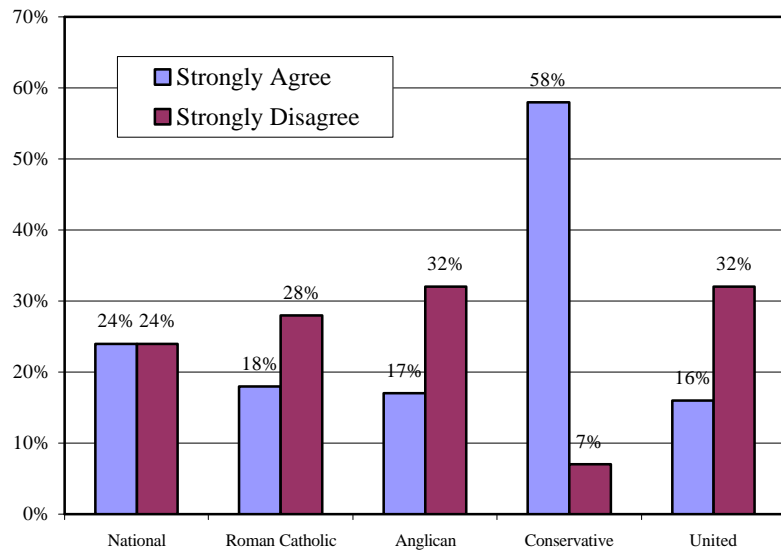


Figure 13
By Denominational Background



Renewal Groups Within Historic Traditions

Most mainline Protestant denominations are benefiting from Biblically orthodox groups working to bring this renewal to their tradition from within. In the United Church of Canada, The National Alliance of Covenanting Congregations (NACC) represents 113 congregations.¹⁵ The Essentials Movement¹⁶ in the Anglican Church in Canada embraces both the Barnabas¹⁷ and Anglican Renewal¹⁸ Movements. In the Presbyterian Church in Canada the Renewal Fellowship¹⁹ encourages pastors sharing its vision, as does the Presbyterian and Reformed Renewal Ministries International.²⁰ Many Catholic charismatic prayer groups minister within the Roman Catholic Church, but support for these groups varies greatly by diocese and no coordinating body exists to encourage the movement nationally.

The strength of the NACC is its unique focus on renewing congregations per se, who in turn become members of the movement. Renewal groups in other traditions tend to focus on the membership of clergy, who in turn affect congregations. This renewing effect on congregations, however, may be lost when the congregation's pastor leaves, whereas the NACC's efforts to bring Biblical orthodoxy to congregations who become covenanting members is more likely to remain.

While the research team identifying church planting needs for evangelical congregations in Canada wishes to take into account Biblically orthodox congregations within mainline Protestantism in each census tract, only congregations evangelizing their community can be identified as meeting the need for Biblically orthodox congregations in a given community, compared to more mobile clergy. We invite all mainline renewal groups, in addition to clergy, to consider ways of drawing congregations into membership and ongoing renewal.

Recent Church Planting Trends by Tradition

Changes in religious affiliation depicted in Table 16 are reflected in Table 18 and suggest a linkage between church planting rates and changes in religious affiliation in Canada.

While a decline in denominational membership may be seen to account for decline in the number of congregations in some movements, it also appears the trend toward planting new churches in evangelical denominations accounts significantly for the growth of that movement. While some may argue changes in religious affiliation produce the need for new congregations, it is difficult to account for spontaneous upward changes in evangelical affiliation. It seems more realistic to view the growth in identification with evangelical denominations as a result of the evangelistic church planting efforts of those denominations.²²

Table 18
Organized Congregations in Canada by Tradition
(1989-1995)

Tradition:	1989	1995	AAGR
Evangelical	7,854	8,848	2.3%
Mainline	9,226	8,358	-2.1%
Roman Catholic	6,173	5,355	-2.6%
Orthodox	300 ²¹	439	unknown

Several Encouraging Indications

To summarize recent pertinent findings:

- ✍ While Canadian identification with Christendom declined dramatically between 1981 and 1991, evangelical affiliation grew 2.8% during that period as reported by Statistics Canada (see Table 16).

- ✍ Evangelical church planting rates stood at about 1.1% AAGR (1984-1994).²³
- ✍ Evangelical church planting rates appear to be rising to 2.3% AAGR (1990-1995) (see Table 17).

While the dates of these findings do not coincide so as to draw firm conclusions, indications are positive for the harvest force in Canada—while the culture is in decline, the Evangelical church is growing through church planting, and the rate of its growth appears to be on the rise. What is needed is more and greater effectiveness in evangelistic church planting to counter the drift of Canadian culture, as we disciple our nation.

Who Is Growing and Why?

Table 16 showed the evangelical movement alone, among Christian traditions, growing 2.8% during the 1981-1991 census period. While some denominations decline, others are growing. Why? What lessons can be learned from those movements currently most effective in planting new cells of believers throughout the land?

Let us break out the nine fastest-growing evangelical denominations for this period to see what we can learn. Table 19 shows the church planting rates of these nine denominations for the previous five and ten years.

Initial Observations

As we peruse the following list of growing denominations we observe:

- ✍ Both renewal movements and more conservative denominations can be found in the list of most rapidly growing denominations in approximately equal proportion.

Table 19
Nine Canadian Denominations
With the Highest Church Planting Rates

Denomination	Average Annual Church Planting Rate		Current Number of Congregations	
	AAGR ²⁴ 5 years	AAGR 10 years	Larger < 100	Smaller > 100
Apostolic Church of Pentecost	5.4%	1.3%	163	
Association of Vineyard Churches	17.5%	36.2%		44
Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists	4.6%	7.2%	124	
Christian & Missionary Alliance	2.3%	2.8%	378	
Church of God – Cleveland	3.8%	unknown	120	
Church of the Nazarene	1.6%	2.2%	190	
Evangelical Free Church	0.0%	2.9%	133	
Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada	1.4%	4.0%		58
Victory Christian Churches	33.3%	34.2%		38

- ✍ Smaller denominations tend to grow more rapidly than larger denominations. All denominations in Table 19 are under 200 congregations in size, with the exception of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.
- ✍ Newer denominations tend to grow more rapidly than older denominations. Victory Christian Churches and the Association of Vineyard Churches, with the highest growth rates, are relative newcomers, beginning their development in the 1980s.
- ✍ The multiplication of denominations may be as strategic to the discipling of the nation as church planting is strategic to the growth of individual denominations.

Why are These Denominations Growing?

We contacted leaders from each of these denominations for interviews regarding their experiences in church planting. The following reports come from these discussions. There are both practical insights and patterns for the wide variety of ways the Lord of the harvest is raising up new congregations.

The Apostolic Church of Pentecost (ACOP) has its roots in the Azusa Street Mission (Los Angeles) revival of 1906. The ACOP subsequently branched off of the Pentecostal Church of Canada in 1921. Largely a western movement, the denomination has been primarily rural, and subsequently closed a number of its congregations as Canadian rural towns dwindled with population migration to the cities.

The ACOP has been multiplying congregations at a net average rate of 5.4% annually during the last five years and set a goal in 1997 to increase that planting rate to 7.1% annually through 2010. To reach this goal each congregation will be challenged to daughter a new work at least every ten years.

The past 5.4% planting rate has been sustained without a nationally coordinated strategy or specific structure, according to moderator Gil Killam, largely because local churches and pastors have been growing in their awareness of the priority of outreach ministry. The role of district has been one of encouragement and some coordination of financial support, but 90% of church planting has been undertaken by mother churches giving birth to new outreach works—churches planting churches. In Calgary, for example, the Calgary Downtown Full Gospel congregation has planted seven daughter churches, and one of these daughters has entered into second-generation planting. The remaining 10% of church planting is district initiated and sponsored.

Nevertheless, further change in the mindset of pastors and leaders remains a major challenge to realizing the greater

harvest potential of the ACOP movement. Many pastors still think they do not have the skills to lead their congregation in birthing a new work. Many leaders are not aware that increasing the size of their existing congregation is, for most leaders, more difficult than birthing a new work. In addition, Rev. Killam is aware of a need to develop more effective strategies and leadership training resources.

Leadership for successful church planting has come largely from experienced staff members of local churches. Recent Bible school graduates are not as successful as church planters, generally speaking, perhaps due to lack of ministry experience.

The ACOP, in addition to church planting, has also seen a small number of previously independent congregations, particularly in the Maritimes and Ontario, turn to them for a denominational home.

In recent years church planting efforts have focused on western urban centres, largely among middleclass Anglo Baby Boomers. The ACOP has not been strong in ethnic planting historically, but change is in the wind as ethnic planting is receiving increasing priority.

The Association of Vineyard Churches began in Canada with a single congregation in 1985, growing to 44 congregations in 1996, an amazing annual average growth rate of 36.2% during the 1986-1996 decade.²⁵ As a young movement the Vineyard movement is known for its creativity and vigour. “Ninety percent of the Vineyard’s congregations have been brought into the movement through church planting,” indicates national director Gary Best, who also oversees the development of Vineyard churches in Asia. “There have been very few adoptions,” he states.

How is the Vineyard planting so effectively? Key to this growth is the commitment to church planting demonstrated by its leadership. Virtually all major functional leaders of

the movement are planting or have recently planted new churches. Gary Best, for example, planted a Vineyard in Langley, B.C., and has seen six new congregations birthed out of this congregation. The Vineyard regional leader for Alberta has planted three congregations in Edmonton and has plans to plant a total of six congregations. Deeper roots go back to John Wimber, Vineyard founder in the U.S., with church growth background at Fuller Seminary, who not only planted the Vineyard in Anaheim but has planted dozens of churches out of it over the last twenty years. “Like begets like,” points out Best.

As a result, church planting is in the genetic code of the Vineyard—“Our mission is to plant churches that plant churches,” says Best. In the organizational culture where high value is placed on small group experiences, a new believer may lead someone else to the Lord, lead their own small group within a year, be mentoring an apprentice leader and already be dreaming of the day that they can help plant a church. “Many Generation Xers want to be planters,” says Best, “many of them overseas.”

The movement also develops and draws entrepreneurs by fostering a pioneering culture. “We’re still able to take a fair number of risks as an organization,” states Best. “We send out people who are learning as they go. Sometimes it looks more like ready, fire, aim or even fire, fire, fire, but we have a corporate environment in which planters can thrive.” Despite being a risk-taking culture, the Vineyard’s rate of church planting success is high. Best cites only three failed plants out of a total of more than sixty over the past dozen years.

The Vineyard has an orientation toward younger people and the poor—and finds both groups very receptive to the Gospel. “There is a real spiritual hunger in Canada,” says Best, “albeit a spirituality often desiring to remain independent of the authority and structure of the established

church. Yet it's a starting point." Best sees changes in Canadian culture moving to revisit major components of the culture of the first century and says, "We're not afraid of that. History shows the Gospel competed well in that environment."

The Vineyard places high value on informal servanthood. "You bring down a lot of barriers by serving people," says Best. "We have preconceived images of who is open and who is not, but servants are not easily put aside." Servant-evangelism, as the approach has come to be known, is most effective when it's not organized, maintains Best. "Shovel a driveway. Clean windows. Not as an organization, but as individuals. Serving disarms people who misunderstand the Gospel." Best cites a recent example of a Vineyard youth group buying hookers' time to buy lunch, give flowers and share Christ's love.

The Vineyard has opted for minimal bureaucracy. "We are resisting the desire to create all the structures we think we need but which could strangle us," says Best. "Organization is not opposed to organism, but organization must remain submitted to the purposes of the organism." Best has been influenced by Roland Allan's *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*.

Several models of planting have been undertaken. Each approach has benefits and challenges. Pioneer planters are valued and encouraged, but not controlled. "We somewhat try to get out of their way and let them do it," says Best. "But pioneer planters are not often long term. You have to discern when to put in pastoral leaders and release the pioneer to plant again."

Another approach that has been used is one Best calls the "strawberry runner," in which 100 to 200 people are sent out to root a new fruit-bearing plant some distance away—still connected to the mother plant, but functionally autonomous. While this approach seems at first glance to be

a fast track to new plants, Best cautioned that they are still evaluating the longer-term benefits of such a strategy. "There is something brought out in a pastor in the process of gathering the first 100 people of a congregation that is missed when the core is readymade."

The Vineyard is flexible regarding formal education for its planters. While seminary is not required, the movement does highly value Biblical knowledge and functional leadership. Several means of moving toward the desired result are used. In some instances young leaders will be urged to take a year or two of formal schooling. All developing leaders are encouraged to read informally and take continuing education classes, as they are able. In addition, a two-year, part-time leadership growth program has been developed with emphasis on reading (leadership and church planting), interacting with experienced planters and being mentored in a local congregation. The primary purpose of the program is to develop self-directed leaders.

Church planting goals tend to be more commonly expressed in terms of mission, vision and qualitatively described desired results rather than numbers. The numerical portion of the goal is to see 200 congregations by the end of the year 2000. "That will be a stretch since the Toronto situation," says Best, "but we'll keep focused on our mission and see what God does."

The Vineyard Task Force for Church Planting remains purposely decentralized. The kinds of new congregations desired are defined and agreed upon. Then nine area directors, each overseeing from five to ten congregations (to keep mentoring relational) cast the vision, gather resources and encourage new plants in their development. Resources given to new plants include little finances—rather one congregation will give the new plant a worship leader, another a youth leader, etc.

Despite the Vineyard's success, Best doesn't consider himself an expert—"We don't really know what we're doing, but we're just doing it and learning as we go. We have a great love and appreciation for the whole Body of Christ in Canada and fully recognize that we are simply a small part of it. We simply want, within our limitations, to play that part as well as we can so the whole may be strengthened."

The Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists (CCSB) planted its first Canadian Church in 1953 and has since grown to 124 congregations in six regions across the country. Fifty percent of this growth has taken place in the last ten years. Between 1986 and 1996 the CCSB planted 131 new congregations, with 67 of these (51.1%²⁶) taking root, for a net average growth rate of 7.2% annually—the highest rate of an established intermediate-sized denomination in Canada during this period. These figures suggest broad seed sowing in new church starts to be key to the significant growth experienced by the CCSB.

Despite this achievement, the convention restructured in 1997 to further energize church planting efforts. Each district association—currently six across the nation—will now be led by “church planter catalysts,” whose role will be to mobilize church planters and to personally do church planting. They will also assemble necessary resources for the growth of the church through church planting. In addition, the services of a national church planting consultant are available to all associations.

Executive director Rev. Allan Schmidt does not perceive Canadians to be resistant to the Gospel. While animosity toward the Gospel is seen in public institutions such as media, government and education, Schmidt sees a real hunger for God in the hearts of average Canadians. “The issue is leadership,” says Schmidt, “if we had leadership we could plant a church anywhere in Canada—new communities, ethnic, rural.”

While 75% of church planters are seminary trained, the CCSB looks for ability rather than formal education, and actively seeks those with the gift and calling of gathering new believers among lay people.

The CCSB has developed church planter assessment processes to assist in identifying such leaders. Church planters are then linked with mentors for ongoing personal support. Regional groups of planters and mentors are gathered quarterly for prayer, sharing and mutual encouragement. The CCSB assists in the funding of local planters for up to a five-year phase-out period.

A wide range of church planting models have been utilized—ten may be identified—but increasingly the intentional “church planting systems” approaches pioneered by Bob Logan of Church Resource Ministries are being adapted and utilized with encouraging results. In most cases mother churches are sought out to sponsor new works, although supporting parent congregations may be many kilometers from the new planting site.

Rev. Schmidt expresses Southern Baptist attitudes toward goals in terms of trying to recognize what God wants to do next and cooperating with His agenda. Numeric goal setting does draw attention to the primary task. “But we want not only new churches, but Bible believing, soul winning, disciple making churches,” says Schmidt.

The main challenge to church planting in Canada is seen as its large geographic size and subsequent very real regionalism. Yet our segmented society also provides opportunities. Much of CCSB growth therefore has been within Canada's visible ethnic communities. Within Québec for instance, the majority of CCSB churches are Haitian, Arabic, Hispanic, etc. Work among francophone Québécois is slow. “Our focus is on finding native Québec sons for leadership,” says Schmidt. “We must intentionally plant Anglo and French churches as well as ethnic.”

Daughtering by established congregations is strongly encouraged, both for the sake of the Kingdom and the health of the mothering congregation. Observes Schmidt, “The congregation that gets preoccupied with itself will die. If it looks outward it grows. If you give the Gospel away, God’s blessing comes back.”

The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) established its first congregation in Canada in 1887 and became autonomous from its U.S. parent body in 1980. A primary core value of the C&MA stresses the connection between a deepening spiritual life in Christ and the resulting heart for evangelism and world mission of the believer. The C&MA had 378 congregations at the end of 1996. An annual average growth rate of 2.7% over the last decade makes it the fastest-growing large denomination²⁷ in Canada.

The primary reason for this growth record, according to Dr. Stuart Lightbody, vice-president for Canadian ministries, is, “we believe the best way to do evangelism is to do church planting.” Personal evangelism is stressed both in established congregations and in new church plants. A second reason for the growth of the C&MA in more recent years is that the global perspective of its historic missionary vision has enabled it to recognize the changing ethnic reality of Canada and respond quickly.

Historically, the C&MA has found its most responsive ground for planting churches in the Prairie provinces, Alberta in particular. More recently it is Toronto and Vancouver where church planting is being done among new Canadians.

The C&MA has been less effective among French speaking Québécois and First Nation peoples. They have responded to these areas of recognized weakness in several ways. By emphasizing the need for indigenous leadership the C&MA has identified an effective francophone district superintendent to develop its work in Québec and a native leader to head its

association of First Nations congregations. Further, at the invitation of the Québec district superintendent and consent of other leadership, the C&MA is sending to Québec those who will approach their task as bona fide, cross-culturally trained, language learning, lifetime missionaries to this largest of unreached people groups in North America.

Strong response to the cultural diversity of Canada’s people groups is also reflected in the formation of three national multi-cultural associations—Chinese, Vietnamese and Filipino—each with their own leadership structure. For 1998 three additional multi-cultural associations are being considered—Spanish, Korean and a yet unnamed association—that will coordinate ministry among Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic people groups.

In the Caucasian community church planting is most commonly done at the initiative of the district office or by the initiation of the local church “mother-daughter process.” Leadership for church planting comes from either seasoned pastors with a special interest or gift in church planting or from younger recent Bible college graduates. In the multi-cultural associations new churches are generally initiated by the associations themselves who see the need and approach the district when plans for the new work are already well developed. Due to a lack of seasoned multi-cultural pastors, leadership for these new works is more often recent Bible school graduates.

Finances for church planting are raised largely on a faith promise basis. Every C&MA church is required by its constitution to hold an annual missions conference. During these conferences congregational members are invited to make financial commitments to support global advance and Canadian ministries church planting ventures.

Goal setting has been a strong factor in C&MA church planting growth. In anticipation of the C&MA centennial in

1987, both the Canadian and U.S. bodies publicly covenanted to seek to double in size by that date, and both bodies achieved the challenging goal. The C&MA in Canada then formed its own “Plan 2000” to set the denomination’s direction to the year 2000. A key goal was to “plant culturally relevant evangelistic churches.” The C&MA is on track to reach 435 congregations by 2000. From 1987 to 1996 a net gain of 114 churches was achieved (127 new plants vs. 13 closures), 59 of these being multi-cultural. By mid- 1997 a net gain of seven congregations had been started, four of these being multi-cultural.

Dr. Lightbody identifies three ongoing challenges: the embracing of the C&MA primary core values by newcomers, additional finances to plant more churches and leadership for new churches, particularly non-Anglo multi-cultural church planters. We, like they, have great confidence the Lord of the harvest, who has given the C&MA movement such great blessings, will continue to provide grace and resources for the task of discipling the nation.

The Church of God (Cleveland) originated in Tennessee in 1887 and began its work in western Canada in 1957, Ontario in 1967 and Québec in 1972. The movement has seen its greatest growth since the mid-eighties, currently growing at 3.8% annually to 120 congregations.

Why is this movement growing so consistently? First, is a focus upon responsive peoples. Bishop Canute Blake believes, “God has a time and season in manifesting His power and grace in a specific ways. Therefore we need to be sensitive to what the Lord is saying and where the Lord is directing the casting of the net. At this time we must be sensitive to the cultural mix and diversity in Canada and not be afraid of it.”

Bishop Blake believes the people groups in Canada most responsive to the Gospel are those who have recently

immigrated. This is supported by the fact that ethnic and cultural churches have been growing best and are planting the most new churches with great diversity—Romanian, Jamaican, East Indian. Canadians value multi-culturalism, and the Church must realize the potential in this cultural value.

Second, is a practical focus on the power of prayer. The movement is looking for 300 intercessors to pray one hour daily for the harvest. Those committed to this calling are called “faith walkers”—partners in reaping the harvest.

A third key is goal setting by a leader who is a strong promoter of church planting. Bishop Blake, leading in a modified Episcopal polity, establishes church planting goals and appoints leaders for new plants. Between August 1994 and August 1996, a goal of ten new congregations for Ontario was set and achieved. Also, an overall goal of 10% membership increase was targeted—a mark successfully reached in each of the last three years! Currently 12 new plants are planned for the years 1996 to 1998—two Caucasian, a Slavic and an East Indian congregation have already been organized.

Financial support for church planting is not left to chance. Member congregations contribute 5% of local offerings to the support of the regional office, 5% to the national office and 5% to home and world missions. These funds in turn are used to support new and developing congregations. In addition, the Church of God denomination seeks 300 partners to seed \$10 a month into the church planting harvest.

Church of God church planting methodology favours the local church birthing, nurturing and supporting the new church with leadership, prayer and finances. Pioneer planting has shown mixed results. Tent-making planters, common in the past, are giving way to younger planters seeking more financial security.

Ensuring that newly planted churches have adequate ongoing support remains a challenge. Yet Bishop Blake would like to see every Church of God plant a new congregation to share in the support and reward of sowing into the great Canadian harvest!

The Church of the Nazarene established its first Canadian congregation in 1908 and grew to 190 congregations by 1995. The Church of the Nazarene has been multiplying congregations at an average annual rate of 2.2% during the 1985/1995 decade, slowing slightly to 1.6% annually during the second half of that period.

A recent study of the contribution of church planting to the overall growth of the movement has been revealing. National leadership reviewed the growth of the movement through congregations established before 1970, then the contribution of congregations planted between 1970 and 1995. The study showed 21% of current Nazarene members resulting directly from recent church plants. Further, 25% of worship attendance, 24% of Sunday School attendance and 23% of finances have resulted from recent church plants.

Mrs. Marjorie Osborne, coordinator of church growth for the Church of the Nazarene, credits the international “General Church” headquarters for keeping church planting continually before its people, particularly as a thrust for the urban and multi-cultural planting. She believes also that Nazarene pastors have become increasingly knowledgeable regarding church growth principles. “In the 1970s six plants were underway at any given point, in the 1980s 12 plants and in the 1990s you can find 24 plants underway at any one time across the country,” says Osborne. “We’re committed to planting churches.”

The Nazarenes have found responsiveness to the Gospel among Anglos in suburbia and among non-Anglos in Canada’s urban areas. Before 1985 most church plants were either

Anglo or French. In the 1990s, however, half of new church plants are among non-Anglo ethnic groups.

Haitian and Filipino groups in Québec currently appear most responsive. Lack of qualified French-born indigenous leadership hampers church planting in French Québec.

Nazarenes use many church planting methods, but a single umbrella concept provides the proven context for them all—planting in clusters. The “*Target Toronto*” project began 27 new outreaches in a three-year period. Osborne now believes clusters of about ten new plants in a given region to be optimal and is willing to work with other denominations rather than allow planters to work without the peer support benefits of planting in clusters. Cluster planting benefits church planter morale, provides interaction and practical ideas and offers the larger dream to which the established church will give more generously. Critical also to Nazarenes is that each new work in the cluster is sponsored by a local church in the district for prayer and practical support.

Leadership for new church development within the Nazarene movement may come from the ranks of clergy or lay leaders, with or without a completed seminary education. Appropriate spiritual gifts for planting are the primary criteria. This broadening of the potential selection pool for church planting is a major advantage over other denominations.

To identify lay leaders with church planting potential, the Nazarenes hold annual lay institutes in major centres across Canada. Lay people interested in church growth are invited with the expectation, expressed in advance, that some new work will be initiated as a result of the experience; e.g., an evangelistic Bible study, new church plant or other outreach. Basic theology, pastoral and evangelism skills are reviewed over eight weekends, spaced one month apart. Instructors for the institute are selected, at least in part, for their

evangelistic personal lifestyles. Of 30 participants at the first Institute in Toronto, seven went on to be full-time pastors, three of which went on to overseas mission fields in Albania and Kenya. Assessment centres are an alternative method used in conjunction with lay institutes.

Church planting goals set for *Target Toronto* shook up the Nazarene world. One of the values of the goal-setting process was to wake people up to the need for church planting, a desirable result even if the full goal was not achieved. On a national level superintendents currently set goals for their district and these are summed to become the national goal.

A church growth committee (10 elected district superintendents, pastors and lay people) work to stimulate church planting on the national level. Districts also have church extension committees.

Challenges remain. The desire to complete the Great Commission is not yet at the top of the list of denominational priorities at the grass roots level. One additional note of encouragement, however, is that Nazarene colleges, which had focused largely on training academics, are now refocusing to produce mission leaders in a world that has forgotten the eternal value of souls.

The Evangelical Free Church began its work in Canada in 1934, becoming autonomous from its U.S. parent body in 1984 on the 100th anniversary of the ministry of the Evangelical Free Church in America. The movement is now 136 congregations strong in Canada. The Free Church has been adding congregations between 1986 and 1996 at an annual rate of 2.9% per decade, slowing during the last five years.

Existing congregations from other traditions looking for an adoptive home have found the denomination's open and inclusive style appealing. While this growth is welcome, Dr. Charlie Worley, District Superintendent for the Lower Pacific

District, believes a much greater proportion of incoming congregational growth must result from church planting.

The Free Church has been finding Chinese immigrants and first-generation Chinese congregations most responsive to church planting, a fact that has contributed significantly to the denomination's growth rate.

Evangelistic church planting initiatives in Québec, however, have come from the Evangelical Free Church in America which, in 1987, commissioned a mission team cluster of four couples to begin work in the province. Four new congregations have been established since 1987, but birthing daughter congregations has been a challenge due to a lack of indigenous leadership. At present all Québec pastoral leadership remains expatriate.

Most church planting has taken place in the context of the mother-daughter model, usually initiated by a mother church. Leadership for new church plants frequently comes from the mother church, sometimes from the senior pastor personally. Seasoned pastors are preferred to new Bible school graduates as church planters, although mature lay persons may be selected to lead a new plant based upon experience.

President Rick Penner would like to see Free Church congregations multiply at a "double-in-a-decade" rate of 7.14% annually, while recognizing the denomination's need for a unified vision and strategy to move in this direction. There is the possibility that a part- or full-time national director of church planting may be commissioned in the next three to five years.

The denomination is reviewing other means of transforming its structure to serve the local church in fulfilling the Great Commission. One possibility includes moving to regional support, and equipping groups of 10 to 15 congregations coached by national staff portfolios in church planting, pastoral care and revitalization.

The mission of the Evangelical Free Church in Canada is to strengthen and expand in Canada. The challenge created by a denomination stressing local autonomy is that the local church has no formal accountability to the district or the district to national leadership. Leadership, therefore, must motivate by informal relational means rather than formal goal setting.

The Foursquare Gospel Church began its first work in Canada in 1927, growing to 30 congregations in 1981, when it was given autonomy from the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Today the movement has 58 congregations.

During the decade of 1986 to 1996, Foursquare congregations increased at an average rate of 4% annually. This rate has slowed to 1.4% annually during the past five years. Just over 50% of this growth has come through the development of new congregations, with the remaining coming through the adoption of existing congregations into the Foursquare movement.

The Foursquare movement is served by a modified Episcopal polity with a local church focus. President Tim Peterson views the role of the denomination simply as “empowering the local church and its laity for their ministry of personifying Christ in the community.”

Rev. Peterson prefers the term “birthing” to church planting. Birthing reflects the natural relational process of spiritual reproduction suggested in the Scriptural depiction of the Body of Christ as family. The normal expression of a Biblically healthy church is the birthing of new congregations just as naturally as is the birthing of children to a relationally healthy married couple. Intimacy with Christ motivates further spiritual reproduction.

“New works” (e.g., preaching points or other outreach ministries) are initiated by the local church. Some of these

develop to become self-conscious daughter congregations. When a daughter congregation becomes viable and reaches beyond itself in winning people to Christ, the national office recognizes it as a pioneer congregation. At a later stage of maturity the congregation is recognized as a Foursquare church.

Every new church, therefore, is connected to a mother church rather than to the national or regional office. The national office partners with and invests funds in a potential mother church which, in turn, invests in its daughter.

Most leadership for “new works” is raised up relationally in the local church family. Foursquare’s Pacific Life Bible College offers ministry training on campus and by video through its “Life Line” extension programs. A seminary degree is welcome but not required for ordination—leaving a wide leadership door open to an empowered laity in their mature “second career” stage of life. The local pastor recommends a mature lay person to lead a daughter church.

Calgary Pastor Arnie ter Mors, coordinator of church planting, is challenging the Foursquare movement to increase its growth rate to an inspiring 12% annually. The church planting representative of each regional unit (of about ten congregations) in turn encourages each local church to participate in giving birth to “new works” regularly and hopefully to begin a daughter church, on average, every seven years.

Even if the lofty goal is not fully subscribed, the focusing effect of the goal is viewed as having great benefits—it is a vision to grow toward, a way to evaluate and improve what is being done and a projection of what could happen as the family pulls together.

The strength of Foursquare growth to date has taken place mostly among young and middle-aged Anglo Caucasian adults through new church development. Also the movement has

assimilated some congregations from eastern cultures. No congregations in Québec have yet been developed.

The Foursquare movement desires to continue to grow as a natural outflow of healthy spiritual life. “We just want to let the natural process of life produce more life,” says Peterson.

The Presbyterian Church in North America (PCNA) came from a merger with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, some 25 years ago. Five of these congregations formed the nucleus of the PCNA movement in Canada. Further leadership came from the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Approximately ten years ago the PCNA became more proactive about church planting. Its approximately 1,650 congregations endorsed a Vision 2000 church planting strategy to grow to 2000 congregations by the year 2000—and they remain close to the trajectory for accomplishing the goal.

British Columbia coordinator Rev. Steven A. Laug identifies key factors as including, (a) the willingness to take the risk and pay the price (and keep going with successes and failures), (b) the desire to be a part of what God is doing (e.g., moving church planting sites to responsive areas, even midstream), (c) the use of an interdenominational church planting assessment centre in selecting potential church planters and (d) the ability to raise additional funds in the United States.

Population groups most responsive to the Gospel have been Boomers and Asian immigrants, particularly Korean and Japanese. The PCNA has had difficulty in finding appropriate leadership for church plants in Québec.

Laug indicates PCNA experience with church planting methods has led them away from the pioneer model due to stress on the church planter’s family. The PCNA would prefer that a planter be available to plant several, even many times and this seems more likely using the “hiving” model. The

hiving model cultivates the mother church to become a seedbed for future daughter congregations. Advantages to this model include a starting core group of lay leaders as well as stronger initial finances. However, Laug warns that if the core group does not begin with evangelistic motivation, the new church is not as likely to become evangelistic as when it is begun by a pioneer leader.²⁸ Laug’s perception is that pioneer planting is more successful at gathering the unchurched, while hiving gathers more Christians who want programs. The PCNA has not been using “cell” or “tent-making” models, as these models tend to take too long to gain momentum and face some funding challenges.

The PCNA has found church planter recruitment in seminaries working effectively in recent years for several reasons. First, the average seminary graduate age has been rising, tending to produce more mature leaders. Secondly, because the PCNA produces more seminary graduates than it has vacant pulpits, many students consider planting from the beginning of their seminary experience. Covenant Seminary, the denominational school in St Louis, therefore offers an emphasis in church planting to assist in this preparation. Internship is required. Seminarians, and even undergraduate students, are linked personally with nearby church planters for several years while still in school.

The PCNA has developed a clear process to select and channel potential church planters:

1. Internship with a church planter.
2. A pre-screening interview.
3. A recommendation to an assessment centre, the result of which may be:
 - (a) qualified to plant,
 - (b) provisional acceptance, or
 - (c) disqualified—but free to upgrade and try again.

4. Qualified and provisional candidates may be referred to serve in a mother church or move directly to planting. In either case, candidates and planters are mentored with written learning contracts.

Laug, for instance, serves as mentor to three current church planters and one in-house potential planter. He seeks to make phone contact every two weeks and to arrange for a visit two to three times a year.

In addition, two regional vision casting gatherings are planned annually—the first for planter couples only. The second is a three-day gathering of prayer, praise and worship for clergy and lay leadership teams of all regional mother and daughter churches, up to 150 people, for vision casting, fund raising, training and fellowship.

Goal setting is a major factor in church planting growth—each presbyter meeting (three per year) reviews goal targets and budget implications. A broad five- to ten- year plan develops first, then specific aspects are addressed.

Organizationally, John Smed serves as team leader for the PCNA's Mission to North America vision. Presbytery church planting committees—generally 15 members, including all planters and pastors of potential mother churches, serve on the committee—plan and review new works. Canadian regional coordinators seek to provide day-to-day church planting coaching at a maximum of one-to-five ratio.

Financial support is raised by various means, ranging from an international campaign to local and regional vision casting gatherings. A uniqueness of the PCNA is that all monies invested in a local plant are committed by the local plant to be passed on when the plant is able, without interest, to another church plant in Canada.

The PCNA also uses the Canada Employment “Summer Career Placement Program,” which pays nonprofit organizations 100% of minimum wage and basic benefits up to 16 weeks at 37½ hours a week for qualified “job creation” projects. Students must be registered in college for the following fall semester. The mother church supplies the church planting intern housing and an increase over the government-supplied minimum wage.

A problem encountered in PCNA plants is finding committed leaders for elder and deacon roles, in that 30% to 40% of new members are from unchurched backgrounds.

Dr. Stephen Beck, pioneer planter of Toronto Grace Church, leads the PCNA flagship plant in Canada. The benefit of feeling called for life, he says, is that “you can take the particular philosophy of ministry God has placed in you and become a vision-driven church—you can shape it.”

Toronto Grace, Beck's second plant, began in September 1994 and now averages 250 persons representing 20 nations. Beck's goal is to plant 20 daughter churches around the metro Toronto area. He began by establishing “life groups” in the city, two of the largest he views as embryonic daughter churches. A Japanese daughter church is beginning to emerge as the church moves toward four weekly services. Worship is translated into several languages—some of these will become the gathering points for new congregations.

Canada ceased being a church culture in the 1960s, Beck believes. Secular Canada is now rather anti-church but open to spiritual matters and spiritually hungry. “They will not go onto our turf, so I go to their turf,” says Beck. He gets out of the office purposely every week to meet with people who are unchurched. It's important to get the feel of the culture, to take notes and get referrals.

Early in his ministry Beck received an invitation to lead a Bible study for his non-Christian friends. He repeated the process and began using Alpha principles.²⁹ Beck calls his adaptation a “School of Discovery”—a weekly dinner to which people bring non-Christian friends, featuring five tracks for group discussion for everyone—wherever you may be on your spiritual journey.

Beck believes that what Christians do in worship services must be understood by non-Christians and touch their hearts. One point of common ground for the Christian and non-Christian is that we are created in the image of God. Beck seeks to raise and answer questions non-Christians are asking so they will learn that the Bible offers answers and so that Christians will simultaneously be trained in apologetics. “Show that people who do not believe actually live as though there is absolute truth,” says Beck. “Word and Spirit are inseparably married—just let the Word convince them of the truth.”

Finally, the story of a newer denomination. In fact, many may not have heard of the **Victory Christian Churches International** movement until now. George Hill, born in England and now 53, had not knowingly met a Christian until his 30th birthday, while working as an electrician and travelling for adventure. Neither had his Australian-born wife Hazel, until both she and George made the decision to follow Christ in 1975 in Lethbridge, Alberta. Four years later they planted their first church in Lethbridge, which grew rapidly on a 43-acre campus and soon began to birth daughter congregations. Victory Christian Churches organized as a movement with five congregations in 1989.

Victory Christian Churches International was an apostolic movement of 38 congregations in Canada at the end of 1996, 45 by mid-1997 and a total of 150 internationally. It has been planting churches at a remarkable rate of 33% annually

during the 1986/1996 decade. Victory Churches recently purchased a 53-room hotel near Canada Olympic Park, Calgary, for its Bible College. It has opened its first church in Jerusalem, hoping to hold an international convention in the year 2000.

Several distinctives mark the rapidly growing renewal movement:

An apostolic leader. The vision, energy and spiritual authority of George and Hazel Hill permeate the movement. Not all 20th century Christians believe in the apostolic ministry in this age, but this characteristic, by whatever name, is consistent with the most rapidly growing denominations around the world.³⁰

Closely related is an emphasis on the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4:11-12. Carefully selected teams composed of an apostle, evangelist, prophet, pastor and teacher open new fields. George Hill calls it “teamwork—getting the right people in the right places.”

Big vision backed by challenging five-year goals. The vision of Victory Churches is to change a nation through church planting, media and education. (Victory Churches received Canada’s first 24-hour Christian television station license in 1996. CJIL, broadcasting from Lethbridge, hopes to go to satellite for national distribution in the fall of 1997. Victory Churches has also initiated the Canada Family Coalition to influence public policy.)

Adequate finances. To be a part of Victory Christian Churches International, a local congregation agrees to tithe to church planting—5% to national church planting and 5% to international church planting. This enables Victory Churches to offer matching dollars to strategic existing churches with limited resources so they can add and train necessary staff to plant new churches.

Most new Victory congregations are hived from a mother church. Typically a small group leader is released from the mother church to begin a care group in a nearby community. The mother church gives prayer and practical support. As the small group grows its leader's gift grows with the challenge, and the nucleus of a new congregation is born.

To begin a cluster of Victory Churches in a city where none have been planted, an entire apostolic team may move to a given city to found a new mother church. In Calgary for instance, an apostolic team gathered 270 people for a first Sunday service and the congregation has subsequently grown to four weekend services. Then, between 1990 and 1996, this new mother congregation has in turn daughtered nine new congregations in the area.

Until 1996 George Hill continued to pastor a local church, at least on a part-time basis. During this time most new leaders gained experience as part of George's staff and many grew to become new church planters. Leadership is now also being developed in "Finishing Edge" evaluation and training courses for lay leaders or previous pastors in transition who feel called to full-time service, have ministry experience and come recommended. The "Finishing Edge" experience includes advanced reading, exams, interviews, personality inventories, essay writing and times of prayer and vision sharing, as new leaders are matched with new ministry opportunities. Fifty-five people enrolled for the most recent "Finishing Edge."

Two of Hill's key leadership development principles are:

1. Be willing to release your best leaders. Invest for an increase. It takes faith to plant your good seed (Proverbs 11:23).
2. Look for people who are better at what you are asking them to do than you are, and do not be threatened by their abilities. The Lord wants to develop character in leaders, removing insecurity.

George Hill sets five-year goals for the movement, and assists each congregation in turn set five-year goals for evangelism and planting. "Goal setting takes courage, faith and commitment," says Hill, "because each time you do it you take a risk." So Hill sets three levels of goal—victory, hallelujah and miracle—"just to give the Lord a chance to do one."

It Takes the Whole Church to Disciple the Whole Nation

All parts of the Body of Christ are needed. Every denomination, congregation, mission agency and disciple of the Lord Jesus can contribute to the multiplication of new cells of believers in every neighbourhood, city block, high-rise apartment and people group in Canada.

Individuals can lead, form or invite unchurched friends to small prayer and care groups. Congregations can become "seed beds" for new churches, birthing a daughter congregation—alone or in partnership—every three to five years. Mission agencies can partner with denominations in forming new churches and directing new converts to church planters for follow-up. Denominations can pray, develop means of supporting church plants and set goals for the multiplication of many kinds of new congregations.

All can participate—lay and clergy—empowered by the Holy Spirit Jesus promised to pour out for this very purpose. We all can pray diligently for revival of the Church and the transformation of our society, one household at a time, to show the presence of Christ to all.

God can and wants to do great, even miraculous, things as we rely on His supernatural presence and empowerment.

A Faith Goal—How Does the Lord of the Harvest Want to Multiply the Church?

The Lord of the harvest calls the whole Church to unite in discipling the whole nation. We are called to repent of our lukewarmness, seek His face, hear His voice, understand the times and respond with faith, vision and sacrificial obedience.

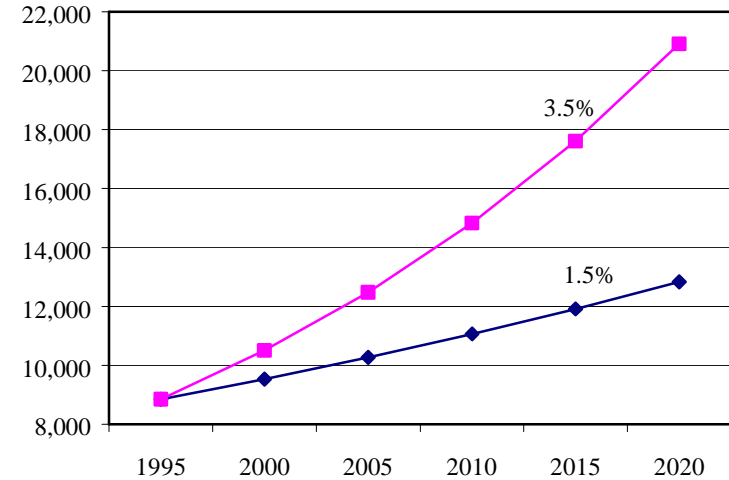
Annual evangelical church planting rates have tended to be in the 1% to 2% range. An estimate of 1.5% AAGR can be made with reasonable confidence. However the current Canadian population growth rate is at 1.1%.³¹ To respond seriously to our call to complete the Great Commission, however, our church planting rate must significantly exceed this rate. The AAGR of the world evangelical church is approximately 5.4%.³² This should inspire us to think big.

Let us engage in some “for instance” speculation! What would happen “for instance” if all denominations of the Body of Christ in Canada would increase our average annual national church planting rate to 3.5% during the next 25 years (see Figure 14)? At a 3.5% church planting rate the national “population-to-church” ratio³³ would be gradually reduced, as depicted in Table 20.

Let us lay before the Lord another possibility. How might the nation be transformed by the presence of Christ if our faith and planning were stretched to pursue 5% and 7% in national average church planting rates during those 25 years (see Figure 15)? At a 7% church planting rate the national “population-to-church” ratio would be rapidly reduced, as shown in Table 21.

Do you see how we, together, empowered by the Lord’s Spirit and presence, could move to within reaching distance of completing the Great Commission? Canada, our homeland, *can* be transformed by the power of the Gospel, and within our lifetime!

**Figure 14
Total Cells of Believers at 1.5% & 3.5% AAGR**



**Table 20
Population-Per-Congregation Ratio
Based on a 3.5% Growth Rate**

Year	Congregations	Population	Ratio
1995	8,848	29,617,448	3,347
2000	10,509	31,390,050	2,987
2005	12,481	33,319,200	2,670
2010	14,823	35,366,911	2,386
2015	17,606	37,540,469	2,132
2020	20,203	39,847,608	1,906

Figure 15
Total Cells of Believers at 5% and 7% AAGR's

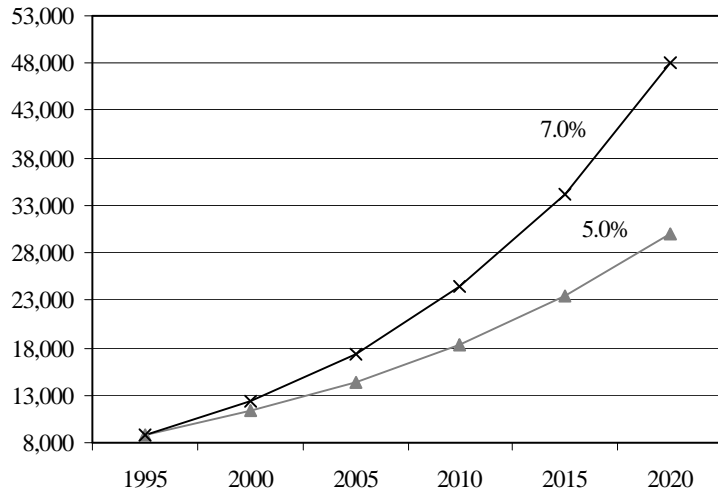


Table 21
Population-Per-Congregation
Based on a 7% Growth Rate

Year	Congregations	Population	Ratio
1995	8,848	29,617,448	3,347
2000	12,410	31,390,050	2,529
2005	17,405	33,319,200	1,914
2010	24,412	35,366,911	1,449
2015	34,239	37,540,469	1,096
2020	48,002	39,847,608	830

What Might This Mean for Each Denomination?

All the above “whole Church” national scenarios are real possibilities. The choice is ours. Church leaders may wonder what such involvement in the harvest will mean for their particular movement.

Table 23, at the end of this chapter, consists of six pages and casts the vision in some detail for individual denominations. This vision does not purport to suggest what will happen or what specific denominations will choose or be able to accomplish in the Canadian harvest field if prayer and human resources are released on a priority basis for church planting.

The table overviews selected denominations:

- ✍ Summarizing recent individual church planting rates.
- ✍ Suggesting a possible (“for instance”) average annual church planting growth rate. Generally a doable 3% increase over current rates is envisioned as realistic, challenging and possible. In a limited number of cases where current AAGR’s exceed 10%, future “for instance” rates have been reduced to sustainable possibilities. In all cases it must be clearly stated that projections do not purport to predict future growth rates, and further that individual denominations are autonomous before the Lord and free to set and alter their own church planting goals. Many movements may exceed these “for instance” possibilities.
- ✍ Calculating the net number of cells of believers permeating the fabric of our nation with the presence of Christ should a denomination plant new congregations at the “for instance” rate. Every denomination, of course, is free to plant as many new cells as the Lord directs during these years.

15,000 New Cells of Believers by the Year 2020?

Look more closely at the top half of the last page of Table 23. In a summary projection depicted there, we can see and be encouraged by what can be done together as we pray for empowerment, plan boldly and re-commit ourselves to plant new cells of believers in every people group, neighbourhood and apartment complex across the land.

Notice the decreasing church-to-population ratio projection to where the current ratio would be halved before the year 2020. This is one of the best measurable indications of progress in discipling the nation (refer to Chapter one).

Is it really possible that the Body of Christ could birth 15,000 new cells of believers by the year 2020? Yes it is. And perhaps an even greater number.

It is God's will that His lost sheep be found. He enables His people by His grace and by the power of His Spirit to accomplish all that is on His heart. Of this we can be confident!

The Canadian Church Planting Congress '97 Responds in Faith

In October 1997 Canadians gathered in Toronto to consider the challenge before us, consult in denominational and regional groupings and begin corporately to respond to the Lord.

Plenary speakers included international leaders such as Lynn Green, director of England's "Challenge 2000" and DAWN co-ordinator and missions strategist Dr. Jim Montgomery. Canadian speakers included Dr. Gary Walsh, executive director of the *Evangelical Fellowship of Canada* and Dr. Arnell Motz, chair of the EFC's *Vision Canada*. Jacqueline Dugas, director of the *Centre for Prayer Mobilization (Every Home for Christ)* led the opening Concert of Prayer and daily prayer gatherings.

The Congress theme was "Pray, Plan, Plant." In the closing declaration delegates said:

We, the delegates of the Canadian Church Planting Congress '97—representing 39 denominations, 13 mission organizations and four seminaries—called together to address the urgent spiritual need in Canada, declare concerted prayer and evangelistic church planting to be the key to reaching our nation.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

That without the raising up of new congregations there are still thousands of Canadians who will not have the opportunity to hear of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That we have a personal and corporate responsibility to reach these people.

That church planting is the key to discipling our nation calling the people to worship and serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

WE COMMIT

To earnestly pray for the harvest field and the harvest force.

To the goal of planting 10,000 new churches by the year 2015.

To plant churches that are geographically accessible and culturally relevant to every Canadian.

To develop networks for support and accountability.

To work together as the whole Body of Christ to accomplish the task of the Gospel for every person and a church for every people.

The Congress³⁴ affirmed a corporate 18-year goal of planting 10,000 new churches which are geographically accessible and culturally relevant to every Canadian. What a clear, specific focus for our combined intercession, resources and energies for the harvest!

This corporate goal involves an increase of 3% in our average annual church planting rate—from approximately 1.5% AAGR to 4.5% AAGR—a *tripling* of effort!

The following table will show, in the years to come, how near to our corporate goal we are coming. Note especially the encouraging reduction in the “Churches-per-Capita” ratio. A declining “Churches-per-Capita” ratio is the key indicator of our progress in discipling our nation. Please review, if you have not done so recently, the relevant section of Chapter 1 outlining this critical “Capita-per-Churches” measurement.

Since the Congress many denominations have set goals, revised budgets and adjusted infrastructure to re-focus on the task. In addition several schools have begun to respond to the need for training thousands of new church planters, many of them cross-cultural. District superintendents and other leaders have also met in each of Canada’s six regions to establish means of resourcing needed church planting support systems.³⁵

Table 22
Measuring Our Corporate Progress in
Discipling Our Nation

Year End	2000	2005	2010	2015
Number of Churches	9,968	12,192	15,101	19,001
Projected Canadian Population	31.4 M	33.3 M	35.7 M	37.5 M
Capita-per-Churches	3,149	2,733	2,342	1,976

Moving Forward!

We must pray, not out of duty but out of an urgent desire to see God’s glory revealed to millions who do not know Him.

Planning must take place because we are created in the image of God, and God Himself plans. Church planting goals can be proposed or set, leadership teams appointed or reviewed, financial plans developed. Planning not completed during Congress breakout sessions scheduled for that purpose must be scheduled for priority attention and continual monitoring.

Planting must take our best attention, leadership, prayer and financial support. All mature existing congregations must be encouraged to parent regularly, individually as often as possible or in teams.

May we give the Lord—and the lost—our best so that Christ will be incarnate in every segment of society and glorified throughout the earth—that *“the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”* (Habakkuk 2:14).

Table 23
A Vision for Discipling a Whole Nation
Multiplying Cells of the Body of Christ: 1997 - 2025

Table 23, Cont'd

Table 23, Cont'd

136

Table 23, Cont'd

137

Table 23, Cont'd

138

Table 23, Cont'd

139

Action Points

- ✍ Have you carefully reviewed your denomination's church planting history and devised your own process leading to specific goal setting?
- ✍ What new insights for church planting can you implement from the experiences of other denominations shared earlier in this chapter?
- ✍ Identify the next three priorities you must attend to in order to proceed effectively and strategically.

Chapter Notes

- ¹ Statistics Canada Census reports on religious affiliation.
- ² Religious affiliation necessarily indicates neither membership, regular attendance, firm commitment or doctrinal orthodoxy. Rather, affiliation suggests a general association with the religious tradition, an affiliation which may range from high commitment to nominalism.
- ³ Mainline and evangelical trends are to some degree difficult to track in that some mainline denominations were essentially evangelical through the first portion of the century.
- ⁴ Statistics Canada Census reports on religious affiliation.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ This may be an argument for the formation of new denominations, almost all of which grow best in their youth.
- ⁷ Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 93-319.
- ⁸ The segment, "No religious affiliation," is now the most rapidly growing "harvest field" in Canada.
- ⁹ Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, Harper & Row, 1977.
- ¹⁰ The Evangelical Lutheran Church merged with the Lutheran Church in America (and Canada) in 1986. These numbers are combined to reflect that merger.
- ¹¹ The best use of language is under discussion. Dr. Reginald Bibby tends to call this group "conservative Protestants," since most within it relate to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and are comfortable with the term "evangelicals;" others prefer "Biblically orthodox."
- ¹² When evangelical gains are removed.
- ¹³ Don Posterski, editor. *Context* (MARC Canada/World Vision) Fall 1996, vol. 6, issue 2. p.7.

Chapter Notes

- ¹⁴Teaching the Body of Christ to hold to and share absolute truths with confidence against the stream of politically correct relativism requires careful and continual education and courage. Christians also require training in sensitivity as we learn to “speak the truth in love.”
- ¹⁵ The NACC represents approximately 2.9% of total UCC congregations and 4.1% of UCC worship attendance respectively. Sec’y-Treas: Bob Blackburn, 5300 Hrenkelly Court, Mississauga, ON L5M 2H4.
- ¹⁶ Essentials Coordinator is Canon Jerry Smith, 1225 Cassells Street, North Bay, ON P1B 4B8.
- ¹⁷ Less “charismatic” in orientation, the Barnabas movement is led by General Secretary Rev. Tom Robinson, R.R.2, Hatfield, NB E0G 2A0.
- ¹⁸ More “charismatic” in orientation, the Anglican Renewal Movement is led by National Chairman Rev. Ed Hird, 1384 Deep Cove Road, North Vancouver, BC V7G 1S5.
- ¹⁹ Rev. Calvin Brown serves as Director, 3819 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, ON M9B 1K7.
- ²⁰ Zeb Bradford Long serves as Executive Director, 115 Richardson Blvd., P.O. Box 429, Black Mountain, NC, 28711-0429.
- ²¹ Research on orthodox congregations was incomplete in 1990; only an estimate was provided.
- ²² An example of the effect of church planting on the growth of a denomination (Nazarene) may be found in the chapter titled, “Can Canada be Discipled?”
- ²³ Murray Moerman and Lorne Hunter, *An Initial Survey of the “Harvest Field” and “Harvest Force” in Canada*. Richmond, BC: Outreach Canada, 1996. p.14.

Chapter Notes

- ²⁴ AAGR calculated over five years. Both five and 10 years, AAGR’s are depicted when data is available to show whether a movement is planting at a higher or lower growth rate in the most recent five years as compared to the previous five.
- ²⁵ Not including seven congregations leaving the Vineyard movement with the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship in 1995.
- ²⁶ This percentage of new starts taking root does not factor in previously established churches closed for other reasons during this period, a factor that would increase the “success” rate of new church starts.
- ²⁷ Large denominations are defined for the purpose of this study as those composed of more than 250 congregations.
- ²⁸ Dr. Beck, pioneer planter of Grace Toronto Church, believes “hiving” is easier because it is not perceived by the public as arising from something new. Canadians, he says, are suspicious both of “something new” and of that which is not “already successful”—a “double-whammy” for the pioneer planter. The pioneer is charged with elitism— “Who does he think he is?” People want to know there is accountability and connection to a larger whole. Canadians, Beck believes, are more suspicious of the new and of the entrepreneurial than are their American counterparts.
- ²⁹ David C. Cook can provide further information on the Alpha model and curriculum.
- ³⁰ For more on this trend cf. C. Peter Wagner. *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*. Regal Books: Ventura, CA, 1990. pp.73-74.
- ³¹ Between July 1996 and July 1997, the AAGR for the previous decade was approximately 1.7%.

Chapter Notes

³² Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World: The Day-by-Day Guide to Praying for the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993. p.23.

³³ “Population-to-church ratio” is the key indicator of progress toward discipling the nation. Please see Chapter 2: “Can Canada be Disciplined” for further details of the importance of this measurement.

³⁴ The term “Congress” rather than “consultation” or “conference” was used to underscore our need, not only to consult or confer, but in addition to make historic corporate decisions affecting the discipling our nation.

³⁵ Dates and events planned in each region may be accessed on Church Planting Canada’s website: www.outreach.ca/cpc.htm or quarterly newsletter.