

The State  
of  
Church Giving  
through 1993

*Excerpt:  
A Unified Theory of  
Giving and Membership*

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*The State of Church Giving through 1993* by John and Sylvia Ronsvalle  
published by empty tomb, inc.  
First printing, December 1995

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ISBN 0—9639962—4—X

## **A Unified Theory of Church Giving and Membership**

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While financial discipleship is a relatively new field of study, the area of church membership has received a great deal of attention in the last few decades. Numerous studies have been done on membership trends, particularly in the mainline Protestant churches in the last 30 years. The one constant during this period is that membership has continued to decline in these communions. The importance of this development is summarized by a statement from two sociologists, David A. Roozen and Jackson W. Carroll. Reviewing data for a variety of denominations from the 1950s through the mid-1970s, they observed, “More significantly, at least ten of the largest (and theologically more liberal denominations) have had membership losses in every year after 1966. Since most of these denominations had grown without interruption from colonial times, their declines reverse a trend of two centuries.”<sup>93</sup> Additional data suggests the membership decline observed among mainline Protestant denominations in the 1970s continued into the 1990s.

Further, a major portion of the historically Christian church in the United States, including mainline Protestants, evangelicals and Roman Catholics, represented a smaller percentage of the U.S. population in 1993 than in 1968. This development has occurred in spite of the fact that some communions within the larger grouping continued to add members. For example, the membership of the 29 communions in the composite considered in earlier sections of this report posted a similar data line in membership as a percentage of U.S. population as that in giving as a percentage of income, as indicated in Figure 16.

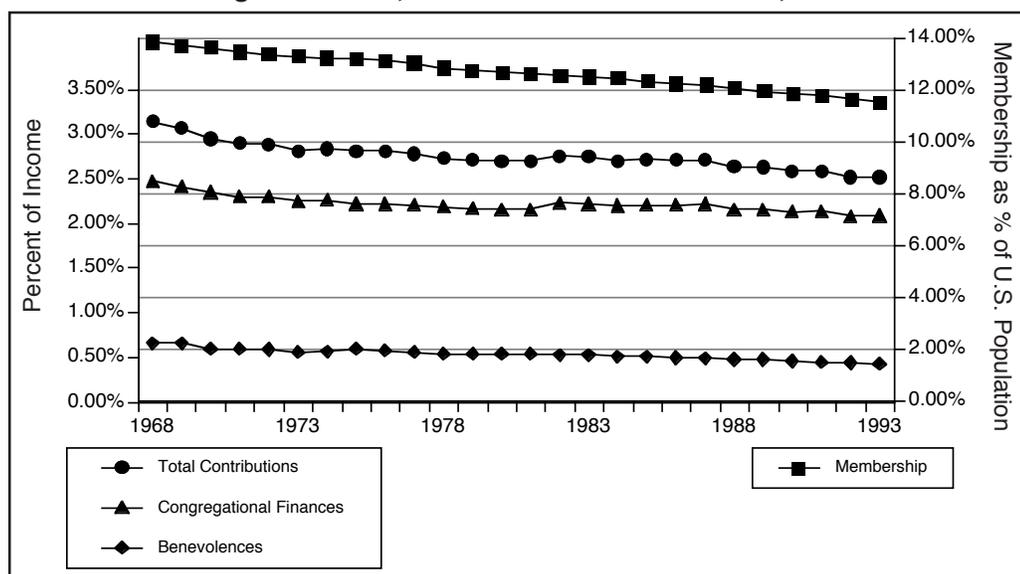
Traditional studies have not been able to diagnose the dynamics affecting church membership in such a way that concerned people have been able to reverse the declining trends. Therefore, a different approach may be needed. A unified theory of giving and membership may prove productive.

One advantage of connecting the two factors of giving and membership more directly than they have been in the past is that dynamics affecting giving can also be evaluated for their effect on membership trends as well. For example, it may be obvious to consider the effect of the advent of easy credit in the early 1960s on church giving patterns. However, would easy credit affect membership? If the relationship between giving and membership were to be explored, then such issues would be evaluated in a broader context.

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<sup>93</sup> David A. Roozen and Jackson W. Carroll, “Recent Trends in Church Membership and Participation: An Introduction” in Dean R. Hoge and David A. Roozen, eds., *Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-1978* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1979), 22-23.

**Figure 16: Membership as a Percentage of U.S. Population and Per Member Giving as a Percentage of Income, 29 Protestant Denominations, 1968-1993**



Sources: YACC adjusted series; USBEA

empty tomb graphic 1995

Based on this approach, a theory includes the following ideas. Beginning in the 1950s, to the degree that the church did not engage the topic of money in a way that translated into individual behavior patterns, people, including church members, became preoccupied with consumerist-related activities as a function of their increasing affluence. As a result, their giving as a percentage of income declined over time. As the church represented a smaller portion of their total financial commitment, and other activities and possessions came to represent a larger portion, their membership lapsed.

Within this theory, then, the amount of giving becomes an important indicator not only of the level of commitment to one's church, as has been discussed in previous chapters of this report. In addition, the church member's giving—more specifically as a percentage of income, representing available resources—also serves as an indicator of the strength of the barrier between the church member and the influence of the surrounding culture.

***Mainline Protestant Denominations and the Unified Theory of Giving and Membership.*** Mainline Protestant denominations were not only the dominant force in Christianity in America through the 1950s. They also had a major impact on American culture in general. The Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists (now largely represented in the United Church of Christ) had influenced the course of the United States from its earliest days. Members of these traditions were the people being described by the acronym WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant). Methodists, Reformed Church in America, Lutherans, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and American (formerly Northern) Baptists joined these denominations, as well as others including the Church of the Brethren, and the Moravian Church in America, Northern Province, in the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. William Herberg is often cited for his book, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, in which he observed that to be American in the 1950s was to be strongly influenced by the dominant mainline Protestant culture, regardless of individual creed.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> William Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1955).

Giving as a percentage of income during the 1950s rose above 3% for this set of ten Protestant denominations. These denominations were also growing not only in the number of members, but also as a percentage of U.S. population.

In 1957, however, these ten denominations peaked at 15.1% of U.S. population. The portion of the U.S. population they represented began to decline in 1958. This meant that they were still adding members, but that the rate of growth had fallen below the rate of growth of the U.S. population as a whole. By 1993, this grouping had declined to 7.8% of the U.S. population.

Giving as a percentage of income continued to increase for these communions until 1961, when it peaked at 3.4%. The decline that began in 1962 continued until it reached 2.5% from 1977 through 1980. Giving as a percentage of income began to rise again, and reached another plateau in 1986 at 2.8%, where it stayed through 1993, perhaps indicating a level of giving had been reached which was necessary to maintain the basic structures of the church.

Membership among these ten communions continued to grow in absolute numbers until 1964, when they totaled 26,884,395 full or confirmed members. By 1993, they represented 20,091,999 members, a decline of 25% from 1964 to 1993.

The observation that for these ten denominations, giving as a percentage of income peaked in 1961 and then began to decline, and that membership peaked in 1964 and then began to decline takes on added importance in light of a comment made in an analysis of membership trends:

. . . it is known that American religious participation increased through the 1950s, peaked in the early 1960s, and then declined through the late 1960s and 1970s. The curvilinear nature of this twenty-five year trend has a critical implication for the search for appropriate demographic explanations. If one is seeking single variable explanations, then the twenty-five-year trend in the distribution of the explanatory variable must match that of religious participation, that is, must be curvilinear, reversing itself in the early 1960s.”<sup>95</sup>

The data for giving as a percentage of income fits the description for a variable that displays a similar curvilinear pattern as that of membership.

How can this data be interpreted in light of the unified theory of giving and membership?

Major changes were taking place in American culture during the 1950s. Given the close identification of these mainline Protestant denominations with the culture at large—to some degree, one might even say these denominations were helping to shape that culture—the members of these churches would have been directly affected by the new dynamics sweeping the nation. In addition to the spread of general affluence, which empowered many more people to pursue individual goals, the related advent of increased communications and ease of travel and mobility, women in the work force, increased emphasis on individualism, increased level of education and the resulting opportunities for upward mobility, as well as technological innovations virtually reshaped American life after World War II.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> David A. Roozen, “The Efficacy of Demographic Theories of Religious Change: Protestant Church Attendance, 1952-1968,” in Hoge and Roozen, *Understanding Church Growth and Decline 1959-1978*, 126.

<sup>96</sup> For a discussion of some of these issues, see Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 65, and a review of Ronald Inglehart’s observations in Dean R. Hoge, “National Contextual Factors Influencing Church Trends,” in Hoge and Roozen, eds., *Understanding Church Growth and Decline: 1950-1978*, 99.

As major dynamics, such as affluence and increased ease in national and global communications and travel, flooded American society in the 1950s and 1960s, the members of these mainline Protestant denominations would have felt the first wave of these changes. The initial impact of these cultural transformations was seen in the slowing rate of membership growth, as indicated by the percentage of U.S. population represented, which began to decline after 1957. This slowing rate of membership growth may have been the earliest indication that church members were being distracted from the church as a major social influence in their lives. Members were still being added, but not as quickly.

The second sign came four years later, with the decrease in the portion of income which was donated to the church, indicating a weakening in the barrier between the church member's values and those of an increasingly consumerist culture. Incomes began to expand faster than church contributions. People had additional resources. However, they did not take the opportunity to maintain or even expand the portion of their incomes given to the church. Rather, they slowed the rate of increase in their gifts. Other data indicates American lifestyles during this period were adding more appliances, home square footage, and automobiles among other items. It is therefore logical to assume that the portion of income no longer being directed to the church was being spent on purchases such as these.

Two other factors would have had a strong influence on these lifestyle developments. One was the new availability of easy credit, which allowed people to improve their surroundings immediately, and pay for it later. The other was the ever-growing presence of television, a compelling medium which helped inform people's expanding lifestyle expectations. The percentage of U.S. households with televisions grew from 19.3% with black and white sets in 1953, to 94.1% with black and white and 5.1% with color sets in 1965.<sup>97</sup> It is interesting to juxtapose the increased number of television sets with an observation by sociologists Roozen and Carroll: "Trend data on the importance of religion in one's life is relatively scarce, but three national surveys spanning the period 1952-1978 show evidence of a long-term decline that is especially sharp since 1965."<sup>98</sup>

Does this interpretation suggest that people chose to direct more of their resources to their personal lifestyles and away from the church in some deliberate fashion? Not necessarily. The fact is that these mainline Protestant denominations probably did not present church members with a clear choice in the matter. The new affluence flooded American society after World War II at levels not imagined before, accompanied by technological innovations that introduced new communication methods directly into church members' homes. The church in general, and these mainline Protestant denominations in particular, were not prepared to help their members form a cohesive approach to these rapidly spreading resources. For example, money has not been considered an appropriate topic for the church.<sup>99</sup> Also, the traditional focus on public policy and education among the mainline Protestant denominations enabled them to address important post-World War II developments such as the evolving cold war and the emerging civil rights movement. However, this approach, not

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<sup>97</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1970* (Washington, DC: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), 687.

<sup>98</sup> Roozen and Carroll, "Recent Trends in Church Membership and Participation: An Introduction" in Hoge and A. Roozen, eds., *Understanding Church Growth and Decline, 1950-1978*, 34.

<sup>99</sup> In a survey of pastors in 14 Protestant denominations, 86% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "Most pastors enjoy preaching about money." From John Ronsvalle and Sylvia Ronsvalle, *Behind the Stained Glass Windows: Money Dynamics in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, forthcoming). See also Robert Wuthnow, *God and Mammon in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 140.

adequately grasping the potential cumulative or corporate impact from the financial empowerment of the individual, did not provide the individual church member with a basis from which to reflect on whether the *ability* to buy many new things was equivalent to a *need* to buy many new things.

Further, these denominations did not take the opportunity of this increasing affluence to develop a comprehensive vision that would engage individual church members' imaginations sufficiently to attract a larger portion of their increasing resources. The late James Grant, who served as executive director of UNICEF until early 1995, observed that, while a new ethic developed that produced a global response to major disasters, there was never a transition from alleviating disasters to taking the initiative to solve ongoing global need, such as the ongoing deaths of children from preventable poverty-related causes.<sup>100</sup> Without such a positive agenda that was commensurate with their expanding resources, church members' spending and attention turned elsewhere.

To observe these developments with the aid of hindsight is not to place blame on the denominations or church members. Rather, the goal is to understand as clearly as possible what happened to bring these denominations to their present state. Rather than accuse church members of becoming selfish, a better description might build on the figure/ground concept. When one first looks at a figure/ground picture, attention is drawn to certain images; as one keeps looking, a word or object may move to the foreground and the original images recede to the back. Similarly, the church, as evidenced by giving and membership patterns, was more strongly in focus for church members of these denominations during the 1950s; as they were caught up in both increasing affluence and new, exciting ways to apply it, the church without a compelling vision may have faded into the background for some, as evidenced in their giving and their membership.

It is possible that the increased responsibility that came with the greater number of possessions — and perhaps the related interest payments — absorbed not only a larger portion of church members' incomes but also more and more of their attention and energies. Quite apart from any moral judgment about whether the lifestyle purchases were consistent with their belief system, the extremely practical problem was that the wide lawns, additional cars and a variety of appliances demanded more time and energy to make purchasing decisions about, to use, and to maintain.

***Giving in Eleven Denominations, 1950-1993.*** In an earlier chapter of this report, giving patterns were considered for eleven denominations. By reviewing their data in five-year periods from 1950 to 1993, it was noted that there was a marked increase in annual constant dollar increases in U.S. per capita disposable (after-tax) personal income from 1960-1965 when income was increasing \$241 per year, compared to 1955-1960, when it was increased \$58. There was also a marked change in the average annual constant dollar increase in per member contributions to churches. In 1955-1960, the annual average increase in per member constant dollar giving was \$5.86, or 10% of the constant dollar increase in income. In 1960-1965, the average annual constant dollar increase in per member giving was \$1.89, or 0.78% of the income increase. This decline in the rate at which giving was growing took place before many of the controversial issues emerged which are often cited as reasons for declines in giving and membership.

During the period 1980-1985, the average annual constant dollar increase in per member giving was 4% of the constant dollar increase in income. Otherwise, church

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<sup>100</sup> James P. Grant, *The State of the World's Children 1987* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 1.

members directed less than 2% of the constant dollar increase in income to their churches between 1970 and 1993.

This data suggests that dynamics began impacting giving in the early 1960s from which church member giving patterns did not fully recover.

***Evangelical Denominations and a Unified Theory of Giving and Membership.*** In a previous chapter of this report, data for eight evangelical denominations was analyzed for the period 1968 to 1993. How does that data appear in light of a unified theory of giving and membership?

Giving as a percentage of income was 6.19% in 1968 for this group of denominations. The per member level of giving as a percentage of income for the eight evangelical denominations declined to 4.95% in 1985, and 4.27% in 1993.

During the 1968-1993 period, membership among these eight denominations expanded 51%, from 535,522 to 806,516.

However, the rate of that expansion slowed, as indicated by the percentage of U.S. population represented by these denominations. In 1968, they were 0.27% of the U.S. population. In 1985, they had expanded to 0.30%, an increase of 14%. By 1993, they represented 0.31%, an increase of 3%. Although they had increased by 17% as a portion of the U.S. population between 1968 and 1993 from the 1968 base, 82% of that growth took place in the first two-thirds of the 1968-1993 period.

According to the unified theory of giving and membership, the portion of income given to the church suggests the strength of the barrier between the denomination and the culture at large. At 6.2% in 1968, considerably higher than mainline Protestant denominations reviewed for that year, these denominations appear to have had a strong barrier to the broader American culture. It may also be observed that the distinctiveness from the larger culture evidenced by the higher giving levels was accompanied by a growth in membership.

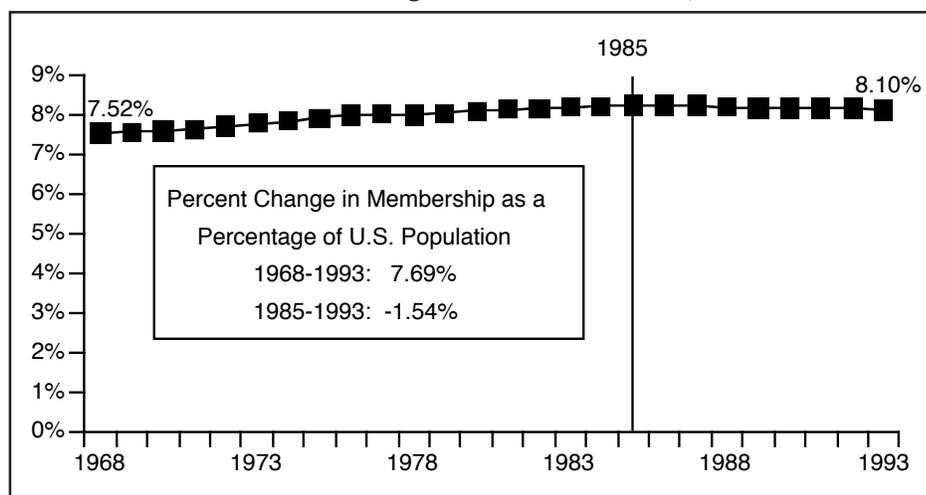
However, the level of giving as a percentage of income dropped between 1968 and 1993. The unified theory would suggest that this decline indicates the barrier to culture has been weakening. The declining giving as a percentage of income has not been accompanied by a decline in the number of members. However, the rate of growth in membership has slowed. These two factors, of declining giving as a percentage of income and a decrease in the percentage of U.S. population represented, may suggest that a decline in membership could be expected at some point in the not-distant future. There may be a threshold in giving as a percentage of income. When the level of giving declines below that level, the barrier to the larger culture may be so weakened that membership will lapse as well.

One factor which may have influenced the decline in giving as a percentage of income in these denominations might be the continued expansion of general affluence in American society. Whereas mainline Protestant church members would have been at the forefront of cultural and economic changes in the early 1950s, additional sectors of society would be affected as the affluence continued to spread more broadly over time. The traditional "holiness" emphasis, including separateness from the "world" which has been typical of many evangelical communions, may have been tempered by the increasing general availability of comfort and luxuries. The televangelists are often viewed through this perspective. For example, reflecting on Jim and Tammy Bakker, formerly of the PTL Club television network, one sociologist observed, "The people who like and follow them see them as real human

beings who are ‘like me and have problems like me, but are more successful.’”<sup>101</sup> Apparently the beliefs supported by members of evangelical denominations did not remove the desire for increasingly comfortable lifestyles common to many Americans. As one evangelical leader commented, “It was easy to condemn as sinful anything we couldn’t afford. When we could afford it, it became a challenge to subordinate it to Christ. Unless we are strongly disciplined in the Word, we have not the strength to do it.”<sup>102</sup> The challenge for the evangelical denominations, as it was for the mainline Protestant denominations before them, is keeping the distinctive barrier in place even when members can afford the cost of lowering it.

The implications of the continuing impact of affluence may be observed in a larger group of 15 conservative and evangelical communions. These combined groups were growing as a percentage of U.S. population between 1968 and 1985. However, as indicated in Figure 17, their rate of growth slowed between 1985 and 1993.

**Figure 17: Percent Change in Membership as a Percent of U.S. Population, 15 Conservative and Evangelical Denominations, 1968-1993**



Sources: YACC adjusted series; USBEA

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***The Southern Baptist Convention and a Unified Theory of Giving and Membership.***

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is the largest Protestant communion in the United States. Data indicates its per member level of giving as a percentage of U.S. per capita income was 2.28% in 1968 and declined to 1.93% in 1993.

Meanwhile, membership in the Southern Baptist Convention grew from 11,332,229 in 1968 to 15,398,643 in 1993, an increase of 36%.

Once again, further review of the data suggests that the level of membership growth was not constant throughout that period. The 1968 membership of 11,332,229 rose to 14,477,364 in 1985, with an annual growth rate of 185,008. By 1993, membership had grown to 15,398,642, with an annual growth rate between 1985 and 1993 of 115,160, or 38% fewer new members each year between 1985 and 1993 than were added between 1968 and 1985. Therefore, it may be observed that the Southern Baptist Convention began to experience a slowing in the rate of growth while experiencing a prolonged decline in giving as a percentage of income.

<sup>101</sup> Larry Martz, et al., “God and Money,” *Newsweek*, April 6, 1987, 18.

<sup>102</sup> Ronsvalle and Ronsvalle, *Behind the Stained Glass Windows: Money Dynamics in the Church*, forthcoming.

This communion also posted a slight decline in the percentage of the U.S. population it represented between 1985 to 1993. From 1968 to 1985, the percentage of the U.S. population affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention grew from 5.65% to 6.07%, an increase of 7.53% from the 1968 base. By 1993, the Southern Baptist Convention represented 5.96% of the U.S. population, a decline of 1.78% from the 1985 base of 6.07%.

In light of the unified theory on giving and membership, the low percentage of giving might indicate a weak barrier between the church member and the culture at large in the Southern Baptist Convention, if the barrier can be pegged at a specific level of giving. However, while the mainline Protestant denominations sat in the context of American society as a whole, Southern Baptists display a distinctive culture that has not only geographical but also historical, economic and even linguistic borders. Indeed, a map prepared by the Glenmary Research Center on American religious membership for 1990 showed six states in the southeast which had 50% or more of their citizens in over three-quarters of their counties claiming membership in the SBC; and these six states were surrounded by five others which had about half their counties with 50% or more of their residents claiming SBC membership.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, to say that Southern Baptist giving levels do not indicate a strong barrier between the church member and the surrounding culture may not convey the same meaning as it did for mainline Protestants and American society in general. The Southern Baptist Convention and its traditional tenets of faith impacted the surrounding culture on a scale that individual communions in other parts of the U.S. usually did not. For example, one pastor remembered his tenure as a minister in an area of the South: “You might be Catholic or American Baptist or Lutheran—but you’re still Southern Baptist.” He also commented that it was general knowledge that to be elected to public office required membership in the SBC.

The presence of a local culture strongly reflecting the church’s beliefs would have served as a barrier between the church member and the larger dynamics flooding American society as a whole since World War II. Giving as a percentage of income in this situation, with a cohesive culture surrounding the church member, might be lower than for other communions, and yet be compatible with a strong identification with the church. Yet the same hypothesis about giving being an indicator of not only church level commitment, but in a related fashion, church member absorption into the more general culture, may still apply. In the case of the Southern Baptist Convention, although giving began at a lower level, there may yet be a threshold below which declines in giving as a percentage of income will be followed by a decline in membership as well. The prolonged decline in giving as a percentage of income has more recently been accompanied by a slowing in the rate of growth in membership. Southern Baptists represented a smaller portion of the U.S. population in 1993 than in 1985. The sustained effect of the dynamics affecting American society as a whole, that include broader affluence and accompanying lifestyle changes, may have first appeared in giving patterns among Southern Baptists, and may also be felt in membership even more strongly at some point in the future as well, according to this hypothesis.

***The Roman Catholic Church and a Unified Theory of Giving and Membership.***

Although at first glance the statement may seem odd, the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention may be very similar in terms of the unified theory of giving and membership. They represent the two largest religious communions in the United States. They also both surround their members with a strong cultural context for their religion. That

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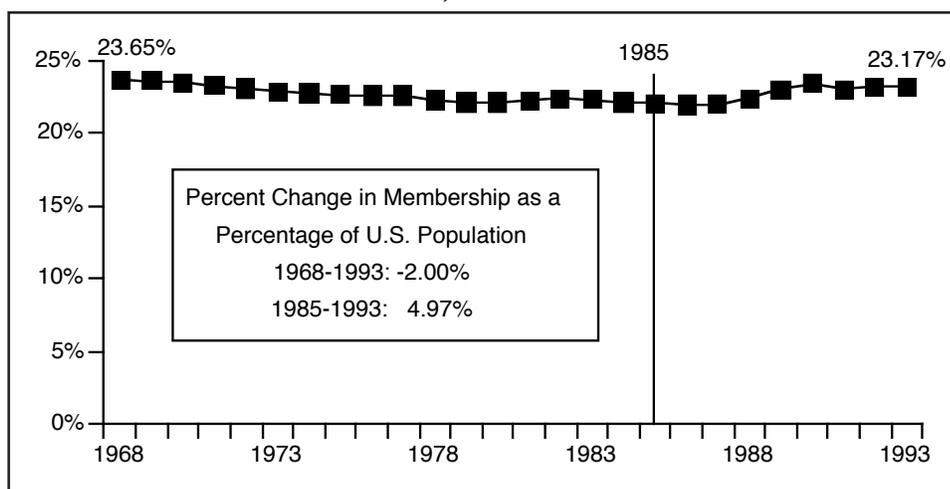
<sup>103</sup> “Major Denominational Families by Counties of the United States: 1990” (Atlanta, GA: Glenmary Research Center, 1992).

cultural context might connect members to their church in a way that members of other denominations are not. As a result, that culture may insulate the membership from dynamics that have produced decreases in other denominations, and keep membership trends independent of giving trends up to a point.

The Roman Catholic Church does not publish financial data on a national basis the way many Protestant communions do. As a result, researchers are not able to analyze trends in giving as a percentage of income for this communion over a prolonged time span. Recently available data on giving is discussed in the previous chapter of this report.

Membership data is available, however. This data indicates the Roman Catholic Church is a communion that has been growing as a percentage of U.S. population since 1985. In 1968, there were 47,468,333 Roman Catholics representing 23.65% of the U.S. population. By 1985, the number of Catholics had grown to 52,654,908, but this number was 22.08% of the U.S. population. In contrast to trends in other denominations which were shrinking as a portion of the U.S. population, by 1993, there were 59,858,042 Catholics which included 23.17% of the U.S. population, an increase from the 1985 level. Figure 18 presents this data.

**Figure 18: Percent Change in Membership as a Percent of U.S. Population, the Roman Catholic Church, 1968-1993**



Sources: YACC series; USBEA

empty tomb graphic 1995

There may be at least two factors which affect the Roman Catholic Church to a greater degree than Protestant communions in the U.S. The first is that immigration from Catholic countries may be increasing membership in the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S.

A second factor may be that the Hispanic population is the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S. Since an estimated 70-75% of Hispanics identify themselves as Catholics,<sup>104</sup> their population growth would also account for some portion of the membership growth in the Catholic Church. Both the immigration and population growth factors would be in addition to any general growth in membership through other means, such as adding new members by confession of faith.

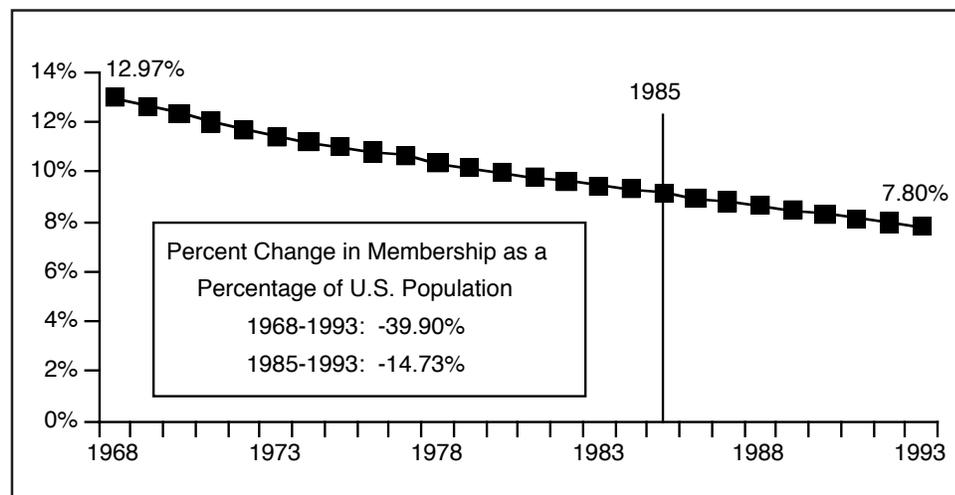
Even so, when one considers the historically Christian Church in the U.S. as a whole, which would include Catholics as well as Protestants, the growth in the Catholic Church is

<sup>104</sup> Allan Figueroa Deck, S.J., "Trends in Latino Religion," *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1994*, Kenneth B. Bedell, editor (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1.

not enough to compensate for the continuing marginalization of the historically Christian church in the U.S. as a portion of the population.

**Trends in Membership as a Percentage of U.S. Population.**<sup>105</sup> The declining membership trends have been noticed most markedly in the mainline Protestant communions. As indicated in Figure 19, a group of 11 mainline Protestant denominations indicate this group of communions decreased as a percentage of U.S. population by 40% between 1968 and 1993.

**Figure 19: Percent Change in Membership as a Percent of U.S. Population, Eleven Mainline Protestant Denominations, 1968-1993**



Sources: YACC adjusted series; USBEA

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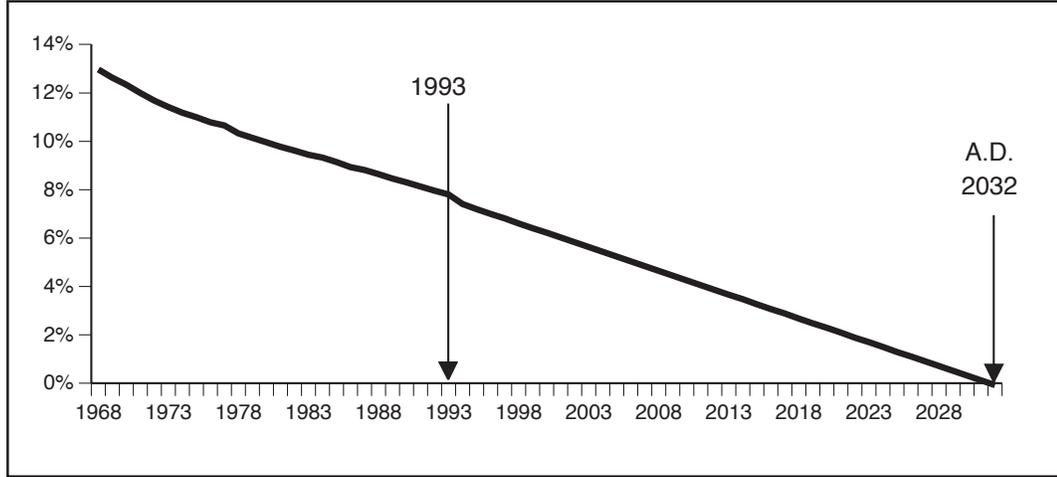
Linear regression was used to project a trend based on 1968-1993 membership data for these eleven mainline Protestant communions, all of which were affiliated with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.<sup>106</sup> As shown in Figure 20, these communions would constitute 0% of the U.S. population in the year A.D. 2032, or 39 years from the last year of available data, if current patterns remain the same.

Of course, these communions represent only one part of the body of Christ. Protestant denominations have varying membership trends. In the composite of 29 Protestant communions considered in earlier chapters of this report, some of the evangelical and conservative denominations were growing in membership even while mainline denominations were declining. In addition, membership data is available for 8 additional Protestant communions as well, bringing the number of Protestant denominations with available data to 37. When one considers whether the historically Christian church in the U.S. may be reduced to remnant status at some point in the future, a larger grouping ought to be included in the equation.

<sup>105</sup> The denominations analyzed in this section include the composite of 29 communions analyzed elsewhere in this report. The data for 29 communions is supplemented by the data of 9 denominations included in an analysis of church membership and U.S. population by Roozen and Hadaway in David A. Roozen and Kirk C. Hadaway, eds., *Church and Denominational Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 393-395.

<sup>106</sup> These 11 denominations include 8 of the communions in the composite of 29 denominations as well as available data for the Friends United Meeting. In addition, data for The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church is included.

**Figure 20: Trend in Membership as a Percent of U.S. Population, Eleven Mainline Protestant Denominations, Data for 1968-1993**

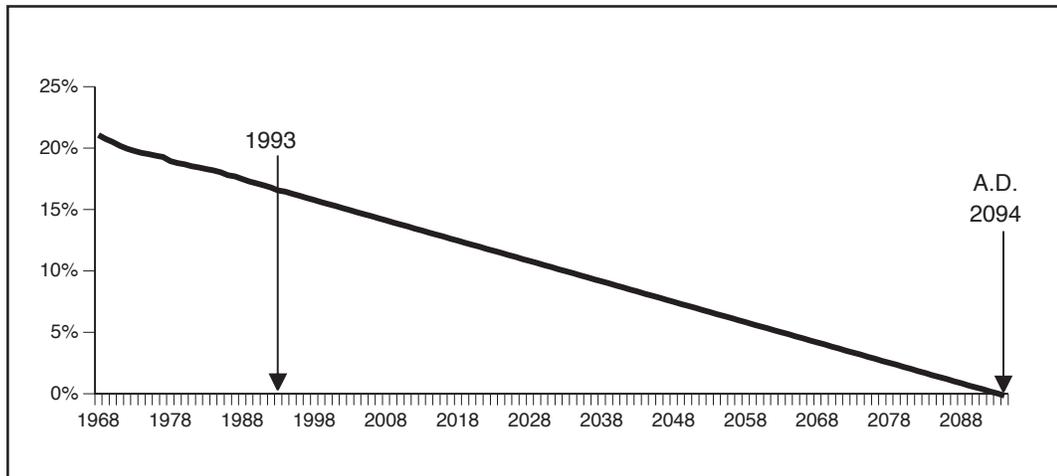


Sources: empty tomb, inc. analysis; YACC adjusted series; USBEA

empty tomb graphic 1995

In 1968, these 37 Protestant denominations represented 42,281,532 members, and in 1993, a total of 42,740,687, an increase of 1%. Meanwhile, the overall population in the U.S. had been growing at a faster rate than the membership changes posted by these denominations. As a result, these communions were 21% of the U.S. population in 1968, and 17% in 1993. The trend for the rate of growth in the denominations and growth in U.S. population over the past 26 years suggests that these groups would constitute 0% of the U.S. population in the year A.D. 2094, or roughly four times the span from 1968 to 1993, once again if present patterns remain constant. This information is presented in Figure 21.

**Figure 21: Trend in Membership as a Percent of U.S. Population, 11 Mainline Protestant and 26 Other Protestant Denominations, Data for 1968-1993**



Sources: empty tomb, inc. analysis; YACC adjusted series; USBEA

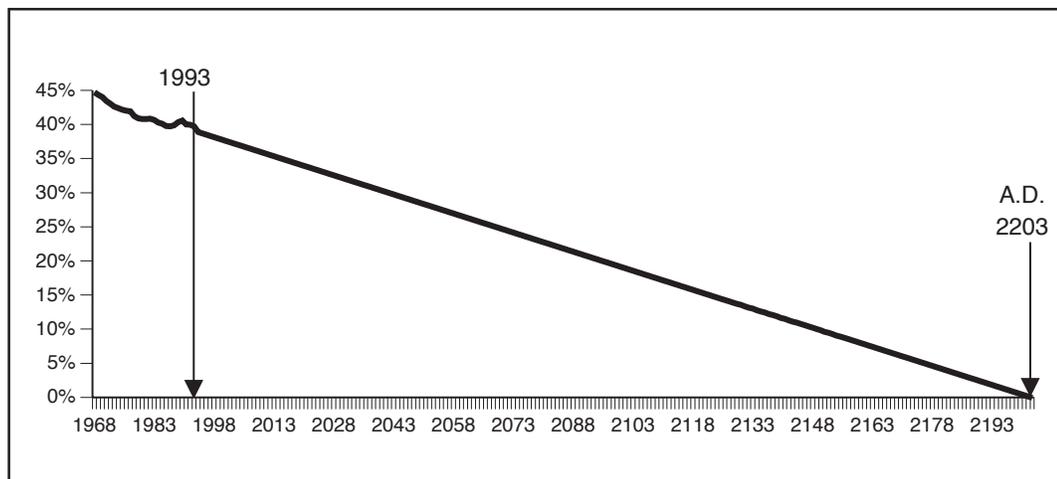
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Of course, the picture would be incomplete without the Roman Catholic Church. Adding in this membership data with that of the 37 Protestant communions considered above results in this combination of Catholic and Protestant communions including 89,749,865

members in 1968. With the U.S. population at 200,745,000, these Christians were 45% of the U.S. population. By 1993, the group had grown to 102,598,729 members. However, the U.S. population had grown to 258,290,000. Now these Christians were 40% of the American population.

If the rate of membership growth of the past 26 years held steady in the future for these 38 Christian communions, and the same were true for growth in U.S. population, then, as shown in Figure 22, these communions would represent 0% of the U.S. population in the year A.D. 2203. Thus, 208 years of the pattern observed in the last 26 years—less than the number of years during which the United States has formally existed as a nation—will produce an American society with only a remnant Christian presence as represented by these major denominational structures.

**Figure 22: Trend in Membership as a Percent of U.S. Population, 37 Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church, Data for 1968-1993**



Sources: empty tomb, inc. analysis; YACC adjusted series; USBEA

empty tomb graphic 1995

As sociologists Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney have pointed out, “For every person raised without religion who adopts a church, three persons forsake the churches for no institutional affiliation.”<sup>107</sup> Thus, these membership trends have serious implications. For those who feel there is value in strengthening the historically Christian church, rather than only monitoring its elimination from the American cultural scene, the data suggests the need to rethink how one might better understand these dynamics.

**Possible Implications of a Unified Theory of Giving and Membership.** Because the mainline churches as a group were affected by declines in membership first, and evangelical and conservative churches were posting membership increases, some membership studies have focused on the differences between these two types of denominations in the past. However, declining giving patterns and slowing membership growth rates may now be observed in conservative and evangelical denominations as well. These developments would suggest that whatever differences of theology and polity, for example, may exist between these two groups of denominations, there are also other factors which produced slowing growth or actual declines in giving and membership in both these groups which also ought to be considered.

<sup>107</sup> Roof and McKinney, *American Mainline Religion*, 180-181.

As the implications of the integrated theory of giving and membership is explored, possible strategies may be suggested to reverse membership declines. For example, one obvious idea is that if declines in giving levels are followed at some point by declines in membership, then increases in giving levels might be followed by increases in membership. If this were the case, then those interested in strengthening what may be weakening church structures would emphasize an increase in the percentage of income given to the church.

While appearing to be a logical construction, financial data from the ten mainline Protestant churches discussed earlier in this chapter would suggest that strategy may not produce the positive results hoped for. In fact, although membership has continued to decline in these denominations as a group, giving as a percentage of income plateaued and then increased. Giving reached a low point of 2.5% from 1977 through 1985, before rising to 2.8% by 1993. Maintaining or even increasing the general level of giving did not result in a reversal of membership declines. The fact that membership declines, although preceded by giving declines, continued even after per member giving increased again may be due to the necessity of current members to maintain a certain giving level in order to sustain their present institutional structures. This “survival level” of giving would require an increasing commitment on the part of the fewer remaining members, but would not necessarily translate into additional members being brought into the congregation. Rather, as the portion of income given is sustained or slightly increased, the result may be a turning inward of the church to its own concerns. This development is supported by the trend noted in other sections of this report regarding the allocation of giving between Congregational Finances and Benevolences. Of the two categories, it has been Congregational Finances, providing for the internal operations of the congregation, which has generally absorbed increases in giving, and Benevolences, including both denominational support as well as broader local and international mission activities, which has absorbed most of the decrease in giving patterns.

Therefore, the experience of these mainline Protestant denominations would not support the idea that merely increasing the portion of income given to the church will be related to an increase in membership. It may be that the decrease in the level of giving foreshadowed the decline in membership, but the data does not support the theory that an increase in general giving therefore produces growth in membership.

However, a connection may exist between the per member amount given for certain types of church activities, and membership growth rates.

***Benevolences Giving and Membership.*** The unified theory of giving and membership suggests there is a connection between giving and membership. As giving declined as a percentage of income, then membership growth rates slowed or reversed—sooner for the mainline Protestant denominations and later for the evangelical and conservative denominations.

A further refinement of the hypothesis might focus on a certain area of financial support, specifically Benevolences, the category which includes, among other things, those activities that might be defined as the broader mission of the church. This hypothesis would suggest denominations posting membership growth would also be posting higher levels of support for Benevolences, and those posting membership declines would be posting declines in Benevolences giving as well.

Dean M. Kelley addressed this connection in his book, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. He observed, “Human beings cannot live without trying to make sense of their experience, to find the meaning in it. . . . Most such explanations originate with a religious

group. . . These communities begin as high-demand religious or quasi-religious movements capable of changing the lives of men and the course of history.”<sup>108</sup>

The larger vision for many Protestant communions has historically taken the form of international missions. Therefore, the patterns in giving to denominational overseas ministries and membership were reviewed for a select group of denominations.

In a recent study,<sup>109</sup> survey data for four Protestant denominations—the Assemblies of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Southern Baptist Convention—as well as the Roman Catholic Church was considered. As noted before, general financial data is not available for the Catholic Church. However, the four Protestant denominations in that study serve as a cross section of denominations for a preliminary review of the relationship between missions giving and membership patterns. Benevolences data, or more specifically overseas ministry financial support data, is available for these four Protestant denominations in the *Mission Handbook* series published by the Missions Advanced Research Center of World Vision.<sup>110</sup> This series of reports provides an overview of denominational as well as independent overseas mission agency activity based in the United States on a multiyear basis. Data for these four Protestant denominations was reviewed for the years 1972, 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1991 from the published *Mission Handbook* series. A per member contribution to overseas ministries was obtained by dividing the published financial figure for overseas ministries for a denomination by the number of full or confirmed members in the denomination for the same year.

Two of the four Protestant denominations, the Assemblies of God and the Southern Baptist Convention, were giving a higher per member contribution to overseas missions activity in constant 1987 dollars in 1991 than in 1972. For the Assemblies of God, per member contributions to overseas missions in 1972 was \$47.54, and in 1991, \$61.80, an increase of 30%. During this period of time, full or confirmed membership in the Assemblies of God grew from 679,813 to 1,324,800, an increase of 95%.

In the Southern Baptist Convention, per member contributions to overseas ministries grew from \$7.65 in 1972 in constant 1987 dollars, to \$9.25 in 1991, an increase of 21%. Meanwhile, membership grew from 12,065,333 in 1972 to 15,232,347, an increase of 26%.

In contrast, both giving to overseas ministries and membership declined in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

In 1972, the per member constant 1987 dollar contribution to overseas ministries was \$9.23 among Lutheran denominations that later merged in 1987 into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and in 1991, it was \$5.21, a decrease of 43.5%. Meanwhile, membership declined from 3,939,005 in 1972 to 3,890,947 in 1991, a decrease of 1%.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Dean. M Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 15.

<sup>109</sup> Dean R. Hoge, Charles Zech, Patrick McNamara and Michael J. Donahue, *American Congregational Giving Study*, a series of papers (delivered to the annual meeting of the Religious Research Association, Albuquerque, NM, November 4, 1994).

<sup>110</sup> The most recent in the series is: John A. Siewert and John A. Kenyon, eds., *Mission Handbook 1993-1995* (Monrovia, CA: Missions Advanced Research Center, 1993).

<sup>111</sup> In 1987 and 1991, the Lutheran contributions for overseas ministries are limited to the ELCA Division for Global Mission. Lutheran World Relief (LWR) funds were not counted in any year of this analysis, since LWR receives funds from both the ELCA as well as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. For the years 1972, 1979 and 1983, the total includes data for: American Lutheran Church/Division for World Mission and Inter-Church Cooperation; Lutheran Church in America, Division for World Mission and

It is interesting to note that a marked decline in giving in the ELCA was accompanied by a small decrease in membership. Along with Southern Baptists and Catholics, Lutherans may experience a strong cultural identity which would serve as a barrier to the broader culture and mitigate against a closer relationship between giving patterns and membership trends. Referring once again to the religious population map prepared by the Glenmary Research Center, a broad concentrated Lutheran presence is indicated in the North Central portion of the U.S. Nevertheless, an absolute decline in membership was observed in the ELCA (and predecessor denominations) between 1972 and 1991.

In 1972, the per member constant 1987 dollar contribution to overseas ministries was \$13.30 in two denominations that would become the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in 1991, it was \$7.64, a decrease of 43%. Meanwhile, full or confirmed membership declined from 3,855,494 to 2,805,548 during the same period, a decrease of 27%.<sup>112</sup>

For these four denominations, the value for the correlation coefficient or  $r_{xy}$  between the percent change from 1972 to 1991 for per member mission giving in constant 1987 dollars and full/confirmed members was .87. The strength of the linear relationship in the present set of data, that is, the proportion of variance accounted for by linear regression, is represented by the coefficient of determination or  $r^2_{xy}$  of .75. The F-observed value of 5.98 is less than the F-critical factor of 18.51 for 1 and 2 degrees of freedom for a single-tailed test with an Alpha value of 0.05. The regression equation at the  $r^2_{xy}$  reported level in the percent change from 1972 to 1991 in full/confirmed membership is of interest, suggesting that there would be value in expanding the exploration to include other denominations in a similar analysis.

For example, data is also available for both membership and overseas giving for The United Methodist Church, the second largest Protestant body in the United States. Per member giving to overseas ministries in The United Methodist Church declined from \$6.21 in 1972 to \$3.72 in 1991, a decrease of 40%. Meanwhile, membership declined from 10,192,265 in 1972 to 8,789,101 in 1991, a decrease of 14%. When this data is combined with that of the other four denominations considered above, the correlation becomes statistically significant. That is, the value for the correlation coefficient or  $r_{xy}$  between the percent change from 1972 to 1991 for per member mission giving in constant 1987 dollars and full/confirmed members for the five denominations was .88. The strength of the linear relationship in the present set of data, that is, the proportion of variance accounted for by linear regression, is represented by the coefficient of determination or  $r^2_{xy}$  of .78. The F-observed value of 10.55 is greater than the F-critical factor of 10.13 for 1 and 3 degrees of freedom for a single-tailed test with an Alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the regression equation is useful at the level suggested by the  $r^2_{xy}$  figure for predicting the percent change from 1972 to 1991 in full or confirmed membership.<sup>113</sup>

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(footnote 111 continued) Ecumenism; and Lutheran World Federation, U.S.A. National Committee. Membership before the merger in 1987 is included for the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1972, 1979 and 1983. Membership data for the years 1979 and 1982 (rather than 1983) is included for the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches which came into existence in 1976 and then merged with the ALC and LCA into the ELCA in 1987.

<sup>112</sup> Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) data prior to 1983 includes data for the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

<sup>113</sup> The overseas ministries support data for The United Methodist Church in the above analysis combined income to The United Methodist Church, World Program Division, and The United Methodist Church Committee on Relief (UMCOR), also a specifically denominational agency. If only World Program Division data is used, the  $r_{xy}$  figure is .88, the  $r^2_{xy}$  figure is .77, and the F-observed value is 10.27, greater than the F-critical factor of 10.13 for 1 and 3 degrees of freedom.

It is also interesting to note that per member giving to overseas ministries in constant 1987 dollars peaked in the mid-1980s for the two denominations with growing membership, even as their rate of growth in membership did. Of the five data years considered, the highest year for the Southern Baptist Convention was 1987, when the per member contribution to that category was \$11.50 in constant 1987 dollars. By 1991, this contribution was \$9.25. Also in 1987, the SBC represented a larger portion of the U.S. population than it did in 1991, indicating a slowing in the rate of growth.

For the Assemblies of God, the highest point among the five years for which there was overseas ministries financial support data was also in 1987, when the per member contributions measured \$66.08. By 1991, this contribution had declined to \$61.80, also in constant 1987 dollars. Between 1972 and 1991, the Assemblies of God membership grew from 0.32% of the U.S. population to 0.52%, an increase of 62% in the portion of the U.S. population this communion represented. However, all of this growth occurred between 1972 and 1987, with a slight decline posted between the data years 1987 and 1991 in the portion of U.S. population represented.

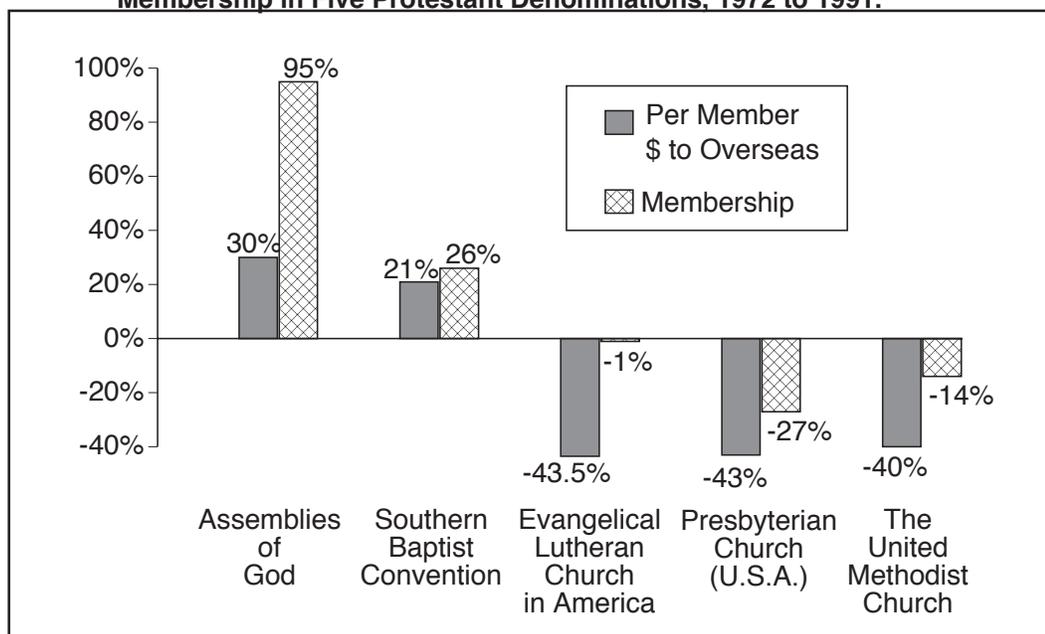
Table 34 presents the data for these five denominations.

**Table 34: Per Member Contributions to Overseas Missions and Membership Data, Five Denominations, 1972, 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1991, Constant 1987 Dollars**

	1972	1979	1983	1987	1991
United States Population	209,924,000	225,106,000	234,326,000	242,860,000	252,688,000
<b>Assemblies of God</b>					
Membership	679,813	958,418	1,153,935	1,275,146	1,324,800
Per Member 87\$ to Overseas Ministries	\$47.54	\$47.81	\$57.10	\$66.08	\$61.80
Percentage of U.S. Population	0.32%	0.43%	0.49%	0.53%	0.52%
<b>Evan. Luth. Ch in Am.</b>					
Membership	3,939,005	3,945,302	3,933,192	3,952,663	3,890,947
Per Member 87\$ to Overseas Ministries	\$9.23	\$6.61	\$7.22	\$8.27	\$5.21
Percentage of U.S. Population	1.88%	1.75%	1.68%	1.63%	1.54%
<b>Presbyterian Ch. (USA)</b>					
Membership	3,855,494	3,321,787	3,122,213	2,967,781	2,805,548
Per Member 87\$ to Overseas Ministries	\$13.30	\$5.18	\$8.58	\$7.75	\$7.64
Percentage of U.S. Population	1.84%	1.48%	1.33%	1.22%	1.11%
<b>Southern Baptist Conven.</b>					
Membership	12,065,333	13,372,757	14,178,051	14,722,617	15,232,347
Per Member 87\$ to Overseas Ministries	\$7.65	\$7.15	\$11.17	\$11.50	\$9.25
Percentage of U.S. Population	5.75%	5.94%	6.05%	6.06%	6.03%
<b>The United Methodist Ch.</b>					
Membership	10,192,265	9,584,771	9,291,936	9,055,145	8,789,101
Per Member 87\$ to Overseas Ministries	\$6.21	\$4.94	\$4.23	\$4.23	\$3.72
Percentage of U.S. Population	4.86%	4.26%	3.96%	3.73%	3.48%

Figure 23 presents the percent change in per member giving to denominational overseas ministries and membership in these five denominations between 1972 and 1991.

**Figure 23: A Comparison of the Percent Change in Per Member Giving in Constant 1987 \$ to Denominational Overseas Ministries and Membership in Five Protestant Denominations, 1972 to 1991.**



Sources: empty tomb, inc. analysis; MARC series; YACC adjusted series

empty tomb graphic 1995

**Further Implications.** The hypothesis now has been refined to include the following points. Per member giving, both as a percentage of income and in constant dollars, is an important indicator of church trends. A sustained decline in giving as a percentage of income will likely be accompanied by a slowing in the rate of membership growth, and possibly an actual decline in the number of members. Further, a denomination that is posting increases in per member support for overseas ministries will likely be posting membership increases as well. Declining support for overseas ministries may be accompanied by a decline in the rate of membership growth, and perhaps even in a decline of the absolute number of members.

A more formal statement of the hypotheses, which merit further investigation based on the preliminary discussion above, might be as follows.

Hypothesis 1: Church member giving as a percent of income is positively correlated with church membership.

Hypothesis 2: Widespread affluence beyond the level of basic needs in a highly churched nation is a force that, unengaged, is negatively correlated with church membership. Corollary A: Access to, and use of, easy credit is negatively correlated with church membership. Corollary B: Hours of television watched is negatively correlated with church membership. Corollary C: Lack of discussion of members' money within churches is negatively correlated with church membership.

Hypothesis 3: Strength of mission vision as measured by church member giving to church mission is positively correlated with church membership.

Hypothesis 4: Geographical social dominance of any given church subculture is positively correlated with church membership. Corollary A: A geographically widespread, broadly accepted mission vision is positively correlated with church membership. Conversely, a focus by individual denominations and traditions on their individual mission visions in isolation from others is negatively correlated with church membership.

As has already been discussed, encouraging an increase in the portion of income given to the church in general may not have the effect of reversing membership decline, since data indicates mainline Protestant denominations have increased slightly in per member contributions as a percentage of income, but continued to decline in membership. The increase in giving was directed to Congregational Finances and the internal operations of the congregation, and the level of support being directed to Benevolences decreased. The increases in the level of giving experienced by these denominations apparently have been focused on institutional survival.

Rather, the connection between a higher per member contribution to overseas ministries and growth in membership would suggest that a denomination which wanted to grow in members might develop an overarching, clear goal supported by most congregations in the denomination. The goal would need to be consistent with the faith and theological perspective of the denomination, and be a goal in which current members are willing to invest increasing financial resources on a per member basis over a period of time. Overseas ministries has served this role for many denominations in the past, including for some, the very recent past. Preliminary, exploratory analysis of the data suggests that an agreed-upon mission vision, however the denomination defines it, that will result in a growing financial commitment from current church members, may be connected to encouraging membership growth in addition to increased financial support.

One final observation can be made at this point. It may be difficult for an individual denomination to develop an overarching goal that is comprehensive enough to challenge the imaginations, and as a consequence the wallets, of church members in the 1990s. If the goal is sufficiently large to evoke a committed response, the denomination may experience the related problem that church members exposed to a comprehensive world view through a mass communication source, for example, Cable News Network (CNN), will feel the task is too large for their single denomination to play a significant role, and therefore they will not embrace a goal they perceive will lead to eventual failure. Rather, a possibly effective alternative would be for a broad grouping of denominations to outline a vision which many communions can embrace, and then individually pursue their unique contribution within the broader context. For example, it is estimated that 35,000 children under the age of five die annually around the globe, most from preventable poverty-related conditions. Further, many of these children and their parents live in areas which have not been exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ as a viable choice of faith. If the goal of ending these unnecessary child deaths in Jesus' name were adopted by a broad spectrum of churches as a common agenda—an affirmation of the broader historically Christian church in the U.S., so to speak—then each denomination could approach its own church members about their vital role in engaging the general overarching challenge. If a denomination chose to emphasize medical care, educational institutions, the distribution of Bibles, agricultural development, etc., or some combination thereof, the individual church member might then feel his or her contribution sat within a larger context that was integrated into the culture of what it means to be a Christian in the U.S. as the 21st century approaches.

**Summary.** It is proposed that a unified theory of giving and membership may provide new insights and ways of thinking about the declines in membership which have been

observed in some denominations over the past 30 years. Membership in a set of 38 historically Christian denominations declined as a percentage of U.S. population between 1968 and 1993. The rates of decline varied among subgroups within the larger set of communions, with some individual denominations within the group posting increases.

Giving as a percentage of income declined before membership declines began in ten mainline Protestant denominations.

A decline in giving as a percentage of income was evident during the 26-year period from 1968 to 1993 in eight evangelical denominations even while the group posted membership increases. However, the rate of membership growth slowed in the last third of the time period as the percentage of income given continued to decline. When the group was enlarged to include seven additional communions, a similar pattern emerged.

Data for the Southern Baptist Convention followed a similar pattern.

Membership grew in the Roman Catholic Church between 1968 and 1993 period, and as a percentage of U.S. population from 1985 to 1993. The role of immigration of Catholics to the U.S., as well as population increases among ethnic groups in the U.S., need to be explored to understand membership trends in the Catholic Church in more depth.

It is hypothesized there is a connection between a decline in giving per member to the church and a slowing in rates of membership growth, or in actual declines of membership levels.

Two Protestant denominations with increasing per member contributions to their overseas ministries also had increasing membership. Three denominations with decreasing per member contributions to overseas ministries also had decreasing membership.

The two Protestant denominations with increasing per member contributions to overseas ministries had lower levels of per member contributions to that category in 1991 than in 1987. Both of these denominations also experienced a slowing in the rate of growth of new members between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s.

One possible implication of the hypothesis that there is a connection between per member giving and membership trends is that a denomination with a goal of reversing declining membership trends may want to work at developing a common mission vision among its supporting congregations, perhaps a vision embraced by many different communions, that results in the increase of per member contributions to support that vision; this increasing level of support may create favorable conditions for membership growth.

## Appendix A: List of Denominations

### **Church Member Giving, 1968-1993**

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.  
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church  
(General Synod)  
Brethren in Christ Church  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Church of God (Anderson, Ind.)  
Church of God General Conference (Oregon, Ill.)  
Church of the Brethren  
Church of the Nazarene  
Conservative Congregational Christian Conference  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
Evangelical Congregational Church  
Evangelical Covenant Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
The American Lutheran Church (merged 1987)  
Lutheran Church in America (merged 1987)  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Evangelical Mennonite Church  
Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches  
Free Methodist Church of North America  
Friends United Meeting (through 1990)  
General Association of General Baptists  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Mennonite Church  
Moravian Church in America, Northern Province  
North American Baptist Conference  
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Reformed Church in America  
Seventh-day Adventists  
Southern Baptist Convention  
United Church of Christ  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

### **Unified Theory, Membership in 11 Mainline Protestant Denominations, 1968-1993**

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Church of the Brethren  
The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Am.  
Friends United Meeting  
Moravian Church in America, Northern Prov.  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Reformed Church in America  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church

### **Unified Theory, Giving in 10 Mainline Protestant Denominations, 1968-1993**

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Church of the Brethren

The Episcopal Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Am.  
Moravian Church in America, Northern Prov.  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Reformed Church in America  
United Church of Christ  
The United Methodist Church

### **Unified Theory, 15 Conservative and Evangelical Denominations, 1968-1993**

Assemblies of God  
Baptist General Conference  
Brethren in Christ Church  
Christian and Missionary Alliance  
Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.)  
Church of the Nazarene  
Conservative Cong. Christian Conf.  
Evangelical Congregational Church  
Evangelical Mennonite Church  
Fellowship of Evan. Bible Churches  
Free Methodist Church of North America  
General Association of General Baptists  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Salvation Army  
Southern Baptist Convention

### **Unified Theory, Add 26 Denominations, 1968-1993**

Assemblies of God  
Associate Reformed Presby. Ch (Gen Synod)  
Baptist General Conference  
Brethren in Christ Church  
Christian and Missionary Alliance  
Church of God (Anderson, IN)  
Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.)  
Church of God, Gen. Conf. (Oregon, IL)  
Church of the Nazarene  
Conservative Cong. Christian Conf.  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
Evangelical Congregational Church  
Evangelical Covenant Church  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Evangelical Mennonite Church  
Fellowship of Evan. Bible Churches  
Free Methodist Church of North America  
General Association of General Baptists  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Mennonite Church  
North American Baptist Conference  
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Salvation Army  
Seventh-day Adventists  
Southern Baptist Convention  
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Note: The data used in these analyses is available in the full published version of *The State of Church Giving through 1993*.