MEMBERS' PERCEPTION OF THE CHURCH'S ROLE

AS AN AGENCY OF HELP FOR FAMILY LIFE

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the

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(ABSTRACT)

Questionnaire responses of 244 active church
members regarding the church's role in providing
programs and services for family life needs and issues
were analyzed. The sample were members of Christian
Churches/Churches of Christ, 16 years old and older who
attended at least one church service per month. The
major predictors of a church member's general attitude
concerning the church providing programs/services for
family life are age and feelings of general needs of
families in America. The younger members tend to be
more interested in a wider variety of church sponsored
programs/services while older members are less
supportive of a broad spectrum of family life programs.

The greater the church member's feelings of needs of families in general the more positive their expressed attitude about the church offering programs/services.

There is also a systematic relationship between gender of the church members and their attitude toward the church providing family programs/services. Females tend to hold the stronger feelings, both positive and negative, while males tend to express the more moderate attitudes. A relatively strong positive correlation was found between the church member's awareness of the availability of a specific program or service and their perception of the appropriateness of the church offering the program or service.

Counseling is perceived as a priority for the church to offer, with the exceptions of pregnancy counseling and financial counseling. Programs and services dealing with aging issues and for the elderly tend to be ranked low in priority for the church to offer, as well as programs and services in connection with community services. Systematic relationships between specific programs/services and various demographic measures or church involvement measures are also discussed.

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My family receives my deepest thanks. In many ways, they are the beginning and the end of my studies and research in family life. They are the beginning in

that they provide me with such motivation and interest
in family life, and they are the end in that the
enrichment of our lives together is a primary goal. So,
to   and   I say thanks for
sharing "Dad" with "Tech," and thanks for being so
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much to allow us to realize our dreams, and thanks for
being such a wonderful person with whom to share the
dreams. She is my colleague in life.

Finally, and most importantly, I acknowledge the
blessings of my Lord. My life, my ministry, and thus
this thesis are dedicated to His Kingdom (the church),
and for His purposes among His people (families).

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MEMBERS' PERCEPTION OF THE CHURCH'S ROLE
AS AN AGENCY OF HELP FOR FAMILY LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Churches and clergy are in a position within
communities to interact with family systems. In fact,
the church is an organization that has complete families
in its clientele, and provides ritualized experiences
for persons passing through the developmental stages of
family life (Sawin, 1980). This puts churches and
clergy in a position to act as agencies and agents of
help for families, and to promote healthy family life
(Anderson, 1980; Friedman, 1985; Sawin, 1980, 1981).
Many church leaders (Anderson, 1980; Anderson &
Guernsey, 1985; Collins, 1976; Howell, 1984; Money,

1978), as well as professional educators in family life
(Duvall, Mace, & Popenoe, 1964; Mace & Mace, 1977) have
emphasized the importance of the church's addressing
family life concerns.

Recently, there have been several books published
by church affiliated publishers outlining procedures for
developing family life ministries within the programs of
local churches (Guernsey, 1982; Hinkle, & Cook, 1978;
Louthan & Martin, 1977; Money, 1987; Rickerson, 1978;
Sell, 1981). The emphasis within churches on family
life is growing, as ways are being developed to address
family issues and needs.

As churches, and religious organizations sponsored
by churches, explore applications of being agencies of
help for families, many decisions will be made
concerning programs, services, use of resources, and
staff involvement.

It is important for the church leaders making
these decisions to be informed on the needs of
families, and to make efforts to develop programs
designed to meet such needs. The literature available
for guiding a local church in establishing a family
ministry generally emphasizes the importance of some
type of needs assessment (Hinkle & Cook, 1978; Howell,
1984; Money, 1987; Rickerson, 1987; Sell, 1981),

ranging from brief outlines of general needs to
suggestions of paper and pencil surveys to give the
constituency. In each case, an awareness of needs is a
starting point for developing programs and services for
family life.

Statement of the Problem

In all of the available literature challenging the
church to develop specific programs and services to
address family life needs and issues, a basic assumption
is being made. The assumption is that if the leaders
and members of a church become aware of a need related
to family life, and the church then designs a program to
meet the need, limited only by the available resources,
families will participate. It is being assumed that
given the necessary resources, need awareness is the
major prerequisite to motivate people to participate in
a program, either as a supporter or client.

The weakness of this assumption is that it does
not consider people's perception of the church's role as
an agency of help for families. It is very possible
that a church member's willingness to support and to
participate in offered family life programs will be
mediated by their perception of what the church should,
and should not, be involved in providing. A person may

be aware of the significance of a program or service in meeting family needs, and yet not perceive it as within the realm of the church's role. In addition to a needs assessment, a church or religious organization should ascertain its constituency's perception of the church's role as an agency of help for family life. Foundational efforts for programs and services within a local congregation for families may need to include a process of educating the constituency concerning the church's potential in promoting family life.

The Purpose of the Current Research

This thesis is the report of such an assessment of members' perceptions of the church's role in helping families through specific programs and services. This report is of a descriptive research project using a survey design. The active members of six congregations in the Roanoke, Virginia area were surveyed to assess their perception of the church's role, and potential role, as an agency of help and promotion for healthy family life.

The purpose of the research was to provide a basis for making informed decisions about the development of future programs, services, and resources, and to provide a means of evaluating the appropriateness

and adequacy of the current programs, services, and resources. It was also within the purpose of this study to provide a basis for an agenda of action for the local churches. Such an assessment will to help identify areas where, if there is a need to be met, the first priority may have to be efforts to educate the membership about the church's potential in helping family life by meeting the need.

Research Questions

There are two related, but distinct, perspectives of the questions to be addressed. A part of this research concerned individual church member's general attitude about the church's role as an agency of help for families, and what factors influenced that attitude. Another part of this research concerned the attitude of the collective population of active church members toward specific programs and services the church might provide, and what factors influenced this attitude. These perspectives are reflected in the following specific research questions:

1. Is there a perception among church members of specific programs and/or services as being appropriate or inappropriate for the church to offer?

2. Is there a correlation between an awareness of the availability of specific programs and services with church members' perception of the program or service being appropriate for the church to offer?

3. Is there a systematic relationship between a church member's general attitude about the church's involvement in family life programs (low to high) and gender, age, education, marital and parental status, length of residence, or various measures of church involvement (frequency of attendance, length of time attending, attending with family, holding a church position)?

4. Is there a systematic relationship of gender, age, education, marital and parental status, length of residence, or various measures of church involvement (frequency of attendance, length of time attending, attending with family, holding a church position) with a respondent's approval of the church offering specific family life programs and services?

5. Is a church member's general attitude about the church offering family life programs and services related to the availability of specific programs and

services in the church's program?

6. Will a church member who senses a greater need
among American families in general be more likely to
expect the church to provide more services and programs
for family life?

7. Will church members tend to approve more
preventive (educational) types of programs and services
or more interventive (direct service) types of programs
and services?

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

General: Relationship of Religion and Family Life

The 1960's, 70's, and 80's have brought a
tremendous increase in the number of published research
articles in the area of religion and family life
(Appendix C). The relationships of religion and a
variety of specific family topics have been addressed.
Articles have been published discussing religion and the
following: family stability (Babchuk, Crockett, &
Ballweg, 1967; Crockett, Babchuk, & Ballweg, 1969);
family values (Baker, 1965; Landis, 1960); family
education and enrichment (Anderson, 1974; Sawin, 1980,
1981); and family authority structure (Larson, 1967).
Also, the influence of religion on attitudes has been an
area of research, looking at attitudes toward such
issues as abortion (Clayton & Tolone, 1973; Renzi,
1975), premarital sex (Clayton, 1971), and fertility
(Bahr & Chadwick, 1985). Religion and socialization has
been an area of research (Fichter, 1962; Hoge, Petrillo
& Smith, 1982; Wieting, 1975), as well as the mutual
influence of religion and family (Thornton, 1985;

Zimmerman, 1973; 1974). Research has also reported on the influence of religion upon family policy (McNamara, 1985; Pankhurst & Houseknecht, 1983).

Perhaps the most popular area of research dealing with religion and family has focused on marriage. The relationships of religion and such topics as marital happiness (Carey, 1967; Kunz & Albrecht, 1977), interfaith marriage (Heiss, 1961: Kenkel, Joyce & Cole, 1965), marital adjustment (Filsinger & Wilson, 1984; Wilson & Filsinger, 1986), marital stability (Shrum, 1980), and marital satisfaction (Hatch, James, & Schumm, 1986) have been introduced in the journals.

This growing number of published articles on various aspects of relationships between family life and religion is a demonstration of the developing awareness of the significance of the relationship (Thomas & Henry, 1985). Yet, most of the research has focused, ex post facto, on an individual's religiosity and the relationship this has to his or her actions, attitudes, marriage, and family life. As important and beneficial as this is, it does not address the issue of the intentional efforts of a church as an organization to promote healthy family life. There have been two articles reporting research on the clergy's role as family helper (Allen, 1975; Mezydlo, 1973), but they

have focused specifically on the clergy's role in marriage counseling and family planning counseling.

The available research establishes the significance of the relationship of religion and family life, and it is very helpful in developing content for a church's family life program. However, there are still the questions about what is perceived as "help," and whether the church is perceived as a source of such "help".

Two specific studies help to highlight this concern. A study was done by McKeon and Piercy (1983) that examined what priests and ministers consider healthy family functioning, and compared it to what family therapists consider healthy functioning for families. The authors indicated considerable agreement among all three groups concerning family unity, adaptability, and communication. However, the researchers also point out some differences in areas such as individual autonomy within the family and the authority structure. The results of the study concerning the perceptions of the different family helpers (priests, ministers, therapists) suggest that assumptions are made, and may be different, concerning family needs. Families also may differ in their perceptions of what they consider to be helpful.

A study by D'Antonio, Newman, and Wright (1982)
examined the way social scientists tend to view the
relationship of religion and family life. Looking at
textbooks and journal articles, they coded the
literature as emphasizing either the social control
aspect of religion (in regard to subjects like divorce,
premarital sex, abortion, and interfaith marriages) or
the social support aspect (such as in familial love,
family solidarity, self-esteem, marital stability,
marital satisfaction, and family values and meanings).
This study (D'Antonio, Newman, & Wright, 1982) indicated
a considerable imbalance with the social control aspect
as the dominant perception of religion expressed by
social scientists in the literature. Their findings
underscore the absence within the social science
literature of an exploration of what the church can do
as a social support, or helping agency, for the family.

Specific: Literature on Churches' Family Life Programs

The published literature that is available
discussing the role of the church as an agency of help
for families is primarily from church related
publishers.

The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has been
promoting Family Life programs through their printed

materials for several years (Hinkle & Cook, 1978),

having a "Family Ministry" department for that purpose.

Also, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has

provided a resource on this subject in the "Leadership

Series" (Howell, 1984).

Dr. Royce Money, Associate Professor in the

Marriage and Family Institute at Abilene Christian

University, has made an important contribution in this

subject area. His first book on family enrichment

(1984) provides "self-help" ideas for families, but also

offers some basic suggestions for a church sponsored

family ministry. He followed this work with a second

book (1987) which is a detailed guide for a local church

working to establish a Family Ministry.

Wayne Rickerson has published two books (1978,

1987) with specific suggestions for church sponsored

family life programs, writing from the Churches of

Christ/Christian Churches perspective. The most

comprehensive work on Family Ministry has been provided

by Charles Sell (1981), professor at Trinity

Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Also, family life programs and services are discussed in

some of the Christian education textbooks (Daniel, Wade,

& Gresham, 1987; O'Bryne, 1984; Richards, 1978).

It is probable that other major denominations have

their own in-house publications on family life programs and services. However, the books listed here are the resources most likely to be found in the popular Christian bookstores, and promoted in evangelical magazines and journals.

As stated earlier, these books on church sponsored family life programs and services do not address the issue of church members' perception of the church's role in helping families. However, the specific programs and services listed in the survey instrument for this research are supported by the principles in the books listed above, and many are suggested for churches by these authors.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample for this study was taken from the
congregations of the Churches of Christ/Christian
Churches in the Roanoke, Virginia, area. "Church of
Christ" and "Christian Church" are designations used by
congregations having historical and doctrinal roots in
what is known as the Restoration Movement. The
Restoration Movement, which began in the early 1800's
(c. 1807-1809), is indigenous to the United States. It
was an effort to move away from ecclesiastical divisions
and distinctions that had developed within the European
Protestant structure, and to bring about a renewed
emphasis, in Christian writings and preaching, on the
authority of Scripture apart from creedal statements and
ecclesiastical organizations. Today, there are
approximately 6,000 of these congregations throughout
the United States, but with a major concentration in the
Midwest (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois).

Because of its foundational concerns, the
Restoration Movement has not developed organizations

with authority above the local congregation. The autonomy of the local congregation is a basic tenet of these churches, and they are often referred to as independent and non-denominational.

There is a sense of identity and fellowship among these churches on a national level, but no central organizational structure. A directory is printed each year listing congregations, ministry agencies supported by these churches, and personnel. However, this directory is offered as a service and information is obtained only as churches voluntarily submit it. There is no source for accurate, detailed demographic information on the membership of the Churches of Christ/ Christian Churches on a national level.

On a local level, there is often a close association among these churches and cooperative efforts in various programs. On such a localized level, information concerning the constituency of a group of Churches of Christ/Christian Churches would be available.

Such association is the case in the Roanoke, Virginia, area. There are six congregations of Churches of Christ/Christian Churches in the Roanoke area. Three of these are in the city of Roanoke, one is in Vinton, one is in Salem, and one is in Roanoke County outside

the city limits. The six congregations are of a variety
of sizes (from 33 to 263 active members at the time of
sample selection), and there is a variation of their
staffs. Three congregations have a single person staff
consisting of the preaching minister, and the other
three have a staff which includes a senior minister, an
associate minister, and a secretary. The combined
constituency of these six congregations includes people
living in a large city (pop. > 100,000), small towns
(pop. = 10,000), and rural areas.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from
these six congregations. The minister of each
congregation provided the names and mailing addresses of
all active members, 16 years old and older. The
ministers had been instructed to identify active
members, for the purposes of this study, as those who
were on the church's membership list and were currently
attending services at least once a month. The total
names on the six lists was 997. However, in order to
assure the sample would represent each of the six
congregations, the random selection was done from each
list separately, providing a type of stratified random
sample. The number of recipients of the survey was 500,
approximately 50% of the collective active membership of
the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches of the Roanoke

area, age 16 and older (see Table 1 for the number and
percentages for each congregation).

Of the 500 questionnaires mailed, 197 were returned
completed. The returned surveys were anonymous, but
they had been numbered, and an address file kept. This
made it possible to send a follow up note to those who
had not responded after two weeks. Of the 303 receiving
the follow up note, an additional 57 questionnaires were
returned. Of the 254 completed survey questionnaires, 7
indicated that they were not a member of the church, and
3 did not answer the question about church membership.
These 10 were discarded, making the research sample size
for analysis 244 (50.4% return of the questionnaires;
actual sample is approximately 24.5% of the active
membership, 16+ years old; see Tables 2 and 3 for
profiles of the sample). According to Babbie (1975, p.
265), a 50% response rate is "adequate" for analysis and
reporting.

Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire was designed for this
study. As a self-administered questionnaire, efforts
were made to make the instructions clear and concise,
and to ask the respondent only to mark the most accurate
response to each question. As the survey was being

Table 1

The sample: Questionnaires mailed, responses received, and final sample size.

CONGRE-GATIONS	No. of Names on Active Membership List	Question-naires Mailed (% of active members)	No. of Responses (% of question-naires mailed)	Question-naires Discarded	Final Sample (% of total sample)
1	240	100(41.7)	74(74)	1	73(29.9)
2	202	100(49.5)	67(67)	2	65(26.6)
3	263	137(52.1)	46(33.6)	1	45(18.4)
4	129	65(50.4)	27(41.5)	1	26(10.7)
5	130	65(50)	24(36.9)	1	23(9.4)
6	33	33(100)	16(48.5)	4	12(4.9)
TOTAL	997	500(50.2)	254(50.8)	10	n=244

Table 2

Demographic profile of the sample.[a]

Variable	Value	N	%
Gender[b]			
	males	93	38.1
	females	150	61.5
	(missing	1	.4)
Age			
	16-19	17	7.0
	20-29	36	14.8
	30-39	65	26.6
	40-49	43	17.6
	50-59	28	11.5
	60-69	42	17.2
	70+	13	5.3
Marital Status			
	single	38	15.6
	married	175	71.7
	divorced	6	2.5
	widowed	13	5.3
	divorced/remarried	9	3.7
	widowed/remarried	2	0.8
	(missing	1	0.4)
Parental Status			
	yes	186	76.2
	no	51	20.9
	(missing	7	2.9)
Education			
	less than 12th grade	54	22.1
	12th grade	87	35.7
	college	101	41.4
	(missing	2	0.8)
Length of Residence (at current address)			
	less than 2 years	48	19.7
	2 to 5 years	44	18.0
	5 to 10 years	34	13.9
	more than 10 years	118	48.4

[a] N = 244

[b] population gender (males/ N=425/ 42.6%) (females/ N=572/ 57.4%)

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Table 3

Church involvement profile of the sample. *

Variable	Value	N	%
Frequency of Church Attendance (the average number of church services attended per month)	1 to 5	63	25.8
	6 to 10	54	22.1
	10+	123	50.4
	(missing	4	1.6)
Length of Time Attending Church (number of years attending the current church)	1 to 5 years	62	25.4
	6 to 10 years	35	14.3
	10+ years	145	59.4
	(missing	2	0.8)
Attend With Family Members (family members attending church services with the respondent)	always	148	60.7
	usually	60	24.6
	occasionally	21	8.6
	never	8	3.3
	(missing	7	2.9)
Church Office or Position (hold an office or perform a regular task or service)	yes	141	57.8
	I have in the past, but not currently	58	23.8
	no	42	17.2
	(missing	3	1.2)

* N = 244

constructed, six people, not in the sample, answered the questionnaire as a pretest. Their comments were used to improve the wording of the survey questionnaire and the layout of the sections for maximum clarity.

The questionnaire was printed on two 11 x 17 sheets of paper (front and back) and folded into an 8 1/2 x 11 booklet, using 7 of the 8 pages (See Appendix A). It is organized in six sections. The first section of the form collected basic demographic information. There are 17 questions about gender, age, marital status, parental status, household size, residence, church involvement, education, and occupation. With the exception of occupation, the answers are grouped (pre-coded) so the respondent simply marks the category of choice.

The second section is called "General Needs of American Families." The respondents were asked to rate eight statements of general family needs on a five-point scale (from "not a need at all" to "needed greatly"). This section does not mention the church's role at all, but is a quick measure of each respondent's general feelings about the current condition of family life in America.

The third section is the primary component of the questionnaire, providing the basis for the statistical analysis. This section, titled "Specific Services and

Programs," provides a measure of the individual church member's perception of the appropriateness of the church providing specific family life programs and services. It is the basis of the analysis in the sense that the other measures obtained from the questionnaire will be analyzed in relation to the measures from section three.

In section three, 34 specific family services and programs are listed. The respondents were asked to indicate their personal opinion about the appropriateness of the church sponsoring, or providing, each of the services and programs. For each specific item, the respondent was to select one of four opinions: Should be a high priority of the church; possible program but not a high priority; church should not be involved; I don't know enough about the program (or no opinion).

The 34 items were selected from family ministry programs implemented in local churches of which the researcher is aware, and from suggestions in the literature. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but an effort was made for it to be comprehensive in scope. The 34 items address representative issues and needs of the various family developmental stages, and they include programs of a variety of sophistication. Some are rather simple and inexpensive while others

would require much more time, effort, money, and expertise. Some are occasional programs and services while others would need to be long term.

There is also a balance among the 34 items between preventive types of programs and resources and interventive services. The six people who took the pretest to help clarify the instrument, were also asked to code the 34 items as preventive or interventive in nature. The question asked was, "What do you see as the church's primary purpose in providing each of these programs and services if the church did provide them?" The possible responses were prevention (educational program designed to prepare for marriage or family dynamics), intervention (direct service programs designed to assist in a marriage or family process), or both (The instructions indicated that many of the items would involve an element of both purposes, but they were to mark "both" only if they felt the church's intentions would be close to a 50 - 50 split between prevention and intervention). Of the items, 12 were classified as primarily educational (prevention) in nature by all six respondents, and 12 were classified as types of direct services (intervention) by 5 of the respondents (the other respondent marked 11 of these 12 as intervention and the twelfth item as "both"). There

was less agreement on the other 10 items, but they received the rest of the "both" responses and a combination of prevention and intervention classifications, suggesting that they were seen as involving both purposes. Table 4 presents the coding of the 34 items into the prevention and intervention groups.

Section four of the survey questionnaire is called Availability of Services and Programs In Your Church." The list of 34 specific programs and services is repeated exactly as it is in section three, and the respondents were asked to indicate two things for each item. First, they indicated whether or not the program or service is currently available from the church of which they are a member, and secondly, they indicated their feelings about the current or future availability of each item. In indicating their feelings about the availability of each item, their response was a choice of three: "I'm glad it is available, or I wish it were"; "I'm unhappy it is available, or I would be unhappy if it were offered"; or "no opinion." A "don't know" category was also provided as a possible answer concerning the availability of each program and service.

Section five of the questionnaire concerns the respondent's participation in family life programs and

Table 4

Prevention and intervention subgroups.

SUBGROUPS	RATINGS BY THE PRETEST (N=6)		
	Preventive	Interventive	Both
PREVENTIVE: educational programs and services designed primarily to help prepare for marriage and/or family dynamics.			
1. marriage preparation classes	6	0	0
2. classes on child development	6	0	0
3. sex education for teenagers	6	0	0
4. classes on Christian family life	6	0	0
5. films/seminars on family topics	6	0	0
6. parent effectiveness training	6	0	0
7. referrals to community social services	6	0	0
8. family planning education	6	0	0
9. library of resources on family life	6	0	0
10. class on adult life and aging	6	0	0
11. marriage enrichment programs	6	0	0
12. advertise community programs on family life and issues	6	0	0
INTERVENTIVE: direct service programs designed to directly assist in a marriage and/or family process with active agency participation.			
1. day care programs for children	0	6	0
2. assistance for unwed mothers	0	6	0
3. family crisis counseling	0	5	1
4. shelter for abused children	0	6	0
5. crisis hot line	0	6	0
6. support group for families of the terminally ill (organized program)	0	6	0
7. foster care for children	0	6	0
8. day care program for elderly	0	6	0
9. support group for families of the handicapped	0	6	0
10. assistance for poor families	0	6	0
11. foster care for the elderly	0	6	0
12. shelter for abused women/families	0	6	0
OTHER:			
1. premarital counseling	3	0	3
2. financial counseling	2	3	1
3. newly married counseling	1	0	5
4. mothers'day out program	0	4	2
5. marriage counseling	1	1	4
6. separation and divorce counseling	0	3	3
7. grief counseling	1	2	3
8. staff person trained in family life education	2	0	4
9. pregnancy counseling	0	0	6
10. referrals to professional counselors	1	1	4

their use of services. This section is titled "Your Personal Participation," and it repeats the same list of specific programs and services (with the exception of "staff person trained in family life education" which could not be answered in terms of an individual's participation). The respondents indicated past participation by yes or no responses, and probable future participation by yes, no, or don't know.

The final section, titled "Evaluation" provided the church members an opportunity to briefly evaluate their church's effectiveness in addressing general family needs and issues. In this section, eight general statements about meeting family needs were rated on a five-point scale from "not done at all" to "excellent". An "I don't know" response was also available. These eight general statements parallel the ones in section one. In the evaluation, these statements were worded operationally so the respondent could say whether or not they were being done.

The survey form had a brief introduction at the beginning and a statement of appreciation at the end. (It also included an appropriate cartoon to give it a personal appeal). The questionnaires were mailed by first-class mail, along with a stamped and addressed return envelope. The cover letter (Appendix B)

introduced the researcher and the project, and indicated the approval and support of their minister and church leaders. A pocket calender was also enclosed (since the mailing was done in January) as a token of appreciation.

Analysis

The responses on section three of the survey questionnaire are used to establish two basic measures for the analysis of the data in this research. These basic measures parallel the two perspectives of research questions discussed above.

First, a measure of each respondent's general attitude toward the church's involvement in providing family life services and programs is established by the sum of the 34 item scores in section three. A response of "should be a high priority" is scored as 4; "possible program but not high priority" is scored as 3; "no opinion/I don't know enough about the program" is scored as 2; and "church should not be involved" is scored as 1. Also, no response is coded as "no opinion". Thus, the potential range is 34 to 136, and a comparison of this measure among the respondents indicates those who are more approving (higher General Attitude Measure) of the church providing family life programs and services, and those who are less approving

(lower General Attitude Measure).

Because the 34 items represent a variety of needs and issues reflecting the different developmental stages of family life, the General Attitude Measure (GAM) is protected against special interest. A high score on the GAM represents an individual's interest and approval of the church meeting a broad spectrum of family needs, in a variety of ways. Conversely, a low score indicates disapproval, lack of interest (perhaps narrow interest), or an absence of knowledge about family life programs. The survey instrument provides no explanation or description of the specific programs, thus the responses are based on the knowledge and experiences the respondent brings to the questionnaire. It is possible, and probable, that different respondents have different conceptions of what the 34 specific programs and services are or would involve when implemented in a church setting. This variance of meanings assigned to the names of the programs would need to be addressed before a church implemented these programs, but it is not an issue in this study. The responses provide an indication of the church member's feelings about the level of involvement the church should provide in dealing with each of the areas of need or concern, regardless of the specific details of the actual

implementation of the programs and services. The

General Attitude Measure(GAM) is used to address

research questions 3, 5, and 6 (see pages 5-7).

The General Attitude Measure scores are grouped

into categories to allow the use of the Chi-square test

of independence. This provides a test for a systematic

relationship between the respondent's general attitude

about the church's involvement in family life programs

and: gender, age, education, marital and parental

status, length of residence, and church involvement

(research question 3); the availability of specific

programs and services (research question 5); and the

respondent's perception of needs among American families

in general (research question 6). The statistical

significance of the computed Chi-square values was

tested at the .05 probability (p) level. To provide a

method for comparing the relative strengths of the

observed relationships, the contingency coefficient (C)

was computed for the relationships with statistically

significant Chi-square values (p < .05).

The second measure developed from the responses on

section three of the survey questionnaire concerns each

of the 34 specific programs and services individually.

Not only is it important to measure each respondent's

general attitude, it is important to measure the entire

sample's attitude about the church providing each specific program and service listed. The Sample's Attitude about a Specific Program (SASP) reflects the collective responses of the sample (n=244) on a specific item. The Sample's Attitude about a Specific Program (SASP) is measured for each of the 34 items in two ways; by arithmatic mean and by frequency.

To address research question 1, the SASP is measured by arithmetical mean of all 244 responses, using the same four-point coding as described above. Then the means of the 34 items are ranked. This demonstrates an order of the specific programs and services based on the sample's attitude about the church's role in providing them. To address research question two, the same ranking of the means of the SASP is used along with a ranking of the frequency of respondents indicating an awareness of the availability of each program and service. The Spearman rank order coefficient of correlation (rho) is used with these two rank orders to test for a correlation between the awareness of the availability of an item with the perception of the church's involvement in providing the program or service. The test of statistical significance of the Spearman rho correlation is conducted at the .05 probability level. The coefficient

of determination (r^2) is also computed.

To address research question 4, the SASP is measured by the frequencies of the four possible opinions within the samples'(n=244) response to each of the 34 items. This sets up the use of a Chi-square test of independence between each item and the other identified variables. This procedure looks for evidence of a systematic relationship between the sample's attitude toward the church's role in providing each of the specific services or programs and gender, age, education, marital and parental status, length of residence, and the measures of church involvement (frequency of attendance, length of time attending, attending with family, holding a church position). The computed Chi-square value is tested for statistical significance at the .05 probability level, and the contingency coefficient is computed for the relationships found to be significant.

In regards to research question 7, the sample's responses to the 12 items coded as "preventive" and the 12 items coded as"interventive" are used. The process of coding these is described on pages 23-24. The preventive subgroup includes the programs and services which the church would provide primarily as educational in purpose, to help people to understand and prepare for

marriage and family dynamics. This subgroup includes:
marriage preparation classes; classes on child
development; sex education for teenagers; classes on
Christian family life; films/seminars on family topics;
parent effectiveness training; referrals to community
social services; family planning education; library of
resources on family life; class on adult life and aging;
marriage enrichment programs; and advertising community
programs on family life and issues. The interventive
subgroup includes the programs and services which would
be provided by the church primarily as a direct service
designed to assist in a marriage or family process. The
interventive subgroup includes: day care programs for
children; assistance for unwed mothers; family crisis
counseling; shelter for abused children; crisis hot
line; support group for families of the terminally ill;
foster care for children; day care program for elderly;
support group for families of the handicapped;
assistance for poor families; foster care for the
elderly; and shelter for abused women/families.

The procedure used to test for a statistically
significant difference in the scores (sums of values for
each subgroup) for these two groups is the Wilcoxon
Matched-Pairs Signed-Rank Test. The Wilcoxon procedure
determines the difference in the two subgroup scores for

each respondent, ranks the absolute values of the difference scores, and places the sign (+ or -) of the difference score with the rank. The sum of the ranks with the less frequent sign generates the statistic (T). For larger samples (n > 25), such as this study, the distribution approximates the normal distribution. The Wilcoxon procedure examines whether the church members tend to approve the church's provision of interventive type programs more than, less than, or about the same as the preventive type programs (p < .05).

All the data obtained by this descriptive survey are nominal and ordinal. The Chi-square test of independence is the appropriate procedure for testing for systematic relationships between the measures described above (from section three of the questionnaire, and the variables from the other sections: gender, age, marital and parental status, education, residence, church involvement, perception of general family needs, and availability of programs and services). The Wilcoxon is the appropriate non-parametric procedure for two dependent samples as the non-parametric parallel to the correlated t test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, there was a positive response from the church members concerning the church's involvement in providing all 34 of the specific programs and services. Table 5 presents the frequencies of each of the four responses on each of the 34 items from section three of the questionnaire, with percentages of the total sample (n=244). Considering the responses "should be a high priority of the church" and "possible program but not high priority" as positive answers, all 34 items received more than 66% positive responses.

Even though the general response would seem to be positive on all 34 of the specific programs and services, the measurable variations among the responses address the research questions identified.

Research Question #1: Is there a perception among church members of specific programs and/or services as being appropriate or inappropriate for the church to offer?

Table 5

Frequency and percentage of responses:[a] 34 specific programs and services.

PROGRAMS /SERVICES	Should Be a High Priority of the Church	Possible Program But Not a High Priority	No Opinion or/I Don't Know Enough About the Program	Church Should Not Be Involved
-marriage preparation classes	156(63.9)	63(25.8)	24(9.8)	1(0.4)
-day care programs for children	87(35.7)	127(52.0)	18(7.4)	12(4.9)
-assistance for unwed mothers	72(29.5)	113(46.3)	46(18.9)	13(5.3)
-family crisis counseling	164(67.2)	59(24.2)	21(8.6)	0(0.0)
-classes on child development	71(29.1)	125(51.2)	28(11.5)	20(8.2)
-sex education for teenagers	118(48.4)	75(30.7)	20(8.2)	31(12.7)
-classes on Christian family life	203(83.2)	35(14.3)	5(2.0)	1(0.4)
-premarital counseling	174(71.3)	55(22.5)	11(4.5)	4(1.6)
-shelter for abused children	115(47.1)	76(31.1)	33(13.5)	20(8.2)
-films/seminars on family topics	120(49.2)	105(43.0)	15(6.1)	4(1.6)
-parent effectiveness training	101(41.4)	104(42.6)	34(13.9)	5(2.0)
-financial counseling	47(19.3)	115(47.1)	40(16.4)	42(17.2)
-crisis hot line	84(34.4)	84(34.4)	57(23.4)	19(7.8)
-support group for families of the terminally ill	112(45.9)	98(40.2)	28(11.5)	6(2.5)
-newly married counseling	119(48.8)	98(40.2)	24(9.8)	3(1.2)
-mothers' day out program	33(13.5)	141(57.8)	50(20.5)	20(8.2)
-foster care for children	60(24.6)	109(44.7)	45(18.4)	30(12.3)
-referrals to community social services	50(20.5)	117(48.0)	60(24.6)	17(7.0)
-marriage counseling	167(68.4)	64(26.2)	9(3.7)	4(1.6)
-separation and divorce counseling	161(66.0)	62(25.4)	17(7.0)	4(1.6)
-family planning education	58(23.8)	131(53.7)	30(12.3)	25(10.2)
-library of resources on family life	75(30.7)	130(53.3)	36(14.8)	3(1.2)
-day care program for elderly	69(28.3)	119(48.8)	38(15.6)	18(7.4)
-pregnancy counseling	66(27.0)	98(40.2)	46(18.9)	34(13.9)
-class on adult life and aging	54(22.1)	141(57.8)	38(15.6)	11(4.5)
-grief counseling	129(52.9)	91(37.3)	19(7.8)	5(2.0)
-support group for families of the handicapped	80(32.8)	127(52.0)	32(13.1)	5(2.0)
-assistance for poor families	154(63.1)	70(28.7)	18(7.4)	2(0.8)
-marriage enrichment programs	82(33.6)	121(49.6)	32(13.1)	9(3.7)
-staff person trained in family life education	71(29.1)	108(44.3)	58(23.8)	7(2.9)
-advertise community programs on family life and issues	52(21.3)	112(45.9)	63(25.8)	17(7.0)
-foster care for the elderly	55(22.5)	110(45.1)	59(24.2)	20(8.2)
-shelter for abused women/families	81(33.2)	91(37.3)	45(18.4)	27(11.1)
-referrals to professsional counselors	72(29.5)	104(42.6)	51(20.9)	17(7.0)

[a] N = 244 / percentage of N for each response in parentheses.

The means of the samples' (n=244) responses on each
of the 34 items (SASP) are listed in descending order in
Table 6.   The means range from 3.803 (classes on
Christian family life) to 2.684 (financial counseling).
The rank order suggests that the programs and services
toward the top of the list are those that are more
"comfortably" seen as appropriate for the church to
offer.   The responses do not demonstrate extreme
opposition to any of the items, but one would conclude
that those toward the bottom of the list are those less
"comfortably" seen as appropriate for the church to
offer.   The results do not indicate any of the specific
programs as inappropriate for the church to be involved
in offering, but they do indicate that church members
feel more strongly about the appropriateness of some
programs than others.

The top 10 specific programs and services in the
rank order of means of responses were also the top 10
in the rank of frequency of the response "should be a
high priority of the church."   (Table 7 presents the
ranking of the frequencies in all four of the possible
responses.) In fact, for these 10 specific items, 48.8%
to 83.2% of the respondents indicated the opinion that
they should be a high priority of the church's program.
This suggests that these ten specific programs and

Table 6

Ranking of the 34 specific programs and services: By the means of the

samples' attitude toward specific programs (SASP). [a]

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	MEAN
1. classes on Christian family life	3.803
2. premarital counseling	3.635
3. marriage counseling	3.615
4. family crisis counseling	3.586
5. separation and divorce counseling	3.557
6. assistance for poor families	3.541
7. marriage preparation classes	3.533
8. grief counseling	3.410
9. films/seminars on family topics	3.398
10. newly married counseling	3.365
11. support group for families of the terminally ill	3.295
12. parent effectiveness training	3.234
13. day care programs for children	3.184
14. shelter for abused children	3.172
15. support group for families of the handicapped	3.156
16. sex education for teenagers	3.148
17. library of resources on family life	3.135
18. marriage enrichment programs	3.131
19. classes on child development	3.012
20. assistance for unwed mothers	3.000
21. staff person trained in family life education	2.996
22. day care program for elderly	2.980
23. class on adult life and aging	2.975
24. crisis hot line	2.955
25. referrals to professional counselors	2.947
26. shelter for abused women/families	2.926
27. family planning education	2.910
28. referrals to community social services	2.820
29. foster care for the elderly	2.820
30. foster care for children	2.816
31. advertise community programs on family life and issues	2.816
32. pregnancy counseling	2.803
33. mothers' day out program	2.766
34. financial counseling	2.684

[a] N = 244 (response values = 1 to 4)

Table 7

Ranking of frequencies of each response.

PROGRAMS / SERVICES (Listed in the Rank Order of the Means of the SASP)	Should Be a High Priority of the Church	Possible Program But Not a High Priority	No Opinion or/I Don't Know Enough About the Program	Church Should Not Be Involved
classes on Christian family life	1	34	34	32/33
premarital counseling	2	33	32	25-28
marriage counseling	3	29	33	25-28
family crisis counseling	4	32	25	34
separation and divorce counseling	5	31	30	25-28
assistance for poor families	7	28	28/29	31
marriage preparation classes	6	30	23/24	32/33
grief counseling	8	23/24	27	22-24
films/seminars on family topics	9	17	31	25-28
newly married counseling	10	20-22	23/24	29/30
support group for families of the terminally ill	13	20-22	21/22	21
parent effectiveness training	14	18/19	16	22-24
day care programs for children	15	5/6	28/29	17
shelter for abused children	12	26	17	7-10
support group for families of the handicapped	19	5/6	18/19	22-24
sex education for teenagers	11	27	26	3
library of resources on family life	20	4	15	29/30
marriage enrichment programs	17	8	18/19	19
classes on child development	23/24	7	21/22	7-10
assistance for unwed mothers	21/22	12	8/9	16
staff person trained in family life education	23/24	16	4	20
day care program for elderly	25	9	13/14	12
class on adult life and aging	30	1/2	13/14	18
crisis hot line	16	25	5	11
referrals to professional counselors	21/22	18/19	6	13-15
shelter for abused women/families	18	23/24	10/11	5
family planning education	28	3	20	6
referrals to community social services	32	10	2	13-15
foster care for the elderly	29	14	3	7-10
foster care for children	27	15	10/11	4
advertise community programs on family life and issues	31	13	1	13-15
pregnancy counseling	26	20-22	8/9	2
mothers' day out program	34	1/2	7	7-10
financial counseling	33	11	12	1

services are clearly indicative of the types of help
for families that church members believe are the
priorities for the church to offer. These top 10
specific programs and services are: classes on
Christian family life; premarital counseling; marriage
counseling; family crisis counseling; separation and
divorce counseling; assistance for poor families;
marriage preparation classes; grief counseling;
films/seminars on family topics; and newly married
counseling.

This list of the 10 programs and services
perceived as of highest priority for the church to offer
includes 6 of the possible 8 items that deal with a
type of counseling. The two specific types of
counseling not ranked in the top 10 are pregnancy
counseling (ranked 32) and financial counseling (ranked
34). This suggests that church members do consider
counseling as one of the priority services the church
should be offering for families, but distinctions are
made in some people's perceptions between the topics
that are appropriate and those that are inappropriate
for the church to address.

The data of this study indicate that church
members feel strongly that the church should offer
counseling for couples in various situations

(premarital, newly married, marital, separation and divorce counseling) as well as family crisis counseling and grief counseling, but not pregnancy counseling or financial counseling. The list of 34 items used in this study covers a broad spectrum but it is not comprehensive of all possible programs, so there may be other topics of counseling some church members feel inappropriate for the church to address. The reasons for the distinction may include the feelings of sensitivity associated with subjects like finances and pregnancy, a feeling that these subjects require more expertise than the church can provide, or perhaps some type of negative connotations associated with certain topics in people's minds. Another study is needed to determine the rationale for the distinctions being made among types of counseling.

The specific items that are ranked in the bottom 10 of the list of 34 items are: referrals to professional counselors; shelter for abused women/families; family planning education; referrals to community social services; foster care for the elderly; foster care for children; advertise community programs on family life and issues; pregnancy counseling; mother's day out program; and financial counseling (Table 6). It can not be concluded that the population

perceives these as inappropriate for the church to offer, but support for such programs would be inhibited by the higher percentage of opposition, and the greater number of people who do not know enough about the program to state an opinion.

As the data reported in Table 7 suggest, financial counseling, pregnancy counseling, foster care for children, shelter for abused women/families, and family planning education are low in the overall ranking because they ranked 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 respectively in the ranking of the number of responses of "the church should not be involved." These specific items are indicative of the types of programs in which church leaders would meet the most opposition when implementing. Family planning education was also third in the ranking of "possible program but not a high priority."

Advertising community programs on family life and issues, referrals to community social services, foster care for the elderly, and referrals to professional counselors are low in the overall ranking of the 34 items primarily because they ranked 1, 2, 3, and 6 respectively in the number of "no opinion, or I don't know enough about the program" responses. These four items are indicative of the types of programs and

services that would not have great support from the
church members, not because of opposition, but because
of the uncertainties about what they involve. It is
interesting that the three specific items of the 34 that
deal with referrals or advertising community resources
are among these receiving a high percentage of "no
opinion or don't know enough about the program"
responses. This suggests an ambiguity among church
members concerning the church's interaction with the
community's resources, and perhaps a lack of knowledge
of available resources.

The other specific item in the bottom 10 of the
list is the mother's day out program. This item
received the highest number of the response "possible
program but not a high priority," which is considered a
positive response, but its overall ranking is so low
because it received the fewest responses of "should be a
high priority" and relatively high ranking in the
responses "no opinion or I don't know enough about the
program" (ranked 7) and "church should not be involved"
(ranked 7/10). This indicates that many see a
possibility for such a program but very few consider it
a priority.

The 14 programs and services in the middle range of
the ranking of means include: support group for

families of the terminally ill; parent effectiveness
training; day care programs for children; shelter for
abused children; support group for families of the
handicapped; sex education for teenagers; library of
resources on family life; marriage enrichment programs;
classes on child development; assistance for unwed
mothers; a staff person trained in family life
education; day care programs for elderly; class on adult
life and aging; and a crisis hot line. For the most
part, as Tables 5 & 7 indicate, these received more of
the middle responses ("possible program but not a high
priority" and "no opinion or I don't know enough about
the program") than the end responses ("should be a high
priority" and "church should not be involved"). The two
notable exceptions to this are shelter for abused
children and sex education for teenagers.

Shelter for abused children is ranked 14 overall,
but it received the 12th highest number of "should be a
high priority" response, and the 7th highest number of
the "church should not be involved" response. This type
of split response is even more pronounced with sex
education for teenagers. In the overall ranking of the
34 items, sex education is central with a rank of 16.
However, it received the 11th highest number of "should
be a high priority" responses, and the 3rd highest

number of the "church should not be involved" response.
This indicates the potentially controversial nature of
these two programs. The strong representation of the
two extreme opinions within the sample suggests that
there will be strong feelings on both sides of the
question of whether or not to provide these programs in
the church. These two programs, shelter for abused
children and sex education for teenagers, need to be
approached differently than the other mid-range priority
services and programs because of the tendency of more
polarized views.

This list of the ranking order of members'
perceptions of the church's priorities in providing
programs and services (Table 6), along with the
analysis, can provide the local church with a basis for
developing an agenda to guide a family life ministry
with the congregation and within a community. The
remainder of the research questions are designed to help
understand the dynamics influencing the attitudes about
the church's role in providing programs and services for
families as presented in response to research question
one.

Research Question #2: Is there a correlation between an
awareness of the availability of specific programs and

services with church members' perception of the program

or service being appropriate for the church to offer?

Intuitively, it seems that there is a correlation

between the availability of specific services and

peoples' attitudes toward those services. At first

glance, it seems that the programs and services most

often heard about in a church setting are toward the

top of the rank order list (e.g., classes on Christian

family life, premarital counseling, grief counseling,

films/seminars on family life), and programs not often

heard about in a church setting are toward the bottom

of the list (e.g., foster care for the elderly, shelter

for abused women/families, crisis hot line). This

correlation was confirmed by the Spearman rank order

coefficient of correlation.

Section four of the survey questionnaire asked the

respondents to indicate the availability of each of the

34 specific programs and services in their current

church's sponsored programs. This does not measure the

actual availability of the programs and services, but

measures the church members' awareness and perception of

the programs' and services' availability. Table 8

lists the number and percentage of respondents

indicating the availability of each of the items, and

Table 8

<u>Awareness of the availability of programs and services.</u> [a]

PROGRAMS / SERVICES	REPORTED AVAILABILITY		
	N	%	Rank
1. classes on Christian family life	109	44.7	5
2. premarital counseling	137	56.1	3
3. marriage counseling	139	57.0	2
4. family crisis counseling	67	27.5	9
5. separation and divorce counseling	101	41.4	6
6. assistance for poor families	158	64.8	1
7. marriage preparation classes	69	28.3	8
8. grief counseling	62	25.4	10
9. films/seminars on family topics	117	48.0	4
10. newly married counseling	61	25.0	11
11. support group for families of the terminally ill	14	5.7	23
12. parent effectiveness training	22	9.0	18
13. day care programs for children	44	18.0	12
14. shelter for abused children	3	1.2	33/34
15. support group for families of the handicapped	7	2.9	29
16. sex education for teenagers	33	13.5	15
17. library of resources on family life	73	29.9	7
18. marriage enrichment programs	31	12.7	16
19. classes on child development	16	6.6	21
20. assistance for unwed mothers	11	4.5	25/26
21. staff person trained in family life education	30	12.3	17
22. day care program for elderly	5	2.0	31
23. class on adult life and aging	10	4.1	27
24. crisis hot line	6	2.5	30
25. referrals to professional counselors	40	16.4	13
26. shelter for abused women/families	3	1.2	33/34
27. family planning education	13	5.3	24
28. referrals to community social services	38	15.6	14
29. foster care for the elderly	4	1.6	32
30. foster care for children	11	4.5	25/26
31. advertise community programs on family life and issues	19	7.8	19/20
32. pregnancy counseling	9	3.7	28
33. mothers' day out program	19	7.8	19/20
34. financial counseling	15	6.1	22

[a] Percentages of total sample (N = 244)

ranks the items by the awareness and perception of

availability. Using this rank order, and the one for

the overall ranking of priority for church involvement

listed in Table 6, the Spearman's Rho shows a

significant positive correlation (rho = 0.6843 / $p <$ .05

/ c.v. = 0.349). The coefficient of determination (r^2)

equals 0.468, meaning that 46.8% of the variance in the

rank of the 34 specific programs and services can be

explained by the variance in the awareness of

availability of the specific programs and services.

This is a relatively strong indication that the church

members tended to consider the specific programs and

services which they are aware of being available as the

most appropriate for the church to be involved in

providing. It is possible that the church

constituency's attitudes about appropriateness of

certain programs has dictated through the years the

selection and development of what is available.

However, if the current programs did actually reflect

the members' attitudes so closely, one might expect a

relatively high evaluation of the current program by the

members. In this study though, the evaluations were

relatively low as indicated in Table 9.

A more accurate explanation of the high correlation

between the awareness of availability and perception of

Table 9

General evaluation: the church's assistance for healthy family life.

KEY:	0 = I Do Not Know	3 = Adequate
	1 = Not Done At All	4 = Above Average
	2 = Done Very Poorly	5 = Excellent

1. Educating youth and children on healthy family functioning.
0 - 51 (21.6)[a]	3 - 75 (31.8)[46.3]	N = 236
1 - 23 (9.7)	4 - 41 (17.4)[25.3]	Mean = 2.326
2 - 31 (13.1)[19.1][b]	5 - 15 (6.4)[9.3]	SD = 1.565

2. Providing training and assistance for parents.
0 - 61 (25.6)	3 - 61 (25.6)[45.2]	N = 238
1 - 42 (17.6)	4 - 15 (6.3)[11.1]	Mean = 1.769
2 - 53 (22.3)[39.3]	5 - 6 (2.5)[4.4]	SD = 1.375

3. Providing information about resources that are available for families.
0 - 65 (27.3)	3 - 69 (29.0)[51.1]	N = 238
1 - 37 (15.5)	4 - 14 (6.3)[10.4]	Mean = 1.777
2 - 47 (19.7)[34.8]	5 - 5 (2.1)[3.7]	SD = 1.392

4. Providing crisis intervention for families.
0 - 84 (35.4)	3 - 34 (14.3)[34.0]	N = 237
1 - 53 (22.4)	4 - 12 (5.1)[12.0]	Mean = 1.464
2 - 42 (17.7)[42.0]	5 - 12 (5.1)[12.0]	SD = 1.471

5. Providing help and resources for families with special needs and problems. (i.e. families of handicapped, terminally ill, etc.)
0 - 54 (22.7)	3 - 57 (23.9)[37.7]	N = 238
1 - 33 (13.9)	4 - 30 (12.6)[19.9]	Mean = 2.176
2 - 42 (17.6)[27.8]	5 - 22 (9.0)[14.6]	SD = 1.613

6. Providing marriage preparation and guidance.
0 - 76 (31.9)	3 - 62 (26.1)[41.1]	N = 238
1 - 11 (4.6)	4 - 41 (16.8)[27.2]	Mean = 2.223
2 - 24 (10.1)[15.9]	5 - 24 (10.1)[15.9]	SD = 1.773

7. Providing support networking for families.
0 - 82 (34.5)	3 - 42 (17.6)[35.9]	N = 238
1 - 39 (16.4)	4 - 23 (9.7)[19.7]	Mean = 1.655
2 - 41 (17.2)[35.0]	5 - 11 (4.6)[9.4]	SD = 1.553

8. Training families in coping strategies.
0 - 88 (37.1)	3 - 36 (15.2)[38.3]	N = 237
1 - 55 (23.2)	4 - 15 (6.3)[16.0]	Mean = 1.316
2 - 42 (17.7)[44.7]	5 - 1 (0.4)[1.1]	SD = 1.304

[a] ( ) percentage of all responses.
[b] [ ] adjusted percentage; "I do not know" and "not done at all" responses are dropped; % of responses 2 - 5.

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appropriateness of the specific programs and services is
probably that the church members' perception of the role
of the church in providing programs and services for
family life is mediated by what they are comfortable
with, and their comfort is based on familiarity.
Another study is needed to further explore and explain
this correlation between awareness of availability of a
program and the attitude of the program being a priority
for the church to provide.

Research Question #3: Is there a systematic
relationship between a church member's general attitude
about the church's involvement in family life programs
(low to high) and gender, age, education, marital and
parental status, length of residence, or various
measures of church involvement (frequency of attendance,
length of time attending, attending with family, holding
a church position)?

     This research question moves the focus from the
sample's attitude toward each specific program (SASP)
listed in the survey questionnaire to the General
Attitude Measure (GAM), which is determined for each
respondent. The General Attitude Measure is the sum of
responses (values=1 to 4) on all 34 items for each

respondent. The range of the GAM among the sample
is 59 to 136, with a mean of 107.123 (n=244). For the
purpose of the Chi-square test of independence (X^2), the
GAM scores were grouped into four groups of relatively
the same size (see Table 10 for the N and range of each
group).

The assumption is that the General Attitude Measure
(GAM) is an indication of a person's overall feelings
about the church's involvement in providing family life
programs and services. The GAM is not skewed toward a
particular special interest because it is based on a
broad spectrum of programs and services. To establish
the consistency of the GAM with a respondent's opinion
about each of the 34 items, the Chi-square test of
independence was used in a 4 x 4 table with the
groupings of the GAM scores and the frequencies of the 4
responses of each of the 34 items. The results are
presented in Table 11, and indicate a direct
relationship between the GAM and the responses to each
of the 34 specific programs and services. The computed
X^2 value exceeded the critical value at the .001 level
in 30 of the tests, and at the .01 level in the other 4.
This establishes that the GAM does reflect the
respondent's attitude about each of the items across
the spectrum of types of programs and services

Table 10

<u>**N and range of four groups of General Attitude Measure (GAM) scores**</u>.

Value	Frequency	N / RANGE	Value	Frequency	N / RANGE
	(Group #1)			(Group #3)	
59	1		108	3	
61	1		109	3	
64	1		110	5	
67	2		111	6	
69	1		112	3	
71	1		113	11	62 / 108–118
72	1		114	7	
74	1		115	6	
75	1		116	10	
76	1		117	6	
77	1		118	2	
79	2				
80	1			(Group #4)	
81	3		119	5	
82	1	59 / 59–96	120	5	
83	2		121	3	
84	2		122	6	
85	2		123	4	
86	3		124	4	
87	2		125	4	
88	1		126	2	
89	6		127	5	62 / 119–136
90	3		128	4	
91	3		129	1	
92	3		130	5	
93	2		131	3	
94	3		132	1	
95	2		133	1	
96	6		134	1	
	(Group #2)		136	8	
97	2				
98	4				
99	2				
100	7				
101	7				
102	7	61 / 97–107		Mean = 107.123	
103	9				
104	4			SD = 16.216	
105	6				
106	5				
107	8				

addressing a broad range of issues and needs. Table 11 also indicates the contingency coefficient for each of the tests, which provides a comparison of the strengths of the relationships between the GAM and each of the 34 specific programs and services.

In most of the tests (20 of the 34), the expected frequency of several of the cells in the contingency tables were small (< 5), and so the tables were collapsed into 2 x 4 tables. The decision was made to do this, in this test and in all Chi-square tests of independence in this study, if more than 20% of the cells had an expected frequency of less than 5. This decision was based on the suggestions of Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1979).

To address research question #3, the Chi-square test of independence was computed for the relationship between the General Attitude Measure (GAM) and gender, age, education, marital status, parental status, length of residence, and four measures of church involvement (frequency of church attendance, length of time attending current church, family attending with respondent, respondent holding a church position). The results of these tests are listed in Table 12. The Chi-square tests show a systematic relationship between the GAM and gender ($X^2 = 8.724$, $p < .05$, $C = 0.186$) and

Table 11

Chi-square tests of independence: General attitude measure (GAM) by the 34 specific programs and services.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	CHI-SQUARE contingency tables (4 X 4)	(2 X 4)	C^a
1. classes on Christian family life		13.998**	.23
2. premarital counseling		7.459**	.17
3. marriage counseling		8.478**	.18
4. family crisis counseling	80.767***		.50
5. separation and divorce counseling		7.942**	.18
6. assistance for poor families		16.358***	.25
7. marriage preparation classes		18.569***	.27
8. grief counseling		17.385***	.26
9. films/seminars on family topics		11.693***	.21
10. newly married counseling		20.981***	.28
11. support group for families of the terminally ill		22.328***	.29
12. parent effectiveness training		28.658***	.32
13. day care programs for children		24.709***	.30
14. shelter for abused children	117.527***		.57
15. support group for families of the handicapped		29.851***	.33
16. sex education for teenagers	79.223***		.50
17. library of resources on family life		36.629***	.36
18. marriage enrichment programs		35.252***	.36
19. classes on child development	116.237***		.57
20. assistance for unwed mothers		41.282***	.38
21. staff person trained in family life education		63.606***	.45
22. day care program for elderly		53.230***	.42
23. class on adult life and aging		42.527***	.39
24. crisis hot line		74.064***	.48
25. referrals to professional counselors		43.368***	.39
26. shelter for abused women/families	132.456***		.59
27. family planning education	94.603***		.53
28. referrals to community social services		42.396***	.38
29. foster care for the elderly	136.968***		.60
30. foster care for children	146.694***		.61
31. advertise community programs on family life and issues		58.988***	.44
32. pregnancy counseling	149.118***		.62
33. mothers' day out program	64.040***		.46
34. financial counseling	126.644***		.58

* p < .05; . ** p < .01; *** p < .001.

^{a} Maximum contingency coefficient (4 x 4 table = .87) (2 x 4 table = .71).

Table 12

<u>Chi-square tests of independence: General attitude measure (GAM) by demographic measures.</u>

Variable	Contingency Table	Chi-square	C[a]
(Research question # 3)			
GENDER	4 x 2	8.724 *	0.186
AGE	4 x 3	16.218 *	0.250
MARITAL STATUS	4 x 3	11.691	
PARENTAL STATUS	4 x 2	7.692	
EDUCATION	4 x 3	9.555	
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	4 x 3	11.318	
FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANC	4 x 2	5.42	
LENGTH OF TIME ATTENDING CURRENT CHURCH	4 x 3	11.797	
FAMILY MEMBERS ATTEND WITH THE RESPONDENT	4 x 2	7.167	
RESPONDENT HOLDS A CHURCH POSITION	4 x 3	10.160	
(Research question # 6)			
AWARENESS OF GENERAL FAMILY NEEDS IN U.S.	4 x 4	71.495 ***	0.476

* $p < .05$;   ** $p < .01$;   *** $p < .001$.

[a] Maximum contingency coefficient for 4 x 2 table = 0.71;
     4 x 3 table = 0.82; 4 x 4 table = 0.87.

between GAM and age (X^2 = 16.218, p < .05, C = 0.250).

The contingency coefficient does not indicate a directional relationship, but the direction of the association can be observed from the contingency table. The contingency table of the General Attitude Measure by age indicates that the youngest age group (16-39) and the middle group (40-59) tend to have the higher GAM scores than the older group (60 and up), and the oldest group has an inflated percentage of the lower GAM scores. The indications are that the age of church members is systematically related to their perception of the church's role in providing programs and services for family life in that the younger the age group the higher the expectation (and approval) of the church's involvement.

The contingency table of the General Attitude Measure by gender suggests a nonlinear type of systematic relationship. For the males, there are fewer than expected frequencies in both the lowest GAM score group and the highest GAM score group. The opposite is true for females as there are more than expected frequencies in the lowest and highest GAM score groups. This suggest that female church members' perception of the church's role in helping family life will tend to be toward the extremes. Those with high expectations and

those who disapprove or expect low church involvement will tend to be women. The attitudes of the males are less dispersed about the mean, reflecting medium range attitudes about the church's involvement in providing programs for family life.

Research Question #4: Is there a systematic relationship of gender, age, education, marital and parental status, length of residence, or various measures of church involvement (frequency of attendance, length of time attending, attending with family, holding a church position) with a respondent's approval of the church offering specific family life programs and services?

Having tested for a relationship between the General Attitude Measure (GAM) and these identified demographic measures, the same demographic measures were tested for a systematic association with the samples' attitude toward each specific program and service (SASP). The Chi-square test of independence was computed on the relationship between the frequency of the four responses on each of the 34 items and each of the demographic measures listed in research question #4, using contingency tables of 4 x k (gender, k=2; age,

k=3; education, k=3; marital status, k=3; parental

status, k=2; length of residence, k=3; frequency of

church attendance, k=2; length of time attending, k=3;

family attends with respondent, k=2; holds church

position, k=3).

The results of these tests are presented in a

matrix in Table 13. The tests showing a statistically

significant relationship at the probability level of .05

are indicated. The contingency coefficient (C) is also

given as a means of comparing the relative strengths of

the associations. These data would be of value to any

church or religious group interested in establishing one

of these specific programs or a program similar in

purpose, because they indicate the demographic factors

that seem to have an influence, or some type of

systematic relationship with the church members'

attitudes toward the programs.

Another study is needed to explore the nature of

these relationships and to offer explanations of the

effects. However, the contingency tables do offer a

suggestion of the direction of the relationships, and

some general observations can be made subject to

verification.

Gender has a systematic association with the

sample's attitude (SASP) toward the church's sponsoring

Table 13

Contingency coefficients of the 34 specific programs and services by the demographic measures.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS / SERVICES:	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	PARENTAL STATUS	LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE	LENGTH OF TIME ATTENDING CHURCH	FAMILY ATTENDS WITH RESPONDENT	HOLDS A CHURCH POSITION
1. classes on Christian family life	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. premarital counseling	-	-	[C=.19]*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. marriage counseling	-	-	C=.23*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. family crisis counseling	-	C=.19*	C=.26***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. separation and divorce counseling	-	[C=.20]**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	[C=.28]***
6. assistance for poor families	-	-	-	-	[C=.17]**	-	-	-	-	-
7. marriage preparation classes	-	[C=.18]*	[C=.27]***	[C=.19]**	[C=.15]*	[C=.16]*	-	-	[C=.13]*	[C=.22]**
8. grief counseling	-	-	[C=.19]*	[C=.17]*	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. films/seminars on family topics	-	[C=.24]***	[C=.26]***	[C=.17]*	[C=.20]**	-	-	-	-	-
10. newly married counseling	-	-	[C=.17]*	-	-	-	[C=.20]**	-	-	[C=.20]**
11. support group for families of the terminally ill	-	[C=.18]*	[C=.18]*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. parent effectiveness training	-	[C=.22]**	[C=.19]**	-	-	-	-	-	[C=.18]*	-
13. day care programs for children	-	[C=.24]***	[C=.25]***	-	-	-	-	-	-	[C=.18]*

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Table 13

Contingency coefficients of the 34 specific programs and services by the demographic measures.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS / SERVICES:	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	PARENTAL STATUS	LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE	LENGTH OF TIME ATTENDING CHURCH	FAMILY ATTENDS WITH RESPONDENT	HOLDS A CHURCH POSITION
14. shelter for abused children	-	-	C=.26 **	-	C=.18 *	-	-	C=.23 *	-	-
15. support group for families of the handicapped	C=.16 *	[C=.16]	[C=.22] **	[C=.22] **	[C=.16] *	-	-	[C=.16]	-	[C=.22] **
16. sex education for teenagers	-	C=.26 **	C=.28 **	[C=.21] *	-	-	-	-	-	-
17. library of resources on family life	-	[C=.24] ***	[C=.21] **	[C=.18] *	[C=.14] *	-	[C=.16] *	-	-	[C=.24] ***
18. marriage enrichment programs	-	[C=.25] ***	[C=.21] **	[C=.17] *	-	-	-	-	-	C=.28 **
19. classes on child development	-	C=.28 **	C=.26 **	-	-	-	-	C=.23 *	C=.19	[C=.18] *
20. assistance for unwed mothers	-	C=.22 *	-	C=.24 *	C=.23 **	-	-	-	-	-
21. staff person trained in family life education	[C=.18] **	[C=.30] ***	[C=.30] ***	-	-	-	[C=.19] **	[C=.21] **	[C=.14] *	[C=.22] **
22. day care program for elderly	-	-	C=.24 *	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23. class on adult life and aging	-	-	[C=.22] **	[C=.20] **	C=.20 *	-	C=.19 *	-	-	C=.27 **
24. crisis hot line	-	C=.23 *	C=.30 ***	-	C=.18 *	-	-	-	-	-
25. referrals to professional counselors	-	-	-	-	C=.20 *	C=.27 **	-	-	-	C=.24 *
26. shelter for abused women/families	-	C=.22 *	C=.24 *	-	-	C=.24 *	-	C=.23 *	-	-

Table 13

Contingency coefficients of the 34 specific programs and services by the demographic measures.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS / SERVICES:	GENDER	AGE	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	PARENTAL STATUS	LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE	LENGTH OF TIME ATTENDING CHURCH	FAMILY ATTENDS WITH RESPONDENT	HOLDS A CHURCH POSITION
27. family planning education	-	C=.25*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C=.33***
28. referrals to community social services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29. foster care for the elderly	-	-	-	-	-	C=.23*	-	-	-	-
30. foster care for children	C=.18*	-	C=.27***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31. advertise community programs on family life and issues	-	C=.25*	C=.23*	-	-	-	-	C=.23*	-	C=.27**
32. pregnancy counseling	-	C=.31***	-	C=.27**	-	-	C=.28***	-	-	C=.27**
33. mothers' day out program	-	C=.33***	C=.23*	[C=.27]***	-	-	-	-	-	-
34. financial counseling	-	-	-	-	C=.22**	-	-	-	-	-
N =	243	244	242	243	243	244	240	242	237	241
K (number of groups in X²) =	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
Maximum C for 4 x K tables =	0.71	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.71	0.82	0.71	0.82	0.71	0.82

Maximum C for 2 x K tables = 0.71

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001
Contingency coefficients (C) of X² tables collapsed to 2 x K are reported in the brackets [ ].

foster care for children, support groups for families of the handicapped, and a staff person trained in family life education. Female respondents were more positive than males in attitude toward the foster care program, and males were more positive than females in attitude toward the other two.

Age relates in a systematic way to the responses on 20 of the 34 specific items (see Table 13 to identify the 20 items). In general, the data suggest that the younger the respondent (within the age parameters of the study) the more positive the attitude toward the church providing the specific programs and services. There are two notable exceptions to this. In regard to assistance for unwed mothers, the youngest group (16-39) gave more than the expected frequency of the response "possible program but not a high priority" and the oldest age group (60 and up) was polarized with more than the expected frequency of the responses "church should not be involved" and "should be a high priority." The other exception to the general observation of the younger the respondent the more positive the response is the attitudes toward classes on child development. In regard to classes on child development, the youngest group (16-39) had more than the expected frequency of "possible program but not a high priority," the middle

age group (40-59) had more than the expected frequency of "should be a high priority," and the oldest group (60 and up) was somewhat polarized giving more than the expected frequency of the responses "no opinion, or I don't know enough about the program" and "should be a high priority."

The respondents' education level is related to their opinions about the church offering 24 of the 34 specific programs and services (see Table 13). The general observation is that the more educated respondents (post secondary) expressed more positive attitudes about the church offering the programs. The exceptions to this include six items (sex education for teenagers, shelter for abused children, crisis hot line, foster care for children, day care program for elderly, and shelter for abused women/families) to which the higher educated group (post secondary) had more than the expected frequency of the response "possible program but not a high priority" and the lower education (less than 12th grade) and the middle education (high school graduate) groups were polarized in their responses with more than expected of both the positive and negative responses. The other exception to the general observation of the connection of higher education with more positive responses is in regard to the samples'

attitude about classes on child development. Regarding child development classes, the least educated group had more than the expected frequency of the "should be a high priority" response and the highest educated group had less than the expected frequency of the priority response and more than the expected frequency of the "possible program but not a high priority" response.

The Chi-square tests indicated a relationship between marital status and the responses to 11 of the specific programs and services (Table 13). The categories of the marital status were single, married, and all others (separated, divorced, and widowed grouped together). The general observation about the relationship of marital status and the samples' attitude (SASP) is that those who are married expressed more positive responses, and both the unmarried and the separated, divorced, and widowed group expressed more negative responses. The exception to this general direction of relationship is the responses to assistance for unwed mothers, to which the unmarried group gave a more positive response than to the other items.

The data indicate that parental status is systematically associated with the samples' attitude (SASP) about 11 of the specific items (see Table 13). In this case, the general observation is that those who

are parents tend to be more positive than those who are

not parents in their attitude about the church's

involvement in providing the specific programs and

services. In regard to shelter for abused children and

referrals to professional counselors, those who are not

parents gave more than the expected frequency of the

response "possible program but not a high priority."

The test for a relationship between the length of

time at their current residence and the respondents'

perception of the church's role in sponsoring family

life programs demonstrate an association with 4 of the

specific items (marriage preparation classes, foster

care for the elderly, shelter for abused women/families,

and referrals to professional counselors). In all four

cases the shortest length of time (less than 5 years)

had the more positive responses, and in each case the

longest length of time (more than 10 years) had more

than the expected frequency of the "no opinion, or I

don't know enough about the program" response. The

middle group (5 to 10 years) was somewhat polarized

between high priority and opposed to the program.

The other four factors examined in relationship to

the samples' attitude toward specific programs (SASP)

are measures of church involvement. The data indicate

that the frequency of church attendance is

systematically related to 5 specific programs and services (newly married counseling, library of resources on family life, pregnancy counseling, classes on adult life and aging, and a staff person trained in family life education). In each case, those who attend church services less than 10 times a month (counting Bible School, Sunday morning worship, Sunday evening worship, and the midweek Bible study) had more than the expected frequency of the response "no opinion, or I don't know enough about the program." In each case except pregnancy counseling, those who attend more than 10 services a month had more than the expected frequency of "should be a high priority" responses. In regard to pregnancy counseling, the higher attendance group indicated a polarized response between "high priority" and "church should not be involved."

Another measure of church involvement is the length of time attending the current church. The Chi-square tests of independence indicate that this measure is associated with the attitudes toward 6 of the specific items (classes on child development, shelter for abused children, support group for families of the handicapped, a staff person trained in family life education, advertising community programs on family life and issues, and shelter for abused women/families). In

general, those who have been attending the shortest
length of time (less than 5 years), which includes new
members, gave more than the expected frequency of the
positive responses of "should be a high priority" and
"possible program but not a high priority." The middle
group (attending 5 to 10 years), in all six of these
cases, gave more than the expected frequency of the
response "possible program but not a high priority."
The long term attending group (more than 10 years) gave
more than the expected frequency of the negative
responses for advertising community programs, and for
shelter for abused women/families, and more than the
expected frequency of the response "no opinion, or I
don't know enough about the program" concerning a staff
person trained in family life education. In regard to
the other three items (classes on child development,
shelter for abused children, support group for the
families of the handicapped), the long time attenders
indicated a polarity of responses between "should be a
high priority of the church" and the "no opinion, or I
don't know enough about the program" response.

Whether or not the respondent's family attends
church with them is another measure of church
involvement considered. This was found to be associated
with the attitude toward the church offering 4 of the

specific items (marriage preparation classes, classes on child development, parent effectiveness training, and a staff person trained in family life education). In all four cases, those who do attend church with a family member regularly gave more than the expected frequency of the positive responses, and those who do not attend church with family gave more than the expected frequency of the negative responses.

The final measurement of church involvement used in the tests of relationship with the SASP is whether or not the respondent holds an office in the church and/or performs a regular task or service (e.g. teaching, youth sponsor, singing in the choir, nursery help). This variable is systematically associated with 14 of the 34 specific programs and services (Table 13). The general direction of the relationship is that those who do hold positions (and perform tasks) in the church tend to give the more positive responses, while those who do not hold positions gave more than the expected frequency of the "no opinion, or I don't know enough about the program" response. There are a couple of notable exceptions to this generality. In response to the specific program of day care for children, those who do not hold positions indicated a polarity of answers between "should be a high priority" and "church should

not be involved," and in regard to support group for families of the handicapped, those who do not hold a position in the church gave more than the expected frequency of the response "should be a high priority."

Research Question #5: Is a church member's general attitude about about the church offering family life programs and services related to the availability of specific programs and services in the church's program?

The results examined in response to research question #2 show a strong positive correlation between the rank of perceived priority and the awareness of availability of the 34 specific programs and services. Research question #5 is a related question but asks if the overall attitude toward the church's involvement in providing family life programs and services (GAM) is systematically associated with the availability of any of the specific programs and services listed. The 4 x 3 contingency tables show statistically significant relationships between the GAM and the availability of 11 of the 34 specific programs and services. These are presented in Table 14, with the contingency coefficient of each as a method of comparing the relative strength of the relationships.

Table 14

Chi-square tests of independence: General attitude measure (GAM) by
the availability of the 34 specific programs and services.

| SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES | CHI-SQUARE contingency tables | | |
	(4 X 3)	(2 X 3)	C^a
1. classes on Christian family life	16.590*		.25
2. premarital counseling			
3. marriage counseling			
4. family crisis counseling	13.770*		.23
5. separation and divorce counseling			
6. assistance for poor families	13.013*		.23
7. marriage preparation classes			
8. grief counseling			
9. films/seminars on family topics			
10. newly married counseling			
11. support group for families of the terminally ill		6.153*	.17
12. parent effectiveness training	21.741**		.29
13. day care programs for children			
14. shelter for abused children			
15. support group for families of the handicapped			
16. sex education for teenagers			
17. library of resources on family life			
18. marriage enrichment programs	17.056**		.26
19. classes on child development			
20. assistance for unwed mothers			
21. staff person trained in family life education	15.355*		.24
22. day care program for elderly			
23. class on adult life and aging		7.393*	.17
24. crisis hot line			
25. referrals to professional counselors	19.449**		.27
26. shelter for abused women/families			
27. family planning education			
28. referrals to community social services			
29. foster care for the elderly			
30. foster care for children			
31. advertise community programs on family life and issues			
32. pregnancy counseling		6.429*	.16
33. mothers' day out program			
34. financial counseling		9.629**	.19

* p < .05;   ** p < .01.

^{a} Maximum contingency coefficient (4 x 3 table=.81) (2 x 3 table=.71).

The 11 specific programs are: classes on Christian
family life(X^2 = 16.590, p < .05); family crisis
counseling(X^2 = 13.770, p < .05); assistance for poor
families(X^2 = 13.013, p < .05); support group for
families of the terminally ill(X^2 = 6.153, p < .05);
parent effectiveness training(X^2 = 21.741, p < .01);
marriage enrichment programs(X^2 = 17.056, p < .01);
staff person trained in family life education(X^2 =
15.355, p < .05); class on adult life and aging(X^2 =
7.393, p < .05); referrals to professional counselors
(X^2 = 19.449, p < .01); pregnancy counseling(X^2 = 6.429,
p < .05) and financial counseling(X^2 = 9.629, p < .01).
The contingency tables for these Chi-square tests of
independence indicate that in each of the 11 cases,
those who said the program is available tend to have the
highest GAM. Also, in each of these 11 cases, the
respondents who said they did not know whether or not
the program was available tended to have the lowest GAM
scores. Those who indicated that these 11 programs and
services were not available had frequencies of the GAM
scores nearly equal to the expected frequencies of the
contingency tables, and the slight variations that were
observed tended to be toward the middle scores. The
general observation is that the church members'
awareness of the availability of these specific programs

is systematically related to their overall attitude
toward the church's involvement in offering programs to
assist family life. The observed relationship is that
knowing about the availability of these programs is
associated with more positive general attitudes than of
those who do not know if the programs are available.
Secondarily, those aware of a program's availability
have slightly higher GAM than of those aware that a
program is not available.

Research Question #6: Will a church member who senses a
greater need among American families in general be more
likely to expect the church to provide more services and
programs for family life?

Section two of the survey questionnaire measured
the respondents' feelings about the general needs of
American families. The responses (values=1 to 5) to the
eight questions in this section were added for each
respondent, providing a relative indication of their
feelings about the needs of families in general. These
totals of each respondent's answers concerning general
family needs were grouped into four categories of nearly
equal size for the purpose of computing Chi-square tests
of independence with the GAM and with each of the 34

items individually. The Chi-square test of independence

between the feelings of general family needs and the GAM

(see Table 12) shows a strong systematic relationship

(X^2 = 71.495, p < .001). The contingency coefficient

(C) is 0.476, indicating a relatviely strong

relationship (maximum C of a 4 x 4 table is

approximately = 0.866). The direction of the

association indicated in the contingency table is that

the greater the feeling of need for American families

the higher the GAM which means the more positive the

respondent is about the church providing programs and

services for family life.

The results of the Chi-square tests of independence

between the respondents' feeling of general needs of

American families and their attitudes about the church

providing each of the 34 specific programs or services

are presented in Table 15. The Chi-square values, the

statistically significant probability levels, and the

contingency coefficients (C) are given. The data

indicate a statistically significant relationship

between the feeling of general needs of the American

family and all of the 34 items except grief counseling

(see Table 15). The contingency coefficient provides an

indication of the relative strength of these

relationships. In each case, the direction of the

Table 15

Chi-square tests of independence: Sample's feelings about general

family needs by the sample's attitudes toward specific programs (SASP).

	CHI-SQUARE contingency tables		
SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	(4 X 4)	(2 X 4)	c^a
1. classes on Christian family life		19.687***	.28
2. premarital counseling		24.200***	.31
3. marriage counseling		25.298***	.31
4. family crisis counseling		23.677***	.31
5. separation and divorce counseling		24.014***	.31
6. assistance for poor families		19.705***	.28
7. marriage preparation classes		23.731***	.31
8. grief counseling			
9. films/seminars on family topics		12.634**	.23
10. newly married counseling		22.037***	.30
11. support group for families of the terminally ill		14.232**	.24
12. parent effectiveness training		17.590***	.27
13. day care programs for children		7.883*	.18
14. shelter for abused children	21.344*		.29
15. support group for families of the handicapped		17.677***	.27
16. sex education for teenagers	28.631***		.33
17. library of resources on family life		26.004***	.32
18. marriage enrichment programs		18.427***	.27
19. classes on child development		9.102*	.20
20. assistance for unwed mothers		9.569*	.20
21. staff person trained in family life education		26.786***	.32
22. day care program for elderly		12.074**	.22
23. class on adult life and aging		12.549**	.23
24. crisis hot line		26.350***	.32
25. referrals to professional counselors		20.899***	.29
26. shelter for abused women/families	31.372***		.35
27. family planning education	29.408***		.34
28. referrals to community social services		21.898***	.29
29. foster care for the elderly	25.569**		.32
30. foster care for children	31.104***		.35
31. advertise community programs on family life and issues		18.768***	.27
32. pregnancy counseling	38.495***		.38
33. mothers' day out program	23.689**		.31
34. financial counseling	46.490***		.41

* p < .05;   ** p < .01;   *** p < .001.

^{a} Maximum contingency coefficient (4 x 4 table=.87) (2 x 3 table=.71).

relationship is that the higher the indication of feeling of needs of American families in general the higher the response toward the church's involvement in providing the specific program or service. Actually, in the case of grief counseling, there is evidence of the same directional relationship but the computed Chi-square was not enough to be statistically significant.

Research Question #7: Will church members tend to approve more preventive (educational) types of programs and services or more interventive (direct service) types of programs and services?

A comparison of each respondent's sum of responses on the interventive subgroup of items and the preventive subgroup of items indicates that 121 scored higher on the preventive scale, and 96 scored higher on the interventive scale. The scores of the other 27 respondents were equal between the two subgroups.

However, the results of the Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Rank Test of the preventive type program scores and the interventive type program scores did not show a statistically significant difference. The computed z was 1.3024, and the critical value at the .05 level (two tailed test) is 1.960 (n=244). There is not sufficient

evidence to indicate that the church members tend to approve preventive types of programs or interventive types of programs one more than the other.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with the stated purpose, this project
has produced a list of possible programs and services
that could address family needs and issues within the
context of a church's sponsored activities, ranked in
an order of priority by the church constituency's
perception of the church's role as a helping agency for
family life (Table 6). The most direct application of
this information is in guiding the churches of the
Roanoke valley, and other churches similar in
constituency, in making decisions about programs to
maintain or to initiate. The stated purpose of this
project also included the provision of a framework to
understand the influences upon the constituency's
attitudes about the church's role as an agency of help
for family life.

The major predictors of a church member's general
attitude concerning the church providing programs and
services for family life are age and feelings of general
needs of families in America. The younger members tend
to be more interested in a wider variety of programs and

services being provided by the church, while older
members are less supportive of these programs and
services. It is not concluded from this that older
church members do not think the church can help
families, but that they do not particularly connect the
idea of helping with the offering of these particular
programs and services. It is possible that the older
church members have a tendency to feel that family needs
and problems should remain private, and that the
church's role in helping is in a general encouragement
mode, without directly addressing specific needs and
problems. However, the indications are that the age of
the church's membership will mediate their support of
the church's involvement in these types of programs and
services.

The church members' overall feelings of the needs
of families in America in general are also positively
related to their expressed attitudes about the church's
role in providing programs and services designed to meet
those needs. This supports the idea found in the church
sponsored literature indicating need awareness as a
prerequisite for establishing family life programs and
services. However, these data make clear the
importance of need awareness among the constituency, and
not just the leaders, as a prerequisite of the church

members' support for such programs.

The other major demographic measure that is correlated with the church members' general attitude toward the church providing family life programs and services is gender. However, the data do not suggest that one gender is more positive than the other, but that in this particular survey, the females tended to express the strongest views in both directions (positive and negative) while the males tended to express the more moderate views. This may suggest a systematic difference in the emotional level in regards to family needs and issues between males and females, or perhaps a systematic difference in the emotional investment in the church work in general. Such conclusions though would need to be verified by other research designed to measure the emotional level or intensity of the feelings.

In regard to the ranking of the 34 specific programs and services, some conclusions can be drawn. This research found no significant difference between the church members feelings toward preventive type programs and the intervention programs and services. This suggests that churches would have constituency interest and support for a family life program balanced with a standard curriculum of educational opportunities

regarding family life and issues, and a spectrum of direct services available to respond to specific problems and crises as they are presented.

It is also important to note the strong positive correlation (rho = 0.6843) between the ranking of the awareness of the availability of the specific programs and services with the ranking of the general attitude about the church providing the programs and services. This suggests the tendency to approve the more traditional forms of programs and services, and to be more cautious about the less traditional.

Considering the ranking of the 34 items, it can be noted that the three items that specifically address issues and needs of the elderly are in the lower third (32%) of the list. This points out the weakness of the church in identifying its role in helping the elderly. Also, the three items that deal with networking with community resources are in the lower third (29%) of the list, indicating the ambiguity of church members about the community role of the church. Actually, this may not be as pronounced within other groups of churches who make community action more of an objective of the church. However, among independent evangelical churches, community involvement is often secondary, and the members are often doctrinally unclear on how to

appropriately interact with community agencies that do not share the same evangelistic emphasis.

It should also be noted that 6 of the 8 items that include the word "counseling" are in the top third (29%) of the list. This clearly indicates that church members see counseling as a part of the church's task, but they are currently uncomfortable with the idea of financial counseling and pregnancy counseling. As suggested above in the report of the results, this may be because of a sensitivity about money and pregnancy issues, or it may be because the constituency feels a need for an expertise beyond the church's capability in these areas. In light of the correlation of this ranking with the ranking of the awareness of availability of programs, it may be that more church members are unfamiliar with these types of services within a church context. However, financial counseling and pregnancy counseling were first and second respectively in the number of responses of "church should not be involved," suggesting some strong opposition to the church offering these. This is particularly striking since the other six forms of counseling are high on the list.

The correlations observed between the specific programs/services and the demographic and church

involvement measures (reported in Table 13) will be particularly helpful to a church considering initiating one of the listed programs. This information provides insight into what factors may influence the church members interest and support in the program or service. Also, the data identify sex education for teen-agers and providing shelter for abused children as potentially the most controversial of the specific programs and services because of the strong polarized opinions.

Research Notes and Limitations

If this study were replicated, the researcher would make a few changes in the methodology. Rather than mail the questionnaires the next time, I would make arrangements to visit the assemblies of the congregations involved (a different Sunday for each congregation) and ask for members to make an immediate response on the instrument. The sample would be random in that it would involve active members who happened to be in attendance on that given day. However, my sense is that it would produce a more representative sample than the one obtained through the mail. The sample receiving the questionnaire was randomly selected, but the actual sample for analysis was dependent upon those

who took the time to respond. Even though it was a 50.8% response, the process perhaps systematically reduced the number of those who have the least interest (or awareness) in the subject of the church's role in helping families. Also, only 6.2% of the sample has been divorced. The actual numbers of the divorced active church members in the congregations studied are not available, but my guess is that it is higher than 6.2%.

Arranging to give the questionnaire directly to people asking for their immediate response would dictate a few other changes that would help the study. The instrument would be simplified and shortened. If possible, the responses would be made directly on computer scan sheets. (The data entering task of the current project was labor intensive, and caused a time lag in the process.) In addition to asking their opinions about specific types of programs, it would ask how the church could help their family right now, and how the church should be helping the families of their community. It would also ask their opinion of what percentage of the church's annual budget and what percentage of the staff's time should be directed to a family life ministry.

For future research, these same research questions

need to be addressed within other church denominations
in the Roanoke area and comparisons made. Also, it
would be beneficial to know if the perceptions of church
members of Churches of Christ/Christian Churches in
other areas differed greatly from those found in this
study. An important emphasis of future research on
this subject needs to be on what influences the church
member's attitude about what the church can and should
do for families. Do members basically assume the
attitude of the church leadership, and accept what they
are informed concerning the church's role in helping
families? Or does the church leadership reflect a
deeper, cultural, demograhically defined role dictated
by the attitudes of the people? The current study began
to examine what the church constituency feels is
appropriate for the church to provide for families. The
next step is to examine why they feel as they do.

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Appendix A

The Survey Instrument

CHURCH AND FAMILY LIFE SURVEY

Dear Fellow Christian,
     As you know, church leaders are constantly exploring ways to help the members of the Body of Christ to grow, serve, and to experience the abundant life our Lord has made possible. Your responses on this survey will be very important to the congregations of the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches in the Roanoke valley. This survey will help the leaders to make informed decisions and to gain insight into important matters involving both the church and the family life of our members.
     This form has been designed to be completed in just a few minutes. Simply mark the most accurate response, or fill in the blanks with just a brief comment. You do not need to give it alot of thought. Usually, the first response you think of will be the most accurate.
     The information on these sheets will remain confidential. Under no circumstances will your name be associated with these answers. (These forms are numbered only so we can follow up with a reminder in the case we do not receive this form back from you in a couple of weeks.) Please return the completed form in the envelope provided.
     Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Yours In Christ,
Jim Herron

****

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM

****

Please Mark the Most Accurate Answer. Check, or Circle, One Response for Each Question.

1. What is your gender?
   (1)male_____ (2)female_____

2. What is your age group? (1)16-19_____
   (2)20-29_____ (3)30-39_____
   (4)40-49_____ (5)50-59_____
   (6)60-69_____ (7)70+ _____

3. What is your present marital status?
   (1) single(never married) _____
   (2) married _____
   (3) separated _____
   (4) divorced _____
   (5) engaged _____
   (6) widowed _____
   (7) divorced/remarried _____
   (8) widowed/remarried _____

4. Are you a parent?
   (1) yes_____ (2) no_____

5. How many children do you have?
   (1)1_____ (2)2_____ (3)3_____
   (4)4_____ (5)5_____ (6)6+ _____
   (7) none_____

6. How many people live in your household? (including non-relatives)
   (1)1_____ (2)2_____ (3)3_____
   (4)4_____ (5)5_____ (6)6_____
   (7) 7+ _____

7. How would you describe your neighborhood?
   (1) city_____
   (2) small town_____
   (3) rural_____

8. Which of the following best describes your home?
   (1) single unit dwelling_____
   (2) apartment_____
   (3) duplex_____
   (4) condominium_____

9. How long have you lived at your present address?
   (1) less than 2 years _____
   (2) 2 to 5 years _____
   (3) 5 to 10 years _____
   (4) more than 10 years _____

10. How many times in the last 20 years have you moved?
    (1)1_____ (2)2_____ (3)3_____
    (4)4_____ (5)5_____ (6)6+_____

11. How long have you been attending the church you are now attending?

(1)1 year_____   (2)2 years_____

(3)3 years_____   (4)4 years_____

(5)5 years_____   (6)6-10 years_____

(7)10+ years_____

12. Are you a member of the congregation where you are now attending church?
(1)yes_____   (2)no_____

13. On average, how many church services do you attend per month? (including Sunday School, AM Worship, PM Worship, and Wednesday evenings)

(1)1_____   (2)2_____   (3)3_____

(4)4_____   (5)5_____   (6)6-10_____

(7)more than 10_____

14. Do members of your family attend church services with you?
(1)always_____

(2)usually_____

(3)occasionally_____

(4)never_____

15. Do you hold an office in the church and/or perform a regular task or service? (such as teaching, youth sponsor, singing in the choir, nursery help, etc.)

(1)yes_____

(2)I have in the past, but not presently_____

(3)no_____

16. What is your formal educational experience? Please circle the highest grade or year you have completed.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

9   10   11   12   13   14   15   16

17   18   18+

17. What is your occupation?

_____

(please be specific. examples: carpenter, carpenter's help; nurse, nurse's aid; high school teacher; student; auto mechanic; homemaker; etc.)

****

"...GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH?...I BET HE REALLY WANTED A PUPPY."

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Section Two: General Needs of American Families

In this section, please indicate **your opinion** concerning the present needs of families in American society. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. What is important is your opinion. **Please circle only one number for each item**, indicating the degree of need you feel is associated with that item.

	NOT A NEED AT ALL 1	INTERESTING, BUT NOT A NEED 2	NO OPINION 3	SOMEWHAT NEEDED 4	NEEDED GREATLY 5
1. Families need an organized and systematic educational program for children and youth on healthy family functioning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There is a need for parental training and assistance.	1	2	3	4	5
3. There is a need for information about resources that are available for families.	1	2	3	4	5
4. There needs to be crisis intervention available for families.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There is a need for resources for families with members who have special needs or problems (i.e. handicapped, terminally ill, elderly, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
6. There is a need for marriage preparation and guidance.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There needs to be support networking for families.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Training in coping strategies for families is needed.	1	2	3	4	5

Section Three: Specific Services and Programs

Please mark the most appropriate response for each of the following services or programs. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers; please indicate your opinion.
(One response for each line please.)

	SHOULD BE A HIGH PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH	POSSIBLE PROGRAM BUT NOT HIGH PRIORITY	CHURCH SHOULD NOT BE INVOLVED	NO OPINION -OR- I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE PROGRAM
marriage preparation classes				
day care programs for children				
assistance for unwed mothers				
family crisis counseling				
classes on child development				
sex education for teenagers				
classes on Christian family life				
premarital counseling				
shelter for abused children				
films/seminars on family topics				
parent effectiveness training				
financial counseling				
crisis hotline				
support group for families of the terminally ill (an organized program)				
newly married counseling				
mothers' day out program				
foster care for children				
referrals to community social services				
marriage counseling				
separation and divorce counseling				
family planning education				
library of resources on family life				
day care program for elderly				
pregnancy counseling				
class on adult life and aging				
grief counseling				
support group for families of the handicapped				
assistance for poor families				
marriage enrichment programs				
staff person trained in family life education				
advertise community programs on family life and issues				
foster care for the elderly				
shelter for abused women/families				
referrals to professional counselors				

Section Four: Availability of Services and Programs In Your Church

Please read through this list again. In Column #1, indicate the availability of the service or program **currently**, in your church.

In Column #2, please give your feelings about the availability of the service or program. **(Mark one response in Column #1 and one response in Column #2 for each item.)**

	COLUMN #1			COLUMN #2		
	Is Available In My Church's Present Program			I'm Glad It Is /OR/ I Wish It Were Available	No Opinion	I'm Unhappy It Is /OR/ I Would Be Unhappy If It Were Offered
	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW			
marriage preparation classes						
day care programs for children						
assistance for unwed mothers						
family crisis counseling						
classes on child development						
sex education for teenagers						
classes on Christian family life						
premarital counseling						
shelter for abused children						
films/seminars on family topics						
parent effectiveness training						
financial counseling						
crisis hotline						
support group for families of the terminally ill (an organized program)						
newly married counseling						
mothers' day out program						
foster care for children						
referrals to community social services						
marriage counseling						
separation and divorce counseling						
family planning education						
library of resources on family life						
day care program for elderly						
pregnancy counseling						
class on adult life and aging						
grief counseling						
support group for families of the handicapped						
assistance for poor families						
marriage enrichment programs						
staff person trained in family life education						
advertise community programs on family life and issues						
foster care for the elderly						
shelter for abused women/families						
referrals to professional counselors						

Section Five: Your Personal Participation

As you read through this list one final time, answer Column #1 in reference to your past participation, and Column #2 in reference to the future, based on your present feelings.

(One response in each Column for each item please.)

	COLUMN #1 Have **you** participated in these services within the program of your current church?		COLUMN #2 If these programs/services were available within your current church, and if the need occurred, would **you** probably participate?		
	YES	NO	YES	DON'T KNOW	NO
marriage preparation classes					
day care programs for children					
assistance for unwed mothers					
family crisis counseling					
classes on child development					
sex education for my teenage children					
classes on Christian family life					
premarital counseling					
provide shelter(in my home) for abused children in the church's organized program					
films/seminars on family topics					
parent effectiveness training					
financial counseling					
crisis hotline					
support group for families of the terminally ill (an organized program)					
newly married counseling					
mothers' day out program					
provide foster home for children					
respond to a referral to community social services					
marriage counseling					
separation and divorce counseling					
family planning education					
use a library of resources on family life					
day care program for the elderly					
pregnancy counseling					
class on adult life and aging					
grief counseling					
support group for families of the handicapped					
assistance for poor families					
marriage enrichment programs					
respond to the church's advertisements of community programs on family life					
provide foster care for the elderly					
shelter for abused women/families					
respond to referral to professional counselors					

Section Six: Evaluation

In this final section, please indicate **your opinion** about how your church is addressing the following issues and family interests. Your responses here will not be used in any type of criticism. This information will help in the analysis of this survey. **(Circle one response for each item.)**

	1 NOT DONE AT ALL	2 DONE VERY POORLY	3 ADEQUATE	4 ABOVE AVERAGE	5 EXCELLENT	6 I DO NOT KNOW
1. Educating youth and children on healthy family functioning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Providing training and assistance for parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Providing information about resources that are available for families.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Providing crisis intervention for families.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Providing help and resources for families with special needs and problems (i.e. families of handicapped, terminally ill, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Providing marriage preparation and guidance.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Providing support networking for families.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Training families in coping strategies.	1	2	3	4	5	6

****

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will be a great assistance to the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches of the Roanoke Valley. **Please return this form in** the envelope that has been provided.

****
PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM
****

Appendix B

The Introductory Letter

Salem Church of Christ

Serving With A Smile

PHONE: (703) 389-2400

TERRY KERR
MINISTER

JIM HERRON
ASSOCIATE

401 WEST MAIN STREET
SALEM, VIRGINIA 24153

January 28, 1988

Dear Fellow Christian,

My name is Jim Herron, and I serve as the Associate Minister with the Salem Church of Christ. I am writing to invite you to participate in a very exciting project, and I sincerely hope you choose to do so. I have discussed this with your Minister, and Jim joins me in asking you to participate.

Over the past several months, I have been taking classes in the Family and Child Development program at Virginia Tech. In June of this year, I hope to receive a Masters degree in Family Studies. (I believe this will provide additional resources for me as I serve our Lord in the ministry of His Kingdom.) As part of this academic work, I am presently conducting research for my thesis. My thesis involves a study of **the relationship between family life and the church.**

The basis of this research will be a survey that I am taking from the members of the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches in the Roanoke Valley. The survey simply asks for opinions concerning what families need, and concerning what the church can do to help meet these needs.

This is an important and exciting work because it will be a way that **Christians can influence what is being said in the literature about Family Life.** It will also be an important help to the churches in knowing what can be done to foster healthy family life.

I must have your help to do this. **Please complete the survey that is enclosed and return to me promptly.** Please do not sign it. All response will remain confidential.

To enhance the scientific value of the results, the survey is being conducted with a "random sample." That is, only a percentage of the members of our churches wil receive this request, and the selection has been done by a random system. **Therefore, it is very important that you return this completed form.**

I am asking this as a personal favor, and as a way you can contribute to some information that will help the churches of the Roanoke Valley.

Thank you. I have enclosed a pocket calender as an expression of my gratitude. If you have any quesitons, you may call me at 389 2400 or 384-7258.

Yours In Christ,

Jim Herron, Associate Minister

Appendix C

A Summary of the Number of
Religion and Family
Articles

Appendix C

Number of References (English) Indexed in the Religion and Family Section of the <u>Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature</u> (13 volumes)

(Listed by publication dates, with decade subtotals and percentages)

Year	Number of References	Decade subtotal (% of total) N=598	Year	Number of References	Decade subtotal (% of total) N=598
1915	1	1910's 1(0.1%)	1961	4	
1927	1		1962	5	
1928	1	1920's 2(0.3%)	1963	5	
1932	1		1964	12	
1936	1		1965	8	
1938	1		1966	6	
1939	1	1930's 4(0.7%)	1967	13	
1940	1		1968	9	
1941	1		1969	14	1960's 82(13.7%)
1943	1		1970	7	
1946	1		1971	6	
1947	2		1972	8	
1948	1		1973	14	
1949	2	1940's 9(1.5%)	1974	35	
1950	5		1975	24	
1951	8		1976	10	
1952	2		1977	17	
1953	2		1978	17	
1954	8		1979	18	1970's 156(26.1%)
1955	6		1980	30	
1956	4		1981	28	
1957	6		1982	45	
1958	3		1983	32	
1959	9	1950's 53(8.9%)	1984	27	
1960	6		1985	26	
			1986	103	1980's 291(48.7%)

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