Chapter Ten

How Current Trends Impact the Church

Dr. Gerald C. Kraft and R. Murray A. Jarman

As we approach the turn of the millennium, it has been natural to use the year 2000 as the focus for church planting and church growth strategies. These have ranged from local church efforts and denominational strategies, to the goal of the *AD2000 and Beyond* movement. Its goal is to have a church for every people group and to share the Gospel with every person by the year 2000. Within Canada, the effort of *Vision Canada* has been to provide every Canadian the opportunity to see, hear and respond to the Gospel by the year 2000. *Church Planting Canada*, a national trans-denominational effort, is working toward planting 10,000 new congregations by the year 2015. This national goal has been broken down into denominational goals for each five-year span. The sheer magnitude of the task has stimulated an impetus for renewed evangelism, church growth and church planting efforts. It has given us renewed cause to evaluate the state of our nation and our world, and commit ourselves to the task of reaching Canada with the Gospel.

If this renewed commitment is to be taken seriously, it will require the cooperation of evangelicals and new innovative ways to reach people. This requires change in the way denominations and churches think about church size and the church planting process. The typical building-oriented understanding of "church" will need to be supplemented by a people-centered philosophy, viewing church less as a meeting facility and more as groups of people joining together for worship, discipleship and caring. There are also new challenges to be faced in raising funds to support these new works and church planters. All of this is taking place against the backdrop of strained conditions economically and shifting moral and religious values culturally. Many of the traditional ways of evangelizing and planting new churches have lost or are losing their effectiveness. How will these efforts be financed? Where will the leaders be found? Who are the unreached people groups or where are the locations needing an evangelical witness? How will the increasingly large proportion of Canadians who have never gone to church be reached with the Gospel? These are the questions facing Canada's Christians in the '90s, as they seek the will of God in reaching their world.

Canada in the Nineties

Canada is undergoing a profound social and cultural restructuring. In the past half-century, Canada's population has moved from a rural orientation to a modern, urban-centric culture. With this has come a shift from the farm to the factory—from the church as a focal point within the community to the community relying on governmental directives and assistance. This process, referred to as the first demographic transition, was the integration of the industrial revolution and its values into the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society. While the focus shifted from rural to urban development, the traditions and institutions that brought meaning to rural society still filled a role, albeit a less important one, within Canadian culture. Cities were the new center of attention, but the rural mindset remained.

During the late 1980s and the 1990s, a further transformation has been increasingly evident. There are a number of trends, taken together, that indicate that Canada is already entering the second demographic transition—a shift from tradition and traditional institutions to greater individualism, secularism and focus on personal development. Canada is following a trend already observed in Europe, in which traditional ways of thinking, along with traditional institutions, are replaced by new, modern and secularized ideas. This shift, although outwardly less noticeable than the initial urbanization phase, has the potential for creating greater tension and stress on the fabric of Canadian society, as many valued traditions and organizations are discarded or marginalized in the paradigm shift.[1] If Canada follows the same path through the second demographic transition as Western Europe, the Church will have little relevance to the majority of Canadians. The challenge for Christians in Canada will be to evangelize the unchurched, and to change many of the externals of how churches function without compromising the message of the Gospel.

The second demographic transition is identified by a confluence of population trends and social changes. Among the indicators are rising age at marriage, rising divorce rates, higher percentages of dual-income families, increased proportions of single-parent families and greater participation in the workforce by women, especially women with young children. There is a tendency toward cohabitation as the prevalent form of partnership and the postponement of families, combined with smaller family sizes. All of these indicators are visible across the Canadian landscape. Some have been evident since the 1970s, but recently a critical mass of factors has been statistically verifiable. Many of the pertinent trends will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

Population Trends

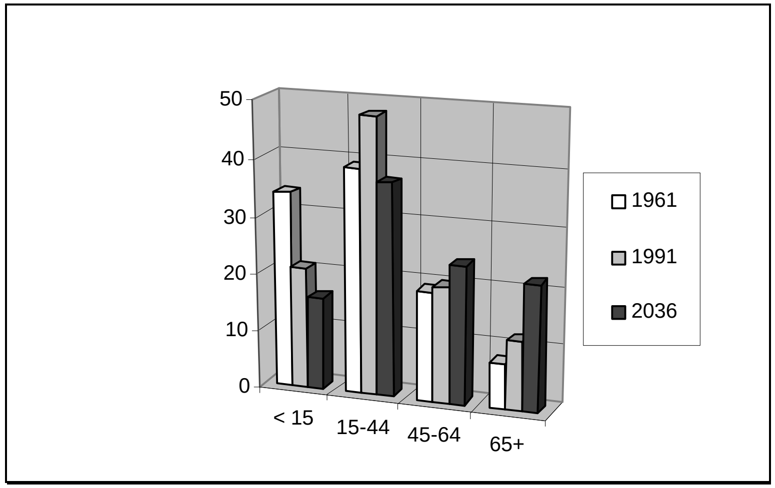
Aging of Society

As a long-term trend, the average age of Canadians has been rising steadily since the 1970s. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s the rate of increase has accelerated, and it shows no signs of reversing its course. Canada's maturing population will have a significant effect on the entire face of our society. Social programs, employment and popular culture will all be heavily influenced.

The median age of Canada's population is rising. In 1997, the median age of Canadians was 35.6 years. Fertility rates (average number of babies born to women of childbearing age) have been below the population replacement level since 1970, and currently stand at 1.59 children per woman (from a peak of 3.8 in 1957). This is almost an all-time low, and it it reflects low birth rates in every province. There is a notable difference in fertility rates for married women compared with women in comon-law unions. Women who are married throughout their reproductive life had twice as many children (2.87) as women in a comon-law relationship (1.44).[2]

We are currently at historic highs for the proportion of workers to total population. Projections show that seniors will comprise 23% of the Canadian population in the year 2030, up from 12% in 1991 and 8% in 1961. This is an increase of 168% over current levels. Comparatively, workers aged 15 to 64 will increase by 28%, while children under age 15 will remain constant at today's level. This points to massive changes in the pension system, to government support for seniors and for large-scale changes in the job market. An exponential increase in the number of seniors' care workers will be required. Also, as the need for workers increases as economic pressures on Canadians to provide for longer retirements increases, and as more people are physically

Figure 27
Age Groups as a Percentage of Population



capable of working well beyond age 65, the traditional retirement age of 65 will be challenged.[3]

In addition to age group differences, Canadians will have to cope with ethnic dimensions to the aging question. Currently 75% of visible minorities are aged 15 to 44.[4] This fact suggests that the vast majority of Canada's elderly are Caucasians, while an increasing percentage of workers and younger families will belong to visible minority groups. The shifting ratio of visible minorities will be another factor in the transformation of our society.

The Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers dominate the landscape of the Canadian population. This population group of adults born from 1946 to 1964 is the single-largest age group in Canadian society, accounting for 30% of all Canadians in 1996. On January 1, 1996 the first of the Boomers turned 50. This transition point has signaled a shift in focus from endless consumerism to planning for financial security in retirement. Right now the Baby Boomers are making the transition from a group of spenders in the 1980s and early 1990s to a generation of savers and investors. Contributions to pension and retirement plans are setting new highs each year. Assets invested in mutual funds have grown from $25 billion in 1990 to $143 billion in 1995, with 1996 expected to set even higher totals. Canada's Baby Boomers have recognized that the government will probably not have the ability to support their current lifestyles when they retire, so they are trying to make up for lost time now.[5] The population distribution of Canada is graphically shown in Chapter 3, Figure 7.

After the Boom

Lost in the shadow of the Baby Boomers are the Baby Busters and Generation Xers. Born after 1966, these two age groups have had to struggle to make it in a world oriented toward, shaped and dominated by the Boomers. The Baby Busters are now turning 30, and are struggling with the transition into the world of career and family. As they strive to build their families and careers, they are faced with job markets saturated by Baby Boomers and housing markets boosted beyond single-income affordability by the preceding generations. All the good jobs and cheap housing are gone, while life in general seems to be oriented against them and toward the Boomers.

Generation X has a fundamentally different viewpoint from the Baby Boomers. While the Baby Busters still pursue many of the dreams held in common with Baby Boomers, Generation Xers have a more cynical attitude. They struggle just to take care of themselves, let alone help others. They aim to be different from the Boomers, in everything from dress to music to lifestyle choices. The unique mindset of Generation Xers impacts everything from consumer purchases to housing to church giving.

Baby Busters and Generation Xers, for all their disdain for the Boomers, are about to become the most prolific consumers in society. Just as the Baby Boomers drove the economy of the 1980s, it will be these two groups who drive the economy into the next millenium. They are the first generations to grow up with computers and electronic communications technology. Rapidly evolving technology is natural to them. It is from this group that tomorrow's missionaries, church leaders and supporters will have to be drawn. One of the big challenges facing the Church is motivating and involving the Busters and Xers for church renewal and church planting.

Social and Cultural Trends

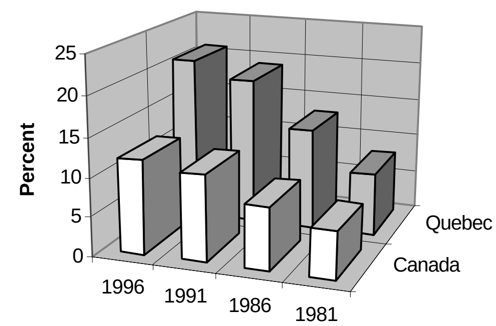
Family and Parenthood

Family has always been a central part of our culture. Polls indicate that family ties are still rated as one of the most important parts of the lives of Canadians.[6] There is increasing disagreement, however, about what constitutes a family. Attempts are being made by gay and lesbian lobby groups to redefine "family" to include same-sex couples; the same groups are also pushing to be recognized as legally married with the right to adopt children. Yet even as our definition of family is under attack, the structure of the family has been changing over the last few decades. Families are smaller, reflecting low fertility rates that have been below replacement levels since the mid-1970s. The number of children being born to Canadian families will not be sufficient to replace their parents when they die. Without immigration or an increased birth rate, Canada's population would eventually shrink. Parents are also waiting longer before having children. In the 1960s, the 20 to 24 year old group had the highest fertility rate. That changed to the 25 to 29 age group in the 1970s and before the year 2000 it may be women aged 30 to 34 who have the most babies. Already, more babies are being born to mothers over the age of 30 than ever before. One in three women having their first child in the '90s are over 30 years of age. More women aged 30 to 34 have babies than women aged 20 to 24, the first time that has ever happened.[7]

Marital Status

It is not only the age of parents that is changing, but also the age at which they get married. The Baby Boomers were the last generation to marry early, while in the 1990s, the trend is toward couples getting married later. In 1992, the average age at first marriage was 29 for men and 27 for women, up three years respectively since 1989.[8] This is in contrast to the 1960s and 1970s, when the average age at marriage was stable at 25 for men and 23 for women. Couples are also less likely now than ever before to get married, at least initially. Twelve percent of all families in 1996 were living common-law, up from 6% in 1981. This figure is much higher in Québec, where 21% of all families were living common-law. In 1990, 31% of Canadians who married at age 25 or older had lived common-law before getting married. Among people forming a first conjugal union between 1990-95, 57% chose to live common-law, with the Quebec figure standing at 80%. Although these statistics are unsettling, one positive note is that of common-law unions formed in the 1970s over 50% resulted in marriages between the same partners,[9] and an additional 25% had married someone else. It is also encouraging to note that people who attended religious services weekly were significantly less likely to live common-law. It appears that many couples want to give a relationship a "trial run," and then get married if everything works out.

Figure 28
% of Couples Living Common-Law



Women in the Workforce

One of the biggest changes in the labor force over the past two decades has been the change in women's employment patterns. Fifty-five percent of women now work outside the home. Mothers of young children are even more heavily involved in the workforce (67% in 1996) than women without children (47% in 1996). Women without children were only slightly more likely to work in 1991 than in 1981, while the likelihood of mothers to work increased by 29% over the same period.[10] Women are almost as likely as men are to have a university degree. Among young women under age 24, more have university degrees and other post-secondary training than men. In 1992-93, 53% of undergraduate students, 46% of masters students and 35% of doctoral students are women.[11] However, wages for women still are only 72% of those for men in the same occupations. There is movement in the right direction, since real wages for women rose 14% in the 1980s compared to 0.4% for men ("real wages" are adjusted to compensate for the effects of inflation, to allow for accurate comparisons in income levels over a period of time).

Although women are more heavily involved in the workforce, they are still just as likely as in previous decades to shoulder the burden of household work. Of women who worked full-time in dual-earner families, 31% of those under age 45 reported being severely “time-crunched,” compared to 15% of men,[12] and over 65% of household responsibilities are the sole responsibility of the wife, with another 13% of responsibilities being shared equally. Husbands are only responsible for 15% of household chores. These statistics are even more lopsided in male single-earner families.

Women’s involvement in the workforce is also a significant factor in the rise of common-law households.[13] Being employed is the strongest factor indicating likelihood of living common-law for women, although it is not nearly as significant for men.

Urbanization

Canada, for all its vast size, natural beauty and wide open spaces, is a country of city-dwellers. Eight of 10 Canadians live in cities rather than in rural areas. Sixty-two percent of the residents live in only 25 metropolitan areas, each over 100,000 in size and each of them still growing. Thirty-four percent of all Canadians live in three cities—Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. By itself Toronto makes up 16% of Canada’s total population. The narrow strip of developed urban corridor from Windsor to Québec City is home to well over half of all Canadians. It is also the large urban centers that are attracting the surge of immigrants, mostly from visible minority groups. With just over 50% of Canada’s annual population growth coming from immigration, and with over 80% of new immigrants moving to the large urban centres, the major cities will be home to an ever larger percentage of the total Canadian population.

Urban living has its economic costs. In Canada’s 25 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) over one-third of renters had trouble affording housing (CMAs are the 25 largest cities in Canada, from Toronto at 4.3 million to Thunder Bay at 126,000). Furthermore, fewer people can afford to own housing in the cities. Forty-three percent of all urban households rented their accommodations, but it was only 16% in rural areas. With rising unemployment and little change in real wages, the dream of owning a home, or even of living comfortably in rented housing, is beyond the reach of an increasing segment of our society. On the positive side, however, Canada’s large cities are not plagued with as many serious problems as large cities are in the United States. Canada’s cities are more ethnically diverse, more stable and have higher average incomes than U.S. counterparts.[14] Family structures, while changing, are typically more “traditional” than in U.S. cities, where divorce, single parenthood, teen pregnancy and drug problems are much more severe. Overall, Canadian cities are “kinder, gentler” cousins to the larger U.S. cities.

Immigration and Ethnic Groups

The changing face of Canada is nowhere more evident than in the increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds of its inhabitants. In 1996, 11.2% of Canada’s population belonged to visible minority people groups. Almost two-thirds of visible minority adults have moved to Canada since 1972. Despite stereotypes, Canada’s visible minorities (18%) are more likely than the general populace (11%) to be educated, especially at the university level.[15] Many immigrants are highly educated, highly skilled people searching for a higher standard of living and with the resources to leave their country of origin. During the 1980s, over one-third of all immigrants came from visible minority groups, primarily from China, Hong Kong and other Asian nations. In 1994, seven of the top 10 countries of origin were in Asia, and accounted for 51% of the 223,875 immigrants.[16] From 1991-96, the top five countries for recent immigrants were all from Asia, with two more in the top ten. Recent government policy on immigration has set the annual limit on immigration at around 200,000 people, well above rates during the 1980s. The government increased immigration to maintain population growth, since natural population growth is not sustainable. The number of people belonging to visible minority groups increased 62% between 1991 and 1996, from 2 million to 3.2 million.

Large cities are the most ethnically diverse areas, and will become increasingly cosmopolitan well into the next century. Ninety-four percent of visible minorities live in Canada's 25 largest cities. By comparison, only 59% of all Caucasian adults live in those cities. Visible minorities tend to settle in pockets within large cities. Seventy-three percent of all visible minorities live in either Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. They make up 32% of the population of Toronto, 31% of Vancouver and 12% of Montreal. People in visible

Table 52
Immigration to Canada, 1991 to 1996

Immigration 1991 to 1996	Number	% of Total
Hong Kong	108,910	10%
China	87,865	8%
India	71,330	7%
Philippines	71,315	7%
Sri Lanka	44,230	4%
Poland	36,970	4%
Taiwan	32,135	3%
Vietnam	32,060	3%
United States	29,015	3%
United Kingdom	25,425	2%
Total of Top 10	**539,255**	**51%**
Total Immigration	**1,038,990**	**100%**

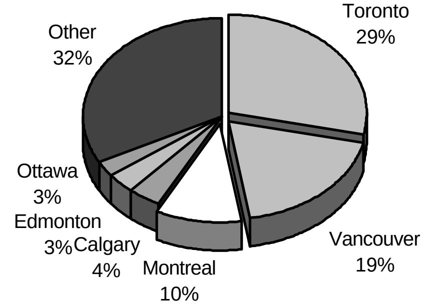


Figure 29
Immigration to Cities—1994

minority groups also tend to be younger than the average Canadian. Around 75% of each ethnic group is between the ages of 15 and 44, a much higher percentage than the 44% average for all of Canada. By the year 2016 visible minorities are projected to increase over 250%, from 2.7 million in 1991 to 7.1 million in 2016. During that time, the population of Canada is projected to grow by 25%.[17] As a percentage of total population, visible minories would move from the current 11% to 20% in 2016. Based on the current situation, by 2016 it is likely that visible minorities in Toronto and Vancouver will be over 50% of the total population, and Montreal will be around 30% of total population. Increases through immigration will also be supplemented by the higher fertility and larger family sizes of visible minority families.

Technological Change

As we approach the turn of the century, the pace of technological change is growing increasingly rapid. Whirlwind change seems everywhere. Traditional fabrication and manufacturing industries are in decline, while service sector, life sciences and high technology companies are booming. Many companies, and also government at all levels, are going through the pains of downsizing and severe cost cutting.

Convenience and timesaving technologies are in high demand, seen in everything from drive-through coffee bars to telephone and computer banking, mega-stores and proliferating fast food choices. Increased choices, options and new possibilities are a defining feature of this decade.

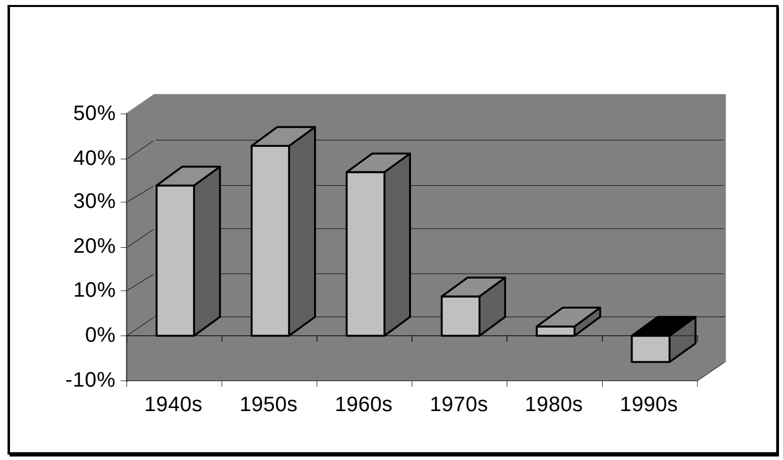
Nowhere is the pace of change more apparent than in the world of computers and the Internet. New computers, new programs and new technology are constantly being introduced. The number of people connected to the Internet has topped 60 million worldwide, and is growing rapidly. Growth of the World Wide Web, a graphical combination of text, sound and images on virtual "pages," is estimated at 10% per month! E-commerce, or the selling of goods and services over the Internet, is growing by leaps and bounds, and is already measured in the billions of dollars annually. According to estimates, within five years over three-quarters of Canadians will have electronic mail (e-mail) addresses. According to the 1996 federal budget, every school and library in the country will be "wired" for Internet access by 1998. One thousand rural communities will have Internet connections provided through government funding, as will 50,000 small businesses. Our world will be much more inter-connected and remotely accessible. Some are even predicting the demise of phone books and directories, these items being replaced by websites and special "net phones" that can look up new information in them without needing a computer.

Income and Donations

It is not news to anyone that we live in hard times economically. During the 1990s, for the first time since World War II, real incomes (after adjusting for inflation) declined. With actual wage increases of 0 to 2%, and inflation of 2 to 3%, spending power of the average person has declined since 1990.

In order to get by, most Canadian families have moved to both husband and wife working to support the family. In 1967, the husband was the lone wage earner in 58% of all households. That figure dropped to 19% in 1991 and stayed the same through 1996, with 61% of households being "dual-earner" families. Dual-earner families are the only group in society whose real incomes (after adjusting for inflation) have risen over the past decade.[18] Dual-earner families tend to be younger couples with smaller families, which they tend to start later in life than single-earner families. Forty percent of dual earners are under the age of 40.

Figure 30
Real Wage Increases by Decade

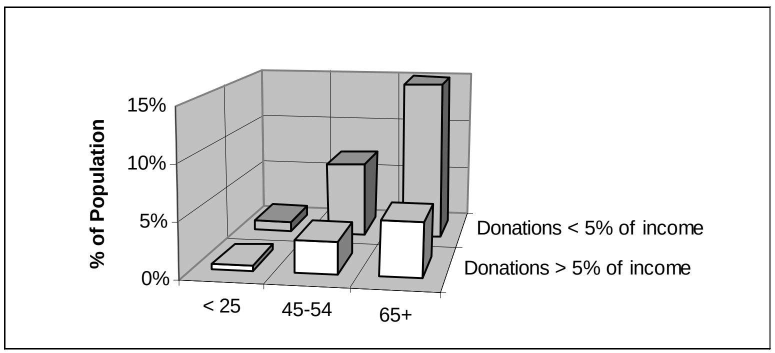


In 1996 27% of Canadian taxfilers reported making a charitable donation, down from 29% in 1990. The average age of these donors has been steadily increasing. In 1990, the average age was 47. By 1996, it had reached 50. The average donation was $730 in 1996, up from $544 in 1990, an increase of 5.0% annually. The median donation (the median is the point at which half the amounts are higher and half the amounts are lower—half of all donors contributed more and half contributed less) rose from $120 to $150.[19] Average donations by age group in 1996 increased from $364 for those under 35, to $612 for those 35-44, to $757 for those 45-54, to $872 for those 55-64, to $1,034 for those over 65.

Table 53
1996 Charitable Donations by Province

Region Figures 1996	Avg. Age	Ave. Donation	% of Taxfilers	Median Donation	Median income
Canada	50	730	27	150	35,200
Newfoundland	49	600	22	260	27,700
Prince Edward Is.	49	640	30	230	28,000
Nova Scotia	51	630	26	200	32,000
New Brunswick	51	750	25	230	30,900
Québec	50	370	25	100	34,000
Ontario	50	810	29	180	37,400
Manitoba	51	810	30	190	31,200
Saskatchewan	53	840	29	240	30,600
Alberta	48	970	27	170	35,700
British Columbia	51	940	24	180	36,500
Yukon	45	760	18	160	47,200
N.W. Territories	42	790	15	190	57,300

Figure 31
Donations by Age Group (1990)



There is a disturbing disparity in donations between the young and old, as seen in Figure 31. While the vast majority of taxfilers contribute less than 1% of their total income to charity, the proportion donating more than 1% tends to increse with age and income. A large percentage of young families are dual-earner families. Single and dual earners contributed, on average, equal dollar amounts to religious organizations, but dual earners had over 50% greater income. Discretionary spending of dual earners was over 50% higher in many categories (clothing, recreation, entertainment), and dual-earner families saved or invested $4,700 on average, compared to $200 for single-earner families.[20] It is clear that dual-earner families, while having higher incomes, are less likely to increase their giving to religious organizations. This is not, however, for lack of financial resources. They do have money, but they have raised their lifestyles and spending habits to match.

Change Within the Church

The Church is not immune to the changes taking place in society. The same forces that are shaking Canadian society affect churches and mission organizations. Aging, family trends and spending patterns have an impact on how churches grow, reach their communities, fund their ministries and recruit and develop both volunteer and vocational workers. Speaking particularly on the financial giving side of current trends, James Engel writes: “Unless radical changes are made by mission agencies and local churches, Christian Baby Boomers will not provide the human and financial resources needed for accelerated evangelism in the 1990s.”[21]

Trends in financial giving toward churches and missions are partially explained by the attitudes of the Baby Boomer generation. The 1990s are a pivotal decade for the funding of mission enterprises. To date, the generation that grew up during the Great Depression and the war years has been the

Table 54
1992 Family Expenditures

Category 1992 Figures	Single Earners (with young children)	Dual Earners (with young children)	All Households
Food	$6,843	$8,350	$5,686
Shelter	$9,128	$11,678	$8,102
Household expenses (incl. childcare)	$2,042	$3,841	$1,974
Furnishings	$1,642	$2,224	$1,372
Clothing	$2,405	$4,030	$2,222
Transportation	$6,450	$8,022	$5,640
Personal Care	$987	$1,316	$844
Recreation	$2,481	$3,683	$2,300
Education	$433	$774	$430
Alcohol & Tobacco	$1,199	$1,587	$1,410
Miscellaneous	$1,191	$1,852	$1,322
Taxes	$11,190	$17,187	$9,378
Security	$2,750	$4,696	$2,289
Gifts & Contributions	$898	$1,207	$1,464
Total Expenditures	**$50,928**	**$72,067**	**$45,548**

financial backbone of many churches. These people, though, are aging and stretched to the limit in their ability to support new ministries, or even to maintain current support. Increasingly the burden for financial support for church and mission organizations needs to be drawn from the Baby Boomers and subsequent generations. Moreover, Boomers have different priorities and interests that must be addressed in order to convince them to support a new generation of church and mission activities. Baby Boomers have a "prevailing entrepreneurial spirit and desire for immediate gratification. While distrust of traditional institutions is common, Boomers view themselves as problem solvers who, if given an appropriate challenge, are likely to rise to meet it."[22] They are willing to commit time and funds when they

have ownership of the cause, and prefer being involved in projects where they can have direct, hands-on participation. Because these traits have not been identified and catered to, the Baby Boomers are "largely immune to the cause of world missions as it has been traditionally practiced and presented."[23]

Churches are faced with many challenges in raising funds and recruiting workers. As Canada's social structure changes, churches will need to adapt to meet the needs of their communities. New strategies will have to be implemented to reach a generation of young people who have grown up largely without church ties. Churches will have to be planted to reach the unchurched areas of our cities. Programs will have to accommodate the diversity of language, cultural and family backgrounds that Canada's cities increasingly represent. This is a massive undertaking, especially considering the lack of robust health within Canadian evangelical churches.

Table 55
Growth Stages of Evangelical Churches

Stage of Growth	% of Evangelical Churches
Initial Formation	10
Maximum Efficiency	10
Plateaued	65
Declining	10
Disintegration	5

On a national level, almost two-thirds of evangelical churches have plateaued.[24] They have become inward-focused and maintenance-oriented, having lost their mission-driven focus. They are not experiencing any significant growth beyond the population growth rate. No effective outreach is taking place. An additional 15% of evangelical churches are either declining or dying.

The health of existing churches has a profound impact on the capacity of the Canadian church to engage in significant church planting efforts. According to the latest research compiled by *Outreach Canada*, the current church planting rate of 1.5% annually is only slightly above the annual population growth rate of 1.2%. Effectively, the number of new churches, after population increases are taken into account, is 0.3% every year. In light of the fact that two-thirds of churches have no growth, another 15% are in decline, and 10% are still in the stages of formation, only 10% of churches are in a life stage which accommodates planting a daughter church. It would seem self-evident that for any significant change to occur in the rate of church planting, a corresponding positive change in the general health and ministry effectiveness of existing churches would also have to take place.

It is also apparent that churches' budgets for local ministry and missions will come under increasing pressure in future years. Staff salaries, as a percentage of church budgets, have remained fairly constant over the years.[25] With increased debt loads for buildings, ministry funds will be squeezed. Church and mission organizations will have to find new, creative ways to finance their outreach activities into the next century.

Table 56
Church Spending by Category

Budget Category	1992	1994	1996
Staff Salary	47%	51%	49%
Debt Service	11%	11%	7%
Local Ministry	26%	22%	27%
Missions	12%	12%	14%
Evangelism	4%	4%	3%

The challenge presented by the Canadian Church Planting Congress held in October 1997 included a vision for 10,000 new gatherings of believers by the year 2015. For this to become a reality there will need to be a significant increase in the present rate of church planting. Currently our evangelical church planting rate is 1.5% per annum nationally. Our current population growth rate is 1.2% annually. The currently reported world rate of church planting is 4.5%. For Canadians to meet the challenge of having a witnessing congregation within the reach of every person will require aggressive changes in the way we plant and support new groups meeting to worship.

Implications

The challenges facing church and mission organizations in Canada are daunting. Waves of change are rippling through churches, denominations and parachurch ministries constantly. Canada's social fabric is being redefined. Shifting demographics indicate that Canada's future population will be older than today's, highly urbanized, and composed of more diverse ethnic groups. Families will be smaller as people are waiting longer to have children, and most families will have both parents working outside the home. Real wages will probably continue to see little growth, so the only way for families to increase their spending power will be to work more.

Christians in Canada must respond to these trends by taking action now. Church and mission organizations will need to begin changing their perspectives on promoting, funding and staffing their ministries, or risk becoming further removed from their cultural context. It may be argued that what is not broken does not need to be fixed. However, in light of the lack of progress in planting new churches, and the high percentage of evangelical churches that are either plateaued or declining, it is clear that something must change.

Continuing ministry using the models of the past will not work effectively in the Canada of the 21st century. Eckard Pfeiffer, CEO of Compaq Computers, has stated that "small incremental changes block your vision of doing something fundamentally different." Minor modifications to the present ministry model will not be sufficient to face the challenges of the next century. What is needed are new ideas, new directions, new supporters, new sources of funding and new vision for ministry.

Creative partnerships and involvement between churches, denominations and parachurch organizations are vital in affecting significant change in the church planting and evangelization rates. Cooperative ventures and strategic alliances between organizations have the potential to reduce the duplication of services and competitive spirit that often characterizes the church planting scene. New channels of communication would need to be opened, allowing specialized staff within diverse organizations to collaborate on a wide variety of initiatives. Churches would focus more on the results than on the organizational processes involved. Decisions would be made that have the best interest of the outreach project in mind, rather than those of individual churches or denominations. Church, denomination and mission organizations would partner together to share resources and expertise.

One vehicle for sharing information and coordinating activities is the World Wide Web. It has become apparent that the information highway will be a central part of the 21st century world. The Internet is here now, and it is not just a passing fad. Computer communications open up new horizons for individuals and organizations to explore. The World Wide Web provides quick access to immense volumes of information, while e-mail allows virtually instantaneous contact around the globe at little or no cost. Enormous potential exists to creatively use electronic communication

to network church leaders and share strategies and progress reports. Mailing lists and e-mailed newsletters have the potential to rally immediate prayer and financial support for challenges as they arise. New technology even allows video-conferencing across the Internet, allowing two users to exchange video and audio signals without paying long distance charges. Technology like this could be put to creative use in training meetings and networking centers for church planters and church leaders.

Canada as a Mission Field

The first obvious implication of the pervasive social and cultural change underway in Canada is that our nation is a vast unreached mission field. The needs are enormous for new churches, for revitalizing older plateaued churches and for re-evangelizing the cities. Since most Canadians live in cities, and the cities are becoming more and more diverse in their ethnic mix, new ways of reaching the cities must be found. Religious groups that are resistant to the Gospel, such as Muslims and Sikhs, have to be targeted for intensive efforts in evangelization, church planting and discipling.

An example of targeting specific unreached people groups would be the Sikh community. If past trends continue second- and third-generation Sikhs should be much more receptive to the Gospel than the immigrants who were born and grew up in India. Since the second generation was born and raised in Canada, many of the ties to Sikh religion and culture are not as strong. Many second-generation Sikhs follow western cultural patterns, and do not place heavy emphasis on their religious heritage. These changes are even more pronounced among third-generation Canadians from visible minority people groups. This does not mean that efforts should not be made to reach these people groups immediately after they immigrate, but recognize that certain people groups have a higher readiness and openness to the Gospel message. It is those groups that should receive the focus of our attention.

Global Partnerships

A further implication that arises from Canada's status as a needy mission field is forming global partnerships to reach people groups. Church and mission agencies need to join together to reach people groups all over the world. An approach that reaches only immigrants in Canada or only an overseas people group is limited in its strategic effectiveness. Take an example of a metro Toronto church trying to reach a neighborhood of West African Muslims. Rather than struggling to discover how to reach African Muslims who emigrated from Nigeria, church and mission organizations can form partnerships with sister organizations in Africa. Leaders and ministry teams can visit churches in Africa that are effectively reaching those people groups. Leaders could be exchanged for a few weeks or months. Evangelists and leaders from African churches can be brought over to help the church understand the culture, needs and effective methods of reaching that people group. Global partnerships share the burden and stimulate creative outreach both within Canada and internationally.

Investing in the Future

To reach Canada's burgeoning immigrant population, missionaries can be sent overseas to invest in leadership training to reach those people groups. As part of the missionary's development of national leaders, he/she can intentionally develop leaders who would be willing to come to Canada as missionaries to work among their own people group. To follow our previous example, missionaries could be sent to West Africa to assist with the training of national leaders. African pastors and evangelists could be brought to Canada to develop strategies to reach African immigrants in

Canada. This arrangement could be either with one church or denomination, or with a mission organization, or even a combination of the two. There is plenty of scope for creative sharing of resources and funding, in addition to the sharing of global missions responsibility between the Canadian Church and the Church in other nations.

Churches can also invest in their own future through creative church planting. Many existing churches, particularly those that are plateaued or declining, have been overwhelmed by change and have not been able to continue to change with society. Rather than encouraging these churches to make radical changes to better reflect their communities, a more appropriate action might be to plant a daughter church. Rather than forcing changes that could cause strife and be a major burden for the church, planting a daughter church could have significant rewards for the mother church. It would benefit from the birthing process, seeing another group of believers reaching their community, and would accumulate a small win. Over time, with other opportunities to reach out to the community, the mother church can build a culture of change that will allow it to better minister to its own community.

Cultivate New Funding Sources

One of the primary tasks for church and mission agencies in the 1990s is finding new ways to develop their financial support bases. Most Christian organizations are heavily funded by people over age 55. As these people move toward retirement, their ability to continue to support missions will be curtailed. Special attention must be given to increasing the level of support from younger families. In particular, dual-earner families have financial resources available. They make up the majority of younger families, and despite higher family incomes they only give as much as single-income families. If they can be convinced of the need to support and given a creative project to be involved in, dual-earner families can become a major financial asset to missions into the next century.

New sources of funding will also be needed if the church planting rate is to be substantially increased. Most churches and denominations are near their financial resource limits in planting churches at the present rate. If this rate is to be increased, new models both for organizing church plants and for funding them will be needed.

Churches Partnering with Mission Organizations

Greater responsibility for the church planting enterprise can and should be extended to the local church. One method of increasing the number of new churches planted is to encourage churches to daughter churches more regularly. The larger role would include churches more as partners rather than just spectators and financial contributors. Churches will be the primary leaders, with denominations and parachurch organizations acting in close support and as equippers of local church leaders. Some large churches already function in this capacity, planting churches and sending out missionaries entirely from their own resources.

Partnerships would allow grass-roots involvement within the church to support church plants and the workers sent out for ministry. Ownership by the local church of the church planting process also increases the level of funding given. Denominations would have to shoulder less of the burden of supporting each church plant, which usually is a major limiting factor in the number of churches planted. The potential for involvement should also appeal to younger church leaders, who are more accustomed to an inclusive style of management.

New Models for Recruiting Leaders

If the church planting rate is to be significantly increased, new methods will be needed to train and prepare church planters. Already there are times when the lack of qualified personnel holds back the start of a new church plant. Often it is the least-experienced church leaders recently graduated from seminary who make the jump into church planting. Increased numbers of experienced, well-trained church planters will be needed. Recognition of the risks involved, proper training and support of church planters, and adequate financial support are important factors in increasing the success rate of new church plants.

Effectively Harness Communications Technology

Modern communications technologies, especially the Internet and e-mail, have great potential to be used effectively in the cause of evangelizing Canada. Church planters can rally immediate prayer support for urgent needs that would otherwise not be made known for weeks or months. A network can be set up between churches, denominations and mission organizations to better communicate and channel help and resources between each party. Denominations can increase communication and information-sharing capabilities while reducing costs by using e-mail to send materials to churches. A number of denominations in the United States already require each pastor to have a computer and e-mail account and to file monthly reports on ministry progress electronically.

Conclusions

If we are to be effective in mobilizing Canadians for church planting into the 21st century, we will need to make some dramatic changes in how we approach the task. We will have to advance innovative, even radical, ways to establish new relationships between churches and support organizations.

The paradigm needs to shift. Denominations have to move from being intermediaries between churches and church planters, to supporting and resourcing the local church to accomplish its mission directly. We will need to focus on unreached people groups wherever they live around the world. This will help to bring missions closer to home for most churches and organizations, while focusing more on effectiveness than on organizational concerns. Partnerships, strategic alliances and collaboration on church planting projects will be key components to building the Body of Christ in the 21st century.

Action Points

- ✍What changes in the social and cultural trends will challenge the Church the most?
- ✍What will the Church need to do in order to maximize its ministry?
- ✍Who should be targeted as new leaders for the workforce?
- ✍Where will we need to look for the financial resources to accomplish our ministries?
- ✍How can churches and denominations work together in planting new churches?
- ✍What role do mission organizations play in the church planting enterprise? How will they be engaged in the challenge?
- ✍How can churches at all stages of growth be involved in planting new churches?

Chapter Notes

[1] *Canadian Social Trends* 39, p. 13.

[2] *Canadian Social Trends* 46, p. 36.

[3] *Canadian Social Trends* 29, p. 4.

[4] *Canadian Social Trends* 37, p. 4.

[5] *Maclean's*, Jan 8 1996, p. 3 of Investment Advertising Supplement.

[6] *Canadian Social Trends* 35, p. 3.

[7] *Canadian Social Trends* 39, p. 14.

[8] *Canadian Social Trends* 33, p. 5.

[9] *Canadian Social Trends* 33, p. 7.

[10] *Canadian Social Trends* 36, p. 25.

[11] *Canadian Social Trends* 39, p. 18.

[12] *Canadian Social Trends* 31, p. 9.

[13] *Canadian Social Trends* 47, p. 10.

[14] Glenn Smith, "Reaching Canada's Cities for Christ," *Urban Mission*, September 1990, pp.30-31.

[15] *Canadian Social Trends* 37, p. 6.

[16] Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Citizenship and Immigration Statistics 1994* , Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997, p. x.

[17] *Canadian Social Trends* 37, p. 8.

[18] *Canadian Social Trends* 35, p. 7.

[19] Statistics Canada's *The Daily*, November 27, 1997.

[20] *Canadian Social Trends* 32, p. 23.

[21] James F. Engel, "We are the World," *Christianity Today* Sept. 24, 1990, p. 32.

Chapter Notes

[22] Engel, "We are the World", p. 32.

[23] Engel, "We are the World", p. 33.

[24] Outreach Canada research findings. Based on Ministry Assessment results and interviews with denominational leaders.

[25] Outreach Canada research findings from annual statistics. Table shows one particular denomination with over 500 churches.