

The Survey: Churches of Christ in Canada, 2001

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This is the third decadal survey undertaken by the editors of the Gospel Herald that utilized a similar format. The survey was made possible by the willing participation of many churches and the helpfulness of congregational reporters. To each who shared in the effort, heartfelt appreciation is expressed.

Membership totals were received for 62% of the congregations; the questionnaire was returned by 54% of the churches. Three listings of churches of Christ in Canada were accessed: the "Directory of Churches" published monthly by the Gospel Herald, the 2001 Canadian Church Directory: Churches of Christ edited by Cory and June Vance, and the web site listing of Christians assembling by Steve Rudd (www.bible.ca). The Gospel Herald lists 130 congregations and the Directory 132. The Gospel Herald lists six congregations not found in the Directory; the Directory lists seven churches not found in the Gospel Herald listing. The Rudd web site listing includes 21 churches, ten of which do not occur in either the Gospel Herald or the Directory.

The total listing of the family members by the Directory were compared with the total number of members reported in the survey for those congregations occurring in both. By this means a factor was determined for each province by which the membership of those churches appearing only in the Directory could be estimated. The projection of total members of Churches of Christ in Canada in 2001 of 6,757 is thus a reasonable approximation.

The first mailing of the survey took place in early November 2001. Hoping to accelerate the process, 80% of the forms were sent via the Internet. Unexpectedly, the response to the electronic questionnaire was low. This required a return to the postal service in March of 2002. The slowness by which these results have come together is regretted, and apology is offered for personal contributions to the delay.

Once again the Gospel Herald is indebted to Jim Dale for his willing application of his computer skills in the collating of the survey. Thanks are also extended to his wife, Amy, for her cheerful imputing of the data.

It is my hope that concerned leaders and workers across Canada will examine thoughtfully the findings of the survey. Surely both encouragement and concern are stimulated by our collective progress as the 30-year profile emerges. For example, trends such as the aging of our congregations and the shrinking of our younger Bible school student numbers need to be considered. The shrinkage of atten-

dance averages and congregational size averages in Ontario and Saskatchewan is troublesome. This is offset by improvements in these areas in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec.

The slow growth of the number of congregations of Churches of Christ in Canada needs to be revisited by all of us. Church planting should become a priority for all congregations in Canada. It has been observed, "The apple tree does not exist to grow apples but to produce more apple trees." Let us determine that each church will plant a church in the coming decade. A church planting church is a growing church!

A Snapshot of Churches of Christ in Canada, 2001

- Total number of congregations – 151
- Total (projected) number of members – 6,757
- Average number of members per congregation – 45.5
- Average Sunday a.m. attendance – 62.1
- Average Sunday p.m. attendance – 36.4
- Average mid-week attendance – 28.6
- % of churches reporting Sunday p.m. services – 45%
- % of churches reporting mid-week services – 73%
- Congregations served by elders – 1 of 3
- Congregations served by deacons – 1 of 5
- Congregations served by preachers – 4 of 5
- Age groupings in educational programs – to grade 9, 29%; high school and university, 17%; younger adults, 9%; older adults, 45%
- Average number of baptisms per year per church – 4
- Average net gain in members per church per year – 2.5
- % of churches conducting special meetings – 60%
- % of churches using mail, TV, phone or radio in outreach – 34%
- % of churches using correspondence courses – 44%
- % of churches conducting home studies – 52%
- % of churches engaged in church planting – 15%
- % of churches contributing to foreign missions – 53%
- % of budget directed to foreign missions on average 17%
- % of churches maintaining programmed benevolence – 39%
- % of churches responding in benevolence as needed – 56%
- % of budget directed to benevolence on average – 8.1%
- Places of assembly – in church buildings, 77%; in rented facilities, 15%; in homes, 8%
- Churches disbanded and organized since 1991 – 19/22