LOCATIONAL ASPECTS OF CHURCHES IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

LOCATIONAL ASPECTS OF CHURCHES IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

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Churches and their locational distributions in the urban community constitute one of the many land use activities of concern to the urban planner. They are important social, cultural, and physical focal points, as well as religious centers. This is particularly significicant in light of recent increases in secular activities in addition to traditional sacred roles. However, in contrast to the great advantages resulting from such functional additions, the increased use of church properties has magnified church related problems including land use incompatibilities, traffic congestion, inadequate off-street parking, noise, site crowding, and structural blight. Maximizing the value of churches in the urban community requires a reduction in these problems and conflicts.

Recognizing this as an objective, the primary purpose of this thesis is the formulation of church locational standards and policies which will foster the proper placement of churches within the urban community. Background for this goal was provided by research into

the historical and current roles of urban churches; the types of church functions; general community conflicts and problems; and the existing locational policies presently used by church leaders, community planners, legislative bodies, and the courts. A salient feature of this analytical approach was a case study of churches within a particular urban environment.

It was revealed in this analysis that religious groups, typically, have not sponsored any definite locational policies with resulting haphazard and poorly planned developments. Even public regulative programs, particularly zoning, have usually allowed churches to locate indiscriminately while forcefully regulating all other uses. A lack of knowledge of the scope and nature of churches in the urban community has undoubtedly been a major factor fostering this situation.

To overcome this limitation, church locational patterns within the urbanized area of Lansing, Michigan, were examined to provide some basic facts regarding the operations of churches and their land use implications. It was revealed in this case study that the total number of churches and the amount of land used was significant enough to warrent careful consideration by community planners. In addition, qualitative research pointed out some important relationships. Most churches generally

preferred locations on the periphery of residential neighborhoods. In this regard, major street locations were most common since such locations facilitated multi-neighborhood or regional service. Very few churches indicated that they served only one neighborhood area. Another significant aspect concerns church quality; it was judged that only one-fourth of the churches in the case study had sufficient merits to be considered as assets to residential areas. In this sense, many churches had structural or environmental deficiencies which could contribute to the downgrading of some housing areas. Existing situations and practices such as these were taken into account in the formulation of desired policies and standards.

The three categories of church planning standards developed in this thesis (namely gross planning standards, site size standards, and locational standards) lend themselves to the determination of church land and locational requirements, whether for master planning, zoning, or individual church layouts. These determinations will enable community planners to minimize the land use problems associated with churches in urban communities. However, before these standards and policies can be effective, they have to be tested and then adopted into the master planning process and land use controls.

When accomplished, proper community growth can be attained which is healthy, safe, orderly, and desirable; and churches can be guided to locations which will be appropriate to church purposes, as well as to realizing community development objectives.

LOCATIONAL ASPECTS OF CHURCHES IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY

AN EXAMINATION OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED, PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTIONS, AND LOCATIONAL POLICIES

By

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Although churches are prominent features in the physical, social, and moral fibers of modern urban life, there has been considerable neglect on the part of both community planners and churchmen to foster church site locations and areas which would maximize their benefits. In this sense, churchmen have been noted to concern themselves solely with religious questions rather than consider the effect that adequate church locations and sites might have on satisfying religious ends. This can be likened to a school administrator concerning himself with only the educational program without regard for having school sites adequate to accommodate this program. Consequently, school sites may be located on small, inaccessible sites which could hamper the attainment of educational objectives. Just as many churchmen, most community planners have historically excluded church locational and area considerations from their planning procedures. The following statement presented in a 1947 issue of the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS, summarizes this situation: "In practically every metropolitan center, neighborhoods and communities are being planned. Industry, transportation,

housing, shopping, recreation, and all community facilities except the church are competently included in the plans .....however the planning profession makes little, if any, direct provision for the church."[1] The author of this statement went further and mentioned the following four reasons as being partially responsible for the lack of proper planning for churches:[2]

(1) There has been no real need to plan for the churches, since in the past churches just bought two or three lots in a row and built on them.

(2) Protestants have not shown any inclination toward planning church locations. Each group just seemed to go ahead on its own judgment.

(3) There has never been a single responsible agent of all churches with whom the planner could deal.

(4) The church has no accepted body of scientifically-established data upon which the planner can safely build.

Although there have been some recent research programs and cooperative activities to overcome the above reasons for the lack of planning for churches, many communities are still faced with inaction on the

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[1]John H. Shope, "The Need for Church Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. XX, No. 3, (Summer, 1947),p. 122.
John H. Shope is Director of the Bureau of Research and Planning of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago.

[2]Ibid, p. 124.

part of planners and churchmen. Some of this is due to the feeling that community planning for churches and subsequent regulation of church locations would be an infringement upon the separation of church and state. Any regulation of churches would be a regulation on religion.[3] Consequently, these reasons for inaction have enabled churches to locate and build as they desire. The resulting haphazard locations of many churches have frequently presented problems to the urban community. In many cases, these problems have contributed to the depreciation of surrounding properties. There is mounting evidence that points out that under certain circumstances churches can be nuisances, can menace safety and comfort, can lower property values, and can be injurious to the public welfare.[4]

As an example, one of the more noted community

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[3]For an informative discussion of the regulation of church locations as a restriction of the free exercise of religion see: "Churches and Zoning" Harvard Law Review, Vol. 70, (June, 1957), pp. 1428-1432. This article states that none of the cases brought before the Supreme Court have rested solely on the freedom of religion guarantees of the first and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. However, the Supreme Court has held that reasonable regulations of time and place are valid depending on whether or not restricting the location of churches in terms of the public interest outweighs interference with the free exercise of religion.

[4]Fred Bair, Jr., "New Churches and the Law," The City Church, Vol. VII (January-February, 1956), p. 2.

problems related to churches is traffic congestion. Along with increased vehicular use in this day and age, much of the underlying cause of this problem is the increased activity taking place on church properties. There has been an increase in religious activities along with an increase in social, recreational, and cultural services. Many churches, on only are in use for one or more services on Sunday, but also have activities taking place on every other day, ranging from weekday services, to bazaars, dinners, dances, and youth meetings. These activities have many land use implications. Of note, they generate a considerable volume of traffic to and from church. Where local streets are of insufficient capacity to handle this volume, traffic congestion has resulted with detrimental effects on adjacent residential properties. Most past church building activities have been characterized by site locations with improper relationships to street access and circulation and site sizes with inadequate off-street facilities for automobile parking.

Besides presenting many problems to the urban community in terms of conflicts, churches, along with related structures such as parsonages and parochial schools, are large users of land in urban areas. The total amount of land probably comes close to equaling the amount of land used by public elementary schools. In

spite of this significance the community planner is quite familiar with public elementary schools and incorporates them carefully in his plans while churches, as mentioned previously, are almost completely ignored.

In contrast to the sometimes neglected land use problems some churches present to the urban community, churches also provide many benefits. Religion itself performs several important functions in society:[5]

(1) Religion performs social solidarity. Religion is "a unified system of beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community.... all those who adhere to the system". (Durkheim)

(2) Religion elevates social standards.

(3) Religion is an agent of social control. Those practices that common experience finds harmful to society eventually find their way into proscription on religious grounds.

(4) Religion has a profound effect on other institutions such as political and economic.

(5) Religion acts as a therapeutic agent, perhaps its most important function in modern society.

In addition to traditional religious oriented functions, many churches are increasingly serving as centers for recreational, social, and cultural pursuits.

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[5]American Society of Planning Officials, "Churches and Planning Controls Information Report No. 106 (January, 1958), p. 4, adapted from J.O. Hertzler, "Religious Institutions," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, Vol. 256, (March, 1948), p. 13.

In this regard, churches have potentially great social importance. If guided effectively, they can provide a regeneration of community spirit which is needed in this age of "suburbia" and "metropolitan agglomerations" where common ties to hold people together are fast disappearing. With this in mind, planners should devise methods to maximize the benefits of churches and minimize their land use problems.

Methodology

Since adequate church locational requirements and site standards for use by planners and churchmen have not been developed heretofore, the purpose of this study is to develop a body of knowledge by isolating and examining church problems, locations, sites, and activities. From this analysis locational standards will be developed which will enable urban communities to minimize land use problems due to churches and maximize their benefits. To accomplish this objective the study has been organized into the following five phases:

I. An examination of the historical and existing roles of urban churches, sacred as well as secular.

II. A brief analysis of the types of urban churches and the conflicts and problems they present to the urban community.

III. An examination of church location policies, if any, fostered by various church groups and their significance.

IV. An analysis of church location policies fostered by others such as community planners, financial institutions, legislative bodies, and courts to determine concern for particular problems.

V. A case study of churches in a specific community to isolate and examine the operations and land use implications of churches within a particular urban environment.

VI. The formulation of suggested policies and procedures which will foster the proper location of churches in the urban community.

A salient feature of this analytical approach was a case study of the Lansing, Michigan, Urbanized Area. There the aspects of locational policy, if any, have been observed and documented. Whether or not locational policies are evident, the existing pattern of churches has been analyzed in both quantitative and qualitative aspects to aid in either the formation or improvement of locational policies.

In this sense, to determine the significance of churches in the aforementioned urban community, statistics have been obtained including information on church construction trends, church to population ratios, site sizes, and membership totals. To ascretain particular distributive patterns, the physical arrangements of churches have been documented in terms of the relationships to other land uses, major streets, housing quality, and accessibility. These procedures have been used to describe fully the distribution of churches in an urban environment

and to identify some of the resulting problems such as incompatibility, traffic congestion, noise, and blight. A basic element of this analysis was a questionnaire which had been mailed to all churches in the urbanized area. This provided information on each church site along with the viewpoints of the local church leaders as to desirable church locational factors. Such information, combined with the physical analysis, will enable recommendations to be made on church locational policy that may be useful to both the community and the churches as a framework for eliminating or minimizing land use problems associated with churches.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, a church is a building used principally as a place where people regularly congregate for the function of religious worship. The term embraces all buildings designated by sign or otherwise as a church, temple, tabernacle, sanctuary, chapel, or synagogue whether the building was designed or constructed specifically as a church or not. In this sense "store-front" churches and houses converted into churches are included where they are primarily used as churches and have a sign to that fact on the premises. The term "church" also includes related accessory uses such as parsonages,

convents, schools, meeting halls, and parking lots when located on the same site or adjoining sites.

Excluded from the definition are churches located on building sites where the primary purpose is not that of religious worship. This includes chapels connected with hospitals, welfare institutions, cemeteries, funeral homes, and college campuses and residences where religious meetings are held in parlors or basements. Also excluded are church affiliated structures which are principally used for social or cultural functions such as Y.M.C.A.'s, off-campus chapels for college students, and church halls or other facilities operated by religious bodies including apartment houses, welfare institutions, religious retreats, and regional church headquarters. By this definition, only sites used principally for religious worship are included in this study.

In summary, this paper will present the growing importance of churches in the urban community from religious, social, cultural, and physical standpoints. Churches will be analyzed not only in terms of the significance of increasing memberships and services, but also in relation to their significant implications on land use. With cognizance of this importance, this thesis studies and presents recommendations to enable community planners to consider effectively churches in their comprehensive planning efforts.

CHAPTER I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHURCHES

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHURCHES

Introduction

As a first consideration, churches are important to the urban planner simply because of the magnitudes involved. They serve many people, are quite abundant, and use a large amount of land. Concerning people, it has been estimated that about 64 per cent of the population of the United States are church members. Actually, there were 114,449,217 churches members in 1960 with these people members of 318,697 churches.[6] Nationwide, there were just about twice as many churches in 1960 as there were gasoline service stations, another familiar land use.[7] These figures emphasize the fact that churches constitute a significant user of land. As stated earlier, the total land area used for churches in urban areas approximates that used for elementary public schools. However, as differentiated from these schools, churches occupy smaller parcels and are distributed all over the urban community. The greater number of churches place many people physically closer to one or a number of churches than to a public elementary

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[6]National Council of Churches of Christ, Yearbook of Churches for 1962, Ed. by Benson P. Landis, (New York: The Council, 1962), p. 275.

[7]Dan Golenpaul, Information Please Almanac-1961, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p. 636.

school. This wide distribution establishes churches as prominent physical features in most neighborhood environments.

Another indicator of magnitude is the amount spent for church construction. Expenditures to construct new churches have increased sharply since World War II. Such outlays jumped from a low in 1945 of $26,000,000 to $736,000,000 in 1955. This trend continued upwards to a current high of $1,000,000,000 in 1960.[8] Bair mentions that estimates based on population forecasts and recent experience indicate that $6,000,000,000 will be spent in the next few years on new church construction.[9]

However, churches are important because of far greater reasons than sheer magnitudes. They serve as a fundamental institution of urban society along with other "institutions" including the family, schools, and government. These institutions are important because they establish value patterns which govern behavior in society.[10] Churches, in this context, function as organizations in which people are related to one another by a set of social norms and behavior patterns. The basis for this

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[8]National Council of Churches, op. cit., p. 279.

[9]Bair, op. cit., p. 4.

[10]Blaine E. Mercer, The American Community, (New York:Random House, 1956), p. 185.

unity is the relationship established between the natural and the supernatural.[11] The importance of this to society has been stressed by Osman in his discussion of the necessity of religion to civilization as follows:

> It is not sufficient for a city to provide services for its people. Mere largeness does not count. Business and industry with consequent economic prosperity are not enough. Even good government cannot build a civilization alone. It needs the work of many hands. But the complete city is concerned with the realms of the mind and spirit. ....Religion had a premier place in the formation of the city.[12]

The Urban Church and the Growth of Cities

Churches and religion played an important part in the growth of cities. The significant size and central locations of temples and shrines in the ancient cities implies that religious institutions virtually dominated the social, political, and economic life of earlier times. Plate 1 shows some of the dominant locations of churches in typical early cities.

Even in the earliest instances of man's habitat of the earth places of worship were the central physical feature of the community. Paleolithic Man established

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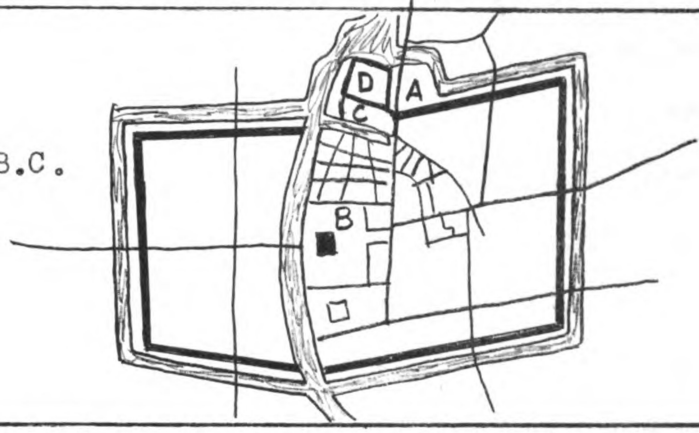
[11] Ibid., p. 224.

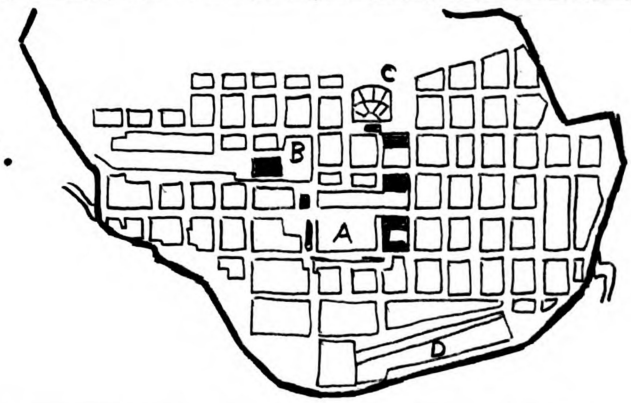
[12] John Osman, "A City is a Civilization," Cities and Churches, Ed. by Robert Lee, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 72.

ANCIENT CITY
-Babylon
6th Century B.C.



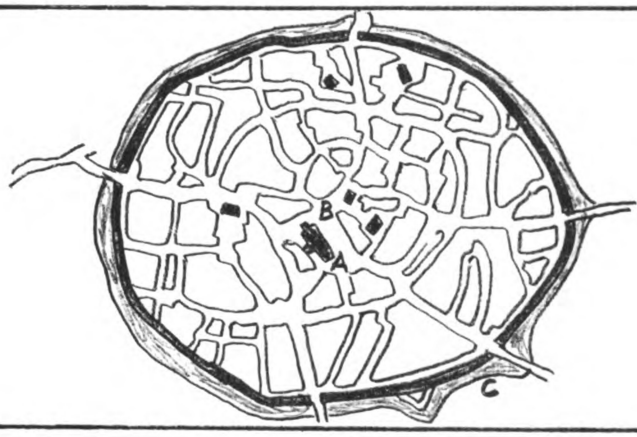
A Ishtar Gate
B Temple
C Gardens
E Fortress

GREEK CITY
-Priene
4th Century B.C.



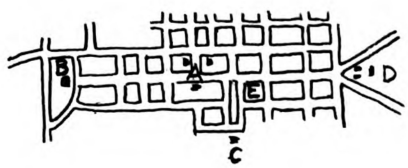
A Agora
B Temple
C Theater
D Stadium

MEDIEVAL CITY
-Noerdlingen
12th Century



A Cathedral
B Plaza
C Moat

EARLY AMERICAN CITY
-Williamsburg
17th Century



A Market Square
B Capital
C Palace
D College
E Church

PLATE 1

CHURCH LOCATIONS IN EARLY CITIES

his living quarters around cave sanctuaries which were used for cermonial worship of the dead and other spiritual activities. These cermonial meeting places were probably the first "germs" of civic life characterized by fixed residences. Previous life was nomadic.[13]

In ancient Egypt many cities to house workers were erected at the sites of pyramids while they were under construction. Places of worship to the dead were part of the religion of that era. Many other cities built during that period were constructed with temples at the community center. Mumford states, that "the earliest ruins recognizable as cities usually disclose only the original dominants, the temple and the palace."[14] This is due to the fact that 'the functions and powers of the Egyptian city intersected not at the marketplace but at the tomb and the temple."[15]

The early Greek cities also had their temples. Osman cites a description of a "polis" by Pausanis, a Greek traveler of the second century, A.D., and a commentator on the cities of his time, as "having as its essential units a 'temple' to the civic deity, a gym-

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[13]Lewis Mumford, The City in History, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), p. 7-10.

[14]Ibid., Plate 2. [15]Ibid., Plate 4.

nasium where the young men gathered to talk philosophy, a 'theatre' where the people learned of the civic tradition, an 'agora' where civic debates took place and destinies were determined, and an 'aqueduct with fountains' which provided the city with its supply of water. Any community which had these five elements was, according to Pausanis, a city."[16]

However, in the ancient cities of Egypt, Greece, and Rome neither religious activity nor political participation were universal from city to city. The deity and temple ritual of each city were exclusive to the citizens of that city. The exclusive character of these religions tended to deprive certain classes, and outsiders in particular, of political participation and property ownership, since these rights were determined by an individuals position in the city-church. Only after many centuries was this close tie between religion and citizenship and property rights modified. The classes of non-property owners continually sought the privileges of citizenship without a commitment to the public worship. This struggle for social change in the ancient western world was not really completed until Christianity introduced a universal, rather than a local, religion. Fustel de

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[16]Osman, op. cit., p. 77.

Coulanges in his study of "The Ancient City" demonstrates how Christianity destroyed the city in this process. Idols were wrecked, along with the shrines of the civic deities and the civic institutions which had been built upon this theology.[17] The result was the Dark Ages during which urban populations returned to rural life. Cities, during this period, decreased in size and importance.[18]

During the Dark Ages the dominance of religious institutions over life in cities was at a low point. The only places were the church strengthened its position were in the monasteries which served as havens of refuge from attacking barbarians and warlords.[19]

Eventually, the unsafe character of the countryside fostered a movement to the walled castles and monasteries for protection. The feudal lords collected higher rents for this protection and having more money they participated in more trade. It was this increase in trade which resulted in a rebirth of cities and towns.

As in the eras preceeding the Dark Ages, the early

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[17]Fustel de Coulanges, The Ancient City, (New York: Anchor, 1956), pp. 389-396.

[18]Arthur B. Gallion, The Urban Pattern, (Princton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1950), p. 33.

[19]Ibid.

medieval towns were physically dominated by the churches or monasteries. These buildings were the tallest structures in the cities and served as focal points from all vistas. Their steeples were the first things seen when approaching the city and the last visualized when leaving. The church plaza usually served as the market place. The principal roads radiated generally from the church plaza to the town gates.[20] Osman aptly describes the role of churches in the medieval city as follows: "The social sturcture of the city was simple....the church was the community. The community was a church. Religion saturated life. All behavior became acts of piety. All vocations were in service of religion. Religion was in the culture."[21] The elaborate and large cathedrals and monasteries of the Middle Ages symbolized the central role which the church played in the life of the city during that period.

The physical, cultural, and political dominance of the church continued until into the nineteenth century when values underwent transformation in the midst of an "industrial revolution" which started to emphasize science and technology. The place of the church receded in everyday

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[20] Ibid., p. 36.

[21] Osman, op. cit., p. 74.

affairs and the factory and skyscraper began to crowd and tower over the churches.[22]

The city reflected the changes in psychology, loyalties, values, and religion of the industrial revolution. Civic life which once centered around the churches now centers around the office, the factory, the shopping center, and the city hall. Much of this decrease in dominance is due to the dispersed nature of religious bodies today. It has been said that England not only gave us our free individuality but also our Protestantism: however, this was not that of a single state church, but the radical Protestantism centered on individual congregations without a church hierachy, ceremony or magnificent place of worship.[23] This individuality of religion resulted in many dispersed churches rather than a few dominant ones. Tunnard describes this early situation as follows:

> Every where they are present, not a few but a host, and in New York City so numerous are they that a whole section, Brooklyn, is known as the "Borough of Churches". As early as the 1830's such cities as Cincinnati had twenty-four churches, Philadelphia ninty-six, and New York itself a hundred, in every instance a church to each thousand of the population. Today, in smaller communities the steeples still shape the skyline, not just a single tall one, as in a Canadian or European village, but several, each announcing a different

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[22]Osman, loc. cit.

[23]Christopher Tunnard and Henry Hope Reed, American Skyline, (New York:Mentor Books, 1956), p. 24.

sect.[24]

A major reason for many dispersed churches was a change in emphasis from the "parish" to the "gathered community" church. In Europe, where there had been state churches, every congregation had rigidly established boundaries, usually called "parishes". To move out of a neighborhood or community was to move out of the parish congregation; for the churches of those times assumed the religious responsibility for every one within their parish boundaries. Initially, most of the churches in this country were, because of their ties to Europe, established on the parish system. However, in a short time American Protestantism went over to the concept of the "gathered community". This meant that membership in a church had nothing to do with geographical limits, but was purely a matter of personal decision. Consequently, churches existed because of people who were there because they wanted to be there, whether for religious reasons or otherwise. As a result, in many places churches of the same denomination were built around the corner from each other and serving people from different areas and backgrounds.[25] The concept

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[24]Ibid., p. 23.

[25]Howard G. Hageman, "The Theology of the Urban Church," The City Church, (May-June, 1959), pp.2-3.

of "gathered community" which resulted in churches organized around differing beliefs and philosophies has been one of the prime reasons for the many, dispersed churches in present urban areas.

Today, the loss of physical and symbolic dominance of churches in cities is indicative of the change that has taken place in the orientation of religious institutions. Bishops no longer become kings, politicians no longer serve at the pleasure of clergymen, and tolls and taxes are no longer collected by churches but by the institutions of government. However, in spite of this surrender of many earlier functions, churches play an important role in the modern city as will be documented in the next section. In fact, the loss of earlier functions may have allowed churches to be more effective in the functions they retained. This seems to be indicated by the recent growth of churches and church members.

Existing Roles and Functions

Although churches basically are places for the worship of God, they also serve as a focal point for family activities and interests, religious education of children, recreation activities, and social welfare services. An increasing emphasis is being placed on social educational and physical needs of church memberships. In 1926 a survey was published which listed the wide range of

activities that took place in 357 Protestant churches. These included classes in such subjects as sewing, music, health, English, dramatics, and gymnastics. In addition there occured social events of all types along with many other education and welfare activities.[26]

Today, the programs of churches are even wider and more varied than reported in 1926. A pronounced movement is occuring from sacred activities to secular activities including social events, athletics, welfare assistance, fund raising, and education. This increase in elaborate accessory functions is evident, by many churches having budgets today in excess of $100,000 compared to budgets only as high as $10,000 in 1932.[27]

Lundberg has stated that today people appear to expect religious institutions to perform the following functions, either for themselves or for the community:

1. Peace of mind for the individual
2. Social Control and guidance
3. Welfare and Recreation[28]

The significance of church activities in forming social relationships has been pointed out in a recent

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[26]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 12.

[27]Ibid., p. 13.

[28]George A. Lundberg, Clarence C. Schrag, and Otto N. Larsen, Sociology, (New York:Harper & Brothers,1954), pp. 571-6.

study. Of eight modern churches studied, between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the church members were reasonably acquainted with more than 25 other members. In addition, between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of the members had at least three of their five closest friends as members of the same church.[29] These figures emphasize the social importance of church activities.

The widening range of church programs, the increasing number of church members, and an increasing interest in religious activities points to an increasing importance of churches in urban life. They are not only continuing to perform their traditional religious function but are increasingly serving as community centers for social, cultural, and recreational pursuits.

Organization of Religious Bodies

The simple designation "churches", as used in previous sections of this paper to describe the religious institutions of society, does not clearly describe the important variations in religious groups with regard to degree of development, means of attaining membership, and unity of beliefs. In general, religious groups can be classified as a cult, sect, denomination, or ecclesia.[30]

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[29]Walter Kloetzli, The City Church, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 126.

[30]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 4.

A cult is a loosely organized religious group. One does not join it to attain membership, but simply accepts its beliefs.[31] Usually membership is on a voluntary basis through personal acquaintanceship.[32]

A sect is usually somewhat larger than a cult but has similar characteristics. Its prestige is somewhat greater, and it has symbolism and emphasizes religious experience.[33] However, its membership is fundamentally exclusive and based on tradition. Sects usually exist in geographic isolation from others.

Denominations are the most secular of the religious groups. They are large and generally fairly homogeneous. Most membership is obtained through tradition, however voluntary affiliations also account for many members.[34]

The ecclesia is the most developed form of the religious groups. One is usually born into it rather than voluntarily joining. Memberships are large and heterogeneous. As differentiated from a denomination, ecclesia are highly sacred by virtue of a particular body of dogma and a hierarchical organization.[35] American religion embraces these four basic structures, and it is important to realize that the differences

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[31]Mercer, op. cit., p. 223.

[32]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 5.

[33]Ibid. [34]Ibid. [35]Ibid.

between these groups are deep and firmly fixed. They have not proven susceptible to change by argument or reason.[36]

The diversity of religious groups in the United States is pointed out in the Yearbook of American Churches. The 1962 edition listed 259 religious bodies including many types of ecclesias, denominations, sects, and cults. It is felt by some that an even greater number was not listed consisting primarily of cults organized for a short duration and some secret sects.[37] Table I portrays that even within major groupings there are many separate bodies. Of the major groups in 1962, there were nine groups with memberships between one million and two million and 82 groups with memberships between 50,000 and one million.

TABLE I

MAJOR "FAMILIES" OF RELIGIOUS BODIES IN THE UNITED STATES-1962[38]

Family	Total Membership (in millions)	Number of Separate Bodies
Roman Catholic	42.1	1
Baptist	19.4	27
Methodist	11.9	21
Lutheran	7.3	19
Jewish	5.3	1
Presbyterian	4.0	10
Eastern Orthodox	2.6	20

[36] Ibid. [37] Ibid., p. 7.

[38] National Council of Churches of Christ, op. cit., p. 278.

These diverse religious bodies present many problems of communication and action to the urban community because there is no central body that speaks for all. Not only that, but there are only a few major bodies which have a central office for all congregations of that group. As a result, most affairs of individual churches are under the direct control of the local congregation. Even the Roman Catholic Church which has a high degree of centralized control does not have a central head in the United States, on the contrary, this religious group is divided into 127 geographic dioceses in which the bishop of that diocese exercises supervision over his particular area of jurisdiction.[39]

There have been efforts in recent years to form local church councils or federations to enable greater cooperation among churches and reduce conflicts. In 1945 there were 230 local councils in the United States, and by 1955 this had increased to 959. Some of these councils have representation from the three major faiths--Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish.[40] These councils attempt to provide some semblance of cooperation among the many religious bodies in matters of mutual concern.

Growth Factors

Accompanying the rapid urbanization after World

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[39]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 11-12.

[40]Ibid.

War II there was a definite increase in total church membership in the nation. This is shown in Table II.

TABLE II

GROWTH IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES[41]

Year	Number of Church Members (in millions)	Total Population (in millions)	Church Members as a per cent of total
1850	3.7*	23.2	16
1880	10.0*	50.2	20
1900	27.4*	76.0	36
1920	45.5*	105.7	43
1926	54.6	117.1	47
1930	57.8*	122.8	47
1940	64.5	131.7	49
1950	86.8	151.1	57
1956	103.2	167.5	62
1960	114.5	---	--

*figures have been interpolated

The foregoing table portrays only general estimates since many difficulties are encountered when determining church memberships. For one thing, there has not been a national religious census since 1936 and, therefore, accurate figures do not exist. In addition, some religious groups, notably the Christian Scientists, refuse on doctrinal grounds to release membership statistics. Even where statistics have been released, different

[41]National Council of Churches in Christ, op. cit., p. 275.

churches have different criteria for defining members. For example, Roman Catholics and certain Lutheran bodies count as members all baptized persons, while Episcopalians and other groups count those regularly attending services of the church or contributing to its support. Since it is difficult to equate all these differences in definition, it is impossible to obtain a reliable record of church memberships. In spite of these limitations, the National Council of Churches in 1960 obtained membership figures for the various religious groups from each of the national headquarters. TableIII summarizes the data obtained.

TABLE III

MAJOR GROUPINGS OF RELIGIOUS BODIES-1960[42]

Name	Number of Churches	Total Membership	Average Membership per Church
Buddhists	53	20,000	378
Old Catholic and Polish Nat'l. Catholic	450	589,000	1300
Eastern Churches	1,123	2,698,663	1900
Jewish Congregations	4,079	5,367,000	1310
Roman Catholic	23,393	42,104,900	1800
Protestant	289,299	63,668,835	220
Total	318,697	114,449,217	360

Although these figures are based on national totals which obviously includes urban and rural situations,

[42] Ibid., p. 248

it was pointed out in a study of churches in Cakland, California, an urban community in the center of the San Francisco metropolitan area that urban average membership figures are similar. Of the 297 churches studied in 1960 in Oakland, it was found that the Protestant churches had an average membership of 364 members; Roman Catholic had 4,170; Morman 2,166; Jewish 1,866; and Eastern Orthodox 1,433. These figures emphasize the relatively small average memberships of the protestant denominational churches as compared to others.[43]

It is important to realize that Table III does not portray a complete picture of the distribution of population among religious or non-religious groups. The protestant group was not broken down into its myriad parts, also this table does not tell how many people belong to no organized religious body. To provide insights into some of these questions, the United States Bureau of the Census conducted a survey of religious preference in 1954. This survey was based on a nationwide sample of 35,000 persons which was expanded statistically to 119,339,000 persons. It provides the best indication available of the religious characteristics of the United

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[43]Rudolf Gast, "Churches in the General Plan of the Community" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1961), p. 50.

States population, 14 years old or older. Table IV portrays the results of this survey.

TABLE IV

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE OF THE U.S. POPULATION PERSONS 14 YEARS AND OLDER, MARCH 1954[44]

Religion	Total Number	Per Cent Distribution
Protestant	78,952,000	66.2
Baptist	23,525,000	19.7
Lutheran	8,417,000	7.1
Methodist	16,676,000	14.0
Presbyterian	6,656,000	5.6
Other Protestant	23,678,000	19.8
Roman Catholic	30,669,000	25.7
Jewish	3,868,000	3.7
Other Religions	1,545,000	1.3
No Religion	3,195,000	2.7
Religion Not Reported	1,104,000	0.9
Total 14 years and over	119,333,000	100.0

A logical question would be how many of these members actually attend church. According to a poll on a Sunday in February, 1954, the American Institute of Public Opinion found that 47 per cent of all adults over 21 years of age attended Church that day.[45] The large

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[44]United States Bureau of the Census, Religion Reported by the Civilian Population of the United States: March, 1957, Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics, Series P-20, No. 79, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958).

[45]Thomas R. Carskadon, USA in New Dimensions, (New York: The Twentieth Cintury Fund, Inc., 1957), p. 70.

membership figures and attendance estimates are indicative of the far reaching effects churches have on life today.

Summary

It has been presented that churches from early times have been a significant part of society, particularly urban society. Churches were the physical,cultural, and political focal points as well as religious centers of most early cities. Even today, they serve as religious, social, and cultural centers of increasing use in spite of the decrease in physical prominence over bygone periods. This loss in symbolic dominance has been attributed to the scattering of many small churches over wider areas characterized by the shift to an individualized "gathered society" religious orientation.

This becomes evident when comparing the number of churches per 1000 persons between today and yesteryear. The 318,697 churches in 1960 is about 1.8 churches per 1000 persons in the nation. This ratio indicates considerably more churches than the one church per 1000 persons cited by Tunnard as an average in early America, and it is probably much higher than the ratio that existed in Europe in earlier history.

The present national ratio of 1.8 churches per 1000 persons calculated differently is equal to one church for each 560 persons in the total population.

However, in terms of the various major denominational categories, this proportion breaks down into one Protestant church for each 620 persons, one Catholic church for each 7,630 persons, one Jewish church for each 43,800 persons, and one "other" church for each 92,700 persons. Although these ratios are calculated on a national basis, they still provide some indication of the numbers of churches to be considered in urban communities.

These churches with increasing memberships, increasing church construction, and increasing church attendance have emphasized their importance as basic institutions of society. Such significant land users deserve careful consideration by those concerned with proper community growth; for unless the problems of churches or the problems due to churches are solved, proper and orderly community growth will be most difficult to attain.

CHAPTER II

THE URBAN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CONFLICT

II THE URBAN CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CONFLICT

Types of Urban Churches

Although to some people churches may seem alike in many features, other observers claim there are such wide differences that no two are ever alike. Actually, individual churches have different kinds of people, different kinds of programs, and different types of locations. Considering such differences, any useful comparison between churches requires that they be classified according to some basic characteristics. One method would be to classify them according to religious characteristics such as liturgical or non-liturgical, or sacred or secular. However, for the purposes of this paper it is more appropriate to classify in terms of physical or social effects. Categories of geographic location, area of service, and functional orientation are possible under such an approach.

Geographic Location

In any metropolitan area churches can be generally classified according to geographic location; that is, downtown churches, inner-city churches and suburban churches. The downtown churches are generally the first established in the community by a particular religious body. Many are known as "First Church" and frequently serve as the "voice" of its denomination in the community.

Because this type of church is in the center of the metropolitan area, facilities for conferences and general meetings are usually provided. Downtown churches serve as strategic symbols of their particular denominations.[46]

The inner city churches are generally located in older residential areas between the heart of the urban core and the new suburban areas. Members are usually drawn from one general sector of the urban area consisting of several adjacent neighborhoods rather than from all parts. Residential deterioration, shifts in land use, and subsequent sociological changes in membership composition pose particular problems to these city churches.[47]

The suburban churches are located in the newer lower density, residential suburbs of metropolitan areas. These areas are generally of a "bedroom" type where many residents commute relatively great distances to downtown or to another sector of the metropolitan area to work. The churches may be old and established, having been there before the new subdivisions were developed, or they may have followed after new growth. Many of the

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[46]Walter Kloetzli and Arthur Hillman, Urban Church Planning, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), pp. 36-7. Walter Kloetzli is the Secretary for Urban Church Planning, Division of American Missions, National Lutheran Council.

[47]Ibid., p. 38.

new churches moved from the inner city as their congregations moved to the suburbs. Memberships tend to be homogeneous and middle-class.[48] In contrast, inner city and downtown churches tend to be more heterogeneous in membership composition.

Area of Service

Churches serve memberships that are distributed in varying patterns throughout an urban area. In this sense urban churches may be either regional serving, community serving, neighborhood serving, or special group serving. Regional serving churches draw members from all parts of the urbanized area and beyond. Examples would be a downtown church and possibly a church of a particular denomination where only one church existed in the immediate region. Downtown churches, in particular, are region serving because of transient attendance from the close proximity to hotels and attendance by others who are not deeply rooted in a given neighborhood. Programs are generally oriented to the "unrelated individual".[49]

Inner city churches are generally of a community serving type. A community is a major segment of an urban area consisting of several neighborhoods. By far, most churches tend to be community serving, although there is

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[48] Ibid., p. 41.

[49] Ibid., p. 38.

a considerable difference between the size and boundaries of the individual communities served.

The neighborhood serving church obtains its membership from a particular neighborhood. Frequently, the neighborhood boundaries serve as a specific set of church boundaries. The church serves a geographical area regardless of the class, race, or economic level of the neighborhood.[50] Few churches can be considered as purely neighborhood churches.

Churches serving special groups have limited their membership to a certain segment of the population. This segment might be a particular nationality, race, or class; or it may be groups such as college students or occupants of hospitals or homes for the aged. Salvation Army citadels cater to another particular segment of the population. In a way, such special group churches are actually regional serving, for they frequently have to rely on such a wide area for membership support.

Functional Orientation

A third type of physical classification might be by functional orientation of the particular church. In this sense, the most general types are those churches

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[50] Ibid., p. 39.

that are purely religion oriented and those churches which are both religion and education oriented.

These three categories are considered the most reliable and significant means whereby the locational characteristics of most churches can be compared, analyzed, and evaluated as to their relationship to each other and to the overall community. The substance of this study utilizes these classifications. To be sure, it is possible that some churches can be classified into all three categories. For example, a Roman Catholic church-school would be both religion and education oriented, and it might be a community serving church situated in an inner city location.

Typical Community Conflicts

In recent years, there has been a gradual change in one particular characteristic of churches, that is, where churches for centuries have been a relatively quiet institution in the community, they have now become a focus for so many activities that they take on characteristics of land use that make it similar, at times, to those uses that are more commercial in nature.

One of the primary purposes of this paper is to isolate and examine the land use problems presented to the urban community which have developed from this change in activity. In this regard, most discussion tends to

center around such subjects as "overbuilding" of church lands; aesthetic considerations; traffic and parking; noise generation; appropriate uses of abandoned churches; and incompatability of land uses, particularly where schools are involved.

Much of the problem or objections to churches is directly attributable to overbuilding the land. Churches have traditionally been constructed on parcels of land that are too small to accommodate adequately the buildings and accessory uses. Consequently, parking has been a problem, because of the limited space available for this purpose; noise has been greater to abutting properties, because the small parcels place the church in closer proximity to these properties; and where churches almost completely cover their properties, needed light and air has been shut off from abutting lands. These problems are accentuated when churches expand by constructing additions without obtaining additional land.

Many other objections arise from aesthetic considerations. Not many people would feel that a pink-colored, cinder-block, church would increase the value of their property, neither would a ramshackle house converted into a church. Similar situations are quite common. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that some churches are an asset to neighboring properties.

Where large landscaped lawns, adequate parking, and architecurally pleasing buildings are provided, properties can appreciate in value due to the proximity of such a church.

Lack of adequate parking that results in unwarranted street congestion is a common objection of properties next to churches. However, even more vehement objections stem from the traffic movement generated by churches. Such traffic is on the increase, not only because of the increase in automobile use in recent years, but also because of the increase in church activities. Many churches now have services every day of the week, along with evening social and recreational events. The exessive traffic that results does have a negative impact on surrounding properties.[51] In some cases this traffic has been charged with being the cause of depreciation of surrounding property values.

Noise associated with churches is another problem familiar to nearby residents. Conflicts on this subject are difficult to rectify because some of the noise is associated with the religious ritual of a particular church. A terse description of the noise problem is stated in the following:

Noise is another specific annoyance from church

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[51]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 14.

> activity. In addition to the noise that always accompanies the traffic generated by a place of public assembly, there is the noise of music, church bells, and carillons. To those nearby residents who live immediately adjacent to church property, the most beautiful of church music in large volume becomes less than attractive. The noise of outdoor social affairs and bazaars can also be annoying.
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> One source of church generated noise is a delicate subject to handle. At the same time, it is a type of noise that meets with most violent objection. This is the noise attendant upon the hysterical religious worship services of some cults and sects. In short, the shouting, wailing, and moaning characteristic of some groups at all times and of other groups during frenzies of "revival" and "protracted" meetings is objected to most strenuously by present or potential neighbors.[52]

Noise from parochial schools adjacent to churches present an additional problem. Where elementary schools are provided, the objectionable noise is from the playgrounds, and where secondary schools are provided the objectionable noise, in addition to student voices, stems from traffic noise, particularly with the growing use of cars by high school students. In addition, the noise and traffic from athletic events has been known to depreciate neighboring property values.[53]

Another land use problem as difficult for the community to reconcile as those already mentioned results from the movement of existing churches to new locations. Aside from the problems of adequately locating and

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[52] Ibid. [53] Ibid., p. 16.

siting the new church, the vacated structure poses a different sort of a problem. Most of such structures were originally designed and built as an edifice for religious practice with all the related symbols and design features. Pressures sometimes mount to convert these structures to establishments for commercial, residential, or industrial uses. These are functions for which the building and site are inappropriately designed. Where such conversions have been allowed, problems have developed in terms of traffic, aesthetics, and crowding which were greater than when the site was occupied by a church. However, in other instances the church structure has not been converted and the building is left vacant for long periods pending the purchase by another religious group. Because of age and obsolescence such vacancies have often resulted in blighted spots in residential areas which only demolition can rectify.

The foregoing presents but a few of the more common land use problems associated with churches which have been cited time and again by various authorities on the subject. This represents an awareness that has developed as to the conflicts stemming from over-building, traffic congestion, inadequate parking, ugly structures, and noise generation. The awareness of these problems has fostered the development of locational

policies for churches among groups including churchmen, governmental agencies, and developers aimed at minimizing these problems. The following two chapters report and analyze these policies and their effects. Through this analysis and an observation of actual locational practices, it is possible to develop appropriate locational policies and measures which, hopefully, can be more effective in minimizing many of the land use conflicts just described.

CHAPTER III

LOCATIONAL POLICIES SPONSORED BY VARIOUS CHURCH GROUPS

III LOCATIONAL POLICIES SPONSORED BY VARIOUS CHURCH GROUPS

Many changes have occurred in recent years to awaken church administrators to the need for comprehensive, long-range, research-based analysis techniques to serve as bases for the formation of policies on planning church locations. Much of the tremendous increase in church construction since World War II has taken place without the benefit of well founded locational strategy. Consequently, many of these relatively new churches may prove to be burdens in the future because of poor locations. In addition, the impact of the autcmobile on church locations has not been carefully studied so that it can be accommodated adequately in future site plans. Other changes that have occurred are the accelerated rate of change in older parts of urban areas with resulting sociological change in church membership and the rapid suburban growth at lower densities thereby rendering traditionally determined church locations obsolete and unworkable. Changes such as these have prompted some church administrators and other individuals connected with religious bodies into developing policies to assist individual churches in making decisions regarding church locations and facilities.

Such policies expressed by these individuals by no means represent adopted principles----for no central policy exists at present among the particular church

groups. However, even though the policies expressed do not represent a consensus, they still carry much weight in the activities of the more involved church administrators and church planners and are often used as standards for new churches. A review of some of the more significant concepts and proposals advanced indicates the extent that some church leaders are now going to meet the mounting land use problems of churches including those due to the automobile, structural obsolescence, overbuilding sites, sociological changes, and rapid church growth. In this respect, these early concepts are serving as a basis for an evolving group of locational policies.

Criteria for Determining Need for Churches

The information presented in the preceeding chapters indicates that there is a wide variety of criteria employed to answer the very basic question of the need for a church as evidenced by the large numbers of small independent churches and the relatively few but highly developed larger churches. Criteria seems to vary between "whim" and detailed justification. Regardless of this situation, most church groups recognize that they are more or less "market oriented" with very few churches built before a congregation exists to support the church. The larger and more organized religious

groups do conduct detailed population studies and other kinds of research so that sites can be purchased far in advance of the actual need for a church. They recognize that this procedure results in considerable savings in real estate costs and assures having a church site at the proper location when a facility is needed. Other churches meet in homes, public meeting rooms, or other temporary facilities until such a time as enough money can be raised to purchase a site and erect a church.

A systematic approach for determining church needs has been promoted by Winegarden which is indicative of the endeavors of emerging church planners. He suggests that churches should seek out new housing developments as possible areas for locating new churches. Once these have been identified the next step is to determine if enough potential members exist to support a church of that particular denomination. This determination can only be made by a door-to-door census of every dwelling unit in a given area.[54] Based on this census the following calculations can be made:

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[54]Neil A. Winegarden, "Problems of Church Extension," New Churches for a New America, (Wheaton: National Association of Evangelicals, 1957), p. 21.

1. Total up the current adult population of the given area.
2. Subtract the number of persons affiliated with other denominations, especially those that will continue that affiliation.
3. Account for those belonging to small sectarian groups.
4. Anticipate about a 50 per cent response from the remaining population.
5. Depend on an approximate 75 per cent increase in population as the area builds.55

This kind of systematic analysis provides an estimate of the number of potential church members. The results will have to be compared to the minimum membership requirements needed to support a church before one can be justified. It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that the national average in 1960 was one church for every 560 persons and the average church membership was 360 persons. According to most authorities these average values are too low to be used as a standard for church planning. [56] Chapin points out a factor that distorts these average figures. He found a number of churches which should have closed their doors according to any "objective" criteria for measuring church "success" but continued to operate with as few as twenty-five

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[55] Ibid., p. 22, citing Murray H. Leiffer, The Effective City Church, (New York: Abingdon-Copesbury Press, 1949), p. 202.

[56] H. Paul Douglas as a result of research of Iowa churches in the 1940's appeared to consider one church per 1000 population as an optimum cited by Edmund de S. Brunner in an article on Douglas in Review of Religious Research, Vol. I, No. 1, (New York: Summer, 1959), p. 11.

members.[57] Michel recommends one Protestant church for every 2500 persons. He states that this will result in churches of approximately 700-900 members.[58] Others such as the National Conference on Church Extension recommend that there should not be more than one church for each 1500 to 2500 persons of Protestant preference.[59] On the other hand, according to Fichter, "The normal urban Catholic parish is a territorial unit which contains from five to ten thousand parishioners".[60] These point out the wide differences of opinion. Generally, the church size has been somewhat dependent upon whether the congregation was a cult, sect, denomination, or ecclesia. Those closer to being cults have tended towards smaller churches and memberships and those of denomination or ecclesia types have tended towards larger sizes.[61]

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[57]F. Stuart Chapin, "The Protestant Church in an Urban Environment," in Reader in Urban Sociology, ed. by Hatt and Reiss, (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1951), pp. 438-448.

[58]Fred W. Michel, Standards for Church Planning, unpublished. Fred W. Michel is Director of Research for the Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis.

[59]National Council of Churches of Christ, op. cit., Vol. II, No. 1, p. 19.

[60]Robert C. Hoover and Everett L. Perry, Church and City Planning, (New York: National Council of Churches, 1955), p. 12.

[61]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 24.

A factor preventing agreement as to church size standards is the conflicting philosophies of clergymen. Some feel face to face contacts are important and these cannot be obtained when congregations are larger than 400 families. Other clergymen feel that only congregations of 1000, 2000, or even more families can support the extensive programs of modern churches and provide the building finances. Because of these differences, some feel that no real uniformity of size will ever be reached.

Relationships of Churches to Memberships

Most church administrators attempt to locate their churches geographically central to their memberships. There are economies of transportation and service which churches obtain from such locations that are no different than other urban land uses, such as stores centralizing within a market area and industrial plants centralizing within a labor area.

This has been pointed out in a few studies on the compactness of church parishes. In a survey by Douglas it was found that 56 per cent of the churches in Cincinnati had "compact" parishes with two-thirds of the members living within one mile of the church. Another 30 per cent had moderately compact parishes, and 15 per cent had dispersed parishes with less than one-third of their members living within one mile of the church. Churches

with scattered members were found to be more characteristic of the smaller religious groups, and of the downtown type of church.[62] This was further emphasized in a study by Kloetzli in which it was found that between 60-90 per cent of the members of the downtown churches studied lived farther than 30 blocks from church; whereas, the churches studied which were located in newer suburban neighborhoods had only about 10-20 per cent of the members living farther than 30 blocks from church.[63]

The principle of a "compact" church membership with the church located in the approximate center has been stressed by Perry. He states that "Churches are designed to serve people. An obvious but often neglected principle is that the church should be located as closely as possible to the people it is going to serve. Ideally, the site should be such that a maximum number of people are within walking distance of it".[64]

Relationships to Other Churches

There has been more concern among churchmen as to

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[62]H. Paul Douglas, Greater Cincinnati Church Study, (Cincinnati: Council of Churches of Greater Cincinnati, 1947), p. 60.

[63]Kloetzli, op. cit., p. 102.

[64]Everett L. Perry, "Selection of a Church Site The City Church, (September, 1952), p. 5. Everett L. Perry is Research Assistant in the Department of City and Industrial Work, Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

the spatial relationship of one church to another than probably to any other problem. This concern for church distribution is more pronounced in Protestant circles where competition for members is more pronounced, however, even the Roman Catholic church has difficulties in establishing parish boundaries between their churches.

Regarding Protestant churches, many clergymen have felt that if there are too many churches in a given area, the potential church members will be divided into many small groups that will be unable to support any one church adequately. A few strong and healthy congregations were felt to be better than many weak ones. This resulted in the formation of "comity agreements" in which related churches gave voluntary preference to a member church to serve a particular area. This has tended to lessen competition among several churches desiring to serve the same area; it has avoided undue duplication of religious activities; and it has tended to keep a control of the ratio of churches to community population. It should be mentioned that a few of the Protestant groups do not believe in comity agreements and also that such agreements assume people have "transferable" faiths.

The "Urban Comity Principles" fostered by the National Council of Churches requires the defining of natural parishes, that is, areas enclosed by primary

physical barriers (railroads, rivers, expressways, etc.) and with relatively homogeneous populations. Within these areas there should not be more than one church for every 1500 to 2500 persons of Protestant preference. The churches in areas not densely settled should not be closer than one mile and churches of the same denomination should not be nearer than one and three-fourths miles. In densely settled areas some clustering of churches would be permitted at stragtegic locations.[65] The major advantage of comity agreements to the urban planner is the reduction in the actual number of churches with which he has to be concerned. Comity agreements also require churchmen to place a little more thought on church need than existed previously.

An arrangement for locating churches based on a neighborhood unit scheme has been proposed by Hoover and Perry. They state that there should be 2 or 3 churches to an average neighborhood. One or two would be located centrally and the rest on the periphery of the neighborhood. Peripheral churches would serve several neighborhoods, whereas, the central church would

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[65]National Council of Churches, "Urban Comity Principles", The City Church, (March, 1951), p. 19.

serve only that particular neighborhood. Hoover and Perry warn against the dangers of the central church becoming a multi-neighborhood type. "Comity agreements" would be established to assure the service area of the central church was restricted to the neighborhood and that it would have almost total responsibility to serve all the Protestants of that particular neighborhood.[66] This assumes a high degree of interchangeability between Protestant denominations.

To supplement the neighborhood type churches, Osman stresses the advantages of a central church "center". He suggests a multi-unit church center which would accommodatethe three major religious groupings: Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. In such a center, "differentiation" would be preserved. Traditions would be continued. But the consequent center would be large enough to have meaning against the scale of the city. The city is not and never will be again a center of religion but religion can be given a central place in the city".[67] Such a concentration of churches would generate a considerable volume of traffic which would have to be adequately accommodated. This factor may limit

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[66]Hoover and Perry, op. cit., pp. 10-18.

[67]Osman, op. cit., p. 81.

the locational choice of church centers of this type.

Relationships To Other Land Uses, Including Streets

Many church planners use similar principles for locating churches in relation to other land uses as school planners use when locating schools. That is, a location in the middle of a residential area is preferred to one that is next to barriers such as railroads and large non-residential areas. Perry emphasizes that locations near such barriers result in a normal part of the parish being cut off and places the church on the edge rather than at the center of its service area.[68] In addition, he further stresses that locations near large non-residential properties such as industrial areas, parks, cemeteries, and institutions should be avoided. These non-residential uses limit the accessibility of the church and industrial properties frequently exert deteriorating effects on adjacent properties.[69]

Perry also feels that a location near some neighborhood focus such as a school or a shopping center offers several advantages. Essentially, a church in such a location would be next to an area to which people are accustomed to travel. In addition, a location next to

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[68]Perry, op. cit., p. 6.

[69]Ibid.

a shopping center could enable joint use of off-street parking.[70] This factor may be of limited value, at present, with increasing daily use of churches and increasing Sunday store activity.

Others feel that locations next to schools have serious limitations. Michel is of the opinion that a location next to a school is a secondary choice because the size of the school and its supporting population may not be sufficient to provide memberships for most churches; also, locations next to neighborhood schools which are usually away from major thoroughfares does not give churches prominent locations and travel patterns to the schools are those of children, not adults.[71]

Michel, feels that a location next to a shopping center may be one of the best sites available for churches. He stresses, however, that they should not be in the middle of the shopping district, but should serve as a buffer location between commercial and residential.[72] A study of churches in Cincinnati, Ohio, pointed out

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[70]William H. Claire, "The Church in the City Plan", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, (Washington: American Institute of Planners, Fall, 1954), p. 176. A reprint of a speech presented to the Los Angeles Lutheran Business Men's Club and other church groups.

[71]Michel, op. cit., p. 2. [72]Ibid.

that Protestant and Roman Catholic churches both showed a tendency to locate within one block of community shopping centers. Exceptions were Episcopalian, Nazarene, and Jewish churches which were scattered throughout the residential areas.[73]

Consensus seems to indicate that churches should be near centers of community activities. This will place churches on natural community travel patterns where they can be regularly seen by all. They also can double as a buffer between residential and commercial developments.

Unless the church is of a purely neighborhood type with walking to church emphasized, locations on or next to major traffic arteries are recommended by church planners. This is to make the church readily accessible to the membership which invariably travels to church by automobile. Locations on arterial routes may provide ease of entrance and exit which is not possible at other locations. Some also feel that there are "advertising benefits" to be obtained from locations on major streets which enables the church to attract the occasional church-goer or traveler.[74] In addition,

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[73]Wesley Akin Hotchkiss, Areal Patterns of Religious Institutions in Cincinnati, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1950), pp. 78-84.

[74]Claire, op. cit., p. 176.

residences or other uses on such streets are less opposed to churches as neighbors than other locations.

Specific Site and Building Considerations

Since, in a general way, specific site and building policies have an effect on locational policies, a brief discussion is included here. The policies and standards for buildings and sites of most concern to this analysis are those on site size, parking provision, visibility, and open space.

Site size. At the present time there are no uniform standards of site size. Most recommendations are experience judgements. Almost all church planners are in agreement that, generally, most churches have been located on sites of inadequate size. Consequently, some church planners, such as Scotford, are of the opinion that new churches should be built on larger sites and that two acres is about the minimum for a church and parking lot, with more space preferred especially in view of the trend towards single story churches.[75] Hoover and Perry state: "...if the church is providing all of its own grounds and surrounding green space, three acres certainly appears to be minimum if not

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[75]John R. Scotford, When You Build Your Church, (Great Neck, N.Y.: Channel Press, 1958), p. 27.

stingy".[76]

Actual sizes will depend upon the facilities to be provided whether church only, or church with school, social hall, parsonage, and recreation space. Certainly, a Roman Catholic church development which would include a church, a rectory, an elementary school, living quarters for the nuns who teach, a playground, off-street parking area, and possibly a parish social hall will require much more than 2 or 3 acres. Some feel that where parochial schools are provided, the minimum acreage standard as used for public schools should be equally applied. For an elementary school this would be five acres plus one acre for each 100 pupils. Thus, for a school of 500 pupils the minimum for school only would be 10 acres. Added to this should be areas for other facilities including church, rectory, and parking.[77]

Of the several area requirements that have been suggested, the more common ones are listed in Table V. It should be noted that some feel that the standards presented by the conference on Church Extension are generally to low.[78]

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[76]Hoover, op. cit., p. 28.

[77]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 24.

[78]Hoover and Perry, op. cit., p. 30.

TABLE V

CHURCH SITE STANDARDS[79]

Source	Recommended Acreage
Conference on Church Extension[a].	1 acre for 0-400 members 2 acres for 400-800 members 3 acres for 800-1200 members 4 acres for 1200 members or more
Presbyterian Board of Missions[b].	3 acres (on the average)
Urban Land Institute[c].	3-5 acres (preferably near a shopping center)
Van Osdal[d].	5-6 acres (for a 600 seat church with 150 parking spaces) 8 acres (for Catholic church with school)
N.A.H.B.[e].	2-2½ acres (500-750 seats)

a. Ross W. Sanderson, Condensed Report, Conference on Church Extension, (New York: National Council of Churches), September, 1953, p. 26.

b. Everett L. Perry, "Selection of a Church Site", The City Church, (New York: National Council of Churches), September, 1953.

c. Urban Land Institute, Community Builders Handbook, (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1954), p. 89.

d. N.K. Van Osdal, Jr., "The Church and the Planned Community," The City Church, May, 1962.

e. National Association of Home Builders, Home Builders Manual for Land Development, (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Home Builders, 1953), p. 203.

[79] Ibid.

Parking. Inadequate parking, as mentioned in the preceeding chapter, has probably been the source of most conflict between churches and the community. To alleviate this problem, church planners are stressing that churches provide more off-street parking space. They recognize that most people now drive to church whether they live half-a-block away or half-a-mile and that most cars come to church lightly loaded. The average persons per car has been said to be as low as one and one-half.[80] Along with the increased use of automobiles by church members, streets are being increasingly restricted by local ordinance to the use of vehicles which are in motion. Greater emphasis is placed on off-street parking than ever before. To accommodate parking demands, Michel recommends that one parking stall for every two seats should be provided on church property with one stall per four seats a minimum.[81]

Visibility. Proper visibility of the church from the street or sidewalk is stressed by many church planners. Corner locations are felt desirable, especially at the intersections of major arterial streets. Hoover and Perry mention that "church and community can benefit from the placement of churches at points of visual

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[80]Scotford, op. cit., p. 27.

[81]Michel, op. cit., p. 1.

advantage. Placed at strategic intersections, churches can act as pleasing terminal features for major streets, thus enhancing their symbolic significance. Middle of the block locations where the sides are obscured by narrow alleys or party walls are unimpressive. A corner lot is better".[82]

Open space. Sufficient open space is needed for aesthetic and landscaping purposes. Michel recommends minimum front yard setbacks of 50 feet with side and rear yards equal to the height of the church proper, never less than 25 feet.[83] Landscaped open space is not only desired from an aesthetic standpoint; it can also reduce much of the noise generated from churches which may be objectionable to neighbors. Church locations which are next to public squares, school yards or other green-belt buffers will gain desirable open space from these adjacent areas.[84]

Conclusions

A few individuals exist in the various church hierarchies who are concerned with community planning, the reduction of land use problems which stem from churches,

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[82]Hoover and Perry, op. cit., p. 32.

[83]Michel, loc. cit.

[84]Hoover and Perry, op. cit., p. 32.

and locational strategy. Many of these individuals feel that, "a poor building in a good location is better than a good building in a poor location".[85]

These policies and attitudes, however, are not yet accepted as the policies of denominations for a unified approach to church locational planning. In most cases individual clergymen still practice whim or fancy in locating and siting their churches. Nevertheless, the opinions stated in this chapter represent the thinking of church leaders on this subject and their thoughts are increasingly becoming considerations for church planning. Some of the attitudes and policies depicted conform to the objectives of proper community planning, whereas others may be in conflict. Emerging policies which stress larger lot sizes, more off-street parking, and compatible church locations facilitate many proper community growth objectives. However, where many small churches are advocated, particularly in the interior of neighborhoods, the resulting traffic congestion and other detrimental aspects can do much harm to the urban community.

The mounting concern among churchmen with locational aspects can lead to cooperative efforts between churchmen and urban planners which can do much to eliminate church land use problems---both to the church and to the community.

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[85]Martin Anderson, Planning and Financing the New Church, (Minneapolis: Angsburg, 1946), p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

LOCATIONAL POLICIES ADOPTED BY GROUPS OTHER THAN CHURCHES

IV LOCATIONAL POLICIES ADOPTED BY GROUPS OTHER THAN CHURCHES

The previous chapter was concerned with church locational policies sponsored by church groups, or of individuals representing church groups. This chapter will explore church locational aspects from another view---those policies adopted by groups that are not church sponsored. In many cases the church locational and site development policies advocated by such groups as land developers, financial institutions, governmental bodies, and courts of law represent stronger views on where churches should be located than those views expressed by the churches themselves. Such groups being quite concerned with the land use problems of churches have implemented control actions, both informal and formal, to restrict church locations. Controls, informal policies, and other similar actions have usually been instituted to eliminate or minimize problems that have developed; thus a study of these controls and policies can provide a review of the problems involved and can aid in evaluating the various opportunities for problem elimination.

Legislation Affecting Church Locations

Governmental powers to control church locations have generally been granted to municipalities by most state legislatures through the power to establish zoning

districts, although most enabling acts usually do not mention church regulation specifically. Some authorities feel that since most states have not specifically mentioned churches and religious buildings, the legislative intent was apparantly that they be judged and regulated in the same manner as other urban land uses are judged and regulated.[86]

Only one state, Massachusetts, has been very definite on this matter by stating that: "no ordinance or by-law which prohibits or limits the use of land for any church or other religious purpose or for any religious sectarian or denominational educational purpose shall be valid".[87] Many municipalities elsewhere in the nation are not following the Massachusetts decision and are attempting to zone for churches---some being more restrictive than others. The constitutionality of many of these ordinances, as we will see later in this chapter, is still quite flexible and approaches used in one area are not generally applicable to other areas.

Zoning for Churches

Zoning has been described in Local Planning Ad-

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[86]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 29.

[87]Ibid.

ministration as "a means of insuring that land uses of the community are properly situated in relation to one another; that adequate space is available for each type of development; that density of development in each area is held at a level which can be properly serviced by such governmental facilities as the street, school, recreation, and utility systems; and that development is sufficiently open to permit light, air, and privacy for persons living and working anywhere within the municipality".[88] Even though it would seem that churches could be regulated under such a broad definition of zoning, common practices have been to make no mention of churches in zoning ordinances at all; or to permit churches in the highest residential district and therefore be permitted in all districts because of the pyramidal ordinance arrangements.[89] This situation was pointed out by W.K. Newman who stated that:

> ....Bassett in his book on zoning indicated that in general zoning ordinances do not restrict the location of churches. Those who have drafted many zoning ordinances have taken this for granted and have not mentioned churches in the ordinances, with the result that persons interpreting ordinances later have raised a question as to whether a church can

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[88]International City Manager's Association, Local Planning Administration, ed. by Mary McLean, (The Association, Chicago, 1959), p. 306.

[89]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 32.

> be erected in an area set aside for single family-dwellings.[90]

Probably as a result of the problems stemming from uncontrolled or unrestricted church construction some communities have recently passed zoning ordinances which restrict churches from some zones. This thought has been implied in the Harvard Law Review which stated that:

> It seems almost undeniable that the same effects which have been held to justify the exclusion of other buildings may also result from the presence of a church in a residential area. Like other places of assembly, churches produce noise, congestion, and traffic hazards. These conditions disrupt the residential character of the neighborhood and therefore tend to depress the value of surrounding property. Moreover, the presence of churches might increase the amount of fire and police protection required by a residential area.... Several courts have found these effects sufficient to justify exclusion of churches.[91]

Besides exclusion of churches from some zones, other types of restrictions have frequently been placed on churches including off-street parking requirements; minimum front, side, and rear yardspace; and height restrictions. Such restrictions on churches through zoning are looked upon with disfavor by the churches.

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[90] W.K. Newman, Planning, 1957, (American Society of Planning Officials, Chicago, 1957), p. 22.

[91] "Churches and Zoning", Harvard Law Review, Vol. 70, (June, 1957), p. 1428.

Their arguments have been summed up by Newman who stated that: "These restrictions hamper church development particularly through increased construction costs, increased cost of site, impairment of future development due to forced relocation, impairment of ability to expand existing plant, and lastly and most serious of all, possible complete exclusion of churches for the community".[92] Although exclusion of churches might be seriously questioned it seems unreasonable that churches should be granted privileges which would place them "above the law of the land."

Typical Zoning Provisions

The following examples of zoning ordinance provisions were in part extracted from Planning Advisory Report No. 106 by the American Society of Planning Officials.[93] They are included in this paper to illustrate the variety of ways churches are handled in many present zoning ordinances.

Dearborn, Michigan (1953): (includes restrictions on schools, convents, and other accessory buildings)

> Permitted in Residence A district: A church or other place of worship, together with the social rooms or other public facilities normally incident thereto.

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[92] W.K. Newman, op. cit., p. 22.

[93] American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., pp. 32-36.

a public or parochial day school, when located on a lot not less than two hundred (200) square feet in area for each student normally enrolled therein, or for whom such school is designed.

A convent, dormitory, infirmary or similarly Class "B" dwelling incidental to a school college or church, when located on the same lot therewith or one contiguous or opposite thereto; provided that the lot on which such use is located has an area, in addition to other area requirements of this ordinance, of not less than fifteen hundred (1500) square feet for each person for whom accommodations are provided therein.

Faribault, Minnesota (1949): (includes lot size requirements and relation to residences)

Permitted in R-1 and R-2 districts: No building to be used as a place of assembly, as a church, private or parochial school, shall be erected on any lot that is not four times the area of the building foundation, nor shall any such building be nearer than 30 feet to any residence lot line.

Ferguson, Missouri (amended 1952): (example of off-street parking requirement)

Permitted in residence A district with Parking: Churches, but only when off-street parking space is provided upon the lot or within 300 ft. thereof, which space is adequate to accommodate one car for every five persons for which seating is provided in the main auditorium of the church and exclusive of the seating capacity of Sunday school or other special rooms.

Lansing, Michigan (1927, recent amendments): (churches not permitted in "AA" or "A" residence districts)

Permitted in residence "B" districts: No building or land shall be used and no building shall be hereafter erected, converted, or structurally altered, unless otherwise provided in this chapter, except for one or more of the following uses: (1) any use permitted in the "A" one-family district, (2)

Libraries, (3) Churches, (4) Community centers owned and operated by public agencies, and (5) accessory buildings....

Los Angeles, California: (includes churches as a conditional use)

Permitted in the A1 and A2 agricultural zones: Churches, and non-profit libraries and museums, provided they are located at least 25 feet from all lot lines.

Permitted in the RA suburban zone and R4 multiple dwelling zone: Churches (except rescue mission or temporary revival) and non-profit libraries and museums with yards as required....

Permitted as a conditional use: The (City Planning) Commission shall have authority to permit the following "conditional uses" in any zone, if it finds that the proposed location of any such uses will be desirable to the public convenience or welfare and will be in harmony with the various elements and objectives of the master plan: (a) airports, (b) cemeteries, (c) churches, and (d) educational institutions.

In permitting the above uses, the Commission may impose such conditions as it deems necessary to protect the best interests of the surrounding property or neighborhood and which are in harmony with the objectives of the master plan. In order to secure an appropriate development of an entire project in keeping with the general purposes of the master plan, the Commission shall determine the height and area regulations for the conditional uses....

Muskegon, Michigan (1952): (includes distance requirement from residential uses)

Permitted in residential districts: Churches located not less than 30 feet from any other lot in any "R" district.

New York City, N.Y. (proposed): (Churches permitted in all zoning districts)

Permitted in all districts: The following community

> service uses: churches and parish houses, community centers, government operated health centers, and schools (except trade schools for adults) are of a community service character, and so are required in all residential areas for the convenience, safety, and amenity of the residents, or are open uses of land providing additional amenities and not creating any objectionable influences.

Oak Park, Illinois (1947): (example of off-street parking requirement)

> Permitted in the single-family residence district: Churches, but any church that is on a new site shall provide off-street parking space upon the lot or within 200 feet thereof, which space is adequate to accommodate one car for every 10 persons for which seating is provided in the main auditorium of the church exclusive of the seating capacity of Sunday school and other special rooms.

Palo Alto, California (amended 1953): (contains area requirements for church sites and requires buildings designed as churches)

> Permitted in all residential districts: Churches and religious institutions, provided that the structure in which this use is located was built, designed, and constructed for the purpose and that the site upon which it is located contains at least 40,000 square feet.

Providence, Rhode Island: (churches exempt from the zoning ordinance)

> Section 22 - Buildings and Uses Affected by Zoning: Buildings housing religious bodies, churches, convents, hospitals, libraries, homes for aged, and museums, whenever such libraries, homes for the aged, or museums are operated on a non-profit basis, are exempt from the provisions of this ordinance....

Royal Oak, Michigan(1956): (includes side yard requirement in residential zones)

> Permitted in all residential zones: Churches, provided that tent churches will not be permitted and there shall be a minimum side yard of 15 feet on each side of a church.
>
> Churches not permitted in neighborhood shopping, administrative and professional, and industrial zones.

Springfield, Oregon (1947): (allowed by special permit in residential districts)

> Permitted in R-1 single-family districts: Churches (except rescue missions or temporary revival) may be allowed by a special permit from the Planning Commission after public hearing and examination of the location has convinced the Planning Commission that such a church will not be unduly detrimental to adjacent and surrounding property....

Toledo, Ohio (1959): (Church locations tied to major streets)

> Permitted in all districts except shopping center and restricted industry zones: Churches or other places of worship provided that a church or place of worship shall locate within 300 feet of another church or place of worship only when at least one has frontage on a major street.
>
> Churches and temples may be erected to a height not exceeding 75 feet when the required side and rear yards are each increased by one foot for each foot of additional building height above the height regulations for the district in which the building is located.

Other approaches have been used in other areas such as Denver, Colorado, and Greensboro, North Carolina, where churches are allowed in residential and commercial areas, but prohibited in industrial districts. Albuquerque, New Mexico, presents still another method in which churches are allowed in all commercial and industrial

districts but only by special permit in residential districts. These varying approaches are all attempts to cope with the increasing problems of traffic congestion, noise, parking, and overcrowding of land resulting from churches. Many zoning approaches are presently being experimented with to cope with these problems in the future. It seems the special permit or permitted use basis may offer the best opportunity to cope with the unique aspects of church construction. On such a basis it may be easier to apply locational standards and provide closer scrutiny of church construction proposals. Each proposed location would be treated on its own merits when reviewed by a planning commission.

Bair mentions that the trends in future restrictive legislation depends on the success of volunteer action. He contends that if suitable church sites are provided by developers, and churches choose and use sites carefully, with full regard for the protection of public interest, public action will be limited. On the other hand, if voluntary action is inadequate to reduce church-created conflicts, the use of more specific public controls of location, planning, and operation of churches will become increasingly acceptable to the courts.[94]

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[94]Fred Bair, op. cit., p. 4.

Legal Decisions

As reported in the Harvard Law Review there has been in recent years a substantial number of cases involving zoning ordinances which restrict or exclude church construction. The decisions in these court cases do not add up to definite findings one way or the other. However, there may be a slight tendency for the courts to allow measures restricting churches from doing anything they wish to do.[95] Regarding subject matter, most of the decisions center around exclusion provisions, rather than restrictive provisions. In other words, where churches have been completely excluded from some districts rather than permitted subject to certain restrictions, such as area requirements or locational standards.

The arguments against exclusion ordinances have been grouped in the Harvard Law Review into the following categories:[96]

(1) Deprivation of property without due process of law

(2) Denial of equal protection of the law

(3) Restriction of the free exercise of religion

These arguments have been the basis of a number of state-court decisions on the constitutionality of

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[95]American Society of Planning Officials, op. cit., p. 40.

[96]Harvard Law Review, op. cit., p. 1429.

zoning ordinance provisions but the Supreme Court has never explicitly passed on these issues; consequently, no universal stand is evident.[97] W.K. Newman points out the confusion by noting that, "There are cases that seem to indicate that in California, Illinois, and Oregon zoning ordinances may prohibit the erection of churches in residential areas; while in Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Texas, and West Virginia the courts have permitted the erection of churches notwithstanding purported restriction".[98] The Harvard Law Review states that the majority of courts faced with the question of the exclusion of churches refused to allow such provisions.[99] Even though most of these courts have not denied the possibility of adverse effects created by churches, they regard these effects as being offset by the social value of religious institutions.[100] Presently, it seems as though the scale is beginning to swing the other way. Adverse effects may soon outweigh social values with increasing use of the automobile, increased church activity, and increased apathy on the part of church leaders.

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[97] Ibid. [98] W. K. Newman, op. cit., p. 23.

[99] Harvard Law Review, loc. cit.

[100] Ibid.

Land Developers

Besides governing bodies and the courts, probably the most vocal group expressing thoughts on church locations and operations has been the land developers. This is probably because they are affected financially be adverse effects from poorly planned churches. Such churches limit the salability of lots and decrease the desirability of many tracts. Consequently, developer organizations have placed much thought on proper church planning in the hopes of minimizing detrimental factors.

In another sense, the National Association of Home Builders emphasizes that churches are an important element of our communities; and that they can stabilize neighborhoods and increase the value of developments. However, they stress the fact that objectionable features are generated by church activity and developers should strive to minimize these features when providing sites for churches or locating subdivisions near existing churches.[101] The principal factors which should be considered in setting aside a church site have been stated as follows:

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[101]National Association of Home Builders, Home Builder's Manual for Land Development, (The Association: Washington, 1954), p. 203.

(1) Need. Don't indicate a site on your record plans without having definite prospects of its use....

(2) Location. Don't locate a church site in the center of your project. Avoid locations which have only minor residential street access. Good locations are on or near minor or secondary thoroughfares, adjacent to shopping centers, in the point of Y intersections, and as buffer sites between residences and business, where shopping center parking may be utilized in part on Sundays without detriment to the business activity.

(3) Size. Size of site will, of course, vary considerably with size of the church. However, if parking space is provided at a desirable rate of one car to every four to five seats, a neighborhood church seating 500 to 750 persons, and including Sunday school rooms, and possibly a parish hall and parsonage, should have an area reserved of at least 2 to 2½ acres, one acre of which should be reserved for parking space.[102]

Developers have the legal power to effectuate their desires through the use of deed restrictions. Restrictive covenants excluding or controlling churches have been universally enforced, even by courts which refuse to allow the same result to be achieved by zoning.[103] A limiting factor to the use of restrictive covenants is the effective period which is usually only 30 to 50 years. They are also enforceable only by private action and not by community desires.

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Harvard Law Review, op. cit., p. 1435.

Financial Institutions

Although no specific citations by financial institutions on church locations are available, they probably are reluctant to issue loans and mortgages for churches where incumbrances exist. These include restrictions on deeds, improper zoning, or neighborhood objection. Financial institutions generally are hesitant about loans where doubt exists as to the security of their investment. With an increasing rate of church construction, a greater awareness will become evident regarding proper placement of churches in the urban community to protect financial investments.

The desirability of churches in residential areas has been expressed in the Underwriting Manual of the Federal Housing Administration under the heading "Adequacy of Civic, Social, and Commercial Centers".[104]

> For a neighborhood to remain stable and retain a high degree of desirability, it should be adequately served by grade and high schools, neighborhood shopping centers, churches, playgrounds, parks, community halls, libraries, hospitals and theaters. Areas occupied by user groups of low incomes will ordinarily require easier and less expensive access to these facilities.
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> Considerations similar to those outlined under the element of shopping centers apply to churches,

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[104]Federal Housing Administration, "Location Analysis," Underwriting Manual, Part III, Section 13, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1958), pars. 1321 and 1324.

> recreational centers, and theaters, public and private golf courses, parks, playgrounds, beaches and swimming pools is desirable to all user groups. The degree of acceptability is determined by a comparison of the facilities available to the subject location in comparison with those available to all other competitive locations in the community.

It is clear from the above extracts that the Federal Housing Administration feels that convenient access to churches is desirable in residential areas. However, they also imply that quality is a consideration. It seems obvious that the FHA would not insure mortgages for residences where harmful property effects are generated from adjacent churches. Such underlying pressures are forcing churches to consider locational and site development aspects more thoroughly.

Conclusions

In terms of external influences on church locations, either churches have been allowed to do essentially as they desire; or they have been unreasonably banished from some communities and subdivisions altogether. These extremes indicate that regulative measures and informal policies are in a stage of experimentation. Many techniques and approaches are being tried. Zoning provisions, for example, have varied from church exclusion in certain districts; to allowing churches with some restrictions; to complete exemption from zoning requirements. It seems the extremes of exclusion and exemption

are unacceptable, since exclusion is unreasonable and exemption does not solve the land use problems that arise from indiscriminate church building. Recognizing the need for applying some restrictions, some zoning ordinances have included many different approaches. Some spell out a minimum distance to residential uses; many have off-street parking requirements; others state minimum allowable lot coverages, require churches to occupy structures designed as churches, or emphasize locations on major streets. There is no indication available that such attempts have been successful in minimizing land use problems due to churches. However, it is felt that these measures have been formulated as temporary, stop-gap measures. Stronger provisions are needed resulting from comprehensive systematic research and data analysis that considers not only existing zoning policies but also the concepts of church planners and other concerned groups. When this is accomplished, the present period of experimentation will give way to justifiable policies and regulative measures that can be adopted in most urban situations to obtain better church locations from the standpoint of the churches as well as the community.

CHAPTER V

A STUDY OF CHURCHES IN AN URBAN COMMUNITY

V A STUDY OF CHURCHES IN AN URBAN COMMUNITY

Introduction

Before suggestions can be formulated as to desirable church locational policies that can be applied in most situations, it is necessary to isolate and examine actual locational patterns within an urban environment. Although previous chapters treated locational factors within a general context, this chapter presents features of church location which have been found in a particular area. Following are some of the questions to be answered. What have been the past locational choices for church sites? What criteria, if any, had been used and what factors were taken into consideration? Do problems of small sites, poor locations, inadequate parking, traffic congestion, etc. actually exist? What is the actual number of churches to be considered? Do churches have harmful or beneficial effects on adjacent properties? To answer these questions, this study will be mainly concerned with physical relationships of churches within an urban community, rather than theological, economic, legal, or social aspects; although some of these factors are included, where necessary, to describe the physical pattern more completely.

Methodology

As noted earlier, a case study of the locational

patterns and site factors of churches within the urbanized area of Lansing, Michigan, forms a significant part of this overall study. It is judged that this area is sufficiently similar to other urban areas so that common problems and relationships can be discovered.

To obtain an adequate analysis, this study area has been researched in both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Statistics have been obtained including information on church construction trends, church to population ratios, site sizes, and membership totals. Knowledge as to locational criteria, choices, and problems was obtained by an analysis of the distribution pattern of churches as related to other land uses, street types, housing quality, and accessibility.

Information on existing churches which served as the foundation for the above analysis was obtained principally from a field survey of each church. The telephone directory, Polk's Lansing City Directory and land use surveys by the Lansing and East Lansing Planning Departments provided the addresses of most churches. These were individually field checked by the author to determine detailed locational information. In addition, the field chrck disclosed a number of churches which were not listed in the aforementioned sources. After all churches in the study area were

located, the Sanborn Atlas, Lansing and East Lansing Assessor's records, and the land use surveys were used to obtain data on site sizes and layouts.

As a supplement to the visual information that was obtained from the field survey, a questionnaire (see Appendix) was mailed to each church in the study area. The questionnaire requested information on such items as membership totals, church use, previous locations, site dimensions, construction dates, off-street parking, and the types of uses accommodated on the site besides churches. In addition, viewpoints were requested on the adequacy or inadequacy of existing locations and site sizes; and, if inadequate, what the reasons might be. The results of the questionnaire did not prove to be as valuable to this analysis as originally expected. In spite of a telephone follow-up, only 37 per cent of the questionnaires mailed out were eventually received. This may be due to the limited knowledge many clergymen have about the physical features of their particular church. In addition, many respondents either refused to answer or gave "distorted" information. These difficulties limited the use of the questionnaire which under most research programs would have been considered a reliable return. However, the questionnaire did provide useful opinions of clergymen on site sizes

and locations even though the statistical data had to be augmented by other means. The quantitative and qualitative data obtained was used to describe fully the distribution of churches in a particular urban environment and to identify some of the church related problems. These results provided revealing insights that made possible valid recommendations to be formulated on church locational policies.

Study Area

Due to the "fluid" nature of many church memberships, an urbanized area rather than a single political jurisdiction was used as a foundation for the case study so that an undistorted statistical analysis could be derived. Members of some churches come from all parts of an urban area and therefore cross from one political jurisdiction into others. Some residents of one city attend churches in another, and different residents in the townships attend churches in both cities.

The urbanized area used for this case study consists of the cities of Lansing and East Lansing, portions of DeWitt Township on the north, Meridian Township on the east, Delhi Township on the south, and Delta Township on the west. Two unincorporated urban concentrations, namely, Okemos in Meridian Township and Holt in Delhi

Township, are also considered as parts of this area. The study area (see Plate 2) conforms essentially to the built up area included in the 1960 U. S. Census urbanized area definition. The population of this area has been estimated at 175,000 persons for 1961.[105] The U. S. Census in 1960 had a population for a slightly smaller area of 174,143 persons.[106] An urbanized area of this size is large enough to permit useful correlations to be derived and analysis to be made, and yet be small enough to enable research to be conducted within the limits of this thesis.

Church Growth Factors

As a result of the field check it was found that a total of 166 churches served the Lansing Urbanized Area at the end of 1961. Of these, 14 churches were conversions from residential or commercial structures; the remaining 152 buildings were designed and constructed specifically for church purposes. The surge of church construction in recent years is quite notable. Of the existing 152 church buildings, 74 or almost 50 per cent

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[105]Estimate made by author based on interpolation of U. S. Census figures and population density map of the Lansing Planning Department.

[106]Derived from the publication U. S. Censuses of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts, Final Report PHC (1) - 73.

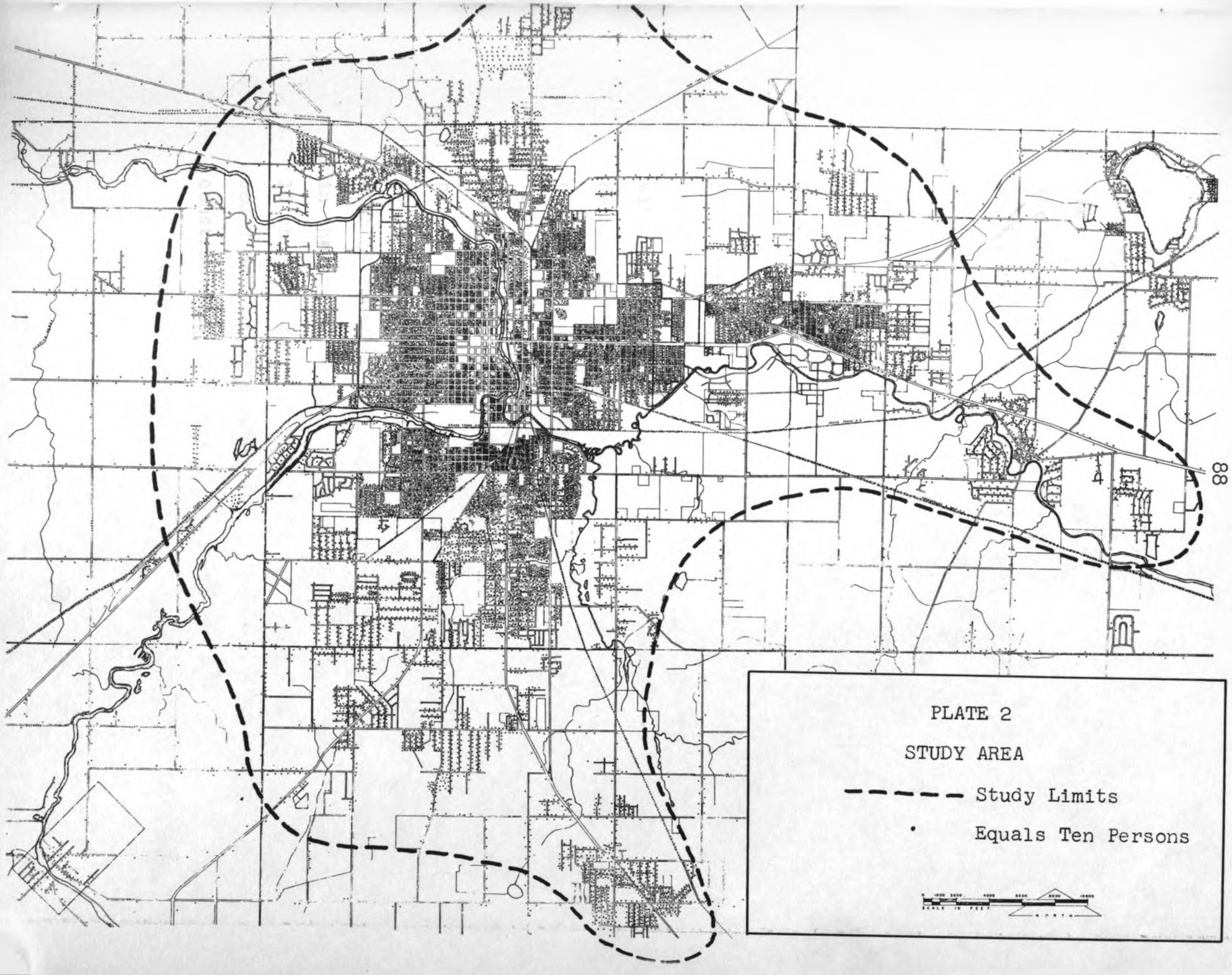
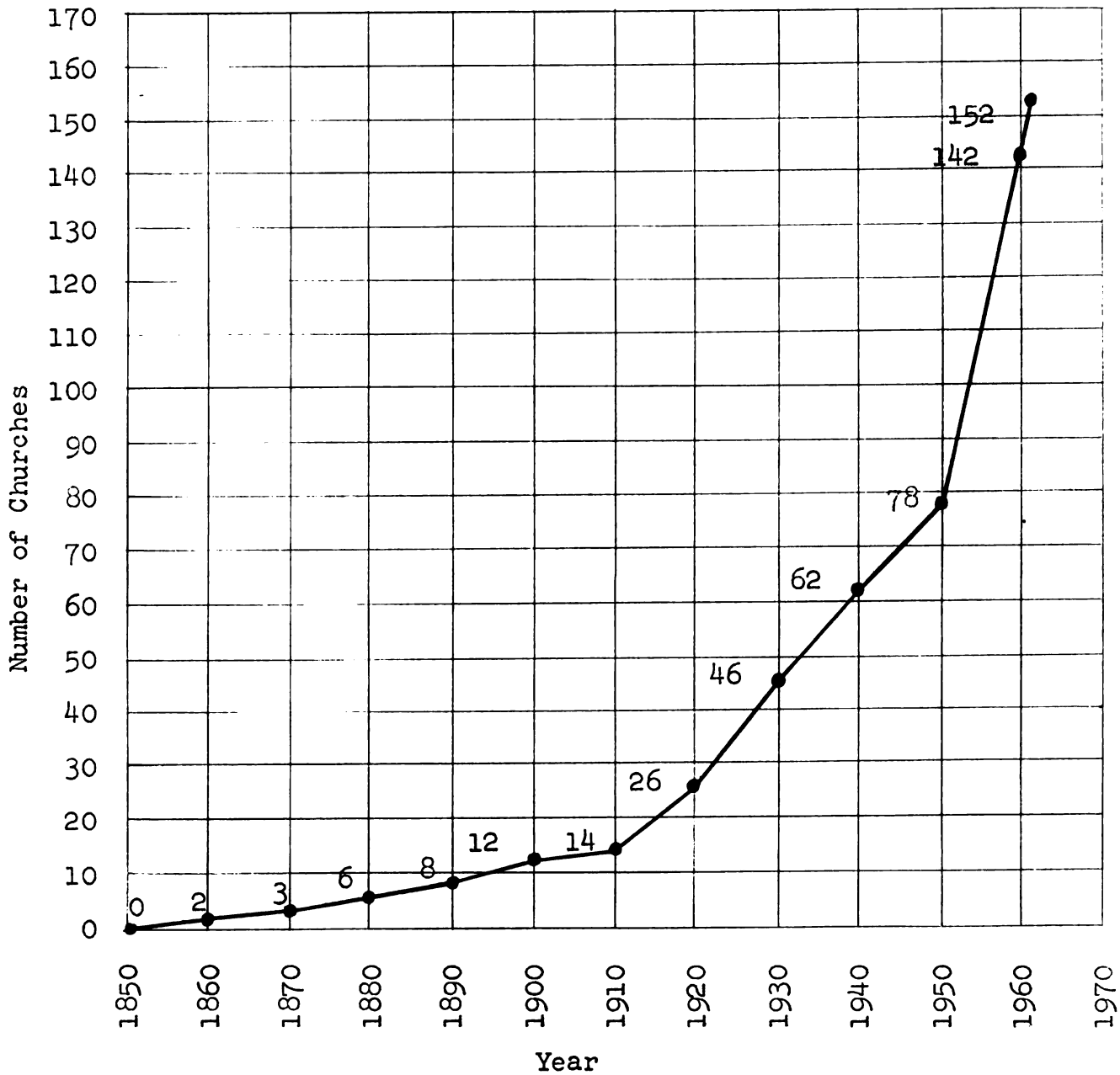


PLATE 2
STUDY AREA
Study Limits
Equals Ten Persons

(48.6%) were constructed since 1950. Graph I portrays the trends of church construction and Graph 2 portrays the volume of construction per decade. The 14 church conversions were excluded from these graphs because conversion dates could not be obtained.

Although Graph I shows the cumulative amount of church construction, which emphasizes the very moderate growth rate during the early history of the area and the greater rate in recent years, Graph II portrays the absolute growth per decade. It shows only about 3 churches were constructed per decade up to 1909. In the following decades, church construction considerably increased with 12 constructed from 1910 to 1919; and the prosperous decade of the 1920's witnessed the construction of 20 churches; however, during the following two decades, 1930 to 1949 (which included a depression, a world war, and post war recovery) this rate dropped to 15 churches per decade. Then with the prosperity of the 50's church construction increased to four times the previous decade with 64 churches constructed from 1950 to 1959. Already in the present decade starting in 1960, there have been 10 churches constructed within a two year span which could mean at this rate a total of 50 churches being constructed in the period from 1960 to 1969.

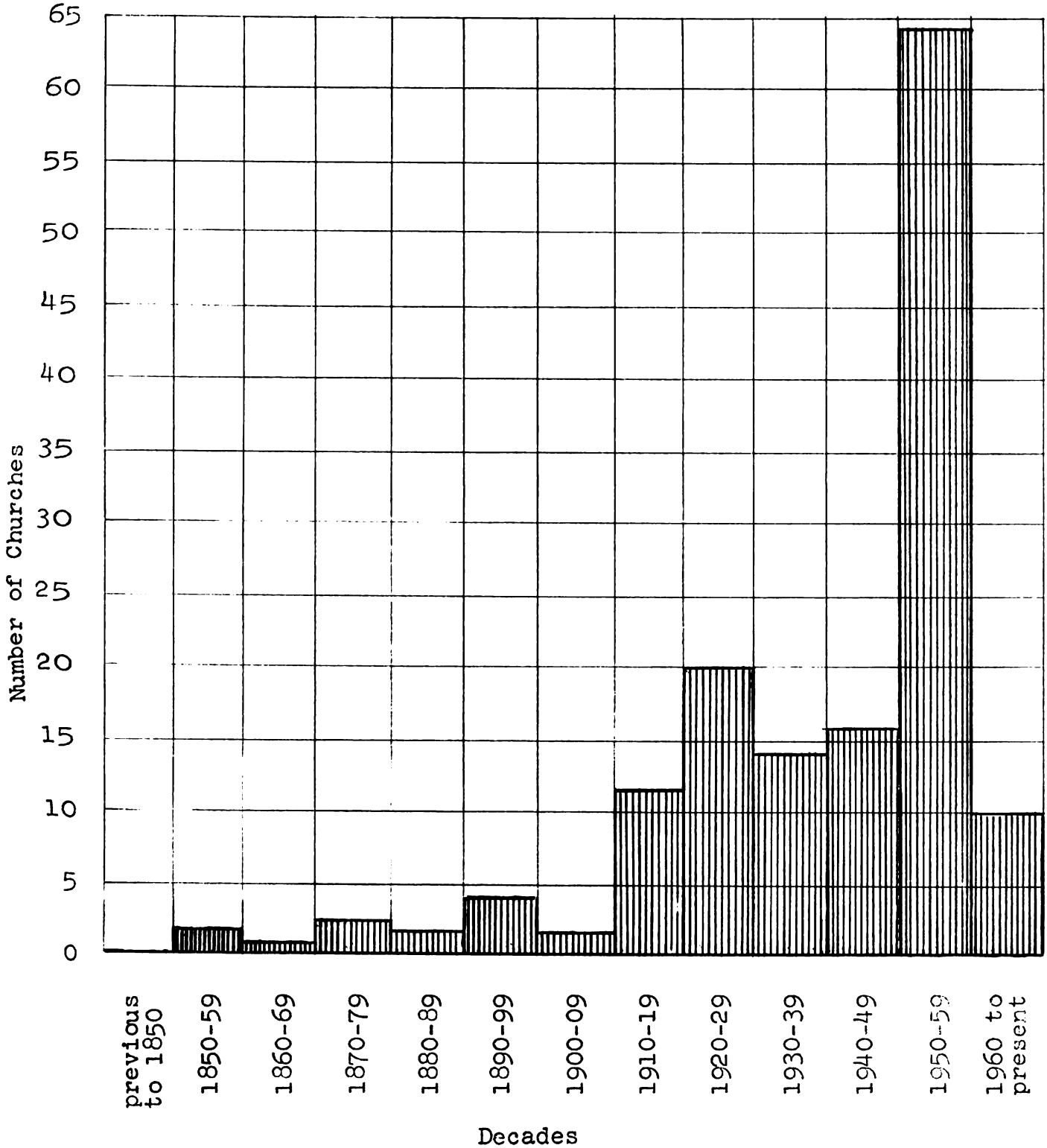
Only 14 churches of the 152 actual church buildings,



Note: conversion churches are not included (total of 14 in 1961)

GRAPH I

CHURCH CONSTRUCTION TRENDS
LANSING URBANIZED AREA



GRAPH II

VOLUME OF CHURCH CONSTRUCTION PER DECADE
LANSING URBANIZED AREA

or 8 per cent, are more than 50 years old, and hence exceed this commonly used yardstick of obsolescence. The two oldest churches are Holt Methodist which was constructed in 1853 and Seymour Avenue Methodist (Lansing) which was constructed in 1854. These old churches emphasize the Methodist backgrounds of many of the early settlers of this area.

An important aspect of church construction is that of church migration, the movement of established churches from one location to another. An indication of this mobility was provided in the previously mentioned questionnaire. Of 48 respondents to a question on church movement, 67 per cent stated that their particular church had previously been situated at other locations within the Lansing Urbanized Area. Some stated that the church had moved to different locations three or four times. The questionnaire also pointed out that many churches after being vacated were then occupied by another church group. The remaining 33 per cent indicated that they had always been at their present location since their church was organized in this area. These figures imply a high degree of mobility among churches. Many of the movements cited, however, were simply from temporary quarters to permanent quarters even though in some cases this constituted a movement of three or

four miles. This migration and the recent increase in church construction have probably brought churches more to the attention of the average citizen and has resulted in an increased awareness of problems resulting from poor church locations and site treatment.

Site Sizes

As noted in an earlier chapter church activities have been increasing in recent years to include much more than simply Sunday services. However, such increased activities by themselves do not result in community problems. It is only when these activities take place on inadequate, cramped sites that problems arise. Where front, side, and rear yards are small, churches are close to adjacent uses and noise problems sometimes become acute. Also, small sites do not allow sufficient room for needed off-street parking, desirable landscaping, and sufficient setback. In addition, light and air can be cut off from abutting properties by large church structures placed on small sites.

Calculations were made of each of the 166 churches to determine the range of site sizes. This information is presented in Table VI. In computing church acreage, the entire church plant was considered. Therefore, the acreage includes that which is occupied by church building, Sunday school buildings, parochial schools,

convents, rectories, parsonages, parking lots, and general open space, provided that such facilities are located on the same parcel. Isolated parsonages or church offices have not been included in the acreage figures.

TABLE VI

CHURCH SITE SIZES

Acreage	Number of Churches	Per Centage
.01 - 50 Acres	90	54%
.51 - 1.00 Acres	32	19%
1.01 - 2.00 Acres	23	14%
2.01 - 3.00 Acres	11	6%
3.01 - 5.00 Acres	3	2%
5.01 -10.00 Acres	4	3%
10.01 Acres and above	3	2%
	166	100%

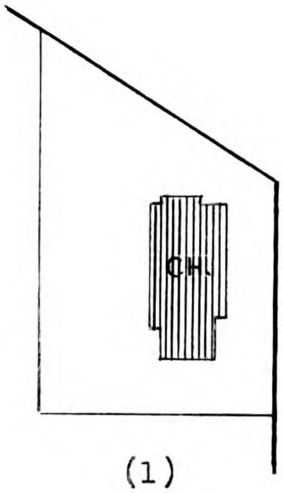
Table VI shows that 54 per cent of the churches are on sites of one half acre or less, that 73 per cent are on sites one acre or less, and that 87 per cent are on sites of two acres or less. Since two acres is considered to be a minimum size for a church site by some church planners, (see Chapter III), some 145 churches out of a total of 166, or 87 per cent, are located on inadequate sites.

The average church site figures out to be 1.24 acres. However, this is misleading because one site has 30 acres which pulls the average up. The median, which would be more representative in this case, is only

0.45 acres. Even though this figure might seem high to some, it is not enough land to provide for the multitude of functions and facilities that now might have to be accommodated on a church site including recreation programs, off-street parking, adequate setback, schools, and housing for the clergy. Schematic plot plans of typical Lansing area churches are shown on Plate 3. These emphasize some of the overcrowded site conditions that exist.

Churches to Population Ratios

Some of the more useful tools for planning analysis evolve from ratio comparisons. A ratio as used here is a quantity of something related to some uniform unit of reference. For example, in terms of population density, a ratio might be 20 persons per acre. Other forms of ratios might be 3 acres of commercial land per 1000 persons or one acre of playground space per 1000 persons. Such "tools", when adjusted properly by recognizing future trends and desires, can be used as a standard to gauge the adequacy of existing facilities or to provide a means for estimating future requirements. As a simple example, if a research program revealed that a standard or ratio for golf courses should be one course for 20,000 persons and a certain community of 60,000 people only had one course in existence the community should acquire two additional courses to meet



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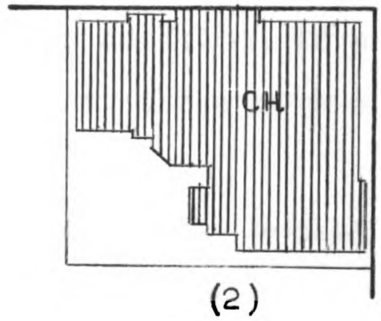

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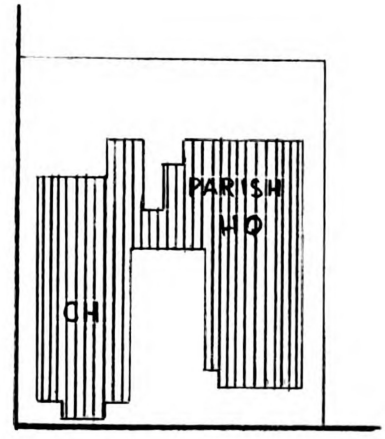

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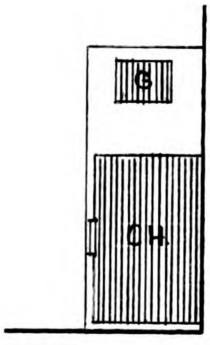

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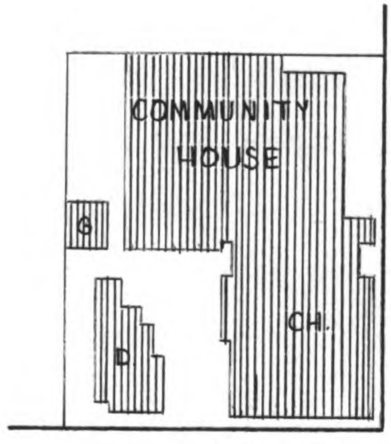

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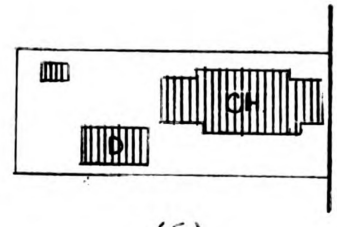

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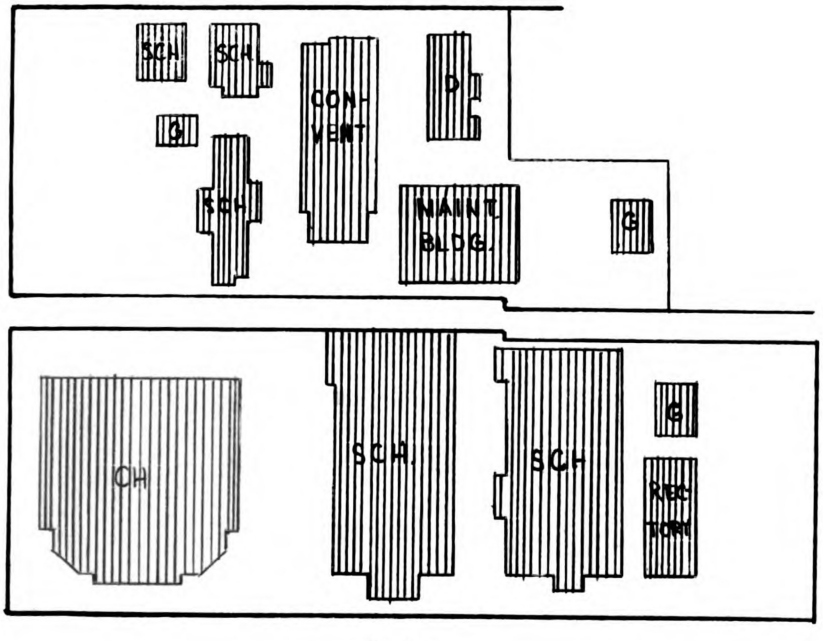

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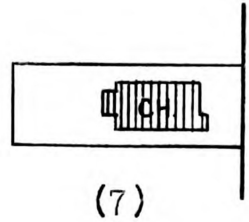

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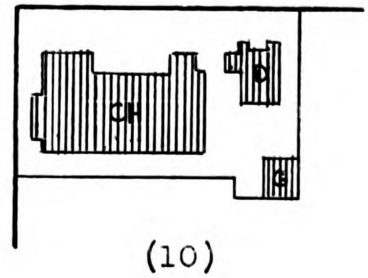

(10)

PLATE 3

TYPICAL CHURCH PLOT PLANS

the standard. In addition, if a future population estimate was 80,000 persons, three more courses would be needed to meet future demands.

On the same basis, knowledge of the ratios of churches per 1000 persons and the acreage of church land per 1000 persons when adjusted properly may be used in estimating future church land requirements. Acreage computations for each of 166 churches in the study area revealed that 208 acres were in church use in 1961. When these figures were related to the 175,000 population of the study area the following ratios were derived:

(1) 0.95 churches per 1000 persons, and

(2) 1.19 acres of church land per 1000 persons

On comparing these values with the data in Chapter II it can be noted that the Lansing area has fewer churches per 1000 persons than the nation as a whole. The national figure was 1.80 contrasted to Lansing's 0.95. The number of churches per 1000 persons in the Lansing area, however, does compare favorably with another study of an urban area conducted by Gast. He found that Oakland, California, had, in 1960, 297 churches for 361,000 persons.[107] This was a ratio of 0.83 churches per 1000 persons. Hotchkiss in a study of the Cincinnati, Ohio, Urban Area apparently

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[107]Gast, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

found 611 churches serving 621,987 persons[108] or a ratio of 0.99 churches per 1000 persons. From these figures, a definite correlation seems to exist between the number of churches in urban areas and their populations.

Before these ratios can be used as standards for estimating and planning future church requirements they should be adjusted for expected future desires and trends. For instance, one adjusting factor could result from pressures to have fewer and subsequently larger churches as advocated by some church planners, rather than smaller sized churches as now exist.[109] If this desire seemed valid then the ratio of 0.95 churches per 1000 persons would have to be revised downward. Another factor might result from the tendencies of churches, as other new urban land uses, to obtain larger sites. As pointed out in answers to the church questionnaire, many churchmen desire sufficient acreage to accommodate adequately off-street parking and one-story churches, and have enough additional space for desireable building setbacks and outdoor activities. Such desires will require the existing ratio of 1.19 acres of church land per 1000 persons to be increased to accommodate the

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[108]Hotchkiss, op. cit., pp. 29 and 36.

[109]Michel, op. cit., n.p.

larger sites. There are definite indications that church acreage is on the increase. Gast mentioned that in Oakland, California, within a six year period from 1953 thru 1959 church acreage increased 71 per cent while the number of churches increased only 12 per cent. This represented an increase in mean acreage from .369 to.565.[110] This trend is also evident in the Lansing area where the average acreage of 13 churches constructed from 1959 to 1961 was 3.79 acres which is considerably higher than the average of all churches of 1.24 acres. There seems to be a definite trend towards larger church site sizes.

Qualitative Aspects of Church Locations

A thorough analysis of churches requires much more than numerical or quantity considerations. Determinations as to the characteristics of church locations are also necessary in terms of the distribution pattern and relationships to streets and other land uses. In this regard, the following questions are to be answered. Are churches located in concentrations or is there a tendency for churches to locate some distance from one another? Are they widely and evenly dispersed? Are they located within residential areas? Have churches located at intersections of major streets, minor streets, or where a major street crosses a minor street?

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[110]Gast, op. cit., p. 36.

What is the quality of churches and is there a correlation between church quality and neighborhood quality? What are some implications of church operation on surrounding land uses? These are a few of the questions that have been answered by qualitative research into the characteristics of church locations.

Use of Church Facilities

Many of the problems resulting from church locations stem from relatively recent increases in activity taking place on church properties. Churches are no longer in use only for Sunday services, but are also in use on many weekdays. This was pointed out in the results of the questionnaire sent to churches in the Lansing Area. Table VII indicates the use of church facilities in the Lansing Urbanized Area over the period of an average week.

TABLE VII

DAILY USE OF CHURCHES
(for 61 total churches)

Day	Number of Churches with Activities	Per Centage of Total Respondents
Sunday	60	98%
Monday	31	51%
Tuesday	35	57%
Wednesday	50	82%
Thursday	40	66%
Friday	25	41%
Saturday	27	44%

The foregoing table shows that obviously Sunday is the day used most frequently with 98 per cent of the 61 churches responding to the questionnaire in use on that day. However, it can be seen that Wednesday is also a popular activity day with 82 per cent of the churches in use. Many are also in use on other days with 13 per cent of the churches stating that they were in use every day of the week.

Typical activities reported were Sunday school and services occuring on Sundays; boy Scout and church board meetings on Mondays and Tuesdays; mid-week prayer meetings and services on Wednesdays; choir practice on Thursdays; and social activities and choir on Fridays and Saturdays.

The respondents also indicated that an average of 382 persons attended each Sunday service (ranging from a low of 9 to a high of 3,500, with some having more than one service), an average of 81 persons attending weekday services, and an average of 143 persons attending other activities such as Sunday school and social activities. These participants came from an average 1960 church membership of 834 persons.

This increase in both religious and secular church activities has been noted in an earlier chapter. It is of particular concern that this increased activity has resulted in increased site use with more traffic

movement, noise problems, and demands on auto parking facilities. Where off-street parking is unavailable or in meager supply, traffic congestion multiplies. In this regard, 27 per cent of the questionnaire respondents indicated they had no off-street parking at all and 48 per cent provided less than 25 spaces.

Spatial Distribution

As noted in an earlier chapter, churches in any metropolitan area are usually found in all sectors and are rather evenly distributed. Is this pattern discernible in the Lansing study area? Plate 4 portrays the physical distribution pattern of the 166 churches within the study area. With the exception of four areas of some degree of concentration, most of the churches are in dispersed locations with wider spacings in newer, outlying areas and closer spacings in older areas. However, in the newer areas there seem to be more churches in the northwest sector than the southwest sector. No reason is obvious for this occurence.

The areas of concentration identified on Plate 4 as B, C, and D are all lower quality residential areas. As are the residences, the churches in these concentrations are generally small and low-quality. They generally are occupied by small sects not associated with larger denominations with names like the "Original Church of God",

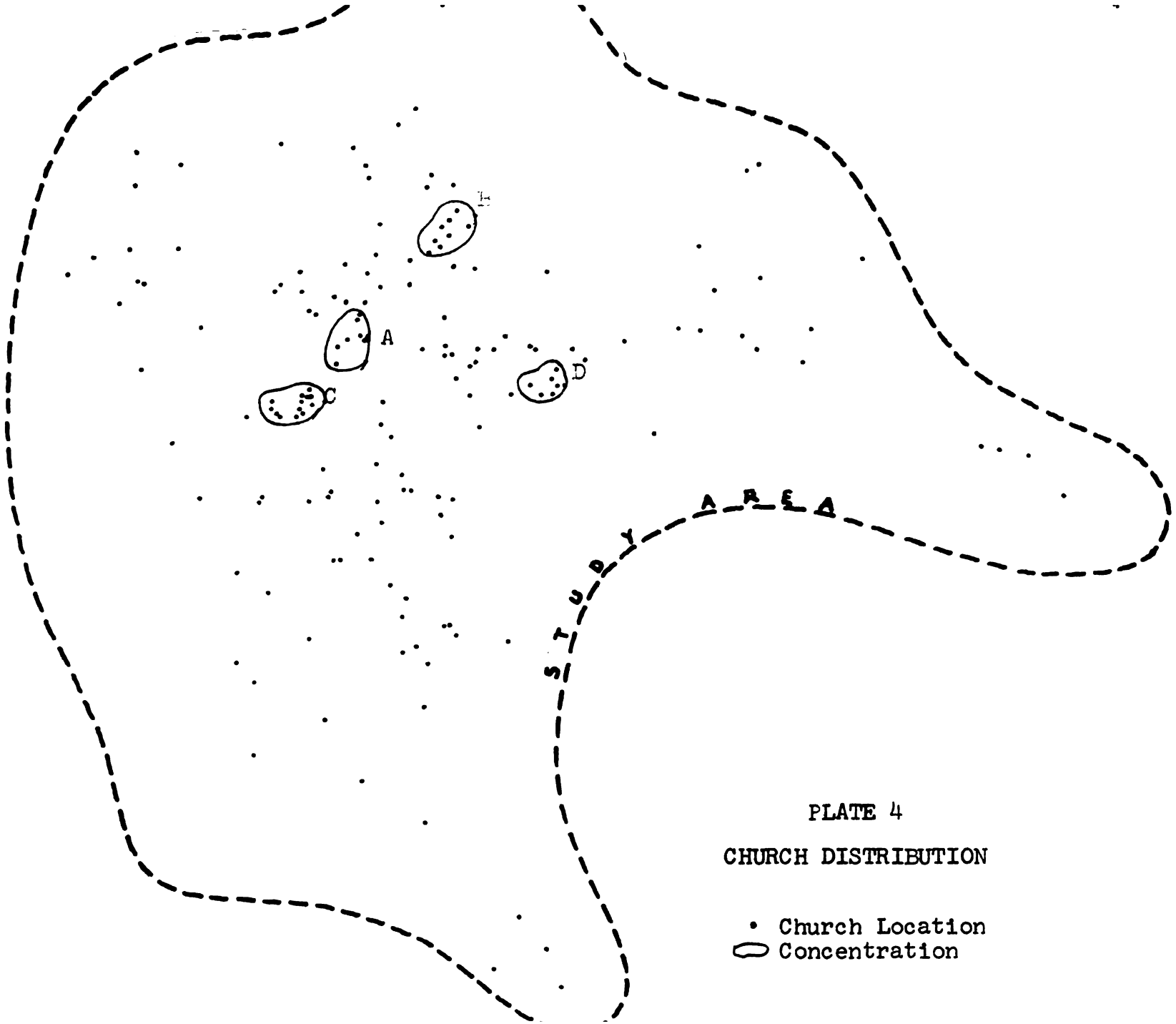

PLATE 4

CHURCH DISTRIBUTION

• Church Location
⬭ Concentration

"Lilly White Pentecostal", and "True Light Baptist."

On the other hand, area "A" is the location of the downtown churches. Many of these are large cathedral-type structures. They generally house central church offices for the larger, more established denominations. No small churches with few members exist in this particular area, probably due to the higher cost of real estate.

A factor which affects the distribution of churches within a particular denomination or group of denominations is the establishment of parish boundaries or service limits by either a central denominational office or through mutual comity agreements. Based on the results of the church questionnaire, it is evident that such practices had negligible effect on church locations in this area. Responses to a question requesting a discription of service limits or parish boundaries indicated that 41 per cent had no definite boundaries and 18 per cent said they did have such limits. Another 41 per cent did not answer the question. Assuming that if the churches in the latter group had definite boundaries assigned they would have answered the question, it may be said that those that did't answer probably did not have boundaries. This would result in 82 per cent of the churches without boundaries and only 18 per cent with definite service limits. Most of the churches that had limits established

were the larger denominations such as Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran. At any rate, such boundary designations may be more evident in the future as more and more churchmen become concerned with proper spacing and placement of churches.

Locations Related to Surrounding Land Uses

Churches are usually located in order to serve a particular residential population. This basic consideration usually would limit church locations to residential areas, however many other factors sometimes influence the actual choice of site, such as availability of vacant land, price of real estate, the presence of incompatible land uses, donations of land, and personal whims. The great number of variants make it difficult to characterize specific patterns; but to obtain some general tendencies, the churches in the Lansing area were classified according to the general land use characteristics of the surrounding properties. Plate 5 portrays a generalized land use map of the urbanized area together with the church locations. Table VIII presents a tabulation of the church-land use relationships which were revealed.

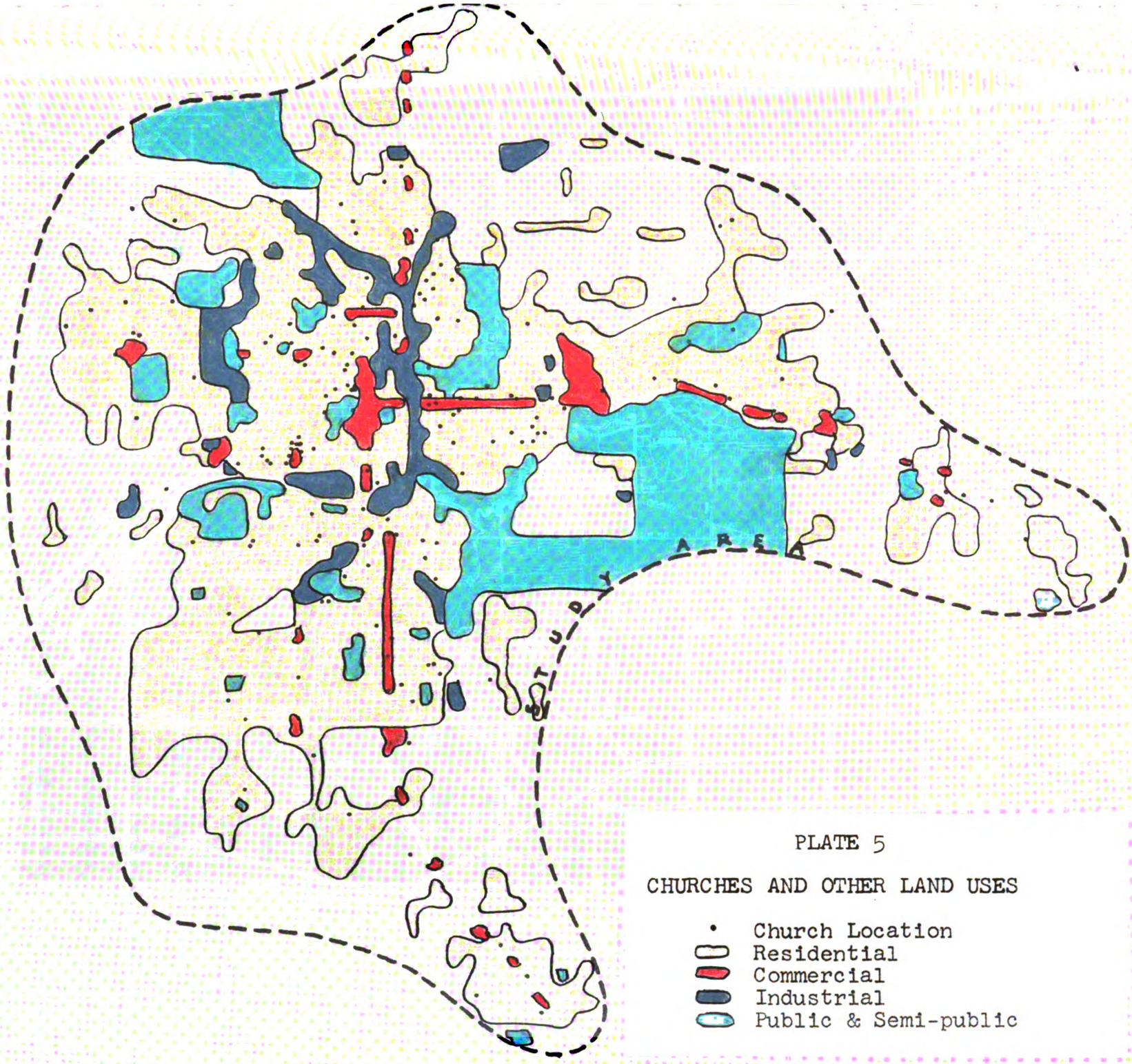

PLATE 5

CHURCHES AND OTHER LAND USES

- Church Location
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public & Semi-public

TABLE VIII

CHURCH LOCATIONS RELATED TO SURROUNDING LAND USE

Type of Land Use	Number of Churches In Each Land Use Area	Per Centage
Residential (interior)	54	33%
Residentail (peripheral)	76	46%
Commercial	17	10%
Industrial	0	0%
Institutional and Public	8	5%
Predominantly Vacant	11	6%
	166	100%

The above data emphasize that most church sites are in residential areas, with 79 per cent of the churches in such locations. Also, since most of the existing, predominantly vacant area will develop into residential uses, it could be stated, with validity, that an additional 6 per cent, or a total of 85 per cent of the churches are in residential areas. However, with that in mind it should be noted that two types of residential locatior categories have been used---interior and peripheral. By definition an interior residential location means that the church is located within a residential area and separated by more than one lot from a grouping of non-residential uses or usual neighborhood boundaries, such as major streets, railroads, or rivers; whereas, a peripheral location means that the church is located on the edge of a residential area. This type of location

is usually next to non-residential uses or on bordering streets, highways, or railroads.

Since 59 per cent of the 120 churches which are located in residential areas are at peripheral locations and 41 per cent at interior locations, it is suggested that more churches have preferred locations on the edge of residential neighborhoods rather than well within such areas. This is probably attributed to many churches serving more than a single neighborhood. Locations within commercial areas, however, have not proven too popular, as witnessed by only 10 per cent of the sites within such areas. Churches located between commercial and residential areas were placed in a peripheral residential category.

Churches, as mentioned in Chapter III, tend to locate centrally to their memberships. Since a high percentage of churches are located in peripheral residential locations, this could indicate that many churches have a multi-neighborhood or larger service area. This fact was demonstrated by analyzing the results of a question included in the church questionnaire which asked, "What general area does your church service". The results are tabulated in Table IX.

TABLE IX

CHURCH SERVICE AREAS

Type of Service Area	Number of Churches	Per Centage
Downtown	1	2%
Greater Lansing Area	30	49%
Inner-city or Multi-Neighborhood	12	20%
Neighborhood	8	13%
New Suburban	8	13%
Special Group	2	3%
	61	100%

The information on Table IX emphasizes that 87 per cent of the respondent churches have service areas greater than a neighborhood in size. Of these, 57 per cent served the Greater Lansing Area and 33% served the inner-city or a multi-neighborhood area. It seems that churches with such large service areas would be dependent upon vehicular travel, so that the following question might be posed: Is the accessibility afforded by locations on or near major street facilities a factor in church site selection?

The significance of major street locations is shown on Plate 6. Major streets included are those streets which carry around or over 5,000 vehicles per day plus state trunklines regardless of the traffic volumes they carry.[111] The importance of major street

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[111] Transportation-An Inventory-January 1962, A report prepared by the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, (Lansing: 1962), p. 11.

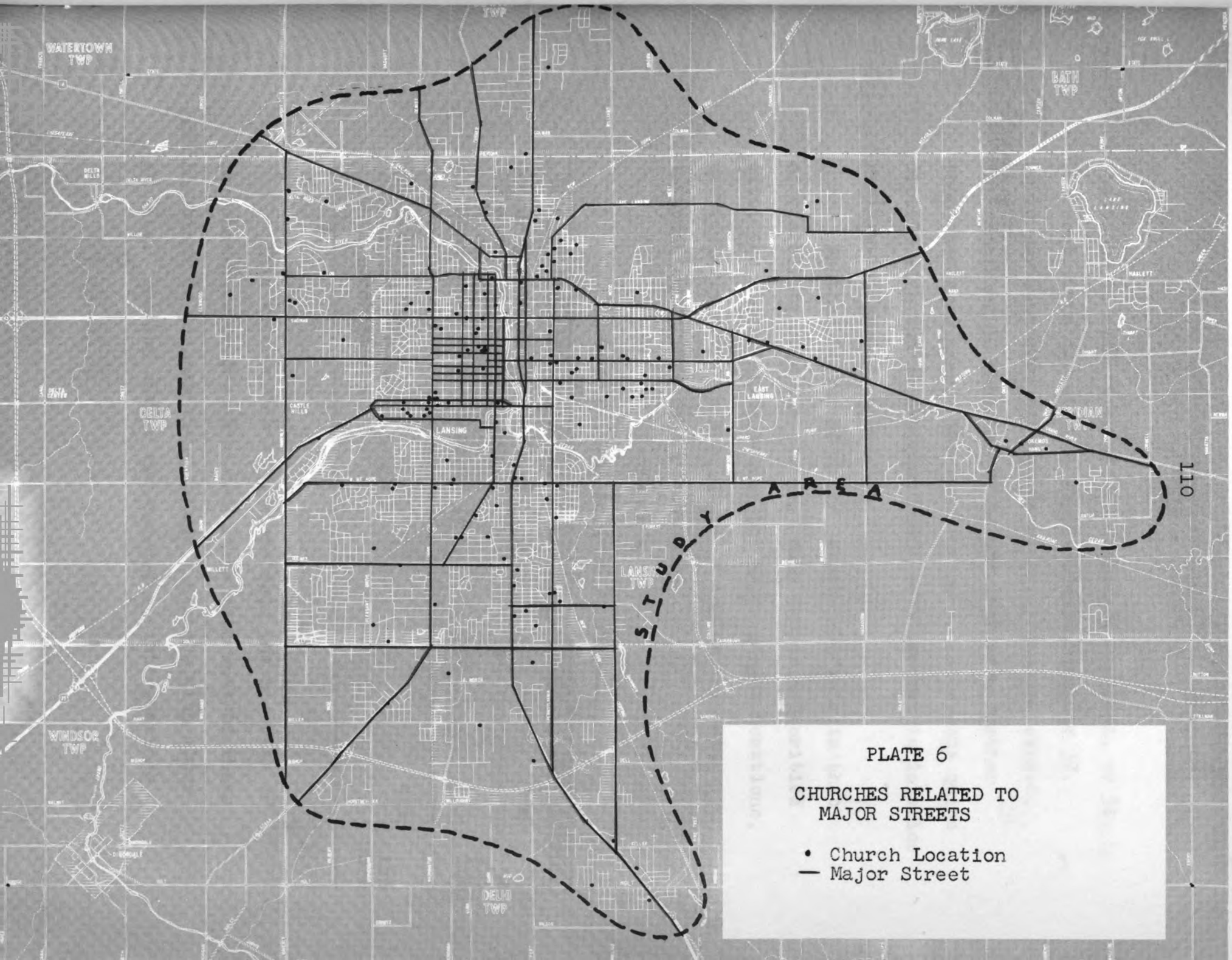


PLATE 6

CHURCHES RELATED TO
MAJOR STREETS

• Church Location
— Major Street

locations is evident by the fact that 84 churches, or 51 per cent, were directly on major streets: another 32, or 19 per cent were within one block of a major street. The remaining 50 churches or 30 per cent were further than one block away. The latter figure corresponds quite closely with the 54 churches which were located in interior residential areas.

Another factor of major street locations is that of visibility from the street. Many church authorities extol the "advertising values" of major street locations, particularly corner sites. Table X summarizes this information on Lansing area churches.

TABLE X

CHURCH SITES RELATED TO STREETS

Type of Location	Number of Churches	Per Centage
Corner sites	95	57%
Major and a major street	8	5%
Major and a minor street	52	31%
Minor and a minor street	35	21%
Mid-Block sites	71	43%
On a major street	24	16%
On a minor street	47	27%
	166	100%

This information emphasizes that the majority of churches have preferred corner sites with most of these locations on intersections of major streets with minor streets. The low number of churches on intersections

of two major streets suggests that churches either do not see the value of such locations or they cannot pay the high cost for such locations which are invariably of a commercial nature. Mid-block sites have been chosen by a surprising 43 per cent of the churches, even though such locations are not advocated by most church planners. As shown by this analysis, locations on or near a major street, which were occupied by 70 per cent of the churches, and locations on corner sited, which were occupied by 57 per cent, must be considered as significant factors in planning for church locations. This is particularly true in light of the large service areas of most churches.

Locations Related to Housing Quality

Repeated planning and housing research endeavors have made it quite clear that the quality of any building and its site has a significant effect on the quality and condition of surrounding properties. Land uses and structures of poor quality generally have proven to be problems and nuisances; whereas, uses of good quality are assets to an area and can appreciate real property values. Churches, as any other use of land, can be of high or low quality. With this in mind, it was considered important to investigate the possible effect of the physical condition of church properties on surrounding properties. In order to do this, an objective means had to be developed

for appraising the quality of indivudual church properties. A rating schedule was developed to enable an objective analysis of each church site in the Lansing area. (see Appendix B) In applying the schedule, penalty or negative points were awarded for:

1. Age of Structure
2. Condition of Structure
3. Land Coverage
4. Conversion of Structure
5. Lack of Off-street Parking

Penalty points were totaled for each church site and a penalty grade was determined. Table XI portrays the results of this quality survey in terms of four levels of condition: sound, some deficiencies, many deficiencies, and dilapidated. Plate 7 portrays some typical churches in each category.

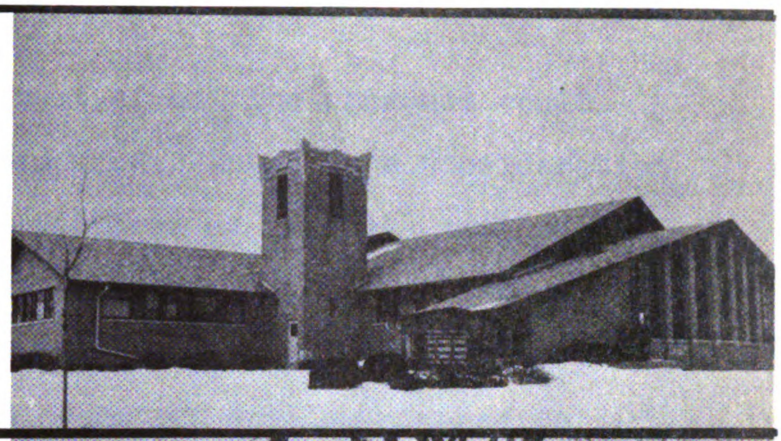
TABLE XI

CHURCH QUALITY

Condition	Penalty Range	Number of Churches	Per Centage
Sound	Less than 11 points	64	39%
Some Deficiencies	11 - 20 points	36	22%
Many Deficiencies	21 - 30 points	39	23%
Dilapidated	31 - 50 points	27	16%
		166	100%

It is significant to note that only 39 per cent of the churches were without deficiencies. However, based on a purely subjective evaluation by the author

SOUND



SOME
DEFICIENCIES

MANY
DEFICIENCIES

DILAPIDATED

PLATE 7

TYPICAL CHURCHES IN EACH QUALITY CATEGORY

only 43 churches or 26 per cent of all the churches could be considered as assets to an area. Taken into consideration in this judgement were such features as adequate setting, pleasing designs, sufficient site area, ample off-street parking, and adequate building setback from adjacent properties. The rest of the churches were considered to be detrimental to their surroundings. In particular, the 23 per cent with many deficiencies and the 16 per cent which were dilapidated were judged as presenting possible depreciating factors on surrounding properties. As has been pointed out time and again in various urban renewal studies, structures of poor quality can be blighting influences: whereas, structures of high quality can do much to stabilize and even up-grade areas. There is no reason to believe that churches are any different.

An evaluation of church locations in relation to housing quality may provide indications as to the effects churches of different quality have on residential areas of different quality. To determine a correlation, if any exists the residential areas of the Lansing Urbanized Area have been classified according to the following categories which are modification of those used by the Lansing Planning Department:[112]

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[112]Comprehensive Master Plan, 1960-1980, A Report Prepared by the City Planning Board, Lansing, Michigan, (Lansing: The Board, 1958), p. 51.

1. Generally Stable - an area usually having no structure in need of major repair; with no deteriorating intrusions of non-residential uses or heavy traffic; and with adequate open areas, recreation space, and utilities. Such areas are of high quality and require no extensive measures to maintain their status.

2. Scattered Blight - an area showing the beginnings of blight by having scattered, deteriorated structures, inadequate community services, gradual intrusion of non-residential uses and traffic, and increasing population densities. Immediate actions are needed to conserve the best areas and eliminate undesirable elements before the area becomes completely blighted.

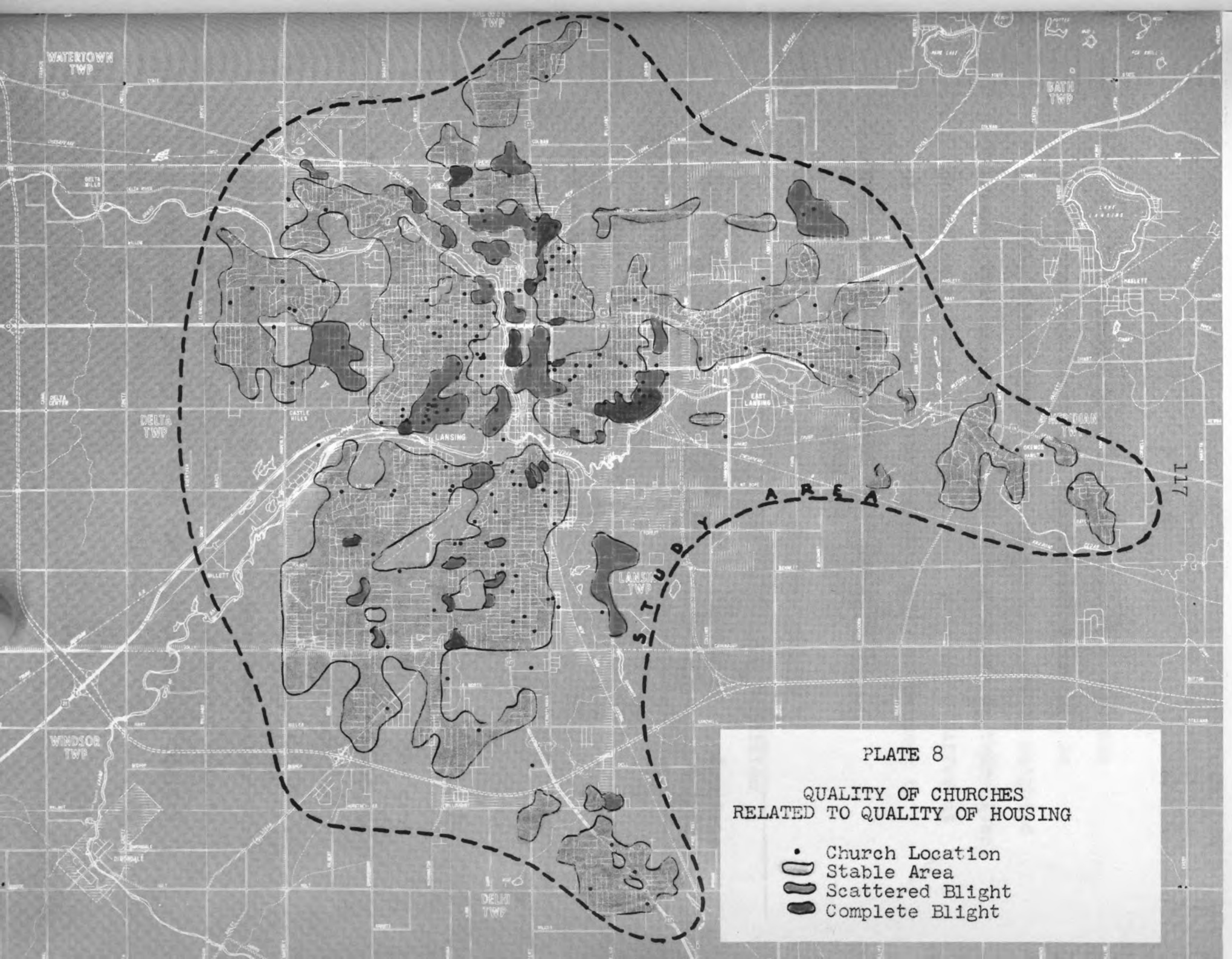
3. Complete Blight - an area which has a high percentage of obsolete or deteriorated structures, incompatable land uses, congestion of people and vehicles, or lack of essential community services. Such areas are usually of such an economic or social liability to the community that only complete clearance can rectify the problems.

All blocks within the urbanized area have been classified into the above general classifications. Plate 8 portrays these areas along with the church locations. The following table presents a tabulation of the results of this analysis.

TABLE XII

CHURCHES RELATED TO HOUSING QUALITY

Type of Area	Number of Churches in Each Area	Per Centages
Generally Stable	99	75%
Scattered Blight	25	19%
Complete Blight	6	6%
Residential Total	130	100%
Non-residential and Open	36	


WATERTOWN TWP
BATH TWP
DELTA TWP
LANSING
EAST LANSING
LANSING TWP
WINDSOR TWP
DELHI TWP
STUDY AREA
PLATE 8
QUALITY OF CHURCHES
RELATED TO QUALITY OF HOUSING
Church Location
Stable Area
Scattered Blight
Complete Blight

The foregoing table shows that three-fourths of all churches located in residential areas are in generally stable areas. Only 25 per cent are in blighted areas. This suggests that possibly churches in themselves, do not exert blighting influences. However, a different picture is presented when church quality is related to housing quality as presented in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

CHURCH QUALITY VS. HOUSING QUALITY

Church Condition	Surrounding Housing Condition					
	Generally Stable		Scattered Blight		Complete Blight	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Sound	51	52%	0	0%	1	17%
Some Deficiencies	19	19%	9	36%	2	33%
Many Deficiencies	21	21%	6	24%	0	0%
Dilapidated	8	8%	10	40%	3	50%
Totals	99	100%	25	100%	6	100%

The above table shows that in areas of scattered blight 100 per cent of the churches have some or more deficiencies, and in areas of complete blight 83 per cent of the churches have some or more deficiencies. Even in generally stable areas, a high amount, 48 per cent have some or more deficiencies. This evidence suggests that the lower quality housing areas have generally lower quality churches, which certainly does not help to up-grade such areas, and that the high number of quality

deficient churches in stable areas, 48 per cent, may warrant actions to minimize potential blighting influences. Churches, unless located and developed properly, may prove to downgrade residential areas.

Summary

The data presented in this chapter has indicated the pattern of church locations in the study area and has brought out some of the problems associated with church sites. Church construction figures have been presented and various physical analyses have been conducted. Some of the locational aspects which were discovered and some of the site problems encountered are summarized as follows:

1. The magnitude of recent church construction in the study area is witnessed by the fact that almost 50 per cent of all existing churches were constructed since 1950.
2. Church use is on the increase for both sacred and secular activities. Sundays and Wednesdays are the most popular activity days. This increased church use places greater demands on church sites and presents more opportunities for conflict with surrounding properties.
3. Much of the problem associated with church sites stems from site overcrowding. Almost 55 per cent of all churches were on sites less than half an

acre in size, with the median size being 0.45 acres.

4. Many churches are of marginal quality which also affects surrounding properties. Sixty per cent of all churches had some or more deficiencies, with 16 per cent being completely dilapidated. In the authors opinion only 26 per cent of all churches had sufficient merits to be considered as assets to an area.
5. It was determined that there was almost one church for each 1000 persons and 1.2 acres of church land per 1000 persons in the urbanized study area.
6. Areas where churches were concentrated centered mainly around the central business district and lower quality housing areas.
7. Land use correlations showed that 21 per cent of the churches were located in non-residential areas and 79 per cent were located in residential areas. Of those in residential areas, 59 per cent were in peripheral locations and 41 per cent were in interior locations.
8. Only 24 per cent of the churches in residential areas were in surroundings of scattered or complete blight; however, a correlation which might suggest

that some churches may add to this blight was emphasized by 100 per cent of the churches in areas of scattered blight having some or more deficiencies and 83 per cent of those in areas of complete blight having some or more deficiencies.

9. The significance of major street locations was pointed out in that 51 per cent of the churches were on major streets and another 19 per cent were within one block of a major street. It was felt that the accessibility afforded by such sites should be maximized particularly when 87 per cent of the respondents to a questionnaire indicated that they served more than a neighborhood area.

10. Corner sites were considered important for most churches with 57 per cent choosing such locations.

Effective locational policies and recommendations depend upon a balancing of existing practices with desired objectives. The background on existing church locational aspects presented in this chapter, along with the information presented in earlier chapters on the locational policies fostered by church groups, legislative bodies, urban planners, the courts and developers, will enable policies to be formulated which will promote this balance.

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTED LOCATIONAL POLICIES AND MEASURES

VI SUGGESTED LOCATIONAL POLICIES AND MEASURES

As emphasized in this paper, churches and their locational distributions in an urban community constitute one of the many concerns of the urban planner. In the planner's comprehensive approach churches have to be related to all other land uses. In other words, churches should not be considered alone, just as residential or industrial uses are not considered separately. The systematic coordination and integration of all urban uses is necessary for orderly, efficient, and progressive community growth. To aid the urban planner in properly coordinating and integrating churches within the urban community, this study has attempted to provide basic information on church locational patterns and operations.

As a summary of the major elements presented, Chapter I pointed out the importance of churches in the urban environment, from social and religious aspects as well as physical. Also emphasized were the change in orientation of many churches from exclusively sacred roles to increasing secular roles. These recent functional additions were seen to be a great social force in providing individuals, particularly newcomers to an urban community, a "sense of cohesion" and a "sense of place" in their urban environment. Such values should be encouraged through adequate planning for churches.

It was pointed out in Chapter II that in spite of these values churches also presented problems to the urban community. Maximizing the value of churches will require a reduction in these problems and conflicts.

Chapters III and IV listed locational policies and site standards advocated by certain religious groups and others. These were seen to be mostly arbitrary or based on inaccurate knowledge, thereby rendering them ineffective as church planning guides.

To examine particular problems and to determine present choices on church distribution and operation, a case study of churches in a particular urban environment was presented in Chapter V. The policy survey and the case study emphasized that at present no uniform policy on locating and siting churches exists. It seems most decisions regarding site locations for churches are determined by a wide variety of subjective judgements with little regard for important land use implications.

Planning Implications

The haphazard locating of churches in the urban environment and resulting land use problems has made it imperative that workable and systematic policies be formulated so that the public official and the church administrator can have a sound framework for church expansion programs. Such standards and policies have

to be based on a thorough study and analysis of the existing situation to assure effective and acceptable results. As a framework for formulating policies, the following points summarize the major findings of this paper. These are the planning implications that are presently apparent:

(1) Past planning endeavors and local government actions have mostly ignored churches in formulating community development programs and policies. This is not to say that church considerations have been totally ignored, but rather that only isolated efforts have been directed towards determining solutions to church problems and to incorporate these solutions into every day practices. As a result, those problems associated with churches have been treated as individual issues rather than in a comprehensive and uniform procedure which should be characteristic of the planning approach. A lack of knowledge of the scope and nature of churches in the urban community is undoubtedly a major factor fostering this situation.

(2) The plight mentioned in item 1 is more serious than ever in the face of increasing use of churches for both sacred and secular activities.

Many churches are being used every day of the week and are approaching the character of low-turnover commercial uses as to the intensity of land use.

(3) Churches have presented major problems to urban areas in terms of traffic congestion, lack of parking, noise generation, site over-crowding, and the obstruction of light and air. These problems have been known to depreciate surrounding properties.

(4) In spite of the problems associated with some churches, actions have not been implemented to maximize the inherent values of churches to society, not only as framers of moral and religious thought, but also as recreational, social, and cultural centers and as a means of providing that intangible "sense of place" to urban dwellers.

(5) Probably due to the lack of concern for church planning matters and a traditional philosophy of separation of church and state, which has allowed churches a "free hand" in society, a large number of small churches, in terms of size and membership, has developed. Problems associated with churches in the urban community become more evident with many churches distributed

over a wider area than if fewer churches existed.

(6) The existing churches assume many different functional descriptions. As to service area, some churches serve entire regions, some only a segment of a community, still others serve localized neighborhoods, and some serve only particular groups such as college students or ethnic groups. Any planning standards and policies should take these geographic and functional relationships into consideration.

(7) The surge in church construction witnessed since World War II has been more pronounced since 1950 and indications seem to point to continued increases in the future. Additional church construction will accompany increasing urban populations. New churches and replacements for existing churches should be accommodated without continuing the present attendant problems to the community.

(8) Most of the problems associated with existing churches seemed to stem from site overcrowding. Churches covering a high percentage of their sites invariably have not provided sufficient land for off-street parking and site treatment. Also, since they usually have structures which

are taller and more massive than residential structures, churches have tended to block light and air from adjacent properties when located on normal residential size lots.

(9) A large per centage of church buildings and sites were considered to be of doubtful quality which could prove detrimental to surrounding properties. Only 23 per cent of all churches were considered to be assets to an area in terms of pleasing architecture, sufficient setbacks for landscaping treatment and light and air, and adequate off-street parking. With such a small number of churches considered to be assets to the community, it suggests that many churches are blighting influences under present locational and site treatment practices.

(10) As suspected, most churches were located in residential areas; but, a majority of these were in peripheral locations which placed them on major streets with many next to commercial centers.

(11) Churches were generally in widely dispersed locations, particularly in newer areas, with concentrations evident only in downtown areas and in lower quality residential sections.

Many of the land use problems stemming from churches are due to the lack of concern among church administrators who tend to view the provision of church facilities from a limited viewpoint. Generally, religious groups themselves have not sponsored any definite locational policies to minimize community conflicts. Individual subjective actions have been the only rule with haphazard and poorly planned developments resulting. Even public regulative programs, particularly zoning have failed to meet the problem. The public has allowed churches to locate indiscriminately while forcefully regulating all other uses. The question might be asked, is this in the public's interest? Some communities have attempted to avoid church related problems by excluding churches. To be sure, the courts have wisely turned down zoning provisions which attempted to exclude churches from specific zoning districts. Rather than approach the problem negatively, what is needed are positive approaches which would allow churches in most districts, but subject them to certain standards. In light of these planning implications, policies and regulative measures must be evolved.

Planning Standards and Policies

Based on information obtained from a survey of

policies and standards of churchmen, planners, land developers and the courts, among others, and the findings presented in the case study of existing churches in the Lansing Urbanized Area, the following points are suggested as standards and policies for the planning of churches:

(1) Gross Planning Standards - Since the case study pointed out that the existing ratio of 1.2 acres of church land per 1000 persons was considered to be on the meager side by both churchmen and planners, a minimum standard to be used for total church land requirements within an urban area in the future should be 2 acres per 1000 persons, with a more desirable standard being 3 acres per 1000 persons. The number of churches within an urbanized area will probably continue to be in the vicinity of one church for each 1000 persons in spite of efforts by some churchmen who advocate fewer churches of larger sizes.

(2) Site Size Standards - A standard for individual church site sizes should be based on a sliding scale related to church seating capacities. This approach would relate area requirements in proportion to the intensity of use. A flexible

standard along these lines would be 1 acre minimum plus 0.5 acres for each 100 seats in the main auditorium of the church. This would allow sufficient area for the church structure, setbacks, off-street parking, and future expansion. Parsonages, rectories, and community halls would require proportionally more land. Also, if parochial schools are provided, they should comply with the accepted standards for public schools which would be 5 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 pupils for elementary schools, or 10 acres plus 1 acre for each 100 pupils for high schools.

(3) Locational Standards - Churches should be required to locate along major streets since very few are of a purely neighborhood walk-to service and, therefore, depend heavily on adequate vehicular access from all parts of a community. In addition, from the viewpoint of the churches the prominance of such locations is an advantage. In this respect corner sites are appropriate.

Preferred locations along major streets would be next to social or economic focal points such as community centers, schools, and shopping centers. Such locations might enable churches to make use of adjacent off-street parking

for special occasions. They also could serve as desirable buffers in these locations between non-residential and residential uses.

Effectuation Measures

These suggested policies and standards are meaningless unless put to use in the master planning process and effectuated through zoning provisions. The gross standards listed allow the planner to gauge overall future church requirements. Since general master plans rarely show detailed locations, particularly of church uses, these standards are sufficient to provide land requirements for use in calculating land needed for other uses. In other words, in calculating land available for residential use in a community, non-residential areas, including churches, have to be considered in the calculation. The gross planning standards allow this to be done more accurately than heretofore.

The detailed standards on site sizes and locations enable church requirements to be determined for detailed local plans and zoning provisions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into specific zoning provisions and wordings since many unanswered zoning questions still exist covering parking requirements, setbacks, and height limitations. However, it is suggested that an appropriate procedure would be to have churches allowed in all districts,

possibly with the exception of industrial districts, on a permitted use basis. This procedure would require the planning commission to scrutinize each church proposal according to established standards and decide whether it constitutes an asset or a detriment to the community. Such zoning provisions should include specific legal wordings covering the detailed standards as listed above to spell out firmly church locational and site requirements.

The development and application of the standards and policies as outlined in this section are necessary to the solution of problems stemming from churches which will allow maximum benefit of church values to the urban community. In this regard, emphasis has been made on the techniques by which planners should consider churches in their planning efforts and has stated some considerations for churchmen themselves when planning new church structures. It is hoped the findings, conclusions, and suggestions presented here will add to the body of knowledge sorely needed on this subject. Additional research should be conducted which would relate the substance of this paper to the following variable factors: population characteristics (religion, economic, and cultural), density of population, and mobility of population. Knowledge also is needed on the characteristics of individual church memberships, attendance, and service areas along with statistical

summaries of street frontages, land coverage, setbacks, height, noise factors, and accessory uses. This will enable the formation of additional zoning provisions based on factual evidence covering building-area to site ratios, open space, setback requirements, height limitations, buffers, and off-street parking. Defensible minimum standards could be developed which would relate directly to the public health, safety, and welfare; reduce traffic congestion; and contribute to the convenience of the public. As part of community land use controls, such standards can foster the proper placement of churches within the urban environment, so that an activity which now presents many land use problems may in turn become a better and more valuable component of the urban community.

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

A. GENERAL

1. What is the official name of your church and its address?

2. What denomination?

3. What general area does the church service?

Downtown	Neighborhood
Greater Lansing area	New suburban area
Inner-city or multi-neighborhood	Special group

4. Describe area if specific service limits or parish boundaries have been established.

5. What was the church membership in the following years?

1960	1950
1955	1940

6. What is the average attendance for each church service (list)?

7. Is a map showing the distribution of church members available?

8. What days in an average week is the site normally in use for activities (list days and type of activity)?

9. If in its history in the Lansing area the church was located at other locations, please describe previous locations (give addresses and time occupied).

10. What happened to the previous location (if known)?

occupied by another church	converted to residential
church torn down	other (specify)
converted to commercial	
converted to industrial	

11. If church moved into an existing structure (that is, did not construct a new building), what was the previous use?

residential	another church
commercial	other (specify)
industrial	

B. SITE

1. What are the dimensions of the site (lot)?

2. What is the area (in acres) of the site?

3. What is the present zoning on the property?

4. What type of area is the property located in?

commercial	apartment
residential	transition
industrial	other (specify)

5. Is the site location adequate or inadequate? Why?

6. Is the site size adequate? If not, what would be a better size?

7. What are the types of buildings on the site (for example, church, parsonage, school, etc.) and the year each was constructed?

8. What is the approximate size of each building (ground dimensions)?

9. How many off-street parking spaces are provided on the property?

C. MAJOR BUILDINGS

1. Present church
   - Date constructed
   - Seating capacity
   - Dates of major additions and their purposes

2. School (if provided)
   - Date constructed
   - Grades
   - School enrollment
   - School capacity
   - Playground size (in acres)

D. OTHER COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX II

APPENDIX II

CHURCH QUALITY RATING SCHEDULE

Age of Structure	Penalty Points
Prior to 1900	12
1901-1925	9
1926-1940	5
1941 to present	0
Condition of Structure	
Needs demolition or major repair	14
Needs minor repair or major maintenance	9
Needs major maintenance	5
No deficiency	0
Land Coverage	
Extreme building coverage	8
Small or no front and side yards	5
Small or no side yards	4
Adequate yard area	0
Conversion of Structure	
Converted from a residential structure	6
Converted from a commercial structure	3
No conversion	0
Lack of off-street parking	
No parking provided	10
Some parking provided	5
Adequate parking provided	0
Possible	50

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