

A STUDY OF CHURCHES IN COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS
IN METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATIONS IN SBC, 1973

September, 1974

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INTRODUCTION

This study has been conducted at the request of the coordinating committee dealing with "metropolitan churches in crisis" (project CC-CPC:28). The persons who have contributed the most to this study and to its production have been the metropolitan associational directors of missions across the Southern Baptist Convention who responded to the questionnaire, Warren Rust of the Metropolitan Missions Department of the Home Mission Board, Miss Cathy Hulsey, the office secretary in the Department of Survey and Special Studies, Mrs. Larra Druin, Miss Lynn Parrish, and Mr. Clay Price, all of the Department of Survey and Special Studies who have assisted in the collation and analyzation of the data. An expression of gratitude and appreciation goes to each one of these persons for their significant contributions and for their hard and diligent work which produced the report.

The purpose of the report is to indicate the number of churches of the Southern Baptist Convention in metropolitan associations that are located in communities that are in crisis. For the purpose of the study, several criteria were established for determining a community in crisis. There were ten types of crises which were listed on the questionnaire, and these will be apparent to the reader later in the report. A copy of the questionnaire has been included in the appendix for referral to these ten types of crises.

The assumption was made that if a community is making some significant racial or ethnic changes, housing changes, or changing to industrial or commercial usage, then this represented a community crisis, particularly for the churches. It was assumed that for the most part, Southern Baptist churches design their programs toward the white middle-class of America,

both white and blue collar employed persons. Therefore, a built in bias of the study was: If a community is changing to one of the ten crisis criteria, it will become something other than a middle-class, white community.

A determination was made as to the location of the churches in the three types of communities (downtown, established neighborhood, and suburban). It was also felt that some characteristics of the churches should be delineated, such as the church size, its income, buildings, and evangelism thrust.

In the light of these considerations, the questionnaire was designed and sent to 217 metropolitan associations as it appears in the appendix. These were mailed to the director of missions with the request that he or someone in his associational office be responsible to select the churches in the various types of crisis communities, and to compile the data on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was fairly extensive in the request for specific data on those churches that were deemed to be in crisis. The original letter was mailed on November 2, 1973, and a copy of this letter appears in the appendix. Subsequent to this, a second letter was sent on March 11, 1974, to those associations that had not responded. By February 18, 1974, 143 of the responses had been received, and by June 1, 1974, the remaining 12 had been received.

On Table 1 are data which indicate the number of associations which responded to the questionnaire. It is very significant that 155 associations of the 217 to which questionnaires were sent actually responded. This is a 71.4% response, which is extremely good since most mail out questionnaires will generate only a 25% to 30% response. Twenty-one of the states had a 75% response or better, with 13 of them being 100%. The response indicates the definite interest of associations in the subject of churches in crisis communities.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATIONS SERVEYED AND THEIR RESPONSE
TO CHURCHES IN CRISIS QUESTIONNAIRE BY STATES, 1973^a

SBC AND STATES	METRO ASSOCIATIONS SURVEYED		METRO ASSOCIATIONS RETURNING QUESTIONNAIRE	
	Number	Percent ^b	Number	Percent ^c
TOTAL SBC	217	18.3	155	71.4
Alabama	10	13.3	9	90.0
Arizona	3	20.0	3	100.0
Arkansas	7	15.9	7	100.0
* California	15	42.9	12	80.0
* Colorado	3	30.0	2	66.7
Florida	14	29.8	13	92.9
Georgia	13	14.1	7	53.8
* Idaho ^f	1	22.2	0	0
Illinois	11	31.4	7	63.6
* Indiana	6	42.9	6	100.0
* Kansas ^d	3	30.8	3	100.0
Kentucky	5	6.3	1	20.0
Louisiana	6	11.8	4	66.7
Maryland	3	20.0	3	100.0
* Massachusetts	1	100.0	0	0
* Michigan	7	53.8	5	71.4
* Minnesota	1	100.0	1	14.3
Mississippi	4	5.3	4	100.0
Missouri	8	10.1	6	75.0
* Montana ^g	1	14.3	1	100.0
* Nebraska ^d	1	30.8	0	0
* Nevada	2	100.0	2	100.0
New Mexico	1	6.7	1	100.0
* New York	2	33.3	0	0
* North Carolina	16	20.0	7	43.8
* North Dakota ^g	1	14.3	1	100.0
* Ohio	7	41.2	6	85.7
Oklahoma	8	19.5	3	37.5
* Oregon ^e	1	18.2	1	100.0
* Pennsylvania	3	100.0	2	66.7
South Carolina	8	18.6	6	75.0
Tennessee	7	10.3	3	42.9
Texas	22	18.6	17	77.3
* Utah ^f	1	22.2	0	0
Virginia	9	20.9	7	77.8
* Washington ^e	3	18.2	2	66.7
* West Virginia	2	33.3	2	100.0
* Wisconsin	1	100.0	1	100.0

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations, 1973.

^bPercent of all associations in that state convention.

^cPercent of metropolitan associations returning questionnaire.

^dKansas and Nebraska are in the Kansas-Nebraska Convention.

^eOregon and Washington are in the Northwest Convention.

^fUtah and Idaho are in the Utah-Idaho Convention.

^gMontana and North Dakota are in the Northern Plains Convention.

*Entered since 1940.

After the data was received in the office of the Department of Survey and Special Studies in Atlanta, it was then collated and placed on the computer at the Home Mission Board. Analyzation then followed, with the results being this report.

Don F. Mabry, Director

Department of Survey and Special Studies

I. THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

Associations With and Without Churches in Crisis Communities

Of the 155 associations which returned the questionnaire, 113 indicated they had some churches located in crisis communities, while 42 indicated that they had none. It is the opinion of the author that there are other churches that could have been included in the study, but the associational directors of missions did not choose to include them. Some of these are located in the associations that reported they had no churches in communities in crisis, while some associations possibly did not indicate all of the churches in such communities.

Number and Percent of Churches in Crisis Communities

One of the immediate questions regarding the subject of churches located in communities in crisis is, "How many churches are in such communities?" The data on Table 2 indicate that almost 18% of the churches in the reporting associations are located in communities in crisis. The reporting associations have a total of 5,543 churches, and 977 of these churches are located in communities in crisis. There is a slight discrepancy between Table 2 and the other tables in the number of churches located in communities in crisis. The 977 represent the churches that could be assigned to associations by states, but there are another 12 churches included in the study which could not be assigned to states.

Some of the very interesting data on Table 2 indicate that there are nine states where more than 20% of the metro churches are located in communities in crisis. The reporting associations account for 15% of all SBC churches, but also account for 1/4 of the resident members (2,370,000).

TABLE 2

TOTAL CHURCHES, RESIDENT MEMBERS AND CHURCHES IN CRISIS
IN METRO ASSOCIATIONS RETURNING QUESTIONNAIRE, 1973^a

SBC AND STATES	ASSOCIATIONS RETURNING QUESTIONNAIRE			
	Total 1973		Churches in Crisis	
	Churches	Members	Number	Percent ^b
TOTAL SBC	5,543	2,370,759	977	17.6
Alabama	462	213,943	77	16.7
Arizona	88	27,701	6	6.8
Arkansas	205	80,816	24	11.7
California	432	90,794	93	21.5
Colorado	36	13,578	3	8.3
Florida	439	210,329	61	13.9
Georgia	298	174,557	94	31.5
Illinois	144	32,850	23	16.0
Indiana	130	31,096	27	20.8
Kansas	45	15,580	11	24.4
Kentucky	54	18,956	3	5.6
Louisiana	201	101,801	20	10.0
Maryland	61	20,543	18	31.0
Michigan	18	4,049	7	38.9
Minnesota	19	1,497	1	5.3
Mississippi	153	73,081	20	13.1
Missouri	260	108,535	27	10.4
New Mexico	37	12,847	5	13.5
North Carolina	283	113,582	59	20.8
Ohio	201	48,716	23	11.4
Oklahoma	92	48,274	17	18.5
Oregon	34	4,792	5	14.7
Pennsylvania	22	2,861	4	18.2
South Carolina	278	124,268	50	18.0
Tennessee	218	103,806	41	18.8
Texas	979	534,005	205	20.9
Virginia	295	149,032	39	13.2
Washington	38	5,138	1	2.6
West Virginia	9	1,712	1	11.1
Wisconsin	12	2,020	12	100.0

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bPercent of total number of churches in the reporting associations.

This figure does not include the membership of the associations that did not have churches in crisis.

Distribution of Churches in Communities in Crisis

The data on Table 3 displays the churches by number and percentage as to the type of community that they are located in and the type of crisis which they face. Surprisingly, only 15% of the churches are located in the downtown areas, while more than 60% are located in established neighborhoods, and approximately 17% in suburban areas (about 4% of the church's locations were not indicated). The directors of missions were asked to determine the location of the church using the three descriptive words "downtown," "established neighborhood," and "suburban." There were no predetermined criteria for these descriptive words other than their general usage to refer to geographical areas. It becomes apparent, then, that the largest number of churches which face crisis communities are located in the established neighborhoods of metropolitan areas.

Table 3 also indicates the type of crisis which these churches are facing and there are some very interesting trends here. The vertical columns on Table 3 will not add to the total, since some churches are facing more than one crisis and duplications appear in the columns. It is apparent from the data that the largest number of the churches are facing communities that are changing racially and ethnically, since 24.5% of the churches are facing a community changing to middle-class Negro, 19.5% are facing a community changing to lower-class Negro, and 13.3% are facing a community changing to Spanish. It is somewhat surprising that more than 22% of the churches are facing communities that are changing to lower-class white. This gives credence to the assumption in the study that Southern Baptist

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS	TYPE OF COMMUNITY ^b									
	Downtown ^b		Established Neighborhood ^b		Suburban ^b		Not Indicated ^b		Total	
	Number	Percent ^c	Number	Percent ^c	Number	Percent ^c	Number	Percent ^c	Number	Percent ^c
TOTAL ^b	151	15.3	627	63.4	167	16.9	44	4.4	989	100.0
Upper Class Negro	2	5.3	24	63.2	11	29.0	1	2.6	38	3.9
Middle Class Negro	28	11.6	176	72.7	33	13.6	5	2.1	242	24.5
Lower Class Negro	49	25.4	129	66.8	9	4.7	6	3.1	193	19.5
Spanish	14	10.7	95	72.5	21	16.0	1	.8	131	13.3
Other Ethnic	6	18.8	20	62.5	5	15.6	1	3.1	32	3.2
Upper Class White	4	7.4	15	27.8	33	61.1	2	3.7	54	5.5
Lower Class White	45	20.7	154	70.7	19	8.7	0	-	218	22.1
Industrial	15	21.7	41	59.4	13	18.8	0	-	69	7.0
Commercial	41	27.0	92	60.5	11	7.2	8	5.3	152	15.4
Multi-Family	41	24.6	97	58.1	20	12.0	9	5.4	167	16.9
Not Indicated	8	17.4	14	30.4	24	52.2	-	-	46	4.7

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of "Type of Community" do not add to the total since some churches are facing more than one type of crisis and thus duplications appear in the columns.

^cPercent is of the number of churches with that crisis by the distribution of location.

churches, in the main, design their programs toward the middle-class whites. It is with some frustration that the middle-class white church attempts to transition itself to reaching lower-class whites, and even more frustrating when the church attempts to reach upper-class whites. Fifty-four of the churches (5.5%) are facing communities that are changing to upper-class white. In addition to these factors, 16.9% of the churches are facing a community that is changing its housing pattern to multi-family, 15.5% are facing a commercial community, and 7% are facing an industrial community.

There are some interesting trends among the various types of communities in which the churches are located. For instance, 29% of the churches facing a community changing to upper-class Negro are located in suburban areas, while only 13.6% of those facing a middle-class Negro change are located in suburbia. As might be expected, approximately 64% of those facing a change to upper-class white are located in suburban areas. In the main, the data indicate that most of the churches facing changes are located in the established neighborhoods (63.4%). There is very little difference in the percentage of churches in the various categories of crises of the established neighborhoods except for those in upper-class white "crisis." Three of the crisis groups, middle-class Negro, Spanish, and lower-class white, have more than 70% of their churches in the established neighborhoods.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHURCHES IN CRISIS COMMUNITIES

Resident Membership

The resident membership data indicate that there are all sizes of churches located in communities where there is crisis. The data on Table 4 further indicate that there are churches in each size group facing each of the types of crisis and each type of community. When the churches located in communities in crisis are compared to the total churches in the SBC, there are some variations between the percentages of churches in each size category. For instance, about 9% of the churches in crisis communities have memberships of 1 to 99, while almost 20% of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention do. About 15% of the churches in crisis have memberships of 100-200, while in the Southern Baptist Convention almost 27% fall into this category. In the category 200-500, there are 35.6% of the crisis churches, but in the Southern Baptist Convention there are 34% in this category. In the other size categories, the crisis community churches have twice as many churches in each category as the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole.

The observation is that the churches in crisis communities are larger in resident membership than in the convention as a whole or in metropolitan associations. The median size church in the SBC has slightly over 200 total members, while churches in crisis communities have a median size of more than 250 resident members. Still there is the observation that the churches in crisis communities are representative of all sizes of churches and no size church tends to predominate in the study.

On Table 5, calculations have provided the net change in resident membership. From 1969 to 1973, 504 of the churches (or 51%) had a net loss in their resident membership. Then, 374 (or 37.8%) showed a net gain from

TABLE 4

RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP IN 1973 ^b									
	1-99	100- 199	200- 249	250- 499	500- 749	750- 999	1,000- 1,999	2,000- 2,999	3,000 or More	NI
TOTAL ^b	93	144	91	261	147	94	99	20	11	29
Upper Class Negro	2	2	4	9	8	3	9	1	0	0
Middle Class Negro	14	30	25	56	47	28	28	7	2	5
Lower Class Negro	15	35	19	48	27	24	16	1	0	8
Spanish	15	17	21	33	16	10	11	2	2	4
Other Ethnic	4	11	3	5	5	1	2	0	1	0
Upper Class White	5	8	10	11	8	4	3	0	1	4
Lower Class White	16	28	16	57	35	28	27	8	1	2
Industrial	7	16	10	22	5	3	4	0	0	2
Commercial	11	20	9	40	20	14	23	9	3	3
Multi-Family	13	27	13	37	24	17	22	8	6	0
Downtown	11	19	12	34	19	21	23	5	4	3
Est. Neighborhood	61	88	51	173	101	54	64	14	5	16
Suburban	20	33	25	40	21	11	7	0	1	9

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

TABLE 5

NET CHANGE IN RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY
IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1969-1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	NET CHANGE 1969-1973										NI
	Net Loss					Net Gain					
	1-99	100- 299	300- 749	750 or More	Total	1-99	100- 299	300- 749	750 or More	Total	
TOTAL ^b	283	167	48	6	504	264	89	16	5	374	111
Upper Class Negro	6	13	5	1	25	4	6			10	2
Middle Class Negro	72	51	19	2	144	48	23	2	1	74	19
Lower Class Negro	48	46	17	1	112	46	7	3		56	19
Spanish	41	17	2	1	61	39	9	1	1	50	19
Other Ethnic	10	7			17	9	2	1		12	2
Upper Class White	6	3		1	10	20	15	1	2	38	4
Lower Class White	68	52	11		131	49	18	6		73	14
Industrial	21	18	4		43	19	2			21	5
Commercial	42	27	8	3	80	39	13	5	2	59	5
Multi-Family	40	32	10	4	86	46	18	3	3	70	2
Downtown	39	34	8	2	83	38	13	3	1	55	13
Est. Neighborhood	188	112	36	3	339	171	43	8	2	224	64
Suburban	43	13	3	1	60	47	26	3	2	78	29

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

1969-1973. Among those who had losses, 56% of the churches had a loss of 1-100, while 33% had a loss of 100-300, 9.5% had a loss of 500-750, and 1.2% lost 750 or more. Most of those churches with the larger losses were located in racially changing neighborhoods, while most of those with smaller losses were located in the neighborhoods changing to lower-class white, industrial, commercial, or multi-family housing. Among those with net gains, 70.6% had a net gain from 1 to 100, while 29.4% had a gain of 100 or more. There seems to be a good scatter of net gain churches among all types of crises and communities; however, since 70% of those with net gains have less than 100, this does not reflect a very high increase among these churches over the five year period.

Since more than half of the churches in each crisis category except upper-class white and all locations except suburban had net losses, the data indicate that the bulk of the churches facing crisis communities are slowly dwindling down until they will cease to exist. Among those churches facing upper-class white communities, 38 (or 61.3%) had net gains, but this represents only 3.9% of the churches. An additional 14 of the churches facing upper-class white communities did not indicate their resident membership in either 1969 or 1970, and thus the net change could not be calculated.

Among the suburban churches, 60 (or 35.9%) reported net losses, while 78 (or 46.7%) reported net gains. Twenty-nine, or 17.4%, did not report their memberships one of the years and could not be calculated as to their net change. Still less than half reported net gains.

It is surprising that there is a consistency of more than 50% of the churches in each category having a loss in resident membership over the five-year period of study. Likewise, it is surprising that more than half

of the churches located in downtown areas and established neighborhoods had net losses during the five years.

Average Sunday School Attendance

Another characteristic of the churches facing crisis communities included on the questionnaire was the average Sunday School attendance. Again, the data (on Table 6) indicate there are representatives of all sizes of churches. It is observed, however, that almost 65% of the churches have less than 200 in average attendance, while more than 1/3 have less than 100 in attendance. This would indicate that for the most part, the churches that are facing crisis communities are the smaller churches which have less leadership, buildings, and money with which to meet the ministry needs in a community facing crisis.

Perhaps a more realistic observation of the data would be the calculation of net change in Sunday School attendance which is reflected on Table 7. Six hundred and three, or 72.5% of the churches, had a net loss in average attendance over the five year study period, while 228 (27.4%) had a net gain. The net gain of most (64.9%) was less than 50. While among those that lost, more than 100 churches (or 18%) had losses of greater than 100 persons in average Sunday School attendance. Although, it must be observed that more than half of the losers (340 churches) had a net loss of less than 50.

Receipts, Total Mission Gifts and Building Debt

There are three additional data which were collated from the questionnaire to indicate something of the financial strength of the churches facing communities in crisis. It was felt that these three data were sufficient to describe something of the monetary conditions in the churches under study.

TABLE 6

SUNDAY SCHOOL AVERAGE ATTENDANCE OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY
IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	SUNDAY SCHOOL AVERAGE ATTENDANCE, 1973 ^b									
	1-49	50-99	100- 149	150- 199	200- 299	300- 499	500- 749	750- 999	1,000 or more	NI
TOTAL ^b	133	229	155	123	136	100	41	18	14	40
Upper Class Negro	0	7	8	6	7	4	4	1	0	1
Middle Class Negro	25	51	33	39	40	31	13	3	3	4
Lower Class Negro	25	53	28	29	25	14	6	1	0	12
Spanish	21	38	27	12	10	9	3	3	2	6
Other Ethnic	10	8	3	5	2	1	2	1	0	0
Upper Class White	2	17	8	6	8	5	1	1	1	5
Lower Class White	27	38	33	32	37	24	17	6	1	3
Industrial	15	19	13	6	9	3	2	0	0	2
Commercial	18	28	22	17	22	16	12	6	4	7
Multi-Family	18	34	20	16	26	22	12	6	6	7
Downtown	19	25	18	23	18	19	12	4	7	6
Est. Neighborhood	97	133	101	80	91	61	25	13	4	22
Suburban	15	61	28	15	21	11	3	1	1	11

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

TABLE 7

NET CHANGE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL AVERAGE ATTENDANCE OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1969-1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	NET CHANGE S.S. AVE. ATTEND., 1969-1973 ^b								NI
	Net Loss				Net Gain				
	1-49	50-99	100-199	200 or More	1-49	50-99	100-199	200 or More	
TOTAL ^b	340	155	86	22	148	40	26	14	158
Upper Class Negro	11	6	8	5	2	1	1	0	4
Middle Class Negro	72	44	35	10	38	8	3	4	28
Lower Class Negro	62	39	24	4	23	6	2	1	32
Spanish	54	22	5	2	17	5	2	2	22
Other Ethnic	15	5	1	0	6	2	0	0	3
Upper Class White	9	5	2	0	4	4	0	1	29
Lower Class White	74	44	26	7	25	7	7	6	22
Industrial	36	7	6	1	10	1	1	0	7
Commercial	51	21	17	7	21	6	6	4	19
Multi-Family	50	20	20	11	22	11	7	3	23
Downtown	52	26	15	5	20	6	5	3	19
Est. Neighborhood	221	99	61	17	93	25	15	6	90
Suburban	59	22	7	1	30	8	3	4	33

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

The total receipts reflected on Table 8 indicate that more than half of the churches (51.7%) have total receipts of less than \$50,000. Almost 30% of the churches have less than \$25,000. This represents more than 500 of the churches in crisis and indicates that many of them are moving very rapidly toward the time when they will be unable to afford a full-time pastor living on the field and serving the church. On the other hand, almost 15% have incomes of more than \$150,000, while almost 30% have from \$50,000 to \$150,000 in income. Again, it is noted that there is a good dispersion of churches into all income categories facing all kinds of crises in all three types of communities. Surprisingly, the matter of crisis does not seem to be a respecter of churches, but has affected all sizes and locations of churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The data on Table 9 indicates the total mission gifts of the churches in 1973. As was previously noted, there is still a good scatter of churches in all categories. The largest concentration (19.7%) are those which give from \$2,000 to \$5,000 in mission gifts annually. About 1/3 of the churches have mission gifts from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and almost 15% have gifts of \$25,000 or more. Surprisingly, only 15 churches of the 989 in the study had no mission gifts reported in 1973. This is quite surprising when it is realized that the churches are facing financial crises month by month. It is also surprising to realize that only 14% of the churches gave less than \$1,000 to mission gifts during the year 1973.

In the matter of church debt, there are some even more significant surprises. Since one of the observed responses of churches in communities in crisis is to build additional buildings in order to overtake the transition, it had been assumed that a significant portion of the churches in the study

TABLE 8

TOTAL RECEIPTS OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	TOTAL RECEIPTS, 1973								
	1- 9,999	10,000- 24,999	25,000- 49,999	50,000- 74,999	75,000- 99,999	100,000- 149,999	150,000- 149,999	200,000 or More	NI
TOTAL ^b	80	206	225	140	89	66	57	87	39
Upper Class Negro	1	4	9	6	3	3	6	6	-
Middle Class Negro	8	48	48	39	26	25	16	26	6
Lower Class Negro	20	48	37	25	19	13	9	12	10
Spanish	11	35	38	15	5	8	5	7	7
Other Ethnic	8	8	4	4	1	3	-	3	1
Upper Class White	2	8	15	11	5	4	1	3	5
Lower Class White	13	44	38	31	31	14	18	24	5
Industrial	6	23	15	12	3	2	2	3	3
Commercial	10	25	30	20	14	7	12	29	5
Multi-Family	14	26	32	19	17	10	16	31	2
Downtown	10	26	22	24	12	13	9	31	4
Est. Neighborhood	58	131	132	94	60	43	37	49	23
Suburban	10	40	61	16	13	7	5	4	11

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

would have a large indebtedness; however, this is not the case. Almost 50% have indebtedness of less than \$75,000, while more than one-fourth have indebtedness of less than \$25,000. In addition to this, 173 churches (or 17.5%) had no indebtedness at all in 1973. This indicates that more than two-thirds had no indebtedness, or less than \$75,000. It would seem to this author that debt does not play a significant role in the largest portion of the churches.

TABLE 10

BUILDING DEBT OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	TOTAL BUILDING DEBT - 1973									
	1- 9,999	10,000- 24,999	25,000- 74,999	75,000- 149,999	150,000- 199,999	200,000- 499,999	500,000- 749,999	750,000 or More	0	NI
TOTAL ^b	116	155	222	126	39	71	6	7	173	74
Upper Class Negro	3	3	6	3	3	10	1	-	8	1
Middle Class Negro	26	30	55	42	10	25	1	1	40	12
Lower Class Negro	28	25	40	19	7	11	-	-	45	18
Spanish	16	30	29	8	5	2	1	1	25	14
21 Other Ethnic	3	9	10	2	1	1	-	-	4	2
Upper Class White	4	11	10	9	5	5	1	1	4	4
Lower Class White	29	35	60	26	3	15	1	-	41	8
Industrial	14	8	14	5	2	-	-	1	19	6
Commercial	15	19	40	15	5	11	3	4	32	8
Multi-Family	12	24	44	23	9	22	1	2	20	10
Downtown	14	16	33	16	7	11	1	4	37	12
Est. Neighborhood	87	108	139	72	23	48	3	2	103	42
Suburban	12	26	40	29	7	11	1	1	21	19

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

III. ADDITIONS OF CHURCHES IN CRISIS COMMUNITIES

Baptisms

It would be normal to assume that churches in crisis communities would have a relatively small evangelism thrust. The data on Table 11 tend to indicate that this is not quite the case. In 1973, only 32 of the churches did not report any baptisms, and this represented 2.2% of the churches. On the other hand, more than 2/3 of the churches had from 1-24 baptisms, while 27.6% had 25 or more baptisms. Surprisingly, more than 10% of the churches had 50 or more baptisms, which is considerably more than the average church in the Southern Baptist Convention baptizes, which is 12. This would seem to indicate that the churches have a strong evangelism thrust, but the net gain in resident membership is very low since the mobility of most of these communities is extremely high. This would mean that the churches are, of necessity, increasing their membership significantly, but having small net increases because members move out of the community almost as fast as new members join. All of the churches, including those facing racially changing communities, multi-family housing communities, and those facing industrial and commercial communities, show fairly strong evangelism trends.

Additions by Letter

There is almost the same trend in additions by letter as there are in baptisms. The data on Table 12 indicates that 59% of the churches had from 1 to 24 additions by letter, while approximately 1/3 (34.7%) had 25 or more additions by letter. Almost 15% of the churches had 50 or more, and only 3% (or 31 of the churches) had no additions by letter. Again, the thrust in additions seems to be relatively strong, but the net gain is still relatively small since the migration in crisis communities is extremely high.

TABLE 11

BAPTISMS OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY
IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF BAPTISMS						
	1-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100 or More	0	NI
TOTAL ^b	323	333	170	83	20	32	28
Upper Class Negro	12	17	5	4	0	0	0
Middle Class Negro	82	81	48	23	2	3	3
Lower Class Negro	75	68	23	8	1	10	8
Spanish	34	49	23	17	2	2	4
Other Ethnic	12	7	6	1	1	4	0
Upper Class White	14	22	8	4	1	1	4
Lower Class White	78	79	38	14	4	3	2
Industrial	31	23	7	2	0	3	3
Commercial	59	44	19	17	6	4	3
Multi-Family	56	49	31	17	12	2	0
Downtown	56	40	27	16	5	4	3
Est. Neighborhood	205	221	99	50	12	24	16
Suburban	50	56	33	15	2	3	8

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

TABLE 12

OTHER ADDITIONS OF CHURCHES BY TYPE OF CRISIS
AND COMMUNITY IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SBC, 1973^a

TYPE OF CRISIS AND COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF OTHER ADDITIONS						
	1-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100 or More	0	NI
TOTAL ^b	251	335	197	99	47	31	29
Upper Class Negro	7	13	9	5	2	2	0
Middle Class Negro	44	92	54	28	12	9	3
Lower Class Negro	60	77	26	11	2	8	9
Spanish	32	43	34	12	4	2	4
Other Ethnic	9	12	4	3	1	2	1
Upper Class White	4	21	10	10	4	1	4
Lower Class White	55	79	36	27	10	8	3
Industrial	30	27	5	2	1	2	2
Commercial	31	53	29	12	16	7	4
Multi-Family	44	48	32	22	17	3	1
Downtown	49	42	21	14	16	6	3
Est. Neighborhood	154	220	134	57	24	21	17
Suburban	36	60	31	22	7	3	8

^aSource: Questionnaires distributed to metropolitan associations.

^bThe columns of churches do not add to the total because some churches are facing more than one type of crisis, and thus duplications appear in the columns.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The following information is the result of the author's observations of the data presented here and the other information from computer analyzation of the data. It is an attempt by the author to share his thoughts and to give some basis for the discussion of this report.

1. Churches in crisis communities represent a very large problem for the Southern Baptist Convention. There are 989 churches in this study which have been selected by the directors of missions of the responding associations as being in the communities where one or more of the ten crises are present. A recent collation of data has provided the author with data on all of the associations located in the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas of the United States. This represents approximately 11,000 churches in 269 associations. Since 17.6% of the churches in the responding associations are in crisis communities, if this same percentage were applied to the 11,000 churches, then there would be 1,936 churches located in crisis communities. The dimensions of this problem suggest to the reader and those responsible for planning and programming with these churches that the problem is significantly large enough to warrant some diligent searching for solutions.

2. After observing the data, it is the author's opinion that most of the churches are facing a racial or ethnic "crisis." As was suggested earlier in the report, many of the churches are facing more than one kind of a crisis, but it is obvious from the data that most of them are facing a racial or ethnic community.

3. Observance of the data has also indicated that there are all sizes of churches located in the communities in crisis. Approximately 1/3 of the churches are small, that is they have less than 250 resident members.

Approximately 1/2 of the churches are medium size, that is they have 250 to 1,000 resident members, and approximately 13% are large, 1,000 resident members or more.

4. Most of the churches in crisis communities are located in the established neighborhoods. For the most part, Southern Baptists and other denominations have already abandoned the center city, and without some significant solutions, in time we will greatly reduce the number of churches in the established neighborhoods. This seems somewhat incongruent with the preaching of the gospel, since in most communities where churches have disbanded or relocated, there was a greater population when the church left than when it was constituted.

5. It is apparent that Southern Baptists are losing ground among the churches located in communities in crisis. This is observed since 50% of the churches had a net loss, and only 37.8% had a net gain from 1969 to 1973. It was also observed that in each crisis category, more than half of the churches had net losses except one category.

6. The evangelism thrust is relatively small, although strong for the size of churches. Approximately 1/3 of the churches had less than 10 baptized, 1/3 had 10 to 24, and the remaining baptized 25 or more. It is surprising that no more than 32 churches reported no baptisms in 1973.

7. Unless solutions are found, perhaps half or more of the 989 churches in this study will not exist in ten years if the present trends continue.

About 52% of the churches have less than 150 in Sunday School; a like number have less than \$50,000 in total receipts, and a like number had a net loss in resident membership. Approximately 44% of those who had a net loss in resident membership lost 50 or more persons during the five years of this study.

November 2, 1973

TO: Metropolitan Superintendents of Missions

Dear Brethren:

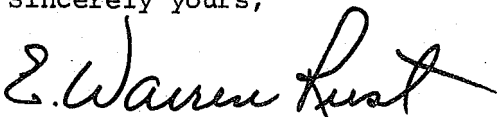
We would like to ask your assistance regarding information about churches in your association and their reaction to transitional communities. The Metropolitan Missions Program and the Department of Survey and Special Studies of the Home Mission Board are involved with a Southern Baptist Convention Inter-Agency project "Metropolitan Churches in Crisis." This inquiry is to seek your assistance in providing the names, addresses, and data of those churches in your association that are in or facing transitional communities. This is perhaps the most perplexing problem facing the denomination. It is suspected that many churches are already facing this problem, or will be, and they need assistance.

The churches we have in mind are those in or facing communities of racial, social, economic, housing, commercial, or industrial transition. You will have to judge which of your churches are facing these kinds of communities and what kind of transition each church faces.

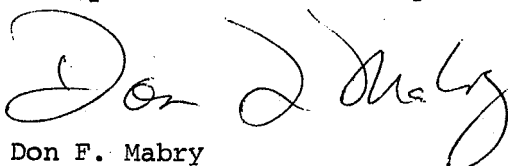
We recognize there are many calls upon your time, but we will appreciate your providing the information on this inquiry by November 15. Please mail back as prompt as possible in the enclosed envelope.

We thank you very much for your assistance and prompt response.

Sincerely yours,



E. Warren Rust
Metropolitan Missions Program Leader



Don F. Mabry
Department of Survey and Special Studies

March 11, 1974

TO: Metropolitan Superintendents of Missions

Dear Brethren:

In November, 1973, we sent you a letter and a form and requested your assistance on a project involving "Metropolitan Churches in Crisis." This involves the churches in your association and their reaction to transitional communities.

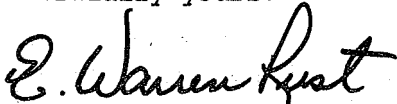
As yet, we have not received a response from your association, and we would like for this survey to be as complete as possible. Enclosed you will find a form on which we would like for you to record the names, addresses, and data of the churches in your association that are in or are facing transitional communities.

If at all possible, please return this form to us by March 30, 1974.

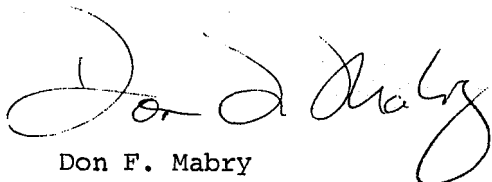
The churches we have in mind are those in or facing communities of racial, social, economic, housing, commercial, or industrial transition. You will have to judge which of your churches are facing these kinds of communities and what kind of transition each church faces.

We thank you very much for your assistance and prompt response to this request. A self-addressed envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

Cordially yours.



E. Warren Rust
Metropolitan Missions Program Leader



Don F. Mabry
Department of Survey and Special Studies