

THE
Church IN RURAL MISSOURI

Midway in 20th Century

PART VI
SPATIAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Part I Introduction

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The

Church

in rural missouri

Part VI

Spatial and Social Relationships

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The analysis of data for the purpose of answering certain questions frequently gives rise to additional questions. The reader may have several questions that have not been answered in Parts II through V of this report.

For example, what is the distance from one open country church to another? Where are open country churches located in relation to villages? Does the number of business services available in villages affect the functioning of village churches? How many people attend Sunday worship services in open country and village churches? What is the average attendance at Sunday School? How many leadership positions does one find in rural churches? What is the number of lay leaders in rural churches? Do church leaders also hold leadership positions in nonchurch organizations? What do rural people think of their churches and clergymen?

To answer questions such as these it was necessary to analyze rural churches in a larger geographical setting than the single townships that comprised the state sample. It was also necessary to take a complete inventory of the business services in villages, and a complete inventory of leadership positions and leaders in churches and nonchurch organizations. To learn what rural people think of churches, it was necessary to conduct an attitude and opinion poll of a sample of rural people.

A second sample consisting of several contiguous townships in six selected areas in Missouri was used. Since this sample was used for both the study of spatial and social relationships of rural churches and the attitude and opinion poll, the selection of the sample is briefly reviewed here. The relationship of this sample to the state sample is also considered, so that the reader will be in a position to interpret these findings as an extension of the analyses already presented. The findings that provide answers to the questions concerning spatial relationships, attendance, village business services, and lay leadership are presented in Part VI. Characteristics of the respondents and the analysis of their opinions concerning rural churches and clergymen will be reported in Part VII.

CHAPTER 25

SIX SELECTED AREAS*

A sample of geographical units larger than the single rural townships used in the state sample was needed in order to investigate the spatial and social relationships of rural churches. These larger units consisted of contiguous townships because data concerning such factors as population and level of living were available for townships. Six such units, referred to in this report as "selected areas," were chosen in different parts of the state. Five of the areas are samples of five different "core" areas, while the sixth was chosen entirely from a rural-urban fringe area.

In discussing sampling in terms of the rural social areas of Missouri, Cecil L. Gregory has indicated three important points concerning the use of core areas.¹ (1) The core areas were determined on the basis of their internal homogeneity, and were the starting points for the delineation of the larger areas. (2) Although the core areas were not selected to represent a statistical average of the respective major areas, a combination of the eight core areas for some variables constitutes a fairly good estimate of the state. (3) Since the core areas in some cases represent an extreme position for a particular factor, or set of factors, a sample of the core areas should produce the greatest contrasts to be found in the state.

The Advisory Committee had expressed an interest in an investigation of a rural-urban fringe area. Only five of the eight core areas could be sampled in terms of the resources available for this project. AB₁ was used because it differed greatly from the other areas. AB₂ was not used because it differed only in degree from AB₁ and was fairly similar to the sampled areas AB₃ and AB₄. Only one of the core areas in the Ozark region was used because these areas are fairly similar. Area E was used because of the contrasting situation in southeast Missouri. The core area in C was not used because of its proximity to the rural-urban fringe area included in the survey.

The six-area sample was chosen, therefore, to serve three purposes: (1) To serve as a sample that would be representative of rural Missouri, be interpreted as an extension of the analysis of data in the state sample, and include such additional items as spatial and social relationships of rural churches and an attitude and opinion poll. (2) To provide an opportunity to analyze rural church data for contrasting situations in different parts of the state. (3) To investigate rural churches in a rural-urban fringe area.

*The original analysis of the material reported in Part VI is contained in an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by George T. Blume, *Spatial and Social Relationships of Rural Churches in Six Selected Areas of Missouri*. University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, 1957.

¹Cecil L. Gregory, *Rural Social Areas in Missouri*. Agricultural Experiment Station Research Bulletin 665, College of Agriculture, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, 1958, pp. 49 and 50.

Two additional criteria were used in choosing sample townships within each core area. Each sample area was to include at least one village or trade center with a population of 700 or more. A circle was drawn with a radius of eight miles from the trade center. All townships included in or touched by the circle were sampled. All of the townships were rural in that no township included a place with a population of 2500 or more. In the southeast Missouri Area it was necessary to reduce the size of the radius to avoid including places with a population of 2500 or more. It was necessary to include one place with a population slightly over 2500.

The sixth area, the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area, was selected to furnish townships characteristic of a rural-urban fringe area. Townships chosen were those touched by or included between old and new highways 40, extending west from the city of St. Charles.

Roman numerals were assigned these six areas in Parts VI and VII to differentiate them from the state sample. The assigned designations were:

- Area I. Northwest Missouri, AB₁
- Area II. Northeast Missouri, AB₃
- Area III. Plains Area, AB₄
- Area IV. Ozark Area, D₂
- Area V. Southeast Missouri, E
- Area VI. St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area

Since this sample was chosen to investigate some phases of the church that could not be included in the state sample, comparable data were collected in these six areas during the field survey of the state sample of churches and clergymen. The field work the following summer was confined to the six areas and consisted of (1) collecting data for the analysis of spatial and social relationships of rural churches, and (2) taking an attitude and opinion poll of 100 persons in each of the areas.

Rural Churches in the Selected Areas

It is important for the reader to remember that the sample of selected areas and the state sample were both chosen before the survey of churches was undertaken. The original plan for the state sample called for a survey of churches in 75 rural townships, 6 percent of the rural townships in Missouri. It was anticipated that 600 to 800 churches might be found in this sample. Provision was made to include additional townships if it became apparent that the 75 townships would not have at least 500 churches. As Part II revealed, it was necessary to survey 99 rural townships, an 8 percent sample of rural townships, to obtain data for only 505 churches.

Likewise, it was anticipated that more churches would be found in the selected areas than the 186 surveyed. Table 91 gives the number of churches and other data concerning these areas.

TABLE 91
COMPARISON OF SIX SELECTED AREAS IN TERMS OF NUMBER OF
TOWNSHIPS, POPULATION IN 1950, PERCENT OF POPULATION IN
VILLAGES, AND NUMBER OF CHURCHES

Selected Areas	Number of Townships	Population 1950	Percent of Population in Villages	Number of Churches
I	3	8,013	29	30
II	10	6,085	41	29
III	10	6,380	26	25
IV	5	4,777	31	27
V	4	15,987	31	40
VI	5	13,459	23	35

Thirty-five of the 186 churches were in Area VI, St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area, leaving only 151 churches in the five core areas. This report has consistently shown that the findings for a given number of religious groups are definitely affected by the proportions of church-type and sect-type groups and the proportions of groups according to the size of membership. When the numbers of churches per area were subdivided further into church-type and sect-type and membership categories, the number of cases became too small to run tests of statistical significance of differences.

In spite of the limited number of cases, the areas were compared in terms of the mean scores of the index of religious group action. Only one area, St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area, with a mean index score of 135, differed greatly from the others. (See Table 87, p. 277.) As in the state sample, the variation within areas was greater than the variation among areas. What differences were present among the five core areas largely disappeared when the groups identified with the Evangelical and Reformed, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic denominations were removed from the sample.

Although the sample of six selected areas was chosen in part to show contrasting situations, the small number of cases in each area limits the use of these data. Part IV gave an analysis of the possible contrasting situations in terms of data for the state sample. It is assumed that this represents a more reliable analysis of religious groups in terms of the rural social areas than the one based on data from the selected areas.

St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area

This area, included to give a view of what was happening to rural churches in a rural-urban fringe area, requires explanation of its differences from the other five.

In contrast to some of the areas that had suffered great losses in population from 1900 to 1950, this area had approximately the same population in 1950 as in 1900. This stability of population is related, no doubt, to the size of religious

groups found in this area. However, such stability of population is hardly characteristic of a rural-urban fringe area since such areas are generally characterized by a rapid growth of population. Although it was not possible to resurvey this area at a later time, observations and reports suggest that the full impact of the "exploding metropolis" has taken place since the churches were surveyed.

In addition to being a rural-urban fringe area, it is a part of an ethnic area. Quite possibly, changes in composition of the population plus other changes will affect the churches located there. However, at the time the data were collected the rural churches appeared to be much more like those of an ethnic area than a rural-urban fringe area. This suggests the possibility that a rural-urban fringe area that is also an ethnic area may be slow in manifesting changes relative to its churches.

Of the 35 religious groups in this area, 33 were classified as church-type. The vast majority of these groups have a relatively long history, as only four of them have been organized since 1900. More than one-half (19) of the groups were classified as Evangelical and Reformed, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic. Approximately one-half of these churches had 100 or more members. In fact, one-fifth of them had 300 or more members, and almost one-fifth of the church-type groups had 400 or more members. All of the sect-type groups and approximately three-fourths of the church-type had worship services every Sunday.

In terms of the previous analyses of this report, it is easy to understand how the characteristics of churches in this area made it differ from the five core areas in terms of the mean index of religious group action scores. The characteristics mentioned above also largely explain differences between this area and the five core areas relative to responses to the attitude and opinion poll reported in Part VII.

Comparison of the Five Core Areas with the State Sample

The sample of selected areas was chosen in terms of the core areas because a combination of these areas for some variables constitutes a satisfactory estimate of the state, as well as providing contrasting situations. Data for the total of the five core areas concerning spatial and social relationships of rural churches are interpreted as an extension of the analysis of the state sample. To show the extent to which this sample can be interpreted as an approximation of the state sample requires a comparison of the two samples.

Index of Religious Group Action. Since the index of religious group action is the most reliable measure of the total functioning of churches, these two samples are compared in terms of the mean index scores. (See Table 92.) The mean index score for the 151 churches in the five-area total is 103.1, which is slightly higher than the mean of 100 for the state sample. Both church-type and sect-type mean scores in the five-area sample were slightly higher than corresponding scores in the state sample. This slight increase in the five-area sample

TABLE 92
COMPARISON OF RELIGIOUS GROUP ACTION SCORES OF STATE AND AREA
SAMPLES OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS BY CHURCH-TYPE AND SECT-TYPE,
AND LOCATION

Type and Location	State Sample		-Area Sample	
	Number Reporting	Mean Scores	Number Reporting	Mean Scores
Total	503	100.0	151	103.1
Church-type	371	103.4	102	107.0
Sect-type	132	90.3	49	95.2
Open Country	321	89.0	70	87.5
Church-type	235	90.9	47	90.1
Sect-type	86	84.0	23	82.1
Small Village	115	113.4	58	112.1
Church-type	94	117.6	42	116.4
Sect-type	21	94.5	16	100.8
Large Village	67	129.6	23	128.3
Church-type	42	142.1	13	137.7
Sect-type	25	108.6	10	116.1

over the state sample resulted from a slightly higher proportion of large churches in the villages in the five-area sample.

A comparison of the index of religious group action scores of churches classified according to location revealed rather small differences. There was a slight tendency for sect-type groups in small and large villages in the five-area sample to score somewhat higher than corresponding groups in the state sample. The similarities are quite impressive, considering that the townships in the five core areas were chosen so each would have at least one village with a population of 700 or more, and that 53.6 percent of the churches in the five-area sample were located in villages. Although these two samples are not identical, it is apparent that the five-area sample approximates the state sample in terms of the index of religious group action scores.

Selected Items. Although the index of religious group action is the best composite measure of the functioning of churches, these two samples may also be compared in terms of variables used in this report. To facilitate comparison, several items are shown in Table 93 for both samples. Differences in some of the variables help explain the similarity between the two samples in terms of the index of religious group action scores. In addition, other differences are discussed briefly to indicate what effect they may have on the interpretation of the data concerning spatial and social relationships of rural churches.

The five-area sample has a higher proportion of sect-type and a lower proportion of church-type groups than the state sample. This would be expected because of the higher proportion of village churches in the five-area sample than in the state sample. This difference would be a serious problem if only the total number of churches in the five-area sample were analyzed, but it does not con-

TABLE 93
COMPARISON OF STATE AND 5-AREA SAMPLES FOR SELECTED ITEMS

Selected items	State Sample	5-Area Sample
Percent Church-type Groups	73.5	67.5
Percent Sect-type Groups	26.5	32.5
Percent Open Country Churches	63.7	46.4
Percent Small Village Churches	22.8	38.4
Percent Large Village Churches	13.5	15.2
Percent Small Churches	32.1	35.8
Percent Medium Churches	32.3	25.8
Percent Large Churches	35.2	38.4
Percent Quarter-time Churches	21.8	15.3
Percent Half-time Churches	32.8	31.1
Percent Full-time Churches	45.4	53.6
Percent Negro Churches	5.7	9.3
Average Membership	102.9	110.8
Church-type	121.4	136.0
Sect-type	51.1	58.3
Average Expenditures for Salary, Benevolences, and Local Operating Expenses	\$2107	\$2373
Church-type	2369	2654
Sect-type	1159	1670

stitute a serious problem here since data are analyzed in terms of church-type and sect-type differences.

Less than one-half, 46.4 percent, of the churches in the five-area total were classified as open country compared with 63.7 percent of the churches in the state sample. On the other hand, 53.6 percent of the churches in the five-area sample, compared with only 36.3 percent of the state sample, were classified as village. The greatest difference was for the category of small villages; 38.4 percent in the five-area sample compared with 22.8 percent in the state sample.

The first reaction to differences in the proportions of open country and village churches is to conclude that the two samples are not comparable and that the findings of one cannot be applied to the other. However, the analysis of Part V of this report showed that location was not a major factor in understanding church functioning. Churches with approximately the same size of membership are likely to have approximately the same index of religious group action scores whether located in the open country or in a small city. The higher proportion of village groups in the five-area sample was also accompanied by a higher proportion of sect-type groups and this, in turn, would mean a higher proportion of small churches. These two samples of churches may be quite similar if they are similar in the proportions of churches according to size of membership, even though they differ in the proportion of village churches.

The five-area sample had a greater proportion of small and large churches than the state sample but it had a smaller percentage of medium size churches.

This higher percentage of small groups resulted from the higher proportion of sect-type groups. The slightly higher percentage of large groups resulted from the proportion of village churches, because there is a tendency for more large groups to be found in villages. The smaller percentage of medium size groups resulted from the fact that of 54 churches in Areas II and III only 10 had a membership ranging from 50 to 99.

The smaller percentage of quarter-time churches and the larger percentage of full-time churches in the five-area sample, compared with the state sample, apparently resulted from two factors. Sect-type groups are generally full-time; therefore, an increased proportion of sect-type groups would mean more full-time churches. Quarter-time churches are primarily a pattern of open country churches; therefore, a reduced proportion of open country churches meant a smaller percentage of quarter-time churches.

As a result of the relatively high proportion of Negro churches in southeast Missouri, the five-area sample had 9.3 percent of its churches classified as Negro compared with 5.7 percent in the state sample. For the analysis of some social and economic variables this difference would constitute a serious problem. When Negro and white churches have been compared in this investigation for comparable categories of church-type and sect-type, and according to size of membership, no significant differences have been found. The increased proportion of Negro churches is probably reflected in the increased percentage of sect-type groups and the slightly higher percentage of small groups.

Another way of examining the size of churches is in terms of average membership. Religious groups, both church-type and sect-type, in the five-area sample tended to have larger average memberships than those in the state sample. At the present stage of church research it is not known what importance may be attached to a difference of eight persons in the average memberships of two samples of churches. In view of the other factors examined, it apparently does not make much difference.

Since the five-area sample had a higher proportion of village churches than the state sample, an increase in average expenditures would be expected in the five-area sample. Mean expenditures for salary, benevolences, and local operating expenses were higher for both church-type and sect-type groups in the five-area sample than in the state sample.

In terms of the index of religious group action the five-area sample approximated the state sample. The comparison of selected items showed similarity and in such items as proportion of village churches, proportion of large churches, proportion of full-time churches, average membership, and average expenditures the five-area sample showed a somewhat more favorable situation than the state sample. Since church-type and sect-type differences are reported for all items analyzed in Parts VI and VII, the differences between the two samples regarding this factor are not serious.

It is concluded, therefore, that the two samples are sufficiently similar for the five-area sample to be interpreted as a satisfactory estimate of the rural church situation in Missouri. In other words, the data for the five-area sample are considered as an extension of the previous analysis of the state sample of churches. The reader should keep in mind that the slight differences between the two samples mean that the five-area sample presents a somewhat more favorable situation concerning churches than would have been the case if these data had been collected for the state sample.

The conclusion that a combination of the sample townships in five core areas constituted a satisfactory estimate of the state led to use of an attitude and opinion poll of 88 clergymen in the five-area samples in Part III for comparison with clergymen in the state sample. In addition to the similarity between the two samples of churches, the two samples of clergymen were fairly similar.

Part VI presents an extension of the analysis of the state sample in the sense that the data concerning spatial and social relationships of rural churches, collected in the five-area sample, are typical of rural Missouri. Although the chief concern in Part VI is with the findings for the five-area total, any important differences represented by one or more of the five core areas will be indicated. All of the data concerning spatial and social relationships have been analyzed in terms of the separate areas as well as the five-area total. Important differences between the findings for the five-area total and the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area will also be indicated.

Part VII will be devoted to results of an attitude and opinion poll given to 100 persons in each of the six selected areas. The responses of 500 people in the five-area sample are interpreted as approximating the opinions of rural people in Missouri; these preferences concerning churches and clergymen will be compared with the findings for the state sample of churches and clergymen. Important differences for one or more of the areas, as well as for the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area, will be indicated.

CHAPTER 26

SPATIAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

During the early settlement of cities and villages in the U. S., church buildings were generally erected near the center of the city or village. This central location made them readily accessible to the population. As cities began to grow, new church buildings were erected to serve the religious needs of the increasing population. Although some of the original, centrally located church buildings were remodeled and enlarged, the majority of the new buildings were located in relation to expanding residential sections of the cities.

Circuit riders ministered to the religious needs of the residents of small villages, the open country, and the ever expanding frontier of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Worship services were frequently held in schoolhouses, courthouses, store buildings, homes, and camp meeting grounds. As the population increased, people began to erect church buildings in the open country and small villages. During the nineteenth century a large number of open country church buildings were erected in rural Missouri.

Apparently two principal reasons are behind the large number of open country church buildings erected in rural Missouri. It was necessary a century ago to have churches located within a few miles of open country residents because of the short distances people could travel to attend worship services. In fact, the distribution of churches closely paralleled that of rural schoolhouses. The density of population was relatively high and there were enough persons within short distances of a church or school to warrant the patterns of distribution that prevailed. One must also remember the optimism of these people. Population was increasing and there was reason to believe that a hamlet today would be a city tomorrow. Today, however, improved transportation makes it possible for open country residents to travel greater distances in less time than their ancestors. Density of population has declined; now a much larger geographical area is needed to supply a population base per church that is as large as it was a century ago.

A second factor involved in the large number of open country churches in Missouri was the intense competition among certain religious bodies. Although some competition existed among all religious bodies, the Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations played a major role in the competitive effort to establish a religious group wherever one had been formed by another denomination. This competition produced a large number of churches in both open country and villages.

The ecology or spatial relationships of churches may be analyzed both as a pattern of distribution and as processes involved in producing patterns of distribution. Data analyzed here deal primarily with the patterns of distribution and spatial and social relationships of rural churches in relation to villages. It was not possible in this investigation to study the ecological processes that over a period of time have produced the present distribution of rural churches.

Village Churches, Services, and Organizations

It is often assumed that the functioning of churches is related to other factors in villages. To investigate these possible reciprocal relationships, village churches were analyzed in terms of the size of population, number of village services, and number of nonchurch organizations.

A survey of the various services available in villages was made in each of the selected areas. Only services within the boundaries of the villages were included. In all villages the residential sections were surveyed also to determine whether or not some service might be available in a private home. A great variety of services were found in the villages, such as: general services, general sales, professional services, commercial recreation, farm sales and services, construction, and manufacturing.

An inventory also was made of the nonchurch organizations in the villages. Newspapers were checked for the listing or the reports of organizations. Public officials were interviewed to supplement the list of organizations. Leaders of the organizations were questioned about other groups functioning in the village. The voluntary organizations included such categories as civic and patriotic organizations, cultural organizations, fraternal organizations, recreational organizations, youth organizations, and organized drives and charities.

Table 94 summarizes the inventory of services and organizations in the five-area sample. Population of the 18 villages ranged from 207 to slightly over 2500. The survey revealed 81 churches, 764 services, and 179 nonchurch organizations. The smallest village had 3 churches, 7 services, and 1 organization while the

TABLE 94
NUMBER, MEANS AND RATE PER 1000 POPULATION OF VILLAGES,
RELIGIOUS GROUPS, VILLAGE SERVICES, AND ORGANIZATIONS
IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE

Village Population, Religious Groups, Services, and Organizations	Number	Mean Per Village	Rate Per 1000 Population
Villages	18		---
Village Population	12,844	714	---
Religious Groups	81	4.5	6.3
Church-type	55	3.0	4.3
Sect-type	26	1.5	2.0
Village Services	764	42.4	59.5
Village Organizations	179	9.9	13.9

largest village had 12 churches, 116 services, and 22 organizations.

An average village, based on statistical means, is not likely to be found in reality, but it sometimes helps to picture the types of situations one may encounter. An average village of 714 persons would have 4.5 churches, 42.4 services, and 9.9 organizations. Another way of interpreting the data in Table 94 is in terms of rates of churches, services, and organizations per 1000 population. In villages in Missouri the rate of churches is 6.3 per 1000 population; the rate is 4.3 for church-type and 2.0 for sect-type. The corresponding rates for services and organizations are 59.5 and 13.9. The rates per 1000 population for churches, services, and organizations are used here to determine the relationships between these factors. They may also be applied to a specific village to ascertain how it compares with the average of this sample.

A casual observation of the number of churches, services, and organizations in villages suggests they are related to the size of population in the villages. This grows out of the observation that as the size of population increases the number of the other factors increases. When these rates are standardized, however, only slight differences are found.

In view of the small number of villages in the sample, the interrelationships among size of village, rate of services, rate of organizations, rate of churches, and the village mean index of religious group action scores were analyzed in terms of the rank-difference coefficients of correlation. The matrix of these intercorrelations is shown in Table 95.

TABLE 95
INTERCORRELATION* OF SIZE OF VILLAGE, RATE OF SERVICES, RATE OF
NON-CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS, RATE OF CHURCHES, AND VILLAGE
MEAN INDEX OF RELIGIOUS GROUP ACTION

Items	Items				
	Size of Village	Rate of Services Per 1000 Population	Rate of Non-church Organizations Per 1000 Population	Rate of Churches Per 1000 Population	Village Mean Index of Religious Group Action
Size of village					
Rate of Services Per 1000 Population	+0.10				
Rate of Non-church Organizations per 1000 Population	+0.17	+0.71			
Rate of Churches Per 1000 Population	-0.83	+0.12	+0.01		
Village Mean Index of Religious Group Action	+0.61	-0.01	+0.27	-0.59	

* Rank-difference Coefficients of Correlation

Only four of the possible intercorrelations among these five variables were statistically significant. There was a significant negative coefficient of correlation of -0.83 between size of village and the rate of churches per 1000 population. The explanation for this negative relationship, that is, the tendency for the number of churches to decrease as the size of population increases, is to be found in the tendency for a large number of churches to be located in small villages. In fact, often as many, and sometimes more churches were found in a village with a population of less than 1000 than in villages ranging in population from 1000 to 2499.

In contrast, a significant positive coefficient of correlation of $+0.61$ was found between the size of village and the village mean index of religious group action score. This correlation means that as the size of the village increases there is an increase in the village mean index of religious group action score. Two things, apparently, are involved in producing this relationship. First, as the size of village population increases there is not a corresponding increase in the number of churches. A large number of churches in small villages tend to have relatively low index of religious group action scores. A smaller number of churches in large villages tend to have large membership, which means a relatively high index of religious group action score.

There is a significant negative coefficient of correlation of -0.59 between the rate of churches per 1000 population and the village mean index of religious group action score. This correlation means that as the rate of churches per 1000 population tends to increase there is a decrease in the village mean index of religious group action score. The explanation for this relationship, similar to the foregoing one, is that a high rate of churches is generally associated with low index of religious group action scores in villages. A high rate of churches per 1000 population in villages generally results from intense competition among church-type groups and the presence of several sect-type groups.

The rate of services per 1000 population was significantly and positively correlated ($+0.71$) with only one of these variables, the rate of nonchurch organizations. The only significant relationship between rate of nonchurch organizations and the other variables is with the rate of services. This relationship means that as the rate of services per 1000 population increases the rate of nonchurch organizations also increases. A complete explanation of this relationship cannot be given in terms of the data available. Possibly, an increased rate of services has some relationship with an increase in special interest concerns which, in turn, may give rise to an increased rate of special interest groups.

Evidently, only one of the variables was related to the functioning of churches. The size of population had a significant positive relationship with the village mean index of religious group action scores and a significant negative relationship with the rate of churches per 1000 population. It is recognized, however, that these variables do not comprise all of the factors in villages that may

be related to churches. The analysis does limit the extent to which a relationship between churches and other factors may be assumed. For example, the evidence clearly indicates that the functioning of churches had little or no relationship to the rate of services available in villages. The intercorrelations also showed an absence of the anticipated competition between churches and non-church organizations which has sometimes been cited as a factor in producing weak churches. The coefficient of correlation between the rate of nonchurch organizations and the village mean index of religious group action score shows a positive relationship. It is quite possible that in a larger sample of villages this relationship may be statistically significant. This correlation means that there is some tendency for the mean index of religious group action score to increase as the rate of nonchurch organizations increases.

Spatial Distribution of Open Country Churches

In the five-area sample, 81 of the 151 religious groups were located in villages and 70 were located in the open country. Since the 81 village churches have just been analyzed to determine the relationships of churches with other factors in the villages, the distribution of the 70 open country churches is considered first in relation to these villages.

Table 96 shows the number and percent of religious groups, church-type and sect-type, located at different distances from a village. The first important

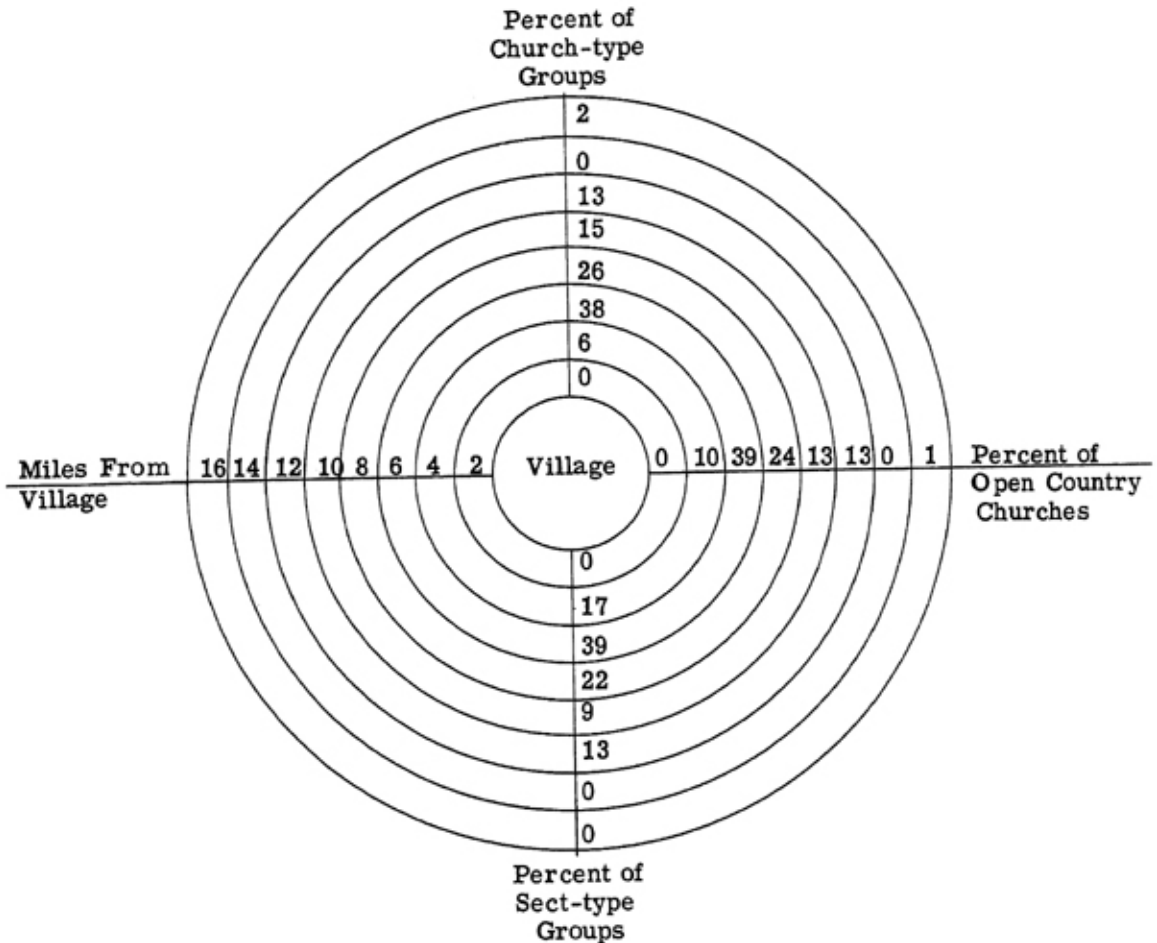
TABLE 96
DISTANCE OPEN COUNTRY RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE
WERE LOCATED FROM A VILLAGE, BY CHURCH-TYPE AND
SECT-TYPE

Distance from a Village	Total		Church-type		Sect-type	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	70	100.0	47	100.0	23	100.0
0--1.9 Miles	--	----	--	----	--	----
2--3.9 Miles	7	10.0	3	6.4	4	17.4
4--5.9 Miles	27	38.6	18	38.3	9	39.1
6--7.9 Miles	17	24.3	12	25.5	5	21.7
8--9.9 Miles	9	12.8	7	14.9	2	8.7
10--11.9 Miles	9	12.8	6	12.8	3	13.1
12--13.9	--	----	--	----	--	----
14--15.9 Miles	1	1.5	1	2.1	--	----

observation is that no open country churches were located within less than two miles from a village. (See Figure 35.) This suggests that the expanding area of influence of village churches is greatest within two miles of a village.

Only 10 percent of the open country churches were located from 2 to 3.9 miles from a village. There are two items of interest concerning this category of churches. First, the influence of village churches is manifested within a radius of 3.9 miles from the village, even though this influence diminishes some in the zone of 2 to 3.9 miles from the village. Second, the data suggest that the range

Figure 35 Ecological Pattern of Open Country Churches in the 5-Area Sample



of influence of village church-type groups is greater than that of village sect-type groups. Only 6.4 percent of the church-type compared with 17.4 percent of the sect-type open country religious groups were located from 2 to 3.9 miles from a village.

The influence of village churches begins a rather rapid decline in the zone of 4 to 5.9 miles from a village. Almost two-fifths (38.3 percent of the church-type and 39.1 percent of the sect-type) of the open country religious groups were located this far from a village. Continued decline of the influence of village churches was observed in the zone of 6 to 7.9 miles from a village; approximately one-fourth (25.5 percent of the church-type and 21.7 percent of the sect-type) of the open country groups were located in this zone.

Only 12.8 percent of the churches were located 8 to 9.9 miles from a village and a like percentage 10 to 11.9 miles away. This decreased proportion of open country churches 8 to 11.9 miles from a village resulted from the pattern of spatial distribution of villages in rural Missouri. In many of the sample areas being considered a point located 8 miles from a village is not likely to be many more miles from another village. Note that only one church was located more than 11.9 miles from a village.

The zone of concentration of open country churches was in an area of 4 to 7.9 miles from a village. Sixty-three percent of all open country churches were located in this zone. For persons responsible for church strategy this may well be a zone of great concern. If the trend of the expanding influence of village churches continues, it will offer serious competition to these open country churches. Within this zone are many small religious groups which may have to merge with other churches or cease to function.

Another hypothesis concerning the distribution of open country churches needs to be examined. A general belief is that churches located near a village tend to be small and weak and those past a certain distance should be stronger and more active. When the 70 open country churches were compared in terms of the index of religious group action scores and distance from a village, no significant relationship was found. The strongest churches, as measured by the index of religious group action, were located the following distances from a village: Area I, 3.5 miles; Areas IV and V, 4 miles; Area II, 6 miles; Area III, 7 miles. In the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area the strongest open country church was located 9 miles from a village. These variations suggest that factors other than distance from a village determine the index of religious group action score of a church.

A second way of looking at the spatial distribution of open country churches is in terms of their relationships with one another, disregarding location of village churches. In the five-area sample, open country churches were located an average of 3.8 miles from another open country church. This formula, however, cannot be applied systematically to all parts of Missouri. The average distance from one open country church to another varied as follows: Areas II and V, 2.7 miles; Area I, 3.5 miles; Area III, 5 miles; and Area IV, 5.9 miles. In the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area this average distance was only 2.4 miles.

Open country churches located approximately four miles apart is a pattern of the nineteenth century distribution that has continued during the twentieth century in Missouri. A century ago it was necessary to have open country churches located fairly close together because farm people could not travel great distances. Today, many of these open country churches have memberships too small to carry more of a church program than worship services one Sunday a month and a Sunday School. If this pattern of the distribution of open country churches persists in Missouri, it is inevitable that many of them will continue to decline.

One response to the above situation is to say that it is not serious because these are churches of different denominations and it is inevitable that they be located fairly close to one another. These 70 open country churches were also analyzed in terms of the average distance from an open country church of one denomination to another open country church of the same denomination. In the five-area sample this average distance was only 6.7 miles. This raises the question for church administrators as to whether or not there is a sufficient population base per church in the open country to enable churches of the same denomination to be located only 7 miles apart and carry the type of church program proposed by most denominations.

Church administrators working in different parts of the state will need to modify the formula above. Average distances open country churches of the same denominations were from one another: Area V, 3.2 miles; Area II, 5 miles; Area III, 5.2 miles; Area IV, 9.8 miles, and Area I, 10 miles. In the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area this average distance was 5.9 miles.

In some of the earlier studies of rural churches, attention was given to the type of road on which the building was situated. This was a serious problem years ago. Today, however, less than one-fifth of these 70 open country churches were located on an unimproved road. A comparison was made of the index of religious group action scores of churches located on unimproved roads with those located on all-weather roads. No significant differences were found in this comparison. High and low scoring churches were found on unimproved roads as well as all-weather roads.

Average Attendance at Sunday Worship Service, Sunday School, and Youth Organization

Average attendance at the various church services and programs is one measure of participation of individuals in the functioning of religious groups. Attendance data were collected for Sunday morning worship service, Sunday School, and the youth organization for the last two Sundays, or the last two regularly scheduled worship services, prior to the time of the survey. The average attendance for two Sundays was used to make it possible to correct for any unusually large attendance on one Sunday that may have been associated with a special service.

The attendance data are presented in two ways. First, they are analyzed in terms of the rates of attendance per 100 members. (See Tables 97, 98, and 99.) Second, the combined attendance data are compared with the population of the areas in terms of percent of population in attendance. (See Table 100.) Although all churches in the five-area sample had Sunday worship services, a slightly reduced number had a Sunday School and a much smaller number had a youth organization. This explains why the total membership was 16,344 for attendance

TABLE 97

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES PER 100 MEMBERS IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE,
BY CHURCH-TYPE AND SECT-TYPE, SIZE OF GROUP, AND LOCATION

Size and Location	Total			Church-type			Sect-type		
	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members
5-Area Total	16,344	9,569	58.6	13,597	6,691	49.2	2,747	2,878	104.8
Small	1,418	1,976	139.3	756	781	103.3	662	1,195	180.5
Medium	2,499	1,746	69.9	1,523	988	64.9	976	758	77.7
Large	12,427	5,847	47.1	11,318	4,922	43.5	1,109	925	83.4
Open Country	4,754	3,214	67.6	3,830	2,240	58.5	924	974	105.4
Small Village	6,868	3,474	50.6	6,107	2,639	43.2	761	835	109.7
Large Village	4,722	2,881	61.0	3,660	1,812	49.5	1,062	1,069	100.7

TABLE 98

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY SCHOOL PER 100 MEMBERS OF THE GROUPS THAT HAD SUNDAY SCHOOLS
IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE, BY CHURCH-TYPE AND SECT-TYPE, SIZE OF GROUP, AND LOCATION

Size and Location	Total			Church-type			Sect-type		
	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members
5-Area Total	15,637	7,933	50.7	12,960	5,421	41.8	2,677	2,512	93.8
Small	1,311	1,623	123.8	719	651	90.5	592	972	164.2
Medium	2,699	1,669	61.8	1,723	957	55.5	976	712	73.0
Large	11,627	4,641	39.9	10,518	3,813	36.3	1,109	828	74.7
Open Country	4,837	2,731	56.5	3,983	1,972	49.5	854	759	88.9
Small Village	6,678	3,427	51.3	5,917	2,643	44.7	761	784	103.0
Large Village	4,122	1,775	43.1	3,060	806	26.3	1,062	969	91.2

TABLE 99

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS PER 100 MEMBERS OF THE GROUPS THAT HAD YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE, BY CHURCH-TYPE AND SECT-TYPE, SIZE OF GROUP, AND LOCATION

Size and Location	Member-ship	Total		Church-type			Sect-type		
		Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members	Member-ship	Attend-ance	Rate per 100 Members
5-Area Total	11,002	1,529	13.9	9,400	974	10.4	1,602	555	34.6
Small	418	321	76.8	66	35	53.0	352	286	81.3
Medium	692	131	18.9	299	70	23.4	393	61	15.5
Large	9,892	1,077	10.9	9,035	869	9.6	857	208	24.3
Open Country	2,213	384	17.4	2,017	246	12.2	196	138	70.4
Small Village	4,813	641	13.3	4,329	454	10.5	484	187	38.6
Large Village	3,976	504	12.7	3,054	274	9.0	922	230	24.9

TABLE 100

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE, SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE TOTAL POPULATION IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE, BY CHURCH-TYPE AND SECT-TYPE

Types of Attendance	Popu-lation	Total		Church-type		Sect-type	
		Average Attendance	Percent of Population	Average Attendance	Percent of Population	Average Attendance	Percent of Population
Sunday Worship Services	41,242	9569	23.2	6691	16.2	2878	7.0
Sunday School	41,242	7933	19.2	5421	13.1	2512	6.1
Youth Organizations	41,242	1529	3.7	974	2.4	555	1.3

rates at Sunday worship services, but was reduced to 15,637 for Sunday School attendance rates and further reduced to 11,002 for rates of attendance at youth organizations.

Population data for calculating rates of attendance for specific churches or categories of churches is extremely difficult to obtain. The only way to obtain it is to survey all of the population residing within the boundaries of the parish of a particular church. This situation forces the investigator to base rates of attendance upon membership data, which creates some problems in interpretation of results. There is the question of the accuracy of the membership data. In some religious groups the membership may be inflated because it includes inactive or nonresident members. This is most likely to occur in church-type groups. There is a definite tendency for sect-type groups to report fewer persons as members than church-type groups.

The different bases for counting members must be remembered in examining and interpreting the rates in Tables 97, 98, and 99, because sect-type rates are consistently higher than those of the church-type. In many instances sect-type rates are higher than 100 per 100 members. For example, the sect-type rate for attendance at Sunday worship services is 104.8 compared with a rate of 49.2 for the church-type. General observation and data indicate that the rate of attendance for sect-type groups is higher than the rate for church-type groups. The only point raised here is that the difference shown in these tables is probably exaggerated by the method of reporting members among the sect-type groups and by the inflated membership of church-type groups which reduces their rates of attendance.

Rates of average attendance at Sunday worship services are shown in Table 97 for church-type and sect-type groups and according to the size of the group and its location. Rate of attendance was 58.6 per 100 members in the five-area sample; rates differed greatly in relation to size of group. The rate was 139.3 for small groups (less than 50 members), 69.9 for medium size groups (50 to 99 members), and 47.1 for large groups (100 or more members). The tendency for rate of attendance to decline as size of membership increased held for all religious groups, the church-type, and to some extent for the sect-type.

The importance of size of the group as a variable in understanding the functioning of religious groups has been mentioned numerous times in this report. Once again, its importance is recognized. The trend for attendance at Sunday worship services to decrease as the size of group increases, with a few exceptions for sect-type groups, also is the trend of rates of attendance at Sunday School and youth organizations. Small churches have the highest rates of attendance at Sunday worship services, Sunday School, and youth organizations. In terms of rates of attendance at these three types of activities, medium size groups fall between the small and large groups. Large churches have the lowest rates of attendance at Sunday worship services, Sunday School, and youth organizations.

Although the average attendance was 9,569 persons at the Sunday worship service, only 7,933 were in attendance at Sunday School. Rates of attendance were consistently higher at Sunday worship service than at Sunday School for church-type and sect-type religious groups, as well as by size of group and location.

Youth organization attendance rates should be calculated on the basis of members in the age category expected to be participants in such organizations. Since such membership data were not available, it was necessary to use the total membership. The average attendance rate of 13.9 per 100 members seems low but bear in mind this is based on the total membership. Attendance rates for youth organizations are influenced greatly by church-type and sect-type differences in reporting membership. The sect-type rate is more than three times as high as that of the church-type, but for attendance rates at Sunday worship service and Sunday School the sect-type rate is approximately twice that of the church-type.

It is often claimed that attendance rates at church services and programs are higher for open country churches than for those located in villages and cities. Rates of attendance in Tables 97, 98, and 99 tend to support this assumption. The evidence, however, does not always indicate as great a difference as some persons have claimed, and in some instances exceptions are found to this broad generalization.

Attendance rates for youth organizations support this assumption. For both church-type and sect-type groups there is a decline in rates of attendance from open country to large village groups. Attendance rates for the total number of religious groups and the church-type at Sunday School also show a consistent decline in attendance from open country to large village churches. But sect-type rates of attendance at Sunday School deviate greatly. The lowest rate is found in open country churches and the highest rate is found in small villages. The attendance rate in large villages is above that of the open country, but below the rate for small villages. The explanation for these unusual sect-type rates appears to be found in the distribution of groups according to size in these three types of location.

Attendance rates at Sunday worship services show still other variations. The sect-type rate in small villages, similar to the Sunday School rate, is the highest. In contrast to the Sunday School rate, the sect-type rate for Sunday worship services is lowest in large villages. Attendance rates for Sunday worship services for all groups and the church-type are highest in the open country and lowest in small villages. The rate for large villages falls between the extremes for open country and small village churches. A part of the explanation for these variations is probably the proportions of churches according to size of membership, but another part may result from the fact that the 18 villages included in the sample are for the most part small villages.

A second way of interpreting attendance is to compare the average attendance at Sunday worship service, Sunday School, and youth organizations with the total population in the five-area sample. Table 100 shows the average attendance at Sunday worship service of 9,569 persons representing 23.2 percent of the total population of 41,242 in the sample areas. Since the five-area sample approximates the state situation, the estimate may be made that approximately one person in every four of the population in rural Missouri attended Sunday worship services on a given Sunday. The average attendance at church-type services comprised 16.2 percent of the total population while 7 percent of the population attended sect-type Sunday worship services.

Approximately one person in every five in rural Missouri attended Sunday School on a given Sunday. While 13.1 percent of the total population attended a church-type Sunday School, 6.1 percent of the population attended a sect-type Sunday School. Approximately one person in every 25 of the total population attended a youth organization. While 2.4 percent of the population attended a church-type youth organization, 1.3 percent of the population attended a sect-type youth organization.

CHAPTER 27

LAY LEADERSHIP OF RURAL RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Part III of this report was devoted entirely to an analysis of clergymen in rural Missouri. In this examination of the professional leadership of rural religious groups it was pointed out that there was a division of labor within a church. In the previous analysis, attention was given to the church activities in relation to whether they were performed by the total group, suborganizations, or by the clergyman alone. Many activities were the primary responsibility of the total group or its suborganizations. For churches and their suborganizations to be organized to perform these activities it was necessary for them to have persons in positions of leadership. It is important, therefore, to investigate these lay leadership positions and the leaders holding these positions.

It is rather surprising to find so little attention given in church research to local church leaders, in view of the importance usually attached to lay leadership. Most of the research on leadership in rural churches has been limited to the clergy. Collection of sufficient data on lay leadership to provide answers for many questions concerning lay leaders was made a major concern in the sample of selected areas.

In the sociological literature dealing with group organizations and leadership a distinction is frequently made between nominal and operational leaders. A nominal leader is a person who has been named or elected to an office or position of leadership. An operational leader is a person who actually initiates action within a group organization. The nominal leader and the operational leader within an organization may or may not be the same person. Although investigation of operational leaders is interesting and profitable, it is a type of research that requires more intensive study than is usually available in a field survey. This investigation was limited to nominal leaders and their offices or leadership positions.

A "leadership position" was defined as the role played or office held by one or more individuals in churches, nonchurch organizations, and selected activity fields. This definition included all of the officers of local religious groups, the officers of nonchurch organizations, and certain important positions such as civil officials. The officer listings of both church and nonchurch organizations included all persons with the exception of those appointed to various committees. A "leader" was defined as a person who at the time of the survey held one or more of the leadership positions mentioned above.

Two inventories of leadership positions and leaders were made in the selected areas. The first inventory included the list of all the leadership positions

in a local church, the names of all the persons holding these positions, and the following data concerning each church leader: age, sex, occupation, tenure in position, residence, and distance traveled to church. This inventory was made by interviewing the clergyman of the local church. In a few instances where the clergyman was not available, the information was obtained from the chairman of the official board or the Sunday School superintendent. The information was collected for all but 10 of the religious groups.

The second inventory was made only of the leaders in nonchurch organizations. Information was obtained by interviewing professional and organizational leaders, such as superintendents of schools, newspaper editors, county personnel, and the officers of voluntary nonchurch organizations. A complete listing was made of all nonchurch organizations in the villages. The inventory of leadership positions and leaders was taken at the same time all organizations and services were being surveyed. This afforded an opportunity for survey team members to check on leadership positions at the same time they were checking other material.

The following analysis of lay leadership is concerned primarily with the leadership positions and lay leaders of rural religious groups. It was necessary, however, to complete the second inventory to answer certain questions. For example, to know what proportion of all leadership positions and leaders in an area are identified with churches a complete listing of all positions and leaders is necessary. In view of the claim frequently made that certain persons hold all of the leadership positions, the second inventory was made so one could determine how many church leaders also held nonchurch positions.

Leadership Positions and Leaders

Table 101 is a summary of the two inventories. In the five-area sample, 4178 leadership positions were listed. When the number of positions is related to the population of the sample area, the rate is 101.3 positions per 1000 population. Note that church and nonchurch leadership positions are almost equally divided. In other words, approximately one-half of all the leadership positions are identified with the church. The rate for church-type groups was 38.5 per 1000 population compared to 12.2 for the sect-type.

The 4178 positions were held by 3167 leaders. Although the rate of positions was 101.3, the rate of leaders per 1000 was only 76.8. A few more women than men were listed as leaders. This is perhaps best illustrated in the female rates of leaders, 79.6, per 1000 women compared with a male rate of 74.1 per 1000 males. The higher female rate resulted from the greater proportion of church leaders who were women because the female rate of nonchurch leaders was only slightly less than that for males.

More than one-half of the 1612 church leaders were women. The rate of male church leaders per 1000 males was 36.4 compared with a corresponding rate of 41.9 for women. The church-type rate of leaders, 30.3 per 1000 popula-

TABLE 101
 NUMBER AND RATE PER 1000 POPULATION OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
 AND LEADERS IN THE 5 -AREA SAMPLE

Categories	Number	Rate Per 1000 Population
Total Population	41,242	
Males	21,004	
Females	20,238	
Number of Leadership Positions	4,178	101.3
Number of Nonchurch Positions	2,087	50.6
Number of Church Positions	2,091	50.7
Church-type	1,588	38.5
Sect-type	503	12.2
Number of Leaders	3,167	76.8
Male	1,557	74.1
Female	1,610	79.6
Nonchurch Leaders	1,555	37.7
Male	793	37.8
Female	762	37.7
Church Leaders	1,612	39.1
Male	764	36.4
Female	848	41.9
Church-type	1,250	30.3
Sect-type	362	8.8
With Only Church Positions	1,407	34.1
Male	643	30.6
Female	764	37.8
Church-type	1,058	25.6
Sect-type	349	8.5
With Church and Nonchurch Positions	205	5.0
Male	121	5.8
Female	84	4.2
Church-type	192	4.7
Sect-type	13	0.3

tion, was more than three times the 8.8 rate for the sect-type. Approximately 87 percent of the church leaders held only church leadership positions. Only 13 percent of the church leaders held both church and nonchurch leadership positions. Although the latter indicates an important amount of participation in both types of leadership positions, it does not substantiate the usual claim that a few persons hold all of the leadership positions.

A greater proportion of men than women participated in both church and nonchurch leadership positions; the male rate was 5.8 per 1000 males compared with a rate of 4.2 per 1000 for women. Church-type leaders participated in nonchurch positions to a much greater extent than the sect-type. There are two ways of illustrating this point. First, 15.4 percent of the church-type in contrast to only 3.6 percent of the sect-type leaders held both types of positions. Second, 94 percent of the church leaders who held both church and nonchurch positions were identified with church-type groups.

Church Leadership Positions and Church Leaders

The rates of leadership positions and leaders in this section were calculated on the basis of the number of positions or leaders per 100 members. It is important to recall the discussion in the previous chapter concerning rates calculated in terms of membership. Church-type rates are likely to be somewhat lower than they should have been because they included nonresident and inactive members. Sect-type rates appear relatively high in comparison because of the practice these groups generally follow of counting only a limited number of persons as members.

In the five-area sample there were 12.6 leadership positions per 100 members. (See Table 102.) The church-type rate was 11.5 compared with 18.5 for the sect-type. This means that there was one leadership position available for approximately every eight church-type members, and one available for every five sect-type members. If these positions were rotated every year and a person held office only one year, it would take only eight years for every church-type member to have a leadership position. The same type of cycle could be completed every five years for sect-type groups.

Although the survey revealed a rate of 12.6 leadership positions per 100 members, the rate of leaders was only 9.7. The church-type rate was only 9 per 100 members in contrast to a rate of 13.3 for the sect-type. The lower rate for leaders means that some of the leaders held more than one position. In fact, 2.3 leaders per 100 members held two or more church leadership positions. The sect-type rate was twice that of the church-type, 3.9 compared with 2 per 100 members.

One of the most revealing analyses of the rates of church positions and leaders was in relation to size of group. Although there were some variations for church-type and sect-type differences, the basic pattern can be illustrated in terms of the total of all groups. Small churches, less than 50 members, had a rate of 35.3 positions per 100 members. Churches ranging in membership from 50 to 99 had a rate of 18.1 positions. Large churches (100 or more members) had a rate of only 8.8. A comparison of the rates for leaders shows a similar pattern. The rate for small groups was 24.6. It declined to 13.6 for medium size groups and to 7.2 for large churches. These comparisons show clearly the tendency for the rates of positions and leaders to decline as the size of group increases.

These data tell us more about churches than the mere fact that rates declined as membership increased. First, a local church probably has a minimum amount of organization and number of leadership positions regardless of size. Positions such as those associated with the official board and the Sunday School comprised the majority of positions. The number of positions in the official board and the Sunday School will increase for very large churches, but a church of 50 members is likely to have the same number of such positions as a church with 100 members.

TABLE 102
 NUMBER AND RATE PER 100 MEMBERS OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND CHURCH LEADERS
 IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE, BY CHURCH-TYPE AND SECT-TYPE, AND SIZE OF GROUP

Type and Size of Group	Church Member- ship	Church Leader- ship Positions		Church Leaders		Church Leaders With Two or More Church Positions		Church Leaders With Nonchurch Positions	
		Number	Rate per	Number	Rate per	Number	Rate per	Number	Rate per
			100 Members		100 Members		100 Members		100 Members
5-Area Total	16,554	2,091	12.6	1,612	9.7	380	2.3	205	1.2
Church-type	13,837	1,588	11.5	1,250	9.0	275	2.0	192	1.4
Sect-type	2,717	503	18.5	362	13.3	105	3.9	13	0.5
Small	1,428	504	35.3	351	24.6	109	7.6	31	2.2
Church-type	796	270	33.9	186	23.4	60	7.5	24	3.0
Sect-type	632	234	37.0	165	26.1	49	7.8	7	1.1
Medium	2,699	488	18.1	368	13.6	94	3.5	41	1.5
Church-type	1,723	337	19.6	259	15.0	62	3.6	35	2.0
Sect-type	976	151	15.5	109	11.2	32	3.3	6	0.6
Large	12,427	1,099	8.8	893	7.2	177	1.4	133	1.1
Church-type	11,318	981	8.7	805	7.1	153	1.4	133	1.2
Sect-type	1,109	118	10.6	88	7.9	24	2.2	---	---

Another way of illustrating this point is to compare the membership and number of positions for churches classified according to size. The total membership of large churches in the five-area sample was approximately nine times that of the small churches, but the total number of leadership positions in the large churches was just slightly more than twice that of the small churches. Total membership of medium size church-type groups was 116 percent larger than that of small church-type groups, but their number of leadership positions was only 25 percent greater.

Rates of leadership positions also vary according to religious bodies. A denomination such as the Roman Catholic Church has, as a rule, a limited number of lay leadership positions, irrespective of the size of membership. A Roman Catholic congregation of 400 members may not have as many leadership positions as a Methodist congregation of 50 members. In the St. Louis Rural-Urban Fringe Area, in which several groups were identified with the Roman Catholic Church, rates of leadership positions and leaders were lower than in the five-area sample.

As mentioned, if positions were rotated every year and a person held office only one year, it would take only eight years for every church-type member to have a leadership position. It would take only three years in small groups, five years in medium size groups, and 12 years in large.

The rates of church leaders per 100 members also decreased as the size of the group increased. Great differences were found, however, when groups were classified according to size. While one member out of every four in small groups was classified as a church leader, only one in seven members was so classified in the medium size groups, and only one in every 14 in large groups.

Rates of church leaders, although manifesting the same pattern as that for positions, were consistently lower than corresponding rates for positions. The explanation for this is found in the rates of leaders who held two or more church positions. In the five-area sample this rate was 2.3 per 100 members, 2.0 for church-type compared with 3.9 for the sect-type groups.

The tendency for one person to hold two or more church positions was most pronounced in small groups. The rate was 7.6 per 100 members in small groups, 3.5 in medium size groups, and 1.4 in large groups. Thus in small groups one member out of every 13 held two or more leadership positions. This ratio was one in 29 for medium size groups and one in 71 in large groups.

It is often assumed in the sociological study of group organizations and leaders that it is healthy for a group to have several persons who have had leadership experience and insight into the functioning of the group that comes from such participation. Before concluding that rural churches are in an advantageous position in this regard, remember that these are nominal leadership positions and nominal leaders. No attempt was made to study these persons as operational leaders. In all probability, some of these persons were in reality operational leaders. The combined data on the functioning of these religious

groups, however, strongly suggest that much of the participation in these positions may have been quite limited. Apparently, certain amounts of structural organization and leadership positions are found in most religious groups irrespective of the extent to which they function.

A criticism sometimes made of rural churches is that they keep the same persons in positions of leadership for long periods of time. Data were collected on the number of years a person had held his current position in a church. Some leaders had held office only a year, while others had held their current position as long as 50 years. The average tenure in the current position, however, was 4.9 years. It was slightly longer for the church-type, 5.1 years, than the sect-type, 4.2 years. The average tenure for men was slightly longer than that for women, 5.6 years compared with 4.3 years. Apparently, village churches rotate persons in leadership positions more often than open country churches. Average tenure for the former was 4.6 years in contrast to 5.6 years for the latter. Average tenure was shortest in small groups, 4.2 years, and longest in medium size groups, 5.4.

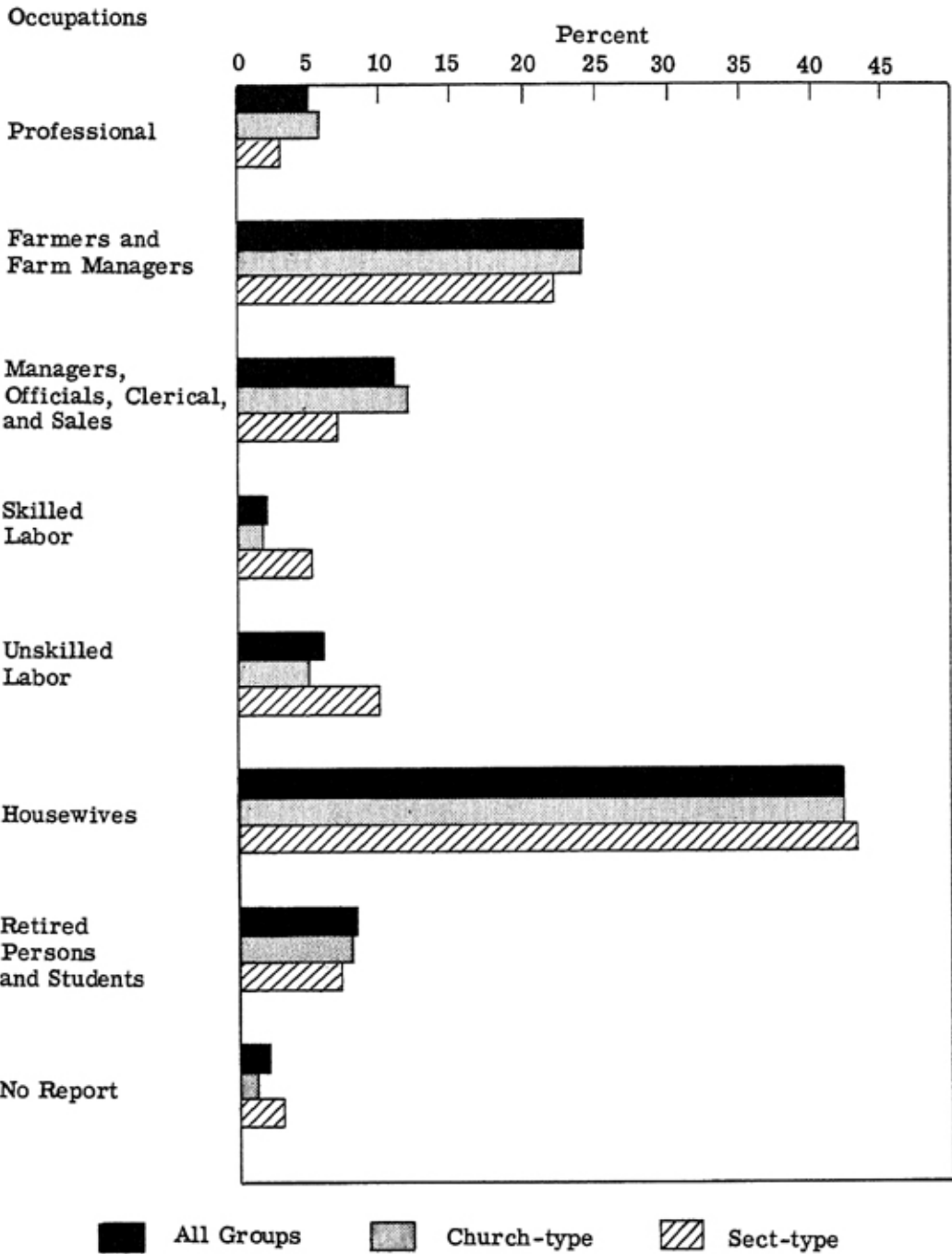
The average age of church leaders in the five-area sample was 43.7 years. There were only slight variations in the average age of leaders when classified by location and by church-type and sect-type. To be sure, leaders were found ranging in age from the teens to the eighties. In some churches the leaders were concentrated in the upper age categories, but in general this was not the case.

Church leaders in the five-area sample were also classified according to occupation. Percentages of church leaders in the various categories are given in whole numbers in Figure 36 to facilitate comparisons. In view of the number and rates of church leaders who were women, it is not surprising that 42 percent of church leaders were classified as housewives. The next biggest category was farmers and farm managers, representing 24 percent of all church leaders. The broad category of managers, officials, clerical, and sales accounted for 11 percent of the leaders. Eight percent of the leaders were retired persons and students. Six percent were classified as unskilled labor, but only 2 percent were classified as skilled labor. Five percent of the leaders were classified as professional.

Church-type and sect-type differences were present in the occupational background of leaders. The proportion of church-type leaders classified as professional was twice that of the sect-type. Likewise, 12 percent of the church-type in contrast to 7 percent of the sect-type leaders were classified as managers, officials, clerical, and sales. The proportion of sect-type leaders classified as unskilled labor was twice that of the church-type, while the proportion classified as skilled labor was two and one-half times the church-type. Only slight differences were found for farmers and farm managers, housewives, and retired persons and students.

These comparisons indicate that the church-type groups were in a somewhat more advantageous position in terms of having higher proportions of professional persons, managers, officials, and clerical and sales people in positions of

Figure 36 Percent of Church Leaders Classified by Occupation, Church-type and Sect-type, in the 5-Area Sample



leadership. As would be expected from the general characteristics of sect-type groups, a greater proportion of their leaders would be classified as skilled labor and unskilled labor than would be the case for the church-type.

Remember that the foregoing analysis of the occupational background of church leaders does not give a completely accurate account of the impact which differences in occupations may make in church leadership. The reason for this is that 42 percent of the church leaders were classified as housewives. It is not known what changes would have been made in the occupational background if these housewives had been classified according to the occupation of their husbands.

The proportions of church leaders in different occupations also varied when they were classified according to the location of the church. Only 2.3 percent of the leaders were classified as professional in open country churches in contrast to 7.4 percent so classified in large village churches. Likewise, the proportion of leaders classified as managers, officials, clerical, and sales increased from 3.6 percent in open country churches to 16.1 percent in large villages. A greater proportion of leaders classified as skilled labor and unskilled labor was found in large village churches than in the open country. On the other hand, the proportion of leaders classified as farmers and farm managers decreased from 37.1 percent in open country churches to 18 percent in the large villages. Likewise, the percentage of leaders in the category of housewives declined from 41.3 percent in open country churches to 32 percent in large villages.

Data on church leaders were also analyzed in terms of residence of the leader and location of the church in which he held his leadership position. (See Table 103.) Of the 693 church leaders who lived in villages, 95.7 percent held a

TABLE 103
COMPARISON OF CHURCH LEADERS IN TERMS OF PLACE OF RESIDENCE
AND LOCATION OF CHURCH IN WHICH THEY HELD LEADERSHIP
POSITION IN THE 5-AREA SAMPLE, BY CHURCH-TYPE
AND SECT-TYPE

Residence and Location of Church	Total		Church-type		Sect-type	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Village Residence	693	100.0	554	100.0	139	100.0
Village Church Positions	663	95.7	531	95.8	132	95.0
Open Country Church Positions	30	4.3	23	4.2	7	5.0
Open Country Residence	919	100.0	696	100.0	223	100.0
Village Church Positions	334	36.3	226	32.5	108	48.4
Open Country Church Positions	585	63.7	470	67.5	115	51.6

position in a village church. Although this was expected, one would hardly anticipate that 4.3 percent of the leaders residing in villages held positions in open country churches. Apparently these leaders had formerly lived near the open

country church in which they held a leadership position, or their families had long been identified with this particular open country church.

Of the 919 church leaders who resided in the open country, 63.7 percent held a position in an open country church. A higher percentage might have been expected. The fact that 36.3 percent of leaders residing in the open country held a position in a village church indicates that open country residents, in addition to attending village churches, are also taking an active part in the leadership roles of village churches. The tendency was more pronounced for the sect-type than the church-type, as 48.4 percent of the former in contrast to only 32.5 percent of the latter held village church positions.

The proportion of church leaders residing in the open country but holding a village church position might be interpreted as the influence of open country residents who have nonfarm occupations, but the data provide evidence to the contrary. Of the 385 church leaders classified as farmers and farm managers, only 51.4 percent held a leadership position in an open country church. The other 48.6 percent held positions in village churches. While 35.3 percent of the leaders classified as farmers held positions in small village churches, 13.3 percent of them held positions in large village churches. These data tend to show that farm people who attend village churches are willing to assume leadership responsibilities in them. The old complaint that farmers do not feel at home in village churches seems to be disappearing.

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