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**Denominational and Nondenominational Impact on Civic Participation of  
Megachurches**

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## Abstract

By focusing on two megachurches in “Midwestern City”, one a large independent megachurch and the other a large Protestant denominational church, I investigate whether the associations that go along with belonging to a denomination make a difference in the type and amount of civic engagement a congregation has in the community. Data come from sixteen interviews with key leaders of both congregations. I also collected church bulletins, attended worship services and other congregational events.

I discovered that denominationalism has an impact on the amount of community outreach of a congregation. The congregations were similar with regard to the type (e.g. soup kitchens) but were very different with regard to style and the manner in which the congregation performed community outreach. The social networks that both these congregations participate help with regard to their outreach efforts. The “culture” of the denominational church played an important role in its outreach activities.



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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Mildred Grabert Keck, who always believed I could do it. Her life and especially her wonderful liberating theology will always be an inspiration to me. She gave me space to be my own person and reach out in community to others.

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# INTRODUCTION

Religious institutions are an integral part of American society. They can bring people and communities together through traditions, worship and community service. Religious institutions are also blamed for some of the worst atrocities imagined. Religious institutions can and often do reflect our morals, values and how we function as a society. It is through our religious institutions that members of our society who need help are often able to find the help they need. Since religions are traditionally based on tenets such as the Christian ideology of the "Golden Rule," they are often looked upon as the "do-gooders" of our society.

Early sociologists always included religion in their studies. Three of the sociological "classics" including Durkheim, Weber, and Marx addressed religion in some fashion. Durkheim, for example saw religion as changing and felt that religion was losing much of its fundamental purpose. His research included primitive societies to examine the real core of religion. Like many sociologists of his time, Durkheim's theories, including his concept of anomie, was influenced by the Industrial Revolution and the changes it brought to all aspects of society including religion. Anomie, simply defined, is a state of normlessness where societal norms are absent or unclear (Durkheim [1912], 1995). Can religion help to alleviate some of this anomie? Durkheim felt that religious institutions could help ease the anomie that people experience through fostering a stronger connection among individuals through a phenomenon he called "collective effervescence" (Durkheim [1912] 1995). Civic engagement as a congregation is part of the collective consciousness which Durkheim felt was so important and volunteering is a manifestation of that collective consciousness.

Durkheim was also concerned about social solidarity. Essentially, he felt there were two types of solidarity; mechanical (simple and non-specialized) and organic (complex and specialized). Most modern societies today experience “organic” solidarity. Social bonds tend to be more impersonal with the organic type of solidarity. The idea of organic solidarity is particularly important for this thesis, which looks at how a congregation of people reaches out to a larger community via its bonds and associations.

Other early sociologists have also been interested in the role of the church in society. H. Paul Douglass in 1926 as part of his work with the Institute of Social and Religious Research attempted to classify congregations into five categories. These categories ranged from congregations who were doing only the bare minimum to survive by holding a worship service and minimum evangelizing to those churches that do above and beyond the minimum for their church and church members and also perform social services in the local community (Douglass 1926). Wind and Lewis also did research on congregations resulting in the Congregational History Project between 1987 and 1991. This study brought new light to the significance of congregations in American life (Wind and Lewis 1994:1).

As DiIulio (1998:57) points out in his chapter, “The Lord’s Work: The Church and Civil Society,” Churches are the country's single biggest source of volunteers, way ahead of workplaces, schools or colleges, fraternal groups, and other civil institutions. There is no doubt that volunteerism and community service are a part of the mission of almost all American Christian churches today. Much of the work in food kitchens, with troubled youth and affordable housing (e.g., Habitat for Humanity) is done through religious institutions. DiIulio (1998) quotes Gallup saying that “churches and other religious

bodies are the major supporters of voluntary services for neighborhoods and communities....Almost half of the church members did unpaid volunteer work in a given year, compared to only a third of non-members." (DiIulio 1998:57).

Civic engagement of congregations has been a topic of study for sociologists and other social scientists since Alexis de Tocqueville came to America in 1831 and researched his well-known book *Democracy in America*. "Civic engagement" for congregations is best defined as activity that reaches out into the community as opposed to those activities that are more inward focusing on the congregation itself. Bellah et al. (1985:38) refers to Tocqueville when describing civic engagement as activities where "Citizens who are bound to take part in public affairs must turn from the private interests and occasionally take a look at something other than themselves." Such activities may include sponsoring Boy Scouts, local missionary work, or other typical community involvement such as food and shelter relief.

However, as much as people today feel that churches are of primary importance in providing social services to the needy today, the primary objective of religious institutions is not social service. As Chaves (2004) points out:

At present, most congregations engage only minimally in social services, and typically the few that do engage more deeply rely heavily on paid staff, involve relatively few congregational volunteers, and conduct their efforts in collaboration – including financial collaboration – with secular and governmental agencies. (p. 78).  
And:

For the vast majority of congregations, social services constitute a minor and peripheral aspect of their organizational activities, taking up only small amounts of their resources and involving only small numbers of people. We fundamentally misunderstand congregations if we imagine that this sort of activity is now, was ever, or will ever be central to their activities (p. 93).

Religious institutions are continuing to change. The most notable evidence of this is the relatively new phenomenon of megachurches. Thumma with the Hartford Institute for Religious Research defines a megachurch as a congregation “which has two thousand or more worship attendees a week” (Thumma 1996:1; 2001). The number of congregations in our country that have membership levels into the thousands is growing (Thumma 1996; 2001). In the early 1990's it was estimated that the number of megachurches was growing at a rate of 5% per year. It was estimated that over two million people were weekly attenders of megachurches in the United States. Chaves (2004:19) estimates that today “most congregations are small, but most people are associated with large congregations.” Indeed, results of the 1998 National Congregations Study conducted by Chaves showed that the largest 10% of congregations contain nearly half of all churchgoers (Chaves 2004:18-19).

Similarly, the number of independent churches is also growing. An estimated 18% of churches (or 10% of church attenders) state they are not affiliated with a denomination, the third largest category after Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist Convention (Chaves 2004: 24). Congregations that have been recently established are much more likely to be non-denominational than churches that were established longer ago (Hall 1999:223, Chaves 2004:26). Some well-known examples of independent megachurches include Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago area (South Barrington, Illinois), Crystal Cathedral in the Los Angeles, California area, and Saddleback Valley Community Church in Lake Forest, California.

What impact do they have on society? What is their role in helping in their communities? I have chosen to examine megachurches in this study for two reasons.

First, megachurches are a growing type of religious institution in American society and second, megachurches have more resources with which to engage in community outreach. Both of these factors make megachurches more interesting for this research as opposed to a smaller church.

Denominationalism has played an important role in religious institutions, particularly in the Protestant and Jewish faiths. Since the origins of the Protestant faith, denominational affiliation has been an important factor in deciding where and how people choose to worship. This is particularly true in the United States because of the strong tradition of Protestant pluralism. Historically, if you belonged to a Methodist, Episcopal or Lutheran church there was a common understanding as to what that meant. For example, Episcopal congregations have distinct practices (such as burning incense) and liturgy. As Ammerman points out “The person on the street, like the theologian in the seminary, knows that denominations are supposed to be identifiable by their beliefs and practices. Defining denominations by the ideas and rituals that distinguish them from others is the commonsense thing to do.” (Ammerman 1994:113).

Denominationalism could very well affect civic engagement. First, denominations provide a structure for social networks that could make civic engagement easier. This structure may include newsletters, websites and conferences that may include information about community outreach and provide an opportunity for a congregation to promote their outreach activities. Additionally, non-denominational churches are more likely to have unchurched members who are less familiar with the religious tradition of volunteering.

Secondly, denominations also provide a sense of connectedness. Congregations that belong to a denomination have a clear identity of who they are to both their members and the larger community as a whole. Denominations have a certain “culture” which the general public understands as being rooted in the Christian tradition. This traditional Christian culture represents the religious connection of people over space and time. Religious culture includes symbols, language, music and even values.

This research will attempt to investigate the influence of denominational affiliation of megachurches on their community involvement. Specifically, I will investigate whether the associations and affiliations that go along with belonging to a denomination of a mainline Protestant tradition make a difference in the type and amount of civic engagement a congregation has in the community compared to an independent, non-denominational congregation.

## PRIOR RESEARCH

The way in which churches relate to the community has been explored on a variety of levels. Perhaps the most influential publication in this regard is Nancy Ammerman’s book *Congregation and Community* (2000). This book looks at a variety of churches in various regions of the country and how they have adapted to changes within the community (i.e., changes in demographics, population growth or decline, and the economic situation). As Ammerman points out, the “community” (both local and larger scale) is where congregations put into practice their religious beliefs and faith. The moral values and the sacred presence of religious institutions are central to why they hold such key positions in our society (Ammerman 2000). This literature review will focus on the community outreach of congregations, megachurches, and denomination.

## *Congregational Community Outreach*

Historically, most of the literature regarding religious-based volunteerism and community outreach focuses on the individual as opposed to the congregation as the literature review indicates. Because a minimal amount of research has been done on congregational volunteerism, there is little foundation for a supporting thesis. However, this demonstrates the need for this research. Two pieces of literature discussing individual volunteerism are worth mentioning briefly. Park and Smith (2000) found that deeper involvement in religious circles begets more volunteering and more charitable behavior towards others on a larger community level. Hoge et al. (1998) discovered that volunteering on the part of individuals is closely associated with other forms of church participation, including Sunday school attendance and taking part in study groups and social events. Therefore, volunteering can become a part of what it is to belong to a church or any religious institution. The authors found that volunteering cannot be predicted by attitudes about congregational needs, leadership processes or the primary duties of Christians in this life. However, volunteering on the part of individuals is closely associated with other forms of church participation including study groups and social events (Hoge et al.1998).

This thesis focuses on the congregational level and not the individual level. Examining denominationalism and social networks on community outreach is important in order to understand what implicit impact denomination may have on the community outreach of congregations. For this research, the concept of social capital (as defined by Robert Putnam, 1995) is not as important as the concept of civic mindedness that includes more civic activities than just volunteering. It includes any public forums, debates, lectures and other activities that the congregation may be involved in.



One example of a congregational-focused research is the study by Roozen, McKinney and Carroll (1984) which examines congregations in the Hartford, Connecticut area by looking at the variety of ways congregations interact with their community, including their civic involvement and mission work. The descriptive narratives of eleven congregations explore how these congregations interact with the community with regard to their outreach activities such as soup kitchens and educational programs. The book also examines how the congregations' religious orientation and presence affects how they interact with the community.

There is additional research on congregations that include civic engagement and outreach as part of their studies. Chaves (2004) looks at community outreach as part of the 1998 National Congregations Study. As mentioned above, community outreach is not a priority for most congregations. For most congregations the emphasis is on their worship, religious education and the cultural aspects of religious life including music, and the arts.

Ammerman (2000, 2005) has done considerable work regarding congregations that also addresses, in part, the community outreach and civic engagement in which congregations participate. Similar to Chaves, Ammerman discovered that serving the community is not necessarily a high priority. Only 37% of all the congregations surveyed (549) named serving the community as an emphasis of the congregation (2005:117). This was, however, higher among Mainline Protestants. She also discovered that size is the most important external factor distinguishing congregations that have social service groups with those congregations that do not have social service groups (Ammerman 2005:135). Additionally, the large majority of churches that have some

kind of organized group to support missionary work are Conservative Protestant (Ammerman 2005:139).

### ***Megachurches***

There is a growing body of literature regarding megachurches, predominately coming from the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Since both congregations analyzed in this study are “megachurches” it is important to understand the previous research regarding large congregations. How does size affect a congregation? Is size the main and/or only distinction between large and small congregations? For example, Thumma (1996) points out that size alone is not sufficient to define a megachurch. A megachurch “must be seen as a collective social phenomenon rather than as individual anomalous moments of spectacular growth or uniquely successful spiritual entrepreneurial ventures.”(p.1). In other words, megachurches should be investigated sociologically in terms of their unique ability to attract members within a community and not by looking at why specific individuals decide to join the megachurch or how they (the megachurches), are successfully able to market their institution to a large number of people.

Thumma identifies three types of megachurches: nontraditional, conventional, and a combination of the two (Thumma 1996). The nontraditional megachurches are typically the independent megachurches, which do not have a traditional worship style. Conventional megachurches are those churches that would resemble a traditional format of worship only on a much larger scale.

There are an estimated 1,200 megachurches in the United States according to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research (Thumma 1996). Traditionally, most people think of megachurches as independent and not affiliated with any mainstream Christian

denomination. However, megachurches can be either independent or affiliated with a denomination. In fact, 20% of known megachurches are affiliated with a Baptist denomination (Thumma 1996). Thumma also states that almost one half of all megachurches are nondenominational and for a majority of megachurches, denominational affiliation is an insignificant matter (Thumma 1996). In addition, many of the megachurches seek to reach out to the “unchurched” or people who do not have a spiritual home and often do not have strong connections to a particular faith or denomination. There is a greater emphasis on "seeker" classes; classes for people who are just beginning to explore their spiritual relationship with God. Additionally, congregational “switching” is more commonplace. This could affect the amount and type of civic activities of the congregation since the membership may not have a strong tie with the community.

Another phenomenon associated with megachurches is the secularization of religion. Megachurches claim that traditional churches have been ineffective in reaching people. In order to make religion more relevant and significant, megachurches use a more modern and secular (non-religious) approach in both their worship services and marketing efforts (Ostwalt 2003). Typically, religious actions such as saying prayers together or singing hymns together are not prevalent. Worship services often incorporate high tech video presentations. Bookstores and/or cafes can be found in some megachurch facilities. Although biblically based, the message is often related to everyday situations. Many of the people who attend non-denominational megachurches do so because of their lack of connection and/or satisfaction with mainstream denominational churches. They

are attracted to this more modern style of worship that is not based on traditional religious rituals and practices.

### *Denomination*

Denominational affiliation can significantly affect a congregation's social networks and community ties. A denomination is more than just a religious organizational structure serving the needs of a particular group of people. As Ammerman (2005:158) states, “Denominations have been, for more than a century, the most common mode of network partnership.” They are the “strategic alliances that allow community organizations to mobilize needed resources and allow congregations to extend their reach” (Ammerman 2005:163).

Sociologists have been debating whether denominationalism is declining in importance in the United States. Traditionally, it has been suggested that denominationalism’s importance (especially in Protestant religions) has been declining and that there are decreasing differences between denominations regarding status, ethnic identity and regional distribution (Sherkat 2001, Wuthnow 1988). Indeed, scholars now "assert that religious beliefs now vary more within denominations than between denominations" (Sherkat 2001:1461). Ammerman states that there is “increasing evidence that ordinary Americans are less and less firmly identified with them. People marry across denominational lines, transfer membership when they move, and drop in and out with impunity” (1994:112). However, a study using data from the late 1970’s regarding American Jews found significant denominational differences between Orthodox, Reform and Conservative Jews (Harrison and Lazerwitz 1982) with regard to organizational activities, political liberalism and Jewish identity. Although the authors

argue that denominationalism in Judaism can be relevant to denominationalism in Protestantism, they do realize that the unique ethnic characteristics of Jews could be affecting the results.

However, Sherkat (2001:1459) makes the point that rational choice theory makes the case that denominationalism is not in decline because of three reasons: 1) people have an adaptive preference to stay with the denomination in which they were raised and are familiar with (staying close to home); 2) "strict" or demanding churches have a high retention rate because of strong following from their members (and the number of these churches is growing); and, 3) Denominational congregations that are not closely connected to secular society but rather emphasis the sacred aspect of society will have higher rate of membership retention.

Roof and McKinney (1987) and McKinney and Roof (1994) found that central to the phenomenon of "switching" denominations, especially post World War II, is the concept of "religious voluntarism." With more religious pluralism and privatization (including megachurches) in our society, people are faced with choices regarding religious affiliation and are free to choose a church that best suits them. Hence, the phenomenon of the religious marketplace (Warner 1993) with churches competing for adherents is important for determining how people select a place of worship. The religious marketplace accounts for, at least in part, the tremendous growth in the number of megachurches. Since people are free to choose a congregation and often do so, churches (especially newer ones) have an incentive to offer what people are looking for. Additionally, rational choice (marketplace) implies that unchurched or unaffiliated people

will more likely join a church for personal and private reasons than people who are invested with denominational identity.

Denominationalism has a variety of functions for different types of religions and churches. The central question of this thesis, therefore, is whether a large megachurch, which is affiliated with a denomination, will be connected via their social networks and other civic affiliations to more civic involvement such as volunteering by the congregation, than will a nondenominational megachurch.

In reviewing the literature, I would expect to find that the denominational megachurch will have the higher amount of volunteer activity in the community. This is mainly because they have more social resources due to the various established networks of religious organizations of which denominational congregations are a part.

Denominational churches are likely to “feel” more connected to a larger community of like-minded Christians especially if their denomination has placed a strong emphasis on civic engagement. Additionally, their denominational affiliation could provide more contacts and more support for community involvement. Also, the independent, nondenominational megachurch is likely to draw more members from a population that is “unchurched” and thus likely to have fewer close ties to the community (e.g., they may have recently moved into the Midwestern City area). Additionally, the orientation of the members of an independent megachurch is not as likely to be that of a traditional church/civic minded philosophy where doing “good” in the community is emphasized. In other words, the traditional concept of joining a church to be a good member of the community and fulfill civic obligation is not a significant factor in these churches. These are issues that have not been addressed in previous literature on megachurches and have

only been slightly examined through the research on church volunteerism in general (via social ties, friendships and other contacts).

## METHODS

This research project compares two Christian megachurches within the same neighborhood located in the northeast side of Midwestern City. One of the megachurches is an independent (no denomination affiliation) congregation and the other megachurch is affiliated with a denomination. The names of these churches are kept anonymous. Both churches currently use the word “community” in their title, thus I call the non-denominational church Independent Community Church (ICC) and the denominational church Denominational Community Church (DCC). DCC has a membership of just under 3,000 while ICC has a membership of over 6,000.

The independent variable is the denominational association of the megachurch congregations. The dependent variable is the type of civic engagement of the megachurch congregation and, to a lesser degree, the amount of civic engagement. Denominational affiliation of the congregation is measured by examining the church's affiliation to a denomination and the importance of these ties. For the purposes of this research a denomination is defined as "the concrete national religious organizations to which congregations may have formal ties" (Chaves 2004:22). This would include, for example, any of the major Protestant denominations as classified per the 1998 National Congregations Study performed by Chaves (2004). It is important that the congregation see this denomination affiliation as part of its identity in that the denomination plays an important role in its traditions, liturgy and teachings.

The dependent variable is measured by examining various types of congregational

volunteerism (civic engagement). The categories include food assistance, housing assistance, employment services, tutoring and other types of outreach activities. I will attempt to answer several questions. For example, are the projects long-term or short-term? Are the projects serving the immediate neighborhood of the congregation or are they broader based? Are they hands-on housing projects (e.g., Habitat for Humanity), food assistance projects, or projects that are related to the evangelical nature of the mission of the church? In other words, is the work of outreach primarily for evangelism and to increase membership, activism and civic engagement in order to reform society, or merely to physically provide for the poor? The type of community outreach in which a congregation engages reflects their religious presence, as Roozen et al. (1984) describe.

This research is qualitative. Throughout the research process I discovered how difficult it is to measure quantitatively the number of general volunteer hours the congregation spends on local service projects. Inconsistencies arose between members or staff reports within the same congregation and also with regard to how the two congregations responded to the inquiry for information. However, I attempted to gather quantitative data and this will be included as appropriate in the "Findings" section. I also examined the local mission budgets of both churches.

Obviously, there are other variables that can affect civic participation of a congregation. These include size, location, socioeconomic status, and other religious based characteristics of the membership (past church affiliation, religious "needs/desires," and fundamental or non-fundamental belief in the Bible). By using two "megachurches," the variable of size is controlled for; by using congregations in the same neighborhood the variable of location is controlled for as well. The variables of socioeconomic status



and other religious characteristics are not automatically controlled and are considered as part of this research and the analysis of the results.

I collected data through personal interviews, attending worship services, collecting bulletins, fliers and other information. The personal interviews were conducted with the key leaders within the congregation, including pastors, associate pastors, and leaders of church committees who are responsible for the social action in the community. The potential respondents were recommended to me by the senior pastors of the congregations. I interviewed 9 members (and pastors) from DCC and 7 persons affiliated with ICC (including pastors). The personal interviews lasted approximately an hour. The interviews were taped and then transcribed. One interviewee from ICC chose not to have his/her interview taped and the senior pastor of ICC responded to interview questions via e-mail.

The questions included such items such as the type and extent (duration of the project) of volunteer activities the congregation is involved and questions regarding the level of importance of the volunteer activities. I also asked questions regarding the social networks and denominational affiliations the church is involved with. I obtained estimates of the number of volunteers and volunteer hours (per capita) spent by the congregation and, as appropriate, from the respondents being interviewed. This information was not available through church documents. Some of the respondents later e-mailed me additional information that I expected to be more formal (and accurate) than the estimates given by the interviewees. As alluded to earlier, this method did not prove to be effective because of inconsistencies in the data. I attempt to measure how important the civic participation and volunteerism is to the congregation as a whole. I also explore

the importance of denominationalism to the congregation. These questions are important because they attempt to measure both what type and how much community service and civic participation is occurring. These questions will determine if denominational megachurches have more of a "leaning" toward civic engagement and activities. The interview questions are included as Appendix A.

## FINDINGS

### *The Congregations*

DCC is a Methodist church, rich with history, and founded in 1880. The existing, traditional Gothic building has been existence since 1927. Before this building was built, the church was in another location in the same neighborhood on the northeast side of Midwestern City. In many ways, DCC is very similar to other Methodist and Protestant churches in both organizational structure and worship. The large sanctuary has stained glass windows, wooden pews, an altar with a large cross, two pulpits, a baptismal fount and other traditional religious symbols. There is also a special space for the choir and organ located behind the altar area.

The church has three services on Sunday morning in the main sanctuary plus a contemporary worship service in the upstairs "theater." In addition, the church also has a worship service for singles on Sunday evening. Weekly attendance is approximately 1,200. It is a growing church, one that Thumma would describe as a "conventional megachurch" or "a smaller corner church on steroids" (Mohrman 2002:38). In other words, it resembles many Protestant churches in the United States with regard to worship activities and even the building itself – only it's bigger with more members.

The church is involved in various program activities including Habitat for Humanity, tutoring, employment services, a church network program for homeless families, soup kitchens and food baskets twice a year (Thanksgiving and Lent). They also have a youth group, women's organizations (they are part of the United Methodist Women's organization) and provide both adult and children's Sunday school classes. This church is also well-known in the Midwestern City area for its outreach to singles. Not only is there a Sunday evening worship service for singles but the church supports many other activities including dance lessons, volleyball, spiritual support for divorced people, widows and widowers and numerous social activities.

The congregation is composed of typically upper-middle class congregants, well-educated with a variety of age ranges. Nearly all of the congregants are white. As one interviewee pointed out, there are so many doctors in the congregation that if someone were to become ill during worship service the question would be not "Is there a doctor in the house?" but rather "What kind of doctors are in the house?"

This congregation has grown and hopes to continue to grow. However, since the church is located in a residential neighborhood in Midwestern City, room for expansion has become a critical issue. The church has already bought property located approximately two long blocks away from the existing church that was originally owned by the Catholic Diocese of Midwestern City and was previously used as a monastery. Adequate parking is a particularly big problem for the congregation. A small parking area is located adjacent to the building but most congregants park on one of the side streets.

ICC is a non-denominational Christian church with a weekly attendance of

approximately 3,000. The church has been in existence for only 10 years and in its present location for only 5 years. The church is presently in a structure that was originally occupied by Home Quarters (HQ). When HQ went out of business in 2000, the church sent people to New York City to make a bid on the building. The successful bid, they feel, was divinely inspired. The outside of the building reminds one of a cross between a warehouse and an athletic facility. In fact, a large banner prominently displayed at the major intersection where the church is located humorously proclaimed, “This is not an Ice Arena”.

The worship space feels more like a theater than a traditional church. With a central stage platform, comfortable seats (including cup holders for the free coffee), carpeting, and large video screens, the atmosphere is a stark contrast to the more Puritan, traditional Protestant sanctuaries. There are no religious symbols visible in the auditorium. There is no choir but rather an electronic band entertains the congregants. The pastor, usually dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, sits on the stage and delivers the message with the aid of various physical representations of the theme for that week. For example, he has brought a treadmill on stage and an athletic locker to enhance the atmosphere and to help emphasize the point of his message.

This church also has three services on Sunday morning and one service on Saturday evening. The church is already outgrowing its facility. ICC just completed its new auditorium in December 2005, which seats 3,500. The previous auditorium seated 1,200.

ICC is also involved in numerous community outreach activities. Similar to DCC, it is involved in Habitat for Humanity, soup kitchens and also prepares food baskets for Thanksgiving (but not Lent). It is also involved in tutoring for children, services for

unemployed and programs for mothers. Perhaps most importantly, it is also involved in organizing a massive city-wide effort to serve an underprivileged population referred to in this document as One-Stop Services. One Stop Services will provide services such as food, clothing, tutoring and employment services all in one central location on the near West side of Midwestern City where a large concentration of lower-income residents reside (not in ICC's neighborhood).

The senior pastor of ICC is not the original pastor of the church, but he has been involved with the church since early in its history. Coming from a Presbyterian background, the senior pastor has formal, theological training. With no support from a denomination to fall back on when congregational problems arise, he has a personal, vested interest in the life of the congregation.

Similar to DCC, the congregants of ICC are mostly white (although spotting a person of color is slightly more common), middle class and fairly well educated. They also attract a wide range of ages although there are fewer elderly congregants at ICC than at DCC.

### ***Denominational and Associational Ties***

DCC is a member of the United Methodist Church (UMC) denomination and regionally is part of the West Ohio Conference of the UMC. Belonging to the UMC denomination means contributing a per capita fee to the conference. In return, the church receives information, resources, and educational material, participates in conferences, and is part of a clearly established network of churches on the local, regional and national level. Every person interviewed knew that the congregation was part of this denomination. References to the denomination are not only in the name of the church but

also can be seen in weekly bulletins, fliers and information posted throughout the church building. DCC has belonged to the Methodist denomination for over 125 years since the church's founding in 1880. The church has been located in its existing building for 75 years. Originally, the church was part of the Methodist Episcopal denomination. This denomination merged with Methodist Protestant Church in 1939 to form the Methodist Church. Subsequently, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the United Methodist Church in 1968. DCC followed in line with these mergers and became part of the United Methodist Church in 1968 (*A Brief History of the (DDC), Midwestern City, Central State: 75 Years: The Vision Continues*). Hence, the "official" congregational history is very clear about its tradition within the Methodist denomination and the importance of the denominational connection.

ICC does not belong to any mainstream Protestant denomination. However, ICC has an affiliation with the Willow Creek Association (WCA). Three respondents mentioned the affiliation with this association: the senior pastor, the pastor who is the Director of ReachOut (DRO) and an assistant to the DRO (who only vaguely knew about the WCA when asked). Willow Creek is a megachurch outside the Chicago area that created an association for churches that want to reach out and grow -especially in reaching out to people who have not found a church home. The WCA serves both independent and denominational churches. The Director of ReachOut at ICC stated that nearly one-half of the member congregations that belong to WCA have denominational affiliations. A look at the Willow Creek website: ([www.willowcreek.com](http://www.willowcreek.com)) confirmed this.

The WCA provides resources, training, and three conferences a year for its members. Although the association is different than a mainline Protestant denomination, in many

ways the association provides the support and social networks of a denomination.

However, it could be argued that the purpose of the WCA is different than the purpose of a typical denomination. The purpose of the denomination is to support the congregation as a member of the denomination. If a smaller church is struggling, the denomination will often step in and help financially. In some instances, the denomination may even own the property where the church is located. Denominations are also often instrumental in providing ministers to a congregation. The WCA, on the other hand, provides only educational, religious and organizational resources. The main purpose of the WCA is for churches to share ideas. If a church finds something that has been helpful to them it is hoped that they would share this information with other congregations in the spirit of Christian cooperation. The WCA website has resources on stewardship, educational material and how to increase membership. ICC interviews confirmed that the association has these resources. Although the congregation does not pay a per capita fee, it does pay an annual membership fee for these services.

DCC is also a member of the WCA association. However, not one of the interviewees (including the senior pastor) mentioned this affiliation. I discovered this after completing the interviews while browsing the WCA website.

In order to better serve their growing congregation, DCC began a contemporary service around three years ago. Some members had started attending a megachurch and felt that some visitors as well as members would feel more comfortable in a more non-traditional worship service. The contemporary service is held at 11:00 A.M. in a relatively small upstairs "theater" that holds only 150-200 people. In many ways this lively service resembles a typical megachurch service. There is a large screen for

showing slides, a small choir of about 10-12 people, an energetic, associate pastor, and a live band. There are no hymnals, free coffee is available outside the auditorium, and there are no religious symbols in the theater. The service has been given a separate "catchy" name indicating its uniqueness and separate identity from the traditional DCC worship. Under the direction of the associate pastor, the attendance at the contemporary service has grown.

One interviewee with DCC stated that she and several other members of the church started the contemporary service because they saw that there was "something happening out there" and "why can't we bring it in here (to DCC)?" They attended trainings and seminars and also visited other churches in other cities and "liked what they saw." Detailed information on these trainings was not obtained.

Interviews with those in both congregations said explicitly that the denomination and/or other affiliations (such as the WCA and other city-wide affiliations) do not make a difference in their community outreach. They do not receive support financially or in volunteers from their denomination and affiliations. Interviewees indicated that resources (money and volunteers) obtained for their civic engagement came primarily from within the congregation with no outside help from the denomination. Only two interviewees with DCC emphasized the importance of denominational connections. Both of these interviewees had strong personal connections with the Methodist denomination through family ties and their religious upbringing. However, when asked to give examples of how the denomination has made a difference with regard to their outreach activities, they were hard pressed to come up with concrete examples. There was one exception. One interviewee mentioned that the Methodist denomination makes a



financial contribution to the Religious Network, an interfaith coalition of churches in Midwestern City.

Similarly, ICC downplayed the importance of the WCA for their church in general and for their community outreach. The Senior Pastor when asked, "What national affiliations does this church have?" responded, "No formal affiliations. The closest would be a voluntary association with the Willow Creek Association which is merely for sharing of ideas."

Therefore, the differences between the two congregations with regard to denomination are not as dramatic as I originally thought before I began the research. Both congregations belong to an organized social network of other churches. DCC however, belongs to an established, highly legitimized denomination that has a formal structure nationally as well as regionally and locally. ICC belongs to a "loose" association of larger churches, which is organized on a national level but has no regional or local organizational structure. Generally speaking, ICC would describe the WCA as being very different than a denomination. In fact, they are very proud of the fact that they do not belong to an organized denomination.

### *Philosophy, Theology and Doctrine*

The philosophy of community involvement for the denominational church goes back to the days of the founder of the Methodist church, John Wesley. Two interviewees made the point that community outreach is an important element of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. This book in part states:

The community provides the potential for nurturing human beings into the fullness of their humanity. We believe we have a responsibility to innovate, sponsor and evaluate new forms of community that will encourage development of the fullest potential in individuals. .... We therefore support social climates in which human

communities are maintained and strengthened for the sake of all persons and their growth. (Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (2000:98).

There is also a rich history of this particular church being a community church. By this I mean a church that is involved in their neighborhood by working to meet the needs of the residents. DCC is a church that is integrally a part of the community through service. From its inception in 1880, the congregation has made community outreach a priority. The mission statement adopted by DCC dated April 1926 (just prior to the dedication of the existing Gothic building) states that:

“The determined policy of this church is that it shall be a seven-day-in-the-week community church. Just so far as physically possible it will be thrown open for the use of all community gatherings, community interests, community programs. We hope to make it a meeting place for everybody and everything that has the highest interests of the community at heart. Questions of faith, church membership, etc., (sic) will not be raised. All are welcome.”

The second paragraph reads in part as follows:

“... We repeat that we are not building to make Methodists. We will be glad to have folks join any church they desire. WHAT WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO IS TO HELP PEOPLE GET ACQUAINTED WITH JESUS CHRIST AND GO FORTH TO LIVE GODLY LIVES OF SERVICE AMONG THEIR FELLOWMEN EVERYWHERE.” (Capitalization in original)

A copy of the mission statement and official policy of DCC as received by one of the interviewees is attached as Appendix B.

When asked the question, “Why does your church engage in civic activities?” the DCC Senior Pastor responded, “People come here “because it is a church of involvement, a church of outreach. Especially our newest members.” Every new member is asked to join a church committee, any church committee, not specifically outreach and is kept involved. According to one interviewee, they may stay on that committee for 2-3 years and then are often asked to serve on another committee. Another interviewee

commented, “It has always been that way. That’s what this church is founded on.”

DCC has kept its vision of being a community church. The 2005 Mission Statement states that “Our purpose is to:

- **Welcome** all people into our faith community
- **Help** each other grow closer to Christ,
- **Share** God’s love in service to others.” (Bolded in original)

The Vision for 2010 is threefold: “In the next five years, our focus will be to:

Become more PASSIONATELY ENGAGED

- In our Spiritual Growth
- In our Church
- In our Community”

When asked why community outreach is important to their congregation, members of the DCC immediately said things like, “it’s part of our tradition”, “It’s part of our DNA”, “We’ve always been a church of outreach,” “We are open 24/7, or “We couldn’t imagine not doing community outreach.” One interviewee made the comment, “Most of us operate more out of a solidarity. We are called to be in this together.”

When speaking about the contemporary service, the senior pastor made a point of saying that even though the contemporary service is similar to an independent megachurch, the theology of the service is the same as the theology of the traditional service in the main sanctuary. The inference could be made from his comment that most independent megachurches are theologically more “conservative” than DCC. Thumma concurs with this philosophy stating that, “Nearly all megachurches have a conservative theological orientation”(Thumma 1996:6). The senior pastor could also have been

indicating that they are not compromising their traditional theology just to increase membership.

ICC also places an emphasis on community. Although ICC did not supply a mission statement, all ICC interviewees indicated that outreach is an important part of their faith. Biblical references were made to Christ's charge to help others, especially those in need. Specifically, James 2:14, "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?" was given as an example of a Bible verse illustrating the importance of community outreach. With ICC, community outreach is generally felt to be an obligation or duty. The Director of ReachOut indicated that it is a "Biblical command". They are doing it because they feel it is what ICC is meant to do and they want to make a difference. Helping those less fortunate is a critical part of Christ's teachings and therefore in this spirit, they feel it is important to follow Christ's example. As with other aspects of independent megachurches, its community outreach has perhaps a more "entrepreneurial" and more secular and business like spirit of innovation and creativity as evidenced in some of its programs such as the One Stop Center described briefly earlier in the paper. However, I in no way mean to implicate that faith is not important to ICC. On the contrary, faith (but not necessarily tradition) is extremely important to this congregation and is an integral reason why the congregation participates in community outreach.

In the past, ICC has put a primary emphasis on evangelical work. One of the primary goals of the congregation has been to bring in people who are "seeking" for a faith community and who may be struggling with whether or not to follow Christ in their everyday lives. In a computerized, instant survey conducted by ICC during one of its

worship services (January, 2005) 56% of the members present indicated that they began attending ICC because they were unhappy with their current church. The survey also shows that most people in the congregation are serious in wanting to follow Christ. Nearly 66% of the members present at that worship service indicated that they believe Jesus Christ is the only way to God, confirming the more evangelical and conservative slant shared by most independent megachurches as Thumma (1996) discovered.

ICC, being a newer church, has not always had the level of commitment to community outreach they currently have. ICC hired a new Director of ReachOut approximately a year and half ago and it is mostly due to his energies and efforts that ICC has participated in civic engagement to such a large degree. Historically, ICC has placed its first priority on evangelism and obtaining new members. According to one interviewee the mission of ICC is to “connect the unchurched with a growing community of Christ followers.” However, ICC is in the process of re-examining its mission and goals and according to this same interviewee, the mission is changing (informally at this time) to encompass the greater importance of community service. This change in their mission indicates that the leadership of the congregation is willing to look outside themselves.

The philosophy of the ReachOut ministries of ICC may be best illustrated as described in their newsletter of March 2005. The director of ReachOut states that the mission of ReachOut is:

*“To holistically reach out as servant-learners to those in need, in Midwestern City and beyond, so that the lives of both those attending (ICC) and those we serve are transformed by Christ.”*

The newsletter goes on to describe an occasion when a police officer was on duty at ICC facility for security reasons during a tutoring session with students from one of the

local schools. The officer was so impressed with what she saw in the program that not only did she sign up to assist with tutoring the following year but began attending ICC weekend programs. This is the kind of outreach that ICC is really excited about. First, the program is benefiting youth who are having difficulty in school. Secondly, the tutoring program brought an “outsider” into the ICC community.

Another example of ICC’s philosophy regarding outreach is reflected in a book lent to me by one of ICC interviewees. The book, *The Search to Belong* by Joseph Myers (2003) was illuminating in understanding how some large independent megachurches approach the concept of community within the congregation. Community outreach outside the congregation is not addressed in the book and therefore did not have direct relevance to my thesis. This in itself is significant and indicates that large independent churches that use this book, such as ICC, are not placing an emphasis on outreach. The fact that the interviewee gave me this book illustrates the importance of how reaching out to members in the neighborhood in order to bring them into their church community and making these people feel comfortable is important to this congregation. To this interviewee, the ICC congregation is the “community”.

The philosophy and theology of both churches are reflected in the way in which the congregations recruit volunteers. For example, both congregations indicate that community outreach is encouraged through sermons (DCC) or the weekend message (ICC). For example, DCC senior pastor indicated that his sermons highlight “Responsibility to your country, to your world, to the civic society and the community – I think it’s all emphasized here.” Community outreach and civic engagement is clearly a priority for DCC. Social justice is also more of a priority for DCC than ICC. ICC, on the

other hand, focuses on evangelism and reaching out to the “unchurched” to make these people “Christ seekers”. Only in recent years has ICC looked at community outreach as a real priority.

### ***Organizational Structure***

Once again, there are many similarities between the two congregations. Both congregations have an ordained minister of a mainstream Protestant denomination as the leader of their congregation, although the ICC leader is not part of this denomination any more. Both congregations have a pastor in charge of community outreach.

DCC has five ministry teams: (1) Community Service (outreach), (2) Inviting and Involvement, (3) Worship and Music, (4) Youth and Family Life, and (5) Education and Spiritual Development. Each ministry is led by a clergy leader (DCC has five ordained ministers) and a lay (non-clergy) leader. This thesis will focus on the Community Service ministry. These clergy and lay leaders along with representatives of the finance committee, trustees, staff, and lay development and technology/communication teams make up the Church Council. The senior pastor reports to the Church Council. The only other paid church staff is administrative (for pastors, youth and senior services) and custodial help. A copy of the organizational structure for DCC is attached as Appendix C.

ICC has six ministry teams: First Impressions and Connections, Experience Design, ReachOut, Business Operations, 0-18 (a children’s program), and Community Groups (small group bible study, book discussions and other related internal activities). As per the Volunteer Serving Guide, the ReachOut ministry includes the Inner-City Soup Kitchen team, the Habitat for Humanity team and the “Tutoring Project” team. These

ministries are primarily run by volunteers but overseen by the Director of ReachOut and one part-time paid and one part-time volunteer staff member. These teams each have a volunteer leader. For example, the volunteer leader for the Inner City Soup Kitchen program has considerable experience with the program and the staff does not need to contribute much assistance. The two areas where the ReachOut staff is most involved are the Tutoring Project and Midwestern City Together/One Stop Services programs. The other ICC ministries mentioned above are internal and although they are crucial to the life of the congregation they are not the focus of this thesis.

ICC has only two ordained pastors (one Presbyterian and one Baptist), one of which does not use the term pastor but rather is the Director of ReachOut. In a written survey completed by the senior pastor at ICC, I asked how many pastors ICC has and asked about their responsibilities. The response from the senior pastor was, "70 people on staff with all kinds of responsibilities. Too many to list". In other words, each staff member and volunteer is considered a "pastor." Although I could not obtain an organizational chart from ICC, there is an Executive Director (who occasionally is involved in the worship services), who has responsibility for the day-to-day activities of the organization. There is also a group of "owners" which takes ownership responsibility for the church. They are responsible for decisions regarding the property and other financial, administrative and personnel matters as well as the general direction (including spiritual) of the church. According to one interviewee, being an "owner" is the next level from being a "member", although technically ICC does not distinguish between regular attendees and members. The fact that ICC does not distinguish between regular attendees and members indicates that there is no specific training required (as is typical per the



denominational tradition) for membership. It also indicates that identity of the congregation is less firmly grounded in religious tradition.

When considering the structure of a church's community outreach, one must look at not just the internal church structure but the external structures as well. Both congregations have considerable contact with outside agencies. The concept of "partnership" is extremely important to ICC church. The term was used several times by nearly all interviewees. Partnership is also important to DCC but does not seem to take on such a critical role. The term partnership means that the church is not taking on the outreach project by itself. Rather, it is assisting an already existing organization to be more effective in providing services to its clients. For example, with the Tutoring Project, ICC sees itself as "partnering" with "Oak Hill School" and "Madison Lake School" (two distinct tutoring programs). ICC provides the volunteer tutors while the schools provide the students and the materials/training as needed to make the program successful. A similar partnership is established for the prison ministries, employment services, Habitat for Humanity and nearly all the other outreach programs. ICC has contacts with other local ministers, particularly ministers of other large independent (and denominational- including DCC) churches. These ministers share ideas and concerns. ICC has recently initiated and has been involved in a project for which they raised money (as part of their "Faith Fund Drive") called Crazychurch.com. Crazychurch.com is a website that serves as a resource for large churches. Since I do not have access to the website I do not have information on what services they provide or how it is different from the WCA.

DCC has affiliations with two city-wide religious coalitions, The Religious Network

and the City-Wide Coalition. The Religious Network consists of 40 Christian churches and one Jewish synagogue. These organizations focus on social justice with goals to make systemic changes by influencing local policy-making. Specifically, they work for such things as improvements to the local schools and the criminal justice system. DCC has approximately 6-7 members that are active in the Religious Network. These people serve on committees, attend meetings and work on other special events and activities. Forty other volunteers get involved in other larger activities. For example, during the summer of 2005, DCC hosted a large supper picnic event (approximately 400 people attended) where ministers from two African American churches (both of them Baptist) spoke and a combined gospel choir inspired the crowd. Referring to the racially mixed crowd one minister proclaimed, "This is how Midwestern City should be all the time!" DCC hosts this event every summer.

DCC also has minimal contact with the City-Wide Coalition, with only a handful of members involved. Neither the Religious Network nor the City-Wide Coalition participates in direct community outreach activities. DCC's involvement with these two organizations points to the more activist and social justice orientation, as described above, of this congregation.

In general, ICC has a looser organizational structure than DCC. The lack of requirements for membership is one way this looser organization is manifested. In addition, the organizational structure of the congregation with committees and ruling boards is more flexible as well. DCC, on the other hand, has certain guidelines dictated by the Methodist denomination with regard to membership requirements and decisions that must go before the congregation for approval. More importantly, the Methodist

denomination requires that each congregation have certain committees – one of which is a missions/community outreach committee.

### ***Type and Amount of Local Community Outreach***

This section describes the various types of community outreach activities that both congregations are involved in. Following this description will be a summary of their similarities and differences regarding these activities. Table 1 outlines the categories (types) and styles (evangelism and social justice) of community outreach that the two congregations participate in.

One of the volunteer activities that the two congregations have in common is Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit housing organization that assists lower income people with home ownership. By gaining the support of volunteers, predominately from local congregations, the organization buys the lot and builds the house with the help of the family that will be moving into the house. DCC has over 400 volunteers involved in the Habitat for Humanity. DCC started its first two homes with Habitat for Humanity in connection with member churches of their Methodist denomination. The Midwestern City Habitat for Humanity is divided into various coalitions or groups that have formed together to work on houses. DCC is part of the “Housing Justice Coalition” which has recently completed its ninth Habitat House. The “Housing Justice Coalition” consists of several local churches of various denominations including Catholic, Presbyterian and Episcopal.

ICC has been involved in Habitat for Humanity twice. ICC helped with Habitat in the past and then ended its involvement because it felt it was unable to provide the types of volunteer resources they felt were necessary in order to do an effective job. This fact

<i>Table 1</i> Category and Amount of Community Outreach of DCC and ICC						
<u>Type of Outreach</u>	<u>Congregation</u>					
	DCC			ICC		
	Yes	No	# /vol.	Yes	No	#/vol.
<i>Direct Service Outreach</i>						
Housing (part of housing network)	X X		400	X	X	250- 300
Soup Kitchens	X		30	X		30-40
Food Baskets	X		60-70	X		50-60
Tutoring	X		5-10 books	X		150
National Missions	X		30 \$	X		\$ prayer
International Missions	X		5-10 \$	X		60-70 \$
IHN	X		60		X	-
Coordination						
Coordination with other religious organizations	X			X		
Coordination with other non-religious organizations	X			X		
<i>Social Justice vs. Evangelism</i>						
Social Justice	X				X	
Evangelism			X	X		

\*These numbers are as accurate as possible based on interview information.

in itself indicates that ICC wants to be involved in community outreach that is highly effective and makes a difference in the lives of others. With the addition of the relatively new Director of ReachOut, Habitat is just one of the outreach activities that ICC feels it can now participate in. Currently, ICC has between 250 and 300 volunteers involved with Habitat for Humanity. While ICC was apparently invited to participate in the Housing Justice Coalition of Habitat, they chose not to participate with this coalition and are building a house independently. ICC and DCC provide Habitat with volunteers and Habitat for Humanity provides the materials and land.

With regard to food kitchens and food baskets, ICC has 50 to 60 volunteers and prepared 1675 food baskets in 2004, and 2000 boxes during Thanksgiving in 2005, which goes to an organization that serves underserved youth living in the inner city, while DCC has between 30-45 volunteers and prepared 1800 food baskets during Lent and prepared 384 Thanksgiving baskets in 2005. However, since DCC personally delivers the food baskets, an additional 75-100 people are needed to deliver some of the baskets to needy families (a one time minimal activity which normally takes less than an hour). Many of the names of the recipients are given to DCC by a local neighborhood community center with the “East Side” Emergency Center and other local social service organizations, particularly on the east side of town, providing additional names.

One of the differences between the two churches is that the denominational church is involved the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). The IHN is a network of churches that offer food and sleeping facilities for a group of homeless families. This organization reaches out to primarily denominational churches. A “host” church is asked to take a number of families (usually between 5 to 7 families) for one week every three months.

There are also churches (usually smaller congregations) that are “supporting” who assist the host congregation. IHN requires approximately 60 volunteers per host week, out of which about 15 people are from a supporting congregation who help during DCC’s week.

The soup kitchen that DCC is involved with is affiliated with a Methodist church, “Methodist City Church”, in downtown Midwestern City. DCC provides meals to this soup kitchen once a month and typically involves 30 volunteers.

Additionally, the denominational church has a strong “singles” organization that reaches out to the entire Midwestern City community. It is one of the largest singles group in the Midwestern City area and serves over 300 singles - down from serving over 1,000 people before the group moved to the annexed DCC monastery building several years ago. The Singles Group (SG) has now moved back to its main church building and now seems to be re-gaining membership. DCC estimates that the SG has approximately 25 volunteers including persons who serve on the board, class leaders, work on the newsletter and serve on various other committees. However, from personal observation, many of these volunteers are not currently members of DCC but have become active in the singles group independently and are now volunteering their efforts. The singles ministry also participates in mission programs including providing meals once a month for the “Homeless Transitional Shelter”, a local shelter for homeless men and women with mental illness in the inner-city, and purchasing Christmas gifts for needy children.

DCC is actively involved with Meals on Wheels, a federal food program (not religiously based) that delivers meals to the elderly (in their homes) who are not able to prepare their own food. DCC Meals on Wheels program provides almost 500 meals a day. The Meals on Wheels program paid DCC to redo the kitchen facility and pays for

the food and staff to make the program work. This federal program even paid to have DCC's kitchen redone. Therefore, the main contribution of DCC to the Meals on Wheels program is the use of their facility. DCC provides relatively few members directly from their congregation that volunteer with this program. The interviewee most familiar with and involved in the program said only "a certain number." He also said, "the main point is .... we're serving our community and we're trying to provide a facility to do it".

Another ministry that DCC supports and offers its facility for is "Employment Hunt Services" (EHS). General meetings are held once a week in the basement of the church with approximately 50 to 70 people attending. Job search workshops and the EHS office are also held in the church.

Other minor DCC ministries include Push for Pencils (collecting school supplies for school children), Pennies for Safety program, and Troops Overseas program (supports our troops in Iraq through care packages with hygiene and food products). These are ministries that are advertised in their bulletins but otherwise there does not seem to be a big push to promote these activities. Members are encouraged to contact the organization independently if they wish. An excellent example of this is a tutoring program at an East Side school which has been promoted in bulletins and church e-mails. Additionally, DCC is involved with organizations such as the Race for the Cure (a fundraiser for the National Cancer Society), which ICC has not been involved with.

Finally, the United Methodist Women (UMW), a national organization, is a major national organization that many women in DCC have an opportunity to participate. In fact, the UMW is the second largest women's organization in the country after the National Organization for Women (NOW). The primary outreach mission of the UMW

in the Midwestern City area is the Wesley Education Center (WEC) for Children and Families. The center serves approximately 145 infants and toddlers of lower income mothers. The WEC has been in existence since 1920. One DCC interviewee remembers helping out with this project as a child because her father was involved with this ministry. In total, DCC provides approximately 20-30 volunteers per year for this venture. Four of the board members for the organization are on the board and at least two members help out on a regular basis by participating at the center weekly or bi-weekly. The other volunteers participate sporadically. For example, the women's circles go down to the center once or twice a year (about 12 members), and DCC members attend WEC fundraiser events.

Likewise, ICC participates in several activities in which DCC does not participate. The Christians Together and One Stop Services are the primary outreach efforts, which will be discussed later in this paper. Other programs include a Hispanic Recovery Program (only 1 volunteer) and a prison ministry. Related to the prison ministry ICC participates in a nation-wide 'Angel Tree' program at Christmas. Through a national Christian organization called Prison Fellowship (their website does not make reference to any particular denomination), ICC congregation provides Christmas gifts for children in the Midwestern City area of incarcerated parents. In December 2005, ICC provided 1600 gifts to 800 children.

The soup kitchen that ICC is involved with, the Inner City Soup Kitchen (ICSK), is an independent, non-church related soup kitchen. Currently, ICC serves meals once a month (on the last Friday of the month) at ICSK with 30 to 40 volunteers being involved in the program. However, the program is expanding. They now serve a breakfast on the fifth



Saturday of the month and will also provide dinner on the first Monday of the month as well as a “chapel service”. One interviewee also made reference to a spiritual message being part of the Saturday breakfast as well. One of the hopes of ICC is that they will be able to provide transportation for the ICSK clients in order for them to attend weekend services at their facility. In this sense, ICC missions tend to have an evangelical purpose as well.

I asked interviewees from both churches for total number of their volunteers. The problems in obtaining this information were mentioned above. To the best that I can identify, DCC has approximately 650 to 700 volunteers and ICC had between 550-600 active volunteers in 2005. These numbers do not include one-time assistance like DCC members who delivered a Project 5000 food basket after church or participated in a one time special event or the participants from ICC who went to Mamelodi, Africa. I conclude therefore, that the congregations are not that much different with regard to total numbers but considering that ICC is twice the size, the percentage of ICC volunteers is approximately half the percentage of DCC volunteers.

With regard to budget, ICC has a total budget of 6 million dollars and has an outreach budget of \$208,000 or 3.5% for Reach Out activities. The DCC total church budget is between 2.5 to 3 million dollars with an allocation of \$101,300 or 4% for community service in 2005. Therefore, ICC with approximately 6,000 members has a total church budget approximately twice the amount of DCC’s total church budget (with a membership closer to 3,000 members). Likewise, the dollar amount of the community outreach budget is also approximately twice the amount as the DDC. Therefore, the financial contribution (as a percentage) to community outreach of the two congregations

is very similar.

With regard to recruiting volunteers, both churches use similar techniques including fliers, announcements in programs and bulletins and during worship service, their web page and, of course, word-of-mouth. DCC also has a “volunteer fair” every so often for members (particularly for new members) to get information on available volunteer opportunities. ICC has never had such an event. Both congregations make attempts to educate their new members about possible outreach activities, but DCC has a formal procedure for introducing new members to the outreach activities with an orientation and makes an effort to match the new member with an outreach activity that suits their interests and abilities.

Although ICC does not have a formal volunteer orientation for new members it does “toot its horn” about its outreach activities when the opportunity arises. For example, during its tours of the new facility many of their international missions and other missions were described. There is also a volunteer staff member who attempts to match attendees with possible outreach activities.

*Similarities and Differences.* There is little difference between the two congregations with regard to overall type and amount of community involvement and civic engagement. Both congregations participate in similar activities such as Habitat for Humanity, community soup kitchens, tutoring, employment services, a prison ministry and programs for mothers. Both congregations operate on the premise that community involvement is an integral part of Jesus’ teachings. Both congregations believe that outreach is necessary for spiritual growth.

An additional similarity between the two congregations is that both congregations feel

they could do more. And they want to do more - much more. Although most congregations would be green with envy at the amount of community involvement these congregations pursue, both congregations see their current involvement as relatively minimal. They not only want to be more active in the community, they want to grow in membership as well - and see these as being inter-linked.

Some of the differences between the two congregations include the fact that DCC is more likely to do outreach in their immediate neighborhood than ICC, DCC has a higher percentage of volunteers and they are also more likely to collaborate on projects with other denominational churches both Methodist and other denominations, such as the Habitat for Humanity, the Interfaith Hospitality Network and the social justice work with the city-wide religious coalitions. DCC also has a higher percentage of volunteers. In contrast, ICC is more likely to work with independent social service (not affiliated with denominations) such as the ICSK, the tutoring programs and all of their work with Christians Together/One Stop Services. Generally speaking, they seem to be more concerned with outreach on a larger scale than just their neighborhood than DCC. When the new auditorium and adjoining facilities were being built, the church said they were building a “launching pad”. They meant that the new structure was being built to help launch new radical ideas and activities. You don’t need a launching pad to serve your immediate neighborhood.

Although the two congregations may be similar with regard to type of outreach, there is clearly a difference in style. DCC’s activities are more focused on social justice and changing the external world around them, whereas ICC’s activities have more of an evangelical, private orientation. This is evidenced through DCC’s activities with the

Religious Network and the City-Wide Coalition and the evangelical orientation of ICC's efforts with the ICSK. Table 1 indicates that ICC, the congregation that focuses more on evangelism also works more with independent, non-religious organizations. In contrast, DCC focuses more on social justice and works more with religious agencies.

Both churches feel comfortable working on community projects independently. DCC however, does more projects directly with other churches – both Methodist and non-Methodist denominational churches. The IHN and Habitat for Humanity are two examples. However, the youth and women's groups are more likely to participate in outreach activities by themselves simply because they have many people within their own church to participate in activities. In fact, this was a point of contention with one interviewee because DCC's youth group doesn't ask other youth groups from smaller churches to join with them in activities. This interviewee felt that a joint collaboration could benefit both DCC and the smaller church.

Another difference between the two congregations is the type of partners that the congregations have. Table 2 shows that DCC partners with more local and regional coalitions. ICC partners with more national and international organizations. ICC is more likely to work on projects independently without any assistance or collaboration with other churches. Their decision to work on a Habitat house alone is an example of this. Also, when ICC assists with the ICSK they do this individually and not in cooperation with other congregations. ICC, however, does participate in projects in conjunction with the Christians Together organization and other organizations affiliated with Christians Together. They don't necessarily organize activities with other churches but rather it

**TABLE 2 Outreach Partnerships of DCC and ICC**

Category of Partnership	DCC	ICC
Local and Regional Partner Organizations	11	6
National and International Partner Organizations	2	4
Total Number of Connections	13	10

**DCC Local/Regional Partners**

Midwestern City Habitat for Humanity  
Housing Justice Coalition (Habitat)  
Methodist City Church (Soup Kitchen)  
Interfaith Hospitality Network  
Homeless Transitional Shelter  
East Side Emergency Center  
Emergency Food Center  
Employment Hunt Services  
Wesley Education Center  
Religious Network  
City Wide Coalition

**ICC Local/Regional Partners**

Midwestern City Habitat for Humanity  
Christians Together  
One-Stop Services  
Inner City Soup Kitchen  
Madison Lake School  
Oak Hill School

**DCC National/International Partners**

United Methodist Church  
Meals on Wheels

**ICC National/International Partners**

Hope Force International  
Faith Fellowship Church  
International Justice Mission  
Prison Fellowship

happens through Christians Together. In this sense, Christians Together serves as a sort of volunteerism clearing house in that it brings churches together to create partnerships in doing outreach activities.

*Educational and Civic Forums.* ICC does not sponsor civic activities (community forums, lectures, and other events). The reason given is that ICC is “a-political” and therefore does not feel it should not be involved such activities.

DCC, on the other hand, does have organized civic activities. For example, I attended a forum where one of the ex-mayors of Midwestern City gave a presentation in the spring of 2005 regarding the aftermath of the 2004 general election and its consequences for concerned religious citizens. There were approximately 75 people in attendance with most people being from DCC and a scattering of people from the community. Monthly forums like these are open to the public and cover a variety of topics - not necessarily political but of interest to civic-minded individuals. Even though the congregation is involved with civic activities it is careful to remain neutral politically by welcoming discussion and being open to different viewpoints.

*The Facility.* The facility of DCC is open for all kinds of activities including Boy Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and a cancer support group. Basically any kind of meeting or activity is welcome as long as the church leadership determines it is beneficial to the community. In fact, there are so many community activities that take place at the church that no interviewee attempted to list them all. They usually referred me to the calendar of weekly activities listed on the back of the Sunday bulletins. The facility is one of the strengths of DCC’s outreach efforts. For example, DCC hosts the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) in their annex building four times a

year and also opens the annex building for another neighborhood church that is undergoing construction for its IHN host week. DCC also provides use of their kitchen facility for Meals on Wheels since they have a large kitchen area. The church does this because they have the facility and it helps the community. One of the difficulties of this research was separating those outreach activities which DCC directly sponsors from those which DCC indirectly endorses by providing space to a specific organization or activity. A list of activities hosted in the DCC facility is attached as Appendix D.

ICC does not provide space for non-church related activities. The facility is used solely for ICC ministry. This fact reiterates the fact that the emphasis of ICC is on their internal church community and more private style of professing their faith. However, there are many other internal, church sponsored activities held in the ICC facility that help the spiritual growth of its members. For example, “seekers” groups, “The Next Level” programs and many other church meetings are welcome in the facility. ICC has already expanded their facility and DCC is working towards expanding their facility. Interestingly, both congregations see their expansion as being critical to their ability to better serve the community.

## **CHRISTIANS TOGETHER AND ONE STOP SERVICES**

An important example of community outreach work of ICC that reflects their basic outreach philosophy is the involvement with Christians Together and the proposed One Stop Services. According to one interviewee, “Christians Together is a non-profit “development organization that helps the body of Christ work together more effectively in Greater Midwestern City”. They help coordinate and develop Christian non-profit ministry efforts across Midwestern City. Christians Together is the umbrella

organization and coordinator for the One Stop Service ministries. Christians Together was founded about two years ago by an individual who has an extensive business background and has done consulting work for both large and small businesses. He was also an assistant pastor of a large independent megachurch (not ICC) in the Midwestern City area and became familiar with many of the non-profit organizations. With this combination of background and skills, the founder (and current director) is in a unique situation to understand the needs of social service organizations and assist them in approaching social service delivery in a more business-like manner, such as addressing the ineffectiveness of duplication of services.

One Stop Services is a proposed non-profit service organization under the auspices of Christians Together, the umbrella organization. It will provide food, clothing, shelter, and employment services, educational services and substance abuse counseling to a lower income population all in one location. One Stop Services is not currently in existence but just recently announced a location of its center in November 2005. The center will be centrally located on the near west side of downtown on a site of an abandoned industrial facility and thus some distance from ICC. ICC has made a “commitment” to Christians Together and One Stop Services both financially and in terms of volunteers. A large part (\$250,000) of the financial “Faith Fund Campaign” held in the fall/winter of 2004 went to the Christians Together organization.

One Stop Services is a network of five churches (including ICC) and five local social ministries including Youth Programs (an organization for enhancing the future of youth, particularly inner city youth), Inner-City Soup Kitchen (ICSK), Inner-City Health Center, Employment Services, and Inner-City Recreational Services. ICSK will eventually be



part of the One Stop Services. This means that the ICSK will no longer be independent but will be part of a larger organization in which ICC has made an "investment". This collaboration of social service agencies is crucial to the effectiveness of One Stop Services giving it more resources from which to draw on and increased respectability.

However, this proposed center has met (not surprisingly) with some resistance from the Midwestern City community. Specifically, the residents of the downtown and near west side neighborhoods are critical that the center may be too large to be effective and will be unable to give clients the individualized social services needed. The critics are also quick to point out that this center is not in the neighborhood of ICC.

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Although the main focus of the thesis was on the local outreach of both congregations, it is worth mentioning the differences between DCC and ICC with regard to international and national missions.

The recent hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma have spurred a flurry of mission activities among many congregations throughout the nation. On the Sunday following Hurricane Katrina, September 4, 2005, I attended a worship service at both ICC and DCC. At DCC, the associate pastor responsible for community service and outreach activities made an announcement at the 11:00 A.M. service in the main sanctuary. DCC members were encouraged to make contributions to hurricane survivors through the denomination missions network; the United Methodist Committee on Relief. A flier with the website contact information, [www.gb-gm-umcor.org](http://www.gb-gm-umcor.org), was made available in the bulletin. In addition, announcements were made regarding two other specific relief efforts. First, DCC announced plans to take care of a family displaced by hurricane

Katrina for one year. By early December, 2005 this had become a reality. The church is currently sponsoring a young couple with an infant. Additionally, the congregation made plans from the beginning to send a volunteer delegation to Louisiana for two to six weeks and aid in whatever way possible. The contact information for the appropriate associate pastor and a church staff person was announced during the September 4<sup>th</sup> service. A trip to New Orleans involving a busload of people from DCC and other churches occurred in November 2005. A total of 19 people participated in this mission including 11 people from DCC, 7 people from “East Side” Methodist church and 1 person from ICC. A second trip to Mississippi is now being organized for April 2006. This trip is focusing primarily on having youth participate in this mission since it is scheduled while most schools have spring break. This trip will likely draw youth members from DCC, East Side Methodist church and possibly an Episcopal church in the same neighborhood, although the plans for this trip have not been finalized.

ICC also acknowledged hurricane Katrina. The service began with a dramatic Power Point presentation of media (television and newspaper) news clips and interviews of people from the previous week. The senior pastor made an announcement that items were being collected during the next two days at the annex building. The items being collected included diapers, toothpaste, bottled water and other basic necessities. The items were then delivered to Hope Force International (a non-denominational Christian organization) for distribution to the hurricane victims. Although the central weekend message was not directly related to the events of the past week (since the message theme is always planned weeks in advanced), the pastor was able to make some relevant

connections. Additionally, a Night of Prayer for Katrina victims was held on September 16. To my knowledge, no other relief efforts were planned.

The DCC website includes international and national missions that interviewees did not mention. These include the African Church Growth Development Fund and Hope for the Children both of which are national Methodist missions. It is likely that DCC provides only financial assistance only for these projects since none of the interviewees, bulletins or other church media make note of these ministries. Through financial contributions DCC also provides minor missionary support to Bolivia, Africa, Nepal, Turkey, and nationally to areas in Florida and Kentucky.

With regard to international missions, DCC has access to a denominational newsletter and website that promotes international missions. If DCC plans an international mission trip, it can announce their trip through the website and newsletters and thereby gain members from different Methodist churches not just locally but regionally as well. The interviewees mentioned four congregational international missions: sponsorship of an orphanage in Samara, Russia, rebuilding a “sister” church in former East Germany, providing generators for hospitals in Haiti, and mission efforts after the 2004 Tsunami in Sri Lanka. Two of these missions could be considered long-term missions (the orphanage in Russia and the relationship with the sister church in East Germany). The other two were one-time responses to natural disaster.

ICC is also involved in international relief efforts. After the devastating Tsunami in Sri Lanka, ICC provided funds to purchase fishing boats for a small fishing village. This allowed the survivors to make a living and provide for themselves. ICC was discouraged by the village from making a visit to the village directly following the Tsunami but now

plans are being considered to make a trip. However, this mission was a response to a crisis situation and is not intended to be a long-term mission project.

The primary international mission that ICC is involved in is the mission in Mamelodi, South Africa. The mission involves partnering with a local church, “Faith Fellowship Church” (FFC) in building an AIDS hospice facility and a mortuary. According to one interviewee, this is "the first Christian AIDS hospice in any town over there - and certainly the biggest". After nearly two years, the hospice officially opened its doors to clients the first week in November 2005. ICC made the initial contact for this mission through the Willow Creek Association (WCA). The senior pastor at ICC met the minister of the FFC at a WCA conference. Otherwise, this international mission is not sponsored in any other way by the WCA. Primarily, this international mission is heavily supported by the congregation, individual church members, and local businesses in the Midwestern City area primarily via contacts within the congregation membership. Often, members who go on trips to South Africa pay at least part, if not all, of their way and help pay for materials and other needs. According to one interviewee, approximately 99% of the people who go on the trips are ICC members or have been attending the services. However, this international mission is also an opportunity for local businesses to do good and provide charitable contributions. Although, to my knowledge, businesses are not directly solicited to contribute to ICC's international missions by the church, individual members are certainly not discouraged from promoting these international missions at work. For example, on one trip to Mamelodi this past year, one member brought along a fellow employee who was not a member of ICC in order to initiate a

business venture. I did not obtain detailed information from the interviewee regarding this venture.

Similar to the Sri Lanka mission, ICC is looking for ways to help people in Mamelodi be self-sufficient. One interviewee stated, "We're looking to create jobs." One business venture is already underway. The women in the village are making beads and red ribbons in support of AIDS. A local AIDS volunteer organization has offered to buy the ribbons thereby generating some income. Another business just being started is a medical prescription care business. ICC hopes to have local businesses support these ministries, but, as one interviewer explained, "it's too early to tell" what these business ventures will be.

The Mamelodi mission is an ongoing mission. ICC intends to be involved with the FFC and the town for the "long haul." All of the interviewees were very excited about this mission and particularly about the fact that the mission is, and will continue, to make a difference both to the FFC and the Mamelodi community. There are now six teams affiliated with this mission. These teams include a medical team (of 17-20) people, as well as an education, employment, prayer, grant writing, and business team. Each of these teams was represented in a recent trip to Mamelodi this summer/fall 2005 in which 15 congregants participated. Another trip to Mamelodi is planned for spring, 2006. This trip will involve helping residents of Mamelodi plant gardens. Interviewees stated that approximately 300 people from ICC are expected to attend. The hope is for this trip to provide an opportunity for more members of the congregation to participate and experience a cross-cultural mission.

An additional international mission with which ICC is involved is a mission effort through the International Justice Mission, an international non-denominational not-for profit organization. Together with numerous other churches nationwide, ICC is working to end sex slavery of young girls in Svay Park, Cambodia. This mission is still very new at time of this research and no major fundraising efforts or trips have been implemented at this time. This mission was highlighted at the open house for the new facility in November, 2005.

## CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that denominationalism does seem to have an impact on the amount of volunteerism. DCC has twice the amount of volunteers, percentage wise, as ICC. On the other hand, denominationalism does not have a significant effect on the type of community involvement. For example, both congregations participate in housing, soup kitchens and tutoring. I found that denominationalism affected the number and partnerships that the congregations had, with DCC having nearly twice the number of local partnerships and participating in city wide religious coalitions. ICC however, was more active in international missions.

The social networks that both these congregations participate in assist their outreach efforts. This social network assists in creating contacts and provides a “venue” in which to start a community outreach program and help maintain it. What makes more of a difference is the fact that these churches have the resources (both volunteers and money) to make a difference in outreach efforts. Both congregations want to grow and are vibrant, changing congregations reaching out to the local community.

Both congregations have a higher level of community outreach than many other churches of a similar size. As the literature review indicates, not all congregations, even large ones, put forth the efforts that DCC and ICC do in community outreach. They have worked hard to increase members, financial resources, and to make their outreach efforts successful as they feel Christ would want them to do.

However, having the resources is not enough. As Wuthnow (1991) pointed out, people must have a way to participate in community outreach. The social networks that these churches have make it possible to use their resources for outreach effectively – and they don't do this alone. Whether it is partnerships with other churches or secular non-profit organizations, these churches would not be able to do their outreach work without the connections of other organizations. Indeed, Ammerman (2005:158) discovered that only 3% of the congregations she surveyed had no social networks (these tended to be smaller, black and newer congregations).

This has been an exciting time in which to study these two vibrant congregations. Both are open to growth and work to expand their ministry. They participate in a continual process of examining their mission and their role in the community as this growth continues. As Christian organizations both congregations strongly believe, as most Christian churches do, that serving others as Jesus instructed is a critical part of what Christians should be doing. Members of both congregations made reference to biblical scripture in this regard. Both congregations are therefore committed to community outreach and service as they feel Christ would want them to serve. The difference is in how they perceive Christ would want them to serve. Further description of how the congregations differ follows.

### ***Private Evangelicalism vs. Public Social Justice***

Like many larger independent churches, ICC focused primarily on growing their member base and providing a welcome space for new “seekers” of Christ. Now that the congregation has a tremendous number of volunteers and the contributions that go with a larger membership base, the congregational leaders feel they have the proper resources to participate effectively in local and national missions; they are now ready to make outreach more of a priority. For example, the church put an extremely large amount of energy and resources into the Faith Fund Campaign in 2004, a fundraising campaign for the internal as well as the external ministries of ICC. A total of 1,600 volunteers helped with the campaign; approximately twice the number that volunteered for the community outreach programs. In a sense, the outreach efforts of ICC are a logical extension of a larger spiritual journey. Interviewees made reference to community involvement as being an important part of an individual’s spiritual growth. Interestingly, no mention was made of the spiritual growth of the congregation as a whole. As one interviewee stated when referring to the congregations participating in community outreach, “a lot of the congregation may not be on that same page yet.” The ICC interviewee who expressed hesitancy about how to rank the importance of community outreach for the congregation did so not because of the philosophic need and importance of outreach but because with such a large congregation, each person has such different needs and are in so many different places spiritually it was difficult to designate a ranking for the whole congregation. Although community outreach is not the central identity of ICC congregation, they participate (as a congregation) in Christians Together, which focuses primarily on community outreach.



For ICC, the primary goal is evangelism in that they wish to connect to people who have not discovered Christ as their savior to become “Christ followers.” Community outreach is an important outcome or extension of a community of Christ followers. This is a reflection of the more inward and personal type of religion that ICC seems to portray.

DCC, on the other hand, does not emphasize evangelism but rather it desires to be visible in the neighborhood first and through this love and service it hopes that people will feel the call to follow Christ either as a new member or as already part of the continually growing congregation. Their goal is to truly be a community church. This is evident in the types of outreach that DCC participates in. DCC participates in activities that emphasize social justice, as evidenced by their affiliation with the Religious Network and the City-Wide Coalition. They also participate in more activities that assist people who are more likely to be connected in some fashion with a Christian organization. For example, the soup kitchen with which DCC is involved is hosted by a Methodist church in a poorer neighborhood. The Wesley Education Center is also likely to attract children from a family with a religious background because of its religious affiliation. There is not a focus on making these people Christ-followers as is the case with some of ICC’s outreach activities.

### *Culture, Tradition, and Identity*

The rich history and tradition of outreach of DCC, both because of its personal history and the philosophy of the Methodist denomination, makes it easier to sustain community outreach. In this sense, the culture of this congregation (as opposed to ICC) plays a role in how the congregation reaches out into the community. The general public understands

DCC in terms of its relationship with the Methodist denomination and hence its traditional Christian ideology. Its community outreach efforts make sense in this context.

The predominant theme of DCC is that this church has always been a “community” church. That is the way it has always been and the way the leaders want the church to remain. As more than one interviewee indicated, “it is part of our DNA”. Community outreach is part of DCC’s identity. Participating in the community outreach and missions of DCC is one way for members to feel they belong to the church community. This is one reason why DCC makes an effort to involve all new members in some aspect of the church activities. It provides a sense of solidarity.

In contrast to DCC, the ICC does not have a clear identity that makes sense to the general public in terms of a traditional Christian ideology (although it does have an identity). Hence, the philosophy behind their community outreach effort is less clear to the general public. This is likely one of the reasons why there is strong community opposition to the One Stop Services. Both their internal and external structure is looser as well. There is no organized denomination reinforcing the importance of their community outreach.

ICC is a newer church without the support of an established denomination for internal congregational and external outreach activities. Nevertheless, ICC has an impressive list of community outreach activities and a significant number of volunteers, particularly since the hiring of the Director of ReachOut approximately two years ago. With the formation of Christians Together and One Stop Services, it appears that ICC, along with the other affiliates, is perhaps better poised to make a real difference in serving the residents of Midwestern City in the future. If the Christians Together organization and

One Stop Services get the support of the greater Midwestern City community, it has the potential for making a huge difference in the Midwestern City tri-state area.

### ***Local vs. Global***

Both congregations are involved in local, national and international missions. DCC, however, has several missions that are primarily focused on their neighborhood. These include the East Hill missions and East Side Emergency Center food baskets. Otherwise, their missions (as are basically all of ICC's) benefit residents within the greater Midwestern City community. They are more concerned than ICC with programs that benefit the community such as the Employment Hunt Services and the Singles Group. These groups do not necessarily solely serve the immediate neighborhood but do tend to draw from the population on the East side, particularly the Singles Group.

On the other hand, ICC seems to place more emphasis on global outreach. It was particularly vocal and enthusiastic about its foreign missions - especially the mission in Mamelodi, South Africa. ICC is continuing to expand its mission work as evidenced through the newest Columbian mission. The Tutoring Program does not directly serve the immediate neighborhood of ICC although one of the schools in particular is relatively close and located on the East side.

### ***Partnerships***

As Table 2 shows, DCC is involved with numerous partners and regional coalitions, especially locally. The coalitions that DCC belongs to permit it to partner with other churches more easily. One example is the neighborhood church down the street that shares its facility for their IHN week. However, when it comes to national and

international missions the DCC is limited to the United Methodist Church and the Meals on Wheels federal program.

Although ICC does not belong to a traditional denomination, it clearly has connections with other independent and denominational megachurches in the Midwestern City area and nationally. In fact, the church began the long term Mamelodi international mission project in South Africa through the Willow Creek Association network. Closer to home, the church's involvement with local ministries corresponds with those of Christians Together and One Stop Services including a tutoring program for children and the job mentoring program. The other churches and organizations that are part of the Christians Together organization support each other and in many ways are working toward the same goals. Otherwise, ICC has a tendency to participate independently in most outreach projects such as the Habitat for Humanity venture.

### ***Effects of Denominationalism***

Denominationalism may be playing a larger role in DCC's outreach effort than even most members of DCC realize. Although DCC does not receive any direct assistance from the denomination with either money or volunteers for their outreach efforts, the indirect benefits of the denominational ties are evident. For example, the first two Habitat houses were done with a partnering Methodist church. The Wesleyan Education Center is a denomination-affiliated mission of the United Methodist Women. The soup kitchen DCC assists is affiliated with a Methodist church. It is also extremely probable that denominational ties helped DCC become involved in the Religious Network and the City-Wide Coalition. The Religious Network focuses more on mainstream Protestant churches and the Methodist denomination assists the Religious Network financially,

although no detailed information was given. Additionally, it is likely that DCC's involvement with the Interfaith Hospitality Network and to a lesser degree, Meals on Wheels, was also aided by the fact that DCC is a member of a mainstream denomination. Much of the partnering that DCC is involved with came about through its participation in various local coalitions.

In conclusion, for both congregations, it is a combination of resources, religious and moral “calling,” and the social networks developed by the churches that make their community outreach efforts possible. The independent variable, denominationalism does have an effect with regard to general amount of outreach (but not type of outreach) they perform. Denominationalism also affects the coordination that these congregations have with other organizations, and the style in which the congregation performs their outreach. The main difference is in how the two churches culturally perceive the purpose of their community outreach. The culture of the Methodist denomination is critical to how DCC and the community see its role with regard to civic engagement and outreach. DCC has more of a connection with the community because of its familiar and traditional values that are expressed in a familiar way. Likewise, the culture of being an independent church with its own set of values and unique ideology has also shaped its community outreach activities of ICC. They are free to be a “launching pad” of a new, fresh Christianity that they hope will change the world.

I hope that this research will play an important role in understanding megachurches and the impact they have on our communities. Since larger congregations are becoming an increasingly influential force in our society further research is needed to determine exactly how these megachurches affect our society. More attention should be given to

the social networks that independent congregations (especially larger congregations) develop and how they differ from traditional denominations. To my knowledge, a study comparing smaller and larger independent congregations with regard to denomination or other social networks has never been done. This kind of a study would be helpful in determining if denominations are more important in terms of internal and/or external assistance to smaller denominations as opposed to larger ones. The importance of denominationalism with its social networks, organizational structures and culture should not be de-emphasized by sociologists as we research this new wave of religious institutions.

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\*\* Also used was DCC's book on their history which was written in 2002 for the 75th anniversary of their current Gothic building originally built in 1927. For confidentiality reasons, the full title of the book can not be disclosed.

## APPENDIX A

### Personal Interview Questions Denominational and Non-denominational Impact on Civic Participation of Megachurches

- 1.) How long have you been a member of ICC (or DCC)?
- 2.) For Pastors: How long have you been Pastor (other title) of \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
Were you ordained as a pastor?
- 3.) Have you received formal training as a pastor?  
  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- 3a.) If yes, which seminary or other institution did you receive the training?
- 4.) What denominational connections or other national affiliations do this congregation have?
- 4a.) Where do you obtain your educational materials? (If respondent indicates they come from a denominational source I will ask further questions such as would they consider using educational material from another source?) (I will ask this to only appropriate respondents).
- 5.) How important would you say your denominational connections are to your congregation?
- 6.) Can you please give me a brief description of the mission/community service work that this congregation currently participates in? How many projects are you involved with?
- 7.) What is your personal involvement with the civic activities of this church? (if appropriate I will ask how many hours they volunteered).
- 8.) Why does your church engage in civic activities?

- 9.) What are some of the community service activities that this congregation has participated in the past?
- 10.) Approximately how many members of your congregation participate in the civic activities of the congregation? Approximately how many hours a week do members spend on volunteering or other civic activities?
- 11.) What kind of organizational structure is in place to help facilitate your community service work? (e.g. committees, special pledge or other fundraising initiatives?)
- 12.) What kind of associations and networks does this church participate in that facilitate community service activities? (neighborhood/community or religious networks. Do you have any church or community partners?)

For DCC:

Would you say that denominational ties are an important influence of your civic activities?

What kind of relationships do you have with other Methodist churches locally?

- 13.) How important would you say community service and volunteerism is to the life of this congregation?

Extremely important \_\_\_\_\_

Very Important \_\_\_\_\_

Important \_\_\_\_\_

Not Very Important \_\_\_\_\_

Not At All Important \_\_\_\_\_

- 14.) Could I please have a copy of the churches' mission statement?

15.) Do you have difficulty in getting members to participate in civic activities?

16.) Why or Why Not?

17.) What methods do you use to try to get members to volunteer in community service?

19.) What would you try to do differently to try to get members to volunteer more?

Thank-you for your time and consideration!

## Appendix B

### DCC Mission and Goals



#### OUR INVITATION

- TO ALL WHO MOURN AND NEED COMFORT  
TO ALL WHO ARE TIRED AND NEED REST  
TO ALL WHO ARE FRIENDLESS AND WANT FRIENDSHIP  
TO ALL WHO ARE LONELY AND WANT COMPANIONSHIP  
TO ALL WHO ARE HOMELESS AND WANT SHELTERING LOVE  
TO ALL WHO PRAY, AND TO ALL WHO DO NOT, BUT OUGHT  
TO ALL WHO SIN AND NEED A SAVIOUR;  
AND TO WHO-SO-EVER-WILL, THIS CHURCH OPENS WIDE ITS DOORS, AND IN THE NAME OF JESUS, OUR LORD, BIDS

**WELCOME!**

DEDICATED SEPTEMBER 25, 1927



#### OUR OFFICIAL POLICY

The determined policy of this church is that it shall be a seven-day-in-the-week community church. Just so far as physically possible it will be thrown open for the use of all community gatherings, community interests, community programs. We hope to make it a meeting place for everybody and everything that has the highest interests of the community at heart. Questions of faith, church membership, etc., will not be raised. All are welcome.

The program aimed at is of such breadth, purpose, and atmosphere that people will rather 'be at church' than not. We want the youth and childhood to find their fun, their pleasure and enjoyment at the church and just as near the altar of God as possible. We will be nearing our ideal when the children and young people of all the community will prefer to be 'over at the church' than anywhere else. We repeat that we are not building to make Methodists. We will be glad to have folks join any church they desire.

WHAT WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO IS TO HELP PEOPLE GET ACQUAINTED WITH JESUS CHRIST AND GO FORTH TO LIVE GODLY LIVES OF SERVICE AMONG THEIR FELLOWMEN EVERYWHERE.

OFFICIALLY ADOPTED APRIL 1926

#### THE MISSION

Our purpose is to:

- Welcome all people into our faith community.
- Help each other grow closer to Christ.
- Share God's love in service to others.

#### OUR VISION FOR 2010

In the next five years, our focus will be to:

Become more **PASSIONATELY ENGAGED**

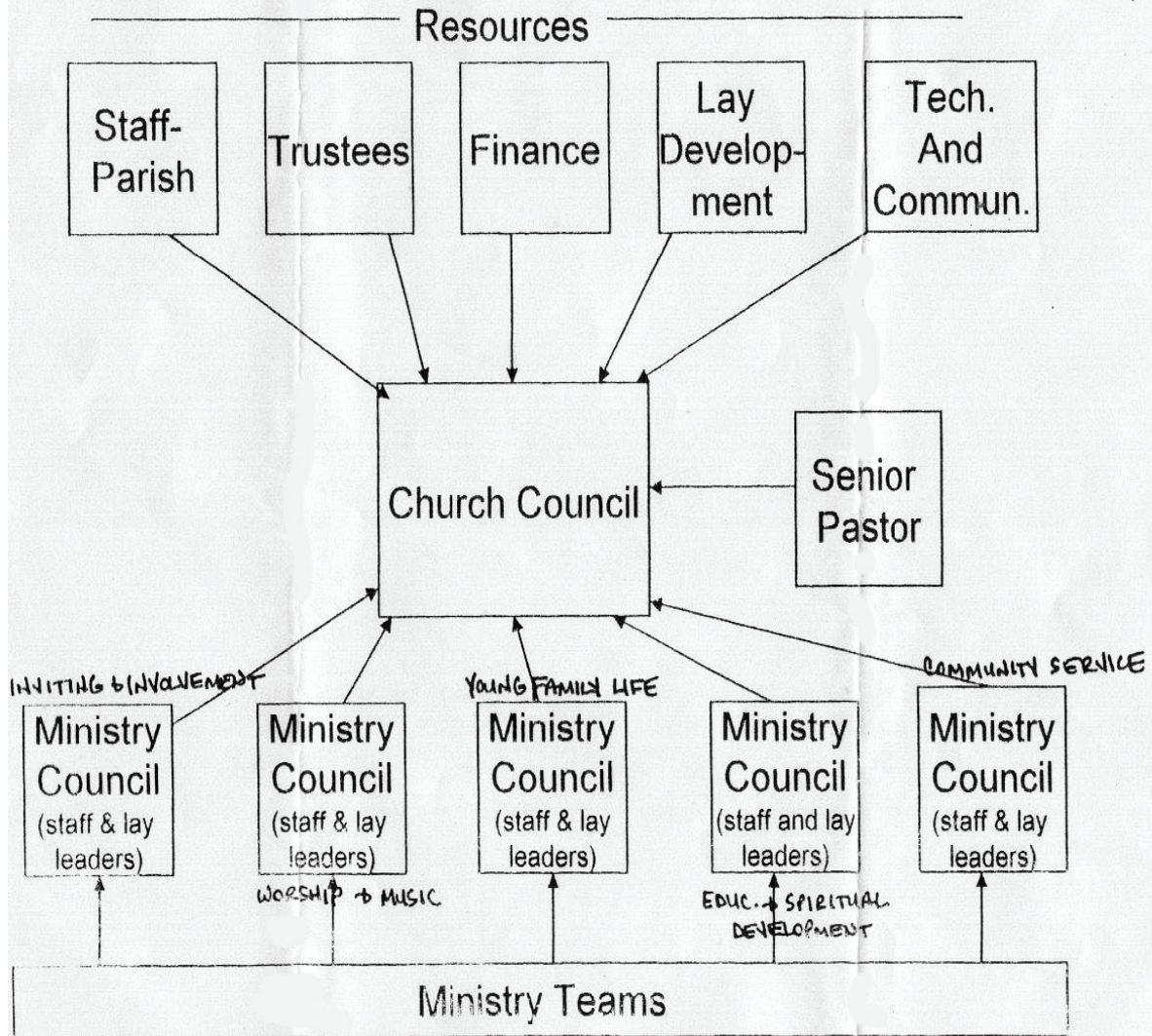
- In our Spiritual Growth
- In our Church
- In our Community.

2005  
STATEMENT  
They match  
Even today!



Appendix C

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



**Appendix D**  
**DCC Facility Use**

**Week of January 9-January 14**

**Monday, January 9, 2006**

8:00am	Job Search/Focus Orientation	G-206
9:00am	Library Book Upkeep	G- Library
9:00am	Job Search/Focus General Meeting	G-Refectory
9:30am	UMW Quilting Group	G-206
10:00am	Overeaters Anonymous	G-217
3:30pm	Basketball/Clark Montessori	G-Gymnasium
5:00pm	Basketball/Cardinal Pacelli	G-Gymnasium
6:00pm	Lay Leadership Meetings	G-116
6:00pm	Carillon Choir Rehearsal	G-Room 09
6:00pm	Disciple I	G-202
6:30pm	Childcare Committee	G-210
7:00pm	Missions Commission	G-217
7:00pm	Boy Scout Troop	G-303-East, G
7:00pm	Friday Singles Meeting	G-208/209
7:00pm	Stephen Ministry Training	G-Parlor
7:30pm	SPRC	G-113
7:30pm	Alcoholics Anonymous	E-105
7:30pm	Stephen Ministry Peer Supervision	G-Refectory