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Pastoral Planning Studies: The North American Approach*

W. S. F. PICKERING

GENERALIZATIONS about the United States are loaded with pitfalls. Anyone who has lived in the country, or visited it to any extent, knows the dangers of making statements about it that have universal application and are at the same time meant to be in any way penetrating. The vastness of the land, the great size of its population with its astonishing rate of increase and geographical mobility, the rich diversity of its peoples' ethnic origins and churches—all these and other factors make for considerable difficulty in talking about the country as a whole, and particularly about its social institutions. Yet this is what the sociologist has to do in order to carry out his work. It is little wonder that at times he fails, in presenting statements that do not have the universal application that is at least implicitly claimed for them. I therefore tread cautiously in speaking about research institutes in North America that have been organized by the churches.[1]

A European, interested in religious sociology, and visiting American research institutes and bureaux established by the churches, would find much to thrill him. But he would also see many things that he would like to question. On the level of getting things done, of creating institutes, of embarking on co-operative ventures that actually get off the ground, of hiring staff and spending money, the visitor, especially if he is an Englishman, cannot fail to prostrate himself before the American achievement and adore. I think he would also be delighted by the fact that the institutes know their terms of reference and their goals, and that they have not confused their work by dealing with contemporary social problems or with social work. The bureaux are concerned almost entirely with planning associated with the institutional church. However, it is precisely at this point that the European would raise serious questions as to whether or not the planning was of the right kind. Even some non-aggressive English clergymen (of whom there seem to be very few these days) would be tempted to raise doubts about certain aspects of the work on which the Americans are expending so much energy.

In order to assess the institutes fairly, we must look briefly at their early history, with special reference to the period just prior to the rise of the modern institutes, and also examine carefully the goals and principles that

*Adapted from a lecture given in Birmingham University, in 1965, at a conference on Architecture and Christian Sociology.

1. Cf. W. S. F. Pickering, "Protestant and Episcopalian Church Survey Centres in the United States," *Social Compass* (Brussels), 9 (1962), 351–59.

govern them. To do this we must consider all too summarily the outlook of the modern American towards religion. Accordingly, I wish to divide this paper into two parts.

I

The history of the research institutes can be conveniently divided into the period between the two world wars and the period from 1945 onwards, which covers the modern institutes.

The sociology of religion, as an academic discipline, was in a virtually quiescent state in America from 1920 to 1940.[2] On the other hand, the applied science, often called religious sociology in Europe, but not in America, developed at a rate hitherto unknown, and subsequently not equalled, if the volume of publications is any criterion. The whole of the interwar period was dominated by the creation and growth of the Institute of Social and Religious Research under its director, Harlan Paul Douglass (1871–1953), an urban sociologist, a devoted worker, and a strong advocate of ecumenical co-operation. Some may know him because of his contribution to the Oxford Conference on Life and Work in 1937.[3] In the same year he also presented a sociological report to the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order on church unity movements in the United States.[4] The Institute of Social and Religious Research was opened in 1921 and closed in 1935, when the money given to finance it by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., ceased to flow. The swan song of the Institute—and by far the most useful volume it published—was entitled *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution.* Written in 1935 by Douglass, with the collaboration of Edmund de S. Brunner (a rural sociologist), it both presents a sociological description of the churches in the United States and gives a glimpse of the workings of the Institute. (It also hints at the reasons for the eventual closing of the Institute.) This large book was by no means an exceptional product of the Institute. In the fourteen years of its existence, forty-eight research projects were undertaken, and seventy-eight studies were produced, at least a dozen of them sizeable books.[5] It must have employed a fair number of staff; in addition to Douglass and Brunner, several others, including Fry, Silcox, Hallenbeck, and Saunderson, published surveys. (Incidentally, Douglass himself was formerly secretary of the American Missionary Society. The Institute was situated in New York and grew out of the Interchurch World Movement.)

2. One notable exception was the work of the Lynds in *Middletown* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929) and *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1937).

3. H. P. Douglass, "Church and Community in the United States," in K. S. Latourette, E. Barker, and others, *Church and Community* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938), pp. 191–259.

4. H. P. Douglass, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity, 1927–1936* (New York: Harper, 1937).

5. Cf. H. P. Douglass and E. deS. Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution* (New York: Harper, 1935), p. v.

It is incontestable that the social and religious scene of America after the First World War, and indeed for half a century before it, cried out for planning and research on the part of the churches. Two sets of problems weighed heavily on the shoulders of church leaders.

To begin with social questions had to be faced, especially at the heart of the cities—squalor, slums, alcoholism, prostitution, the migration of Negroes from the South to the North, and various forms of ethnic bitterness. The churches, if they were to be concerned with society at all, had to be deeply concerned with these problems, which, however, could only be gauged by the social survey then beginning to gain its rightful place as a tool of social analysis. The tackling of social problems was given theological foundation and drive by the movement of the social gospel, most pointedly through the writings of Rauschenbush. It was also obvious enough that the problems were so extensive that only joint action by the churches could bring about anything approaching a solution.

But if the churches were going to accomplish their task for society at large, they had to exist: that is to say, they had to build their strongholds in areas inhabited by people who were either without, or hostile to, the ministrations of the church. From the turn of the century, and at an accelerating rate after the First World War, American cities were growing and eating into the countryside at unprecedented speeds. Faced with this often unseemly development, the major denominations, despite their great resources, felt that they were unable to produce enough churches for the rise in population. Once again, the only answer seemed to be in co-operative action. Leaders quickly saw that the churches must not build on top of one another in one area and leave other parts of a town or neighbourhood deserted. The field was in fact big enough for all to stake a claim. No denomination could lose through co-operative church planning.

The two sets of problems, which have been very briefly mentioned, became the main concern of the Church Federation Movement, which has a complicated and not very exciting history.[6] Its remote antecedents stem from missionary work of the first half of the nineteenth century on the frontier where, as is so often the case in the mission field overseas, it became obvious that co-operation is better than competition. In 1867 there emerged the nationally organized Evangelical Alliance for evangelistic and social work. From this beginning there grew the more comprehensive National Federation of Churches for common action on religious, social, and temperance issues. The Federation gave way in turn (in 1908) to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which had official representatives from ecclesiastical bodies. The Council first declined and then revived during World War I. With America's entry into the war there arose the War Councils of Churches for promoting national morale. After 1920 there was another decline and then a revival of federal councils. Shortly after the war

6. Its history is given in some detail in H. P. Douglass, *Protestant Co-operation in American Cities* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1930).

it was estimated that there existed as many as eighty federations in various cities, the most successful being in the larger urban areas. From the beginning the federal council emphasized the social gospel, although Douglass notes that little was actually done about it during this postwar period.[7] At the same time the problem of establishing churches through co-operation drew considerable attention and a good deal of joint action resulted. This part of the work of federations became known as "comity," which is nothing more than co-operative church planning with reference to church building. The stated objectives of the Philadelphia Federation of Churches make clear the work of the federation movement, including the task of comity:

1. Promotion of co-operation in evangelism.
2. Closer relations among churches of various denominations and among religious agencies.
3. Consolidation of superfluous churches, the release of church property and the transfer of equities to other centres; the establishment of churches wherever needed, but the discouragement of duplication.
4. Law enforcement, in touch with courts and police; co-operation with government relative to the enforcement of the eighteenth amendment.
5. Sabbath observance.
6. World peace.
7. Industrial peace.[8]

The federations set up their own survey centres; the following is a point-by-point summary of what one federation covered through its comity department:

1. A religious survey of new suburban areas.
2. Proposed organization of congregations.
3. Location and purchase of sites.
4. Organization of Sunday schools.
5. Organization of missions.
6. Relocation of churches.
7. Merger of two churches of the same denomination.
8. Transfer of churches from one denomination to another.
9. Responsibility for fields abandoned by removing churches.
10. Co-operative real-estate holding for sites.
11. Methods of making adequate surveys to determine proper church location.[9]

(One principle that emerged from the comity movement, which as far as I know is still accepted today, is that the effective working area of a church is within a radius of one mile.)

The Institute of Social and Religious Research appears to have grown out of the Church Federation Movement, as a body designed to undertake research of a scope that was impossible for local federations. It saw its work as that of "an independent agency to apply scientific method to the study

7. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 54.
8. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 59.
9. Cf. H. P. Douglass, *Church Comity* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1929), pp. 4f.

of socio-religious phenomena."[10] The projects that the Institute undertook were not confined to the solution of local problems but were seen as having wider application. Douglass certainly attempted to carry the work of analysis beyond local problems—an aim that, alas, does not appear to have been sufficiently emphasized by those who have subsequently organized institutes. Then, he wrote in *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*:

The Institute has not so much initiated research as it has discriminated between researches desired by others. The interested agencies, however, frequently conceived the researches required in rather narrow and particular ways. In such cases the Institute has habitually worked over the project into more generalized form, so that the results might have wide applicability. It has also sometimes deliberately originated research projects in order to fill a gap not recognized by others.[11]

The influence of the ecological school of Chicago, led by sociologists like Park and Burgess, is unmistakable in the methods used, not only by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, but also in the surveys carried out by local federations. Books by Douglass, such as *The St. Louis Survey*, *The Springfield Church Survey*, *1000 City Churches*, *The Church in a Changing Society*, and others, make extensive use of maps, charts, and tables, in an attempt to describe the sociological ramifications of the churches.

The great tragedy is that after fourteen years the Institute ceased operating. In *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*—it seems certain that he wrote this section—Douglass offered some of the reasons why the Institute found opposition to its work. Strangely enough, something akin to "religionless Christianity" appears to have been one of the reasons. Objections on these grounds came from a group in New York who saw no hope for the institutional churches as vehicles for communicating Christianity and were opposed to the Institute because its aim was to strengthen the churches, not abolish them. Clearly, if it had been using its knowledge to rid the country of its churches, it would have gained the group's support.[12]

We have now reached the second phase of the history of the research institutes. When Douglass' bureau collapsed, nothing was done to continue its work, at least on the national level. After the end of the Second World War a wave of institutes began to emerge, as new social situations called for the use of co-operative techniques. In many respects the new situations were but old ones writ large, and with this consideration in mind I have given what may seem disproportionate attention to the first period of the history of the institutes, because it is better documented than the second period, on which relatively little printed material is available. But I also think it is safe to say that, because the problems are much the same as in the previous period, the institutes have much the same goals and methods of working.

10. *Ibid.*, frontispiece.
11. Douglass and Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution*, p. 6.
12. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 11.

Rather than try to describe the growth of the past twenty years, I have thought it more helpful to speak about the institutes as they are working at the moment. There are in existence three types of bureaux.[13]

(a) In the first place, there is at least one bureau established on an ecumenical basis. This is the Bureau of Research and Survey of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, with headquarters in New York. This bureau (an agency of what we in Canada might think of as the American Council of Churches) has just under twenty full-time people on its staff, of whom several have doctorates in sociology. To date, the bureau has not published in book form anything like the amount of material that came out of Douglass' Institute. It can be said, however, that, like Douglass' Institute, it does not carry out local surveys, but concentrates on those that have national significance. It is the nearest thing to his Institute now in existence, and has the honour of housing all of the documents and files of the old Institute of Social and Religious Research.

(b) Secondly, there are national bureaux that belong to particular denominations. The Episcopalian General Division of Research and Field Study—formerly of Evanston, now in New York—is one such bureau. It employs about a dozen full-time assistants and has a budget of something like $50,000–100,000 per annum. Another bureau of the same type is the Presbyterian Institute in Detroit. Sometimes the denominational bureau is within a university or college; for example, the Methodist bureau is situated in the School of Theology of Boston University.[14] These, and other similar institutes, are well organized and amply financed. They employ professionally qualified assistants, and sometimes have the help of postgraduate students working for a higher degree and using data produced by the bureaux.

(c) Finally, there are local bureaux, which are commonly operated on an ecumenical or federation basis. The old church federations have now given way to the local councils of churches, but the work done by them is not very different from that of the former federations. Councils frequently create survey centres for specific tasks and employ full-time or part-time professional or semi-professional help. In the matter of church planning there has been little change in the principle of comity, which was so important a feature of the federations between 1920 and 1940. The value of comity is as great as it ever was, as the American suburbs continue to mushroom, and as the downtown churches become more and more deserted. The local survey centres are thus deeply involved in producing sociological information about the general community, projections about housing development and decay, and other relevant material to help those in authority to decide whether to open, close, or merge churches.

It is quite apparent that the institutes and bureaux of the United States have become accepted and their work welcomed. That survey centres

13. Some of these details are given in Pickering, "Protestant and Episcopalian Church Survey Centres in the United States."

14. I believe that a Roman Catholic bureau of research exists within a college in Chicago.

connected with local councils persist is firm testimony that the churches find this type of research valuable for executing their task. It seems unlikely that such centres will decline. To the Americans it seems mere common sense that, if a metropolitan authority has its own planning commission, so the churches should have a similar commission to plan the building of new churches. Such a commission would consist of experts who could be consulted both by outside boards and by individual churches. Professionalism is growing, and it is taken for granted that the churches should have their own specialists.

This outline of the history of research institutes, which has underlined their rise and value to the American churches, may be brought to a close with a brief reference to the historico-sociological reasons that can be adduced to explain their emergence. Co-operative church planning for extension and regrouping stems from:

1. The enormous diversity of denominations in America—quite apart from the many sects.

2. The rapid growth in population, particularly in the cities, with the expansion of the suburbs and the depopulation of the central areas. (It would be true to say that, by and large, comity is an urban movement.)

3. The realization that, with limited resources, co-operation is better than competition, especially if it is believed, as was once proclaimed, that every person in the United States should have reasonable access to a church, irrespective of its denomination—at least within "Protestantism."

4. A belief that the theological difference between the various denominations is not in the last analysis great. (It is alleged that members of the Protestant churches in fact believe much the same sort of things, and there would appear to be good empirical evidence to support this.)

5. The fact that the history of the churches in the United States is studded with movements towards federation and church unity, to a degree not known in Europe. (The churches tend to trust one another and, therefore, to co-operate with one another.)

6. The generally accepted belief that religion is a "good thing" and that everyone should be religious. (Religion is assumed to be part of the American way of life.[15])

II

Considered in other perspectives, the work of the modern institutes is disappointing. Little has been published and little appears to be in process of publication. Consequently, the academic, who rightly feels that, if what the institutes undertake is research, it ought to be made generally known with a view to universal application, is frustrated. Why is it that publications have been so few? The first reason (I think) is that the material produced is essentially local. Secondly, the quality of the institutes' work is such that

15. Cf. W. Herberg, *Protestant–Catholic–Jew* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956).

either the generalizations that could be drawn from it are already known or else the work is an inadequate basis for any generalizations. In short, it can be argued that what the bureaux are doing in most cases is not research, but merely application. The tasks that they set themselves cannot be considered as scientific research, which is the testing of hypotheses; instead they are devoted to presenting selected facts with a view to the making of local and practical decisions. The institutes are involved in nothing more than what the Dutch would call "planology." Some of them which are honest enough to admit this limitation, deliberately place their emphasis on planning rather than on the more sophisticated aim of research.

The surveys undertaken by local and even denominational institutes concentrate on what the Americans call resources—resources in people, resources in money, resources at the moment available, resources expected in the future, resources in leadership, and so on. The result of a survey turns out to be little more than an inventory list, long and tedious, which makes virtually no contribution to our understanding of the working of religious institutions. The aim of the local survey is often expressed in the phrase "making your church effective"—i.e. making it a popular and going concern. (Some of the earlier books along these lines went so far as to suggest such drawing-cards as stained-glass windows, a set of chimes, the taking of a portrait-photograph of a new member of the church by an amateur photographer!) For churches wishing to undertake a detailed study to discover their resources, but unable to afford professional help, most institutes supply do-it-yourself kits, which are not without pastoral value in getting members interested in facts about the local church which were formerly unknown to them, but which contribute nothing to self-analysis and self-criticism.

In order to understand the apparent weaknesses of the institutes—at least as seen through European eyes—a little more clearly, we should examine somewhat more thoroughly the underlying principles and assumptions of the bureaux.

The first point to be considered is the tacit assumption that the present religious institutions ought to continue to grow. As I said earlier, most Americans believe that religion is a "good thing," but the difference between the "average" American, if I may use the term, and his English counterpart is that for the American the churches and their associated institutions call for loyalty and support, whereas for the Englishman they are only of value to those who feel naturally inclined towards them, and for the most part he believes that people desire only minimal involvement. The American, therefore, unlike the Englishman, seeks to foster the growth of the churches. I hope this is not an oversimplification; I must add that evidence is to hand to show that, among university students, seeds of growing indifference to religion are maturing. Commentators usually offer comfort by saying that up until now at least, signs of adolescent agnosticism give way in later years to a return to church-going as the student enters marriage and has a family.

Very few writers in the United States today take the position, not unknown in previous decades, that Christianity must spread by means other than the churches, or that the churches should cease to multiply until new structures are found, though Harvey Cox, in his recent book *The Secular City*, tends to lean towards such a position.

This observation brings me to my second point. The success of the American churches, not to mention the flourishing state of their peripheral organizations, is such that the authorities can hardly fail to wish them to proliferate in the form they now possess. A few external modifications may be permitted, but nothing more radical is contemplated. The temptation to persist with the successful is great. Who wants to throw away a time-honoured, dividend-producing machine? Church leaders, therefore, show less willingness to experiment than their business *confrères*. Indeed, they seem all too conscious that, just because so much is changing on the American scene, many who are involved in constant social change wish to be identified with at least one institution that does not change.

On the other hand, writers like Berger and Winter, who stand outside the institutes, but who speak as convinced Christians, have launched aggressive attacks against what they call middle-class religion and demand some change—an almost but not quite radical change—in the shape of ecclesiastical structures. They point to the fact that the churches, devoid of parochial boundaries or areas of responsibility, move with the mobile, wealthy middle class from the centre of the cities to the greenery of the suburbs, leaving old churches deserted and available to the incoming Negro or Puerto Rican groups who are economically depressed. To be sure, there is nothing new in what these men say, but their attack on the situation is perhaps stronger than any that has been presented up to now. They imply that the whole structure, the way of thinking, and the organizations of the churches are essentially middle class and can have little or no appeal to working-class people. Berger's book *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies*[16] and Winter's *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches*[17] are in some people's eyes exciting reading and are indeed favourites with those who feel that the attacks made by their authors on so-called phoney middle-class religion are justified. I have no room here to discuss these books at any length, but I must say that, provocative though they are, they both suffer from serious methodological weaknesses. They are not acceptable to professional sociologists, because their conclusions do not rest on empirical data but on personal observations; they are both reformist studies; but above all, their weakness lies in a subjective criterion of what religion is or should be. They both suggest that there is something that can be called "authentic" religion and that, in their judgment, is absent from the middle-class churches. This is an invalid sociological appraisal. No sociologist can refer to the qualitative content of

16. P. L. Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961).

17. G. Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961).

religion or of religious institutions. On the other hand, if they are speaking as theologians they should use theological criteria, but such criteria are not made explicit in their books. Moreover, if there is any 'blame" to be meted out, it should surely be attributed, not to the masses who live in suburbia, but to the church leaders who have encouraged the masses to think the way they do about religion.

A Roman Catholic priest, A. M. Greeley, in his book *The Church and the Suburbs*,[18] discloses a much more cautious attitude by stating that there is a great amount of good in suburban religion, which in fact possesses both weaknesses and strengths. There is nothing profoundly sociological in what he says, and he does not write as a professional sociologist, but at least he avoids the assumption of Berger and Winter that only the devil is at work in middle-class America. Indeed, those two writers take a very middle-class stand in condemning their own class and looking romantically towards the working classes. (After all, Marxism is basically a middle-class movement.)

It should be noted further that, no matter how much Berger and Winter want reforms of church structure, they have a very conservative attitude towards man's religious leanings. For them, man is at heart a religious animal. Thus Winter says: "Our conviction—and no amount of research could prove or disprove this—is that the majority of laymen in the organization church have been drawn there by a deep search for the meaning of life. Many of them could not put this search into words, and most of them would fail a theological examination. Nevertheless, underlying their search for social identity is a deep uneasiness which expresses itself in organizational activity."[19] Most religious thinkers—and Winter seems to be among them—cannot accept the existence of the outspoken critic, agnostic or atheist who, on intellectual grounds or for psychological reasons, has no time for religion of any kind. (This person is also beyond the ken of the institutes.) Man is seen to be religious by nature; he tries to be religious and if he does not attend church it is simply because the structure of the church is foreign to him by reason of its sociological form, or perhaps its neurotic attachment to organizations. Berger and his disciples seem to say: Man does not find "authentic" religion in the churches. Let it be restored by the manipulation of structures and all will be well. Thus the problem is seen as sociological rather than theological. I have already suggested it must in fact be approached the other way round. The theological basis must come first. In seeing what is happening in the United States, we should not be oblivious to the more explicitly theological writings of van Buren, Tillich, and the Bishop of Woolwich (who appears to have gained a good following in North America), but generally speaking their thinking has not been accepted —nor for that matter has the thinking of Berger and Winter—by those who wield power in the churches at the national level or by the man in the pew.

Whether one agrees with Berger and Winter or not, one fact is inescapable. Their writing, which has caused so much controversy, has not been

18. A. M. Greeley, *The Church and the Suburbs* (New York: Deus Books, 1963).
19. Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches*, p. 158.

sponsored by the institutes of the churches, but has come from the pens of individuals working outside them—men who teach in university or college. The institutes, so far at any rate, have not been instrumental in producing prophetic best-sellers.

Perhaps the problem is that the institutes have not taken self-examination, either by theological criteria or by sociological criteria, even half seriously enough. Theological principles are necessary for the running of institutes, since they are centres of what might be called applied science. Where applied science exists, precise ends and goals have to be specified. In the case of the American institutes we find an implicit theological acceptance of religious institutions as they are now established. No reform, let alone radical reform as sought by the Bishop of Woolwich, can be contemplated by the institutes, since such reforms depend on theological evaluation, not on sociological criteria. Unless institutes are deliberately empowered to propose reforms, they cannot in fact take any such step. By their constitution they are bound to promote the religious structures at present in existence. Their mandate has to do with the church, seen as a social institution, in its generally recognized shape and form.

But even in the maintaining of the church as the institution we know today, the work of the institutes appears to be superficial, and it does not extend beyond the unearthing of the most elementary sociological facts. No questions are asked as to how or why religious institutions take the form they do, how power structures are developed, why so many women are involved in the churches, and why the churches attract the middle classes. In some ways it is not surprising that these questions fail to be raised, in view of the generally accepted success of the American religious institutions. The man who pays the piper calls the tune. Institutes find themselves carrying out survey after survey, each of the same kind, in locality after locality. The customer wants answers on a short-term basis. He wants results and he wants them fast. He is not interested in research for its own sake. Hence the more profound issues go unheeded.

To sum up: if the object of the research institutes is to facilitate the expansion of the churches according to their present structure and shape, as handmaids of the churches, these centres, with all their limitations, are a necessity, not a luxury. But if research at a deeper level, either sociological or socio-psychological, is required, the value of their service is questionable—although it should be added that there exists within them the potential for undertaking such work.

In conclusion, a few words ought to be said about research institutes in Canada. Compared with the United States, Canada is an underdeveloped and sparsely populated country. Americans frequently see Canada as a place for holidays, especially if the holiday is to be an outdoor one, complete with shooting and fishing. With a population just over one-tenth of that of the United States, and with strong ethnic groups that resist absorption into a nebulous, virtually non-existent Canadian way of life, the people of Canada

stand half-way between Europe and the United States. Like their rich cousins to the south, they are blessed with religious pluralism, and like them, too, they find that their churches are well attended. However, there is evidence that church-going has, generally speaking, never reached the American level, and is very likely declining at the present time. Co-operation among the churches is widespread, especially in social matters, and church unity took a great leap forward in the formation of the United Church, now the largest Protestant church in Canada, which came into being in 1925 through the amalgamation of the Congregational, Methodist, and part of the Presbyterian churches. No research institute like that of Douglass has ever existed in Canada, and there has been no development of the idea of comity in the towns. (Some of the reasons for the lack of co-operative planning can be seen in the limited number of major denominations and in the limited number and size of Canadian cities—at least before the Second World War.) However, a few important studies in the sociology of religion have appeared, and it should be recognized that Canada is an ideal country for such research.

In more recent times the only stirrings in religious sociology have come from Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Within the University of Montreal, in the late 1950's, the Roman Catholics started a survey centre, whose particular concern was a church attendance survey of metropolitan Montreal, carried out under the direction of a professional sociologist, Father N. LaCoste. Every parish was covered on a particular Sunday in 1961, when 1,800,000 people filled in forms. The results are ready to be published whenever permission is given.

Also in the late 1950's, the Anglican Church of Canada set up a research department in Toronto for the whole of the church in Canada. The surveys planned by the Unit of Research and Field Study, following the pattern developed by the Episcopal Church in the United States, were mainly diocesan surveys. Of these, two or three have been completed. Staffing problems caused a slight set-back, as well as a reappraisal of what such a department ought to be doing. A substantial annual budget has been put aside for the bureau, and it is hoped that it will resume full-time operations very soon.

Certainly the church in Canada sees the need for centralized planning and survey analysis. I imagine that other institutes will make their appearance in the near future, for Canadians are much more sociology-conscious than are the English, if not as much as the French and Americans. Survey centres may be established in connection with local councils of churches, but such councils are still few in number and relatively weak. Some individuals are undertaking research in both the sociology of religion and religious sociology, but their work hardly comes within the terms of reference of this paper.