



# World Christian Database

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## Methodology

Excerpt from *World Christian Trends*, Barrett and Johnson (William Carey Library 2001).

*What do church statistics mean?*

As already noted, vast efforts are put into the collection of statistics by the over 300 traditions and 33,800 denominations across the world and their 3 million constituent churches and congregations of believers. This raises again the familiar fundamental questions: Do these statistics mean anything at all? Are they worth the churches' time and effort involved in collecting them? Do they in any sense assist the churches in realistic planning for mission in the modern world? After compiling this book, we would wish to answer all 3 questions clearly in the affirmative. We would however point out that, through inadequate analysis by the churches in almost all countries of the world, the true implications of church statistics have almost everywhere not yet even begun to be investigated. Further, proper analysis is only rarely being attempted. This is therefore the place to issue a call to a fresh approach to the collection, use and creative analysis of church statistics. To help churches put the right value on their statistics, and to encourage their proper evaluation, we suggest that such statistics have 3 major types of use to the churches: they assist in understanding of the past, in analysis of the present, and in planning for the future. These can be elaborated as follows.

1. Understanding the past. The first use of church statistics, and the most widely employed today, is towards understanding a church's development in the past. Up to the present time, the collection and presentation of church statistics seem to have been of most value to church and mission historians and others writing up the history of the church or denomination concerned; or comparing the church life of a former generation with that of the present; or discussing expansion and other trends from the past to the present. We use statistics ourselves in this way in WCE's Country Tables 1 by giving figures of all religions and Christian megablocs in the years 1900 and 2025, thus enabling long-term trends of decline or increase to be detected.

2. Analyzing the present. Secondly, statistics are often of considerable contemporary value to church officials and administrators. This is so in that they enable them to compare the present situation of their church with its immediate past (e.g. the previous year or two), to find out how that situation is changing. For large organizations, it is primarily an urgent or immediate question of logistics (the planning, handling and implementation of large quantities of personnel, material and facilities). The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, for instance, requires detailed statistics of previous campaigns in order to plan how many chairs, ushers, hymnbooks, etc, are needed for a large campaign, how much literature to produce, how much car parking space needs to be procured, and so on and so forth (their largest single meeting has had 1.1 million physically in attendance). For organized churches and denominations, 3 less immediate but equally profitable areas of analysis are: (1) numerical decline of membership, where this is happening, and the problems it raises (e.g. redundant buildings), (2) numerical growth of membership, where this is happening, and the problems it raises (e.g. inadequate buildings or supplies of hymnbooks), and (3) adult baptisms as an indicator of the impact being made, if any, on the secular or non-Christian world around. By careful analysis of relevant statistics the effectiveness of the churches' organization can be assessed, points of weakness located, and reorganization effected.

There is, however, another and far more valuable type of contemporary analysis which is only rarely being done as yet. This involves relating a church's statistics to current secular statistics concerning the social

situation, and social change, in its own country or area. In most parts of the world, a vast amount of secular statistical data is now available. This covers demography, population increase or decline, urban growth, industrialization, migration, age-groups, ethnic groups, social classes, occupational groups, employment, tourism, transportation, mobility, incomes, standards of living, socio-economic status, housing, land use, literacy, publishing, book sales, leisure, radio and TV sets and listening habits, and so on. Much of this is available to the enquirer in printed form, sometimes in the form of pictorial charts, and sometimes in the form of maps. A church or denomination which relates its own statistics to this wealth of secular data can form a realistic appraisal of its own contribution and progress and can gain valuable insights into the present effectiveness of its various ministries.

Such data are widely available both at the international level (published by UN, UNESCO, FAO, WHO, ILO, et alia), and also at the national level (from government census and statistical offices, and national public-opinion and planning organizations). In WCE Country Tables 1, we relate church statistics to demographic data at these 2 levels. Moreover, in many countries, there is also a steady flow of detailed secular data available at subnational levels, namely those of region, province, state, county, municipality, city, district, borough, local authority or ward, down to the secular equivalent of the local church parish or congregation. If a denomination collects and organizes its own data not only at the national level but also broken down by these secular regions and local areas, then immediate comparison and creative analysis at those levels also become possible.

There is a widespread problem here concerning areas of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In many denominations and in most countries of the world, the boundaries of dioceses, synods, conferences, districts, parishes, presbyteries, circuits and so on bear little or no relation to the local secular or political administrative boundaries within which secular statistics are collected. This means that direct comparisons of church data and secular data are often difficult or impossible. There is a simple remedy, however. By a simple process of adjusting beforehand the areas within which the church collects its statistics, or by totaling or dividing them up to fit the secular boundaries after their collection, church statistical areas can be brought into line with secular areas, and direct comparison is then possible.

3. Planning for the future. Using church statistics for strategic forward-planning, i.e. to plan church development and activities in both the immediate future and long-range foreseeable future, is a novel exercise for most denominations. Statistical data about both the church and the environment are indispensable for effective planning. Again, the starting-point is secular planning in the church's locality, region or nation. In many countries, ambitious 5-year or 10-year development plans are being drafted, not only at the national level but also for standard socio-economic planning regions and even for small local areas. The fundamental or base data in all such cases are demographic estimates or projections of the size of the population over the next 5 or 10 years, often divided up into small geographical areas and also by sex (male/female), age-groups, and ethnic or language groups. Such data often include also projections concerning employment trends, literacy, education, leisure patterns, and so on. Population projection into the future is no longer a matter of guesswork or speculation but is now a well-developed science, and in WCE Country Tables 1 we use the United Nations Population Division's population projections for all countries of the world for the years 1950-2050. Similarly, a church or group of churches could use regional projections to plan new congregations, manpower deployment, youth ministries, literature evangelism and the like. Another important by-product of such analysis is that churches known to be making use of secular planning data are often invited by secular authorities to take part themselves in the on-going secular planning process.

The indicators and indexes given here enable interested persons to assess the various purely numerical and hence relatively objective criteria involved in any decision about priorities, and hence to plan realistically for the future.

#### *Maps and religious geography*

Another important aspect of this analysis of the past, present and future is the relating of religious statistics to geography. A church's membership and manpower (past, present, future) can be charted on a map (in particular on government maps with secular data) to provide visual analysis of the church's situation vis-a-vis the secular world, development and social change. The best type of maps to use in this connection are human environment maps, i.e. maps which depict not only topography but also population density,

urbanization, political divisions, land resources and land use, communications, transportation and traffic (on air, land and sea), and so on. In this survey we give human environment maps of this type in the GeoAtlas of Christianity and religions (Part 33). On these maps will be found most of the places, areas, regions, ecclesiastical or diocesan headquarters, and so on, referred to in this survey. The geographical location of most churches can be found on them by using addresses in the Directory of global Christianity (WCE Part 12). Churches interested in similar maps in their own countries will often find that a wide range is available from their government's department of survey or planning, or from local university departments of geography; or from professional international bodies located elsewhere.

### *Improving your church's statistics*

With such creative possibilities before us, small improvements in your church's statistical procedures could yield enormous benefits. Churches and denominations, with their administrative officers and planning staff, should therefore realize that their statistics, which are already of considerable value to many other churches and Christian groups of which they themselves may be unaware, could be made of immeasurable greater value, both to themselves, to their sister churches of like tradition, and to the wider Christian world (as well as to the world at large), if the following modifications were made to their procedures.

(1) Each church or denomination should examine the existing statistical categories it uses, and, for the benefit of readers from other churches, confessions or countries, should add to its published figures and reports the fullest definitions of exactly what those categories are measuring, from the standpoints of time (the date the statistics refer to) and geographical area or boundaries. They should make clear which of the following groups are included or excluded in each category: adults and children or infants (defining the ages covered by each group), de jure or de facto members, citizens or aliens, residents or nonresidents, immigrants and refugees, Blacks and whites (and all other racial, ethnic and linguistic groups), peasants, farmers, office workers, students (and other occupational groups where known); and so on. When a church official from another country or confession, or any other Christian observer, reads your church's statistical report, the answers to all such queries should be immediately clear to him.

(2) Each church should ensure that the statistics it collects include the following strategic information:

(a) some measure of annual decline or growth in membership; (b) some measure of practicing Christians, either weekly or monthly church attenders, or attenders at Easter or Christmas; (c) some measure of the participation or presence of children and infants, i.e. annual baptisms or dedications of infants, and Sunday-school enrolments or weekly attendances; and (d) some measure of conversions from (or losses to) the secular or non-Christian society around, e.g. the year's adult baptisms (indicating from what age it is administered to children), stating in addition what their previous religious backgrounds were (agnostics, atheists, Buddhists, and so on). With this concrete statistical data in hand, your church can then immediately assess its strategic situation.

(3) Each church should consider collecting additional statistics about its membership and its ministries which can be compared directly, for purposes of self-analysis and forward-planning, with the secular or general social statistics regularly collected and published in its own country at national, regional, and local levels, concerning social change in the country and the present and future socioeconomic situations.

(4) Each church should then adjust the boundaries of the areas for which it collects its statistics, so that they coincide with secular or political boundaries at national, regional, and local levels, to enable its statistics to be directly comparable with the secular statistics. No doubt it would cause too great a structural upheaval to alter the actual boundaries of the jurisdictions themselves, which are often hallowed by years, decades or even centuries of existence. There should however be little difficulty in ensuring that the church's statistics are gathered and collated within the boundaries of standard socio-economic planning areas used by local and national governments. Again, all such boundaries implicit in the church's statistical reports need to be clearly described for the benefit of other users.

(5) Each church, finally, might very well consider taking this process to its logical conclusion by redefining and standardizing its own ecclesiastical categories to approach, or even coincide with, some overall worldwide interdenominational or ecumenical system (such as that proposed and followed in this book). This means that it should consider adopting some agreed standardized criteria for enumerating membership and ministry, so that its statistics then become directly comparable both with those of its sister churches of

similar denomination, and also with those of other denominations.

A series of standardized questionnaires was in fact evolved to collect data for the present survey, using the major European languages. Each questionnaire asked not only for a denomination's data but also their own exact definitions used, and the relevant date (year).

#### Range of data available

Surveying the world in a sentence or two, we find that at least 7 varieties of religious statistics are kept and compiled by churches in one country or another. These are: (1) demographic and sociographic statistics on Christian population in particular areas and peoples; (2) statistics of religious behavior and Christian practice; (3) statistics of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and structures; (4) statistics of church personnel and lay workers; (5) statistics of social and cultural institutions (schools, hospitals, etc); (6) statistics of church prosperity and finance; and (7) statistics of religious psychology, beliefs, motivation and attitudes. Most but not all of these are handled in the present survey.

#### Geopolitico-religious analysis

When it comes to analyzing the mass of statistical data assembled for this survey, we do so by regarding the world as an aggregate of 238 countries, each of which has certain geographical, socioeconomic, political, cultural and religious characteristics, and which may be classified in various ways, one of which is into the Western (or Capitalist) world, the Communist or formerly Communist or Socialist) world, and the Third (or Non-aligned) World. This process is described here as geopolitico-religiocultural analysis, or, a shorter term, geopolitico-religious analysis.

#### *A survey of 238 countries*

WCE Part 4 contains a survey in a standardized format of the de facto situation in each of the 238 distinct and separate countries in the world in the year 2000, based on the list of countries published quarterly and annually by the United Nations (see *Population and vital statistics report*, UN, 1999, and *UN demographic yearbook*, 1999). This definition of 'country' covers both all sovereign independent nations, and also all nonsovereign dependencies and territories with over 30 inhabitants which do not form a subject, organic or federal part of some larger nation (i.e. dependencies which are self-governing, or governed separately). Because the UN listing is politically conditioned, the listing used in this book differs slightly from it. We attempt a more exact description of the de facto situation by (1) accepting as definitive the divided state of Korea and certain other states; (2) including as distinct and separate countries China (Taiwan), Spanish North Africa, and a small number of other disputed territories with de facto or contested separate existence (Northern Solomons/Bougainville, Palestine, Sahara, Timor), unless the dispute is now over 15 years old and has been settled de facto (e.g. Goa, Sikkim, Kashmir); and (3) excluding certain territories (though listed separately by the UN) on the grounds that each forms part of a larger nation, namely Ascension, Asian Turkey, East Berlin, England, European Turkey, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Tanganyika, Tristan da Cunha, Wales, West Berlin, West Irian, Zanzibar. In this book, the nouns or adjectives 'national' (meaning a citizen as opposed to an alien) are used to mean pertaining to the countries in our listing.

#### *Future changes in nation status*

Our present format permits a number of future political changes to be quickly catered for. If 2 of the 238 countries merge, or if a large nation absorbs a smaller territory (such as India absorbing Sikkim), the reader can work out the new Country Tables 1 and 2 for the new entities simply by adding these together for both of the countries involved.

## ENUMERATING THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

#### *Finding the statistics you want*

Statistics can be useful to the reader in several ways, both specific, general and comparative. Firstly, the reader may want to know the size of one particular figure, for some specific reason (e.g. the number of clergy in the diocese he lives in). Or secondly, he may want a general idea of the size of a particular church

(e.g. an overseas denomination he is going to visit). Or thirdly, he may need to compare one church with another, or one set of statistics with another (e.g. which is the largest church in a particular country; or

whether the church he supports has more national clergy than expatriate clergy). The statistics in this book attempt to supply these forms of assistance.

### *The general order of magnitude*

The main feature of the statistical presentation in this volume is that its primary object is to establish broad areas of magnitude—to give the general order of magnitude of the situation, whether denominational, local, tribal, national, regional, racial, continental or global. From the point of view of the planner, development officer, Bible society executive, broadcaster, journalist or researcher, the important thing is to know (for example) whether Protestants in a particular country number 1,000, or 10,000, or 100,000, or 1 million, or 10 million; the exact size to the last digit may be of interest but is often of little further use. In the same way, many other totals enumerating approximately the entire Christian enterprise have been computed and presented here, such as radio audiences, unevangelized populations, and so on. The word ‘approximately’ is the operative word in this survey; absolute precision and accuracy are not to be expected, nor in fact are they always necessary for practical working purposes. This means that, although the tables and other statistics may help readers who want specific individual figures, they are mainly designed to give this general-order picture set in the total national and global context. To this end, where detailed local statistics compiled from grass-roots sources have not been available or were incomplete, the tables supply general-order estimates provided by persons familiar with the local statistical situation.

### *Comparative statistics*

A second major feature of the statistical presentation is the comparative aspect: statistics of a similar type (e.g. adult membership), if published in a table in a single column, must be comparable from one church to another. Like must be compared with like; and like can only be compared with like. One cannot directly compare Roman Catholic statistics of ‘Catholics’ with Baptist statistics of ‘Baptists’, because the former include baptized children and infants and nominal adherents, the latter usually no infants or children but only baptized believing (and usually practicing) adults. To present only such statistics as the churches supply in this way would be frustrating and would merely underline the non-comparability of church statistics from one tradition to another. Ideally, we should collect statistics to the same definitions from all the churches, but for historical reasons it is now virtually impossible to get everybody to use similar definitions. It is, however, possible to adjust a body’s figures to make them comparable with those of others. In this book, therefore, the problem is solved (a) by identifying clearly all statistics as applying to either adults only, or to adults plus children; and (b), in cases where a church only enumerates one of these categories, by computing general-order estimates of the other category. Most churches in fact enumerate each year only one type of membership statistics, either the number of adults or communicants on the rolls or records (as do Baptist, Methodists, Pentecostals and other ‘gathered’ churches) or the total number on the rolls including children and infants (as do Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, and other traditions with geographical parishes). Relatively few confessions enumerate both adults and total; these include Anglicans, some Reformed and some Lutherans. To make these data comparable from one tradition to another, therefore, the missing figure (adults or total) has been estimated and added either by the churches themselves or by the authors. These latter general-order estimates can usually be spotted by the reader because they are rounded, or more rounded than the church’s main aggregated figure which is often given to the last digit. The major case of this method in this book concerns the Roman Catholic Church. Since Catholic statistics never enumerate adult Catholics, we provide general-order estimates of this category throughout by multiplying total affiliated Catholics (baptized plus catechumens) by the national figure for the percentage of the population over 14 years old. This assumption that the age structure of the Catholic Church is similar to that in the country as a whole is reasonably true in the Western (developed) world, although somewhat less accurate in Third-World (developing) countries where proportionately larger numbers of children and young people become Catholics than older people. Our assumption does, however, enable direct numerical comparisons to be made between Catholic statistics and Protestant statistics.

In the same way that comparison can only be made if definitions are like, comparisons of different bodies can only be made for the same point in time. One cannot meaningfully compare Catholics in 1930 with Baptists in 1980; they must be compared for the same year. Likewise it is wrong to add up totals of church memberships for different bodies at different dates, although it may sometimes be satisfactory if one can assume no change took place between the range of dates.

### *Reading percentages correctly*

For comparing different quantities we use percentages throughout this survey (e.g. 'Catholics number 70% of the country's population, and Protestants 30%'). However, a single specific religious body or grouping may be quoted in the survey as having several quite different and apparently contradictory percentages attached to it. Thus, in the article on Fiji, we state that Indians who are Roman Catholics form (a) 1.5% of the Indian population of Fiji, (b) 8.9% of all Roman Catholics in Fiji, (c) 0.8% of the whole population of Fiji. All 3 percentages are correct, and consistent, but refer to 3 different ways of expressing the size of Indian Roman Catholics. Throughout this survey, therefore, the reader interested in a particular percentage, or set of percentages, should take care to ascertain precisely how we define them, what larger population is involved, and hence exactly what the percentages mean.

### *Accuracy claimed for particular statistics*

Churches and religious bodies do not have at their disposal the vast networks of enumerators and analysts that government censuses and public-opinion polls employ, hence churches' statistics are not able to claim accuracy to the last digit. Similarly, although a government census in 1968 may report the number of Christians to the last digit (e.g. 2,450,793), projections into the future based upon this figure cannot claim complete accuracy but can only be approximations indicating the general order of size of the statistics required. In this book, therefore, the statistics presented fall into 2 categories: general-order estimates, and multi-digit aggregates. General-order estimates can be recognized throughout by their rounded nature, e.g. '5,000', '20,000', '100,000'. Where they occur in a Country Table 2, they usually represent estimates of their own size by the churches themselves; where they occur in a Country Table 1, they represent estimates by persons familiar with the nation, or by the authors as the result of complex computer operations. Multi-digit aggregates can be recognized throughout as figures appearing to claim accuracy to several digits, e.g. '5,291', '21,684', '102,735'. In a number of cases in the book's surveys, a church or diocese returned this kind of statistics rather than rounding it to the nearest hundred or thousand as one would do with a general-order estimate. In such cases Table 2 repeats the unrounded number, for 2 reasons: (1) to indicate the church's claim that the statistic is not a rough guess or general-order estimate but is based on some kind of aggregate or grass-roots roll total or head count, and (2) to enable readers familiar with that church's statistics to recognize the particular figure and hence to know its source and the exact date it applies to, in case more up-to-date or reliable figures later became available. It is remarkable how often such a multi-digit aggregate may be quoted for years after its original computation, and how easily recognizable each one is when it turns up again. Preserving the digits in this way is therefore an aid to the proper use of these statistics; but our practice must not be taken to imply bogus precision or any claim to accuracy to this last digit.

### *Choice of best data available*

Because our survey has attempted to be comprehensive, in certain countries where no hard statistical data or reliable surveys were available, we have had to rely on the informed estimates of experts in the area and subject. In this volume, we have made no detailed attempt at a critique of each nation's censuses and polls or each church's statistical operations. After examining what is available, we have then selected the best data available until such time as better data come into existence.

### *Quantifying inaccessible data*

There are a number of areas of church or religious life where it is impossible to obtain accurate statistics, usually because of state opposition to Christianity or religions. Thus it will probably never be possible (nor, perhaps, desirable) to get exact head counts of crypto-Christians, or of isolated radio believers, or of annual conversions to underground churches, and the like. Where such information is necessary to our present survey, we have therefore made reasonable and somewhat conservative estimates.

### *Totalling figures of varying accuracy*

In each table a number of totals are given at the end. When figures which are multi-digit aggregates (e.g. '102,782') are added together with others which are general-order estimates (e.g. '110,000'), the resulting total (212,783) is printed to the last digit in the interests of consistency and exactness of analysis. However, when such a total is quoted or used outside this survey, it should be rounded (to 210,000), to indicate only

the general order of accuracy that it is possible to claim. This avoids the quoting and spreading of totals which appear to claim greater accuracy than is justified.

*Totals for churches with dioceses or other subdivisions* The same applies to totals for a church with dioceses or other jurisdictions. Figures for a church's dioceses or subdivisions are added and given in Table 2 on its first line to the last digit; but if they are quoted outside this survey they should be rounded.

#### *Totals and rounding*

All our columns of absolute numbers in Country Tables 1 and 2 always add up exactly to the totals and subtotals shown. However, as with all large statistical tables, a column of percentages may not always add up to exactly the total or subtotal indicated, due to rounding. Although in most cases throughout this survey component percentages in fact add up exactly to their respective totals, in a small number of cases this is not so because of the rounding feature. As an example we may total:  $0.13\%+0.13\%+0.13\%=0.39\%$ ; when each is rounded to only one place of decimals, the figures become  $0.1\%+0.1\%+0.1\%=0.4\%$ , which introduces a small discrepancy.

#### *Dates of statistics*

It is important, in changing situations, to know the exact date (year, perhaps also month and sometimes day) to which particular statistics apply. This book compares government statistics of religion with churches' statistics; but in doing so, it must be remembered that a government census (or a public-opinion poll) is almost always taken on a single, known day; whereas, by contrast, churches' statistics are compiled over a lengthy period that may amount to 3, 4, 5, 6 or even 7 years from the local grass-roots counting of heads to final compilation of totals by a large denomination or church. Denominational totals published in 1995 therefore probably refer to the situation in 1992, 1991 or even 1990 in the case of very large denominations. This point is important in analyzing religious change and will be elaborated on below.

#### *Updating a church's statistics*

Many of the largest or best-organized churches publish membership statistics annually. This means that the figures given in our Country Tables 2 are not always the latest available for those churches, after the year 1998. It would be inaccurate, however, to describe such figures in Tables 2 as 'out-of-date'; they represent accurately the situation for the year 1995 or 2000. In the case of each such church, the reader wanting the latest available figures should consult the latest edition of that church's yearbook (e.g. *Annuario Pontificio* and *Statistical yearbook of the Church* for the Roman Catholic Church).

#### *Statistics must be consistent*

A major feature of this survey is that care has been taken to make the various statistical categories, the national tables, and the international totals, all fully consistent with each other and without internal statistical discrepancies or contradictions. This means that (1) each statistical category we use has been given a single clear operational definition applicable worldwide and in all countries, churches and religions; and (2) in all complete enumerations in this survey (in Country Tables 1, 2 et alia), all subtotals of absolute numbers add up exactly to the relevant total; and all percentages add up to exactly to 100% (in practice, such totals are sometimes 0.1% or 0.2% out, due to rounding). In particular, in every country the totals of all religious and non-religious populations add up exactly to the countries population, i.e. to exactly 100%. A number of other consistency checks come readily to mind: e.g. in large paedobaptist (infant-baptizing) state churches with few adult conversions each year, the annual number of infant baptisms should be somewhat smaller than the total number of annual births in the country. Vast numbers of new single facts or items of data can be checked in this way before being inputted to the tables. In a few places when data were being collected for this book, different authorities gave, for the same situation, radically divergent data. In most cases the discrepancy was solved and the situation resolved by examining the exact context of the data. It was then found that in almost all cases the differing data referred either to different points in time, or to slightly different geographical areas, or to different definitions of the item in question. As a result this survey is able to give a single figure for every clearly-defined entity at a given point in time. Similarly, where various authorities differ concerning quantifiable matters, we have attempted to present a single statement rather than a series or range of contradictory statements.

## WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

### *Two divergent answers*

There are 2 distinct and different ways in which Christians have been enumerated for well over the last 100 years, and in embryo for very much longer. The first is enumeration from the point of view of the state or society at large or the general public, in which individuals are asked in a government census or public-opinion poll to state publicly what religion they adhere to. The second is enumeration from the point of view of the churches, in which congregations or clergy state the total persons that they know are affiliated with them, i.e. whose names and addresses are on their records. These 2 methods almost always in all countries produce significantly different totals. Until now, the usual explanation has been either that governments are prone to over-enumerate or that churches are prone to under-enumerate, or vice versa. It is much more satisfactory to assume that, given their formidable resources and expertise, both are enumerating substantially correctly but that they are enumerating quite different kinds of person; and this assumption is basic to the present survey.

### *Who is a Catholic?*

The difference becomes sharpest over statistics of Roman Catholics. Africa provides a stark contrast. According to governments and polls organizations, there were 52.8 million Roman Catholics in Africa in 1970, rising to 76.8 million by 1980. According to the Vatican, there were only 45.3 million in 1970, rising to 66.2 million by 1980. Why the discrepancy? The answer is that governments were measuring self-identification (persons who call themselves Roman Catholics), and the Vatican was counting only baptized Catholics and catechumens known to its parishes and priests. Both usages must be accepted and must be taken seriously, since neither is likely to be changed; the best procedure therefore is to qualify these usages of 'Roman Catholics' with 2 different adjectives to distinguish the one from the other. This is done here by use of the terms 'professing Roman Catholics' and 'affiliated Roman Catholics' respectively, defining the latter (in mission countries) to mean all baptized Roman Catholics together with any catechumens, i.e. all persons on the books or records of the Roman Catholic Church. The latter term then stands for Roman Catholics as enumerated by that church itself.

### *Who is a Pentecostal/Charismatic?*

Another illustration comes from the above question. According to the 1980 Christianity Today/Gallup poll, 19% of all adults in the USA identified themselves as Pentecostal/Charismatics; yet, according to Gallup, of this 19% only 15% were members affiliated to churches and only 3.5% were regularly active and involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic activities. Why the discrepancy? Our answer to all such problems is that all such data are valid and consistent, but that exact definitions must be used in labeling the results: In this case, 19% of the USA were professing Pentecostals/Charismatics, 15% were Pentecostals/Charismatics affiliated to churches, and 3.5% were regularly-active and involved Pentecostals/Charismatics.

### *A new methodology*

As a result, this book incorporates a new methodology of enumerating statistics of the Christian world. In the past, certain churches (usually those with a strong link with the state) have quoted, as their membership figures, government census figures of professing adherents; other churches (those with little or no link with the state) have enumerated only those persons regularly or actively participating in church life. These 2 types of statistics are describing quite different entities and therefore cannot properly be compared. Instead, this book divides all statistics of Christians into 4 basic types: professing Christians, affiliated Christians, practicing Christians, and Great Commission Christians (those involved in outreach). These 4 types will now be elaborated on.

#### *1. The right to profess one's choice*

Our new methodology takes as its starting-point the United Nations 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 18: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.' Since its promulgation, this group of phrases has been incorporated into the state constitutions of a large number of countries across the world. This fundamental right also includes the right to claim the religion of

one's choice, and the right to be called a follower of that religion and to be enumerated as such. The section on religious freedom in the constitutions of very many nations uses the exact words of the Universal Declaration, and many countries instruct their census personnel to observe this principle. The instructions to enumerators in the 8th Census of Canada (1941) are typical in this respect: 'The religion of each person will be entered according as he or she professes'. This Declaration has however been virtually ignored in the churches and by Christians in general. Almost the first interest in it has been a recent action of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in Brazil. In 1978 they published and distributed over one million copies of an ecumenical edition of the Declaration, complete with Bible references and official church pronouncements on the subject.

On this definition in the Declaration, then, 'Christians' means all those who profess to be Christians in government censuses or public-opinion polls, i.e. who declare or identify themselves as Christians, who say 'I am a Christian', 'We are Christians', when asked the question 'What is your religion?' From the biblical point of view, there is justification for the definition in passages such as the word of Jesus in Matthew 10:32 (Good News Bible): 'If anyone declares publicly that he belongs to me, I will do the same for him before my Father in heaven'. A parallel passage is Romans 10:9; a person is a saved Christian 'if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord' instead of the required obligatory state-worship formula 'Caesar is Lord'. Another term for professing Christians can therefore be confessing Christians.

Public declaration must therefore be taken seriously when endeavoring to survey the extent of Christianity. This definition covers many categories of Christians including the large numbers of groups and individuals who, while striving to follow Christ and being indisputably Christian, nevertheless refuse to identify themselves with any existing organized Christian church or denomination. Statistics of these *professing Christians*, or confessing Christians, or declared Christians, or self-identifying Christians, are widely available, published by governments and polls organizations.

## 2. *Affiliated to organized Christianity*

By no means all those who profess to be Christians, however, are affiliated to the organized churches and denominations, and so it is necessary to give here also statistics of *affiliated Christians*. We define these as those known to the churches or known to the clergy (usually by names and addresses) and claimed by them in their statistics, i.e. those enrolled on the churches' books or records, with totals which can be substantiated. This usually means all known baptized Christians and their children, and other adherents; it is sometimes termed the total Christian community (because affiliated Christians are those who are not primarily individual Christians but who primarily belong to the corporate community of Christ), or inclusive membership (because affiliated Christians are church members). This definition of 'Christians' is what the churches usually mean by the term, and statistics of such affiliated Christians are what the churches themselves collect and publish. In all countries, it may be assumed with confidence, the churches know better than the state how many Christians are affiliated to them. This therefore gives us a second measure of the total Christians which is quite independent of the first (government census figures of professing Christians).

## 3. *Religious practice or church attenders*

A third definition of membership relates to those who actually practice their religion, i.e. *practicing Christians* who may also be termed active Christians, attending Christians, committed Christians, militant Christians (composing Christ's Church Militant Here on Earth, to quote the Prayer for the Church in the Church of England 1552 Communion Service). Practicing Christians are defined here as those who participate in the ongoing institutional and organized life and pattern of the churches. Using the broadest definition, this covers all affiliated church members who attend church services of public worship a minimum of once a year; and it covers all who fulfil the minimum annual obligation of their church, which may be reception of communion at Easter and/or on other occasions annually. Using a more rigorous definition, this category may be subdivided into monthly attenders (those who attend church at least once a month) or weekly attenders (those who attend regularly every Sunday). Many churches keep such statistics of practice, and in addition many secular polling organizations provide data on church attendance. Where such data exist, statistics of practice for a denomination or diocese are given in *WCD Country Table 2*, column 10, using the code P (= % practicing); and estimates of practice for the whole country are given in *WCD Country Table 1*. Note that the *percentages* for practicing and non-practicing usually quoted refer to

percentages of affiliated Christians, not percentages of the whole country's population. To many persons active in the churches, this definition of 'Christians' is the only one they can use; Christians are those who practice the faith by attending worship regularly within the churches.

4. *Involvement in the church's outreach* Christians described by types 1, 2, and 3 above are not necessarily activists or zealots or enthusiasts or believers who take their faith seriously enough to practice specifically Christian values. A large number estimated here at 400 millions are church attenders who nevertheless do not live a specifically Christian lifestyle involving obedience to Christ as Lord including involvement in his mandate to outreach and mission. Some 648 millions of Christians do, however, get so involved, taking seriously Christ's final commands to his disciples 'Go', 'Make disciples', 'Baptize', 'Teach'. Because they are aware of these commands and are actively attempting to follow Christ on his mission, this survey terms them *Great Commission Christians*. The totals for every nation are given in Country Tables 1; the methodology for their calculation is set out in Part 21 "GeoPersonnel" and elsewhere.

#### *CHILDREN ALSO MUST BE INCLUDED*

The place of children in Christian enumeration needs critical examination and radical re-emphasis. All churches would agree that the influence and example of parents are the most powerful of all influences. The family is by far the most important instrumentality through which individuals acquire personal, cultural, and social self-identification. In consequence, children of church members are more likely to remain members than those whose parents are not church members. Children of ardent and practicing Christians usually are, to the extent that their years permit, ardent and practicing Christians.

#### *Children also can practice their faith*

Many churches however do not enumerate children of under 15 years. One reason is that it has been widely noted that most conversion crises occur in the 13–20 age group in Christian families or in christianized lands. On this view, therefore, children who have not yet reached 15 (known in Protestant circles as 'the age of decision'), cannot reasonably be expected to be practicing and believing Christians. We here take the opposite view: children and infants also can properly be called Christians, and can actively and regularly (to the extent of their ability) practice the Christian faith. The photographs of practicing Christians shown on this page, and a number of others throughout the book, show children (defined as ages 5–15 years. i.e. the school-age population), infants (defined as under 5 years old, usually termed the pre-school populations) and in several cases new-born babies (see infant baptism services portrayed later) who are present and active or in some way participating in Christian worship and witness. To understand the magnitude of this problem, it is advisable at this point to see just how numerous children are in the Christian world.

#### *How numerous are children?*

Reasonable assumptions on this subject are: (1) in the Christian world the proportions of children and other functional age-groups are (for our own immediate purposes) approximately the same as in their country and in the world at large; (2) children and infants have, in general, the same religion as their parents; and (3) in particular, children and infants of practicing Christians usually practice the faith to the extent that they are able and should therefore also be called practicing Christians too. We then arrive at the conclusion demonstrated in the table below that in AD 2000 approximately 240 million children and infants in the world can properly be called practicing Christians.

#### *Enumerate your children and infants*

Since children and infants form in this way over 36% of all professing Christians, and 37% of all affiliated Christians, it stands to reason that in any statistical survey of world Christianity they must not be ignored, whatever a particular confession's answer may be to the questions 'Can an infant be a Christian?' and 'Can an infant be a practicing Christian?'. Churches whose statistical procedures ignore children and infants can now be seen to be seriously underenumerating their own numerical strengths. On the world scale, this situation has given rise to a serious understatement of the size and numerical strength of the Christian community in comparison with the total population, a situation which has often then been rationalized theologically by the assertion that the Body of Christ must always be only the Little Flock, the Saving Remnant, the Gideon's Band (of only 300 persons), in other words only a tiny minority in a non-Christian

world.

For a true assessment of the situation, therefore, children and infants must be enumerated. Those world confessions which are Non-Liturgical, such as Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals and other Protestants whose present procedures enumerate only adult members (15 years and older, i.e. the working-age and old-age population in the table below) should therefore note that these adults probably form only around 63% of their true total community, on their own definition of membership. To arrive at a correct estimate of their true strength vis-a-vis the total population around them they should increase their quoted adult membership figures by dividing them by a factor around 0.63 (63%). The exact procedure by which this has been done in the present survey, for all such denominations in all countries of the world, is explained below in the discussion of the methodology of *WCE Country Table 2*.

It follows that, to ensure comparability from one confession or church to another, it is important to note whether any statistics that one is examining (or quoting) include children and infants. Baptized listings for the Liturgical world confessions—Catholic, Orthodox, Anglicans and some Protestant churches including Lutherans—and also government census figures, do include children and infants; but communicant rolls and other adult listings exclude children and infants and enumerate only adults. Censuses of church attendance often badly under-represent the true situation because attending children and infants are not included among the total of attenders, who are then divided by the total population (which includes children and infants) to arrive at incorrectly-low percentages. A total of adults cannot properly be compared with another total including children, otherwise misleading conclusions may be drawn. In the same way, all public-opinion polls enquiring about affiliation and religious practice enumerate only the adult population. Since the children and infants of religious parents, and of practicing Christians, can also be active attenders, they also must be enumerated to make any accounting complete. In many countries, the religion of children is stated in law to be that of their parents, as in Norway's 1969 law declaring that 'Children born in wedlock belong to the religion of their parents'. It is assumed in this survey therefore that, when such polls data are used, children under 14 have the same characteristics as their parents; i.e. the same religion, and religious practice, as the head of the family; except in rare cases where data to the contrary are available. This means then that all statistics given in Country Tables 1 cover the total community of every religion—men, women and their children and infants.

## RELIGION DEFINITIONS OF 8 TYPES OF PERSONS, 7 BEING CHRISTIANS

### *Operationalizing our definitions*

We can now proceed to relatively exact definitions of the major variables used in our enumeration of all categories of Christians and other religionists. We can also study how they are quantified and how they are operationalized. The latter term has a specific meaning. 'Operationism or operationalism is the insistence upon the use of operational definitions in science wherever the meaning of a term in quantitative discourse is to be understood' (J. Gould & W.L. Kolb, eds, *A dictionary of the social sciences*; London, 1964:475. See also 'The present state of operationalism', chapter 2 in P.G. Frank (ed), *The validation of scientific theories*, New York, 1954). The value of exact definitions is that different observers or analysts of the same situation should then arrive at similar results. Definitions of simple categories such as 'church personnel', 'institutions', even 'schools', can vary considerably from one user to the next. Our solution here is to formulate definitions which are as precise as possible cross-culturally and cross-nationally, and then to apply these standard definitions for all countries, churches, and religions.

### *Enumerating all categories*

The key to understanding the enumeration of Christians presented in this book lies therefore in grasping the definitions contained in the diagram above, and in the explanation that follows. These definitions arise out of 10 different standpoints or ways of looking at the world and its populations. Table 14–8 sets these out in a comparative format, adding 2 other categories: 'Demography', and 'Evangelization'. To assist in understanding the definitions, we also add global totals for each of the types of Christians and others in the 2 years 1970 and 2000. After giving the diagram, we then explain each of the 10 standpoints.

#### 1. Demography

The starting point is the size of the global population in the 2 years 1970 and 2000, as shown on this line.

## 2. Religion

The world may, to start with, be divided into two according to whether or not persons profess any religion. Those who profess no religion (15.2%) may be called either unbelievers or non-believers, or religionists. The term 'religionists' is coming increasingly into use; thus in August 1978 there was held at the Jakko-in Temple Study Centre in Inuyama City, Japan, the Third Conference of Youth Religionists in Japan.

## 3. Evangelization

Secondly, the world is divided into the trichotomy of World A (the unevangelized), World B (evangelized non-Christians), and World C (all Christians).

## 4. Christianity

The world may again be divided into two, into those who are Christians, and those who are non-Christians of all kinds including the non-religious. Christians are defined here as all who call themselves followers of Christ, in public or in private, or who regard themselves as followers of Christ or as part of a Christian community or who claim to be such. As has been explained, this is in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in which every individual has the right to say to what religion he or she belongs and to have this accepted by state and society.

## 5. Public profession

Christians may first be subdivided into 2 main categories—professing, and crypto-Christian—depending on whether or not their faith is publicly known, i.e. known and declared to the public and to the state. Professing Christians are those who profess (declare, state, confess, identify themselves) publicly to be Christians when asked what their religion is, either in government censuses, or in public-opinion polls, or by social scientists or other researchers conducting surveys. Professing Christians are therefore persons known to state or government, and/or to the public at large, and concerning whom statistical totals are known to the state and government and are often published by them or quoted in their dealings with the churches. Such census records constitute a formal declaration or statement to the state revealing one's personal religious preference, and one which may be used by the state against the individual or his family or relatives or associates. Consequently in countries where Christianity is discriminated against, many rightly choose not to reveal this information to the state. These persons, to whom we give the name crypto-Christians, are so important that we should describe them in detail at this point.

*Crypto-Christians.* This grouping is also called secret believers, or non-professing Christians, or Christians not publicly baptized, or clandestine or underground believers. They are those who for reasons of family, personal safety, status, employment or other factors do not declare or reveal their commitment to Christ or expose their faith to public or state scrutiny or enquiry but prefer to keep it private. As a result, they are not enumerated as Christians in government censuses or polls but remain unknown and unenumerated in such public enquiries. For various other reasons also, they remain unknown to governments and unregistered with them, or are overlooked or excluded in government tallies. They are however, usually known to the churches, or join churches openly, or are known by the churches to have been baptized privately, or in fact constitute their own churches. In almost all cases, churches regard them as affiliated, and include them in their own enumerations of affiliation. The churches count them in their statistics, though they often do not record them by name and they take pains to conceal their identity from the state or a hostile populace.

A description of the family background of metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad (died 1978) provides a good illustration. 'He was born into a party-card-carrying Communist family 49 years ago. His father was a militant atheist. His mother was officially an atheist as well, although privately Nikodim said that she had been a secret believer. He apparently discovered this only after he himself joined the Church, during his teens' (*Religion in Communist lands*, 6, 4 (Winter, 1978), 227).

Another type of secret believer is found in Islamic countries. There are large numbers of Muslims in these countries who are trying to follow Christ whilst remaining in the Muslim community and not breaking with it. The present survey enumerates such persons as 'Hidden Muslim believers in Christ' and estimates their total in the year 1995 at 450,000 in 15 countries.

Secret believers are not necessarily always underground, or persecuted—they are merely unknown to the

state or unrecognized by it. Often the state or society at large is completely unaware of the existence of sizeable groups of Christians, especially if they belong to illegal or banned groups (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, New Apostolics, etc.) Certain churches in any case prefer to exist clandestinely, deliberately operating unknown to the state.

Underground Christians may be further characterized as crypto-Protestants, crypto-Catholics, crypto-Orthodox, et alii. Another distinction is that a group may be, for instance, crypto-Witnesses (secret Jehovah's Witnesses) but not crypto-Christians because their religion is officially regarded as Roman Catholic or members of some established or state church.

It will be noticed from *WCE* Country Tables 1 in certain countries that the 'professing' categories are missing for certain 'affiliated' traditions present there. This means that those traditions are in the category of crypto-Christians.

*Safeguarding clandestine Christians.* There is need to preserve the anonymity of crypto-Christians in many countries, due to hostile state apparatus. The data we give in this book are unlikely to harm them because the information usually comes from existing published sources. We mention no persons' names or addresses. In any case, state files on these groups are greatly more detailed, comprehensive and incriminating than anything we publish here. At the same time, it is necessary to urge Christians in Western countries to be on the alert to avoid any possibility of incrimination of secret believers in such countries.

## **6. Church affiliation**

Professing Christians may be subdivided into 2 categories—affiliated, and unaffiliated (often called nominal)—depending on whether or not they are in any sense attached to or associated with organized or institutional Christianity. Affiliated Christians are Christians who are known to or in the churches, who at some time present or past have joined or belonged to one of the churches' categories of membership and affiliation, who hold or have claimed formal membership in a local church, who are known to the churches individually by name and are therefore on the churches' rolls or books at local or grass-roots level. They are therefore Christians with whom the churches are in touch, who are on the records of the institutional churches or organized Christianity, who are not simply individual Christians but are also part of the churches' corporate life, community and fellowship, and who are therefore enumerated by the churches as members or adherents in a form which can be substantiated. Statistics of affiliated Christians, as presented in this book, are always those supplied by the churches themselves, although in a handful of public-opinion polls the question 'Are you a member of any church?' has produced similar data (e.g. AIPO 1954 and 1976, Gallup 1940-2000 in the USA).

In the Western world, affiliated Christians are also professing (known in government censuses), but in Communist countries and in Third-World countries with a dominant non-Christian religion, a sizeable number remain as crypto-Christians. The organized churches, overtly asserting that Jesus is the Christ, are termed by Paul Tillich the manifest church (*Systematic theology*, III, p. 152–382, passim). In cases where 2 churches claim the same people as members (as is widely the case in Latin America with Catholics and Evangelicals), this is shown as a group of doubly-affiliated at the end of *WCE*'s Country Table 2, and in Country Table 1 on the line immediately after all affiliated megablocs, with the negative sign to ensure correct computerized enumeration and addition.

Nominal Christians are defined here as professing Christians who are unaffiliated or unchurched, i.e. not affiliated to churches, nor in contact with them, nor attached to them, nor associated with them, nor known to them nor on their rolls or books. They are therefore Christians who are outside or have rejected the institutional churches or are otherwise not on the records of organized Christianity, who may individually be Christians but who are not part of the corporate life, community or fellowship of the churches, and who therefore from the churches' point of view are regarded as Christians in name only, whilst at the same time often maintaining Christian beliefs and Christian values. Nominal Christians, in other words, are unaffiliated Christians who, for reasons good or bad, do not belong to the visible and organized community of believers. They are sometimes called the latent church as opposed to the manifest church which unashamedly asserts Jesus as the Christ (Paul Tillich, et alii).

In the Western world (Europe, USA), this term 'nominal' often carries connotations of dishonesty or hypocrisy, and such persons not known to the churches are often regarded as post-Christians forming a

penumbra of residual Christianity; though from another point of view they contain large numbers of personally-committed Christians who find themselves indifferent to organized or institutional religion. A full statistical study of this category in one particular nation, the USA, has been undertaken by Gallup International in their poll 'The unchurched American' (June 1978 onwards), whose main finding is: 'A majority of American adults who for one reason or another have rejected the institutional church still adhere to most traditional Christian beliefs and values'. This survey is summarized here in Country Table 1 for the USA. The situation with regard to being 'nominal' is quite different in regions where Christianity is expanding, especially Africa, where this category covers masses of intending or latent Christians who desire to be Christians and regard themselves as followers of Christ but who have not yet been contacted or initiated (catechumenate and baptism) by the churches, because the latter are quite incapable of handling the huge numbers involved. In many Third-World countries where there is a wide difference between Christianity and the local culture or cultures, there is also the serious problem of existing churches being unsuitable for the reception of new converts. A preliminary article written for the 1978 Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism explains it thus: 'Many who decide for Christ from non-Christian backgrounds do not become members of the Church in the fellowship of believers... There are several factors hindering the new believers from becoming members of the visible church... In certain cases the new disciples often find it difficult to identify with the existing Christians for social reasons... Uprooting people from their cultures and transposing them into another culture makes it socially difficult for many Asians to become Christians' (George Samuel, 'Nurture the harvest', *Asia's harvest* (ALCOE Newsbulletin), 4 (1978), 1).

Another reason for the existence of large numbers in this category of nominal Christians is that census figures include large numbers of dispersed, or isolated, or scattered Christians, families and groups, including recently-moved or -migrated persons and groups, who are unaffiliated, or not yet affiliated, to churches for a variety of reasons such as a local absence of churches using their own language, or their very recent arrival, and so on.

For all these reasons, the term 'nominal' is therefore used here in its strictly correct or literal sense, i.e. persons who (for whatever reason, good or bad) are at present Christians in name only (viewed from the standpoint of the churches).

Two other variants of affiliation are used in this survey: doubly-affiliated (to 2 denominations at once), and disaffiliated (baptized Christians who have since or recently become professing agnostics or atheists).

'Roll-cleaning' has an important bearing on the size of affiliated membership. Large established or state churches seldom or never 'clean their rolls' (i.e. remove names no longer known to them, or names of members who have left, died, migrated or apostatized). Through not cleaning its rolls regularly and realistically, the Roman Catholic Church in particular has on its rolls vast numbers of names of former Catholics who are now no longer members in any sense. An example is the so-called 'Red Region' of Emilia-Romagna in Italy. Polls have long showed that its population is heavily Communist, 4% being atheists and another 15% agnostics; but *Annuario Pontificio* (1995) still reports that this population, roughly coterminous with the archdiocese of Bologna, is 99% Roman Catholics affiliated to the archdiocese. There is of course truth in this, in that the 99% in all probability were at one time baptized Catholics; now, however, 20% have disaffiliated themselves. We take care of this phenomenon in our tables with the clearly-de-fined category 'disaffiliated'. A fuller definition will shortly be given.

## 7. Practice

Affiliated Christians may be subdivided into 2 categories—practicing Christians, and non-practicing Christians—depending on whether or not they take any part in the ongoing organized life of the churches. Practicing Christians are affiliated Christians who are involved in or active in or participate in the institutional or organized life of the churches they are affiliated to; or who are regarded by their churches as practicing members because they fulfil their churches' minimum annual attendance obligations or other membership requirements; or who in some way take a recognized part in the churches' ongoing practice of Christianity. Thus in the Church of Scotland 'active communicants' are defined as persons who communicate (receive communion) at least once a year. In 1939 this was 76.8% of all communicants on the rolls, 56.7% in 1943, 72.0% in 1946, and 71.3% in 1959. In the Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt), a 'practicing Copt' is one who receives communion at least once every 40 days. Sometimes there is a financial connotation; some denominations only count as practicing those adult members who contribute

each year to local or central church funds. Certain denominations publish detailed definitions: thus the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA explains 'A "participating" member is one who exercises a continuing interest in one or more of the following ways: attendance, giving, activity, spiritual concern for the fellowship of the congregation regardless of the place of residence' (Classification of church membership, General Assembly Resolution No. 57, Detroit 1964). The broadest meaning of the term is of annual church attenders, those who attend a service of public worship (within the ordinary pattern of institutional religion) at least once a year regularly; it excludes those who only attend church on special private family or personal occasions (baptisms, weddings, funerals), or only on civic occasions or state festivals, but it includes all persons who listen to services only over radio and TV (bearing in mind that countless elderly, infirm, sick and handicapped persons who cannot attend church nevertheless listen or view regularly, and that in vast numbers of places where churches are not accessible (e.g. Norway, Africa, oceans) radio/TV services are the only possible form of attendance). In many larger Protestant churches, statistics of affiliated members tend to be close to those of practicing members; in other words, their definition of membership is those who partake of communion at least once a year. Similarly, in many smaller Protestant churches, affiliated members means those who attend regularly or even weekly.

Non-practicing Christians, in contrast, are affiliated Christians who take no part in their churches' ongoing activities, and who are inactive and non-attending or who describe themselves as such. They are sometimes termed dormant Christians, or collectively as the dormant church.

## 8. Church attendance

Practicing Christians may also be termed active, attending, committed or militant Christians, and may be subdivided into several mutually-exclusive categories of attending Christians, as shown in Table 14–

3. This information is often obtainable in part from polls data. It covers the 8 main types of attenders shown in the diagram, which may be listed as follows in decreasing order of participation: those who attend church services several times a week (daily attenders); those who attend church services every Sunday, or Saturday (weekly or Sunday attenders); those who go only twice a month (fortnightly attenders); those who go only once a month (monthly attenders); those who, for reasons of age, infirmity, sickness or in the absence of local churches, in place of church attendance listen regularly to Sunday radio/TV services every week or once a month (radio/TV service listeners); those who attend church on church festivals only (festival attenders); those who attend from time to time or irregularly, i.e. at most 2 or 3 times a year (occasional attenders); and those who attend or take communion once a year only, often at Christmas or Easter only (annual attenders). As explained above, our definition of practicing Christians excludes 2 further categories: civic attenders, i.e. those who attend church services only on civic occasions or state festivals, and private attenders, i.e. those who attend church services only for special private family occasions (baptisms, weddings, funerals). In the Western world, this latter type of attendance is sometimes irreverently termed '4-wheeler religion' because the main participants enter church only when wheeled in prams, wedding cars, or hearses. Care should be taken in examining a poll to see whether its categories are intended to be distinct, mutually-exclusive and non-overlapping (this being the usual situation), or whether they overlap in a cumulative manner; 'annual attenders' in a poll may mean either those who attend only once a year, or the aggregate of all who attend once a year (including those who attend monthly, fortnightly, weekly, daily). On average across the world, Christians attending once a month or more are usually well over half the size of the total of practicing Christians. In this book, 'practicing' percentages always mean % of affiliated Christians (as shown in Country Tables 2 column 10, where P = % practicing every year, and W = % practicing every week, i.e. Sunday attenders); this is because only affiliated Christians can reasonably be expected to practice.

*Attending non-members.* There are 2 further types of church attender that are excluded from our category of practicing Christians. The first are attending non-members, i.e. nominal Christians (who by definition are non-church-members) who occasionally or in some cases regularly attend church services. Such individuals are relatively few in number and are sufficiently negligible in aggregate not to be shown specifically in our Country Tables 1.

*Attending non-Christians.* The second type are attending non-Christians, i.e. persons who attend church services regularly or occasionally, being interested in Christianity, but who are still non-Christians (pagans, Muslims, Hindus, etc). In areas of the world where Christianity is expanding rapidly, large numbers of non-

Christians attend church every Sunday as potential converts. This is particularly the case in Black Africa, such as in TEKAN in the Central Belt of Nigeria, in the Tiv Church, and elsewhere in the tropics. All such persons are not included in our category of practicing Christians, and in Country Tables 1 they are included only under their own religions at the times indicated.

## **9. Belief**

The foregoing categories of Christians describe the external, visible, observable status of Christianity. However, these categories of themselves can say little or nothing about the inner quality of Christian faith or experience, or about faith and belief. For this reason, several Christian traditions go further and hold that they are only interested in ideal categories like ‘believing Christians’, ‘true believers’, ‘real Christians’, ‘committed Christians’, ‘converted Christians’, ‘nuclear Christians’, ‘authentic Christians’, ‘born again Christians’, and so on.

Unfortunately, virtually no traditions, churches, or agencies actually measure and report such statistics, which means that such categories are useless as variables in any global enumeration. Almost the only example of such statistics on the world level comes from the Assemblies of God, who in their 1998 global report gave for 50 countries figures of members ‘Baptized in the Holy Spirit’ that totaled to only a fraction of all affiliated members.

It is feasible to define ‘Belief’ here to include ‘Commitment’. Christians may be divided into committed, partially-committed and uncommitted Christians. The term committed can be defined in many different ways; one way, as shown in the diagram, is to regard regular attenders (once a month or more) who profess belief in Christ as Savior and an experience of salvation or conversion, to compose this committed nucleus. Unfortunately, all such categories of commitment are too subjective to enumerate fairly or scientifically, and so they have to be excluded from Country Tables 1 and 2. Attempts have been made, however, to probe deeper and to quantify certain aspects of belief and faith, using public-opinion polls. The most revealingly personal question on belief that has been asked is, perhaps, ‘Do you consider that you have been born again (as a Christian)?’, and other variants. The experience of new birth is here defined as a turning point in life when one commits oneself to Christ as Savior and Lord. To this question in 1976 in Norway, 18% of all Norwegians replied Yes (27% for all young people), and in the USA 34% of all adults (50% of all professing Protestants, 18% of all professing Catholics) rising to 41% by 1995 (Gallup). Using our definitions of professing, affiliated and practicing Christians. This means that in the USA 49% of all practicing Christians (and 72% of all practicing Protestants) define themselves as born-again Christians. What these figures indicate is that, although statistics of belief and commitment on a world scale are unavailable and not likely to become available, existing statistics of profession, affiliation, practice, attendance, and belief may be taken as a reasonably reliable indicator of the presence of belief and commitment. On the world scale, it is probable that some 40% of all adult practicing Christians would claim this experience of new birth. Children and infants, once again, should be enumerated with their parents, so that one can extend this latter sentence to say that 40% of all practicing Christians of all ages belong to a self-identifying born-again Christian community. Because this and similar questions have only been asked in a handful of nations, all industrialized, these data are not here systematically documented in Country Tables 1, but are given to some extent in *WCE* Part 12 “Dictionary”, under the entry ‘belief.’

## **10. Mission and outreach**

A final typology used here attempts to sum up the previous typologies and to subdivide totals of Christians into those properly termed ‘disciples’—all those who take seriously Christ’s call to follow him in his mission on Earth—and those other Christians who are not so demarcated, for reasons good or bad. This last typology coins the term ‘Great Commission Christians’ (alternatively, ‘GeoChristians’) meaning all who are aware of Christ’s final commission, accept it for themselves, and are in some degree involved with Christ in his mission. The opposite category is here termed ‘latent Christians’. This whole subject is worked through in Part 21 “GeoPersonnel” where the methodology for measuring Great Commission Christians is derived.

### ***Inclusive and exclusive definitions***

From Global Diagram 30’s definitions (Part 1), it may be seen that several categories overlap, and several are mutually exclusive. The grand total of all Christians, on this definition, can be counted in 2 main ways:

(1) from the state's standpoint, as the total of professing and crypto-Christians, or (2) from the churches' standpoint, as the total of affiliated and unaffiliated (or nominal) Christians. Crypto-Christians are always affiliated (never nominal); and nominal Christians are always professing Christians (never crypto-Christians). Similarly, a professing Christian may at the same time be an affiliated Christian and also a practicing Christian. But a nominal Christian cannot at the same time be an affiliated Christian, nor a practicing Christian; nor indeed can he be a non-practicing Christian either. To avoid confusion, therefore, great care must be exercised in the exact choice of the terms one wishes to use.

### ***Mutually-exclusive adherence***

In the same way, this survey uses its terminology for followers of other religions in a mutually-exclusive sense. A person is either a Christian, or a Hindu, or a Muslim, or an atheist, or something else, but he cannot normally be enumerated here as more than one of these at any given time. We recognize that there are many independent individuals who like to think of themselves as having 2, 3, 4 or even more of these labels simultaneously. In reply it should be noted that (1) no government census in any country gives such individuals the option of a multiple choice, (2) such individuals are normally few in number, (3) the vast majority of people in virtually all countries can be clearly described by a single term each, and (4) our survey is a demographic one describing broad populations rather than exceptional individuals. To this extent our use of mutually-exclusive categories is justified.

In one important way, however, this situation is changing. Large numbers of Hindus, and to a smaller extent Buddhists and Muslims, are still calling themselves by those names but are also professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, God, and Savior. These persons are categorized here under the generic term 'Other non-Christian believers in Christ', and their statistics are (a) included, together with their myriads of house churches and private mininetworks or even minidenominations, in *WCE Country Tables 2*, and then (b) reconciled in *Country Tables 1* by the inclusion of the category 'Doubly-professing religionists' or 'Doubly-counted religionists'.

### ***QUANTIFYING RELIGIOUS CHANGE***

The world religious situation is far from static; change is continual, old religions are waning and new religions are arising. Surges of conversions from one religion to another are constantly taking place; many churches are expanding numerically, others are declining. This survey investigates changes over time in certain quantifiable aspects of church life. It attempts to document this in every country, firstly by compiling statistics for definite years (particularly mid-1970, 1990, 1995, and 2000), and secondly by giving annual rates of increase or decrease for all religions (in *Country Tables 1*, as described below) and for all individual denominations and churches (in *Country Tables 2*, column 9, which as explained below gives annual exponential church growth over the 25-year period 1970-1995).

Religion, race and society are in fact not dead mosaics or fixed and unchanging patchworks. They are living and active entities constantly changing in a ceaseless flux of action and reaction. We take account of all this in our survey by incorporating into our texts and tables not only religious change but also indicators of societal, demographic and ethnolinguistic change.

The global situation in AD 2000 is described and analyzed here in *Global Diagram 41 'The dynamics of global religious change'*.

### ***Measuring growth rates***

The rates of growth, increase, decrease or decline of membership in many churches can readily be measured from their annually-reported statistics. In this survey this has been done by obtaining the statistics for 2 different years, where possible 5 years apart (to minimize the effects of roll-cleaning and other annual irregularities), usually 1990-1995 and 1995-2000, and working out the average annual growth rate as a percentage. Great care must be taken in such computations to ensure that the statistics used are measuring exactly the same entity (especially geographically) for each of the 2 years concerned. Growth, as per cent increase or decrease per year, must be measured by dividing any annual increase by the identical category of total. Thus a church in a particular country with 500,000 total adherents (including children) in 1995 which grows to 600,000 total adherents (including children) in 2000 shows an increase of 600,000 minus 500,000 = 100,000, which divided by 5 = 20,000 a year, which divided by the mean membership of

550,000 gives an increase rate of 3.64% per year. In practice, this book follows a more accurate method by using the 1970 and 1995 figures for each denomination to arrive at exponential annual rates. Results are set out for every denomination in Country Tables 2 column 9. Values are given to 2 places of decimals. Negative values (e.g. G=-1.03%) indicate that a body is decreasing or declining annually. For each country, the net totals of all such changes in affiliation for the period 1990-2000 were then calculated. Statistics of Christians in the column 'Total' were then compiled under 'Annual change, 1990-2000' in all Country Tables 1. The same was done for non-Christian religions, in most cases by comparing censuses or polls over 5 or 10-year periods. Where no other data were available, for some countries censuses of 1900 and 1970 were available from which century-long trends could be established.

There are several different ways of measuring the growth of a church or body. Firstly, one can measure either adults only, or total community including children; in Country Tables 1 and 2 we always use the latter. Secondly, the growth rate of a church or religious grouping can be measured over a single day, or a month, a year, a decade, or 50 years—and all will yield differing results. In this survey we are concerned primarily to measure long-term rates, i.e. rates over the 25-year period 1970-1995 in Country Tables 2, column 9, and rates over the decade 1990-2000 in Country Tables 1. A growth rate measured for a specific church over a 2- or 3-year period may not be sustained throughout the decade, which explains differences in rates for the same church obtained at different times.

### ***Checking for plausibility***

A certain amount of religious change or church growth claimed by some bodies may appear unlikely, implausible, exaggerated or even physically impossible. Logarithmic graph paper provides a quick method of checking on the plausibility of any time series of figures of church or population growth. One simply plots the claimed growth figures on a graph (vertical logarithmic axis) against time (horizontal axis). The resulting lines will have to be reasonably linear, or slightly curvilinear, to be credible or plausible. In this sense, log paper is a far more valuable analytical tool than ordinary graph paper.

### ***Demographic inertia***

Before proceeding to analyze annual change into the 2 major component parts utilized in this survey, we should note an important principle affecting the growth and evolution of populations; large populations only change their basic characteristics gradually or slowly. This demographic inertia is a concept from demography, based on the observable fact that changes in the fertility rate take several decades before they have any effect on the growth rate of a population. In fact, any time-series based on large-scale phenomena, particularly populations in the millions, will behave in a relatively stable manner. This has a useful consequence for missiographers constructing tables describing a country's religious evolution over the decades, in that a study of regular series of government censuses of religion in a country (such as Table 9 and its facing page in *1971 Census of Canada: religious denominations*, p. 9-1, for the years 1921-71) leads to an important generalization: the percentage size of a religious community or population in a country does not change appreciably over the years from one census to the next, even when total population is increasing rapidly, unless (a) large-scale conversions are taking place within the community to or from another religion, or (b) its fertility or biological increase rate is markedly different from the national average, or (c) mass emigration or immigration is under way in the community, or (d) an anti-religious revolution takes place in the country, or (e) religious belief within the community is severely eroded by secularism. In the Western world, the percentage figures for particular religions usually remain unchanged from year to year, or change relatively slowly. In the Communist world, percentages have changed little from one year to the next except as a result of anti-religious revolutions and resulting mass defections or emigrations; and in the Third World, annual increases are gradually taking place in the % Christian of many populations due to mass conversions and long-term missionary activity over the decades.

### ***Natural change***

The total annual numerical change (growth or decline) of a religious body or grouping in a particular country is composed of 2 quite different types of change which it is important to identify and to separate. The first is (1) *natural change*, which is change as experienced by the whole population of the country concerned, including all religious bodies, and over which religious bodies have, relatively, little or no control. This natural or demographic change is itself composed of 2 parts, (a) biological change (in UN terminology, 'natural' increase or decrease), which is change due to natural causes properly so called, i.e. the

annual net aggregate of births to members of the body minus deaths in it; together with (b) migration change (sometimes termed transfer change), which is the annual net aggregate of immigration into the body (arrival or transfer of members or co-religionists from other countries) minus emigration out of it (departure or transfer of members or co-religionists to other countries). Natural change, consisting of these 2 types together, has been calculated for each country in the world in the biennial UN publication, *World population prospects*, (New York: UN). All churches in all parts of the world experience biological increase nowadays, though rarely are they aware of it as a cause of their growth. All churches also experience on a small scale the continual ebb and flow of migration, as their members move from one country to another, but in only a few cases is the migration change large enough to warrant comparison with biological change. In all Country Tables 1, these net annual changes are shown for all religions as well as countries in the column 'Natural' under 'Annual change, 1990–2000'. When a figure in this column is negative, it means either that deaths are outstripping births, or that nett emigration is outstripping any natural biological increase, or some combination thereof.

### ***Conversion change***

The natural change just described involves no change in religious allegiance or adherence; from the churches' point of view, it is 'natural' because it represents the state of affairs existing before religious conversions take place. There is therefore a second type of change which occurs when changes in religious allegiance or adherence do take place, i.e. when people leave one religion and join another. Depending on the observer's point of view, this can be called unnatural, non-natural or even supranatural or supernatural change. In this survey, we term it (2) *conversion change*, defined here as consisting entirely of changes in religious allegiance, i.e. the annual nett aggregate of conversions to the body of new adherents from other religions or religious bodies, minus defections (sometimes termed apostasies) from it of former adherents leaving to join other religions or religious bodies, or abandoning religion altogether. A large majority of churches in the Third World are experiencing conversion increase nowadays, whilst in the Western world many older denominations are experiencing conversion decrease as former members withdraw from affiliation, usually into nonreligion. In all Country Tables 1, these net annual changes are shown for all countries and religions in the column 'Conversion' under 'Annual change, 1990-2000'.

It should be carefully noted that our category 'conversions' does not carry here exactly the same theological and evangelistic connotations usually attributed to the term in Christian parlance and scholarship. Rather, our term refers to transfers of allegiance from one religion to another, or from one Christian bloc to another, or from one type of Christian (e.g. 'affiliated') to another (e.g. 'unaffiliated'), or from religious to nonreligious, and so on. 'Conversion' here includes changes of religious profession due to mixed marriages, one of the commonest causes where Islam and other world religions are involved with Christianity.

### ***Total = natural + conversion***

By asking, then, how much of the total annual change experienced by any particular religious body is due to natural biological causes, how much is due to migration, and how much is due to changes of religious allegiance or adherence, we arrive at the formula for annual change in the body:

### **Total change = natural change + conversion change.**

In all Country Tables 1, these 3 types are given for all major religious groupings, giving the totals shown there for all countries and the totals for regions, continents and for the world shown in Part 10 "GeoStatistics".

In order therefore to assess whether a church or religious grouping is expanding by conversions or accretions and not simply by natural causes, we must compare its total growth rate with its biological or natural increase rate.

### ***Differential fertility, mortality and migration***

Because data are rarely available for religious bodies or groupings concerning the actual increase rate due to biological causes (births minus deaths), the assumption has been made in Country Tables 1 that all groups share the same natural increase rate as the national average, unless evidence to the contrary is available. In fact, certain groups have higher fertility than the average (e.g. Irish Roman Catholics in

Britain; Blacks in the USA; Roman Catholics in 20th century Switzerland and Holland; Muslims across Black Africa); and certain Christian bodies in certain countries in certain eras have experienced markedly-reduced mortality compared to that of the general population, due to the introduction of Western medicine (e.g. churches linked to Western missions in India and other developing nations). In general, however, our assumption is adequate for the tables' main purpose of establishing broad areas of magnitude. In the same way, unless specific information is available concerning the migration rate in religious blocs, this is assumed to parallel that of the nation or country. In several countries, however, for churches or blocs where these rates are vastly different from the national averages, higher fertility or different migration rates for certain religious groups have been included in Country Tables 1.

### ***Hidden changes***

An inevitable property of overall compilations of totals such as our Country Tables 1 and 2 is that many smaller internal increases or decreases are hidden or masked. Rapid growth of one body may be hidden in a government census if combined with rapid decline of another body of the same religion or ecclesiastical tradition, or in a different geographical area. Our column 'Annual change' in Country Tables 1 therefore shows not the entire picture of change but only the net losses or gains of each religion or religious bloc.

### ***All totals are net (nett)***

As mentioned at various points above, it must again be remembered that all of our totals of change shown in the tables are net (often spelt 'nett') totals, i.e. gains of all kinds (conversions/births/immigrants) minus losses of all kinds (defections/deaths/emigrants).

### ***Massive increases may be spurious***

During our analysis of existing compilations of church growth data, we have occasionally found apparently large recorded increase rates for specific churches. On investigation these have proved to be spurious, being the results simply of better and more thorough data collection over the years. Such spurious increases have then been amended and replaced in our tables.

### ***A general idea of conversion***

The whole object of the column 'Conversion' in *WCE* Country Tables 1 is to give a very general idea of the broad order of magnitude of the long-term trends in religious change going on in the country during the decade 1990–2000. The figures given here add up to zero for each country, because conversions to one religion or religious grouping must always mean defections or losses from another religion or religious grouping. By examining this column, it is therefore possible to see where converts are coming from. For example, if Protestants are gaining 100,000 converts a year, and tribal religionists are losing 100,000 a year, and all other groups experience few or no conversions a year, then this is a clear case of a mass movement from tribal religion to Protestantism.

As will shortly be explained, the column 'conversion' was not derived by direct measurement but was derived indirectly by computation. In order to keep the mathematics exact, the figures in the 3 columns under 'Annual change, 1990–2000' are all given to the nearest digit, so that the columns and rows add up exactly; however, this must not be taken to imply any claim to bogus precision. A figure such as '1,937' under 'Conversion', therefore, should be taken to mean, and should be quoted to imply, only that something of the order of 2 thousand people a year are joining that religion or grouping.

### ***Analyzing annual baptisms***

Another way of measuring religious change, this time for a single church or denomination, comes from analyzing statistics of annual baptisms. For a large number of churches, these data are presented in Country Tables 2, column 10, and from them it is possible to see to what extent a church or denomination is keeping up with, or exceeding, or falling behind, the natural population increase (in the case of adult baptisms) and/or the birth rate (in the case of infant baptisms). To do this (for churches practicing only adult baptism), divide the annual number of adult baptisms (coded Y in column 10) by column 6 (adult members); or (for churches practicing infant baptisms (coded y in column 10) by column 8 (total affiliated). The resulting rate, expressed as a % per year, can then be compared with, respectively, either the national natural population increase rate, or the national birth rate. If a church provides only figures for both adult and

infant baptisms combined (as is usually the case with the Roman Catholic Church; coded Yy in column 10), and if this rate is appreciably higher than the birth rate in the country, then it means that substantial adult baptisms are taking place. At the national level, the annual religious change indicated by these data on baptisms for all churches is incorporated here in Country Tables 1 in the 2 columns 'Natural' and 'Conversion' increase.

### *Statistics of new charismatic movements*

In many parts of the world, new Christian movements are beginning and growing rapidly, the largest example being the global neo-pentecostal and charismatic movements within the major older denominations. Such groups have little time or opportunity for self-analysis, and usually keep neither statistics nor exact membership lists. Further, many movements exist within the structures of older denominations, value their close relations with them, and oppose the collecting of statistics as tending to artificially crystallize their identity and to appear to divide charismatics from their non-charismatic fellow-Christians. It must be emphasized here, therefore, that such statistics as we provide in this survey serve merely as an aid to understanding the order of magnitude of the situation and its rapid evolution over the years, and should not be construed as conferring a separate or separatist identity on such movements.

### *More elaborate analyses*

Our analysis of religious change shown in Country Tables 1 in the 4 columns 'Annual change' gives an overall general idea of the dynamics of change in any country. In this survey, we have not gone into detail further than this. However, by subdividing the first 2 columns into 15 columns, the reader interested in more detailed analysis of any Christian bloc (Roman Catholic, Anglican, etc) can generate more elaborate tables to indicate even more clearly what is going on. In the expanded format shown, our 4 basic columns from Country Tables 1 in this survey are shown as, respectively, the new columns 8, 15, 16 and 17. 'Natural change' as defined in this survey can be divided into (a) 'Biological change' (Births minus 'Deaths') and (b) 'Migration change' or transfer change ('Immigrants' of the same Christian bloc who come into the area or grouping from another country, minus 'Emigrants' who leave the religion or grouping not by defection but by moving or being transferred to another country, these 2 categories encompassing adults, children and infants together). In the same way, Country Table 1's column 'Conversion change' can be divided into 'Converts' (total all individuals gained from other religions) and 'Defections' (total all individuals lost to other religions or to no religion); and 'Converts' can be subdivided into 'Adults' and 'Children and infants'. It is also possible at this point to introduce, with due care, churches' statistics of annual baptisms (both adult and infant), so that one may compare and correlate annual baptisms or conversion figures with the more generalized church growth figures given in Country Tables 1. Normally, infant baptisms relate solely to the infants enumerated in 'Births' below; and adult baptisms relate mainly to persons converted from outside. However, there are 2 major exceptions to this. (1) In the case of a paedobaptist or infant-baptizing church which is making many converts from outside, a number of infant baptisms will be of children of these new converts, which we have located below as column 12. Such a church's statistics of infant baptisms must therefore be apportioned between columns 1 and 12.

(2) Likewise, in the case of a church which baptizes adults only (not infants) and which is relatively static, i.e. not making converts from outside, all of its baptisms are of existing church children only, i.e. children of long-standing members, who have grown up in the church over the years, but who were not baptized in infancy; these we have located below in column 10. Such a church's statistics of adult baptisms must therefore be apportioned between columns 9 and 10. This can be done by dividing the total of adult baptisms into the 2 further columns 'Outsiders' i.e. baptisms of persons previously completely outside the Christian bloc in question until their baptism this year, and 'Grown church children' (children of long-standing church members in traditions not practicing infant baptism, who have now reached the age of adult baptism, usually 10–15 years old), These latter should not strictly speaking be termed as 'Converts' but they are included here because 'Adult baptisms' in toto are often so termed.

Other refinements might include investigating differential fertility, mortality and migration, as described above. If these data can be found for each religion and bloc under consideration, the analysis could be made more exact.

In particular countries, the reader may wish to subdivide these columns even further, for instance by sex into males and females, or by age-groups, or by socio-economic groups, or by occupational groups, or by

ethnic or linguistic groups, etc. If the data are available, the scope for more elaborate analyses, and therefore for deeper understanding of the whole process, is endless.

### ***ANALYZING WORLD STATISTICS***

Statistics of Christians and of all religions in *WCE* Part 4 (Country Tables 1 and 2) are arranged and coded in such a way that the reader can follow any or all of 5 main types of worldwide analysis, and 13 sub-types, depending on whichever are of interest or are valid to him, using the geopolitical and religious typologies and data in Table 12-1. The first 2 types below apply only to affiliated Christians in Country Tables 2; the rest apply to both Country Tables 1 and 2. World totals are shown analyzed in these ways in Part 1; regional and continental totals are shown analyzed in Part 10.

#### **1. Ecclesiastical analysis**

An important part of any description of a church or denomination is what its ecclesiastical tradition is. This information is given for each country for all denominations in Country Table 2, column 3 (the last 3 letters). This column lists in coded form some 300 different ecclesiastical traditions (detailed in “GeoCodebook”, Part 16), and world statistics of affiliated Christians are analyzed in this way in Part 10.

#### **2. Conciliar analysis**

In Country Tables 2, column 4, information is given on the membership of the 5 main types of Christian council—confessional, global, continental, regional and national (see GeoCodebook). Christians throughout the world can therefore be analyzed according to the involvement or non-involvement of their churches in the different councils existing across the world; this also is done in Part 10.

#### **3. Geopolitico-religious analysis**

A major type of analysis is by groups of countries. There are many possible ways of classifying the 238 countries of the world, using geopolitical, or politico-religious, or purely religious typologies. In this book, we employ 10 sub-types of typologies based on 10 subjects; these will shortly be described. The codes used for them are given in the GeoCodebook, and the information describing each country is given in Table 16-1. Using these typologies, Christians are analyzed in the global Tables in Part 10.

#### **4. Ethnolinguistic analysis**

In analyzing the world’s populations, it is important to see people not only as citizens or residents in a particular country, but also to see them as members of the basic homogeneous units to which they belong, and which usually have greater emotional hold over them than the tie of common citizenship. If we can see them thus, they can then more effectively be understood, described, enumerated, approached, reached, known, evangelized and eventually christianized. Such units are people of similar ethnic origin, or of similar race or color, or of similar culture, or of similar language, and so on. We do this in this book by employing an ethnolinguistic typology of homogeneous units, or of families or groupings of homogeneous units. Most of the ethnolinguistic units we employ can themselves be broken down further into yet more meaningful homogeneous units. The right place to do this, however, is not in a global survey such as ours but in detailed studies at the national and local level.

In the same way, Christians also may be classified according to their racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic as well as national affiliations. This is done in Country Tables 2, column 10, for many individual churches, denominations and dioceses. It is also done for the Christian community as a whole using the classification and code given in *WCE* Part 8 “Ethnosphere” (Peoples of the World). Parallel data on the total secular population are given at the start of each country’s survey article under Secular Data. In consequence, the world’s populations, and all Christians, can be analyzed among the world’s major ethnolinguistic homogeneous units, its families and peoples.

### **SIX MAJOR ECCLESIASTICO-CULTURAL MEGABLOCS**

#### **5. Ecclesiastico-cultural analysis**

A further, fifth, type of description brings us, finally, to a typology of Christians which is the most widely used by observers and scholars but which is also the least clearly defined. As a result we will now describe

it in detail at this point, because we will have to coin and justify certain neologisms which will then be used throughout the book.

It has long been considered useful for many purposes to divide the world's Christians into major historico-cultural ecclesiastical megablocs, coalitions or ongoing or enduring streams, based on historical, ecclesiastical, cultural and phenomenological considerations. Of such major ecclesiastico-cultural megablocs, the most widely recognized and used are the trio (1) *Roman Catholicism*, (2) *Orthodoxy* (both Eastern and Oriental), and (3) *Protestantism*. These are major de facto groupings which have arisen during the course of Christian history among peoples of different cultural areas and nationalities. Although often regarded as worldwide spiritual families, these blocs are not the result of merely religious or theological or spiritual affinities or differences; they incorporate deep nationalistic, ethnic, linguistic and cultural currents as well, as is illustrated from the early history of the Oriental Orthodox churches: 'Adherence to completely incomprehensible dogmas, like the espousal of the Monophysite doctrine by great masses of people in the Orient and in Egypt, was the expression of an anti-imperial and anti-Hellenic separatist nationalism' (Max Weber, *The sociology of religion*, Boston: Beacon, 1963:70–1). These 3 megablocs are in fact differentiated by many such complex factors.

In any comprehensive survey of how Christians regard themselves, however, it soon becomes apparent that there are many large churches and denominations which do not define themselves under any of these 3 terms, and often reject all three. Since they thus cannot be fitted into the simple 3-fold typology, it means that yet other megablocs must exist. Anglicans, for instance, do not regard themselves, as a whole, as either Protestants or Catholics, but regard themselves as forming an intermediate or bridge tradition; Jehovah's Witnesses do not regard themselves as Protestants or as part of main-line Protestantism; and Old Catholics reject any identity with Roman Catholicism. Consequently our survey recognizes the existence of 3 further distinct worldwide megablocs or distinct enduring streams of Christianity: (4) *Anglicanism* (mainly the Anglican Communion and its 700 dioceses, originating in Britain around AD 100 and evolving since the 16th century its distinctive 'bridge' position intermediate between the Protestant and Roman Catholic positions), (5) *Independency*, which refers to the many churches or movements that are independent of historic Christianity (categories 1-4 above), and which are also termed Postdenominationalist, Restorationist, Radical, Neocharismatic movements, also Old Believers and other schisms from Orthodoxy, and Old Catholics and other autocephalous Catholic churches; and (6) *marginal Christians* (para-Christian, quasi-Christian or tangentially-Christian deviations from mainline Christianity claiming a second or supplementary or ongoing source of divine revelation in addition to the Bible, either a new revealed Book, or angelic visitations, or visions; these date from 1566 to the present day and include Unitarians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Mormons and vast numbers of other more recent movements).

Between them, these 6 megablocs cover all varieties of Christianity found in the Middle East, Europe, North America, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania.

### ***Caucasian-initiated Christianity***

Throughout its history, Christianity as represented by these 6 types or megablocs or streams has been predominantly the religion of the Caucasian or Caucasoid race of peoples, as defined here in our classification Peoples of the World, covering the Semitic, European, Indo-Iranian and related races. Caucasians have always exceeded 85% of all Christians until well into the 20th century, as is tabulated here in Part 1. By 1900 they were still 89%. Furthermore, throughout the last millennium Christianity has been predominantly the religion of the White peoples, rising from 61% of all Christians in the year 1000 to 93% in 1500 and only gradually falling to 81% by 1900.

In order to better understand and analyze this 6fold typology of Christians, it is helpful to consider the evolution of Christianity in terms of its indigeneity or indigenoussness, i.e. in terms of the main races and peoples among whom it has arisen as an indigenous religious movement. Indigenous churches are those that are native to a people, belonging naturally to the soil as contrasted with churches originating abroad or in an alien culture (*Little Oxford dictionary*). From this point of view, the history of Christianity and the current phenomenon of world Christianity can be described in terms of 3 distinct phases or groupings of indigenous churches, namely those related to Semitic, White, and Non-White peoples respectively. These will now be described in turn.

#### ***1. Indigenous Christianity among Semitic peoples***

Christianity began in the 1st century among the Semitic peoples of the Middle East (defined here as Caucasians of the Middle Eastern geographical race). Four powerful Semitic indigenous church traditions resulted: Syrian Orthodox (later Arab), Coptic Orthodox (later Arab), Ancient Church of the East (Assyrian, later Nestorian), and in the 4th century AD, Ethiopian Orthodox (Amharic). Although dominant at the end of the 1st century AD (70% of all Christians) and numbering 38 million Christians by AD 500, these Semitic traditions later declined drastically to under 5% of all Christians by 1500 and to only 2% by 1650. Today their influence is relatively small (23 million Christians or 1.2% of the world total) and emanates from headquarters in the Arab world (Damascus, Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad) and in the racially-Caucasian Amharic world (Addis Ababa).

Semitic indigenous churches, as currently in existence, may therefore be defined as those original ancient churches among the Semitic peoples dating from the 1st–5th centuries AD which are still in existence today as distinct denominations completely Semitic in membership and leadership (Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, Assyrian Orthodox), excluding those originally Semitic churches which have long since become predominantly White in membership and leadership (Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, etc).

## **2. Indigenous Christianity among White peoples**

Europeans, the so-called White peoples, were present on the Day of Pentecost in AD 30 (proselytes from Rome, Cretans and others from Asia Minor—Acts 2:10–11). From then on they numbered about 5% of all Christians, rising by AD 100 to around 30% and 38% by AD 500. By AD 1000, Whites numbered 61% of all Christians, and the focus and center of gravity of Christianity's expansion had moved north and northwest into Europe, and it has remained there ever since. As a result, all of the first 4 ecclesiastico-cultural megablocs above are today predominantly European in origin, history, culture, theology, ideology, psychology, ethos, influence, numerical significance, church organization, membership and leadership. From the point of view of race, their members belong predominantly to the European geographical race (including North America). From the point of view of colour, they are predominantly Whites. From the political point of view, all are predominantly centered either in the Western world or in the former Communist world, and have their world spiritual headquarters and centers there. And from the developmental point of view, their main centers are predominantly in the richer and more developed countries.

This European or White Caucasian origin can readily be seen when one considers the origin, and place and date of origin, of each megabloc, and the ongoing influence exerted by each. These can be rearranged by chronological order of their emergence, as follows. (1) *Orthodoxy* arose as 2 separate branches. Eastern Orthodoxy worldwide traces its origin to the Holy Land itself and in our Country Tables 2 to AD 30; it still looks to Constantinople (the Second Rome) in European Turkey and Moscow (the Third Rome) in European Russia. The smaller grouping of Oriental Orthodoxy, which also traces its origin to AD 30 as shown in Country Tables 2, may be divided into a White part, with the Armenian Apostolic church having its headquarters in Echmiadzin in Armenia; and a Non-White although still Caucasian part, as we have seen above, consisting of the Semitic indigenous churches—the Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, and Assyrian traditions with their headquarters in the racially-Caucasian Semitic world (Damascus, Cairo, Addis Ababa, Baghdad, Beirut). Numerically these Non-White traditions are outnumbered 7 to one by the White Orthodox traditions. (2) *Roman Catholicism* worldwide traces its origin to Rome in the 1st century AD (its earliest beginnings being traced in our Country Tables 2 to AD 30) and is still controlled, guided and inspired from its centre in Vatican City, Rome, in Italy. (3) *Anglicanism* worldwide traces its origins (as Country Tables 2 document) to Britain in AD 61, and to this day it still takes its inspiration from Canterbury and London, in England. (4) *Protestantism* worldwide is usually dated back to the 16th-century European Reformation in Geneva and Wittenberg, but, as our Country Tables 2 make clear, its origins in several of the major Protestant churches of Northern Europe go back in unbroken continuity a further 900 years, in fact to at least AD 690; as a bloc it continues to be inspired by German and Scandinavian Lutheranism, by the Dutch and Swiss Reformed traditions, by English Methodism, by the North American Baptist tradition, and a number of other White-initiated traditions. (5) *Independence* traces its origins in part to Old Catholicism in 1724 in the Netherlands and 1863 in Germany, and is still centered on Utrecht in Holland and (Catholic Apostolics) on Zurich in Switzerland; also to Old Believers in Russia; also to many other all-White movements. Lastly, (6) *Marginal Christians* originated in Romania with the Unitarians in 1566, and today it has its major worldwide power centers in the USA (Brooklyn, Boston, Salt

Lake City, etc).

Since 1800, and over the last 100 years in particular, these 6 megablocs have all demonstrated their vitality and initiative by expanding out from their bases in Europe and North America across the world to the Non-White races; and the churches begun there are still to a greater or lesser extent under their control or influence. The vitality and initiative of this missionary expansion have been, once again, predominantly from among the White races in European and North American churches.

The historical fact of European or White origin, initiative and ongoing influence must not however be equated with, or construed as, White imperialism or White racism. Non-Whites play important roles in these 6 megablocs, firstly as members of their churches in Europe and North America, secondly as members and leaders of their daughter churches across the world, and thirdly through initiating new movements which remain within those churches (for example, the East African Revival movement within the Anglican and Protestant churches, or the large numbers of new African religious congregations for priests, brothers and sisters begun by Africans within the Roman Catholic Church). Despite all this, however, the overarching ethos remains both European and White; and the Black and Non-White daughter churches which have resulted, although in the case of almost all the largest churches now completely in the hands of local leadership, are still sufficiently close to their parent bodies (and often closely tied to them or controlled by them or influenced by them in theology, ideology, polity and organization) for it to be correct to call them also, as they call themselves, by the terms Roman Catholic, or Protestant, or Anglican, or Orthodox.

In sum, then, the 6 major megablocs described above can still be described as predominantly Caucasian initiatives in origin, predominantly European and North American initiatives in origin, predominantly White initiatives indigenous to the White peoples in origin, predominantly found in the richer and more developed countries, and predominantly based in the Western and formerly Communist worlds of today.

### ***3. Indigenous Christianity among Black and Third-World peoples***

As far back as 1549 (Japan) and 1741 (USA), however, new types of Christianity have emerged that do not fit readily into any of the first 4 major megablocs, and since 1900 they have rapidly become numerically increasingly significant on the world scale. These consist of denominations, churches and movements that have been initiated, founded, operated, led, controlled and spread not by Caucasian Whites or Europeans from today's Western or former Communist worlds but by Black, Non-White or Non-European peoples from most of the major geographical races of what is now termed the Third World—Africans, Afro-Americans, American Indians, Asiatics, Mestizos, Northern Indians, Oceanic Negroes—with no dependence on European or North American White initiative, leadership, control, assistance or ties. In most cases these Black or Non-White bodies have been begun as schisms or secessions from, or have otherwise severed their relations with, White denominations belonging to the 4 Europe-initiated megablocs. Of these schisms the vast majority have broken off from Protestantism, although sizeable numbers have split from Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, with some from the Orthodox megabloc also. The main characteristic common to all these bodies, and that which enables us to see in them a single, coherent new major megabloc or stream parallel to the other 4, is that all were *begun on Black, Non-White or Non-European initiative, in Third-World countries or among Non-White or Non-European minorities elsewhere*, and since the year 1500. Subsequent to their Black or Third-World origin, they have had their own history; they remain without predominant White or Western control, influence or ties; they have Black or Third-World types of theology; and they have initiated their own foreign missions to many nations. This megabloc or stream covers all Christian movements initiated anywhere by Non-Whites or Non-Europeans, without European assistance, mainly in the Third World but also among Black and Non-White minorities in the Western world. It includes the following: the African indigenous churches (African independent churches movement); similar independent or separatist churches in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Latin America, the Philippines, and other Third-World countries; indigenous Christian movements in Oceania; American Indian indigenous churches in North America; Black indigenous churches in the Caribbean; and the Black churches of North America.

The Black churches of North America are particularly interesting in this connection because until recently they have always been classified as a part of North American Protestantism, and sometimes as little more than an unorthodox peripheral fringe around it. An examination of the magnitude of their statistics however

suggests that this is an unsatisfactory assessment. In 1970, there were 22,580,000 Blacks (Negroes) in the USA; of these, 95% professed to be Christians (62% Baptists, 17% Methodists, 4% Roman Catholics, 1% Episcopalians, 1% Presbyterians, 1% Lutherans, with 9% independents and others), 1% Jews, 1% Muslims, and 3% non-religious. The total of all Blacks affiliated to churches was about 20,770,000 (92% of the total Black population), of whom only about 8% of all Blacks were in predominantly-White denominations (800,000 Roman Catholics, 500,000 United Methodists, 130,000 SDAs, 95,000 Southern Baptists, 65,000 Episcopalians, etc), and even then were usually found in separate Black churches and denominations which have separated or split from White churches over the preceding 200 years. These Black-led schisms were originally begun to liberate Black Christians from the effects of Protestant White racism, and today they continue as Black initiatives under Black leadership without dependence on White churches, creating their own distinctive forms of Christianity often related to their African religious heritage. The contrast can be expressed thus: White Protestant churches emphasize the literary tradition, formalized theology, and word-oriented or verbalistic worship; the Black churches emphasize emotion, soul, spontaneous non-literary spirituality, Black oral theology, and Black religious music (Negro Spirituals). Although the oldest of these churches (AMEC, AMEZC, NBCUSA, NBCA) have much in common with their White Protestant counterparts, many newer ones (including all Black pentecostals) have very little in common. Rather than being part of Protestantism, the Black pentecostals of the USA 'belong phenomenologically to the non-literary type of communication of the Third World while living in the literary culture of America' (W.J. Hollenweger. *The Black pentecostals' contribution to the church universal*, Geneva: WCC, 1970:11). So then, rather than to continue labeling these Black churches as Protestant, it would be preferable to regard them as sui generis or a new expression of Christianity and to coin a neologism to describe them. Within this new grouping, the AMEC and other older bodies thus would form a Protestant-type wing closer to Protestantism, and the pentecostals an African-type wing closer to their Third-World parallels.

In the same way, although many other Non-European churches in other countries have arisen out of and broken off from world Protestantism, they cannot properly still be called Protestant, and they themselves usually reject the term. Further bodies have broken off from one or other of the 3 other major megablocs, and these also cannot now properly still be called 'Roman Catholic', 'Anglican', 'Orthodox', etc. At the same time, the total adherents of all such bodies have by the year 2000 become numerically so significant (161 million) that they must be taken seriously as a new entity. So far it remains as a somewhat amorphous entity, with as little in common between component parts as is the case with Protestantism itself; and so far there is little awareness of being an entity and no interest as yet in any kind of international meeting together, conferring or organizing. Nevertheless, the fact is that we are faced here with, at least in embryo, and an entirely new historico-cultural major Christian megabloc.

It is important too to note that this megabloc, like the other 5, should not be considered as primarily a racist grouping, although racial in composition. Although Non-White, it is not anti-White. In many ways its churches are open to the White world. A growing number (e.g. the Black churches in Jamaica) send missionaries to White countries, and they and many other (e.g. the South African healing churches) attract sizeable numbers of White members and converts.

The problem arises of what to call this new ecclesiastico-cultural megabloc. Whatever new terminology we attempt tentatively to coin and employ, there will always be critics. In the first place, there is no recognized ethnic or cultural term to refer collectively to the peoples outside Europe and North America, or all peoples other than the White peoples, and so the analyst who needs a single term has to resort (as we have had to above) to the somewhat negative terms 'Non-European' and 'Non-White'. Both these terms are unacceptable in many circles, since they define people negatively in terms of what they are not; to overcome this difficulty, we therefore coin, to parallel them, the somewhat cumbersome term Black/Third-World, referring to peoples native to the Third/World and to the Black race in particular. We will still have occasionally to use the term Non-White in its technically correct descriptive sense, for example when referring collectively to Black and Chinese and Amerindian churches or peoples; for this reason, therefore, we use it capitalized (Non-White). Secondly, we cannot use terms like 'Schismatic', 'Separatist' or 'Secessionist' because many of the movements we are analyzing began de novo as new revival movements without schism or radical break, and also because such terms cannot be applied exclusively to Non-White movements since sizeable numbers of White schisms and secessions take place every year within the European-initiated megablocs. Other terms like Sundkler's South African typology Zionist/Ethiopian/Messianic are not sufficiently general to apply to more than local parts of this bloc.

## ***DELINEATING THE INDEPENDENT MEGABLOC***

### ***A new multiracial global megabloc emerges***

At this point, a completely new solution has presented itself with the meteoric rise since the 1960s of White-led Postdenominationalist churches and networks across Europe and America. It is now evident that, like the Non-White churches just described, these new bodies are characterized by the same basic term, Independency, which can now be defined as *independent of historic Christianity* whether Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, or Protestant. Moreover, it is now widely recognized that these White-led churches are following closely in the paths of the pioneering development of the African indigenous independent churches since 1815, the Asian indigenous independent churches since 1549, the Amerindian indigenous independent churches since 1741, and the Oceanic indigenous independent churches since 1867; as well as the Old Believers since 1666, and the Old Catholics since 1724.

This newly-recognized ecclesiastico-cultural megabloc has now become an immense presence across the world, with over 386 million church members.

*Locally-founded indigenous churches.* Another term widely used in the literature describing these movements is 'indigenous'. Correctly used, this word means 'originating or developing or produced naturally in a particular land or region or environment... not introduced directly or indirectly from the outside' (*Webster's third new international dictionary*, 1971). Indigenous churches may be defined as those originating within a country or race or people, or produced naturally by nationals of that country or members of that race or people, as opposed to churches of foreign or alien origin imported from abroad or introduced from outside the group, such as immigrant churches or mission-related churches. As used and defined here, this term says nothing about whether or not the peoples involved are indigenous to, or the original inhabitants of, the country they happen to be in; the term refers only to the production of Christian movements within their midst. The term also refers, further, only to churches of indigenous tradition; thus if the Roman Catholic or Anglican or Lutheran or Methodist church was begun in a particular country by native evangelists of that country (themselves indigenous to that country), we still term them in this survey Roman Catholic or Anglican or Protestant, etcetera; their resulting churches being of foreign rather than indigenous origin and composition.

Indigenous churches are therefore, and are increasingly called today, locally-founded churches. Indigenous churches as defined thus can, strictly speaking, be either European or non-European, White or Black, although in the literature the predominant tendency has up to now been, for reasons of historical development, to limit the term to the Black and Non-White races. White secessionist churches in many cases regard themselves as having a similar tradition to their parent bodies, albeit purified and reformed; by contrast, Third-World schismatic churches sit loosely to the denominational tradition or bloc of their parent bodies; they regard themselves as no longer Catholic, or Protestant, or Anglican, but as part of a new indigenous and independent bloc. Nevertheless, all of these groups in this new megabloc can properly be called indigenous churches because they were begun in their own countries or among their own peoples by nationals of those countries or members of those peoples. Thus the True Jesus Church is a Chinese indigenous church begun in China by Chinese in 1917; it is strong among Chinese immigrants in Malaysia and in Brazil and in the USA, where it is still correct to call it a Chinese indigenous church.

Similarly, the Black churches of the USA, all of which originated in Black-led schisms from White denominations, can properly be called Black indigenous churches in the sense that they were begun among the black population in the USA by Black people who also happened to be USA nationals. They are indigenous to the Black people of the USA (which has no bearing on the fact that Blacks are not the indigenous peoples or original inhabitants of North America). In particular, USA Black pentecostals represent an indigenous initiative of major significance in that many authorities consider that around the year 1900 they initiated the entire Pentecostal world movement, even though from 1908 onwards in the USA it split into separate Black and White parts. As a result of considerations such as this, we find that we now have several adjectives with which to describe this whole new megabloc: Independent, indigenous, largely Pentecostal/Charismatic/Neocharismatic, Postdenominationalist, Restorationist, Radical, Neo-Apostolic. No one adjective by itself is sufficient, but together the 9 are adequate to differentiate the bloc from the preceding 5 blocs.

In this survey, therefore, we term this new bloc *Independent Christianity*. On our definition, it consists of 2

distinct miniblocs, the first being (1) *Black or Non-White or Non-European churches* begun anywhere in the Third World or among Non-European or Non-White minorities in the Western world. It consists of churches all of which were formed by Non-Europeans since the year 1500, beginning in 1549 in Japan and 1741 in the USA but mostly since 1900, without European assistance or aid and often in the face of European opposition or hostility. It covers and includes African indigenous churches, Amerindian indigenous, Asian indigenous, Black indigenous, Chinese indigenous, Coloured indigenous (in Southern Africa), Filipino indigenous, Indian indigenous (in India), Indonesian indigenous, Japanese indigenous, Korean indigenous, Latin American (Mestizo) indigenous, Oceanic or Pacific indigenous, and other Third-World indigenous churches. It also includes their foreign missions working abroad in other countries.

This new megabloc also consists of (2) *White-led or White-initiated Postdenominationalist churches*, largely begun recently or long after the Non-White movements, rapidly expanding and with missionary links across most countries of the world.

For convenience when discussing these movements in their own contexts we usually refer to them simply as 'Independent churches' in contrast to the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Protestant churches anywhere which often appear in those contexts as foreign, foreign-originated or foreign-dominated bodies.

In terms of our ethnolinguistic classification Peoples of the World (*WCE* Part 8), this new category of 'indigenous churches' refers to churches formed since AD 1500 and indigenous to any and all peoples and ethnolinguistic groups in any part of the world without exception.

The links between this large variety of new terms, all coined and used in this book, can best be depicted by means of the family tree in Table 16-6, column 3. Almost all these terms are, on our definition, distinct and mutually exclusive categories which do not overlap. However, certain alternative or overlapping terms are sometimes used, such as Bantu indigenous which is part of the wider term African indigenous. Some of this whole range are local ethnic terms, some are geographical, some national, some regional, some continental and one or 2 are global terms. Progressively, these latter terms describe and embrace a range of the former, with at the top our single overall term covering the whole phenomenon.

### ***SUMMARY CONCERNING MEGABLOCS***

#### ***Six basic Christian megablocs***

To sum up, when attempting to describe and analyze the Christian world in terms of a handful of major ecclesiastico-cultural megablocs, the best criterion is to ask from whence the major or predominant initiatives and ongoing impulses came, and continue to come, and where they look to for their major or predominant world spiritual headquarters; who the initiating or dominant peoples are, and what ethnolinguistic families, races and color, and what types of world, they belong to. We then arrive at the schema used in this book in Country Tables 1 and given in coded form for all denominations in Country Tables 2, column 3, first letter. With its aid we then obtain the analysis of the world's Christians presented in Parts 1, 10, and elsewhere here.

#### ***Description not evaluation***

We should stress again that the object of this survey is primarily descriptive, i.e. to describe as accurately and objectively as possible the actual state of affairs in all significant detail. It is not our purpose here to evaluate the authenticity of particular branches of Christianity. Thus the term 'marginal Christians' coined and defined above contains many movements claiming to be Christian but which, from the standpoint of mainline Catholic, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox theology are usually considered to be heterodox, unorthodox, quasi-Christian, even pseudo-Christian or heretical, or even not Christian at all. Examples are the many 'New Age cults' that have attained worldwide expansion in the 20th century. In this particular book we are not concerned either to expound their doctrines or to evaluate their Christian commitment, but only to point out that these movements claim to follow Jesus Christ and hence must be included in any objective world survey of the phenomenon called Christianity.

### ***ECCLESIASTICO-CULTURAL MINOR BLOCS***

Within the first 4 of the 6 major ecclesiastico-cultural megablocs just described, there are large numbers of Christians who form distinct and clearly-defined sub-blocs or minor blocs, which in consequence are de-

scribed and often also enumerated in this book. These will now be described under the 3 headings (a) popular religiosity, (b) popular piety, and (c) Charismatic and Evangelical renewals. The first 2 of these are here collectively termed popular religion, religion of the masses, or religious manifestations of the people, terms which also cover parallel phenomena in non-Christian religions. Among christianized manifestations, term (a) refers to deviant versions of popular religion of Christian background, and term (b) refers to more orthodox or recognizably-Christian versions. These various terms will now be described.

### ***Non-Christian popular religion***

The term popular religion is generally used to cover the universal phenomenon of widespread or popular expressions or varieties of religion, including both Christian forms and also specifically non-Christian forms such as animism, Chinese folk-religion, Bhakti Hinduism, folk Hinduism, Bodhisattva Buddhism, and so on. These varieties are characterized by a deep sense of the presence of God in everything; belief in the extraordinary power of mediators (whether saints or men), rites and prayers; sacred meanings for all happenings; sacred sites and places; and the like. In our survey, we describe non-Christian popular religion in the countries where it occurs, but we give more attention to specifically-Christian or christianized forms, using the 2 terms described in the next few paragraphs.

### ***Popular religiosity***

In numerous countries of the world, there are within the churches unusual or deviant forms of Christianity widely practiced by multitudes who are members of the majority or dominant churches, in particular the Roman Catholic Church. This phenomenon includes several varieties of mass syncretistic folk-Christianity, christo-paganism, spiritist Catholicism, cults of miracles and the miraculous and supernatural, cults of the Virgin Mary or of saints, and other manifestations described in this survey under each of the countries concerned.

These popular expressions of religion, faith, thirst for God, and the desire for worship, miracles and healings, on the part of large masses of people and especially of multitudes of the poor, are here collectively termed popular religiosity. On the negative side, this type of popular religion involves distortions of genuine Christianity through the intrusion of superstition, forms of worship without faith in Christ, marginal sects and cults, syncretism, and non-Christian beliefs and values. Great stress is put on images, medals, relics, statuettes, rosaries, shrines, magical practices and taboos, saints' days, litanies, novenas, processions, pilgrimages, associations and the like. Until recently these manifestations have been regarded only as impure or debased versions or caricatures of Christianity, hence have been despised and attacked by theologians, missionaries and churchmen. To quote Paul VI (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, section 48), 'Popular religion... is often subject to penetration by many distortions of religion and even superstitions'. Increasingly nowadays, though, they are being reevaluated and seen as valid expressions of people's gropings for God and for genuine experience of Christ, although widely infiltrated with non-Christian forms.

Popular religiosity, then, is the term used here to describe deviant forms of Christian or christianized popular religion. Its clearest and most widespread manifestations are found in the Roman Catholic Church in most countries of Latin America.

### ***Popular piety***

The latent Christian values in many types of popular religion are now being discovered by the churches (Roman Catholics in particular), as a result of which they are being seen to be valid expressions of people's search for God, although, again, often falling short of fully-Christian doctrine and practice. Particularly notable is widespread popular devotion to the Crucified Christ under various visible representations (in Brazil, 'Senhor Bom Jesus') and other popular expressions of Catholic faith (devotion to the Madonna, etc) including more definitely-Christian versions of the list given in the last but one paragraph above. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Paul VI observed of popular religion: 'It involves an acute awareness of profound attributes of God: fatherhood, providence, loving and constant presence. It engenders interior attitudes rarely observed to the same degree elsewhere: patience, the sense of the Cross in daily life, detachment, openness to others, devotion' (Section 48, 'Popular piety'). A more accurate and positive term for this phenomenon, instead of merely speaking of popular religion, is therefore the title of that section; popular piety. It should also be observed that such manifestations of popular devotion are extremely important in

Eastern Europe and other formerly Communist or anti-Christian countries where the churches had long been under constant repressive pressures from the state. In our survey, these manifestations of popular piety are described for numerous countries, but since they often embrace almost the entire Christian community (in Roman Catholic countries especially), they are not separately enumerated or categorized in Country Tables 1.

### ***Charismatics in Renewal***

In most countries, there have arisen spiritual renewals which have crystallized out into recognizable and measurable movements today. Among older groupings are the Evangelicals (in the English usage of the term), found among Protestants and Anglicans, dating especially from the 18th century Evangelical Revival in the Church of England. Followers are enumerated here in Country Tables 1 for each country under the same term, Evangelicals. Among newer groupings, the best-known is the Charismatic Renewal at present under way since 1960 within (in chronological order of origin) the Anglican, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, and Orthodox traditions. Followers are enumerated here in the notes under Country Tables 1 for each country, using the terms Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant Charismatics.