Downtown Metropolitan Churches: Ecological Situation and Response

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Based on three principles from theories of human ecology, this study examines the response of downtown churches in metropolitan Columbus, Ohio to a changing environment. Over 150 years, churches grew in number, stabilized, contracted sharply, and restabilized, changing increasingly from neighborhood to niche churches. Better-funded larger and older churches survived by developing heterogeneous religious and other ties with diverse weekday populations of downtown residents, employees, shoppers, and transients. Churches closer to the city center had more opportunities to develop these relationships. Sociological factors such as theology, leadership, and external resources from the metropolis, state, and nation also played a role. The interaction of sociological and ecological frameworks on both macro and micro levels explains the response of religious organizations to specific urban environments.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do downtown metropolitan churches respond to their unique ecological niche? Over the years, a massive body of research has examined how churches respond to urban environments like the inner city, urban neighborhoods, and suburbs (see Douglass 1926; Sanderson 1932, and references in Ammerman 1997). Downtown is distinctive as the center of government, business, and services (Kinchloe 1938, 1962:104–14) and in attracting those who do not attend neighborhood churches. Like other specialized areas, downtown and all of its institutions and organizations have changed as the metropolis expanded (Palen 1979:141–45). Government and financial centers grew, pawn shops and billiard parlors died, and department stores decentralized (Gold 2002: ch. 4). A major change was the exodus of many downtown residents and churches (Winter 1962; Gold 2002).[1] Many churches followed their members to the suburbs (Wuthnow 1979, 2003), but others closed their doors (Kloetzli 1961:17, 26, 111).

A church's decision to leave downtown typically involves weighing the cost of neglecting the biblical call to serve the stranger and the poor (Matthew 25:31–46; Warner 1988:8, 283–89; Cnan, Biddie, and Yancy 2003:19). Moving away implies turning away from both (Leiffler 1949:75) while staying supports the call (see Kloetzli 1961:chs. 1–3). However, Ammerman (1997:ch. 5) reports that few churches succeed in integrating the poor into their congregations (see also Nelson 1997). Church theology may emphasize salvation by faith or salvation by helping others (Chaves 2004:ch. 4). Some churches see worshiping and helping others as inseparable (Warner 1988:34, 292). Where the emphasis is on saving one's soul, the decision to move is relatively easier to make.

A few studies have examined how downtown churches survived change. No one has examined how the *universe* of survivors adapted (but see Roozen, McKinney, and Carrol 1988). Some churches simply continued to serve aging congregations much as in the past. Some followed their members to the suburbs. Others closed their doors (Kloetzli 1961:17, 26, 111). Most of

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the surviving churches had to adjust to new neighbors, increasing traffic, growing urban decay, and crime (Choldin 1978). Parishioners encountered an increasingly dangerous environment, especially for night meetings. Clergy had to debate whether and how to serve downtown workers, shoppers, business clients, beggars, the delinquent, homeless, and mentally ill (Price 2000:17, 111). Strategies differed among congregations (see Ammerman 1997:ch. 4). Some sought to attract worshipers from nearby gentrifying areas; others tried to attract inner-city residents (Price 2000:74 ff.) and build multiracial congregations (Leiffler 1949:75). A few experimented with outreach programs to help the homeless and transients. One very rich church tried to rehabilitate a nearby inner-city area (Price 2000:57–76). Some churches expanded weekday services to employees and others. Several gave space to Alcoholic Anonymous and other groups. Using a comprehensive ecological framework (Walton 1993:314), this study examines how *all* downtown churches in one metropolis responded to diverse weekday populations (Blau 1977; McPherson 1981; McPherson and Rotolo 1996; Turner 1998).

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Several ecological models, each with a distinct focus, have been used to study urban church behavior (Douglass 1927; Roozen et al. 1988:14–354; Ammerman 1997:ch. 6; Eiesland and Warner 1998). Ammerman (1997:130ff) and Ebaugh, O'Brien, and Chafetz (2000) studied niche congregations, Eiesland (1999) studied organizational competition, and Becker (1999) looked at cultural and identity specialization. This study focuses on downtown populations, organizations, environment, and technology in the past and today (Duncan and Schnore 1959; Duncan 1964; Hawley 1968; Hannan and Freeman 1989). The relevant downtown populations are employees, shoppers, travelers, and transients. Churches that differ in their key functions may respond differently to these pedestrians (Quinn 1950; Beidwell and Kasarda 1985:106, 226). The organizations consist of church personnel with their theological mission and the organizations and people they contact in outreach. The environment is the church's *location* or exposure to pedestrians generated by downtown organizations (Park 1936; Schnore 1965; Baradwaj 2000). Last, we consider the technology of transportation, the automobile, as a background factor (Hawley 1950:287, 302).

The number of churches downtown represents a response to historical change in the community. Hawley's (1979) theory of urban growth, some principles of organizational ecology (Carroll 1984; Hannan and Freeman 1989), and the rational choice framework of church growth (Finke and Stark 1992) inform the response process. As Hawley's theory predicts, constant population growth in Columbus over two centuries changed the internal organization of downtown, the urban neighborhoods, and the suburbs, as well as the division of labor among the three.

Hannan and Freeman show how institutional changes manifest themselves in organizations (churches). The density-dependent principle of organizational ecology (Hannan and Freeman 1989:131–41) predicts that early on, the founding of organizations (churches) in an area lags population growth. New organizations are founded until their number meets the area's carrying capacity. Then organizations compete for members living beyond the area, in this case, downtown (Finke and Stark 1992). With continued population growth, members move farther away. Attendance costs in time and money increase. New churches are founded in new areas, escalating competition for members between downtown and outlying churches, which leads to organizational specialization (Hannan and Carroll 1992). Neighborhood churches become family oriented and respond to the social, ethnic, or class composition of the area. Downtown churches draw more socially heterogeneous members who value social diversity in congregations and outreach.

Declining downtown residential numbers and the out-migration of parishioners tend to reduce church resources with little reduction in the churches' maintenance costs (Carroll and Hannan 1989:524–25; Hannan and Freeman 1989:51, 132, 204; Namboodiri 1989). Survivors tend to be the older churches with more resources and the ability to innovate (Hannan and Freeman 1984, 1989:61–89, 103, 116); for example, by enticing downtown populations to attend church during the week and developing novel outreach programs absent in local churches. Thus, programs that

serve the homeless, unemployed, and needy may attract parishioners who place high value on social action programs. Innovative programs tend to attract a socially heterogeneous membership (see Baum 1996:96). Younger and smaller churches with fewer resources are more likely to die, owing to the liability of smallness and newness (Stinchcombe 1965:148–49). In sum, a curvilinear pattern of church births, growth, stabilization, decline, and restabilization reflects a response to metropolitan growth (Hannan and Carroll 1992).

Downtown churches vary in their responses to weekday populations. Early Chicago ecologists (Park et al. 1925, 1936; Hawley 1950:237, 405) proposed the principles of space friction and least effort. Churches nearest the center of downtown are the most exposed to socially heterogeneous pedestrians and respond to them the most. The composition of pedestrians differs according to church location (Livezey 2000). Churches near parking ramps and thruways are more exposed to poor transients; those near housing for the homeless and employment agencies are more exposed to casual laborers. Of course, churches exposed to fewer pedestrians can reach more of them by committing more resources to outreach. Wherever their location, small churches without full-time pastors that are closed during the week cannot respond to pedestrians (Schaller 1992). In sum, holding theology, policy, leadership, and resources constant, the ecological gradient principle (Gist and Halbert 1956; Quinn 1950:479) predicts that the churches most exposed to foot traffic respond to it the most and offer the most in religious services and outreach.

DATA AND METHODS

The origin of this study was accidental. Asked to survey members of Trinity Episcopal Church, across from the State Capitol and exposed to the heaviest pedestrian traffic, the senior author adapted a questionnaire from the Congregational Life Survey provided by the Research Office of the Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. With an 85 percent return rate ($N = 148$), the report on Trinity revealed that members were aware of the advantages of their church's location for offering weekday religious services and outreach (Klein 2003:245). Subsequent conversations with the rector pointed to the need to survey all 18 downtown churches. A literature review revealed scant research on such a universe. In Columbus, one of 32 U.S. state capitols with populations over 250,000, 18 churches from a number of denominations are spread over the downtown. The differences in their exposure to weekday populations and their responses comprised a suitable topic for study.

Polk's *Columbus City Directories* from 1860 to 2000 provided data on the number of churches, organizations, and institutions located downtown (Polk, R. L. and Co.) . The social characteristics of downtown residents in 1950 and 2000 were derived from Census Tract Reports of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Data on the responses of the 18 downtown churches to weekday populations were derived from interviews with clergy, staff, and volunteers. We asked for a brief church history, the size, age, socioeconomic and racial composition of the congregation, church activities during the week, the number of persons in each activity, clergy and staff contacts with other churches and religious groups, outreach activities, the number of people reached (workers, shoppers, homeless, others), and the number who entered the church for religious or other reasons. The senior author attended Sunday and weekday services in autumn and spring, noting congregational size, age, sex, and racial composition, and student number, age, sex, and racial composition in the Sunday Schools. He visited the churches on weekdays at different hours to see whether sanctuaries were open in order to gauge the difficulty in gaining access to church offices and staffs. Last, he visited the area on weekdays at different hours to gauge density and composition of foot traffic.

We also tested whether Trinity Episcopal was more socially diverse with a wider outreach program than the other 14 Episcopal churches in the metropolitan area (see Stebinger 2000 for a parallel study). Data obtained from the Dean of the Columbus Deanery were compared for reliability with data obtained from six of the churches. The number of religious services and outreach programs were classified as low, medium, and high.

FIGURE 1
DOWNTOWN CHURCHES IN COLUMBUS, OHIO 1951 AND 2001

THE SETTING

Columbus' metropolitan region currently has about 1,500,000 inhabitants. In 1816, as a village of about 1,000 residents, Columbus was selected as the state capital. The town grew at a moderate pace through depressed and prosperous times with a balanced economy of banking, government, education, insurance, services, and manufacturing. The center of downtown has always been the State Capitol at Broad and High Streets (see Figure 1). An area of almost three square miles, downtown is bounded by the Scioto River on the west and interstate highways on

the other three sides. It is clearly separated from German Village and the Brewery District on the south, the Arena District on the northwest, the commercial Near North Side and Columbus State College on the north, and office and residential areas on the east. The poorest area, Franklinton, lies west of the Scioto River. An African-American residential area stretches north and east to the airport; another one is mostly south of downtown.

Before 1950, downtown's boundaries were less distinct than today's on the east, north, and south. As today, most government buildings were located west of High Street. The main commercial district stretched along North and South High Street. On the northern edge of downtown were railroad yards, factories, warehouses, and Fort Hayes. On the south, downtown melded into German Village, a residential area of small homes with retail stores, churches, and schools. On the east, downtown neighborhoods melded into middle-class and affluent areas. As of today, most of the large mainline churches are on East Broad Street.

In 1950, the interior areas of downtown contained vibrant neighborhoods with almost 40,000 inhabitants, along with the commercial services and institutions associated with normal neighborhood life (Table 1). A thriving African-American community with its institutions and services was located in the northeast quadrant of downtown, along Mt. Vernon Street. Behind the mansions on East Broad Street were small apartments and houses for middle-income and poor families, both black and white (Hunker 2000:ch. 9). Downtown contained 40 churches, compared to 18 in 2000 (Figure 1); 17 schools compared to two today; 90 groceries and meat markets compared to 30 today. The 15 bakeries and 13 small department stores shrank to two each. The 60 beauticians and barbers and the 29 tailors were cut by over half. The five movie theaters, seven billiard parlors, and 16 savings and loan associations vanished. The number of auto dealers, hotels, railroads, and labor organizations were drastically reduced. In sum, until 1950, downtown Columbus was

TABLE 1
DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS ORGANIZATIONS IN 1950 AND 2000

Items	1950	2000
Population	39,864	4,289
Churches	40	18
Schools and trade schools	17	2
Universities, academies	1	3
Labor organizations	100	4
Welfare and social service agencies	40	30
Apartment buildings	37	10
Grocery and meat markets	90	30
Bakeries	15	2
Department stores	13	2
Beauticians and barbers	60	25
Tailors	29	6
Bank locations	9	13
Savings & loan locations	16	0
Movie theaters (with live performances)	5	0
Concert halls (drama, opera, dance)	5	4
Art galleries, dealers, and consultants	1	17
Billiard parlors	7	0
Auto dealers	13	3
Hotels	39	10
Railroads	11	0

both a thriving center of specialized services for the metropolis and a retail center for downtown residents.

In the late 1960s, downtown boundaries began to harden. By 1990, nine-tenths of the residents had left. Factories in the northern and eastern edge had failed or moved to the city outskirts (Hunker 2000:31–35). High-rise municipal, county, state, and federal buildings were built, as well as high-rise banks, office buildings, and hotels. A convention center, sports arena, and supporting services were constructed in the northwest Arena District. With the doubling of downtown employment to 90,000, parking ramps and lots occupied a third of downtown space to accommodate 60,000 vehicles. Mass transportation withered. The number of art galleries and concert halls grew, but the earlier balanced institutional structure of residential areas crumbled.

Despite the growth of downtown employment, pedestrian traffic is low most of the day and almost absent on nights and weekends. In the 1980s, the city sought to attract shoppers by razing an area south of the Capitol for a multistoried mall. The long-vacant state prison in the northwest area was also razed to make room for a sports arena, apartments, offices, and stores. Today, the mall falters, the Arena District thrives, and some downtown housing is being built. On weekdays, foot traffic is heavy just before offices open, during lunch, and at the end of the day. Heaviest along four or five blocks in all directions from the State Capitol, it declines in all directions from the Capitol (cf. Hawley 1950:256). Downtown has little pedestrian traffic most of the day. Almost all offices, services, and churches beyond four blocks of the Capitol lock their doors. Intercoms screen callers. Even though 4,000 people live downtown and 90,000 work there, pedestrians who venture beyond four or five blocks of the Capitol feel apprehensive amidst parking lots and empty lots, many of which have been set aside for speculation. The auto-oriented downtown has forced out facilities that depend upon a balanced residential community.

FINDINGS

The Changing Downtown Church Market

In line with the theory of organizational ecology, downtown churches grew from 25 in 1862 to 39 in 1921, apparently the carrying capacity of the niche (see Figure 2). During the Great Depression, the number fell to 26, but returned to 39 by 1945. Beginning in 1950, the growth of employment in big business and government, slum clearance for urban redevelopment, and the construction of interstates around downtown forced many local residents to move. By 1980, 20 churches had died, and the new number had stabilized at 18 (Table 2; Roberts 2003:6–15).

All but one of the downtown churches that survive today were founded by 1910. All but two are mainline Protestants, traditional African-American denominations, or Roman Catholic. All of those founded in the post-World War II decade died by 1980. All six African-American churches along Mount Vernon Avenue died as well as the three along South Third (Table 2; see also McRoberts 2003:ch. 3). As none of their edifices was substantial or subsequently occupied, garages, parking lots, thruways, and offices replaced them (Table 2).

At the time of this study, the surviving downtown churches were largely major denominations: three Roman Catholic, two each of the Baptist (one Afro-American), Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Baptist (one Afro-American), and one each of African Methodist Episcopal, Christian Science, Church of Christ (African American), Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, and Spiritualist. Of the 18 churches, 15 are more than a century old. Only St. Paul's Episcopal was in danger of closing. The churches draw most of their members from areas beyond downtown.

A similar conclusion was suggested by R. D. Mackenzie's (McKenzie 1923:153, 590, 591) 1920's study of two Columbus mainline churches that survive today, one downtown, another three miles north. Members of the downtown Congregational Church lived in all wards of the city,

FIGURE 2
COLUMBUS DOWNTOWN CHURCHES 1862–2001

mostly in a band stretching east and north about four miles. Two-thirds lived in the two highest economic tiers, one-third in the three lowest tiers. By contrast, the great majority of members of the neighborhood Presbyterian church to the north lived within a half-mile of the church in the second highest tier of affluence. This suggests that even in the 1920s downtown churches drew their members across scattered and more heterogeneous areas of the metropolis (Kleniewski; Wuthnow 1998, 1999). We showed McKenzie's maps to two downtown clergy who commented that the residential distribution of their members today resembles McKenzie's pattern, but the east and north commuting distance has about doubled.

Although today's downtown churches have more economic reserves than those that died, after 1960 even the survivors lost half or more of their members (Klein 2003:271). Former parishioners increasingly settled in the suburbs and attended newly established local churches. Klein (2003:117–19) suggests that those who left tended to be young, highly educated, upwardly mobile professionals who were less devout than their parents. This accords with Wuthnow's (1979:266–72) national studies showing that urban migrants to the suburbs materially reduce their church participation.

Social Diversity of Downtown and Other Churches

Do neighborhood churches respond to metropolitan diversity as much as downtown churches? We could not compare all downtown churches to all metropolitan churches, so we compared the findings from a survey of members of the downtown Trinity Episcopal Church ($N = 148$) with comparable data provided by the Episcopal Dean for the other 14 Episcopal churches in the metropolis. The findings may well apply to other mainline denominations.

Members of the downtown church live in 75 percent of Columbus' zip codes and 60 percent of the suburban zip codes. None live in the poorest African-American zip code areas (*Source Book of Zip Codes* 2000). Eleven percent of Trinity members are African American compared to 13 percent

TABLE 2
DOWNTOWN CHURCHES 1941–2001 AND LAND USE FOR DEFUNCT CHURCHES

Map Symbol	Church Name	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
1	Broad Street Presbyterian	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	St. Paul's Episcopal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3	First Baptist Church	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	First Christian Science	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5	Broad St. United Methodist	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6	First Congregational	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7	Catholic Cathedral	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
8	Trinity Episcopal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9	Trinity Lutheran Church	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10	St. John's United Church of Christ	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
11	Central Presbyterian	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	Greek Orthodox Cathedral	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
13	St. Patrick's Catholic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
14	St. Paul's AME	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
15	Holy Cross Catholic	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
16	Spiritualist Cathedral	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
17	Mount Olive Baptist	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
18	Church of Christ		X	X	X	X	X	X
A	Salvation Army Citadel		X	X	X			B
B	Free Holiness Mission Church		X	†				B,P
C	Soul's Harbor Inc.		X	B	B	B	B	B
D	Third Street Mission		X	X				B
E	Calvary Chapel Presbyterian	†	X	X	B	B	B	B
F	South Fifth Pentecostal Mission		X	X				B
G	Central Community Church	†	X	†				B,P
H	Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church		X	†				P
I	Livingston Methodist Church		X	X				P
J	Holy Church of the Living God		X	B				B
K	Bethel AME Church		X					G
L	Gay Street Baptist Church		X	X				P
M	Caldwell Zion AME Church		X	†	†			G
N	Zion Baptist Church	†	X	X	B	B		B
O	Family Altar League Mission	†	X	X	APT	APT	APT	APT
P	Industrial Rescue Mission		X					B
Q	Apostolic Holiness Church	B	X	†			B	B
R	Apostolic Church of Jesus		X					HWY
S	Church of the Living God	†	X	X				HWY

Legend: † = Church at 1951 address not listed under 1951 church name, APT = Apartment building, B = Business, including office buildings, G = Garage, HWY = Highway, P = Parking lot, X = Church at 1951 address listed under 1951 church name, Blank = Don't know.

in the metropolis. The range of family incomes in the zip codes where Trinity members live and that for the metropolis is similar, but the members' median income is $1,000 lower. Slightly more than half of the members had attended the church for 10 years, one-third for more than 20 years. Seven-tenths of those with children living at home identify strongly with the church, and highly value its socially diverse congregation and its services for the weekday downtown

TABLE 3
**INDICATORS OF METROPOLITAN DIVERSITY OF EPISCOPAL CHURCHES IN
THE COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN REGION**

Church	Location	Resident Dispersion	SES*	Race**	Religious Contacts	Outreach	Downtown Presence
All Saints	Suburb	Low	UM	E	High	Ad hoc	Low
St. Alban's	Suburb	Low-Med	U-UM	E	Medium	Low	None
St. Andrew's	Suburb	Low	M-LM	E	Medium	Low	None
St. Edward's	City	Med-Low	WC	E	Medium	Low	None
St. James'	City	Medium	M	E	Medium	High	Low
St. John's	City	Low	WC	e-o	Medium	Low	Low
St. John's	Suburb	Low	UM	E	High	High	Med
St. Mark's	Suburb	Medium	UM	E	High	Low	Low
St. Matthew's	Suburb	Low	M	E	Low	High	None
St. Nickolas	City	Low	WC	E	Low	Low	None
St. Paul's	Downtown	Medium	M E	E	Medium	Low	None
St. Patrick's	Suburb	Low	UM	E	Medium	Low	Low
St. Phillip's	City	Low	UM	AA	Medium	High	Low
St. Steven's	Suburb	Med-Hi	UM	E	High	High	Low
Trinity	Downtown	High	UM-M	e-o	High	High	High

*Class abbreviations: U = upper, UM = upper middle, M = middle, LM = lower middle, WC = working class.

**Race abbreviations: E = European, AA = African American, e-o = European and Other.

population. As often occurs in a niche church (Ammerman 1997:130; Gieryn 2000:477–81; Wedam 2000; Scharen 2001), members have a high sense of self-identity (Ebaugh, O'Brien, and Chafetz 2000:107) and are theologically and politically liberal. More than seven-tenths support women's right to abortion, ordination of gays and lesbians, ecumenism, and church involvement in social issues like gun control, criminal justice, and poverty.

The Dean compared members of the 15 Episcopal churches in the Deanery for residential dispersion, socioeconomic status, race, contacts with other churches, weekday religious services, and outreach. Seven churches are located in Columbus and eight in the suburbs. Six draw members from broad areas (coded medium, Table 3); the other nine, primarily from their neighborhoods. Six have mostly upper-middle class members; three predominantly middle class; three split evenly between working and middle class, and three have working-class members. The five that have contacts with other religious bodies are politically liberal and accept gays and lesbians. Another five are moderately disposed to accept diverse lifestyles, cooperate with other religious bodies, and support liberal political causes. Two congregations strongly emphasize the social gospel, aid to the poor in the inner city, and involvement in secular politics. Finally, nine churches have limited outreach programs, and six of them are heavily involved in them. In sum, members of the downtown church are the most residentially dispersed (Column 2, Table 3) and have the highest proportion of nonwhite members (except for the African-American St. Phillips). Trinity shares with five others an openness toward ecumenism and a strong outreach program, but its downtown location gives it a decisive edge in reaching diverse populations (Column 7, Table 4). Overall, the downtown church ranked consistently higher on all indicators of social diversity and in offering weekday religious services and outreach. The rector's credo announced, "There is no such thing as the Social Gospel: The Gospel is social" (see Warner 1988; Cnan, Boddie, and Yancy 2003; Smidt 2003).

CHURCH RESPONSES TO DOWNTOWN POPULATIONS

Ecological theory predicts that, by virtue of location, the 18 downtown churches will vary in response to the four downtown populations (employees, shoppers, residents, and transients) in proportion to their exposure to them. Eleven of the 18 churches stand on East Broad or South Third Street (see Figure 1). Pedestrian traffic along East Broad extends further than along South Third Street because downtown expansion is impeded by the long bridge over Interstates 70 and 71. The two churches just north of the bridge are in virtual cul de sacs (Figure 1), exposed to little pedestrian traffic. By contrast, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral on North High Street, just south of the northern boundary of downtown, is exposed to heavy pedestrian traffic generated by the nearby Convention Center, a hotel, the North Market, and retail stores, but an iron fence around the church deters inquisitive pedestrians. In sum, the closer a church to the Capitol at the intersection of Broad and Third Street, the denser the daily pedestrian traffic and the greater the church's exposure to it.

Churches Responses to Downtown Residents

Did downtown changes from 1950 to 2000 raise or lower church opportunities to attract downtown residents? The number of residents declined by 88 percent; churches declined by 45 percent. Thus, residents potentially could be better served in 2000, but the evidence for this is obscure (see Table 4). The percentage of male, single, and unemployed African Americans

TABLE 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF DOWNTOWN CENSUS TRACTS, DOWNTOWN, AND METROPOLIS FOR COLUMBUS 1950 AND 2000[c]

	Census Tract 30		Census Tract 40		Downtown Only		Columbus SMA	
	1950	2000	1950	2000	1950	2000	1950	2000
Square miles	1.6	1.6	0.9	0.9	2.5	2.5	540	3,579
Population	21,926	2,134	17,936	2,155	39,864	4,589	503k	1,540k
Density	13,703	1,334	19,929	2,394	15,946	1,836	540	430
Males (%)	0.46	0.61	0.50	0.52	0.53	0.57	0.49	0.49
Never married	0.22	0.57	0.23	0.66	0.22	0.61	0.11	0.29
Nonwhite	0.47	0.57	0.19	0.80	0.31	0.43	0.33	0.19
Completed HS	0.19	0.71	0.13	.080	0.15	0.22	0.14	0.32
BA or more	0.01	0.24	0.04	0.32	0.03	0.28	n/a	.39
Contract mo. rent ($)	38	400	37	343	33	336	37	486
Median house inc. ($)	2,313[a]	17,632	1,649[a]	16,636	2,390	17,300	3,250	55,039
Detached dwelling (%)	0.35	0.18	0.15	0.04	0.78	0.09	0.37	0.60
Rented dwelling	0.99	0.82	0.87	0.89	0.39	0.86	0.12	0.33
Unemployed	0.12	0.22	0.10	0.07	0.11	0.09	0.05	.003
Mgt., Prof., related	0.08	0.30	0.14	0.37	0.10	0.34	0.20	0.36
Services	0.33	0.26	0.20	0.16	0.24	0.20	0.29	0.14
Sales and office	0.15	0.25	0.21	0.35	0.18	0.30	0.11	0.29
Manual	0.44	0.19	0.45	0.12	0.49	0.15	0.41	0.21
Total[b]	100	100	100	100	101	99	101	100

[a]Median family income ($).
[b]Numbers may reflect rounding.
[c]U.S. Bureau of the Census (1950, 2000).

downtown, always greater than in the metropolis, increased somewhat by 2000. Median household income for the metropolis was one-third higher than downtown's in 1950, but three times higher by 2000. Thus, relative to the metropolis, the downtown area has deteriorated markedly.

The downtown sectors north and south of Broad Street, always different (see Table 4), became more stratified over the half-century. In 1950, the northern part was more prosperous, had a better-educated and larger population, and a larger and thriving African-American community. By 2000, the northern part was virtually depopulated. Residents of the southern part were better educated and higher in social status, income, and occupational level. Population became more dense with the building of three large apartment buildings, including one Catholic retirement home, one for the middle class, and one for the affluent.

Three churches survived north of Broad Street: the Greek Orthodox Cathedral, St. Patrick's Catholic, and the African-American Methodist Episcopal (AME). The Greek Cathedral has never recruited members from downtown. After 1950, St. Patrick's experienced an out-migration of its mostly Irish parishioners, but it attracted members who lived elsewhere. After 1970, the AME church experienced the same pattern. South of East Broad Street, four churches survived: the Spiritualist Cathedral, Holy Cross Catholic, and two African-American churches—Mt. Olivet Baptist and the Church of Christ. The Spiritualist Cathedral and the Church of Christ have always had small congregations and opened only for Sunday services. The former had always attracted members who did not live downtown, and the latter had always drawn its members from the nearby inner city. Over time, most of Mt. Olivet Baptist's downtown residents had moved out, but they continued to patronize the church. In 1950, Holy Cross was a parish church and it remains such today because it serves the residents of the nearby Catholic retirement home as well as ex-parishioners who migrated out of the area.

A survey of one mainline church downtown showed that about 4 percent of its members live downtown, most south of Broad Street. None of the clergy of the 18 downtown churches mentioned that they served or tried to serve residents of downtown and the immediately surrounding area. In sum, over the years, downtown's population shrank enormously and most of its small churches died. All the surviving churches serve a few parishioners who live downtown, a few more who live in the inner city, but mostly members living in the city and suburbs.

Congregational Diversity of Downtown Churches

To gauge the extent that downtown churches reflect metropolitan diversity, we compared all congregations for their residential dispersion, members' socioeconomic status, members' race, interchurch contacts, and the social characteristics of those reached in the weekday religious services and in outreach (Table 5). Of the 18 churches, 15 are more than 100 years old (Table 4). Only St. Paul's Episcopal is in danger of closing. All the others, except the African-American Church of Christ, draw the majority of their members from beyond the inner city (Column 2, Table 5). However, the three Catholic churches, the two African-American churches (AME and Mt. Olivet Baptist), and the Spiritualist draw perhaps a third of their members from nearby areas. The 10 remaining white Protestant churches draw their members more widely.

In socioeconomic status, all but five congregations draw a quarter or more of adult members from at least two of the three major occupational classes (Column 2, Table 5). Trinity Episcopal and the Catholic Cathedral, both within two blocks of the Capitol, display the greatest class diversity (three levels). The least diverse are located on the downtown's periphery: Broad Street Presbyterian, St. Paul's Episcopal, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral, and the Church of Christ. Only two of the predominantly white churches approach the 13 percent black population of the metropolis: First Baptist at 15 percent and Trinity Episcopal at 11 percent.

Most downtown churches (11) have few interchurch and interreligion contacts (Column 5, Table 5). The Greek Orthodox, the two Catholic parish churches, and the three African-American churches have the fewest; none of these churches is located on the main gradients of Broad or

TABLE 5
SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COLUMBUS DOWNTOWN CHURCHES

Church	Distance to Capital[a] (1)	Residential Dispersion (2)	Race Diversity (3)	SES Dispersion (4)	Religious Contacts (5)	Interreligion Contacts (6)	Openness and Outreach (7)	Outreach Involvement Pattern[b] (8)	External Inputs to Downtown (9)
1 Broad St. Presby.	8.5	Hi	Lo	Lo	Hi	Med	Hi	Mix	Hi
2 St. Paul Episcopal	8.5	Lo	Lo	Lo	Med	None	None	None	None
3 First Baptist	6	Hi	Med	Med	Lo	Lo	Lo	C	None
4 Christian Science	5	Hi	Lo	Med	Lo	None	None	None	Lo
5 Broad St. Methodist	4	Hi	Lo	Med	Hi	Med	Hi	Mix	Hi
6 First Congreg.	4	Hi	Lo	Med	Hi	Med	Hi	Mix	Med
7 Cath. Cathedral	1.5	Med-Hi	Lo	Hi	Med	Hi	Lo	I	Hi
8 Trinity Episcopal	0	Hi	Med	Hi	Hi	Hi	Hi	Mix	Lo
9 Trinity Ev. Luther.	4	Hi	Lo	Med	Lo	Lo	Med	Mix	Hi
10 St. J. C of C. Congreg.	4	Hi	Lo	Med	Lo	Lo	Lo	S	Lo
11 Central Presby.	1	Hi	Lo	Med	Med	Med	Med	Mix	Lo
12 Greek Orthodox	9	Hi	Lo	Lo	Lo	Lo	Lo	S	None
13 St. Patrick's Cath.	5	Med-Hi	Lo	Med	None	Hi	Lo	I	Hi
14 St. Paul's AME	8.5	Med-Lo	Lo	Med	Lo	Lo	Hi	Mix	Med
15 Holy Cross Cath.	4	Med	Lo	Med	Lo	Lo	Lo	I	Hi
16 Spiritualist	2.5	Lo	Lo	Lo	None	None	None	None	None
17 Mt. Olivet Baptist	6.5	Med	Lo	Med	Lo	Lo	Med	S,C	Lo
18 Church of Christ	7.5	Lo	Lo	Lo	None	None	None	None	None

[a] In constant units.
[b] Pattern abbreviations: C = congregation, I = Institutional, S = Staff, Mix = Mixed (combination of C, I, and S), None = No outreach.

Third Streets. The six churches with the most contacts are all located on the two main pedestrian gradients: Trinity Episcopal, St. Paul's Episcopal, Broad Street Presbyterian, Broad St. Methodist, the Catholic Cathedral, and Central Presbyterian. In sum, distance from the Capitol and location on the main gradients are roughly associated with social diversity of members and interchurch and interreligion contacts.

Religious Contacts with Daytime Populations

Religious contact with daytime populations is easily measured: the church is either open or closed for worship (Column 5, Table 2). All three Catholic churches offer daily masses, but only the Cathedral's doors are open all day long. Although St. Patrick's (run by the Dominican Brothers) and Holy Cross are not located on the two main pedestrian gradients, they have high weekday attendance. St. Patrick's attracts a few downtown workers, but most of its attendees are retired city dwellers who are attracted by the church's strict emphasis on Catholic doctrine. Holy Cross does not attract downtown workers. It serves the residents of the nearby 14-story Catholic retirement home, as well as city dwellers who originally lived in the parish. Both the Cathedral and St. Patrick's score at the median on offering religious services to downtown populations. Since Holy Cross attracts very few downtown workers or transients, it scores low.

Of the 14 Protestant churches, Trinity Episcopal, like the Catholic Cathedral, offers daily services and remains open all day. Central Presbyterian, also located across the street from the Capitol, offers some weekday services and is episodically open. The Greek Orthodox Cathedral is open all day, but holds no services. In sum, two Catholic and two Protestant churches offer weekday services and three of them are within two blocks of the Capitol and are the most exposed to foot traffic (Figure 1). The remaining 12 churches offer few or no religious services.

Trinity Episcopal occasionally holds joint services with two churches it founded: St. Phillips, an African-American middle-class church, and St. John's, an Appalachian working-class church. Members of Trinity serve monthly suppers to the poor who live near St. John's (Table 3). Catholic and Jewish clergy periodically participate in Trinity's Sunday services, and Trinity holds special services for groups visiting the city, such as the runners in the annual Columbus Marathon. A restaurant in Trinity's undercroft serves as a meeting place for members of other churches who work downtown. Funerals of government and business notables are often held at Trinity and its rectors are regularly asked to offer prayers before sessions of Ohio's Senate and Assembly.

Openness to Daytime Populations

Data in Column 7 of Table 4 summarize the extent to which downtown clergy, staff, and volunteers make "nonreligious" contact with downtown weekday populations. Most of it is with poor transients and, to a lesser degree, downtown employees and shoppers. "Street people" include alcoholics, mentally ill, drug addicts, the homeless, battered women, unemployed, and destitute travelers who seek food, clothing, housing, counseling, bus fare, and information about agencies that might help them. For some downtown employees and shoppers, churches provide nursery schools, lunch facilities, and meeting space for groups; e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, business and professional groups, religious groups, musicians. Thirteen churches are in some form of contact with daytime populations; five have no contact: St. Paul's Episcopal, Church of Christ, the Spiritualist Temple, Christian Science, and the Greek Orthodox. The first three have too few members and resources to offer outreach. Christian Science outreach is limited to a few volunteers who coach public school students in reading. The Greek Cathedral's outreach is limited to providing funds for some county agencies.

Much of the variation in outreach reflects different ways of organizing it. Although the Catholics and the Lutherans do the most for the downtown and inner-city poor, they do not do it through individual churches but through other organizations, such as the Diocese, a religious order, or an outside agency. Transients who seek help from the Catholic Cathedral are sent to JOIN (Joint

Organization for Inner City Needs), a nearby emergency organization run largely by diocesan volunteers. Each morning JOIN provides sandwiches for "permanent" downtown transients; for others, it provides clothing, eye glasses, and advice on which agencies to contact. Some transients are sent to nearby Catholic Charities, run by the Diocese and funded by government, United Way, and public contributions.[2] The Cathedral ranks medium on direct outreach.

St. Lawrence Haven, run by the Catholic Society of St. Vincent de Paul, is located next door to Holy Cross Church (see Figure 1). On weekdays, it provides food and other services to transients, mostly young African-American men. Volunteers who help the Society and the Haven are not identified with individual Catholic churches. Also located near Holy Cross is the Salesian Boys and Girls Club, housed in a four-story building with recreational and meeting facilities. It sponsors athletic, religious, and social activities for the children of poor blacks and whites who live nearby. St. Vincent's, the Haven, and the Salesian Brothers have little contact with Holy Cross. Although informants from the three Catholic churches mentioned these programs, they could not identify any of their members as volunteers. St. Patrick's and Holy Cross (Table 5) are ranked low on direct outreach because none of their staff or congregation were identified as working with these agencies.

In contrast, Protestant churches identified their volunteers who engage in organizational outreach. Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Ohio, like Catholic Charities, is not tied to individual churches. It receives 20 percent of its funds from government and the remainder from donations, by congregations and businesses in the state. Its budget, second only to United Way's, supports a large full-time staff. Its downtown Faith Mission provides up to 150 "employed" homeless persons with shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and other services. Unlike the Catholic organizations, volunteers who assisted LSS in serving meals and in administrative services were identified with their churches.

Pattern of Outreach

The outreach organizations of downtown churches may be classified as institutional (I), run by church staff (S), run by clergy (C), all three (M), or absent (O) (see Table 5, Column 8). The small Protestant churches with few resources had no outreach. Those with medium-sized programs displayed a mixed pattern; the strong programs mainly involved staff and members. All Catholic churches displayed the institutional pattern. The small programs of St. John's Evangelical-Congregational and the Greek Cathedral were run by staff. To simplify data presentation on the association of church location and outreach in 10 Protestant churches, we first examine those on the two pedestrian gradients of South Third or East Broad Streets (Figure 1).

South Third Street Gradient

Trinity Lutheran Church, located in a cul -de -sac just north of I-70 and I-71 (the southern border of downtown), is exposed to little foot traffic. A few transients knock daily on its doors seeking food, money, or help. Like most downtown churches, it hands them a municipal "Street Card" that lists the private and public agencies available to the poor, homeless, veterans, and mentally ill. Typically, a staff member assesses the transient's needs and directs him or her to an appropriate agency. Because the church stands near the thruway exits, indigent travelers quickly spot it. The staff gives them coupons that are honored at a nearby filling station and grocery store, and informs other churches about the transients to prevent their making a circuit. As noted, Faith Mission of Lutheran Social Services has significant volunteer help. Trinity Lutheran also provides meeting space for several music groups and Alcoholics Anonymous. It ranks in the middle in outreach (Table 5).

One block north and slightly west of Trinity Lutheran is St. John's Evangelical United Church of Christ-Congregational. Exposed to little foot traffic, it is closed to transients on weekdays. Its

outreach is largely limited to collecting clothing for the poor, providing a meeting room for Alcoholics Anonymous, and space for local concerts. It rents unused Sunday School space to a private school that sits next door. It also ranks low on outreach.

Four blocks north at the edge of Capitol Square is Central Presbyterian, whose motto is "keeping Christ in the central city." Its open side door leads to the church offices. Transients are given sandwiches or sent to appropriate agencies. Breakfast is available for transients every Sunday morning and once a month volunteers serve lunch to about 30 homeless men. Weekly lunches are held in the basement for downtown business and professional employees. A staff member is developing a program to make contact with the 20,000 downtown university students. Several concerts are held in the church annually. The church ranks medium-high on outreach. Trinity Episcopal, on the corner of South Third and East Broad ranks highest on outreach. In sum, as expected, church outreach increases along the Third Street gradient (see Table 5).

East Broad Street Gradient

Broad Street Presbyterian Church (BSPC), on the eastern edge of downtown just east of I-71, sponsors an elaborate outreach program whose quasi-corporate structure shares characteristics with both the Catholic-Lutheran corporate pattern and the individualistic Protestant church pattern. BSPC sparked the organization of COMPASS (Church Outreach Ministries Program Assistance and Social Services), an organization that helps poor women with children on a long-term basis to find jobs, manage money, and plan for the future. At first, the church responded to transients ad hoc, but it could not meet the mounting need. Other Presbyterian churches were invited to share the burden, and later other denominations joined in funding COMPASS, now an independent agency with a professional staff. Headed by a social worker, it operates a daily food pantry and provides clothing and household supplies to needy families on a weekly basis. Housed on church grounds, the agency is assisted by volunteers from participating churches. In addition, a third of BSPC's congregation volunteers in assisting a nursery school, two Head Start programs, a summer recreation program for children living nearby, a reading tutoring program for children, and financial advice for the needy. The church also supports BREAD, a liberal social action organization that presses the city to help the poor. BSPC ranked highest in outreach (Table 5). Across the street from BSPC is St. Paul's Episcopal church. Barely surviving, it supports no outreach (Table 5).

Two blocks west is the First Baptist Church. With a southern flavor, it had a thriving membership before World War II and began to attract African Americans who lived nearby. The aging and shrinking congregation is not attracting new members. Prospects for growth are dim. On weekdays, only a few transients knock on the locked side door. Outreach is limited to collecting clothes for the poor and contributing to COMPASS's food pantry. A few members volunteer in downtown welfare organizations. The church ranks low in outreach.

Two blocks west stands the huge Broad Street United Methodist Church. Supported by other churches and run by an independent staff and volunteers, the church provides space for emergency overnight shelter for 50 homeless women and their children. It also provides meeting space for two small congregations (Vietnamese Christian Fellowship and Lamb of God Anglican) and meeting rooms for Alcoholics Anonymous. The gym is available to Franklin University students, and the church co-sponsors an annual Christmas program, Bethlehem on Broad St., that provides food and clothing for 2,000 homeless people. The church ranks high on outreach. Diagonally from United Methodist is the First Congregational Church. Transients who appear on weekdays are sent to appropriate agencies that the church generously supports with volunteers. The church also contributes to about 30 local agencies for the needy and furnishes volunteers for several of them. It rents and sometimes offers meeting space to about 50 organizations, many of them downtown. Ties have been developed with a nearby impoverished neighborhood. Most recently, the congregation joined BREAD and supports it with volunteers. First Congregational's historical

reputation as a leader in the Social Gospel movement is made manifest by its involvement in national liberal coalitions. Like the Catholic Cathedral three blocks east, it ranks medium-high on direct personal outreach.

Last, Trinity Episcopal, on Capitol Square at the corner of Broad and Third, is exposed to the heaviest foot traffic (Figure 1). The Parish House door is unlocked. Anyone can enter to see clergy, staff, or volunteers. With the partial exception of Central Presbyterian, other downtown church offices clear inquirers through an intercom. The homeless, destitute, drug addicts, mentally ill, and travelers who arrive at the bus station three blocks away seek help from Trinity, the first church whose door is open. The log of strangers who enter church offices daily ranges from seven to 20, but scores enter the Parish House for meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, AlAnon, lunch in the undercroft cafeteria, business seminars, and religious conferences. Trinity's food collection program, one of the oldest and largest downtown, dispenses food on demand. An unsupervised self-help clothes closet is directly accessible to transients. The church sponsors weekly organ and jazz concerts and invites musical groups (Gay Chorus, Cantari Singers) to give concerts in the sanctuary. The number of people who enter the church and Parish House weekly is about five times the size the normal Sunday congregation of about 125. The socially diverse characteristics of the entrants make them the most heterogeneous of all outreach populations. The church ranks high on outreach (Table 5, Column 7).

Off-Gradient Churches

All three downtown African-American churches are located off the gradients. The tiny Church of Christ in the southeast corner of downtown has no outreach. The large St. Paul's AME and office building are located in a cul -de -sac in the northeast corner of downtown. Surrounded by businesses and parking lots, the church is exposed to little foot traffic. Yet, its outreach program is similar to Mt. Olivet Baptist's on Rich Street, in the heart of a commercial district with heavy pedestrian traffic in downtown's southeast quadrant (Figure 1). Both churches have well-developed programs strongly supported by clergy, staff, members, and government grants. Mt. Olivet recently added a full-time pastor whose main task is outreach. Although both congregations are largely middle class, their main outreach targets are distressed African Americans in the nearby inner city who suffer poverty, family disruption, poor diet, heart disease, and drug and alcohol addiction. Both churches receive city and state funds to monitor the probation of ex-prisoners. Most of those who approach the churches for help are referred to local welfare agencies. However, clergy, staff, and members target up to a score of men annually for rehabilitation and integration into congregation, neighborhood, and community, a process Roozen, O'Brien, and Carrol (1988:141) call "in-reach." Although the churches are not located on the main pedestrian gradients, their location near the inner city's African-American areas facilitate their outreach. In short, AME's outreach is well developed and ranks high; Mt. Olivet Baptist's ambitious program is just being launched, so it ranks medium.

Structured Relations Between Church and Downtown Populations

Do weekday activities of churches become structured or are all those who enter birds of passage? Because we did not consider this question at the inception of the research, we rely on the limited data at hand. Obviously, the four churches with no religious services or out-reach can be ignored. The churches that helped transients only on an ad hoc basis can also be ignored: Trinity Lutheran, First Baptist, and St. John's Evangelical-Congregational. Churches that offer religious services during the week do develop "second congregations." This was the case for Catholic Cathedral and St. Patrick's. Holy Cross did not develop a second congregation because its weekday worshipers are mostly retired residents in the nearby Catholic Tower. They attend their parish church. Since the outreach of all three Catholic churches

is largely outsourced to welfare organizations, enduring relations with transients have not developed.

Churches develop lasting ties with outreach clientele when they establish organizations that seek to rehabilitate clients over a period of time, like Broad Street Presbyterian's COMPASS. AME and, to a lesser degree Mt. Olivet Baptist, developed strong ties with the men they selected for integration into their congregations. First Congregational developed weak ties with organizations that had met in its building for years. Finally, Trinity Episcopal and to a lesser degree Central Presbyterian developed both religious ties and outreach programs with both fleeting and stable aspects. Some downtown employees and shoppers have attended their weekday worship services for years, and others attended episodically, a pattern also found among the Sunday worshipers. These people comprised "second congregations" like that of the Catholic Cathedral.

In addition, some churches developed lasting, semi-permanent, as well as fleeting contacts with persons and organizations. The "regulars" included both individuals and organizations, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and members of other churches who meet regularly and lunch in Trinity Episcopal's cafeteria. Others include the professional who visits the city annually and drops in to say hello, the vagrant who sleeps on the back pew and drops three neatly rolled $20 bills in the plate once a year, the transient who visits the office weekly, sits quietly for half an hour, and leaves. Not part of a second congregation, they nonetheless are church "citizens" and have an identity in the church. Although most of them give the church no material support, the church has adopted them as part of its mission (Berdichevsky 1980). Together, the second congregations, the citizens, and the regular congregation represent a symbiotic relationship, an emergent structure as the church and downtown populations respond to one another. The Episcopal rector summarized the situation: "This church doesn't need to develop an outreach program. All it has to do is open its doors."

Conclusions

This study used an ecological approach to explain how downtown churches respond to weekday populations around them. We used Hawley's theory of metropolitan growth to account for their specialization, Freeman and Hannan's age-dependent cycle of organizations to explain historical changes in the number of churches downtown, and Park and Burgess's gradient theory of individual and organizational mobility to explain current church responses to pedestrian traffic. Although the three principles of human ecology were largely supported, they were not comprehensive enough to account for all church responses. We found, for example, that the basic principles did not consider the impact of fluctuations in prosperity and depression on the growth cycle of churches. Nor did they consider the impact of noneconomic institutions on church survival. Thus, all the small African-American churches downtown in 1950s and the African-American neighborhoods were entirely wiped out by urban renewal programs. Also, the ring of interstate highways built around the downtown helped to destroy the African-American neighborhoods.

Over the years, most of the downtown churches survived by becoming niche churches, by appealing to the special religious concerns of parishioners who live throughout the metropolis, and by responding to the employees, clients of stores and businesses, and transients during the week. Ecological location theory helped explain church differences in reaching these populations. In general, the churches most exposed to heaviest pedestrian traffic responded the most to them. In effect, the churches created "second congregations" with "members" whose social characteristics varied more widely than those of the Sunday congregation. With important exceptions, a gradient appeared: churches closer to the State Capitol, where the pedestrian traffic was heaviest, made more contacts with populations that were more heterogeneous socially.

The three exceptions to this generalization indicate that, in not considering the impact of the wider metropolis on downtown churches, we failed to apply ecological theory to its full extent. Human ecology defines a community as a set of interdependent units based on a division

of labor. Our findings pointed to several instances where agencies *outside* of downtown made important contacts with downtown populations, especially transients and the indigent. JOIN and Catholic Charities were sponsored by churches in the Diocese; Faith Mission by Lutheran Social Services, a state organization. Broad St. Presbyterian's COMPASS was supported by a consortium of Presbyterian and other churches as were Broad St. Methodists' Women' Shelter, Bethlehem on Broad St., and BREAD. AME and Mt. Olivet Baptist sponsored probation supervision, supported by government agencies. These involvements of external agencies with downtown problems imported personnel and resources that likely exceeded the combined contributions of the individual churches.

In several instances, downtown churches brought help and services to groups outside of downtown. Trinity Episcopal served dinners to the poor in Franklinton and "adopted" a grade school in Columbus; First Congregational systematically "adopted" a nearby neighborhood, and several Protestant churches adopted schools for tutoring in reading. The involvement of churches, organizations, and persons from areas beyond downtown in downtown remains a relatively unexplored area. Our study of downtown as a special ecological area indicates a need to study how churches in other subareas of the metropolis respond to environments that differ widely in physical, demographic, social, and theological character. While we can point to a few such studies, the sociology of religion lacks a systematic and comprehensive analysis on how churches respond to specialized environments (Wuthnow 2003). The work is just beginning.

NOTES

1. Historically, all downtown institutions (e.g., business, mass communication, government, education, recreation) responded to metropolitan growth. Flight from downtown was not limited to churches, and churches were not unique in paying zero property tax. Government, education, military, and many nonprofit organizations also pay no taxes. Tax and zoning concessions to attract employers or to persuade them not to move make the problem very complex. To our knowledge no one has systematically compared all institutional responses to urban growth.
2. The Diocese contributes 5.1 percent of the budget of Catholic Charities.

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