

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the attitude to congregational life and change in six Irish religious congregations. A total of 162 religious responded to a detailed questionnaire related to the following topics: communication; participation in the congregation; mission statement, charism; purpose of the congregation; satisfaction with the congregation; leadership; congregational life; work; and change. The study identified a number of negative areas, which must give cause for concern at this crucial stage in the life of many Irish congregations. It also identified a lack of specificity in the mission statements of congregations, which is likely to prevent any evaluation of congregational effectiveness and suggested a number of strategies based on organisational development models.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Organisations, in their essence are groups of people who come together to achieve a specific goal. In this sense religious congregations can be classified as organisations. Despite this classification however, the use of managerial or organisational consultants by religious congregations in Ireland was virtually unheard of before 1970. Irish business organisations, on the other hand, in their efforts to achieve organisational goals within an increasingly complex organisational environment have availed of such expertise since the early 1960's. The main reason for this time lag is, that prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), and during the years immediately following it, religious congregations in Ireland felt no need of outside assistance because they:

- were one of the best and most powerful of the nations's subcultures, exhibiting stability, security and cohesiveness

- had values, beliefs, traditions and behaviour patterns that exerted a strong influence on a highly

motivated and increasing membership

- had a strong corporate identity which was maintained by utilising the talents of all the members in the creation, maintenance and extension of institutions (hospitals, schools, mission stations, etc.) under the auspices of the individual religious congregation

- had a high status within the Irish culture, with its predominately Catholic ethos. Religious men and women were very visible and held a socially and pastorally honoured position. Their roles and the expectations of the Irish people were clearly defined

- were financially viable

Individual religious congregations exist within the church because their founders/foundresses were concerned about the gap that existed between gospel values (love, mercy, forgiveness etc.) and the world. Inspired by the spirit of God and the desire to minister to his people in need, they invited others to join them in the living out of their vision. While all christians, through their baptism, are committed to living the gospel values, religious publicly commit themselves to being unconditional in their love of God and the concrete expression of that love to people in

need, be that need spiritual, educational, medical, financial, or whatever.

All organisations, including religious congregations go through cycles of growth, Hostie (1972); Cada et al (1979); Quinn and Cameron (1980); Kimberly (1980); Cameron and Whetten (1981), which move from the euphoria of the foundation phase to periods of expansion and stabilisation. After varying lengths of time this stabilisation phase gives way to a period of organisational breakdown. During this phase the organisation will either revitalize itself, continue a minimal existence, or become extinct. The longer and more institutionalised the period of stabilisation, the less the possibility of preserving the original foundational vision and the more difficult the prospect of change and innovation. And yet, without change and innovation all human groups stagnate and die. This is as true of religious congregations as it is of business organisations, as is evidenced by the fact that only 30% of all religious congregations founded in the church continue to exist. Futrell (1981).

Two main factors coincided to propel religious congregations in Ireland out of their stabilisation

phase. These were the growing secularisation of Irish society and the Second Vatican Council.

Catholic religious congregations are ecclesial (church) bodies and as such are subject to authority of the church. Following Vatican II they were directed to evaluate what they were doing in the light of the charism of their founder/foundress; the mission of the church; the needs of the people of God; and their own resources. *Perfectae Caritatis*, (1964). Complying with these directives was more difficult for religious congregations in Ireland than, for example, their counterparts in the U.S.A. because the more cohesive and integrated a subculture is, the more traumatic the prospect of change and innovation. Arbuckle, (1987).

During the early 1970's the Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Ireland (C.M.R.S I.) added to the impetus for change through the publication of two documents addressed to Irish religious:

1. The F.I.R.E. Report (1973). on the future involvement of Irish religious in education.
2. The "Focus for Action" Report (1974), which contained recommendations regarding the activities of religious congregations in Ireland during a time of change.

In the twenty three years since Vatican II, religious congregations in Ireland have expended a great amount of time, energy and finance in their efforts to revitalise their organisations. and yet, despite renewal chapters; a procession of experts from various disciplines; new and updated constitutions, renewal programmes; etc., congregations today remain confused. Recruitment is poor; in many cases entrants are non-existent; traditional apostolates are in jeopardy; the average age of religious rises alarmingly, and financial viability is on the decrease. More than 20 years after receiving the mandate to change, religious congregations in Ireland continue to experience chaos.

In an effort to deal with this chaos, some Irish congregations imitated their counterparts in the business world and availed of the expertise of organisational consultants. The majority, however, because of the privacy regarding internal workings that has traditionally characterised religious congregations; a lack of 'know how' on how to use such expertise; and a suspicion regarding the appropriateness of using managerial principles in the religious sphere; have not availed of this resource during these years of painful upheaval.

It is my hypothesis that those congregations that have availed of the expertise of organisational consultants (i.e. experts, who without taking over responsibility for the task, help organisations to draw up an agenda of those issues that need to be addressed if the organisation is to become relevant and healthy, and then help them to develop the resources needed to resolve those issues) have been more efficient and effective in the clarification of their goals and in assisting the membership to take ownership of these goals. As a consequence their mission within and for the church is being more effectively exercised.

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Religious congregations are going through a period of crisis and this study attempts to contribute to an understanding of this crisis by attempting to.

- examine the foundation mission statement of selected religious congregations
- examine any subsequent policy changes taken by the religious congregations
- measure the current activities and personnel distribution of congregational members
- relate these activities to the original objectives of the religious congregation as a measure of their current effectiveness
- examine the contribution of organisational development in achieving organisational effectiveness

BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Organisational Survival:

The ecological or natural selection theory, Hannan and Freeman (1984) predicts that older organisations have a greater possibility of survival than newer ones. According to this theory, religious congregations should have a low mortality rate, because their full life cycle is normally about 300 years . Hostie (1972). In fact, however, 70% of all religious congregations founded since the beginning of the Christian era have ceased to exist. Futrell (1981). This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that older organisations undergoing fundamental internal re-organisation assume the characteristics of newer organisations with their greater vulnerability and lesser chances of survival: Hannan and Freeman (1984). Furthermore, when environmental factors lower the external legitimacy of organisations, the probability of mortality is increased. Singh, House & Tucker (1986).

Chronological age therefore, is no guarantee of organisational survival. External and internal factors can result in old organisations assuming the characteristics of 'new' organisations, with their high vulnerability and greater propensity to die Singh, House & Tucker (1986).

Religious Congregations before Vatican 11:

Active religious congregations are organisations formally approved and under the authority of the Catholic church, in which the members publicly profess vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience, generally live in common and are committed to works of service. In the years prior to Vatican 11 (1962-1965) Chittister et al.(1977) suggest that one of the most satisfying aspects of religious life was the sense of moral security which it imparted to its members. By living their lives in harmony with the current interpretation of the founder's rule, as expressed in written constitutions, religious would be assured not only of ultimate salvation, but also of a high degree of inner peace in this life. This security was supported by a life style and a prayer schedule which continually reminded religious that they were giving their entire lives for the love of Christ. In addition, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience made for strong people who grew accustomed to the habitual restriction of natural desires, and whose energies then poured out in a phenomenal amount of dedicated work for the church, and especially for those people in the church who most needed their services - the uneducated, the sick and the poor.

The culture that existed in religious congregations before the mid 1960's bears many similarities to the 'strong grid strong group' model of culture developed by the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1982). In this model, behaviour is highly traditional, what was done in the past determines what should be done now, and in the future; the stress on group identity gives security to the members, but at the same time only allows for close relations with people within the boundaries of the group; conformity to the group and to established, detailed rules of life are so strong, that they inhibit an individual's capacity to make autonomous decisions and to take responsible personal action; there is a strong emphasis on group cohesiveness, togetherness, interdependence, and group harmony; the position of each member within the group is clearly defined and the behaviour expected from each individual is clearly understood.

During the 1950's and early 1960's religious life was highly esteemed and active religious congregations experienced a significant growth in membership and consequent expansion of services. In the mid 1960's worldwide membership of religious congregations reached the highest point in the history of the Catholic church Hostie (1972) estimates that there were 335,000 male

religious in 1965 and O'Murchu (1980) puts a figure of one million on the number of female religious in 1960.

Change in Religious Congregations:

During the second Vatican Council religious institutes worldwide were instructed to renew themselves, and the number and scope of Council and post Council documents, Flannery (1975,1982), addressed to religious congregations leaves no doubt as the importance attached to such renewal by the highest authorities in the Catholic church. Lumen Gentium, ch 6 (1964); Ad Gentes (1965); Perfectae Caritatis (1965); Ecclesiae Sanctae (1966); Renovatiois Causam (1969); Evangelica Testificatio (1971); Mutuae Relationes (1978); Religious and Human Promotion (1981); The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life (1981); The Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life (1983). Members of religious institutes were to engage in consultation and experimentation that would enable them to re-examine their current apostolates (commitments on behalf of people in need) leadership models etc., in the light of the changing and uncertain conditions of the world, while at the same time remaining grounded in Christ and the charism (vision) of their founders.

Schneider (1986) suggests, however, that the real impetus for change in religious life, as a result of Vatican II, came from two statements of Vatican II that were not specifically addressed to religious, but, nevertheless highlighted the need for cultural change within religious congregations. Schein (1985) defines culture as:

"the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed, in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel, in relation to those problems."

He also suggests that because such basic assumptions have worked repeatedly in an organisation's history, they are likely to be taken for granted and to have dropped out of awareness.

The first of these statements was that 'all' Christians are called to the fulness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (Lumen Gentium, ch. 5). Flannery (1975). At the outset this seems like a

fairly straightforward sentence but it addressed the culture and identity of religious life, which, at least since the 13th. century had been defined as a higher way of life, the life of perfection, a superior vocation not given to all christians (Schneider, 1986) The Council undermined in a definitive way this long held assumption regarding religious life and left religious with the dilemma of explaining to themselves and to others the elaborate structures that separated them from the 'ordinary' christian, if their life was not a higher form, in need of protection.

The second statement reversed the centuries long adversary stance of the church in relation to the world (Gaudium et Spes, no.1)....."the church is a community which realizes that it is truly and intimately linked with humankind and its history". Flannery (1975). Separation from the world, renunciation of the secular, even a certain cultivated distance from non-members of one's own religious congregation (including family), has been characteristic of religious life since the days of the desert fathers. This separation has taken various forms in the course of history, for example, flight to the desert; monastic enclosure; dressing differently; living in convents and monasteries; and following a lifestyle that could not possibly be

assimilated into ordinary contemporary life. This statement called for an end to the 'closed system' of religious congregations and challenged the membership to change and adapt the organisational boundaries separating them from their environment so that instead of being separated from the world, religious could be in, with and for the world.

During the years since Vatican II religious have struggled, with varying degrees of success, to respond as generously as possible to these directives for change. But it has not been easy and the difficulties were added to by two unanticipated worldwide events:

1) a sharp decrease in the overall numerical membership of religious congregations as a result of a decrease in the number of new entrants and an increase in the number of departures among existing organisational members. Between the years 1960 and 1982 the number of female religious dropped from one million to 960,991. O'Murchu (1980); Schneider (1987). while the number of male religious fell from 335,000 in 1965 to 229,281 in 1982 Hostie (1972); Schneider (1987).

2) a growing secularisation in society i.e. a gradual disappearance of mythical and religious legitimations and explanations of society. O'Donnell (1986).

Religious congregations before 1965	Religious congregations after 1965
High membership	Decreasing membership
Low median age	High median age
High status in society	Lowered status
Financially viable	Financial problems
Hierarchical leadership	Shared leadership
Group conformity	Individual creativity
Separation from the world	Involvement in world
Security	Insecurity
Large group living	Small group living
Traditional structures	Evolving structures
'Superior' way of life	One way of christian living
Institutional works e.g. teaching, nursing	Individual work in new areas e.g. drugs,
Strong culture	Cultural change

Fig 1: Some of the more significant changes in religious congregations during the last twenty years.

The changes faced by religious congregations as a result of Vatican II and a growing secularised society, have caused a lot of suffering. When a people's way of living or culture is dramatically changed, the effects can be traumatic, and the stronger the culture being changed, the greater the trauma.

Fig 1 summarises some of the more significant changes in religious congregations since 1965.

Religious congregations in Ireland:

Religious congregations have played a major part in the history of the Irish church and in the development of the country itself. They have founded and administered schools, hospitals and orphanages; they have worked with the poor, the oppressed, the working class and the wealthy; they have influenced - for good or ill - every generation of Irish men and women and the institutional structure of the Republic since its' founding. Until recent times religious have worked for subsistence wages and have been totally self-supporting.

Like their counterparts in other countries, Irish congregations have been effected by the changes that occurred as a result of Vatican 11. Also, like their counterparts Irish congregations have experienced a significant decrease in membership during the last twenty years. The number of new entrants dropped from 1,375 in 1965 to 262 in 1986. Furthermore, between the years 1977-1986, 2,833 Irish religious left their congregations. Council for Research and Development (1986). The difficulty experienced by Irish congregations in attracting new members is related not only to the fundamental internal reorganisation

currently taking place within congregations but also to a decrease in their external legitimacy. A survey of Irish values and attitudes. Fogarty, Ryan & Lee (1984) showed:

- a diminishing societal respect for religious and the institutions of the church
- a lower religious practice
- a sense of alienation towards the church being felt by women
- indications that young mothers were not imbuing their children with Catholic values as their own mothers had done
- a decline in the credibility of church leadership
- a more critical attitude towards the church's teaching among those with higher levels of education.

Religious Congregations in Crisis:

A review of the religious literature reveals a deep concern worldwide about the present state of religious congregations within the Catholic Church. Matura (1974); Fitz & Cada (1975); Dubay 1979; Cada et al (1979); O'Murchu (1980); Lozano (1983); Schneider (1986); Arbuckle (1987). Lozano (1983) acknowledges that it is a well established fact that there is a crisis in religious life and that many congregations are wondering and worrying about their future and whether or not they can survive. O'Murchu (1980) describes the modern religious as 'desperately pessimistic' in the face of declining numbers, crises of authority, growing apathy etc.

And so, like business organisations, religious congregations have experienced environmental pressure and internal restructuring in the last two decades that was unprecedented in their recent history. Like business organisations, religious congregations have been confronted with the reality of scarce resources at a time when departures of trained personnel and experimentation into new ministries are making greater demands on these resources. And like business

organisations the future effectiveness of religious life in Ireland will be greatly determined by the priorities and values of current decision makers. Unlike business organisations, however, the use of organisational development consultants to achieve greater organisational effectiveness during a time of rapid change, is the exception rather than the rule in Irish religious congregations.

This study attempts to examine the applicability of organisational development to religious congregations that are undergoing fundamental internal restructuring within a rapidly changing society.

Need for this Study

Tavernier (1974) asserts that methods proposed successfully in industry for years, are being adopted throughout the Catholic church with the zeal and enthusiasm of new converts. This may be so, but literature on the application of managerial or organisational principles to religious congregations is still extremely sparse. Non-profit organisations are described by management writers as the most difficult to analyse. Albrecht (1983) states that "non-profit management has for many years been one of the greatest sources of frustration and disillusionment among management theorists". Newman and Wallander (1978) suggest that managing not for profit enterprises be treated as a variant of the basic management model. The character of such organisations is too ambiguous to be able to indicate the nature of the variations. Characteristics such as the intangibility and immeasurability of service, relationship to clients, professionalisation, and the nature of charismatic leadership are constraining on planning, organizing, and motivation. While there is no doubt regarding the complex nature of non-profit organisations and the even greater complexity of religious congregations, the lack of literature is still surprising when you consider

that religious congregations have been in existence for centuries and the average congregation has certainly outlived the average business organisation. Adding to the knowledge available on the organisational dimensions of religious congregations, therefore, is one reason for this study.

A second reason for this study is the question of effectiveness. How effective are religious congregations today? This is an important question for the 16,600 religious men and women in Irish congregations. It is also important because of the numerous institutions managed and operated by religious congregations. In total, almost 1,100 schools and colleges and close to 300 hospitals and homes (homes include homes for the handicapped, aged, homeless, orphanages, etc.) are run by religious orders in Ireland. Irish Catholic Directory (1985) Fig 2 shows that the majority of these institutions, including 90% of the hospitals and homes, are managed by religious women.

Religious congregations are spread throughout the 32 counties of Ireland. By far the greatest concentrations of religious groups however, are found in the East and South of the country, notably in the archdiocese of Dublin and in the dioceses of Waterford and Lismore and Cork. Less than 10% of religious institutions are located in the North of Ireland. Irish Catholic Directory (1985)

Fig 2. Institutions managed by religious congregations in Ireland.
Irish Catholic Directory (1985)

	Schools						
	Primary	Secondary	Boarding	Special	Colleges	Homes	Hospitals
Nuns	391	291	32	44	20	157	103
Priests	8	21	10	2	13	10	—
Brothers	133	130	2	11	3	14	2
Total	532	442	44	57	36	181	105
Of which, Northern Ireland	49	51	2	4	1	18	3

Finally, a major paradigm shift is underway in religious life today. The form of life for which many religious men and women were trained is over. Similar paradigm shifts have occurred only four or five times previously in christian history.....the 5th century shift from a desert expression of religious life to Benedictine monasticism; a shift in the 13th. century to the active, mobile stance of the friar; the Counter-Reformation shift to the paradigm of educated defenders of catholicism; and the 19th. century shift to the great institution builders, engaged in extending services of education, healthcare, pastoral leadership and primary evangelisation to the greatest number possible. (cf. Fig 3)

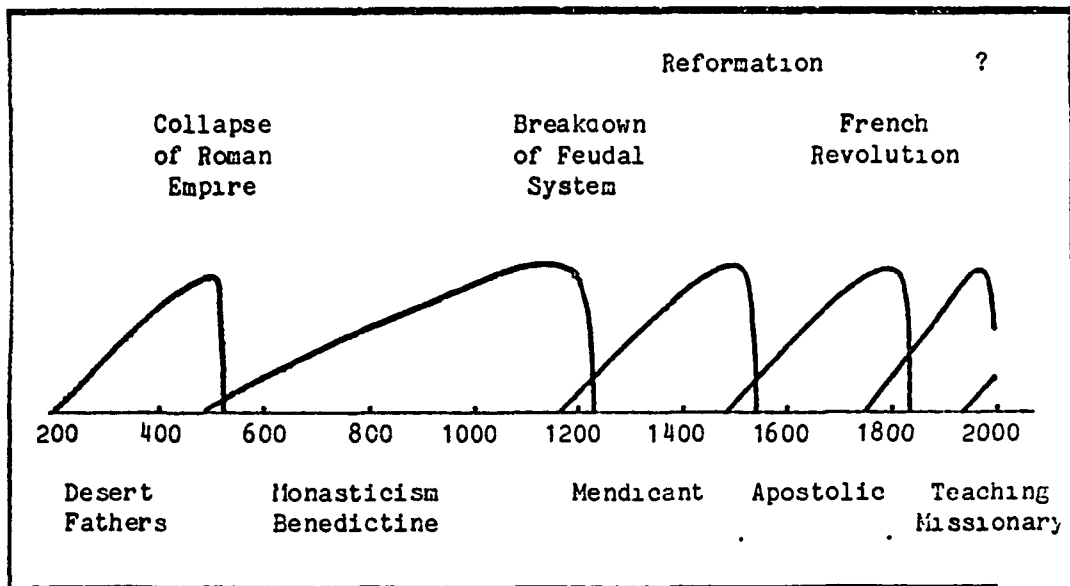


Fig. 3. Paradigm shifts in religious life.
Hostie (1972); Fitz & Cada (1975)

During these paradigm shifts many congregations disappeared, many new ones were founded, and existing institutes underwent major modifications in order to integrate elements of their previous lived experience with the new thrust. Organisations because they are dynamic entities, must take on structures and processes required by changing conditions and people if they are to survive. Beer (1980). Times of paradigm shift are times for participating as fully as possible in the historical moment in which we find ourselves, however difficult this may be, and the more important the mission of an organisation, the more important it is that everything that will increase its' effectiveness is utilised. Religious congregations by discovering the elements they have in common with other organisations can avail of the accumulated wisdom within the organisational literature during a crucial period of paradigmatic change.

Historical Perspective

Organisations do not exist in a vacuum. Like individuals they have a past that exerts a powerful influence on the present. Sarason (1972); Kimberly (1980); Stinchcombe (1980); Pennings (1980); Miles and Randolph (1980); and Kanter (1983) all emphasise the need to study the early development of organisations, for it is then that the parameters are established which limit the direction and scope of future development in the organisation. Historical awareness reveals patterns and trends in the development of organisations; shows that there are some periods in an organisations' history that are more important than others; and surfaces the realisation that there was a time when current organisational traditions, structures, and values did not exist. Such an awareness can contribute to the effectiveness of organisational intervention strategies, because "the ability to imagine things differently is essential in those who work for change." Schneiders (1987).

Most historians refer to five distinct forms of religious life. Each new form was a reaction to major ecclesial (church) and societal changes. Furthermore each new form of religious life that

emerged in history tended to adapt the current philosophical thought and use in for the achievement of their religious purpose.

The 3rd. to the 5th. century saw the rise of desert monasticism, first in Egypt and later in Syria, where Pachomious (290-346) wrote the first monastic rule. This form of life had both solitary and communitarian dimensions and was a reaction to the growing comfortableness of christianity, which after two centuries of persecution had finally been legitimised by Constantine (Edict of Milan, 313). The neoplatonic philosophy of this period, with its emphasis on physical discipline and purification as a necessary preparation for contemplation, influenced the form of religious life that emerged, with its stress on flight from the world, to undertake the extreme asceticism that characterised desert monasticism.

Between the 5th and the 12th centuries which saw the collapse of the Roman Empire; the emergence of the feudal system; and the disintegration of classical culture, a new form of monastic life emerged, beginning with Benedict (480-547). Benedictine monasticism responded to the breakdown of civilisation, and to the barbarian invasions of the 'Dark Ages' by founding monasteries that were centres of piety, order,

learning, and stability in a world becoming increasingly disordered, unstable, and irreligious. The monastic structure that evolved was feudal, with the abbot or abbess acting as spiritual guides and temporal administrators to large groups of loyal 'subjects' who saw themselves in familial terms.

Religious congregations responded to the increasingly urban, mercantile and mobile situation of the 13th. century through the development of the mendicant orders. The two great founders of this period were Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) and Dominic Guzman (1170-1221). With the growth of cities, the foundation of universities, the rise of a middle class, and the emergence of a poorer class who were virtually serfs, the mendicants abandoned the Benedictine ideal of stability in favour of greater mobility. Economically, like their secular counterparts, they supported themselves from alms or from what they earned by working. Intellectually they appropriated the new (and supposedly subversive) philosophy of Aristotle, to the service of the gospel.

The 16th. century provides an even clearer example of the interrelationship between new forms of religious life and the social, cultural and intellectual developments in society. The Clerics Regular and the

directly apostolic groups (e.g. Ursulines, Jesuits) were in response to the antropocentric humanism of the renaissance and the often legitimate clamour for reform that led to the Protestant Reformation - the first threat to the central authority of the Catholic church in the western world. Many of these religious institutes were militant and vigorous in their denunciation of the Protestant reformers; were committed to the defense of the catholic faith in Europe and the new lands that were being discovered; openly accepted the secular learning of the time; cultivated an individual piety and devotions for the highly individualistic men and women of the time; and for the first time made a public committment to apostolates in the institutionalised secular realm by setting up educational institutes that were separate organisational entities.

Religious congregations founded in the 19th. and 20th. centuries responded to a world growing increasingly specialised. Congregations were founded for one or two specific purposes, such as, education of young women (or men); the care of the poor; the care of the sick; to work in missionary countries. Irish congregations founded during this period include Christian Brothers (1802); the Sisters of Mercy (1831) and the Columban Missionary Society (1921). This was the era when

building big institutions was in vogue. The 18th. century anti-clericalism which had resulted in the suppression of many orders, including the Jesuits (from 1773 to 1814) continued to affect the internal structure of these institutions with their emphasis on external conformity, distrust of outside influences, unquestioning acceptance of authority etc.

This brief historical sketch illustrates the point that the form of religious life that developed during different times in history, operated out of, and accepted the ecclesial and societal situations in which it found itself, whether that meant accepting the values of feudalism; the values of urban life that characterised the medieval period; the ideal of conquering the world for Christ which predominated during the reformation and post reformation era; or the values of societal care and specialisation that have characterised our most recent history. Each new form of religious life was in response to special societal and church needs. Almost always, these were very large needs, although there were some situations where a religious congregation was founded for one very specific need. For example there was an order in France, in the late middle ages, whose work was the building and repairing of bridges. It is the

recognised ancestor of the Department of National Highways in France. Padberg (1986).

Religious life has had a long and often difficult history and while there are some congregations that have survived succeeding societal upheavals (e.g. the Benedictines, Dominicans, Ursulines etc.) the vast majority of congregations founded in the church are no longer in existence - 124 of the 178 congregations of male religious founded before the 19th. century, have disappeared. Hostie (1972). Cade et al. (1979), referring to the work of Hostie (1972) discovered that those congregations that had survived went through predictable cycles of development. These life cycles could be divided into five distinct periods - foundation; expansion; stabilisation; breakdown; and critical, and three outcomes are possible at the critical period - extinction, minimal survival or revitalisation Cada et al (1979). Most religious congregations today are at the critical period in their life cycle.

Foundation Charism

The Founder:

All religious congregations begin with a vision, a dream of something new. Without the vision or the dream there would not be enough energy to carry on in the face of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that frequently face young organisations. Founders are people who are particularly sensitive to historical change and endowed with a gift for interpreting the signs of the times. These sensitivities, which give an acute understanding of new needs and new opportunities often engage the founder in opposition to what has become established, familiar or comfortable to the institution or society. Pettigrew (1979) suggests that the behaviour of the founder becomes the basis of ritual and myth which guide the organisation through its history. Lodahl and Mitchell (1980) propose that the founder, who is likely to have been a charismatic leader may serve as a significant source of identity. Whitley (1977) describes charisma as a special attribute of an individual personality who is endowed with exceptional qualities, and on this basis is treated as a leader who presents definite obligations to his followers. The founder and the first group attracted to his/her vision take on the characteristics

of a movement, that is, a group of people animated by a common concern and allowing different degrees of membership. Schneiders (1986). Founders of religious congregations have the particular characteristic of breaking new ground in response to new needs, and when these responses are most successful, of institutionalising their response, to provide a structural support and hospitable climate for the ideas and actions of the first followers. The problem was, that all too frequently the institutionalisation of a particular responses and the institutions in which, or from which, the response operated came to be considered as goods in themselves, thereby inhibiting the freedom to move into new ventures.

Charism of the Founder:

The Second Vatican Council, *Perfectae Caritatis* (1965) mandated all religious congregations to renew themselves....in the spirit of the founders' charism. The importance attached to this aspect of renewal can be understood with the realisation that the charism of a congregation dictates its mission. If through history the charism has been lost or diluted either through over-institutionalisation or otherwise then the mission of the congregation becomes unclear. Unclear

mission statements lead to unclear goals and objectives and is the path to organisational chaos. It is not surprising therefore that during the 10 years after Vatican II, 'founderology', George, (1977) was taken very seriously. Members of individual congregations were engaged in searching for their original identity, i.e. their "roots". The purpose of this research was to articulate in a language of our own times the authentic vision of the founder, so that it became the ideal and norm for contemporary renewal and adaptation. Futrell, (1981).

Mission Statements:

As a result of their research into their foundation charisms, congregations produced updated mission statements. These mission statements were subject to review at subsequent chapters - meetings of elected delegates held at regular intervals and the highest decision making body within an active religious congregation. The mission statement of a religious congregation is an articulation of the members perception of why the congregation exists at this present time, and why it should continue to exist within the church and contemporary society. To be

valid this mission statement must flow from from an understanding of the founder's charism; an understanding of the needs of the church and the world at this present time; and an understanding of how these needs are the same or different from those to which the congregation historically responded.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The goal of organisational development (OD) is to create a self-renewing organisation. A self-renewing organisation is one that has developed a climate and structures whereby the members of the organisation cooperate in the planning and problem solving that help an organisation to adapt to internal and external changes and successfully accomplish the organisational mission.

Although the literal meaning of the words 'organisational development' could refer to a wide range of strategies for organisational improvement, the phrase has come to take on a definite meaning in organisational literature and organisational practice. Beer (1980) refers to it as a rapidly emerging field of applied behavioural science concerned with helping contemporary organisations deal with the problems of commitment and adaptability, which he suggests are problems symptomatic of the increasing stress on bureaucratic organisations.

Definition of Organisational Development (OD):

A poll conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (1974) asked several hundred OD professionals for their definitions of OD. The one most agreed-upon was:

OD is an effort that is (a) planned (b) organization-wide (c) managed from the top to (d) increase organization effectiveness and health through (e) planned interventions in the organizations' processes using behavioural science knowledge. Beckhard (1969).

Firstly, therefore, OD is a planned change effort. The need for planning change is also suggested by Bennis (1969) when he describes OD as a complex 'educational' strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organisations so that they might better adapt to a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Planned change efforts involve interventions in the ongoing, normal activities of the

organisation. Interventions are a set of activities, usually led or facilitated by a consultant, and aimed at helping a group to examine and act upon their behaviour and relationships. Schein (1969). These interventions are carefully designed and executed to change an organisation from its currently less desirable state, to a state of more effective functioning. The most commonly used interventions are:

- . Diagnostic Interventions: gathering data about the total system or its parts for feedback and diagnosis
- . Process Interventions: activities intended to have an impact on organisational behaviour and process.
- . Structural Interventions: interventions for diagnosing existing structures and implementing innovations.
- . Individual Interventions: the selection, training and developing of individuals so that the fit between people and other components in the social system can be improved.

Secondly, in a management development situation the client that is changed is the manager, but in an OD process the client that is changed is the whole organisation. The scope of OD covers the total enterprise, from the organisation in its' community, to the individual, as the fundamental unit of the organisation. Kuriloff (1972) . The organisation is viewed as a system or pattern of relationships where changes in one part of the system, directly or

indirectly affect the constituent parts, or subsystems. This differs from the traditional organisation theory where subsystems have been studied separately, with a view to later putting the parts together into a whole. The systems approach emphasises that this is not possible and that the starting point has to be the total system, Kast & Rosenzweig (1979). In his definition of OD Beer (1980) not only indicates that OD is organisation-wide, but also stresses the importance of congruence between the various organisational components:

"OD is a system-wide process of data collection, diagnosis, action planning, intervention, and evaluation aimed at: enhancing congruence between organisational structure, process, strategy, people and culture; developing new and creative organisation solutions; and developing the organisation's self renewing capacity." p.10

Thirdly, according to Beckhard's definition, an OD process should be managed from the top. Not everyone agrees with this however For Beer and Huse (1972) it is sufficient that top management is not opposed.....indeed attempting to obtain too strong a committment from top management during the early stages of OD can be threatening enough to cause withdrawal from planned change. In 1980, Beer appears to reconsider his position regarding the importance of managerial support in OD processes when he states:

"A system wide OD effort must have the intellectual and emotional commitment of the target-unit's top manager." p.228

This commitment on the part of top management is strongly emphasised in the OD literature. For example, Bennis (1969); Blake & Mouton (1969); Beckhard (1969); French & Bell (1978). Albrecht (1983) estimates that:-

"With the personal commitment, and especially the initiative of the chief executive, the battle is ninety percent won." p.135

Fourthly, according to Beckhard's (1969) definition, the purpose of OD is to increase organisational effectiveness and organisational health. An organisation is effective to the extent that it accomplishes the objectives of the organisation. Huse (1979). Zand (1977) agrees with Beckhard and defines OD as:

"organizational development is concerned with the deliberate, reasoned, introduction, establishment reinforcement, and spread of change for the purpose of improving and organizations effectiveness and health. Effectiveness refers to the setting and attaining of appropriate goals in a changing environment. Health refers to the motivation, utilization, and integration of human resources within the organization."

Organisational health and effectiveness are also emphasised by French and Bell (1978) . For them it is important that the the members of an organisation collaborate in such a way that the goals of the organisation are attained at the same time that human values of individuals within the organisation are

furthered. They state that the goals of OD are to make the organisation more effective, more viable, and better able to achieve both the goals of the organisation as an entity and the goals of the individuals within the organisation.

Values and Assumptions of OD:

If the purpose of OD is to achieve organisational health as well as organisational effectiveness then there are, by implication, certain values and assumptions upon which OD is based. Bothwell (1983) lists some of the more significant concepts that form the foundation of OD:

- . all people have value, and their welfare should be a concern of the organization.
- . individuals have drives towards personal goals and development.
- . the needs and aspirations of people are reason for organized effort in society.
- . work and life are richer and more meaningful if feelings, hopes and needs are a legitimate part of the organization's culture.
- . people wish to be accepted by and interact cooperatively with at least one small reference group.
- . leadership and maintenance functions must be shared with group members.
- . decentralization is to be valued and attained.

- . people are capable of increased effectiveness, and they can contribute to their reference groups solution of problems.
- . win/lose strategies are not as optimal to the solution of most organizational problems as win/win strategies.
- . suppressed feelings and attitudes have a negative effect on the group's problem solving, personal growth and job satisfaction.
- . OD takes time, patience, and a long-range perspective by key organizational leaders.
- . improved performance from OD needs to be sustained by changes in the total human resource system of the organization

The OD Process:

Finally, behavioural science is used in OD. The changes that are applied to an organisation by OD consultants are based on concepts developed in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, management, and organisational behaviour. OD is usually undertaken when top management perceive organisational problems. Examples of organisational problems that are of concern to OD specialists might include, lack of motivation; low productivity; the challenges of a merger; change in leadership; poor planning or communication; inadequate structures or internal processes; etc. Central to the OD process is the use of OD consultants.

OD Consultant:

The use of a change agent or catalyst is one of the distinguishing characteristics of OD. The literature available on the qualities and skills considered as essential for an effective od consultant is enough to make one pause and wonder if such a 'being' could exist in reality! The list includes diagnostic ability; basic behavioural knowledge; knowledge of behavioural science techniques; empathy; goal setting ability; knowledge of the theories and method within the consultant's own discipline; problem solving ability Glickman (1974). Other areas, include the ability to do self-assessment Havelock (1973); the ability to see things objectively Rogers (1971); imagination and flexibility R. Lippitt (1969); and honesty, consistency and the ability to inspire trust.

Perhaps the best (though general) description of the 'role' of the OD consultant comes from Harrison (1977) "to intervene at a level no deeper than that required to produce enduring solutions to the problem in hand; and to intervene at a level no deeper than that at which the energy and resources of the client can be committed to problem solving and change." Other writers describe the role of the OD consultant as that of educator and diagnostician. Lawrence and Lorsch

(1969); the performer of integrating functions. Havelock & Havelock (1973); to adopt a neutral and non threatening stance Franklin (1976). The three roles of the OD consultant according to Bennis (1973) are training; consulting; and applied research.

Whether the consultant is internal or external, i.e. has a role within the organisation, or is located outside, there are certain basic phases of relationship and interaction between the client and the consultant.

- . the phase of contact, entry and relationship establishment
- . the phase of contract formulation and establishing a working relationship
- . the phase of planning the goals and steps of problem solving
- . a phase of action-taking and continuity of effort
- . a termination of the contract phase

Fig 4: The organisational development process. Bothwell (1983)

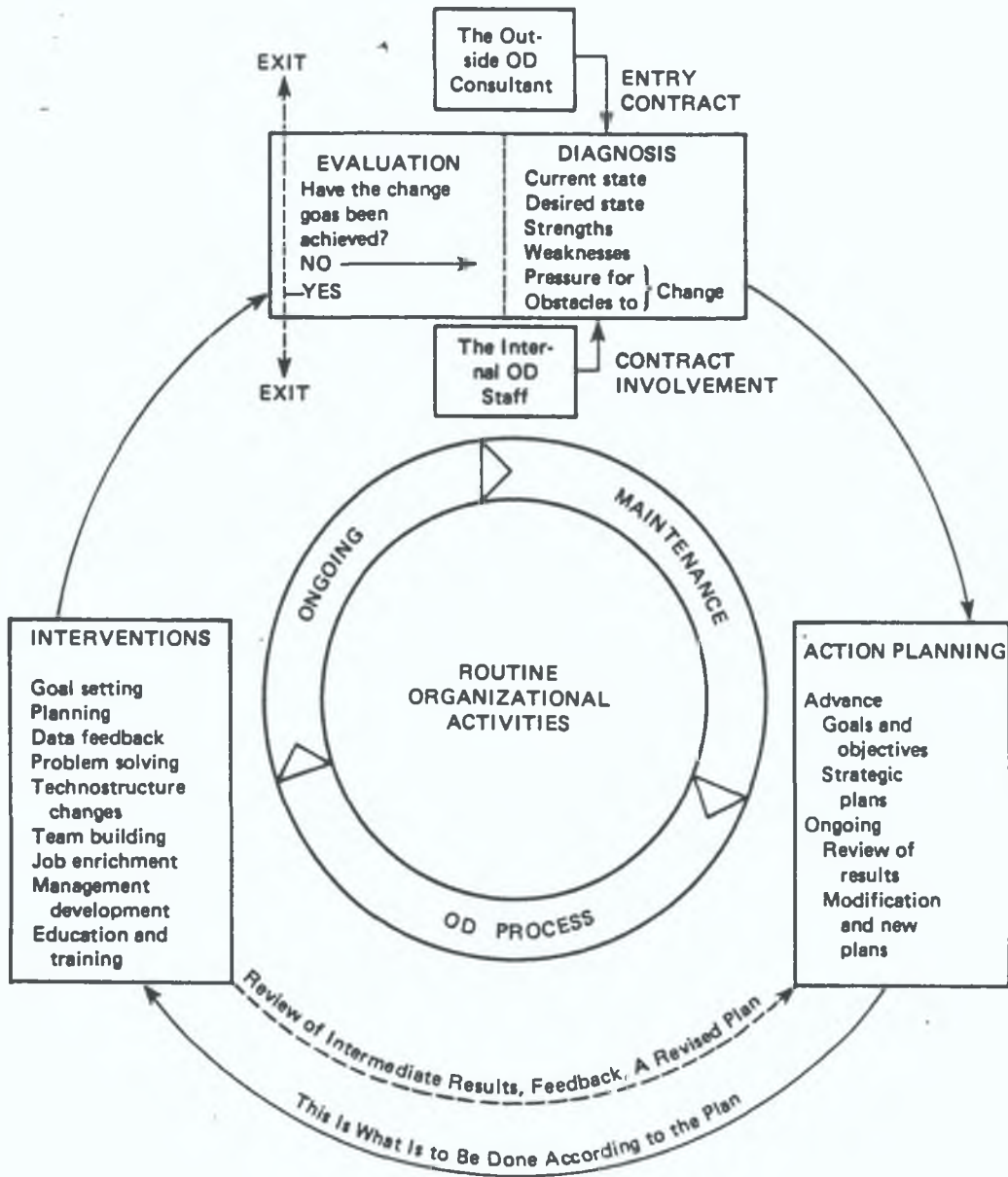


Fig. 4 summarises the various steps that occur during a typical OD process.

The first step in the organisational development process is the initial contact the consultant has with the organisational leadership and the agreement of a contract by both parties. How this 'entry' stage is handled is critical to the success or failure of the whole process. Beer (1980) asserts that if the consultant is directive and controlling, managers will build expectations for this behaviour in the future and will either resist or become dependent. If on the other hand, the consultant is confronting, supportive, and shares a willingness to influence and be influenced, the relationship is more likely to evolve along these lines. As Beer and Huse (1972) point out, the change agent has his own normative, developmental theory or frame of reference. He must therefore be conscious of his own set of values and assumptions and share them with the client system, thereby establishing openness and collaboration from the beginning.

The next step is a diagnosis of the current state of things. What are the organisation's strengths? What are the organisation's weaknesses? What are the pressures for, and obstacles against change? Where would the organisation like to be once the changes have taken place? Huse (1980) suggests that the most efficient and effective sequence of of diagnostic

methods starts with observation, is followed by a semistructured interview, and is completed with a questionnaire intended to measure more precisely, problems identified in earlier diagnostic methods. The basic data from the client group is summarised by the consultant and fed back to the group for validation and further diagnosis. Schein (1969) notes that the failure to build up a common frame of client-consultant relationship may lead to a faulty diagnosis or a communication gap where the client is unwilling to believe the diagnosis or accept the prescription for effective change.

Next, the consultant and the client system jointly agree on further action to be taken. This involves establishing goals and objectives and planning strategies for the action steps to follow. The planning that takes place is for one or more interventions that will be introduced by the consultant. Fig. 4 shows nine of the more common interventions. This stage also involves an ongoing evaluation of the intervention strategies and a willingness to modify existing plans or formulate new ones if the planned goals have not taken place.

When the interventions are completed a final evaluation takes place to determine if the planned goals of the change effort have taken place. If the answer is yes and the organisation has now established internal systems for ongoing process maintenance, i.e. has become self-renewing, the OD consultant can and should terminate his contract with the organisation. The organisation will be self-renewing to the extent that that these internal processes and procedures are integrated into the normal activities of the organisation and are subject to periodic diagnosis, action planning and evaluation.

Internal and External Consultants:

Lippitt and Lippitt (1969) propose that the basic dynamics in the consulting situation are the same whether one is an external or an internal consultant. from their experience they advocate a teaming of internal and external consultants as the most effective approach for serving the client.

Grid Organisational Development:

Grid organisational development is based on the Managerial Grid developed by Blake and Mouton (1964,1968). The grid is a two dimension framework, with one dimension representing a concern for production and the other a concern for people. The grid identifies these two concerns, rates them on a nine-point scale and plots them on a horizontal and vertical axis respectively. Among the eighty-one possible combinations, five main styles of organisational management emerge, namely: Team (9,9); Task (9,1); Country Club (1,9); and Middle of the Road (5,5). The ideal is considered to be the team management (9,9) position where concern for production and the needs of organisational members are integrated by the management. Blake and Mouton identified ten barriers to organisational excellence, with the two foremost being communication and planning.

The implementation of a grid improvement programme consists of a prephase and six phases, lasting from three to five years. Blake and Mouton believed that if the phases were followed systematically, the organisation would move from the initial step of examining organisational behaviour and style to the

implementation of an ideal strategic organisational model. The grid, with the exception of the prephase, is designed to be conducted primarily by organisational members who have been trained in overall grid concepts.

There has been relatively little research done on the managerial grid programme partly because few organisations have undertaken the full six-phase programme and partly because it is extremely difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of such a large-scale and multifaceted programme. The evaluations that have been done are contradictory. Blake and Mouton (1968); Beer & Kleisath (1967); and Blake et al. (1964) found changes in attitudes and profit improvements in some organisations. Greiner, Leitch & Barnes (1968) on the other hand found no changes in organisational climate because of lack of management support.

What OD is not:

In addition to examining definitions of OD, another way of understanding it is to examine what OD is not:

- . OD is not management development. management development is focussed on a particular manager or group of managers to change individual managerial behaviour. OD is focussed on the broader system of which the manager is a subsystem.

- . OD is not a specific technique, such as sensitivity training, job enrichment, group team building, or management by objectives. OD may use specific

techniques, but only after the relevance and utility of a specific technique has been clearly demonstrated by careful diagnosis.

OD is not concerned solely, with making people happy. Rather it is concerned with organisational health effectiveness and efficiency.

Hedberg (1974) as suggested that perhaps the simplest way of describing OD is to say that it promotes the asking of two questions....."where are we now?" and "where would we like to be?", and offers a variety of ways in which the members can move their organisations towards the desired state.

Historical Sources of OD:

OD is derived from three main sources. French & Bell (1978); Huse (1975):

- 1) The growth of the National Training Laboratories and the development of sensitivity training groups or T-groups in 1945.
- 2) The use of attitude surveys and the feedback of data to participants....a method developed at the Research Center for Group Dynamics, University of Michigan, (1945).
- 3) The socio-technical approach, which considers neither the human nor the technical dimensions of work as being paramount, but instead focusses on the interaction and interrelatedness of the two. Much of the work on the socio-technical approach to OD stemmed from the early work done at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London (1948)

OD and Religious Congregations:

While OD is not a panacea for all the problems facing today's organisations, including religious congregations, it is nevertheless one strategy for intelligently facing the requirements of a changing world. French & Bell (1978). When an OD process is used in a religious congregation the principles in Beckhard's definition remain applicable, i.e. the change effort must be planned; organisation wide; managed from the top; utilise behavioural science knowledge; and have as its' goal congregational effectiveness and health. However, some understanding of the similarities and differences between religious congregations and business organisations Darmanin (1983) is needed when applying these principles to religious congregations. Such an understanding will contribute to a more accurate diagnosis by an OD consultant of the organisational problems facing a religious congregation.

Similarities:

Organisations are social inventions designed to achieve economic or other purposes, while at the same time fulfilling member needs. Beer (1980), while an institution is defined by Greenleaf (1977) as:

a gathering of persons who have accepted a common purpose, and a common discipline to guide the pursuit of that purpose, to the end that each involved person reaches higher fulfillment as a person through serving and being served by the common venture, than they would have achieved alone or in a less committed relationship.

In this respect a religious congregation can be either an organisation or an institution and is therefore subject to the psycho-social laws governing all organisational behaviour. In a religious organisation as in any organisation a group of people with different personalities come together to achieve common goals, share common values and to provide services both for the members and for the 'clients'. Many concepts and processes therefore, are common both to business organisations and to religious congregations. For

example, statements of mission and goals; planning and evaluation; delegation of authority; team-work; communication; establishing norms; motivating members; conflict management; resistance to change; personnel selection and training.

Differences:

Nevertheless there are basic differences between religious congregations and business organisations and it is perhaps these differences more than the similarities that have been responsible for the limited use of OD in religious congregations.

Differences between religious congregations and business organisation include a difference in the goals pursued by each. Religious congregations are primarily concerned with religion, with the rediscovering and reaffirming the numinous, the sacred and the holy for the people. Implicit in a difference in goals is a difference in the priority of values. Beliefs held by organisational members about the identity, purpose, and character of an organisation, affect organisational actions. Watson (1963); Sproull (1981). In religious congregations certain values are considered essential,

such as, faith, the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, apostolic service etc. These values condition and determine organisational processes, and become the principal criteria for planning, evaluation, decision-making, choice of work, training of members, selection of leaders, life-style etc.

Another major difference is the motivation factor. The reasons for seeking employment in a business organisation are quite different from the reasons for joining a religious community. The latter is a voluntary choice of a 'state of life' that will colour an individual's behaviour, life-style, work etc. The motivation for living in a religious congregation cannot exclude faith in God who occupies a central place in the motivation factor.....a religious is responsible not only to peers and the organisation, but above all to God. Consequently the problem of motivation common to all organisations will be resolved differently in a religious congregation.

Other major differences between religious congregations and business organisations include:

- . members of a religious congregation not only work together, but they also live together.
- . becoming a member of a religious congregation is normally a life commitment.
- . the members of a religious congregation and the leadership are either all men or all women

These differences affect the organisational culture; the psycho-social processes existing among the members; organisational stability; possibilities regarding long-term planning; the importance of proper selection procedures etc.

Life Cycle:

Another factor that needs attention during the planning of an OD process for a religious congregation is the history of the congregation. As organisations grow older and more complex they are faced with new problems that demand new decision making processes. Normally a religious congregation is older than a business organisation. Some congregations in Ireland, and elsewhere have existed for centuries (e.g. Benedictines, Dominicans, Ursulines, Jesuits), and have survived through several life cycles. The sociological studies of Cada et al. (1979) showed that each of the religious systems that survived, went through a series

of life cycles, that they termed the Vitality Curve. The Vitality Curve refers to the natural rise and fall of an institution relative to its usefulness and success in society historically. Hall (1986).

This life cycle approach has received a lot of attention in the literature on business organisations. Greiner (1972), Adizes (1979), Kimberly (1979) and Miles (1980) suggest that it may be possible to predict the major problems, opportunities and decisions that an organisation will have to face by studying the movement of the organisation through life cycle phases. Greiner (1972) sees the life of an organisation as being a series of alternative revolutionary and evolutionary stages. A calm evolutionary stage is ended by a crisis phase in the organisation, and this crisis is resolved by some revolutionary readjustment. Argenti (1976) identified the causes and symptoms of collapse in young, rapidly expanding, and mature organisations. Hannan & Freeman (1978) and Aldrich (1979) examined the expansion and contraction of populations in organisations in their ecology or natural selection theory. When Quinn and Cameron (1980) reviewed several different life cycle models they identified four common stages of development - creativity and

entrepreneurship; collectivity; formalisation and control; and elaboration of structure. Cameron and Whetten (1981) examined the changes that occurred in perception of effectiveness by organisational members as their organisations moved through various life cycle stages. According to Kimberly, Miles & Associates (1980), "organizations are born, grow and decline. Sometimes they awaken, and sometimes they disappear." Kimberly (1980) states that an understanding of the life cycle theory should greatly enrich the content or organisational theory. Hostie (1972), Fitz and Cada (1975), and O'Murchu (1980) apply the life cycle approach to religious congregations.

Authority:

As an OD process is managed from the top, knowledge of the structure of leadership that exists in a religious congregation is essential. Authority in a religious congregation is invested in a major superior, who is elected for a definite number of years, the exact number being prescribed by the constitutions of individual congregations. The most usual term of office is for six years, with the possibility of being reelected for a further six years. These superiors are assisted by councillors. The number of councillors and

the extent of their authority are also prescribed in the constitutions of individual congregations. Authority is also exercised by the general chapter of a congregation when it is in session. A general chapter is an ad hoc body of elected congregational members who meet to elect major superiors, councillors, and to clarify congregational goals in the light of changing 'client' needs, the charism of the congregation and current congregational resources.

Prior to Vatican II the major superior of a religious congregation was frequently identified as the sole representative and interpreter of God's will for congregational members. Vatican II however instructed congregations to emphasise the principals of collegiality, subsidiarity, delegation, coresponsibility, and participatory decision making *Perfectae Caritatis* (4.14); *Ecclesiae Sanctae* (11,4,42-43); *Lumen Gentium* (22-23); *Evangelico Testificato* (25). Since then, to varying degrees, there has been a shift from hierarchical to horizontal models of government. Structures are increasingly designed to insure participation by members in major decisions and to provide for decentralisation and subsidiarity, so that decisions are made at the level where they will be implemented. Authority is more and

more conceived of, as a service within the congregation, rather than benign control from above. What is emerging is the concept of the entire membership as responsible for corporate mission of the congregation, and the strategic choices of the congregation with regard to increasingly scarce resources.

The mandate from Vatican 11 instructing religious congregations to change came at a time when these congregations were experiencing growth in membership and expansion of services, and possessed some of the conditions Sofer (1961) outlines as unfavourable to change e.g. the market for the services produced (education, healthcare) by congregations was stable; there was a formal structure protecting the traditional policies of congregations and the membership. Change in religious congregations, in the mid 1960's, was more in obedience to church authorities rather than any felt need by congregational leaders or members. Had it not been for Vatican 11, religious congregations would have postponed congregational changes because organisations change if they are under pressure, and rarely change if they are not. Beckhard (1970); Greiner (1967). The changes that took place in religious congregations after Vatican 11, therefore, were decreed by a higher

authority. This type of change can result in a lot of psychological and organisational strain. Keleman & Warick (1973), or raise expectations about the change beyond the management or organisation's capacity to meet these expectations. Reddin (1976).

Religious congregations in Ireland, as elsewhere, have made valiant efforts at renewal over a twenty year period, in response to the decrees from Vatican II. Today many religious are weary from change efforts! Furthermore, unanticipated outcomes of such change can cause disillusionment, resentment, frustration and disappointment. These feelings create a loss of motivation and reduce momentum, just when momentum is needed. Beer (1980). In religious congregations the unexpected outcomes of change have been numerous. Since the mid 1960's traditional values, life-styles and institutional works have disappeared or been severely curtailed; new structures have evolved slowly and often painfully; financial viability is no longer taken for granted; the intake of new members has virtually ceased; and the departure of trained personnel continues. These changes have caused insecurity, some anger, confusion, loss of identity and for varying lengths of time distrustful polarisation among members.

The changes have caused an imbalance within congregations. Kuriloff (1972) states categorically that organisational survival depends on the continual assessment of the forces for and the imminence of change, and appropriate activity aimed at restoring equilibrium. Change in religious congregations today therefore, while still being an obedient response to church authorities, is increasingly accepted as a necessary condition of survival by many congregations.

Leaders of religious communities worldwide, are increasingly recognising the need for more sophisticated planning and development approaches as a result of the changes that have, and are, taking place both within Roman Catholic religious congregations and within the environment in which they live and work. A research report (1983) by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), concludes that administrative procedures, as well as spiritual vitality, do have a bearing on the success of religious institutes. The report emphasises that successful religious congregations have effective leadership which uses personalistic and productive administrative procedures. The research of this report supported the hypothesis that successful religious congregations have the following eight characteristics:

1. Pro-active administration
2. Closeness to the people served
3. Active up-dating of the apostolate
4. Nurturing members for apostolic effectiveness
5. Strong value formation
6. Uncomplicated organisational procedures
7. Doing well what the congregation did traditionally
8. Internalized discipline

These characteristics are based on research into successful business organisations in America by Peters and Waterman (1982) Given that the goal of OD is to create a self renewing organisation i.e. one where the membership cooperates in that planning and problem solving which will help the organisation to adapt successfully to internal and environmental changes and achieve the congregational mission it is to be expected that it will increasingly becoming one of the more sophisticated development methods being recommended for use in religious congregations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were used as the data collection method in this study because:

1. they could be given to the total sample at the same time at a relatively low cost
2. the large volume of data obtained could be more easily analysed and presented within the limited time available
3. they could be self administered
4. the responses could be quantified and not subject to the bias of the researcher.

.....

The research for this thesis was divided into two parts:

PART 1:

A fairly general questionnaire (Questionnaire 1. Appendix 1) was sent to all the Major Superiors of religious congregations in Ireland with 10 or more members. Its purpose was to obtain data on:

- (a) the age, size and country of origin of religious congregations in Ireland
- (b) The reasons why the congregations were originally founded.
- (c) Major congregational changes that have taken place during the last 20 years.
- (d) The types of work religious congregations are currently engaged in.
- (e) Updated mission statements.

From this data six congregations were selected for more detailed study.

PART 2:

From the data obtained in Part 1, six congregations were selected for more detailed study. Thirty members from each of the six congregations selected participated in an Attitude Survey. (Questionnaire 2: Appendix 2). The purpose of this questionnaire was to examine how men and women religious feel about their congregations and their work and on the basis of this data to suggest possible areas in need of change in religious congregations.

PART 1

With the help of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors 108 congregations were initially selected. The sole criterion for this selection was that a congregation had a membership of at least 10 people who were currently attached to the Irish region of the congregation. On April 7th the Major Superiors of these congregations were contacted by mail (Letter 1: Appendix 1) and asked to respond to a short questionnaire. (Questionnaire 1 Appendix 1). Sixty nine congregations or 63.9% of the population contacted responded to this initial questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain some overall data on the size, age, mission, and work of religious congregations in Ireland and specifically, to identify congregations that had

- . at least 200 members based in Ireland
- . undergone significant congregational changes since Vatican II
- . employed outside specialists in at least four of the following areas: communication, leadership, decision-making, founding vision, group behaviour.

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE 1:

Questionnaire 1 (Appendix 1) was analysed to determine.

- (a) Where religious congregations in Ireland were founded
i.e. country of origin
- (b) When religious congregations in Ireland were founded.
- (c) The size of religious congregations in Ireland
- (d) Why religious congregations in Ireland were founded.
- (f) The major changes that have taken place in religious
congregations in Ireland since the mid-1960's.
- (g) The work currently being done by Irish religious.
- (g) The mission statements of religious congregations in
Ireland.

Country of origin by century of foundation of religious
congregations in Ireland

In the sample who responded to Questionnaire 1, and taking the 11 autonomous groups of the Sisters of Mercy as one congregation, only 18.6% of the congregations currently based in Ireland were founded in this country.

Table 1: Religious congregations in Ireland by the country of foundation and the century of foundation.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	CENTURY OF FOUNDATION						
	6C.	13C.	16C	17C	18C	19C	20C
Belgium						2	
France			1	4	1	19	1
Holland						1	
Holy Land		1					
India						1	
Ireland					1	5	5
Italy	1	2	3		2	5	
Nigeria							1
Spain		1	1			1	
TOTAL NO. CONG.	1	4	5	4	4	34	7

Note: The total of congregations in Table 1 does not add up to 69 congregations because 11 of the respondents were separate, and autonomous groups of the one congregation, i.e. the Sisters of Mercy. As these 11 groups have the same date and country of foundation, they were considered as one congregation for Table 1.

SIZE OF CONGREGATIONS;

Most of the religious congregations in the sample are multinationals i.e. only a small % of the total membership is actually based in Ireland. The congregations with the highest % of the membership based in Ireland are congregations that were originally founded in Ireland, or congregations founded outside Ireland, but with the top administration located in Ireland from the early days of the of the foundation.

Table 2: The size of religious congregations in Ireland by the number of congregations in Ireland by the % membership based in Ireland.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF CONGREGATION	NO. OF CONG IN IRELAND	% OF CONG. MEMBERS IN IRELAND
Over 20,000	2	1
10,000 - 20,000	3	From .2 to 1
5,000 - 10,000	7	From .7 to 2
1,000 - 5,000	24	From .2 to 66
500 - 1,000	10	From 2 to 90
100 - 500	22	From 4 to 100
Under 100	1	100

WHY RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS WERE FOUNDED.

The main reason given by the sample for the foundation of their congregations were:

- (a) To preach the Gospel and to train the clergy
- (b) To alleviate the deprivation caused e.g. by the French Revolution and the Famine in Ireland.
- (c) To provide education, health services, and accomodation for the sick, the poor, orphans, prostitutes.
- (d) To train missionaries for non Christian countries.

CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS SINCE VATICAN 11:

The main changes recorded by the sample were:

Note: The number in brackets refers to the number of congregations indicating change in a specific area.

- (a) Change in the structure of Government with more decentralistaion and more participation by the membership in the decision-making process. (25)
- (b) New missions to Third World countries (21)
- (c) New rules and Constitutions (21)
- (d) Movement into new types of work (19)
- (e) A new approach to the formation of new members (17)
- (f) Smaller community groups (15)
- (g) Movement away from a monastic style of living (14)
- (h) Renewed interest in original charism (13)
- (i) New emphasis on professional updating and renewal courses for the members (13)

(j) Lower numbers joining; higher median age; fully professed members and members in initial formation leaving their congregations. (11)

(k) Movement out of traditional work and the selling or donation of property (9)

(l) The deployment of personnel to work with the poor (8)

(m) New emphasis on the personal freedom/responsibility of the members (6)

(n) Collaboration with the laity. The formation of Lay Associate Groups; Lay Missionaries; and Lay people in leadership roles. (5)

WORK OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS:

The numbers in brackets indicate the number of congregations from the sample who are involved in specific works.

(a) Education, which includes: primary; Secondary; 3 Level; Adult; school for the blind; agricultural colleges; school for the deaf. (48)

(b) Parish work (25)

(c) Health Care, which includes: nursing; the administration of hospitals; care of the physically and medically handicapped; home nursing. (22)

(d) Social Work, which includes the care of. single mothers; alcoholics; drug addicts; the elderly; travellers; a centre for the homeless; hostels for the less well off, and students; guest house; centre for delinquents; youth clubs; residential care of women. (20)

(e) Spirituality, which includes: retreats; spiritual direction; confessional; pastoral counselling; the administration of retreat houses and conference centres; prayer groups; preaching missions; house of prayer, hospital chaplaincy. (30)

Other work mentioned was: formation of future missionaries (2); editing a missionary magazine ;(1) mission awareness (5); recruiting new members (2); Jewish/Christian relations (1); Human Development workshops (2), work in seminaries (1) community development (1); supporting returned missionaries (2).

MISSION STATEMENTS:

Nineteen of the sample or 27.5% did not include a mission statement in their response to Questionnaire 1. Three congregations stated that they were in the process of articulating an updated mission statement.

The most frequent emphases in the mission statements were:

- (a) To proclaim/ be witnesses to the Gospel values of love, hope, compassion in today's world.
- (b) Solidarity with, and a preferential option for, the poor and the victims of injustice. Addressing the causes of injustice in Society.
- (c) Discerning and responding to the current needs of society both in Ireland and Third World countries.

SUMMARY OF PART 1:

1. Most religious congregations in Ireland were originally founded outside Ireland during the 19 century and continue to be multinational, with only a small percentage of the membership based in Ireland.

2. The main reasons given for the foundation of religious congregations were:

- (a) to preach the Gospel
- (b) to train clerics for Ireland and for missionary countries.
- (c) to alleviate social needs

The updated mission statements of the sample indicate a re-emphasis by religious congregations on the original goal of their foundation.

3. Most Irish religious work in the areas of education; parish work; health care; social work, and spirituality.

4. The main changes that have occurred in religious congregations during the past 20 years are:

- (a) the decentralisation of authority and increased participation in the decision-making process
- (b) a decreased membership and a higher median age

- (c) a movement away from a monastic style of living and smaller community groups living together
- (d) increased professional updating and renewal of members
- (e) a different approach to the formation of new members
- (f) new types of work and new missionary ventures undertaken
- (g) renewed interest in the original vision of the founder
- (h) the sale or donation of congregational property
- (i) collaboration with the laity.

5. All religious congregations had used change agents.

PART 11

Part 11, which forms the main part of the research for this thesis, made a more detailed study of six congregations, three congregations of women and three congregations of men. These congregations were selected from congregations who had responded to Questionnaire 1. The criteria for selection were that congregations would have:

- (a) at least 200 members based in Ireland
- (b) have undergone significant organisational changes
- (c) employed outside specialists in at least four of the following areas: communication; leadership; decision-making, founding vision; group behaviour.

Of the 69 congregations who responded to Questionnaire 1 within the time stipulated, six congregations of men and eight congregations of women satisfied these criteria. Three of the men's congregations and one of the women's congregations, were unable to participate further in this research because of prior commitments. Furthermore, one of the female congregations was located in Northern Ireland and was excluded because there was no comparable male congregation in Northern Ireland among the respondents. Of the five remaining female congregations, three were chosen to participate in an Attitude Survey on Religious Congregations, one was chosen as a pilot group

for the same Survey and one was held in reserve in case difficulties should arise in the administration and collection of the Attitude Survey. In fact, the cooperation of this final congregation was not needed. While this selection of the women religious for the second stage of the research lacks a certain objectivity in its final stages, it is hard to see how it could have been avoided

Questionnaire 2: (Appendix 2)

The purpose of the research was to examine the attitudes of men and women religious to their congregations. The 70 attitudes chosen for examination come under ten headings:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Communication | 6) Purpose |
| 2) Participation | 7) Leadership |
| 3) Charism | 8) Congregational Life |
| 4) Mission Statement | 9) Work |
| 5) Satisfaction | 10) Change |

Two further questions were asked regarding the survey itself : a) were the questions clear? and b) was it a good idea to conduct such a survey?

The six religious congregations, who participated in the Attitude Survey of Religious Congregations provide the main data for this research. Ideally, it would be more interesting and more beneficial if a sample from every religious congregation in Ireland had been included in the population or at least a comparable sample of six congregations with a more conservative approach to change. In that way results would have come from a broader spectrum and represented a wider range of Institutions and various forms of religious life. Time and cost limitations however, have unfortunately restricted the scope of this research. An option therefore was taken in a certain direction, but it was the option most likely to give a reasonable representation of the situation in religious congregations in Ireland that have undergone significant changes since the mid-1960's and to achieve the goal of this thesis.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN:

An Attitude Survey on Religious Congregations was constructed (Appendix 2). This instrument was largely based on an Attitude Survey produced by Dr. John Hurley, Head of the School of Faculty and Staff Development, at the National Institute of Higher Education (N.I.H.E.), Dublin. Dr. Hurley developed this Survey for use in certain semi-State bodies in Ireland.

The following guidelines were used in adapting the Attitude Survey for use within religious congregations:

1) Since the questionnaire cannot be interminable in length and still invite a careful response, decisions were made about which topics/issues deserved more attention at this time and by this method than others. It was decided that:

- a) the questionnaire would NOT concentrate on the more spiritual areas common to all religious congregations e.g. religious vows or promises, private or communal prayer etc.
- b) the questionnaire would cover the main areas related to the ORGANISATIONAL dimension of religious congregations under the following headings:
 - . Communication
 - . Participation
 - . Charism
 - . Mission Statement
 - . Satisfaction
 - . Purpose
 - . Leadership
 - . Congregational Life
 - Work
 - . Change

2) The questions used would be understandable to and meaningful for the majority of the respondents.

3) The questions used would deal with aspects of religious life that are common to members of all religious congregations.

4) The demographic questions would be: age, sex, position in the congregation, occupation.

5) Questions on the clarity and usefulness of such a survey would be included.

6) A blank page would be provided at the end of the questionnaire and respondents asked for additional comments or suggestions regarding topics they would like included in future surveys.

7) The questionnaire would be pre-tested to discover any difficulties in understanding the questions. As a result of this pilot study the following changes were made:

- a) the format of the questionnaire was altered
- b) the wording of several questions was changed
- c) three questions were removed
- d) two new questions were added

SAMPLING PROCEDURE:

With the cooperation of the leadership of the six congregations involved in the Attitude Survey, thirty members were randomly selected from each group. However, in order to ensure that the respondents were in some measure representative of their respective congregations an attempt was made to ensure that the sample included:

- (a) different age groups
- (b) different positions within the congregation
- (c) different occupations

In this way a stratified random sample was drawn from each congregation.

Each of the questionnaires was coded in such a way that the congregation of the respondent could be identified and the number of responses from each congregation ascertained. On May 17th., 180 surveys were mailed or otherwise delivered to the respondents. Each survey was accompanied by a personal letter of explanation as to how individual respondents had been selected. (Letter 2: Appendix 2)

A total of 162 surveys were returned, or a 90% response rate. Of these 80 or 49.38% of the responses received were from male congregations and 82 or 50.617% from female congregations.

DATA:

To ensure that analysis of the data produced valid results.

- a) data from each survey was copied into a coded notebook
- b) data from the notebook was entered into a Lex Technical Word Processor
- c) data on the screen was compared visually with the original source of the data
- d) data was transferred to SPSSX where summary statistics were performed to ensure data validity
- e) range tests were carried out for all questions

DATA ANALYSIS:

1. A Profile of the Respondents

2. Statistical Analysis

1. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

The sample population was analysed to determine the:

- (a) The number of people in different congregational positions.
- (b) The number of people in different age brackets.
- (c) The number of people in different occupations
- (d) The frequency with which the sample attended updating courses.

2. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

Statistical analysis of the data consisted of a mean value and standard deviation value for each question. A T-test was applied to selected variables indicating statistically significant differences between variables at 0.05 level; at the 0.01 level; and at the 0.001 level. 't' differences at the 0.05 level are denoted by *; at the at the 0.00.01 level by **; and at the 0.001 level by ***.

RESULTS

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

In order to understand the results of a survey one must know something about the participants in it.

POSITION WITHIN THE CONGREGATION:

All the congregational positions listed in the questionnaire were represented in population sample.

Table 3: Position in Congregation

Position	Male	Female
Major Superior	3	0
Regional Superior	1	4
Local Superior	7	10
Formation Personnel	11	3
Active Members	46	40
Retired Members	5	17
Temporary Professed	5	7
Novice	2	1
Total	80	82

Nine people, six male religious and three female religious, all over 70 years of age, come under the heading of active members.

AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

Table 4: Age of Respondents

Age	Number		Total
	Male	Female	%
Under 20	3	0	1.85%
21 - 30	6	3	5.55%
31 - 40	8	14	13.58%
41 - 50	20	16	22.22%
51 - 60	20	19	23.45%
61 - 70	12	15	16.66%
Over 70	9	18	16.66%
TOTAL	80	82	99.97% *

*Does not add to 100% due to rounding.

In this sample the % of males over the age of 50 is 51.25%

while the % of females over 50 is 63.4%. These figures correspond to the aging trend in religious congregations in Ireland. In 1971 the number of clerical religious moving into the 60-80 age bracket was 13%. By 1982 this number had more than doubled to 27%. For religious sisters the number grew from 26% in 1971 to 42% in 1982. Council of Research and Development (1986)

OCCUPATIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS:

The sample contained a wide variety of occupations. Those occupations with the most frequent response are listed below.

Table 5: Occupations

Occupation	%	
Teaching	29.00	of the respondents
Administration	15.41	
Parish work	12.50	
House maintenance	8.02	
Formation	6.79	
Social Work	6.79	
Total	78.51	

Other occupations listed by individuals or very small numbers of participants included: chaplaincy; nursing; counselling; prayer; editing a magazine; research; initiating new programmes; retreats; librarian; sacristan; missionary; secretarial.

Thirty-one people or 19.13% of the total population stated that they were currently doing more than one job

Number of People	Number of Jobs per person
11	3
4	4
1	5

Fifty-five people or 35.18% had experienced more than three types of work in the congregation. During the last five years, ninety people, or 55.5% had changed their job.

UPDATING:

The frequency of attendance at updating courses is shown on the following Table:

Table 6: Frequency of attendance at updating courses

Frequency	Male		Female	
	Number	%	Number	%
Every year	18	23.07	30	37.03
Every 2 years	8	10.25	14	17.28
Every 3-5 years	20	25.64	12	14.81
Every 5-10 years	17	21.79	18	22.22
Never	15	19.23	7	8.64
Total	78	99.98	81	99.98

* Does not add to 100% due to rounding.

There were three missing values in the responses to these

questions - two from the male congregations and one from the female congregations. The twenty-two people who had never attended an updating course were distributed as follows:

Table 7: Numbers who never attended updating courses

Age	Male	Female
20 years old or less	2	0
21 - 30	1	1
31 - 40	1	0
41 - 50	4	1
51 - 60	6	1
61 - 70	1	2
71 years and over	1	1
Total	16	6

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis comprised of comparison of certain variables for the purpose of analysing any statistical differences that exist in the data. For the purposes of this study, measures of the central tendency and spread were used as a basis for comparison. The following section shows both question and answering patterns using a somewhat abbreviated form of the questionnaire. For the complete questionnaire see Appendix 2.

To avoid 'response set' the meaning of some values in the questionnaire was reversed. All mean values have been adjusted however, so that a value of 1 = Negative i.e. it disagrees with a statement while a value = 5 is positive i.e. it agrees with a statement.

The 10 sections of the questionnaire consist of either 5 point or 4 point scales. The type of scale being used is indicated at the beginning of each section.

REPORT OF RESULTS:

(a) The results are reported under the 10 headings of the Attitude Survey Questionnaire. (Appendix 2)

(b) A mean value and a standard deviation value are given for the entire sample.

(c) A mean value and a 't' value are given for the three selected groupings chosen for comparison.

(d) The selected groupings chosen for comparison are:

- i) Female and male congregations (Sex)
- ii) Superiors and non superiors (Position within the congregation)
- iii) The under 50 and the over 50 age brackets (Age)

(e) Female and male congregations were selected as groups for comparison because it can be hypothesised that sex differences will produce differences in the questionnaire responses.

(f) Superiors and non superiors were selected as a group for comparison because it can be hypothesised that superiors exercise greater influence within religious attitudes of the two groups to their congregation can therefore be expected. In this study the term 'superior' includes major superiors, regional superiors and local superiors. Superiors form 15.43% of the sample population.

(f) Different age groups were selected for comparison because it can be hypothesised that a variation in responses will occur between older and younger age groups. The under 50 and the over 50 age groups were chosen because this division of the age groups in the sample population came nearest to providing each of the comparative groups with 50% of the sample population. In the sample 43.20% are 50 years old or under, while 56.78% are over 50 years old.

(g) Individual congregations were not selected as groups for comparison because the initial analyses of the individual groups showed that major differences occurred between the women and men religious. It was therefore decided to limit the analysis to these two groups. Furthermore, because of the small sample from each congregation, it was the opinion of the researcher that comparative results from the data obtained would not necessarily form a valid basis for a comparative study of the congregations involved in the Attitude Survey

SECTION 1: COMMUNICATION: (Q.1)
(5 point scale)

Table 8: COMMUNICATIONS (1)

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 50
(a) BETWEEN MEMBERS	3.663	.816	3.817	3.500	3.333	4.000	3.750	3.636
			t=2.49*		t=-1.45		t=0 39	
(b) IN LOCAL COMMUNITY	3.799	.906	3.975	3.610	4.000	3.800	3.750	3.818
			t=2.58**		t=0.53		t=-1 15	
(c) BETWEEN SUPERIORS & MEMBERS	3.806	.820	3.939	3.667	4.333	4.200	3.250	4.091
			t=2.10*		t=0.23		t=-1.51	
(d) WITH LAY COLLEAGUES	3.513	.915	3.732	3.276	3.333	4.000	2.750	3.091
			t=3.20 **		t=-2.74 **		t=-0.42	
(e) WITH THOSE WHO WORK FOR CONG	3.633	.817	3.852	3.403	3.333	3.800	2.500	3.455
			t=3.56 **		t=-1.20		t=-1.36	
(f) WITH OTHER CONGREGATIONS	3.146	.764	3.296	2.987	3.667	3.400	3.000	3.000
			t=2.57 **		t=0.64		t=0 00	
(g) WITH LOCAL CHURCH	3.196	.899	3.235	3 156	4.000	2.600	3.500	3 364
			t=0.05		t=3.50 **		t=0.20	
(h) WITH THOSE WE WORK FOR	3.748	.842	3.963	3.526	3.333	4.000	3.500	3.909
			t=3.36 **		t=-2.00 *		t=-0.46	

Main Findings of this Section:

(a) Six of the mean values for the overall population are positive i.e. >3.50 indicating an overall positive response.

(b) The two highest mean values for the overall sample population indicate that communication is best (i) between superiors and members and (ii) within the local religious community.

(c) The two lowest mean values within the overall sample were in the 'uncertain' zone, and indicated that communication with (i) other religious congregations and (ii) with the Local Church, is only 'fair'.

(d) The most significant differences occurred between the female and male congregations and to a lesser extent, between the superiors and non superiors. No significant differences occurred between the under 50 and the over 50 age groups.

(e) The under 50 age group had a mean of 2.500 in Q1(e) indicating bad communication with those who worked for the congregation.

Summary of significant differences in Table 8.
(Based on the T-test)

Significance Level	Female/Male	Sup/non Sup	Under 50/Over 50
0.05	2	1	0
0.01	5	2	0
0.001	0	0	0

(Q.2).

Agree or disagree?

Table 9: COMMUNICATIONS (2)

			SEX		POSITION		AGE	
	MEAN	SD	F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50	
(a) INADEQUATE COMM. BETWEEN MEMBERS DECREASES EFFECTIVENESS OF CONG.	3.270	1.112	3.025	3.526	3.667	3.000	3.500	3.455
			t=-2.90 **		t=0.67		t=0.08	
(b) MAJOR SUP OUT OF TOUCH WITH LOWER LEVELS OF ORG.	2.296	.991	1.7500	2.091	1.667	2.200	1.750	2.091
			t=-0.61		t=-0.90		t=-0.61	

Main Findings of this Section.

Question (a):

(a) The mean of the overall sample for question Q2(a) falls in the 'uncertain' zone indicating uncertainty as to whether or not the overall effectiveness of the congregation is being negatively affected by inadequate communication between members in different work. It should be noted however that (a) male religious, (b) superiors and (c) the under 50 age group agree with the statement i.e. have a mean value greater than or equal to 3.50

(b) There is a significant difference at the 0.01 level between female and male congregations.

(c) There is general disagreement with the statement of Q2(b) i.e major superiors are not out of touch with the lower levels of the organisation.

SECTION 2: PARTICIPATION: (Q 3)
(5 point scale)

Influence on the congregation

Table 10: PARTICIPATION (1)

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50	
(a) VATICAN	3.012	1.112	2.815	3.313	3.667	3.200	3.000	2.636
			t=-2.30 **		t=0.67		t=0.61	
(b) LOCAL CHURCH	2.741	.949	2.610	2.875	3.667	2.600	2.750	2.909
			t=-1.78		t=2.58 *		t=-0.29	
(c) MAJOR SUPERIORS	3.887	.961	4.049	3.714	4.667	4.400	4.500	3.636
			t=2.20 *		t=0.64		t=1 94	
(d) LOCAL SUPERIORS	3.709	.905	3.593	3.831	4.333	4.500	3.750	3.364
			t=-1.66		t=-0.38		t=0 97	
(e) CONG. MEMBERS IN CHARGE OF FINANCE	3.031	1.040	3.173	2.885	3.667	3.400	3.500	3.000
			t=1.75		t=0.44		t=0.88	
(f) RETIRED MEMBERS	2.700	1.098	2.860	2.544	4.000	3.200	3.500	2.636
			t=1.78		t=2.14 *		t=1.94	
(g) ACTIVE MEMBERS	3.824	.707	3.838	3.810	4.667	3.800	3.750	3.727
			t=0 24		t=2.23 *		t=0.06	
(h) NEW MEMBERS	2.385	.967	2.500	2.269	2.667	2.600	2.250	2.182
			t=1 50		t=0.13		t=0 11	
(i) OUTSIDE EXPERTS	3.050	1.123	3.432	2.663	3.333	4 200	3.000	2 727
			t=4.61 ***		t=-1 73		t=0 28	
(j) YOU PERSONNALLY	2 763	.928	2 763	2.763	4 000	3.600	2.000	2 818
			t=0.00		t=1.63		t=-1.32	

Main Findings of this Section.

(a) The three highest mean values in the overall sample indicate that the people with the greatest influence on what happens in the congregation are (i) major superiors (ii) active members and (iii) local superiors.

(b) The highest mean value (4.667) in Table 3 occurs in Q3(c) indicating that superiors strongly agree that major superiors exert the strongest influence in religious congregations

(c) The lowest mean values in the overall sample indicate that the least influence is exerted by (i) new members (ii) retired members and (iii) the Local Church

(d) The lowest mean value (2.000) in Table 3 occurs in Q3(j), in the under 50 age group, indicating that this group felt they had little influence on what happened in the congregation.

Summary of significant differences in Table 10
(Based on T-test)

SIGNIFICENCE

LEVEL	FEMALE/MALE	SUP/NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50
0.05	1	3	0
0.01	1	0	0
0.001	1	0	0

(Q.4)

Decisions: Members asked for suggestions?
(4 point scale)

Table 11: DECISIONS

		SEX		POSITION		AGE	
MEAN	SD	F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50	
3.403	.851	3.256	2.825	3.333	3.400	2.750	3.364
t=3.32 ***				t=-0.16		t=-1.14	

Main Findings of this Section.

Although there is a significant difference between the female and male congregations at the 0.001 level, the overall response indicates that the leadership often/always asks the opinion of those likely to be affected by decisions.

(Q.5).
(4 point scale)

Decisions: Members participate with superiors?

Table 12: PARTICIPATION (2)

MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
		F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 50
2.918	.702	2.988	2.846	2.667	3.000	3.000	3.091
		t=1.27		t=-1.00		t=-0.14	

Main Findings of this Section.

The overall response is positive i.e the members participate with superiors in making important decisions.

SECTION 3: CHARISM: (Q.6).

(4 point scale)

Have meaning today?

Table 13: CHARISM

MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
		F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 50
2.839	.851	2.864	2.813	3.000	3.200	2.750	3.182
		t=0.38		t=-0.53		t=-1.19	

Main Findings of this Section:

The overall result is positive i.e. the original vision of the founder has meaning for the respondents

SECTION 4: MISSION STATEMENT: (Q.7).

(4 point scale)

Is the Mission Statement meaningful?

Table 14: MISSION STATEMENT
(4 point scale)

MEAN	SD	F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50	
3.163	.800	3.235	3.099	4.000	3.600	2.750	3.500
		t=-1.15		t=-1.63		t=2.50 *	

Main Findings of this Section.

(a) The Mission Statement is meaningful to the overall sample.

(b) The Mission Statement is most meaningful to superiors (mean = 4.000)

(c) The Mission Statement is least meaningful to the under 50 age group (mean =2.50)

(d) There is a significant difference at the 0.05 level between the under 50's and the over 50's.

SECTION 5: SATISFACTION: (Q.8)
(5 Point scale)

This congregation is better?

Table 15: THE CONGREGATION

		SEX		POSITION		AGE	
MEAN	SD	F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50	
3.925	.911	3.873	3.975	4.000	4.000	4.500	3 909
		t=0.70		t=0.00		t=-1.46	

(Q9). Encourage person to join congregation?

Table 16: SATISFACTION

MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
		F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 5	
2.075	.519	2.167	2.107	2.000	2.000	2.000	2 111
		t=0.69		t=000		t=-1.00	

Main Findings for Q8 and Q9:

The overall sample is satisfied that their congregation is better than most they know and would encourage those genuinely interested to join it.

SECTION 6: PURPOSE: (Q.10).

(5 point scale)

Purpose of congregation achieved?

Table 17: PURPOSE

MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
		F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 5	
3 685	.838	3 720	3.612	4.333	3.600	3.250	3 636
		t=0.80		t=1.77		t=0 68	

Findings Except for the under 50 age group there is overall agreement that the purpose of the congregation is being achieved

SECTION 7 LEADERSHIP (Q 11)
(5 point scale)

Does leadership

Table 18

LEADERSHIP

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 5
(a) DEMAND SUBMISSION	2 146	1 037	1 859	2 630	1 667	2 200	1 750	2 727
FROM MEMBERS			t=-3 59 **		t=0 -90		t=-1.63	
(b) LISTEN	3 556	787	4 811	3 658	4.000	3.800	3 333	3 72
			t=3 78 ***		t=0 53		t=-0 43	
(c) SHOW	3 755	966	4.200	3.300	3 667	3 600	3 333	3 90
INITIATIVE & CREATIVITY			t=6.58 ***		t=2 26 *		t=-1 31	
(d) ACT LIKE	2 425	1 195	1.988	2 873	1 667	2 200	3.333	2.36
PARENTS			t=-5 03 ***		t=-0 90		t=1 34	
(e) WELCOME	3 543	1 040	3 390	3 700	3 333	4 200	4 250	3 54
SUGGESTIONS BUT WANT FINAL WORD			t=-1 91		t=-1.13		t=1 87	
(f) PROMOTE	3 944	882	4 232	3 646	4 000	4 400	3 667	3 63
A CLIMATE OF TRUST			t=4 42 ***		t=-1.63		t=0 03	
(g) LISTEN BUT	2 429	885	2 259	2.600	2.000	2 200	2 500	2 36
LITTLE DECISION MAKING			t=-2 48 *		t=-1 00		t=0 25	
(h) SHOW	3 868	835	4 127	3 612	4 000	4 000	3 250	3 54
EMPATHY			t=4 08 ***		t=0 00		t=-0 53	
(i) ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO LOYALTY TO INSTITUTION AND ITS RULES	3 613	904	3 309	3 924	4 000	3 200	4 000	4 00
			t=-4 58 ***		t=1 63		t=0 00	
(j) CARE FOR	4 006	771	4 171	3 835	4 000	4 200	3 333	4 00
PERSONS WHILE BEING EFFECTIVE ORGANISERS			t=3 05 ***		t=-1 00		t=-1 74	
(k) EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION	3 235	952	3 346	3 125	4 000	3 600	2 750	3 09
			t=1 47		t=1 63		t=-0 73	

Main Findings of this Section.

- (a) The mean values for the overall sample show a positive reaction to the leadership in religious congregations.
- (b) The reaction of male religious is significantly less positive than the reaction of female religious.
- (c) The overall reaction of superiors is more positive than that of non superiors.
- (d) The overall reaction of the under 50 age group is less positive than that of the over 50 age group.

Summary of significant differences in Table 18
(Based on T-test)

Significance			
Level	Female/Male	Sup/Non Sup	Under 50/Over 50
0.05	1	1	0
0.01	1	0	0
0.001	7	0	0

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE:
(5 point scale)

Life in the congregation satisfies the need for:

Table 19: CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 5
(a) A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD	3.766	.901	4.074	3.475	3.667	3.600	3.500	3.546
			t=4.45 ***		t=0.16		t=-0.11	
(b) PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	3.744	.960	4.088	3.400	3.667	4.200	3.000	4.000
			t=4.84 ***		t=-1.37		t=-1.16	
(c) WORKING WITH THOSE IN NEED	3.408	1.103	3.718	3.101	3.333	3.600	3.750	3.182
			t=3.64 ***		t=-0.44		t=-0.52	
(d) SECURITY	3.874	.933	3.722	4.025	4.667	3.600	3.500	3.546
			t=-2.07*		t=1.41		t=-0.05	
(e) AFFIRMATION	3.538	.893	3.763	3.308	4.333	3.800	3.250	3.546
			t=3.29 **		t=0.90		t=-0.44	
(f) PROCLAIMING GOSPEL VALUES OF LOVE ETC.	3.692	.842	3.838	3.544	4.000	3.200	3.250	3.45
			t=2.22 *		t=1.31		t=-0.38	
(g) A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT FROM WORK	3.769	.998	3.875	3.663	4.667	3.600	3.000	3.81
			t=1.35		t=2.05 *		t=-1.35	
(h) FRIENDSHIP	3.720	.937	3.790	3.650	4.667	3.800	3.000	3.72
			t=0.95		t=2.23 *		t=-1.14	
(i) A SENSE OF MEANING IN LIFE	4.044	.884	4.190	3.899	4.667	3.800	3.750	4.09
			t=2.09 *		t=1.73		t=-0.63	

Main Findings (a) The two highest mean values for the sample were Q12(1) (mean=4.004) and Q12(d) (mean=3.874), indicating that the congregation satisfied the members need for (1) a sense of meaning in life and (b) their need for security

(b) The two lowest mean values for the sample were Q12(c) (3.408) and Q12(e) (3.538) indicating that the need (a) to work with those in need and (b) for affirmation, were only partially satisfied by life in the congregation.

(c) There are significant differences between female and male religious and to a lesser extent between superiors and non superiors.

(d) The under 50 age group have a lower mean value than the over 50 age group in all responses except Q12(c)

Summary of significant differences in Table 19
(Based on T-test)

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	FEMALE/MALE	SUP/NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50
0.05	3	2	0
0.01	1	0	0
0.001	3	0	0

SECTION 9: WORK (Q.15)
(5 point scale)

Frequency of tension or stress:

Table 20: FREQUENCY OF TENSION OR STRESS

MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
		F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 5	
2.913	.996	2.926	2.900	3.000	3.800	3.500	2 727
		t=-0.16		t=1.16		t=-1.10	

Main Findings of this Section.

- (a) The sample sometimes feels stress or tension.
- (b) Female religious feel stress and tension more frequently than male religious.
- (c) Non superiors feel tension and stress more frequently than superiors.
- (d) The under 50 age group feel tension and stress more frequently than the over 50 age group.

(Q.16) The affect of tension and stress on community life:
(5 point scale)

Table 21:

WORK AND STRESS

MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
		F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 5
2.384	1.090	2.405	2.363	1.667	3.000	2.750	2.818
		t=-0.25		t=2.08 *		t=-2.41 *	

Main Findings of this Section:

- (a) For the overall sample stress and tension does not affect community life.
- (b) There is a significant difference at the 0.05 level between superiors and non superiors and between the under 50 and over 50 age groups.

(Q.17) WORK:
(5 point scale)
Table 22:

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 50
(a) I GET FULFILLMENT FROM MY WORK	4.217	.677	4.210	4.225	4.333	3.000	3.000	4.182
			t=-0.14		t=2.08 *		t=-2.00 *	
(b) MY WORK IS IMPORTANT FOR THE CONG.	4.126	.785	4.114	4.138	4.333	4.200	3.250	4.091
			t=-0.19		t=0.27		t=-0.93	
(c) MY WORK IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL	3.994	.771	4.037	3.950	4.333	3.400	3.000	4.000
			t=0.71		t=1.36		t=-2.13 *	
(d) MY WORK IS A VALID EXPRESSION OF FOUNDERS CHARISM	3.892	.834	4.013	3.772	4.333	3.600	3.000	3.818
			t=1.83		t=1.20		t=-0.87	
(e) PEOPLE OUTSIDE BELIEVE CONG.DOES GOOD WORK	4.013	.646	3.873	4.150	4.667	3.800	4.000	4.000
			t=-2.76 *		t=2.23 *		t=0.00	
(f) I DO AN EFFECTIVE JOB OF WORK	3.957	.616	4.062	3.850	4.000	4.000	2.750	4.364
			t=2.20 *		t=0.00		t=-2.49 *	
(g) I DO A BETTER JOB BECAUSE I AM A RELIGIOUS	2.538	1.020	2.430	2.646	2.667	2.200	2.000	1.700
			t=-1.33		t=0.79		t=0.49	
(h) I AM EXPECTED TO DO A BETTER JOB BEC. I AM A RELIGIOUS	3.171	1.048	3.089	3.253	3.000	2.400	4.250	2.500
			t=-0.99		t=0.85		t=2.98 *	
(i) MY PROFESSIONAL ARE OBSOLETE	1.988	.932	1.951	2.025	2.000	2.200	2.500	1.546
			t=-0.51		t=-0.41		t=2.69 **	

Main Findings of this Section.

- (a) The overall response of the sample is positive.
- (b) The sample disagrees with the statement that their professional skills are obsolete.
- (c) The sample is uncertain as to whether or not (i) they do a better job because they are a religious Q17(g) and (ii) they are expected to do a better job because they are religious.
- (d) There are significant differences between (i) male religious and female religious (ii) superiors and non superiors and (iii) the under 50 and the over 50 age groups.

Summary of significant differences in Table 22:
(Based on the T-test)

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	FEMALE/MALE	SUP/NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50
0.05	2	2	4
0.01	0	0	1

SECTION 10: CHANGE: (Q.20)
(5 point scale)

Attitude to Change:
(5 point scale)

Table 23:

CHANGE

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 5
(a) ENCOURAGED TO PUT FORWARD IDEAS	3.938	.839	4.305	3.563	3.667	4.400	3.500	3.818
			t=6.23 ***		t=-1.77		t=-0.81	
(b) LIFE-STYLE OF CONGREGATION TO CONTINUE	2.994	1.110	2.481	3.513	4.000	2.200	3.750	2.364
			t=-6.64 ***		t=3.67 ***		t=1.94	
(c) WORK OF THE CONGREGATION TO CONTINUE	3.062	1.032	2.703	3.425	3.667	3.000	3.250	2.455
			t=-4.70 ***		t=1.04		t=0.87	
(d) I AM WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS CHANGE	4.123	.794	4.159	4.088	4.000	4.400	4.000	4.273
			t=0.57		t=-1.63		t=-0.36	
(e) THE CONG. HAS CHANGED TOO MUCH	1.889	.870	1.890	1.888	1.333	1.200	2.250	1.546
			t=0.02		t=0.34		t=1.40	

Main Findings of this Section.

(a) The sample feels encouraged to put forward ideas for new developments and is very well disposed towards the introduction of changes affecting the work of the congregation.

(b) The sample disagrees that the congregation has changed too much.

(c) The overall sample is uncertain as to whether the life-style of the congregation will continue in its present form in the foreseeable future. There are however very significant differences between (i) female and male congregations and (ii) superiors and non superiors.

(d) In the complete questionnaire the only difference between superiors and non superiors at the 0.001 level superiors and non superiors is found in Q20(b).

(d) The under 50 age group have a higher mean value than the over 50 age group in Q20(b) and Q20(c) indicating that the younger age group is more inclined to believe that the life-style and the work of the congregation will continue in its present form in the foreseeable future.

Summary of significant differences in Table 23.
(Based on the T-test)

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	FEMALE/MALE	SUP/NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50
0.001	3	1	0

Attitude to Change Agents;
(5 point scale)

Table 24: CHANGE AGENTS

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 5
(f) EMPLOYED REGULARLY BY CONGREGATION	3.652	.924	3.963	3.338	4.000	4.000	3.500	3.273
			t=4.54 ***		t=0.00		t=0.32	
(g) CANNOT UNDERSTAND CONGREGATIONAL NEEDS	2.329	.927	2.185	2.475	2.000	1.800	3.750	2.364
			t=-2.00 *		t=0.33		t=1.98 *	
(h) HAVE MADE THE CONG. DEPENDANT ON THEM	1.858	.713	1.945	1.800	1.667	1.400	3.000	1.634
			t=1.02		t=0.64		t=2.99 **	
(i) EDUCATED MEMBERS OF THE CONG. IN SKILLS TO HELP CHANGE PROCESS	3.809	.923	4.146	3.463	3.667	4.600	3.000	3.455
			t=5.04 ***		t=-1.02		t=-0.88	

Main Findings of this Section:

(a) There is a positive attitude towards change agents in the sample.

(b) There are significant differences between (i) male and female congregations and (ii) the under 50 and over 50 age groups.

Summary of significant differences in Table 24.
(Based on T-test)

SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL	FEMALE/MALE	SUP/NON SUP	UNDER 50/OVER 50
0.05	1	0	1
0.01	0	0	1
0.001	2	0	0

The Survey:
(5 point scale)

Table 25:

SURVEY

	MEAN	SD	SEX		POSITION		AGE	
			F	M	SUP	NON SUP	UNDER 50	OVER 5
(a) WERE THE QUESTIONS CLEAR	4.157	.751	4.366	3.935	5.000	4.600	4.000	4.273
			t=3.76 ***		t=1.63		t=-1.40	
(b) IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO CONDUCT SUCH A SURVEY	4.050	.870	4.100	3.987	4.667	4.600	4.000	4.091
			t=0.89		t=0.16		t=-0.20	

Main Findings. The reaction of the sample was very positive.
For Q24(a) there was a significant difference between the female and male congregations at the 0.001 level

COMMENTS ON THE SURVEY:

- (a) Eight people found the survey comprehensive.
- (b) Three people doubted the accuracy of the survey
- (c) Three people felt that the survey was too 'secular' i.e they would have liked more emphasis on the 'spiritual' dimensions of religious life.
- (d) Six people enjoyed doing the questionnaire.
- (e) Six people would like to see the results.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE SURVEYS:

- (a) Relationship with the Local Church.
- (b) Decreasing numbers in religious congregations
- (c) The Change Process
- (d) The members of religious congregations in the process of leaving their congregation and the members who have already left.
- (e) Religious dress
- (f) Institution v's flexibility
- (g) Relevance of the Church in Ireland in a time of change.
- (h) Divisions in religious communities e.g. between (i) people of different ages (ii) people with different interests.
- (i) Coping with failure in religious life
- (j) The sick and the old members of religious congregations.
- (k) Religious who are between jobs.
- (l) New members to religious congregations.
- (m) The mission of religious congregations.
- (n) Community living
- (o) How to supervise the members of religious congregations to ensure that 'spiritual duties' are carried out.
- (p) Formation for religious life.

SUMMARY OF PART 2

1. COMMUNICATION:

- (a) The results indicate an overall positive response to communication within religious congregations. Communication was best (i) between superiors and members and (ii) within local communities. Communication was least good (i) between different religious congregations and (ii) between religious congregations and the Local Church. The under 50 age group indicated that communication was not good between religious and those employed by religious congregations.
- (b) Men religious, superiors and the under 50 age group felt that inadequate communication between members in different types of work has decreased the overall effectiveness of congregations.
- (c) The most significant differences in the responses occurred between women and men religious and to a lesser extent, between superiors and non superiors.

2. PARTICIPATION:

- (a) Major superiors, active members and local superiors exert the greatest influence on what happens in religious congregations.
- (b) New members, retired members, the under 50 age group, and the Local Church exert the least influence on what happens in congregations.
- (c) The members participate with superiors in making important decisions, and the superiors usually ask the opinion of those likely to be affected by decisions

3. CHARISM:

The original vision of the founder has meaning for the members of religious congregations.

4. MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission statement is meaningful to the overall sample. It is most meaningful to superiors and least meaningful to the under 50 age group.

5. SATISFACTION:

Religious are satisfied with their congregations and would encourage those genuinely interested to join them.

6. PURPOSE:

Except for the under 50 age group there is overall agreement that the purpose of the congregation is being achieved.

7. LEADERSHIP:

- (a) The overall reaction to leadership in religious congregations is positive.
- (b) The reaction of men religious is significantly less positive than the reaction of women religious. To a lesser extent, non superiors and the under 50 age group were less positive than superiors and the older age group.

8. CONGREGATIONAL LIFE:

- (a) The two needs that were most satisfied for the overall sample were (1) a sense of meaning in life and (11) security.
- (b) The two needs that were least satisfied for the overall sample were (i) to work with those in need and (b) affirmation.

- (c) The major differences in the responses occurred between men and women religious and to a lesser extent between superiors and non superiors, and between the older and younger age groups.

9. WORK:

- (a) Some tension and stress is experienced as a result of work. This tension and stress is felt more by women religious, non superiors and the younger age group.
- (b) Stress and tension as a result of work does not affect community life for the overall sample. There are however, significant differences between superiors and non superiors and between the older and younger age groups.
- (c) The reaction to work is positive. In general, men religious, superiors and the over 50 age group are more positive about work than women religious, non superiors and the younger age group. The professional skills of religious are not obsolete.
- (d) There is uncertainty as to whether the respondents (i) do a better job because they are religious and (ii) they are expected to do a better job because they are religious.

10. Change:

- (a) There is encouragement to put forward ideas for new developments and a positive attitude towards the introduction of changes affecting the work of religious congregations. Religious feel that their congregations have not changed too much.
- (b) There is uncertainty as to whether the life style of the congregation will continue in its present form in the foreseeable future. Superiors, the younger age group and men religious are the groups most convinced that the life style will continue.

- (c) While the overall reaction to change agents employed by religious congregations is positive, the under 50 age group feel that they cannot understand congregational needs and that they have made congregations dependant on them. They are also the group who are uncertain as to whether change agents have educated congregational members in skills to help the change process.
- (d) Women religious employ more change agents and are generally more positive about them, than men religious.

11. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS:

The 80 men and 82 women who responded to the questionnaire came from (i) different positions within the congregation (ii) different age groups and (iii) different occupations.

12. THE SURVEY:

The reaction to the survey was positive.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

Organisational development is a process of planned change, managed from the top, to bring an organisation from a currently less desirable state to a state of more effective functioning. Bothwell (1983) Organisational development consultants assist in the development of systems and processes of planning and problem solving, that help the whole organisation to adapt to internal and external changes and successfully accomplish its goals. The interventions used by OD consultants are based on concepts developed in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, management, and organisational behaviour.

A number of issues emerged from the results of Questionnaire 1 (Appendix 1) and Questionnaire 2 (Appendix 2) which deserve consideration if OD is to be successfully applied to religious congregations. The discussion of these issues will follow the outline used in Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2. The numbers in brackets refer to page numbers in the text.

- The Age of Religious Congregations:

The results show (p.67) that religious congregations are older organisations that have undergone fundamental structural reorganisation during the last 20 years. Such re-organised organisations (p.8) assume the characteristics of newer organisations with their greater vulnerability and lessened chance of survival. An acceptance of this reality will be difficult for the current membership of religious congregations, because the fact that an organisation has survived for a long period of time is always a cause for justifiable pride among organisational members. Furthermore people who join older organisations, particularly people, like religious, who have made a life commitment to their organisations, have expectations that the continuity of such organisations is more or less guaranteed. Expectations are part of the individuals psychological contract with an organization, Schein (1970) and when these expectations are threatened people become dissatisfied, frustrated, and afraid. The greater the threat, the greater the possibility that organisational members will deny the reality of a precarious organisational future. This denial will be more likely in organisations, such as religious congregations, where the median age is high, and where the majority of members have been with their congregations for many years. It is to be expected therefore that the prospect of employing an OD consultant in such organisations will

be met with resistance. For OD consultants employed by religious congregations, therefore, the entry phase of the process (p.45) will be particularly important. Furthermore, because the core values of any organisation are developed through history and expressed differently in different cultures and different historical times a general knowledge of the Life Cycle approach to organisations (p.54), combined with a detailed knowledge of the life cycle of the employing congregation should greatly enhance the effectiveness of the OD consultant.

- National and Multinational Organisations:

The results from Questionnaire 1 (p.68) show that the vast majority of religious congregations in Ireland are multinational organisations. An OD consultant employed by a religious congregation in Ireland therefore, is more likely to be working with a sub-unit of an organisation rather than a total organisation. An accurate diagnosis of the current state of the sub-unit by an OD consultant has to take into consideration the international dimension of the overall organisation and assess the influences exerted on the sub-unit as a result of internationality.

- The Goals of Religious Congregations:

The reasons given for the foundation of religious congregations are essentially religious. (p.69)

Religious values underlie the work and life style of all religious organisations and cannot be ignored in an OD process because the goals and objectives of any organisation flow directly from the organisational values. But OD consultants also have personal values and assumptions (p.45). Open communication between a religious congregation and a potential OD consultant is needed therefore, to establish whether or not the values of the organisation and the values of the consultant are in harmony or at variance.

When employing an OD consultant religious congregations need to avoid two extremes:

- (a) Employing an expert in spirituality but with little expertise in OD theory and practice.
- (b) employing an expert OD consultant with personal assumptions and values that are at variance with the religious values of religious organisations.

- Mission Statements:

The results from Questionnaire 1 show that most religious congregations in Ireland have updated mission statements (p.71). The results also show that these mission statements lack a certain specificity.

The mission statement of any organisation, including religious congregations is a statement by the membership as to why this organisation exists, and why it should continue to exist. The mission statement implies a special destiny or call for the members of the organization. Bothwell (1983). Although the words mission and mission statement have traditionally been associated with religious organisations, it is now quite common for business organisations to have written mission statements which are distributed to employees and displayed throughout the organisation. For example, a copy of the mission statement of Allied Irish Banks is printed on the cover of their Annual Report and displayed at their central headquarters in Dublin.

Valid mission statements flow from the original vision of the founder and relate to the identity and broad purposes of the organization, institution or community. The mission identifies the 'business' the system or subsystem is in. Egan(1985) Mission statements are

properly, general statements of position to ensure that increasing organisational effectiveness may be monitored.

Because mission statements are general, positive statements about areas of concern for a congregation they can be seriously open to ambiguous interpretation unless there is further clarification to determine the precise areas of concern for specific congregations. For example, 2 members of the same congregation, from different age groups or with opposing mind-sets, could interpret the overall mission of the organisation from very different perspectives and each be convinced that their interpretation is the correct one. Different interpretations of the mission statement by individuals, or small groups within an organisation is a recipe for divisiveness within organisations.

The mission statements of the 6 congregations who participated in the main part of this study (Questionnaire 2) were also general. For more detailed information refer to Appendix 3. The emphasis in these mission statements is on:

- (a) the proclamation and personal witness to Gospel values.
- (b) Solidarity with the poor.
- (c) Communal living

- (c) Concern for the victims of injustice. Addressing unjust structures in society.
- (d) Discerning and responding to current societal needs.
- (e) Communal living

form the main source of data for this research it would be impossible for this study or any other study to determine whether or not a religious congregation is effective, i.e. achieves the purpose for which it was founded and continues to exist. Further specification of the mission statement is needed. For example, a person trying to determine the effectiveness of those congregations in Questionnaire 1 who stated that 'solidarity with the poor' was an integral part of their congregational mission statement would first have to determine what this congregation meant by the words "solidarity" and "poor. Does " solidarity" mean that the congregation will dispose of all of its wealth? Or does it mean that any member of the congregation who is earning over a specified amount will give up their job? Or does it mean that all members (or 50%, or 20%) of the congregation will live and work only in areas where the unemployment rate is greater than 10%. And for this congregation who are the poor? Are they the families on the dole in inner city Dublin? Or the people who are starving in a refugee camp in Ethiopia? Or illiterate male adults in rural Ireland who are currently

unemployed? Questions of this nature could continue endlessly but the point is that positively stated generalities are not a prescription for measurable action or evaluation in line with the mission statement.

If organisational activity is to be kept in line with organisational mission 2 further steps are needed:

(a) The clarification of organisational goals i.e. a long-range statement of what the religious congregation wants to accomplish.

(b) The establishment of objectives. Objectives are short-range; specific, challenging but realistic; and measurable. They are closely identified with the stated goals. As the objectives are accomplished, the goals are accomplished.

Objectives of Religious Congregations:

congregations into external and internal. The former constitute the apostolic commitment of the congregation technically known as the "mission of the institute." The latter pertain to the survival and maintenance of the institute (finances, recruitment, formation, etc) and of its members (community living, continuing education, spiritual renewal, health, etc.). According to Overmann (1978) a formal procedure for congregational planning should include the following steps:

(a) clarification of the charism of a congregation and the development of a statement of mission.

(b) Identification of the congregation's areas of concern and the setting of prioritized goals.

(c) The setting of objectives and the designing of activities to achieve the goals.

(d) Periodic evaluation of the planning program according to o pre-determined norms.

Management by objectives. (MBO)

wishing to make their valid but general mission statements susceptible to measurement and to the planning of activities, is management by objectives (MBO). The strategy used in MBO rests on the importance of the individual and their contribution to the achievement of organisational purpose. Huse (1980) defines management by objectives as an attempt to establish a better fit between personal and organizational goals by increasing communications and shared perceptions between the manager and subordinates, either individually or as a group, and reconciling conflict where it exists. Huse (1980). It is a system that could prove beneficial in the future development of religious organisations to ensure that organisational needs and individual needs are integrated in a healthy

psychological fashion. MBO is one of the technical interventions used by OD consultants and could readily be adapted to communal discernment processes, i.e processes whereby religious people through prayer and dialogue search for the correct congregational action in specific situations.

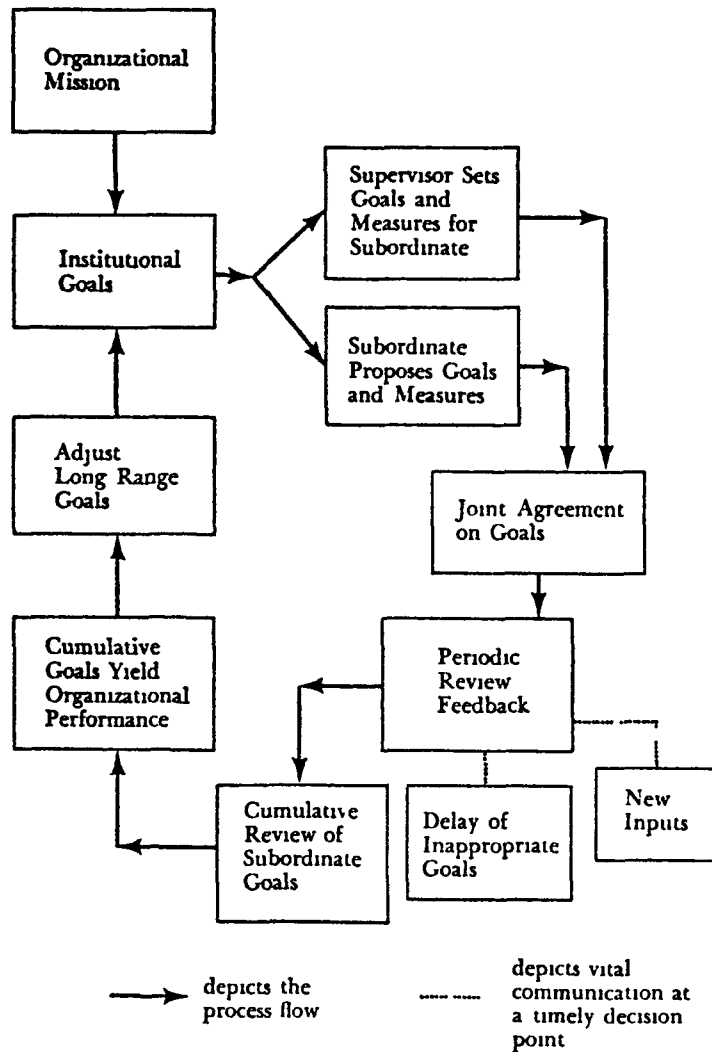


Figure 5: The MBO Cycle
(Lahti, 1970)

A summary of the steps that occur during an MBO process are summarised in Fig.5.

The implementation of a management by objectives system follows certain specific steps.

1. The central purpose and function of the organisation must be generally understood and agreed upon. The importance of full subscription to the mission statement by organisational leaders and organisational members cannot be overemphasised; the mission statement becomes the measure by which all subunit purposes and objectives are appropriated for commitment.
2. The institutional goals for a specific length of time must be drawn up and agreed upon by a significant number from all levels within the organisation.
3. The purpose of each subunit within the organisation must be understood and agreed upon. Each subunit must justify individual purposes and understand how they serve the overall goals.
4. Once the purpose of each subunit is established, supervisory individuals must be accountable for the work to be accomplished by them if the subunit purpose and the organisation goals are to be met.
5. Each subordinate must establish his/her major performance objectives in measurable terms, with specific deadline dates. Having reached agreement with the manager on these objectives, the subordinate develops a set of individual objectives of what he/she plans to accomplish within the parameters of an agreed job description. Open discussion between the manager and the subordinate will foster the principle of involvement and commitment.
6. The manager and the subordinate enter into a joint review of the mutually agreed upon objectives
7. At an agreed upon time interval, the supervisor and the subordinate review progress towards objectives. They may choose to update and revise goals at this time
8. A report, summarising major accomplishments and variance between results achieved and results expected is prepared by the subordinate. This report is discussed jointly by the supervisor and the subordinate and a new set of objectives is established.

9. Long-range objectives are reviewed and adjusted in accordance with the degree of achievement for the current goals, and a new commitment is made to new objectives. Religious congregations and MBO:

Some examples from the responses to Questionnaire 2 will serve to illustrate the need for MBO or some similar form of congregational planning by religious congregations.

1) The under 50 age group found the current mission statements of their congregations significantly less meaningful than the over 50 age group. This could have serious implications for the future of congregations 5 or 10 years from now unless the situation is addressed.

2) Whereas a major emphasis in the mission statements was on concern for the poor and the victims of injustice, this was the need that was least satisfied by life in the congregation was the need to work with those in need. This was particularly true for men religious and for the under 50 age group. This raises the question as to whether a mismatch exists between organisational goals and individual goals.

3) An ongoing commitment to the purpose and mission of an organisation implies a conviction on the part of the members that they personally exert some influence on what happens in the organisation. This sample, however, although satisfied that their opinions were asked regarding important congregational decisions, felt they exerted little influence on congregational affairs. Once again this is particularly true for the under 50 age group.

-WORK.

The results show that (a) most Irish religious work in the areas of education; parish work; health care; social work; spirituality; and administration. (p 70,81); (b) over 50% of the sample attend updating courses every 2 years (p.82); religious feel that their professional skills are not obsolete (p.99); and nearly 20% of those who responded to Questionnaire 2 had more than one job (p.82). Among the changes that have taken place (p.69) in religious congregations during the last 20 years is the movement away from traditional types of work previously undertaken by congregations, and the redeployment of personnel to work with the poor, and in new missionary ventures. These changes have taken place at a time of decreasing membership and a rising median age within religious congregations. (p.70,80) It is not surprising therefore that, although the results from Questionnaire 2 indicated an overall positive response to work among religious (p.100), they also indicated that some tension and stress as a result of work exists. (p.98). Three other possible sources of the work related stress emerge from the results.

- (a) the inadequate communication that exists between people in different types of work, which has decreased the overall effectiveness of religious congregations. (p.88).
- (b) the uncertainty that exists as to whether the members of congregations do a better job they are religious (p.99).

- (c) the uncertainty that exists as to whether or not those in religious congregations are 'expected' to do a better job, simply because they are religious (p.99).

A knowledge of Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory for increasing motivation and job satisfaction will provide helpful background data for planned OD interventions. Other factors that will need consideration are:

- (a) developing a climate of open communication between people in different types of work. This will be particularly important as religious organisations undertake more varied types of work and the inevitable conflict over priorities, resources and responsibilities emerges.
- (b) diagnosis of the reasons underlying the workaholic tendencies present in some religious, at least and the effects of workaholism on the overall organisational climate.
- (c) the ways in which individual religious cope with the pressure exerted by the expectations of others.

The fact that good communication exists between superiors and members and within local communities (p.86) of religious congregation bodes well for a positive outcome to an OD process, which is managed from the top, and involves the total membership. The fact that communication is not good between individual congregations; between congregations and the Local

Church; and between religious and those who work for religious congregations (p.86) indicate that the organisational structure of religious congregations will need attention from an OD consultant to ascertain whether or not the 'closed' structure which traditionally characterised religious congregations (p.14) still prevails and is appropriate for modern objectives.

- Participation in Religious Congregations:

The major influence exerted by superiors and active members (p.89) in religious congregations, combined with the consultation that superiors have with members affected by decisions and the participation of members in the actual decision-making process, all favour an OD process in religious congregations. However, the fact that retired members, new members and the under 50 age group appear to exert little influence in religious congregations is likely to result in suppressed feelings that will be detrimental to organisational effectiveness. One of the assumptions underlying OD (p.41) is that suppressed feelings and attitudes have a negative effect on a group's problem solving, personal growth and work satisfaction.

- Charism and Religious Congregations:

The findings of this study show a renewed interest in the original vision of the founder (p.69) and that this vision is meaningful to the current membership of religious congregations (p.91). All organisations have a value core centre out of which comes all their behaviours, rules and management structures and gives rise to what is known in the business world as corporate culture. This value core is developed through history and is rooted in the images of the founder. Hall (1986). The renewed interest in the founder combined with the changes that have taken place (p.69) have resulted in a cultural change within religious congregations (p.15). The importance of organisational culture as a determinant of organisational change and effectiveness is receiving increasing attention among OD theorists and practitioners. (cf. Beer, 1980).

- Satisfaction with Religious Congregations:

The results show that most religious are satisfied with their congregations (p.92) and would encourage others to join them (p.93). These findings are encouraging in

that they indicate that most individuals have achieved a relative state of equilibrium with regard to their social group and their role in the larger organisation. During times of change however, roles and relationships are changed by new structures and processes, and members who are satisfied with the current state of an organisation will resist such changes. The tendency to resist change is common to all of us, because it means an end to the ways things have been, the familiar and the predictable. Who is not afraid of the unknown? It has received extensive coverage in the psychological, sociological and organisational literature. (cf. Coch and French, 1948: Lawrence 1969).

- Why Religious Congregations were Founded:

Except for the younger age group, the findings show (p.93) that most members are satisfied that religious congregations are achieving the purpose for which they were founded. The positive and negative aspects of this sense of satisfaction, as discussed above under 'Satisfaction' are also applicable here. The fact that the results show (pg.93) that one major group within an organisation feels that the purpose of the organisation is not being achieved is likely to result in conflict

situations within an organisation. Conflict situations are usually regarded as being negative and disruptive of organisational life. This is probably more true in religious congregations than in other organisations. But a conflict situation when properly handled, has many positive aspects. For example it can (a) clarify issues and positions (b) increase self-awareness (c) lead to a new synthesis of ideas or methods (d) result in innovation and creativity (e) increase motivation and energy. An important finding (p.94) for OD consultants working with religious congregations is the uncertainty as to whether religious superiors emphasise the importance of conflict resolution.

- Leadership:

The results show (p.69) that a change in leadership style and philosophy is the most frequent change among religious congregations and that (p.94) there is an overall positive response to the current leadership. These results are important for organisations during a period of change because it is the top manager in any organisation who must help the members to understand the internal and external pressures that indicate the need for change if organisational effectiveness is to be

achieved. The manager's job has always been the development and maintenance of congruence between the people in the organisation; the organisational process; the organisational structure; and the organisational environment. Beer (1980). The period of rapid change in which we live makes it more difficult for managers to develop organisations with a continuing capacity for sensing a poor fit between organisational components, and responding with planned change. While it is true that OD consultants need the commitment of top management in any OD programme, it is also true that top management needs the expertise of OD consultants so that the articulation of new organisational directions is soundly based on accurate data, and carefully timed to achieve the maximum cooperative acceptance from organisational members.

- Congregational Life:

The movement away from the formalised living style associated with monastic structure and the change from large group to small group living (p.69) indicate a changed communication system within religious congregations. An OD process will need to assist the

members in development and practice of new communication skills to deal with the small group approach to community life. The small group approach has received a lot of attention in sociological, psychological and organisational literature of recent times. (Dyer, 1977: Katz and Kahn, 1978).

The new emphasis on personal freedom and responsibility (p.70) within religious congregations will involve reclarification of what constitutes communal living for religious today. As individuals experiment with their new freedom and responsibility an increased knowledge of organisational behaviour will be needed (cf. Mohr, 1982) to cope with the tensions that emerge between those who want more freedom and those who prefer things to remain as they were. This tension will also be present between new members who have undergone a different approach to formation (p.69) and older members who have expectations of them based on their own formative training.

An effective OD process will not only provide an accurate diagnosis of the effects of these changes but will also surface the current needs of the members. Needs are an internal state in a person that causes

objects or outcomes to become attractive. Beer (1980). The results show (p.96) that the needs that are most satisfied by congregational life are (a) a sense of meaning in life and (b) security, while the needs that are least satisfied are (a) to work with those in need and (b) affirmation. When individual needs have been identified an OD consultant will assist in the development of organisational structures designed to attract, keep and motivate people with a variety of needs. The classic work of Herzberg (1959) has formed the basis of much research into the importance of individual needs if organisational effectiveness is to be achieved.

- Change and Change Agents:

Despite the fact that the changes that have already taken religious congregations have affected most aspects of organisational life (p.69,70) the results show that religious are encouraged to put forward ideas for new developments and do not feel that their congregations have changed too much. All religious congregations who participated in this research had used change agents and while the overall response was positive the younger age

group felt that change agents could not understand congregational needs and had made congregations dependent on them. (p.102). The implication of this for future change agents is that they face a hostile environment from a very significant group. Careful attention to the entry stage of an OD process will therefore be vital for OD consultants to religious congregation.

- The Survey:

The positive reaction to the survey (p.103) and the suggestions for future surveys (p.104) indicate that such an exercise was not only worthwhile but surfaced different areas in need of attention within religious congregations.

DIFFERENCES IN THE GROUPS CHOSEN FOR COMPARISON:

Statistical tests were applied to the data from Questionnaire 2 to determine where the major differences occurred. T-tests showed (pg. 86 to 103) that the significant differences in the responses occurred between:

- (a) Women's congregations and men's congregations
- (b) Superiors and non superiors
- (c) The under 50 and over 50 age groups

As the differences in each of these groups provide useful data for OD consultants employed by religious congregations, they will be discussed in some detail

(a) Women's Congregations and Men's Congregations:

Of the three groups chosen for comparison in the statistical analysis, by far the greatest differences in responses occurred between women and men religious. The T-tests show that there were 18 significant differences between the two groups at the 0.001 level; 9 differences at the 0.01 level; and 10 differences 0.05 level.

Women religious were less satisfied with their work (p.99) than men religious and were less convinced that the work they did:

a) was important for the congregation;

b) was valued by people outside the congregation

The results show (p.92) that men, on the other hand while more convinced than women that their congregations were better than most other congregations, were in fact, less positive, overall, than women religious, about their congregations. (p.86,87,90-94,96). Further significant differences between men and women religious (p.101,102) show that men religious feel:

a) more convinced that the life-style and work of congregation will continue in its present form into the foreseeable future.

- b) that change agents (i) are not employed regularly by their congregations (ii) cannot understand congregational needs and (iii) have not educated congregational members in skills to help the change process.

These differences are important for OD consultants employed by religious congregations. If OD consultants are to develop credibility among organisational members they need to identify the root causes of organisational problems and anticipate the consequences of planned organisational change. The differences between men and women that emerge from this study indicate that the root causes of organisational problems are different in congregations of men and women. Different OD interventions might well be needed therefore in congregations of men and women. (cf. Kanter, 1977).

One possible reason for the extent of the differences between these two groups is that the 3 congregations of men who participated in Questionnaire 2 were all clerical religious congregations. Fleming et al. (1985) define clericalism as:

" the conscious or unconscious concern to promote the particular interests of the clergy and to protect the privileges and power that have traditionally been conceded to those in the clerical state "

For priests who are also members of a religious congregation, the growing 'declericalisation' of the Church is traumatic. It involves a fundamental change in attitudes which is very painful to achieve and very difficult to sustain.

The data shows clearly that significant differences exist between male and female religious. All the male religious in this study belong to clerical congregations. It is therefore to be concluded that the significant differences that exist are due either to the fact that they are male or they are clerics. It is beyond the scope of this study to establish which is the decisive factor - maleness or clericalism - but it is clear that there are significant differences between men and women religious and that men religious are more resistant to change than women religious. (p.101,102).

Perhaps the more positive attitude to change displayed by women religious (p.101,102) can be explained by the fact the changes that have taken place in women's congregations has resulted in women taking more control over their organisational and individual lives. Prior to Vatican II, life within religious congregations of women, and indeed in most business organisations, was

essentially patriarchial. (Loring and Wells, 1972). Patriarchial culture prevails when male privilege and power are institutionalised. As late as the 19th. century all religious congregations of women were obliged to have a male ecclesiastical superior with powers equal and often greater than the major superior. Although the law was abolished, the practice continued for many religious congregations of women in Ireland up to, and even for some time after, Vatican II. Furthermore, the members of most congregations of women were: governed by rules and constitutions that had had been adapted from those used in men's congregations; frequently adopted men's names when formally accepted into a congregation, and were refused entry into schools of theology. Within congregations of women therefore, there was sufficient dissatisfaction with the status quo to overcome resistance to change.

Knowledge of the historical development of clerical religious congregations (Padberg, 1985) and religious congregations of women (Schneiders, 1987) is necessary for OD consultants who intend to work with these organisations.

(b) Superiors and Non Superiors.

A shared perception by organisational leaders and organisational members on the future orientation of their organisations is a prerequisite for organisational effectiveness. It is a cause for concern therefore, when T-tests showed (p.101) that the significant difference between superiors and non superiors regarding the future life style of the congregation was at the 0.001 level. Superiors felt that the life-style would continue in its present form into the foreseeable future. Those who were not superiors disagreed. The different expectations of the two groups on an issue as important as this could result in a lot of frustration. Accurate communication within an organisation depends on a common knowledge of the goals and objectives of the organisation. Without such knowledge there will be a decreased understanding, acceptance and commitment to organisational objectives and goals. A reassessment of the existing communication system within an organisation, and the development of a better climate of

open communication and collaboration is needed, when there are major differences between management and members as to where the organisation is going, in terms of life within the organisation, and the future work of the organisation.

Other significant differences between superiors and non superiors regarding communication within religious congregations (p.86) also emphasise the importance of developing more effective communication processes. The T-test results showed two significant differences at the 0.01 level and one difference at the 0.05 level. An OD consultant can expect support from superiors in the development of more effective processes because the findings show that superiors are more aware than non superiors that inadequate communication between members in different types of work is decreasing the overall effectiveness of congregations (p.87).

Other results in this study indicate further areas in need of attention if an OD process within a religious congregation is to be effective:

- (a) Superiors experience less stress than non superiors (p.97).
- (b) Superiors get more fulfillment from their work than non superiors. (p.99).

- (c) Congregational life satisfies more needs for superiors than for non superiors. (p.96). The need that was least satisfied for superiors was the need for a deeper relationship with God. As this is a core value for religious men and women, this is clearly something that needs to be investigated.
- (d) Non superiors are more open to change (p.101) change agents (p.102) than superiors.

(c) The Under 50 and Over 50 Age Groups:

Results from the data show (p.99) that the greatest number of significant differences between the older and younger age groups occurs in the area of work, (5 significant differences at the 0.05 level and one significant difference at the 0.01 level), with the younger age group experiencing less job satisfaction. It is a cause for concern in any organisation when the future leadership is experiencing dissatisfaction in their working lives. Although it has not been proved that job dissatisfaction decreases productivity it can be said that "purposeful activity makes for organisational effectiveness." Kuriloff (1972). The measurement of job satisfaction might usefully be included in future organisational development models for religious congregations.

According to the data (p.89) both superiors and the under 50 age group were in agreement that the retired members of the congregation exert a significant

influence on what happens in religious congregations. Because religious congregations in Ireland have experienced a large decrease in membership since 1965, the median age within the congregations has risen, and the % of retired members has increased. Council for Research and Development (1986). This has resulted in a new and painful situation within religious congregations which will demand great empathy and expertise on the part of an OD consultant.(cf. Beckhard and Harris, 1977). Painful realities will have to be faced and painful questions asked. For example, what is the future for congregations if this trend continues for another 20, 10 or even 5 years? What are the problems and the fears that face the retired or soon to be retired members in the face of such uncertainty? What are the problems and fears of the decreasing % of active members?

This is an extremely sensitive area for any family group or any situation where people live together, but it is a situation that will not disappear by ignoring it. Religious men and women struggle to live by Gospel values where love for one another predominates. An OD

consultant needs to be aware that these values can cause a congregation to avoid looking at situations of potential conflict and pain, by postponing the exploration of acceptable alternatives for the elderly and retired.(cf. Burke,1972). The members of a religious congregation will experience great difficulty in distancing themselves from older congregational members, yet if this is not done effectively, but in a Christian way, the younger congregational members will have reduced energy to commit to those key activities of congregational life which derive specifically from the congregation's mission statement.

OD consultants who work for religious congregations are working with people who have become accustomed to congregational life. That is, not only do the members of such organisations work together, but they normally live together and pray together. The culture i.e the prevailing patterns of values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, activities, interactions, norms and feelings French and Bell (1984) in religious congregations therefore, will differ from the culture in a business organisation. While it is important that OD consultants preserve a neutral stance and avoid being

absorbed into the culture of a client organisation (p.42), it is also true that they need to understand the culture of the client organisation because complete understanding of the total organisation cannot occur without the holistic perspective that the concept of culture provides. Beer (1980).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Religious congregations are facing an uncertain future. Their inability to attract and retain new members; the loss of trained personnel; the rising median age; the dwindling financial resources, have created a situation where many congregations are worrying if they will manage to survive. The minimum conditions for organisational survival parallel the conditions for survival of the biological organism. Both need to grow and to be interdependent. At the organisational level growth may occur through an increase in size, expansion of services, or improved efficiency and effectiveness, while interdependence implies unifying interaction between; the organisation and its environment; the different sub-units of the organisation; and the individual members of the organisation. If organisations are to survive therefore they must have values and norms which are flexible enough to enable them to cope successfully with the continuous change involved in growth and interdependence. Kuriloff (1972) asserts that organisational survival is dependant on the

constant reassessment of the external and internal organisational environments and an awareness of the forces for and the immanence of change and appropriate activity aimed at restoring equilibrium.

This study reveals a number of negatives regarding the growth and interdependence of religious congregations.

For example:

- (a) The under 50 age group found the mission statements of their congregations significantly less meaningful than the over 50 age group.
- (b) Although men religious were less positive than women religious about their congregations they employ fewer change agents.
- (c) Superiors were in disagreement with non superiors regarding the future life style of the congregation.
- (d) The under 50 age group experienced less satisfaction with their work than the over 50 age group.
- (e) Inadequate communication between people in different types of work was seen by the members to decrease the overall effectiveness of the congregation.

The implication of these results is, that although religious congregations have already undergone significant changes during the last 20 years, there is still much to be done if they are going to survive in rapidly changing environmental conditions of today. The study shows that congregations will need to research and develop new types of structural support systems and organisational climates which will help the members to accomplish the congregational mission as effectively as possible in the unpredictable environment in which we live.

Before a change process is initiated in a congregation there must be a careful and rigorous diagnosis of the existing situation to determine the extent of the problem. If the people who are affected by the change do not perceive a genuine problem the change will never get underway. A perceived gap between where people are and where they want to be is necessary to unfreeze the members of a congregation and make them willing to invest the time and energy needed to adopt new structures and procedures. Careful diagnosis of the proposed structures and procedures is also needed to determine if these changes are the best option presently available. The best available option is the one most likely to help the congregation achieve organisational effectiveness.

The most difficult part of any change is implementation. Many good ideas that have been approved by congregations in documents and at chapters have never implemented because the leadership failed to anticipate or prepare for the resistance to change on the part of the membership. No matter how important the changes are for the future of a congregation their implementation will conflict with some interests and jeopardize some

alliances in the organisation. The major strategy in overcoming resistance to change is to make sure that the change meets a real need in the congregation. While the study shows a positive attitude towards change there are also indicators that further change will be resisted.

For example:

- (a) The different attitudes of superiors and non superiors towards the future orientation of their congregations.
- (b) The feeling of the under 50 age group that congregations had become dependant on change agents, and that change agents could not understand congregational needs.

The changes in religious congregations that were required as result of Vatican II were changes in the total organisation. In the decree *Perfectae Caritatis* religious were directed to examine their entire manner of living together, praying together, working together, of governing and been governed. This examination was to take into account the sociological, the psychological, and the economic needs of the religious themselves as distinct persons in a total society, civic as well as Church. The reason for this radical change programme was that religious congregations would adapt to the changed conditions of our times, the needs of the Church and the requirements of a given culture. In Vatican II the Church saw that for the efficiency of its own mission, all Christians,

and in a special way, religious congregations must be in, with and for the world, listening attentively to its needs, and reading the signs of the times through which Christ speaks no less than through scripture and tradition.

The changes required by this directive are therefore changes in the total congregation. They cannot be limited to a once off period of change such as writing new constitutions, or having a renewal programme for congregational members. Neither can the changes be limited to one aspect of congregational life, such as the movement into smaller living units, because a change in one part of an organisation involves change in the total organisation. An example of this, according to Yuhaus (1976) was the updated formation programmes for new members, that were introduced by many congregations only to find that they were not workable because the rest of the congregation were not ready for it. When the members trained in this new formation programme moved into the unchanged context of community life and custom more problems were created than were solved. Yuhaus (1976), also asserts that the problem with religious life today is not formation, it is not

not prayer - 'it is a radical shift from a closed to an open system with implications beyond our expectation that require a total approach.' If congregations are take the directives of Vatican II seriously, therefore, they will need to search for the type of congregational change that results in new forms of religious life emerging which will speak to the people of our time in the same way that older forms spoke to people in the past.

There is body of expertise already available on the introduction of change, collectively known as organisational development (OD). The goal of OD is to create a self renewing organisation. A self renewing organisation is one that has developed a climate and structures whereby members of an organisation cooperate in the planning and the problem solving that help an organisation adapt to internal and external changes and successfully accomplish the mission of the organisation. What has emerged from the data is that religious congregations are in need of organisational development. The study shows that there will be some resistance to using organisational development consultants. The under 50 age group felt that outside change agents could not understand congregational needs. But religious

congregations, like all organisations are a group of people who come together to achieve a specific goal. As a group they are subect by the same pscho-social laws as other organisations and like other organisations they need to introduce and manage change. One of the quickest and most effective ways of doing this is to employ OD consultants. Organisational development consultants have been employed in such diverse areas as educational institutes, hospitals, business organisations, the civil service, religious congregations.

Religious congregations are important to the life of the Church, and to society at large. As a group of people publicly committed to the Christian principles of love and compassion they have a profound message to give to people in need. Why then should they not be as tough at ensuring that their mission is achieved as effectively, as for example, General Motors or Jesus Christ.

FURTHER RESEARCH:

At the empirical level religious congregations in Ireland would benefit from further research in the following areas:

1. The extent to which the mission statements of religious congregations are, or can be, further specified so that they include measurable goals and objectives. Related to this is a study of how the attitudes of religious women and men regarding goal consensus and the setting of measurable objectives affects the tasks of goal analysis; prioritization; the formulation of objectives; and evaluation.
2. A study of religious congregations that have undergone an OD process to determine those influences that resulted in the decision to initiate an OD process. This might take the form of a comparative study of similar congregations which had refused to initiate an OD process or who had abandoned the process before its completion. A study such as this could prove useful in identifying the norms that exist in religious life, and the formal and informal criteria used by the members of religious congregations in evaluating congregational effectiveness and congregational ineffectiveness.
- 3) The administrative complexity, the communication problems, the change in life style, job satisfaction, and other effects that occur within congregations as a result of moving into varied ministries during a time of decreased personnel, and lower financial viability
- 4) The development and experimental use of a model within religious congregations which integrates organisational development principles and the communal discernment process, normally used by religious congregations when making major decisions.

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APPENDIX 1

Ursuline Convent,
13 Pembroke Park,
Donnybrook,
Dublin 4.

9th. April 1988

Dear Sister, Brother, Father,

I would like to ask your help with an M.A. thesis I am writing for the National Institute of Higher Education, Dublin. The thesis is an attempt at assessing the relevance of organisational development principles and practice to religious congregations that are in the process of changing. My aim is to obtain a clearer understanding of the possible uses of consultants to religious congregations.

It would be of great assistance if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire, which is very brief, and return it to me by April 20th. I would like to assure you that all information regarding your congregation will be treated as confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Guy o.s.u.

Organisational Development in Religious Congregations
Questionnaire

1. Name of Congregation? _____

2. In what year was the Congregation founded? _____
3. In what country was the Congregation founded? _____
4. Why was the Congregation founded? _____

5. How many members in the Congregation? _____
6. What % of the members are based in Ireland, including those who are currently working overseas? _____
7. What major congregational changes have taken place since Vatican 11?
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
d) _____
e) _____
8. What is/are your main apostolate(s) in Ireland? _____

9. What is your most recent Mission Statement? _____

10. In what areas have outside specialists been used by the Congregation? (since Vatican 11).

Please circle whichever numbers apply.

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Theology | 5. Education | 9. Decision-making |
| 2. Scripture | 6. Finance | 10. Founding Vision |
| 3. Prayer | 7. Communication | 11. Group Behaviour |
| 4. Liturgy | 8. Leadership | 12. Other |

Please return the questionnaire to Mary Guy o.s.u.,
Ursuline Convent, 13 Pembroke Park, Donnybrook, Dublin
4.

APPENDIX 2

Ursuline Convent
13 Pembroke Park,
Donnybrook,
Dublin 4.

May 6th. 1988

Dear

Thank you for completing the questionnaire which I sent to you last month. Your responses have been most helpful for the M.A. thesis I am currently engaged in at the National Institute of Higher Education, Glasnevin, Dublin. I am most grateful for the time taken to respond so promptly and so thoroughly to each of the questions.

As a result of this questionnaire I have selected 6 congregations for further study. If you are willing I would like your congregation included. The purpose of this study is to establish what people think of their organisation and its work. The results should be useful in identifying, to some extent at least, the current situation within religious life in Ireland, and suggest possible areas of change and improvement.

This study would involve (a) an interview of about 30 minutes with a person in the congregation able to give factual data regarding the current distribution of personnel within the congregation and (b) the random selection of 30 volunteers from the congregation to complete the enclosed attitude survey.

Individual answers to the attitude survey and the combined answers of your congregation will be treated as strictly confidential. They will be combined with the answers from 5 other congregations and reported for groups of people. It will be impossible to identify individuals or specific congregations.

I realise that once again I am imposing on your time, but am hopeful that the results of this study might prove helpful during a difficult time for many religious congregations in Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Guy o.s.u

Ursuline Convent,
13, Pembroke Park,
Donnybrook,
Dublin 4.

17 May, 1988

Dear

I am currently doing an M.A. thesis on the application of organisational principles to religious groups in Ireland. As part of the thesis, I am conducting an attitude survey of 6 groups - 3 male and 3 female. In consultation with your Provincial/Regional I have made a random selection of 30 members within your group to complete the enclosed questionnaire.

Individual answers to the attitude survey, and the combined answers of your group will be treated as confidential. They will be combined with the answers from 5 other groups and reported in such a way that it will be impossible to indentify individuals or specific groups.

Your name is one of those randomly selected. I realise that I am imposing on your time, but would be most grateful for your co-operation. I am hopeful that the results might be useful in identifying, to some extent at least, the current situation within religious life in Ireland, and to suggest possible areas of change and improvement

Yours sincerely

Mary Guy o.s u.

Attitude Survey on Religious Congregations

1. The aim of this survey is to establish what people think about religious congregations and their work. The results of the survey should be useful in suggesting possible areas of change.
2. If the survey is to be helpful, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and frankly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers and the important thing is that you answer the questions the way you yourself see things or the way you feel about them.
3. As the answers to the questionnaire will be completely confidential, please do not sign your name.
4. The answers you give will be combined with those of others, from your own and five other religious congregations and will be reported for groups of people. It will be impossible to identify individuals or congregations.
5. Guidelines for answering the questionnaire are given at appropriate places throughout the questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. COMMUNICATION.

In my opinion communication:

	Very Bad	Bad	Fair	Good	Very Good
(a) Between the members in the congregation is	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Within my local community is	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Between superiors and members is	1	2	3	4	5
(d) With lay colleagues is	1	2	3	4	5
(e) With those who work for the congregation is	1	2	3	4	5
(f) Between this congregation and other religious congregations is	1	2	3	4	5
(g) With the local Church	1	2	3	4	5
(h) With those we work for	1	2	3	4	5

(Circle one number on each line)

2. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Circle one number for each line across).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(a) Inadequate communication between members in different types of work has decreased the overall effectiveness of the congregation.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Major superiors are out of touch with what is happening at lower levels in the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

3. PARTICIPATION:

In your opinion how much influence do the following groups or persons have on what happens in your congregation? (Circle one number on each line across)

	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Some Influence	Quite a Lot of Influence	A Very Great deal of influence
(a) Vatican	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Local Church	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Major superiors	1	2	3	4	5
(d) Local superiors	1	2	3	4	5
(e) Congregational members in charge of finance	1	2	3	4	5
(f) Retired members	1	2	3	4	5
(g) Active members	1	2	3	4	5
(h) New members	1	2	3	4	5
(i) Outside experts employed by the congregation	1	2	3	4	5
(j) You personally	1	2	3	4	5

4. In general when decisions are being made, are the people affected by these decisions asked for their opinions and suggestions? (Circle one number)

They are never asked for their opinions and suggestions	1
Rarely	2
Sometimes	3
Often	4
Always	5

5. Do the members of the congregation participate with superiorss in making important decisions related to the life and work of the congregation? (Circle one number)

- | | |
|--|---|
| Not at all | 1 |
| They never participate but they are sometimes asked for their opinions and suggestions | 2 |
| They jointly decide on many important issues concerning the life and work of the congregation. | 3 |
| They jointly decide about all the important issues concerning the life and work of the congregation. | 4 |

6. CHARISM:

Does the original vision of the founder have meaning, speak to you today? (Circle one number)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Rarely | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| Often | 3 |
| Always | 4 |

7. MISSION STATEMENT:

Is the current mission statement of the congregation (Circle one number)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Very meaningful for you | 1 |
| Fairly meaningful | 2 |
| Only a little meaningful | 3 |
| Not at all meaningful | 4 |

8. SATISFACTION:

Overall this congregation is better than most I know. (Circle one number)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 1 |
| Agree | 2 |
| Uncertain | 3 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 5 |

9. If a person came to you with a genuine interest in religious life would you

1. Discourage him/her from the whole idea
2. Encourage him/her to join your congregation
3. Encourage him/her to join another congregation
4. Encourage him/her to join a lay religious group
5. Encourage him/her to get married

(Circle one number)

10. PURPOSE:

In your opinion, to what extent is the congregation achieving the purpose for which it was founded.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Not at all | 1 |
| A little | 2 |
| To some extent | 3 |
| Quite a bit | 4 |
| Very much | 5 |

(Circle one number)

11. LEADERSHIP:

In your opinion does leadership in the congregation:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a) Demand submission from members	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Exercise their role by listening.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Demonstrate initiative and creativity	1	2	3	4	5
(d) Act like parents to community members	1	2	3	4	5
(e) Welcome suggestions but want to have the final word.	1	2	3	4	5
(f) Promote a climate of trust, openness, shared feelings and mutual trust.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) Do a lot of listening but little decision making	1	2	3	4	5
(h) Show empathy	1	2	3	4	5
(i) Attach importance to loyalty towards the established institution and its rules	1	2	3	4	5
(j) Care for persons while being effective at organising	1	2	3	4	5
(k) Emphasise the importance of conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5

(Please circle one number on each line)

12. Congregational Life:

To what extent does life in the congregation satisfy your need for

	Not At All	A Little	To Some Extent	Quite A Lot	Very Much
(a) A growing relationship with God.	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Personal growth and development.	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Working with those in need.	1	2	3	4	5
(d) Security	1	2	3	4	5
(e) Affirmation	1	2	3	4	5
(f) Proclaiming the Gospel values of love, justice and compassion.	1	2	3	4	5
(g) A sense of achievement from your work.	1	2	3	4	5
(h) Friendship	1	2	3	4	5
(i) A sense of meaning in life	1	2	3	4	5

(Please circle one number on each line)

13. WORK:

How many types of work have you experienced in the congregation?
(Circle one number).

1	1
2	2
3	3
More than 3	4

14. Have you changed your job or the type of work you do, during the last five years? (Circle one number).

Yes 1

No 2

15. How often do you feel under any tension or stress as a result of your work? (Circle one number)

Very frequently 1

Frequently 2

Sometimes 3

Seldom 4

Never 5

16. Do you think the stresses and strains of your job affect your life in community? (Circle one number)

To a very great extent they affect it 1

To a great extent they affect it 2

To some extent they affect it 3

To a small extent they affect it 4

To a very small extent they affect it 5

17.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(a)	I get a sense of fulfillment from my work.	1	2	3	4	5
(b)	I feel my work is important for the congregation	1	2	3	4	5
(c)	My work is an effective way of proclaiming the Gospel	1	2	3	4	5
(d)	My work is a valid expresssion of the founder's vision	1	2	3	4	5
(e)	People outside the congregation believe the congregation does good work	1	2	3	4	5
(f)	In general, I do an effective job of work	1	2	3	4	5
(g)	I do a better job than most because I am a religious	1	2	3	4	5
(h)	I am expected to do a better job than most, because I am a religious	1	2	3	4	5
(i)	My own professional skills are obsolete	1	2	3	4	5

(Circle one number on each line)

18. How frequently have you attended updating courses? (Circle one number)

Every year	1
Every 2 years	2
Every 3 - 5 years	3
Every 5 - 10 years	4
Never	5

19. CHANGE, INNOVATION AND FLEXIBILITY.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(a) This congregation encourages people to put forward ideas for new developments	1	2	3	4	5
(b) The life- style of the congregation is likely to continue in it's present form in the foreseeable future	1	2	3	4	5
(c) The work of the congregation is likely to continue in it's present form in the foreseeable future	1	2	3	4	5
(d) I am well disposed towards the introduction of changes affecting the work of the congregation	1	2	3	4	5
(e) I feel the congregation has changed too much	1	2	3	4	5
Change Agents:					
(f) Outside experts are regularly employed to help the change process in the congregation	1	2	3	4	5
(g) Outside experts cannot understand our congregational needs	1	2	3	4	5
(h) Outside experts have made the congregation dependant on them	1	2	3	4	5
(i) Outside experts have educated members of the congregation in skills that have helped in the change process	1	2	3	4	5

YOUR POSITION IN THE CONGREGATION:

Please circle the number opposite the position which corresponds most close to your own position in the congregation.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 20. | 1. Major superior | 5. Active member |
| | 2. Regional superior | 6. Retired member |
| | 3. Local Superior | 7. Temporarily professed member |
| | 4. Formation Staff | 8. Novice |

AGE: \

21. Which of the following age groups are you in? (Circle whichever number applies).

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1. | 20 years old or less | 5. | 51 - 60 |
| 2. | 21 - 30 | 6. | 61 - 70 |
| 3. | 31 - 40 | 7. | 71 years and over |
| 4. | 41 - 50 | | |

SEX:

- | | | |
|-----|--------|----|
| 22. | Female | 01 |
| | Male | 02 |

23. ABOUT THE SURVEY:

I am interested in your opinions about this survey. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Circle one number for each line across).

	Very Clear	Quite Clear	Fairly Clear	Unclear	Very Unclear
(a) In general, die you feel that the questions were clear?.	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Good	Good	Mixed Feelings	Not a Good Idea	Bad Idea
(b) In general do you think it is a good idea to conduct an attitude survey like this one?	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS SHEET

There is space here for any additional comments you may wish to make, and you may also wish to suggest areas that you would like to see included in future surveys.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Thank you again for your cooperation

Appendix 3

The mission statements of the 6 congregations who participated in Questionnaire 2:

Congregation 1:

"Called by God in Christ, living together in communities as friends and brothers according to the inspiration of the founder, listening to and praising God, drawn by His love to serve Him in the needs of others."

Congregation 2:

"Aware that we are at a crucial moment in the history of our Congregation, we.....call each other to transform our fear into courage as we experience the paschal mystery of death and and resurrection to new life.

Option for poor and the promotion of justice are the focus of this Chapter and our thrust for the next six years.

We call each other

- to Gospel-centred conversion
- to hear the cry of the poor and to engage with them in mutual evangelization
- to respond to the demands of justice in our lives and works
- to name and committ ourselves to areas of vital apostolic importance and to name and free ourselves from non-vital commitments
- to hear the Spirit present in each sister and to nourish especially the new life in the congregation
- to shared responsibility and to empower our leaders to take the action needed to release and focus our energy in a renewed experience of unity in mission".

Congregation 3:

"Jesus was sent by his Father to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God. We as..... participate in the Church's mission. Our call to this mission is an integral part of our baptismal consecration and of our profession in this religious family. True to the fundamental inspiration of our foundress we strive to proclaim by word and action the love and truth of Jesus to the people of our day".

Congregation 4:

"Committment to:

- Solidarity with God's poor
- Working for structural change
- Living a Gospel-orientated life in community"

Congregation 5:

"To follow the poor Christ.
Bringing the Good News to people.
Promoting peace and justice in contemporary society".

Congregation 6:

"The purpose of the Society is to proclaim the glory of God and to promote the santification of it members. The special purpose is to undertake the duty which weighs upon the whole Church, of preaching the Gospel to the nations."