

Winter 1-5-1988

# Why Business As Usual Is No Longer Possible

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## Recommended Citation

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**DRAFT**

Why Business As Usual  
Is No Longer  
Possible

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A presentation on societal trends to the  
Planning Conference, January 5, 1988, at  
LomaLinda University.

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## WHY BUSINESS AS USUAL IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE

What I will share samples the major trends that either threaten your ministries or provide open doors of opportunities.

My stance is hopeful because I believe so deeply in the power of God's Spirit to redeem situations and people. However, my message is also one of urgency. I am thoroughly convinced from the research evidence that we do not have the luxury of repeating the past--doing business as usual. The situations within which we serve are being altered so markedly that new priorities and changes are required, just to maintain status quo. Many of you want to go beyond status quo.

Because you are people of faith who take seriously the promises of God and people of prayer who believe that with God nothing is impossible, I anticipate God will give you a compelling vision of the future.

Many societal trends could be identified. To illustrate, Yankelowitch, Skelley and White have identified 55 trends in the American culture and assess their degree of change each year. But many of these trends typify only certain highly specific sub-groups.

Let me draw your attention to eight major trends that in a pervasive way, are making profound changes in the people you serve. The first three have to do with families and roles.

### FAMILIES AND ROLES

The first trend may surprise you because it is less obvious than others I will mention.

#### 1. MOUNTING ANTI-CHILD ATTITUDES

Go back for a moment to the 19th century when children were publicly valued for their economic usefulness. It was common for foster families to take orphans into their homes with the expectation they help with farm chores and household tasks. Children were seen as part of the labor market, contributing to family income and household management. In a 1896

court case, a Georgia couple sued a railroad for the wrongful death of their child, claiming he had been worth \$2 a month (he used to run errands). The court denied the suit because the child was too young "to have any earning capacity." The same year another court case involved a 7-year-old, Ettie Pressman. Her father claimed she earned \$3 a week for the family. In this instance, the court awarded him \$1000 for the loss of his daughter.

When Child Labor legislation was first introduced, it was sharply opposed by many. Even as late as 1920, well over a million children between the ages of 10 to 15 were still working in cotton and textile mills.

The emotional impetus for Child Labor legislation lay partly in the way many parents were misusing their children. Hence the rise of this significant organization--the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Children. During this period of history, many strongly opposed child insurance because in both Europe and America, an insurance policy served as an inducement to neglect one's children. Some parents were willing to speculate on the life of their child.

A major shift in attitudes toward children occurred between the years of 1870 and 1930 when the role of children changed from being a useful economic asset to a priceless love object. Viewed as sacred, children in the 20th century came to be seen as emotionally priceless but economically useless. Current estimates say it costs parents \$100,000 to \$140,000 to raise a child.

The 20th century has been characterized by a rightful intolerance over the death of a child. Witness, for example, the powerful influence of MADD, the organization of mothers whose children were killed by a drunk



driver. Court settlements for the death or deformity of a child often exceed a million dollars.

However, another shift in attitudes toward children is appearing, an anti-child attitude. Articles are being written today with titles like these, "Do Americans Hate Children?" Germain Greer categorically asserts that modern society is profoundly hostile to children. Norton Grubb, in his book, Broken Promises, contends that the sentimentalization of childhood stops at the family doorstep. He says, "The deep love we feel in private does not include a public love for children." More persuasive than these quotes is the statistical landmark passed in 1981. In that year, the number of married, childless couples surpassed the number of married couples with children. By 1985, there were 24 million married couples with children compared with 26 million that had none. It is a trend that shows no signs of reversing itself. ("Tomorrow's Nation," Education Week, May, 1986).

Thoughtful people are favoring a re-evaluation of the useless child concept. They recognize that the role of the self-denying adult and irresponsible child are frustrating for both parties. They argue that children's rights have been over-emphasized at the expense of children's obligations. The solution is to develop innovative ways of utilizing the range of children's capacities, ~~as is done in rural areas. Child work on the farm teaches responsibility and gives children a sense of worth and involvement in the needs of their family. (Zelizer, p. 220; 1985)~~

I view this re-evaluation of the useless child concept as having great implications for the church. Increasingly, there is a call for meaningful involvement of children and youth in service activities. I believe this accent should be given a high priority. It is being seriously considered

as an addition to high school curricula. Homes for disturbed youth have found that service projects enhance self-esteem and train youth for a life of service. In a time of growing anti-child attitudes, we do well to match their sentimental value with a new appreciation of their worth as partners in the mission of our congregation.

## 2. CHANGING NATURE OF THE FAMILY

Note the change in demographics that has occurred in the last 30 years. In 1955, 60 percent of the households in the U.S. consisted of a working father, a housewife mother, and two or more children of school age. By 1985, that kind of family unit had dropped from 60% to 7%, an astonishing shift. Truly, the traditional family is a vanishing one.

The census department tells us that 59% of children born in 1983 will for some time live with only one parent before reaching 18. Here is the breakdown:

- 12% born out of wedlock
- 40% born to parents who divorce
- 5% born to parents who separate
- 2% born to parents who will die
- 59%

In other words, only 41% of the kids we work with will reach age 18 having lived in a two-parent family.

Oxford Analytica, in their book America in Perspective say this about families of the future.

"Americans will live longer, but their marriages will not. Family life will become even more fragile and less predictable than in the past.

But, Americans will keep on trying again in remarriage. More will avoid marriage and more will live together without marriage. The majority will end their childbearing days decisively through sterilization." (p. 11.) No general return to three-child families is likely." (p. 17).

The typical family will have two earners with the woman suffering from overload. One can expect to see men (fathers) attempting to even the distribution of household tasks. There will be less time for social events outside the home. Both partners will be spending more time in the home with the big increase in non-work time being spent watching TV. "The critical problem will be how to manage conflicting demands of work, family, and domestic roles."

Diffusion and fragmentation in personal lives will increase as divorce, illegitimate children, dual careers, etc., become accepted options in family life. (p. 330)

You are aware of the high incidence of divorce and the growing number of single parents. In the Minneapolis school system, for instance, 48% of the children in the school year 1983-84 were from single-parent homes. You can imagine the burden a single parent, usually 90% of the time, the mother, has to carry, and how difficult it is for her to maintain a strong family life. Many divorced parents, however, remarry and new families are formed. In fact, last year 46% of all marriages were remarriages. It is predicted that such newly-formed stepfamilies will be the norm by the year 2000. But the blending of divided families is only the first step toward recovery of a strong family. There are potentially divisive dynamics within a stepfamily (stronger than in single-parent homes) that must be understood and handled before a strong family can emerge. It is an issue to be faced in every congregation.

Addressing family issues, however, is not part of our tradition--nor has it been an ingredient in our programs of Christian education. Therefore, changes will be required--changes in our attitudes toward people whose behavior puzzles or disappoints us; changes in our congregational program to accommodate the questions and needs we face; and changes in how we reach out to people who have dropped out of our memberships. Our data show clearly that most parents drop out of congregational life when a divorce or unwanted pregnancy occur. And tragically, these parents and their children are the very ones who especially need the support and care of a congregation.

Clearly the implication is that a ministry to children and youth must include parents. How parents handle the dynamics of single parenthood, of blended families, of various kinds of stress powerfully affects their youth's response to the Gospel. We need classes for youth and parents in how better to relate to each other, how to create close family life, how to communicate with each other, and above all, how to share the faith and pray with one another. Such an approach requires a carefully developed program of high quality.

Clearly, parent education as well as parental involvement are of critical importance. And this is expressed in a major conclusion of a 1984 study of education among Hispanics:

"The most successful schools in our study were those that encouraged-- indeed required--that parents become partners in teaching and learning."

(p. 13. Position Paper: Celebrating Difference)

### 3. CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN

A shift is occurring nationally in women's concept of their role in the home, church, work and community. Some view this as an opportunity, others as a threat. How it is faced may determine whether a substantial

number of women--those in public positions of leadership and who are well educated--remain as active members of our churches.

Our study of the 2 million women in a Lutheran denomination made clear that their concept of role is changing. Three issues surfaced in the study: equal status in the church, mothers working outside the home, and abortion. Let me speak to the first two.

Equal Status. Three out of four women believe they are as qualified as men to give leadership in the church, and 4 out of 5 believe God calls women to the office of ordained ministry. Today one is seeing an end to female passivity and a call for greater ~~militancy~~ <sup>intentionality</sup> in seeking equal status for women in the church. I believe the issue of unequal status in one's congregation is a troubling one for many women.

Working Outside the Home. Half the women in the study believe that a married woman with children has as much right as her husband to work outside the home. The other half disagree. Who favor this most? Women ages 18-34. Who oppose this idea most? Women who are widowed or over the 65 years of age. Note these striking changes in the percentages of working mothers with children under 18 years of age.

1950 - 18%	1970 - 40%	Recent poll only 21% - full-time
1960 - 28%	1980 - 54%	homemakers

This trend is viewed as irrevversible. Hence, the prediction is two wage earners in every family, with overload characterizing the woman. Though increasingly, fathers will be accepting household duties, the mothers will be the most pressed. Think for a moment what this implies for the future. Fewer women, our traditional caregivers, will be available for church and community tasks. More men will need to volunteer for tasks traditionally handled in the past by women. This includes teaching Sabbath School.

Though they are part of the work world many women will not leave home to carry out their job. Households as "electronic cottages", where work is done on computers and word processors, are increasingly attractive to corporations. More jobs done at the office will be done at home; more activities that were public will take place at home. One can expect more part-time work, the sharing of household chroes, and much informal work being done in the home. Just as we refer to "house fathers" we may start using the term "house child" as more children share responsibility for household tasks while mother works. The "feminization of poverty", the growing gap between single parents and two-career families, it is predicted, will revive the idea of children earning money for the family.

Check overlap with p. 5

With the household's increase in importance as an economic unit, one can expect social and psychological strains to become increasingly severe. Tensions between "work" and "family life" are likely to become a central preoccupation of American society in the years to come. Fragmentation of personal lives will increase as divorce, illegitimacy, dual careers, etc. become accepted options in family life.

The critical problem will be how to manage conflicting demands of work, family and domestic roles. Without question, health of the household will be one of the keys of our country's future. And I might add, of our congregations and school's future.

Because life is going to become more home-centered, our ministries need to be more family oriented and responsive to the cry for closer family life.

#### VALUES AND BELIEFS

Some of you may be familiar with my book, Five Cries of Youth, a description of church youth based on a 1970 national study. In response to the oft-raised question, "Have the cries changed?" I carried out an analysis comparing survey data on church youth from 1974, 1980 and 1985 to the original date from 1970. Four of the cries showed little change but the one dealing with moral values and beliefs showed dramatic change

164

Two of my next trends relate to this dramatic change: increased secularization and a growing moral vacuum.

The third trend--really a counter trend--is emerging spirituality

#### 4. INCREASED SECULARIZATION

This is a well-documented trend. We see it in the removal of religious symbols from the public sector, in the paucity of references to religion in school textbooks, in the commercialization of Sunday and in school policies that make religion appear as though it were irrelevant, even harmful. I see it in the realm of scholarship. Less than 2% of the hundreds of thousands of research studies carried out by psychologists include the religious variable, even though we can demonstrate empirically that religious beliefs and values are the best predictors of what people say or do.

I draw attention to this obvious trend because of its impact on the home and church. Today most church homes rarely discuss God, the Bible, or matters of faith.

This fact became dramatically evident when we asked over 8,000 young adolescents (grades 5-9) whose parents are members of a Protestant or Roman Catholic Church how often they sit down as a family to discuss God, or the Bible, or some religious issue. Though 99% of the parents belong to a major Christian denomination, 44% of their adolescents said it never happens; 32% said it may happen once a month; 13% said "once a week," this left around 10%, or one out of ten for whom this ancient tradition is maintained with a degree of regularity every ~~week~~. *day*.

As you know in all mainline denominations, there has been a dramatic decline in Sunday School enrollment for children and youth. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod used to confirm 92% of the children they baptized--by 1980 it had dropped to 57%. Today fewer young people know the stories of the Bible, or verses from Scriptures, than did their parents.

A second evidence of an increasing secularization is seen in the annual surveys of freshmen entering our country's colleges and universities. Polling data over a 20-year period on 6 million freshmen shows a steady rise since 1966 in student's interest in material success and a steady decline in their concern over developing a philosophy of life.

Take the life goal of "being very well off financially." The proportion of freshmen regarding it as important has increased to 70%--a 40% increase over the past ten years. Contrastingly, the life goal of "developing a meaningful philosophy of life" dropped precipitously. Fifteen years ago it was the most valued goal (out of 20) being endorsed by 83% of entering freshmen. By 1983-84, it had dropped to 7th on the list, being endorsed by only 45%.

This shift away from a service orientation shows also in the career choices of entering freshmen. The severest reductions have occurred among the human service occupations: teaching, nursing, social work, law enforcement, and the ministry.

We can expect fewer young people to be choosing service-oriented professions. Because of the sharp decline in sheer numbers and this shift in value orientation, we can expect severe shortages of teachers, pastors, youth leaders, and social workers. It is already being seen in our seminaries and felt on our college campuses. The command of Christ to pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His vineyard takes on a new urgency for the years to come.

In light of the growing secularization in our society, we need to give greater attention to establishing Christian youth subcultures. I say this for two reasons. First, children and youth need settings where symbols of the faith and the Scriptures can be discussed as they relate to coping with a secular culture. Truly, our young people are aliens in today's culture.



The second reason is that children and youth need a sub-culture where they can find friends with similar values and beliefs. The informal friendship clusters that result from school and church youth meetings can become their spiritual support group. There is an undeniable kinship of support that comes to young people when they see friends at school with whom they have been discussing issues of faith at church.

##### 5. GROWING MORAL VACUUM

The year 1965 is often identified as a watershed year when a national shift in values began, a shift toward greater individualism, personal freedom, and tolerance for diversity. Evidences of this shift are seen in the greater incidence of hedonistic lifestyles, people's unwillingness to make commitments, the lessening of loyalty to institutions. The focus of today's values is increasingly on oneself--one's own pleasure and advancement. (This value orientation dominates current movies and TV.) Robert Bellah's current book, Habits of the Heart, identifies this widespread individualism as a social cancer which is eroding marriage commitments, loyalty to institutions, and a sense of communal responsibility.

The idea of a growing moral vacuum is especially evident in behavioral patterns of today's youth. <sup>adults</sup> Never before in our history as a nation have we had such marked upturn in self-destructive activities. It often is spoken of as a social epidemic. Note why I use the word "urgency" when I refer to what is happening to the fabric of our society.

Drugs. During the 1960's and 1970's, use of illicit drugs increased twenty-fold, and the use of marijuana increased thirty-fold.

Alcohol. In a given two-week period, almost half the high school seniors in our country will have <sup>been</sup> drunk. This statistic we confirmed through a Search Institute study in Minnesota in 1983.

Child Abuse. 1984 showed a 400% increase in reports of child abuse.

This "disease epidemic" exists at all social levels. At least one child out of seven experiences an average of 11 episodes of violence per year.

Suicide. The rate among young people has tripled in the past 25 years. For every completed suicide, there are 50 to 100 attempts among young people.

What are the implications here for school and congregational ministries? We need to accent the elements that strengthen youth's immune system and their ability to resist moral infections. In this regard our evidence is most encouraging.

Our studies confirm that as youth's acceptance of moral beliefs goes up, their involvement in self-destructive activities does down. As youth are helped to internalize moral beliefs their immune system is strengthened and they are able to say "no" to behaviors pressed on them by mass media or their peer group. The implication is that in home and church we need to be more explicit in discussing moral issues quietly and rationally, showing how certain behaviors violate certain inner needs and disrupt relationships with others. This approach known also as induction, represents an effective way of helping youth internalize moral beliefs.

Parenthetically, let me say that imposing rules and regulations upon young people in an authoritarian way has the opposite effect. Our studies and many others show that parents, teachers or pastors who are overly strict and prone to judge and criticize children, produce a disproportionate number of moral rebels. Tragically, the youth most likely to reject traditional moral beliefs and live the life of a rebel, are those coming out of ultra-conservative, overly-strict homes.

We need also to redouble our efforts in helping youth become compassionate and socially responsible. Most effective here is going with them to carry out acts of mercy and thus demonstrate a concern for others.

A second evidence of hopefulness is found in adolescents for whom a personal faith is central. We find that these youth are not only more likely to reject self-destructive activities but also are more likely to be involved in serving and helping activities. Youth who live a life based on God's promises show an inner power evident in their behavior.

Implications? Two basic themes ought to run through our ~~youth and family~~ <sup>in school & congregation -</sup> ministries--the teaching of healthy concepts of right and wrong, and second, leading children and youth into a conscious awareness of Christ as Lord and Savior.

#### 6. EMERGING SPIRITUAL INTEREST

You may be surprised at this trend having heard the account of increased secularization and a growing moral vacuum. The fact that these coexist speaks to the reality of cross currents and shifts occurring in different sub-populations. It also speaks to a new sense of emptiness and a hunger for the realities of the unseen caused by self-centered living. George Gallup, who has published his studies of religion in America over the past 50 years, makes this interesting statement.

He says, "Although basic involvement indicators such as religious preference, church membership, church attendance, etc., have remained basically stable, (over the past ten years) there are clear-cut signs of renewed interest in religion." He notes an upturn in the number of Bible study groups and the new religious ferment on college campuses. Through a study of Christian broadcasters in 1985, he discovered that one-half of the nation's adults say they are more interested in spiritual matters than they were five years ago.

McKenna, in his book, Megatruth, draws attention to trends indicative of people's intensified search for spirituality. Here are three:

- the growing influence of the charismatic movement at home and abroad
- the increasing interest in spiritual formation--not least at our seminaries
- the rising tide of evangelism in the mainline denominations

Parker Palmer, in his book, To know As We Are Known/A Spirituality of Education, contends that "spirituality" has been the missing ingredient in our intellectual quest as Christians. Seminarians, intent on their theological studies, failed to develop their spiritual resources. It is not uncommon today to hear pastors express the conviction that commitment to spiritual development is more important than professional development.

~~What about the future?~~

With this increased interest in spirituality a discernable shift is also taking place in moral values. Here, too, there is a growing disenchantment with modern lifestyles and the philosophy that "anything goes." In 1987, the Yankelovitch polling service reported a new receptivity to discipline, authority, responsibility, and commitment. A return to something like basic American values was seen which they labeled a "new traditionalism." The group for whom this was especially true was the baby boom generation, now in their 30s and 40s.

Interestingly, this return showed up also with a select group of high school seniors. Surveys of high achievers, those are listed in the "Who's Who of American High School Students, showed the following trends over the 10 years, 1976-1985.

- an increase to 78% in teens who have never had sexual intercourse
- an increase to 80% in teens who have never used drugs
- a decrease of 30% over a ten-year period in males and females who approve of abortion.

I find it significant that during the past ten years, the percent has gone up of youth who agree with the values of their parents on eight different issues--religion, education, dress styles, friends, etc. To illustrate, the percentage agreeing with their parents on drug use has gone from 50% to 75%. I was amazed to see their answers when asked about censoring the media: 72% said they would censor medias' presentation of "explicit sex."

Clearly, a trend toward greater acceptance of universal moral values is emerging and with it an interest and willingness to view ethics as a public issue, and let me add, increasingly some moral choices are seen as ones that cannot be reduced to simple either-or decisions. Something more than a legalistic system of thought.

I believe this emerging trend presents a decade or two of opportunity. I say this because studies since 1920 have shown that religious interest and participation tends to rise and fall by decades. We have seen a low point in the late sixties-70's, with a bottoming out and upturn in religious interest. I believe this shift is a harbinger of a new openness to religious matters. A new door of opportunity is open to one-on-one ministries that lead to significant conversations about Jesus Christ and His unseen but very real Kingdom. (Note the increase of young adult Methodists).

The negative side of this trend is found in its self-centered quality. Oxford Analytica says it this way. "Though the statistical indicators of religion are up, its social indicators are down. Today's radical individualism, psychological narcissism, and consumption revolution is eroding the vitality of today's religion." A preoccupation with oneself religiously can result in a religion of self-effort, of legalism. One can be pre-occupied with one's relationship to God and care nothing for a hurting society. This tendency of today's religious interest underscores the need for preaching and teaching that of a two-legged gospel--personal faith and involvement in a life of service.

It also stresses the need for home, congregational and school ministries that accent the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ--His promises, His presence, His intervention in our lives.

I say this out of deep conviction. Three of our major studies have shown that when ministries accent what a person does--is preoccupied with rules and regulations, serious flaws appear in the members. Our massive study of 4,000 Lutherans showed that upward to 2/5 are law oriented. <sup>As such</sup> they tend to be prejudiced, self-oriented, aloof from community needs, authoritarian in their approach to parenting, and intent on seeking their personal advantage. By way of contrast, those whose focus is on what God is doing for them are far more likely, beyond chance factors, to have an intensely personal commitment to Christ, a happy outlook on life, openness to needed change, involvement in social issues and helping activities, and are caring persons.

#### CHALLENGES TO SCHOOLS AND CONGREGATIONS

My last two trends present unique opportunities <sup>for</sup> to this Church body because of ~~your~~ <sup>in health education</sup> history, <sup>your</sup> and multi-cultural approach.

#### 7. EPIDEMIC INCREASE IN HURTING PEOPLE

It requires no prophet to predict that the outcome of epidemic increases in drug and alcohol abuse, sexual immorality, family violence and crime will result in an increase in psychologically scarred people and fragmented families. Ours is a hurting society. I think it significant that when we carried out our study of how laity and clergy in 47 denominations view ministry, we found a high priority given to helping people under stress--physical, emotional, moral, and spiritual. This is why a new word is becoming important in today's concept of ministry. In addition to the words "teach" and "preach" is another word, also important in the ministry of our Lord, the word "heal." Here I am referring to a healing ministry in its broad sense. Let me touch briefly on why I see this word as being so important.

Stress. During the last ten years, scientists have identified stress as the major cause of mental disorder, disease, and people's escape into drugs and alcoholism. A recent government publication on bereavement documents that the stress caused by the loss of a loved one increases the likelihood of death from accidents, suicides, cardiovascular diseases, and some infectious diseases. Such people are at risk at least one year following the death. Unfortunately, our ministries usually stop when the funeral is over.

Lifestyles. Today, infections and diseases are no longer the primary reason that people are hospitalized. Rather, the primary reason is shifting to the behaviors and lifestyles of people. Excessive drinking, drug use, smoking, poor health habits, and overwork account for upwards of 45% of those who are hospitalized. Lifestyles not only pose moral issues but also health issues. We are discovering how much the physical, moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of people are interrelated. Let me give you some surprising research evidence as to how a personal faith relates to health.

Personal faith. A recent task force report (1984) from the National Institute of Mental Health has compiled research evidence that shows that people of faith live longer, have fewer arteriosclerotic diseases, and fewer psychiatric impairments. People of faith who are afflicted by diseases cope better with them. The reason is that a personal faith enhances the eagerness for life, a positive outlook, a sense of meaning, and higher self-esteem. These and similar attitudes are related to successful coping with diseases, even those as intimidating as cancer.

Such information points to a new day of opportunity for congregations in developing healing ministries. By healing, I am referring to support systems for people who are battling a disease such as cancer, support groups for those tyrannized by depression or family problems, and support groups for those seeking a change in life direction. Such ministries could address the needs of hurting people.

As you know, the ministries of most congregations have been largely cognitive--preaching and teaching. A new ministry is needed that accents a caring approach, one that is sensitive to the hurting, the lonely, the defeated, and the overwhelmed.

I see two implications for ministry in this trend. One is a new emphasis on training young people in how to reach out in caring ways to hurting peers. Friendship groups can become support groups that open up and take in lonely, rejected adolescents who need loving and caring. A good illustration of such a program is the Biblically-based Peer Counseling Program of Dr. Barbara Varenhorst (350 Grove Drive, Portola Valley, CA 94025).

A second implication is a new emphasis on showing parents how they can demonstrate a caring spirit. Here I refer to a form of sharing the truth that could be called "doing the truth." An illustration of this would be taking one's adolescent on a visit to someone who is sick or in need of help. That is what Frank Terrell did with his 11-year-old son, Trevor. Their sharing of food and blankets with street people in Philadelphia set in motion what has become Trevor's mission.

~~Howing Minority Populations~~  
Immigration patterns and differential fertility rates are significantly changing the nation's social composition. 1984 was the greatest year for immigration in the history of our country: It was the year 2/3 of all immigrants in the world entered this country.

It is predicted that by the year 2000, one out of 3 people in this country will be non-white. Furthermore, it is predicted that 20 years later, in the year 2020, diverse racial and ethnic groups will make up half the population of the U.S. This prospect of cultural pluralism is something to celebrate - for mainstream organizations have much to learn from diverse cultures. But there is a special challenge in this development.



One can expect a growing population of American youth to be poor, non-white, with limited English proficiency and from broken families. They will contribute an increasing number <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ a population often referred to as the underclass--people who will largely have to be supported by the government. To illustrate, the drop-out rate in New York schools is more than 70% for both African and Hispanic American youth.

On the plus side, a relatively well established middle class family of blacks and Hispanics is emerging. Today we have 247 black mayors and 3,212 elected Hispanic officials.

Significant too, are the one-half million foreign students in this country--people who will be their countries' new leaders. Consider the evangelism opportunity if your colleges could enroll and nurture the friendship of these students.

Implications? Your vision of the future needs to include ways of being able to reach and flexibly serve increasingly diverse memberships. It would be a fitting response to the command of our Lord if a concerted effort were made to welcome the stranger, the poor, and the non-white into our schools and congregations. He was always concerned with the hurting and the neglected.

I found it significant that a report on evangelicals in Central America written by a religion writer for the Atlanta Journal, included this item. Evangelical groups in these impoverished countries are opening religious schools which offer free education to rural and slum families who cannot afford any schooling for their children. This focus on the region's children is becoming an effective method of evangelism, something which you treasure also for your schools.

An adequate response to this trend can hardly be "more of the same."

To serve the needs of ethnic youth through <sup>your</sup> schools <sup>in ways</sup> that create a climate <sup>involves broad scale involvement.</sup> of excellence, <sup>^</sup> the task (using the words of a 1987 Position Paper by Quest)

is

"not <sup>only to</sup> ~~just~~ demand a great deal of one's students but also <sup>to</sup> involve parents in positive and constructive ways, seeking to respond to their unique needs."

These then are <sup>of many that could be mentioned</sup> ~~the~~ eight trends <sup>^</sup> that make business as usual no longer possible.