

A Brief Sociological Examination of Local United and Anglican Churches

In a previous article in the *Canadian Journal of Theology*,¹ attention was drawn to the sociological issues, both theoretical and demographic, involved in a possible union of the United and Anglican churches. It was suggested that some of the major problems which might appear in the eventual completion of a scheme of union would tend to arise mostly at the local level or at the level of middle-range, rather than at the highest authoritative level. Tensions and difficulties at the local level might be forestalled or eased if the problems could be carefully ascertained beforehand and given a thorough airing. To this end, surveys might be carried out on a sample basis which would cover theological and institutional issues seen by local congregations. The article also stated that, in comparing Anglican and United churches sociologically, there were certain important areas on which there was no available information. In particular, data about the social or occupational structure of church memberships were unobtainable. Such information, which would be helpful in seeing how the churches might combine locally and nationally, could best be obtained by questioning church members themselves.

This article briefly presents the findings of two surveys which might be said to offer pilot information about the issues just raised.² It also attempts to evaluate the findings in relation to the problems of institutional union.

The two churches surveyed were St. Andrew's United Church and St. George's Anglican Church, both located in Winnipeg and separated by less than half a mile as the crow flies. They possess a great number of common characteristics. Both serve part of a large, English-speaking, middle-class residential area of south Winnipeg. Both churches have been built since the end of the second world war – or more accurately, rebuilt. The present edifices speak of success and wealth. Within their respective denominations they head the list of churches known for great prosperity and a large following, both in Winnipeg and throughout Canada.³ The two churches originally came from the same, now depressed, downtown area of Winnipeg, and at much the

1. W. S. F. Pickering, 'The Sociological Issues Raised by a Possible Union of the United and Anglican Churches,' *CJT*, 13 (1967), 174-88.

2. The results given here are drawn from a mimeographed report by W. S. F. Pickering and J. E. W. Jackson, 'St. Andrew's and St. George's, Winnipeg – Two Churches different only in Denomination' (1964). Cf. Pickering, 'The Sociological Issues,' 183, n. 10.

3. St. Andrew's has been described as 'one of the largest – wealthiest – congregations of the United Church' (*United Church Observer*, 1 December 1963).

same time (around 1915),⁴ and they have been friendly rivals for well over half a century.

It is difficult to compare the membership of St. Andrew's and St. George's, since they represent different denominations which do not have the same criteria for computing membership. St. Andrew's had, at the time the survey was taken (1963-64), about 1900 adult members in the area, and about 5000 people of all ages were known to the officers of the church either as members of the church or as having some connection with it.⁵ At St. George's the number of Easter communicants in 1964 was 976 and the number of people known to the clergy was estimated to be about 1400. Both churches are well known for their efforts in Christian education. In 1955 St. Andrew's built an education centre costing \$200,000.⁶ Its many Sunday schools had just under 1000 members, while at St. George's the Sunday schools drew about 320 children. In matters of churchmanship St. George's could be called 'average' or more precisely 'central,' and if the notion of churchmanship is applicable to the United Church the same epithets might be applied to St. Andrew's.

The surveys carried out in the two churches were designed to cover only worshipping congregations, though the survey at St. George's was extended for a special purpose.⁷ The surveys were intended to establish as accurately as possible the number of people who attended worship on Sundays which were held to be typical. Questions were asked which were designed to extract demographic data about the congregations, including some reference to the social and occupational background of the worshippers. It was estimated that ninety-five per cent or more of both congregations took part in the survey.⁸ Short questionnaires were handed out and filled in during the notice-periods at each service.

Table 1 sets out the number of individuals who attended church on the Sundays and who filled in the questionnaires. It refers only to those who were taken to be fourteen years of age and over. People who attended church twice, or more frequently, were eliminated in the counting at the later services they attended.⁹

Large though the congregations at St. George's might be by Anglican standards, totals for the day were only just over half of those for St. Andrew's

4. Contrary to the parochial system as commonly maintained by the Anglican Church, St. George's was given episcopal permission to change its site to a suburb to which its members were beginning to move during the first world war.

5. Total adult membership (including people temporarily living outside Winnipeg), together with adherents, was 2500 (1964).

6. Strangely enough, a year or so earlier St. George's built a new parish hall for \$220,000.

7. The survey relating to St. George's, together with other surveys carried out in the parish, formed the basis of an M.A. thesis in sociology, submitted to the University of Manitoba by J. E. W. Jackson in 1964.

8. The survey was conducted at St. George's (at all services except 8.30 am Holy Communion) on Sunday, 28 April 1963, and at St. Andrew's on Sunday, 26 April 1964.

9. 'Twicers' (mainly the clergy and members of the choirs) were few in number.

TABLE 1

Service	St. Andrew's		St. George's	
	N	%	N	%
9:30 am	141	24	—*	—
11:00 am†	404	69	259	85
7:00 pm	37	6	44	15
TOTAL	582	99	303	100

*No service at St. George's at 9:30 am; the 8:30 am service was not surveyed at St. George's because few people (about 30) attend it.

†For both St. George's and St. Andrew's the choir was considered as part of the eleven o'clock congregation. Except where members came for the first time in the evening, they were excluded from the evening congregation.

(303 compared with 582). The United Church scored by having a 9:30 am service (141 adults present) which in form was precisely the same service (identical hymns, lesson, prayers and sermon) as the later morning service. At 11:00 am both buildings tend to be well filled and late-comers find it difficult to obtain a seat. In the evening St. George's had a slight edge on St. Andrew's, but in both places at this time people of under twenty-five years of age predominated.

In the matter of the ratio between the sexes, the churches were virtually identical and both were weighted towards women (about forty-three per cent male; fifty-seven per cent female). For the parish area of St. George's, which includes St. Andrew's, it was calculated that in 1961 the percentage of males (fifteen years of age and over) was forty-six and of females fifty-four. The churches were thus not so 'dominated' by women as might have been expected.

The two churches had a relatively large number of young people of both sexes between the ages of fourteen and twenty, but as the age increased the relative number compared with the population of the parish area decreased up to approximately the age of forty-five (see table 2). Thereafter a reverse trend set in. Thus males between twenty-five and thirty-four years of age constituted only seven per cent of the worshippers at St. Andrew's, and ten per cent at St. George's, but sixteen per cent of the inhabitants of the parish area. Males between fifty-five and sixty-four were seventeen per cent strong at St. Andrew's, eighteen per cent at St. George's, and twelve per cent in the parish area. When larger age groupings are taken into consideration, it can be seen that at St. Andrew's males and females fifty-five years of age and over are relatively strong, while at St. George's females between thirty-five and fifty-four years of age are well above the proportional level in St. Andrew's and in the parish area.

There was some slight difference in the marital status of worshippers at St. Andrew's and St. George's. From table 3 it will be seen that St. Andrew's

TABLE 2

Age	St. Andrew's %		St. George's %		Parish Area 1961 %	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
15-19 years	14	7	23	14	12	11
20-24 years	6 } 13	5 } 15	5 } 15	3 } 9	10 } 26	8 } 23
25-34 years	7 } 13	10 } 15	10 } 15	6 } 9	16 } 26	15 } 23
35-44 years	18 } 38	16 } 39	18 } 36	22 } 51	20 } 38	21 } 39
45-54 years	20 } 38	23 } 39	18 } 36	29 } 51	18 } 38	18 } 39
55-64 years	17 } 36	22 } 39	18 } 36	11 } 27	12 } 25	12 } 28
65-69 years	7 } 36	7 } 39	3 } 27	4 } 27	4 } 25	5 } 28
70 and over	12 } 36	10 } 39	6 } 27	12 } 27	9 } 25	11 } 28
TOTAL	101 (N=249)*	100 (N=309)†	101 (N=119)	101 (N=157)‡	101 (N=5,013)	101 (N=5,834)

*2 did not state their age and were not included.

†18 did not state their age and were not included.

‡12 did not state their age and were not included.

TABLE 3

Marital status	St. Andrew's %	St. George's %	Parish Area 1961 %
Single	19	28	25
Married	73	63	67
Widowed	8	9	9
TOTAL*	100 (N=570)	100 (N=277)	101 (N=10,796)

*Not including separated, divorced, and no response.

had proportionately fewer single people (nineteen per cent) in its congregation than St. George's (twenty-eight per cent). The corresponding percentage for the parish area was twenty-five. The level of married people at St. Andrew's (seventy-three per cent) was above that of the parish area (sixty-seven per cent), while the level at St. George's (sixty-three per cent) was below the level in the local community. The proportion of those who were widowed was much the same in the two churches and in the parish area. When marital status was related to the number of males and females born before 1940, the two churches were more closely parallel than where marital status was not related to sexual differentiation. At the United church about one out of every thirteen women was single; at the Anglican church about one out of every ten (no table given). In terms of absolute figures the number of people separated or divorced was the same in each church (five).

TABLE 4

Country of Birth	St. Andrew's %	St. George's %
Canada	81	81
United Kingdom	11	14
Other Commonwealth	—	2
Other European	2	1
Other	5	2
No response	1	1
TOTAL	100 (N=582)	101 (N=303)

One very close parallel between the churches was found in the country of birth of their members. At both St. Andrew's and St. George's eight out of every ten worshippers said that they had been born in Canada (table 4) – a ratio that applied to the parish area itself. Relatively speaking, slightly more at St. George's (fourteen per cent) than at St. Andrew's (eleven per cent) stated that their country of birth was the United Kingdom, but the latter church had slightly more people born in countries other than Canada, the United Kingdom, and Commonwealth countries (seven per cent) compared with St. George's (three per cent). Some might have expected a greater divergence between the two churches in the matter of the country of birth of their worshippers. The Anglican Church of Canada has very close ties with England. It is generally regarded as being strongly Anglo-Saxon in outlook, and a large proportion of its members are thought of as being admirers of the English way of life. However, at St. George's ninety-three per cent of the congregation had parents who were both of British Isles origin, while at St. Andrew's the corresponding percentage was eighty-one (no table given). In the matter of country of birth and ethnic background there is little to choose between the two churches. They are both solidly Anglo-Saxon.

There is also a striking similarity in the educational level of worshippers at the two churches. The results of the educational achievement of males and females are given in table 5. The figures exclude those who at the time when the survey was taken were students at school or university. Among males slightly more than one out of every two in both churches was a university graduate or at least had attended a university. The level of graduates was higher for St. Andrew's (forty-eight per cent) compared with St. George's (thirty-six per cent), but at St. George's, relatively speaking, more attended a university without getting a degree (sixteen per cent) compared with St. Andrew's (nine per cent). Most people would guess that in both churches fewer women than men in terms of absolute figures and percentages would have a university degree or would have been to a university. The results bear out this assumption. About one out of every four women at St. Andrew's and one out of every five at St. George's had a university degree; those who had

TABLE 5

Education (excluding students)	St. Andrew's %		St. George's %	
	M	F	M	F
No formal education	1	—	1	1
1 to 8 yeats	5	2	5	3
9 to 10 years	5	10	8	13
High School graduate	31	46	33	44
Some university	9	15	16	16
University graduate	48	24	36	20
No response	1	2	1	3
TOTAL	100 (N=206)	99 (N=297)	100 (N=87)	100 (N=143)

not graduated from high school amounted to twelve per cent at St. Andrew's and seventeen per cent at St. George's. St. Andrew's can claim to have a slightly better educated congregation than St. George's, but compared with the parish area they both display levels of education well above the average. In St. Andrew's forty-six per cent of its worshippers of both sexes, excluding students, attended university for a period of one year or more (without necessarily obtaining a degree), while in St. George's the percentage was forty-three and in the parish area it was twenty-three. In metropolitan Winnipeg only eight per cent had reached that level of education in 1961.

In the two churches the proportion of males who worked for their living was much the same: two-thirds (no table given). St. George's had, relatively speaking, more students and fewer retired men. For the occupational status of women, the figures were again close for the two churches. About six out of every ten females were non-earning housewives.

Of the men who said that they worked for a living, five per cent at St. Andrew's and six per cent at St. George's claimed that they earned \$25,000 or more for the year prior to that in which the survey was taken (see table 6). Only about five per cent in both parishes estimated that they earned less than \$5,000 a year. The average for all men was over \$11,000 in both churches. (A comparable figure for metropolitan Winnipeg for 1961 was \$3,907.) Table 6 shows that the two churches have a virtually identical salary distribution. There can be no shadow of doubt that, judged by the incomes of worshippers, both St. Andrew's and St. George's are rightly seen to be wealthy churches — certainly amongst the wealthiest of Winnipeg. In his thesis Jackson observed that St. George's displayed a degree of wealth far greater than that of the parish area. He wrote: 'Incomes were found to be well over double that of incomes of those who work for a living in St. George's parish and triple that of the income for Winnipeg.'¹⁰ One is tempted to ask

10. J. E. W. Jackson, M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, p. 66. Jackson has also shown that St. George's is not representative of the immediate area, in so far as the

TABLE 6

Income (Males)	St. Andrew's %	St. George's %
Under \$3,000	—	1
3,000-4,999	4	3
5,000-6,999	9	17
7,000-9,999	26	21
10,000-14,999	25	23
15,000-24,999	18	14
Over \$25,000	5	6
Not disclosed	13	15
TOTAL	100 (N=171)	100 (N=78)

whether St. George's attracts the wealthiest people in its parish, or whether it draws on those who live in wealthy suburbs outside the area.¹¹ It is more than likely that what is true of St. George's in this matter is also true of St. Andrew's.

The method used to determine the class structure of the two churches was one based on occupation. It made use of what is technically known as the Warner scale. (For a full description of the method, see Jackson's thesis.) In table 7, rating one refers to doctors, lawyers, engineers, executives, and managers. At St. Andrew's forty-three per cent of the men fell into this category, while thirty-five per cent of the men at St. George's were similarly placed. Rating two includes such professionals as nurses, librarians with a degree, high-school teachers with a degree, and certain classes of business people. Forty-one per cent of the men of St. Andrew's and thirty-nine per cent of the men of St. George's belonged to this category. Rating three consists of grade-school teachers, clerks, stenographers, secretaries. Here St. Andrew's registered thirteen per cent and St. George's fourteen per cent. A tiny handful of people were found in the other and lower ratings at St. George's — ratings which cover working-class occupations — and none at St. Andrew's. One can conclude from the results relating to this occupational scale that both churches are essentially middle-class and are almost completely devoid of any elements of the working-class or low-income groups. While it was not possible to produce statistical evidence, it seems more than likely, in the light of other facts that have already emerged from the surveys, that the class structure of the two churches is considerably higher up the middle-class scale than the parish area in which they are situated.

St. George's, since it is an Anglican church, is organized as a parish with

proportion of male members interviewed who had voted for the NDP at the previous election was below the proportion of votes cast for the NDP in the constituency in which St. George's is located.

11. There was some evidence that the wealthier worshippers lived a good distance away from their churches, but the numbers involved were too small to be highly significant.

TABLE 7

Occupational rating, Warner scale	St. Andrew's %	St. George's %
One	43	35
Two	41	38
Three	13	18
Four	2	4
Five	—	1
Six	—	1
Seven	—	1
No response	1	1
TOTAL	100 (N=171)	99 (N=78)

well-defined parochial boundaries. Two-thirds of the worshippers said that they lived within the parish area, while a number lived well beyond the parish in the exclusive suburbs of Tuxedo and Charleswood. At St. Andrew's worshippers were asked if they lived within a radius of one mile of the church. (American sociologists estimate that a church's effective area is a residential zone that is within a mile radius of the church.) About eight out of every ten people at St. Andrew's said that they lived within a mile of the church. St. Andrew's may well 'serve' the local community more than St. George's and indeed it was the intention of the officials in the early days of St. Andrew's that it should become a community church.

Worshippers at St. Andrew's were asked if they had always been members of the United Church, and worshippers at St. George's if they had always been Anglican. Results on a proportional basis proved to be almost the same at the two churches. About seven out of every ten worshippers answered the question in the affirmative. This figure corresponds closely to the results of surveys carried out in other Anglican churches in Winnipeg.¹² (Some of those who have changed their denominations will have done so before becoming members of St. George's or St. Andrew's, while others will have left St. George's to join St. Andrew's or vice versa. Both ministers said they were aware of some 'traffic' of this kind. It was impossible to estimate its extent.)

Members of the congregations were asked to indicate how frequently they attended public worship by stating how many times they went to church each month. The results are given in table 8 below. Even in this 'religious' matter a striking similarity once more emerged between St. Andrew's and St. George's. Virtually the same percentages were found for identical categories. About half of each congregation claimed to attend church four times or more a month. Just over a quarter attended about three times a month. Those who went once a month or less amounted to six or seven per cent in both churches.

Male 'active' church members (those who attended church once a Sunday

12. Cf. W. S. F. Pickering, *The Inner-City Church*, Anglican Church of Canada, Council for Social Service, Bulletin 187 (1963).

TABLE 8

Frequency of church attendance (times per month)	St. Andrew's %	St. George's %
Once or fewer	7	6
About twice	12	13
About three	28	26
Four or more	52	52
No response	2	3
TOTAL	101 (N=582)	100 (N=303)

or more frequently) tended to have a smaller income than 'inactive' members (those who attended church less than once a Sunday) (no table shown). Three-quarters of the 'active' members (male and female) had always been in their declared denomination. Further, those worshippers who changed their denomination showed themselves to be less regular at worship than those who had not changed their denomination. Living within the parish boundary or a mile from the church (as in the case of St. Andrew's) had no positive correlation with the level of church-going.

It was not intended that the surveys should deal with the financial structure and working of the two churches. For that a special inquiry is needed. But with an accurate account made of the congregations there was a good opportunity to relate the number of people present to the collections that were taken during the services. There is an obvious weakness in drawing too many conclusions from statistics of this kind. The nature of church giving is such that, thanks to stewardship programmes, the use of pledges, and envelope-giving, collections vary enormously from Sunday to Sunday, sometimes irrespective of the size of the congregations. On the day that the survey was taken at St. Andrew's the collections at all services (excluding Sunday school collections) amounted to \$2,247. Since the number of adults present was 582, the average amount given by each adult was \$3.86. At St. George's the collections came to \$1,304 (thought to be below average), while the number of adults was 303. Thus the average per adult was \$4.30. Perhaps it ought to be mentioned in passing that the budget for St. Andrew's in 1962 was \$135,000¹³ and that St. George's was planning for a budget of \$110,000 for 1963-64.

The criteria selected for comparing the two churches are simple but important sociological aspects of institutional life. The results showed that in nearly all the criteria selected - sexual differentiation, age-structure, marital status, country of origin, education, annual income, social class, frequency of church attendance, and amount of money given in collections - the two churches display similar if not identical patterns. At no point, according to the results of the survey, was there wide divergence. That St. Andrew's had a

13. Cf. *United Church Observer*, 1 December 1963.

higher proportion of people who had graduated from a university and that the church had more worshippers who lived near the church seemed to be unimportant exceptions in the light of the over-all picture created by the surveys. United Church members and Anglicans, at least in these two churches, are socially very near to one another indeed.

To some degree these sociological parallels are hardly surprising. The churches are contiguously situated in a well-defined middle-class dormitory area. People who live in such suburbs inevitably have many common social characteristics and these characteristics would naturally be reflected in the local congregations. However, the suburb in which St. Andrew's and St. George's are situated shows a wider variety of social characteristics than those displayed in the two churches. There are in the area a fair proportion of 'poor people,' and certainly the variation in ethnic background is much wider than that shown in the two churches. Religiously, the suburb has a good representation of Roman Catholics and Jews as well as those of other religious groups such as the Mennonites. Fairly near St. George's there is a large Roman Catholic church and it would be interesting to see if its congregation displayed the characteristics as those visible in the Anglican and United churches. One would imagine that there would be considerable differences in ethnic background and occupation. Jackson, in his detailed study of St. George's, maintained that the social stratification of that church was slightly more middle-class than the neighbourhood itself. The same thing can possibly be said of St. Andrew's as well. Thus Anglican and United churches do not accurately reflect the local social structure. They tend to create structures within themselves which are socially 'above' those of the area. It is possible that those members who come to the church from outside the immediate area tend to come from areas which are wealthier, rather than poorer, than that in which the church is situated. It should be remembered that Winnipeg is a city of over 500,000 people and contains a plethora of ethnic groups. In practice, the membership of both churches is limited in terms both of ethnic background and of income. Their powers of attraction are limited in almost identical ways. Sociologically, they present very similar patterns.

Certain questions arise as a result of the findings of the two surveys. These questions need to be answered by empirical investigation carried out on a wide basis. Perhaps one of the chief values of the survey has been in the raising of hypothetical problems which bear on the question of unity.

1. Can it be said as a general rule that, where United and Anglican churches exist in close proximity, they display similar social characteristics? Admittedly there are extraordinary parallels between St. Andrew's and St. George's, which one would not expect to find in other contiguous Anglican and United churches: their common downtown origin, their being built at the same time, and so forth. But over and above these chance similarities there are, as we have shown, many social qualities which are common to both congregations. It has been stated elsewhere that for the country as a whole those who call themselves United Church or Anglican do display many common social

qualities relating to age and ethnic origin.¹⁴ If broad characteristics are to be seen at the national level it is reasonable to suggest that they are also to be seen locally, especially where congregations are drawn from a common neighbourhood. We would suggest as a working hypothesis to be tested by further surveys that, where United and Anglican churches are contiguous, their worshipping bodies do contain common social characteristics of the kind we have outlined.

2. If there are social differences between contiguous churches, is the origin of a United church a significant factor? St. Andrew's was a Presbyterian church until the formation of the United Church in 1925. It is possible to say that the Presbyterians were and are the most middle-class of the Protestant churches. Would this fact account for the particular social qualities of St. Andrew's? We are of the opinion – an opinion which we admit we cannot substantiate by pointing to hard facts – that the Presbyterian background of St. Andrew's has not made its social structure what it is now. However, this particular point – not necessarily with regard to St. Andrew's – should be looked at in more detail. Where United churches are of Methodist origin do they display a similar or 'lower' social structure pattern than that of the neighbourhood in which they are located? In such a case there might be a marked difference of social structure between such a church and that of the contiguous Anglican church.

3. We were struck by one interesting result of a rather different kind. The surveys concentrated on demographic factors, but in answer to one 'religious' question – how often people went to church – the same pattern appeared in both churches. Yet they represent two different denominations, having different forms of Sunday worship. Ideals and norms apart, in practice members of both congregations attend dominical worship with much the same regularity. Has the survey hit on something which could be said to be typical for the whole of Canada? Is it true that in given areas or localities Anglicans and United church people attend church with much the same degree of regularity? Obviously there are regional differences; for instance, the level of church-going in remote prairie places is, from general experience, different from that in urban areas. It seems reasonable to suggest that the ideals set before members in the two denominations and the responses that people make to those ideals are very much the same, be the church United or Anglican.

4. It is most unlikely, even if a scheme for union were accepted in the near future and an amalgamation of local churches put into effect, that St. Andrew's and St. George's would be merged. According to external criteria both are successful and both make full use of their buildings (by generally accepted ecclesiastical standards). If, however, the churches were not successful, and were in fact half empty, their amalgamation might be a possibility. In such a case, the common social characteristics of the congregations would not hinder a merger. The surveys we have carried out would indicate that in the suburbs of Winnipeg – and we assume in other similar areas – contiguous United and

14. Cf. Pickering. 'The Sociological Issues.'

Anglican churches could readily be merged without ensuing hostility or objection on the grounds of social incompatibilities. No one could argue that union would mean that congregations would have to worship and be religiously associated with social groups different from their own.

5. It would be helpful to find contiguous United and Anglican churches where there were significant differences in their social structure. Apart from any sociological value of an attempt to determine the reasons for such differences, it would also be practically useful to discover ways and means of merging satisfactorily two such churches, on the assumption that some form of amalgamation was desirable.

The surveys which have been described here have produced limited but profitable empirical data relating to the social structure of two contiguous United and Anglican churches. The findings, which display marked parallels between the churches, have prompted a number of questions. As well as suggesting the need for more investigations into the social structure of local churches – a point we have laboured *ad nauseam* – we should like to outline the way in which research could be pressed a stage further.

Earlier it was stated that some of the more serious problems facing a successful union of the Anglican and United churches would be found at the local level. Resistance to union among local churches may imply either a general lack of desire for union, or a realization of serious differences between the churches – differences which would prevent the local units from combining. It would be helpful to know more about the wish for union on the part of congregations and parish churches. But, granted for the moment that the desire is there, resistance may well be found in real or alleged differences between local churches. The question arises: where are the differences to be found? We have suggested that these are not of a demographic or social kind, at least for contiguous churches. Two other avenues of exploration remain open: the religious beliefs of worshippers and non-theological attitudes towards the local church.

The refrain comes once more. There is virtually no information on the religious beliefs of church members, although the United Church recently undertook a national survey of the faith and attitudes of its ministers and laity.¹⁵ No similar research has been undertaken among Anglicans, nor have detailed local studies been embarked on in either church.¹⁶ Admittedly the religious beliefs of individuals are difficult to ascertain, but the need to proceed in this direction remains. It is possible that significant differences in belief exist against such variables as denomination, frequency of church attendance, level of education, urban and rural location, and so on.¹⁷ Much depends on

15. Cf. S. Crysdale, *The Changing Church in Canada* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1965).

16. Some tentative work along these lines has been carried out by M. J. Jackson and P. H. Mann in England. See their essay, 'Anglican-Methodist Relations in Two Urban Parishes,' in W. S. F. Pickering (ed.), *Anglican-Methodist Relations: Some Institutional Factors* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), pp. 129–59.

17. Crysdale attempts to make variations of this kind.

what religious doctrines are selected as being significant. Belief in God may not be as important as belief about the eucharist, since everyone presumably believes in God but, again presumably, they may have different views about the eucharist. However, in the light of such limited information as we do have, and because of the growth of secularization and secular ideas, we would advance as a working hypothesis, which needs substantiating or denying, that the beliefs of most United Church members and Anglicans are very much the same. Perhaps a well-educated, theologically inclined minority in large local churches would hold different religious beliefs – beliefs that might be difficult to reconcile. But such people are likely to be the exception. The ‘average man in the pew’ in one church has, we believe, theological beliefs and attitudes which are very close to those of the ‘average man in the pew’ in the other church. Today theological questions are not the subject of heated debate, and they no longer tend to divide people. The result of this may well be that people as a whole are fairly near to one another in the matter of the content of their beliefs.

Non-theological factors form another dimension which calls for examination. This category refers in the main to attitudes of attachment (or hostility) of individuals towards the local congregation, which are not theological in nature. People accept and hold tenaciously to the ‘ordinary’ and physical things of the environment; if these are taken away from them, or if their existence is threatened, they behave in a dramatic or highly emotional manner. Similarly, the attachment of church members to groups or even to buildings is frequently strong. If the building is demolished or the group dissolves, members feel their ‘religious’ lives collapse. They find it extremely hard to be attached to a new group or worship in a new building, although the group or building is associated with the same denomination, and is therefore theologically identical. If there is resistance in changing local churches of the same denomination, such resistance is likely to be greater in the merging of different denominations. Non-theological or institutional factors have been delineated¹⁸ though their analysis in local churches has not been extensively undertaken. These factors, we would suggest – for we can do no more than that – hold the key to those differences between local United and Anglican churches which can and will influence the carrying out of any likely scheme of union.

18. Cf. N. Ehrenstrom and W. G. Muelder (eds.), *Institutionalism and Church Unity* (New York: Association Press, 1963).