

Churches of Christ among the Watchi of Togo

2001 Church Growth Report

Including: Rational for 2001 Statistics as well as Recommendations and Projections for Future Growth

General Statistics

Churches among the Watchi of Togo who fellowship together and made reports numbered 19 in December 2001. Most are small congregations with memberships of baptized believers averaging about 20 members with some under 10 while one has nearly 100 members.

By initial estimates, eight congregations are functioning as independent congregations. This means that outside of occasional visits and advice, the congregation is no longer led by a missionary. This is a good increase from three in 2000. Of these eight congregations, five are considered strong. Vogan is strong but has been at a plateau for a couple of years. Tabligbo and Kpokpo Kondji both ended the year with great advances in an ability to be self-led. Nyinoume has continued to steadily rise to this position. Tsadome also moved to the strong independent category mostly because of strong leadership provided by Mikadodo. Three congregation which are independent are considered weak. Nyitaveglovi has been plagued by leadership problems and loss of membership. In the same cluster of Dagbati, VoAsso remains steady but lacks older men and has lost many fine teachers to jobs in the cities over the years. Ahepe seems to suffer from luke-warmness.

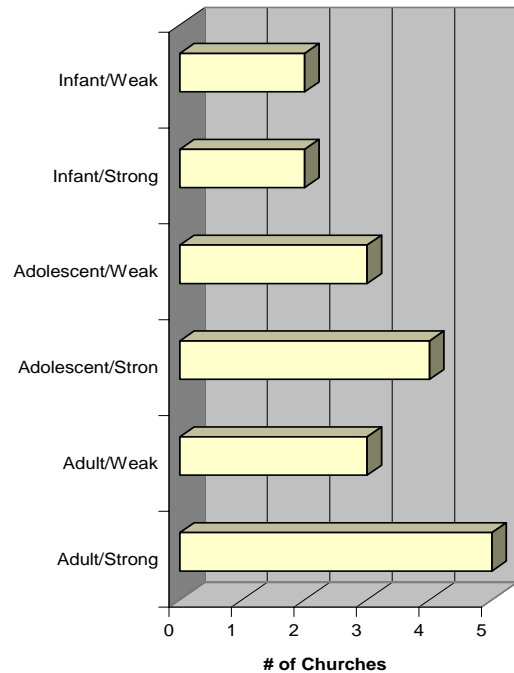
Maturing congregations accounted for seven of the congregation. Most of these churches are less than three years old yet have passed beyond the staged of being a new congregation. Three are strong: Atsansi, Kpeve, Didokpo. Though they have their problems and still need guidance, they are maturing well and advancing towards independence. Three are maturing but are weak: Ahonkpe, Fiove, and Koleve. Each has unique struggles and all lack leadership capable of helping the church move forward. The three still require assistance from missionaries and evangelists.

Four churches are very young and need continued guidance so they may begin to mature. Two were categorized as strong: Avadzime and Amouzou Glita. Two others were characterized as weak as 2001 came to an end: Attiogon and Afakomi. Attiogon started just a week before the end of the year and was labeled as weak because of its newness and small number. It looks to hold great promise. Afakomi is weak mainly because of a lack of men and a mentality that has been difficult to understand certain truths and aspects of Christian life.

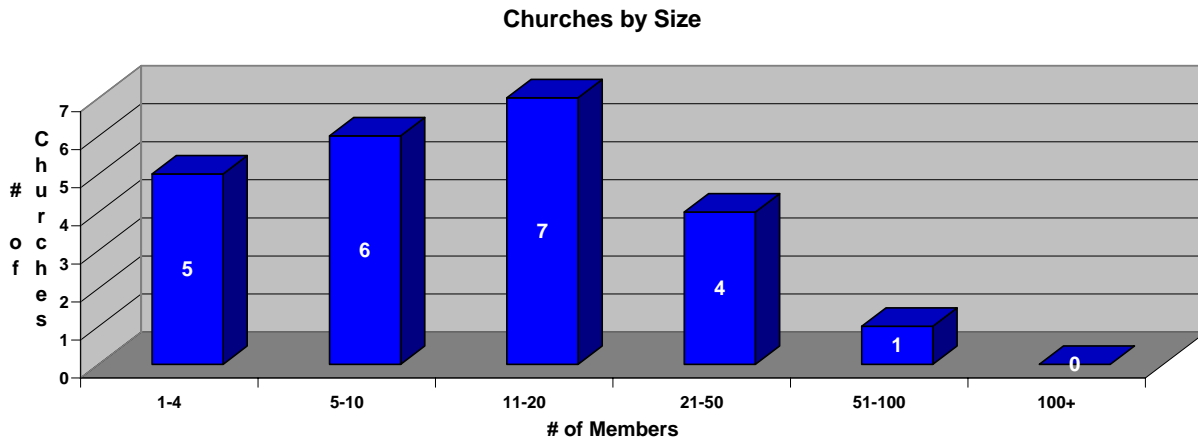
Of the church members, more than 85% are active in their churches. This means that they attend their home church or help in other congregations at least three or four times a month. This indicates that churches are encouraging members to attend regularly. This is also evidenced by many churches that meet at other scheduled times during the week for prayer and Bible study. In addition to church attendance many members were involved in preaching points.

Churches preached in nine places this year to establish churches. These are referred to as preaching points. Vogan, Nyinoume, Kpestou, Koleve, Adakonou, Tabligbo and Kpeve all worked to help establish preaching points with the intent that these will one day be churches. Various congregations often had members collaborating in their work. Five of the preaching points became churches.

Strength of Watchi Churches



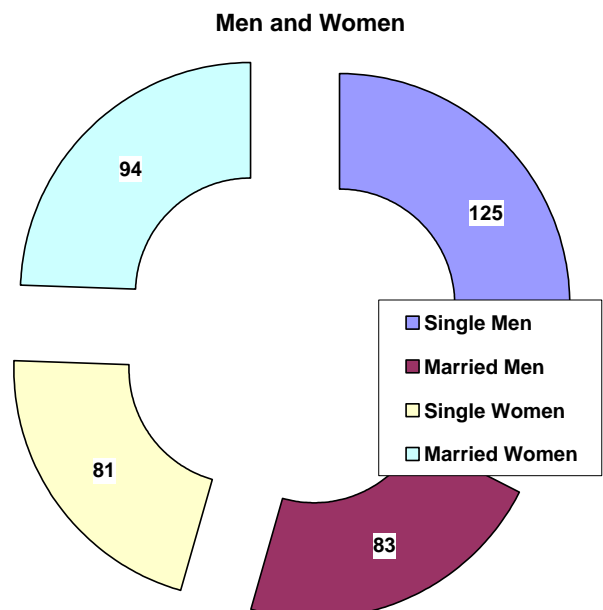
In the breakdown of men and women in the churches, there was some change. In 2001 men composed nearly 60% of the churches while women made up just over 40%. This margin was closed some this year with women gaining ground to make up about 45% of the membership, while men still held about 55% of the members. Although men still are more prevalent than women, this is often evident in young churches where the young men are more literate and interested in social advancement. Churches need to continue targeting whole families and the young women of the communities.



To have strong churches, it will be clear below that strong families are needed. As the churches mature, weddings among members should be encouraged. In the past, there has been a barrier to this. In 2000, single men were nearly twice that of single women (140:71). This year the numbers changed. The ratio of single men to single women was 125:81. Single young women must continue to be targeted for conversion, not simply as marriage prospects but to avoid the normal social pattern of allowing men to change and leaving women ignorant in many domains including but not limited to Christianity. A couple of ideas have emerged to help evangelize both single and married women. One is the concept of the priesthood of all believers. All men and women should be witnessing about Jesus in their communities. Women as well as men, need to be taught ways to talk and teach of the Lord. Second, some have suggested that women be included in more of the preaching points from the beginning. Although it cannot be proven, it is likely that the high number of male conversions is a result of the number of males participating in evangelism at the preaching points. It is reasonable to therefore suggest that with the inclusion of more Christian women at preaching points, more women will turn to Christ.

One other interesting statistic is the number of married men. With only 83 married men, this segment of the church is nearly exactly the same size as the smallest group in the churches, the single women discussed above. In evangelism, churches must focus on married men. These men are the heads of their families and leaders in the community. When they are targeted in evangelization, the church is strengthened. In evangelization, the older men of the community should be the first priority. Young men will come to faith even if they are not targeted. Women are more likely to repent if their husbands are members. Therefore, churches should evangelize with a focus on men and family groups.

The age breakdown of the church shows that the largest segment is held by the youth. Just as in the year before, 60% of the baptized members are under thirty. This comes as no surprise when one realizes that half of the population of Togo is under 16, and 75% of the population is under 30. This group is important to the future of the church; however, they must have good leadership from the older community of the church. Time after time, churches which rely on the youth for teaching and leadership are led into confusion and problems.



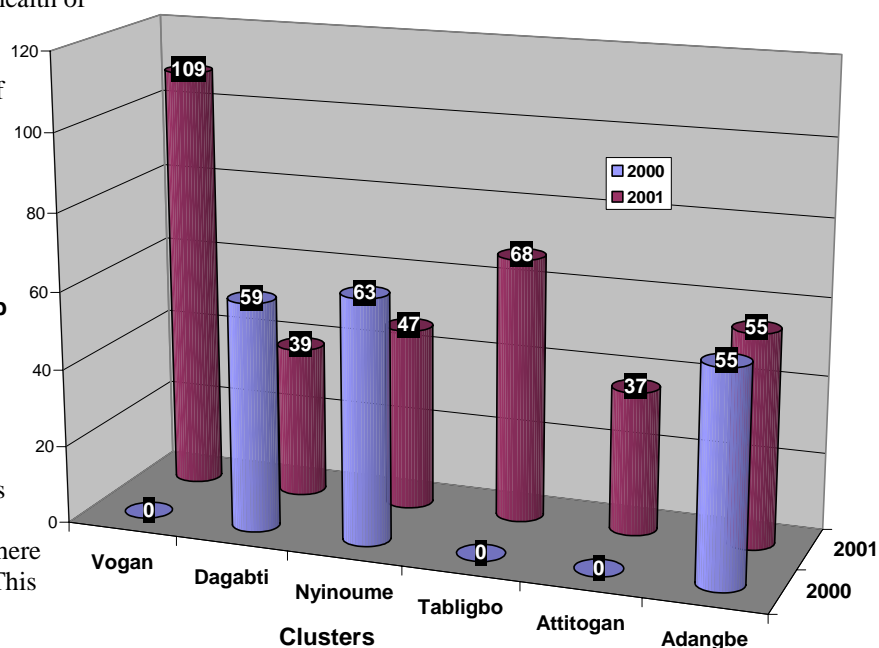
This is evident in the recent rash of churches that have stopped meeting. Nearly all were composed of and often led by men just above or under the age of 30. The strength of the youth is their vitality and energy. They should be included in church outreach and programs of the congregation; however, they should be led by wise and capable mature leaders. The next age group is 30-50 years old. About 32% of the members are in this group. This group is usually the strength of the congregation. They are relied on for leadership and are usually more stable in their faith. As churches begin to look towards elderships, many will come from this group. This is particularly evident when one realizes that the average life expectancy in Togo only reaches into the 50's. The last group is over 50 years old. This group only accounted for about 8% of the membership. This group should not be overlooked. They bring wisdom although they are often faced with illiteracy and long past lives in pagan worship. Praise God that people are never too old to convert and use their testimonies to influence other older people in the community.

Although baptized membership is only at about 400, the combined attendance reaches nearly 700. These figures are about the same as last year. This includes a large number of children. This group should not be overlooked. Although they are not baptized members, Lord willing, they will be one day. Children, as already noted, are the largest age group in the Togo population. This group should be targeted for attendance so that they will learn of Jesus in their youth and one day become Christians. If this group is not targeted the future of the church will be much weaker. Children's programs should be implemented in all churches as a valuable part of the church body. Although some children's programs were started this year and teaching materials have been made available to all of the congregations, most churches don't have lessons or activities for children. Another group included in the nearly 200 non-baptized members attending on Sundays is that of adult visitors. No exact statistics are available, but it is estimated that as many as 40 adults are visiting on Sundays. This group needs to grow. Members should constantly be inviting friends and family members to worship times. The number of visitors indicates the potential for future members. Those who do visit must also be followed up upon. This means that members must visit and encourage their visitors. Much of this should be informal; however it is possible to start programs of visitation. All churches should be growing, but as will be noted below, few of the established churches experienced continued growth in 2001. This must change and be reflected in the number of visitors present.

One interesting statistic that seems to indicate strength and stability in churches is the number of married couples worshipping together. Of the eleven stable congregations, eight have at least two married couples as faithful members, while only three strong congregations had one or no couples. This seems to be confirmed in the fact that of the eight weak churches, only two have two or more married couples worshipping together.

Another statistic being looked at is the health of churches in close proximity to others. Clusters of churches which fellowship regularly and cooperate in various aspects of church life are a great encouragement to one another. This can be stimulated when churches are near enough to one another to allow members to easily visit one another in worship, leadership meetings, work projects such as buildings, and outreach. Churches within a 5-7 kilometer radius seem to be natural clusters, although some clusters are spread even farther apart. In December 2001, there were six active clusters. This was a major change that occurred in 2001. In 2000 only three clusters were active. The number of members now included in clusters has doubled. Last year there were 177 members in churches of clusters. This year that increased to 355.

Membership by Clusters



Membership by Clusters and Isolated Churches:											
Clusters											
	Vogan	Dagabti	Nyinoume	Tabligbo	Attitogan	Adangbe	TOTAL IN CLUSTERS				
2000	Not a cluster	59	63	Not a cluster	Not a cluster	55	177				
2001	109	39	47	68	37	55	355				
+/- in 2001	109	-20	-16	68	37	0	178				
Isolated Churches											
	Atansi	Ahepe	Vogan	Kpokpo Kondji	Tabligbo	Adakonou	Klologo	TOTAL ISOLATED			
2000	9	6	100	15	55	17	3	205			
2001	15	13	In Vogan Cluster	In Tab. Cluster	In Tab. Cluster	In Attit. Cluster	Not Meeting	28			
+/- in 2001	6	7	-100	-15	-55	-17	-3	-177			

This may have been the greatest accomplishment in terms of trying to help the movement be more interdependent for the future. These churches meet for combined worship regularly and have activities such as women's classes and have leadership meetings for mutual encouragement. The Dagbati cluster has found this structure extremely valuable as the churches have relied on one another through growth problems. One leader said that had it not been for the cooperation of the four churches, it is likely that all four congregations would have ceased to exist. These clusters have also allowed for more evangelism as leaders from various churches in the cluster work together to evangelize. This year the following clusters were active: Dagbati-including Tsadome, Nyitaveglovi, VoAsso, and Ahonkpe; Adangbe-including Koleve, Didokpo, and Kpeve; Nyinoume-including Fiove and Nyitaveglo, and Kpetsou (for part of the year); Vogan-including Vogan and Avadzime; Tabligbo-including Tabligbo, Kpokpo Kondji, and Afakomi Kope; and Attitogan-including Attitogan, Adakonou Kope, and Amouzou Glita.

Those churches still acting in isolation do so not out of a desire for autonomy or independence but simply because of the fact that they are in isolated areas without other congregations to fellowship with. Ahepe is unfortunately still far from others. Klologo was also without a sister church, and in spite of the fact that Vogan sent a teacher twice a week, the congregation failed, possibly in large part due to their isolation. The Atsansi congregation was planted with the intention of being a cluster in 2001, but some leadership problems prohibited this and left them isolated once again. Their women participate in women's studies with the Dagbati women. At the same time it must be noted that clusters can also bring their own problems. For example, the Kpetsou church no longer exists because of a rivalry with Nyinoume. In addition, Tsadome of the Dagbati cluster is now doing well after Mikadodo came to help them. The only problem was that he left Gnitaveglovi in a leadership dispute and that congregation has continued in a downward spiral. There are some great success stories also. In the Attitogan cluster, Adakonou Kope worked hard to create a cluster which continues to grow. Tabligbo and Kpokpo Kondji seemed ready to work on their cluster relationship at the end of the year in ways that had not been seen in over 5 years. For clusters to work well, they must be implemented soon, before a church becomes too independent. The idea of "instant cluster" continues to be tested. The idea is that from the very beginning, two churches are planted simultaneously in order to have inter-church relationships and encouragement from the inception. The future of cluster cooperation has yet to be seen; however, it shows great potential in stimulating growth, maturation, and membership retention.

Membership Gains

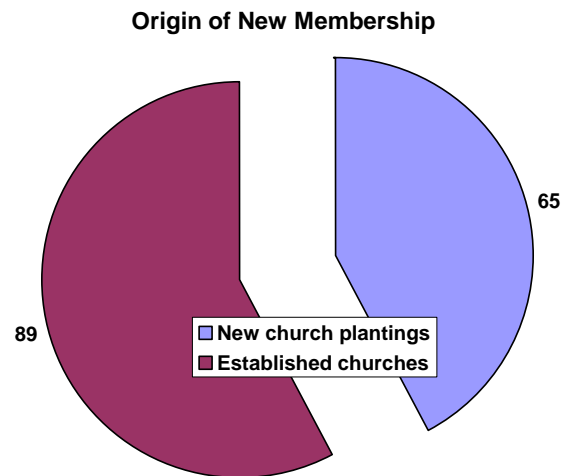
Some people wrongly equate membership with attendance. This survey defines membership as those baptized members who have continued to participate in church life and worship services throughout the past year. Attendance is the number of people who actually attend certain activities. The difference is more evident when one realizes that in December 2001, the churches had 383 active members while attendance was nearly 700.

During the year 2001, there was no actual membership growth although five churches (Afakomi, Attitogan, Agbedepeme, Avadzime, and Amouzou Glita) were planted. One of the new churches (Agbedepeme) stopped meeting in the same year. Another two congregations (Kpetsou and Klologo) also stopped meeting. The loss of these congregations offset much of the expected growth. New congregations accounted for 22.75% of the churches

surveyed. However the net rate of congregational growth was only 10.53% because of the losses of congregations this year.

As previously mentioned three churches stopped meeting in 2001. Klologo experienced membership declines due to members who moved and loss of faith. Agbedepeme had many members who moved or became members of another church which moved to their town. Kpetsou leaders rebelled against the other churches of Christ and asked another church group to come lead their congregation.

Membership, as alluded to above, experienced no actual growth this year (It was exactly % growth with 383 members at the end of both 2000 and 2001). Much of this was attributed to the loss of the three congregations. In addition, of the 19 churches existing in December 2001, 4 were new (Attitogon, Avadzime, Amouzou Glita, and Afakomi). One congregation experienced no gains or losses (Kpokpo Kondji). Five gained membership (Tsadome, Atsansi, Nyinoume, Kpeve, Ahepe). Nine congregations declined (Vogan, Ahonkpe, Gnitaveglo, VoAsso, Adakonou Kope, Fiove, Koleve, Didokpo, Tabligbo) . These figures show that the majority of churches that have existed at least one year are not experiencing growth. Even those experiencing growth are growing very slowly. Unfortunately, these losses come on the heels of 2000, in which only one pre-existing congregation experienced any growth—and only of 2 members, it is apparent that one of the greatest problems of church growth among the Watchi is sustained growth among pre-existing congregations. Measures need to be taken to help pre-existing churches continue to grow after their initial year of implantation. Missionaries and evangelists should strategize to reduce membership loss, retain members, and actually experience consistent growth within the existing congregations.



Offsetting the losses of 2001, there were small gains in certain domains. Growth occurred through various means over the year. There were 154 new members added in 2000. Less than half (42%) of the new members came from new church plantings. This indicates that growth of a movement necessitates new church plantings. The fact that 89 new members (57% of membership gains) were found among the pre-existing churches reveals that new members are not limited to church plantings. However, it suggests that even with new members among existing churches, losses are still occurring. This would indicate that the greatest problem among existing churches is not finding new members but retaining old ones.

The modest gains mentioned above came through baptisms, restorations and transfers from other churches of Christ and denominations. The breakdown of these gains is as follows:

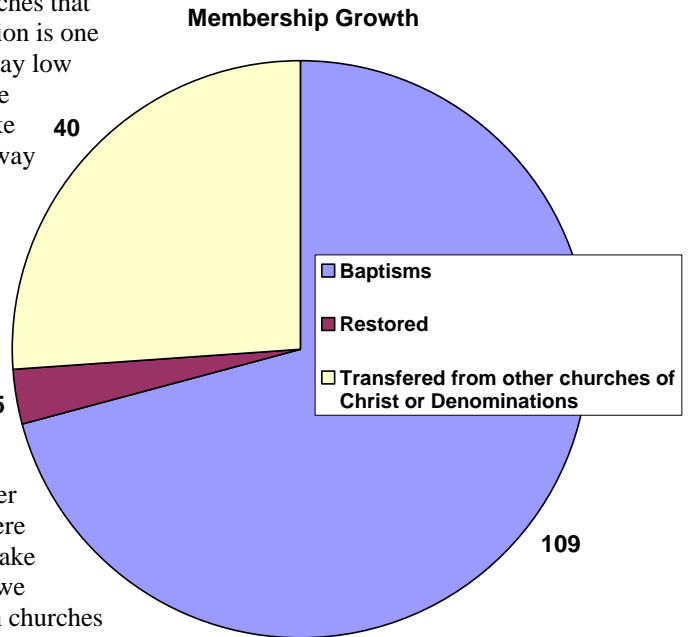
- **Baptisms:** The number of baptisms in 2001 was 109. This evidence of conversion was particularly noted in the new churches planted this year. Of the 109 baptisms, 52% or 57 occurred where new churches were planted. Although this is high, the actual number of baptisms in church plantings last year (98) was nearly 60% higher than that of this year. New churches in 2000 had an average of 16 baptisms. New churches in 2001 only averaged about 11. This may indicate that even new churches being planted are smaller than previous church plantings.

Nine of the fifteen established churches also had baptisms throughout the year totaling 52 or 47%. This is a significant drop from the 74 baptisms experienced in the previous year. A renewed determination to reach out to the community of the individual congregation must be established if churches are going to see new conversion. All congregations should continue to propagate through new births of Christians. This element of growth must continue to be emphasized.

- Another category of growth occurred through restorations. These people had been faithful Christians at one time, but had fallen away from the Lord before the year 2001. During the year they return to faithfulness and recommitted themselves to the Lord. There were five people who were restored to the Lord in 2000.

This accounted for nearly less than 5% of the net growth in 2000. If members continue to seek after the Lord's sheep who have wandered astray in order to bring them back to the Great Shepherd, this category of growth can increase. This should be a goal for churches that have experienced reversions in past years. If reversion is one day be diminished, this category of growth might stay low simply because fewer have been lost who need to be restored. Until that time arrives, leaders should make a concerted effort to direct those who have fallen away back to Christ.

- The third category of growth occurred through transfer. These were members of other churches of Christ or denominations who had already experienced immersion in the Lord and desired to serve the Lord with the local congregation. In this category, 40 people transferred into congregations accounting for 23% of the year's growth. Transfer growth is not growth from among non-Christians, our primary target. Although transfer growth is good if members are moving to areas where other churches of Christ exist, churches must not make this area of growth their primary target. Otherwise we become sheep-stealers and cause problems between churches that other Christian groups and pagans alike cannot understand or appreciate.



This year there were no congregations started by missionaries without the assistance of nationals. Four (Agbedepeme, Avadzime, Amouzou Glita, and Afakomi Kope) were started with the cooperation of missionaries and nationals. One church, Attitogon was started without the assistance of missionaries. To a great degree, these numbers indicate the planned approach of the missionaries to cooperate with congregations in church planting in order to train them to be well equipped; however, as time goes on, those churches who have cooperated with missionaries previously, should strive to act independently to plant churches.

Also to be noted when studying growth is the low involvement of churches in new church plantings. Nine congregations (Vogan, Ahonkpe, Gnitaveglo, Atsansi, Adakonou, Nyinoume, Tabligbo, Koleve, and Kpeve) evangelized outside their community in order to try to establish new congregations. Some of these churches worked in cooperation to establish these preaching points. Of the churches not participating in church plantings, nearly all were dealing with local problems or low membership. Their internal struggles limited their outreach. Some believe that inward focused churches cease to grow and also fail to see growth in new church plantings. They would argue that churches focused on church planting and evangelism see internal growth and growth in outside evangelism in addition to natural maturation. Others would reasonably argue that before seeking numerical growth, churches should take care of internal struggles in order to increase spiritual growth. Both views are valid. Churches must continue to be focused on the harvesting of souls. At the same time, churches must continue to strive for maturity and spiritual growth. However, numerical growth and spiritual growth should not be mutually exclusive. Churches must continue to strive for both forms of growth by evangelizing and leading the established churches toward maturity. In this discussion it is commendable that two very young churches, Atsansi and Kpeve, were both involved in evangelism and church plantings. Their example should be noted by evangelist and considered for implementation in young churches soon after planting. The new vitality of the church often yields a harvest. It helps protect the young church from apathetic study focus and actually stimulates maturity as new Christians must defend their faith and grow in conviction.

One area of growth already alluded to but not specifically pointed out is internal growth. Young and established churches must continue to grow. Although statistics are not available to confirm the observation, many of the evangelists and missionaries among the Watchi believe that if a new church does not have a second wave of conversions within the first year, future growth will be very low. This may be true because the young Christians must be the primary spokesmen for Christ in their community. If they do not reach out while their faith is fresh,

there is a great likelihood that they will not reach out through evangelism later. Also, it should be noted that established churches are going to experience membership loss to moves, reversion and transfers as a normal part of church life. Therefore it must also be realized that losses must be offset and even surpassed through the conversion of new souls as a normal part of church life. As previously emphasized, for church growth to occur among the Watchi of Togo, our established churches must not simply participate in new church plantings. They must also continue to stimulate evangelism in their own congregations so as to win the lost and promote healthy increases in membership. Evangelization at home and in new areas should never be in opposition. Rather, both are necessary for the advancement of the Kingdom and the health of the churches. Growth plateaus are realities, but our congregations must never be comfortable with growth stagnation and should continually strive for new growth.

Membership Losses

While loss of members is never desirable, it is normal. However, there are some patterns that should be noted in order to stop membership attrition. This year, 154 members left their church homes. Five primary factors of membership loss should be investigated: loss to other churches of Christ, loss to other denominations, loss due to members moving away, loss as members return to the world, and death.

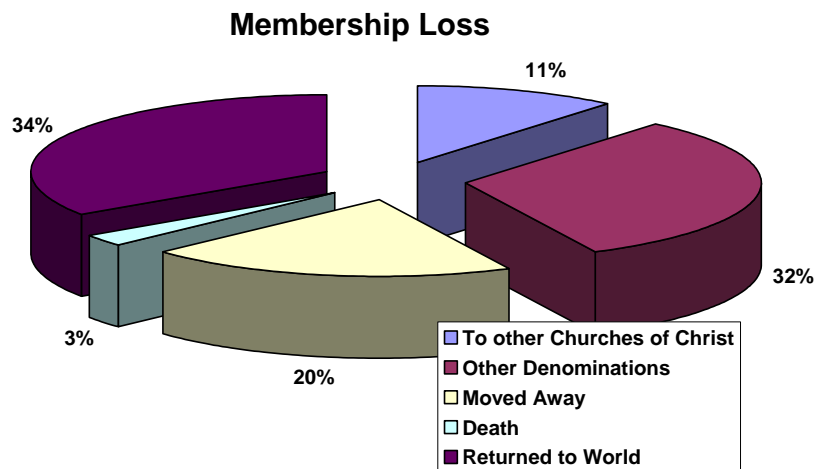
- Membership transferring between churches is not considered true loss, rather it is transferred. Of the 17 members who transferred to other churches of Christ, most moved to the cities such as Vogan and Lome. This is part of the region's loss to urbanization. In addition to those who transferred churches, many simply stopped going to church as will be seen below. Students moved from villages to cities for school. People of the villages moved to the cities for work. As a category, the losses experienced in this category were low and only accounted for about 11% of the membership losses. It should be remembered that if members are moving, they should always be encouraged to find an active role in a body of believers in the place where the move. If a church of Christ exists in that place, moving members should be encouraged to attend there. At this time there is not much of a problem of members casually switching between congregations.

However, the "church-swapping" problem needs to be watched for as churches and grow in close proximity to one another.

- Another cause of loss is membership moving to other denominations. About 30% of the membership losses in 2000 occurred when members left for other denominations. Although a strong focus has been maintained that it is not the church that saves but Jesus, it is disappointing to see members casually leaving one church for another. Although it would not probably be

appropriate to over-react to this problem and preach our doctrines as superior to other churches, it would be prudent to emphasize the congregational aspect of family and the importance of fellowship and faithfulness. Additional steps may be warranted to determine what is happening in the churches to cause members to move to other denominations. If it is determined that it is due to problems such as sin or leadership weaknesses, these problems should be addressed in order to curb the problem and even encourage members to return. If the losses to other denominations occur because of doctrinal disputes, these doctrines should be investigated and studied. If changes are scripturally necessary, they should be made. Otherwise studied conclusions should be explained to members to avoid future attrition.

- The third area of membership loss was due to members moving away. This accounted for about 20% of the losses. Some of this happened because of marriage. Women who marry in other towns should be encouraged first of all to marry members of our congregations so that they do not move only to find husbands without faith and the lack of opportunities to attend church. Second, if marriage requires a person



to move, they should be encouraged to seek out a church which will lead them closer to the Lord. Another reason people moved was for job opportunities. Some areas such as the Dagbati cluster have lost members as the phosphate mines are acquiring land in the area and young members move to the cities such as Accra, Lagos, Lome, and Abidjan for job training and work. In addition to this, areas such as Dagbati and others have no land left for farming because of the generations of land division among children and the purchase of land by outsiders and mining operations. This leaves some with little choice but to move to the cities for employment or to large farm operations in distant areas. This is occasionally permanent but a larger problem which may not be evident in the statistics is that some men leave their families for months at a time for as farm-hands and charcoal producers. In addition, some students move away to attend school and never find another church home. They often return home during the breaks with weak faith. Churches must begin to encourage students who leave home to practice their faith and be active in their home congregations during the breaks. Additionally churches must begin to strategize with members who move away so that this can be an opportunity for new church plantings. When a member moves, he should at least be open to the possibility of beginning a new church in the new area.

- The fourth area to be identified is loss to the world. This area of loss was the highest loss and most damaging to the health of the churches. These reversions accounted for nearly 34% of the year's losses. Those who fall into this category left the Lord and returned to the world. Although some people lost their faith in the urbanization processes described above, most of these people who reverted did not go to other congregations of churches of Christ or to other denominations; they simply fell away. This is an area of loss that the churches must grow sensitive to. Churches must guard against members who become lazy, discouraged, disenchanted with church policies and structure, etc... Many of the churches lost more members to the Devil than the gained for the Lord in 2000. The churches must make plans to counteract this trend. First, we need to strive for true conversion and not simple "club-like" affiliation among members. We must emphasize counting the cost before becoming a Christian-not in order to dissuade people from become Christians, but to emphasize the life-long commitment it entails. After this, churches must be sensitive to members who are backsliding and encourage them before they return to the world. Churches must be sensitive to the spiritual needs of the members in order to help them grow in faith and fellowship. Visitation groups, encouragement structures, or other preventive measures should seriously be considered in congregations. The evangelist planting churches should encourage members to pay careful attention to weaker members from the inception of the church. The evangelist must model this and help the local members to initiate such activities.
- The last category of loss is death. Only 4 members died last year. This accounted for only 2.6% of the church losses. It is expected that this figure will rise in the future as the movement begins to age and as AIDS begins to take a greater toll on the population of Togo including the church. Churches are encouraged to make provisions for death and burial of members. AIDS teaching needs to occur in the churches both in order to prevent it and deal compassionately with those whom it effects.

Related to the loss of members was the loss of many leaders in a few of the churches. As leaders have left some of the churches over the years in places such as the Dagbati cluster, their churches were left paralyzed. Many men have left for employment and job training. Although it is true that a man must feed his family, it is equally true that the church must be spiritually fed. Although lay leaders are not paid, they must consider the health of their congregations before leaving. Churches may need to think of ways to help those who serve the congregations. Since most of the members are subsistence farmers, this may include offerings of maize and other farm goods. At the same time, leaders need to be encouraged to test God and walk by faith in the realization that God will take care of their families.

When examining losses, it is necessary to see reversions occurring in the movement. Those people who loose faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, are considered to be reversions in this report. There were 53 documented reversions this year. In addition, of the 31 members who moved away and could not be surveyed to find if they had remained faithful, it is estimated that about 18 no longer practice their faith. Thus the total of those reverting was recorded as 71. Taking these 71 reversions and dividing it by the 517 total members of 2001 (those in January {383} plus those baptized {109} and restored {5} and transferred from outside the Watchi movement {20} in 2001), the reversion rate was 13.73%. Although the actual percentage seems low, 71 reversions out of only 517 members had a significant negative impact on the movement's growth.

Conclusion:

In view of the church growth studies from 2001, it is apparent that the churches of Christ among the Watchi are at least maintaining the number of members. However, the primary objective for the missionaries and nationals is help churches grow in numbers and maturity. Spiritual growth and maturation can not easily be calculated, but membership growth can be both calculated and analyzed for trends, strengths and weaknesses. It is very apparent through this year's survey that the churches among the Watchi need to improve their growth. Some of this can be accomplished by following some of the proceeding ideas mentioned in the statistical sections. These ideas and new ones must be developed and followed in order to see growth and membership retention. Evangelism must take place in established churches and in new areas. Retention of membership must also become a focus so that churches see actual growth. Goals for 2001 should include internal growth, new preaching points, and membership retention.

If current rates of growth from 2000 had continued, 2001 should have had a membership of 462 and 24 congregations. Because of membership losses and the loss of congregations, the actual number of members remained 383 and the number of churches ended at 19. This severely affected the growth curve and must be compensated for starting in 2002. Lord willing, next year we will surpass this year's goal of 24 churches with a total membership of 462. It must be remembered that the growth of the Kingdom of God is a spiritual affair and not simply a statistical analysis as is performed in economics and business. Therefore, the future of the church and the growth of the kingdom cannot be projected as a science. Otherwise, we will grow lazy in our faith and fail to expect God to "do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine." On the other hand, our data may lead us to rely on human wisdom and methods as we try to force statistics that do not actually reflect what is happening in the hearts of man and in the spiritual realms.

In light of the spiritual nature of church growth, the church must learn to move forward in the Spirit. Spiritually, churches must be prepared to step out in faith through prayer. The Watchi are still highly pagan and largely unresponsive to the gospel. Some surveys still claim that less than 2% of the Watchi are currently active Christians of any affiliation. Unless The Church of Jesus boldly moves into spiritual conquest, Satan will continue to dominate the Watchi. Our congregations must begin fasting, praying, and participating in the Lord's work in order for the harvest to be made among the Watchi. Spiritual preparation should be made before stepping out to attack the stronghold of Satan. Churches casually pursuing evangelism without adequate dependence on God will be easy prey for Satan, who seeks to devour Christians like a roaring lion. As the church moves forward, may God stretch out his hand before his people and prepare the Watchi for a harvest of righteousness.