

TRINITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

IN

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY
STANLEY J. RODES

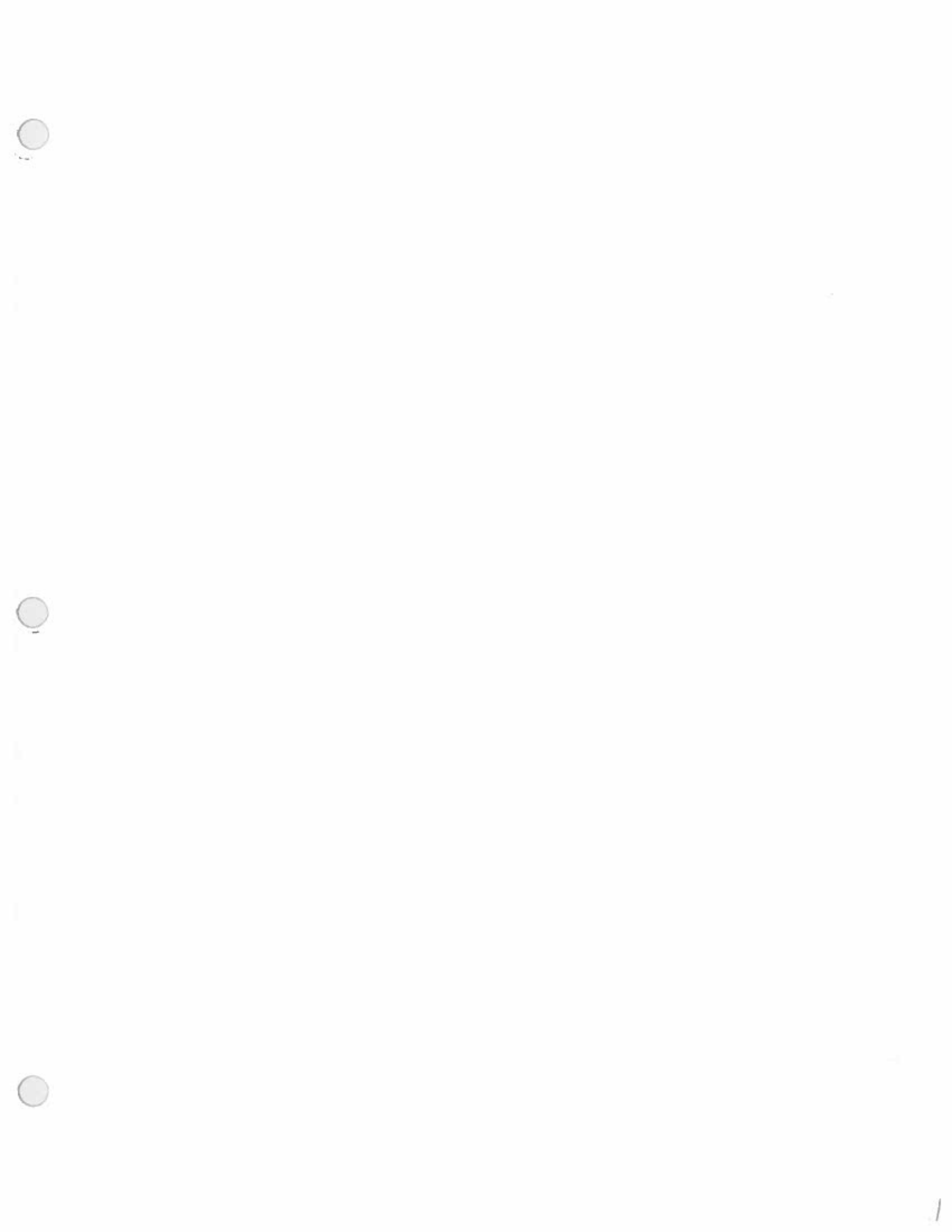


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Part One: Beginnings to 1966	3
Part Two: 1967 to the Present (1978)	9
Conclusion	14
Appendix I: Statistical Analysis	15
Appendix II: Sources	21
Endnotes	23

INTRODUCTION

In our concern with the present and in our anticipation of the future, it is easy to overlook, and even ignore, the prelude of the past. The fact is, when we commit ourselves to fellowshiping with a specified community of believers, the bond of membership ties us to a particular past and influences the direction of our future, individually and collectively. This link with a particular past — that is, the history of Trinity Church of the Nazarene, in this case — is deeply significant.

First, a reading of Trinity's history will reveal who gives life to the church. It is not the talented service of the ministers or laity that gives life to the church. Rather, it is God, and God alone, Who both guides and provides for the church which He indwells with His Spirit. Of course, God does not inhabit church buildings, He dwells in the hearts of people who have believed on His name. So it should not be surprising that a reading of this history will also reveal through whom this Life-Giver carries out His purposes. God works through people. You will discover these persons to be dedicated and willing to serve. You will also find that God works through finite and fallible people.

Third, this link with the past will reveal that Christian unity is

not defined in terms of the absence of disagreement, but is, rather, defined in terms of unity of purpose. Even so, while there is room for disagreement among believers, this history will reflect the love and forgiveness that characterize His people.

Fourth, reflection on the past history of Trinity will provide a setting in which to place the present dynamic life of the church. And lastly, it is hoped that this history will suggest a way of looking to the future that will inspire the reader to faithfulness and service to God and to the community of believers at Trinity.

May 19, 1980

S.J.R.

PART ONE:
BEGINNINGS TO 1966

OUR LITTLE CHURCH ON THE CORNER

Our little church on the corner
Of Royer and Madison streets
Is such a friendly little church
It never a stranger meets.

It isn't a fancy ediface
Of architectural art,
But it has a certain glow within
That gladdens every heart.

For when we lift our voices
In songs of praise or prayer,
We can feel the Holy Spirit,
And we know that God is there.

Our little church on the corner
Was built by faith alone,
With truth for its foundation,
And Christ its cornerstone.

Polly Travnicek

"After the organizational meeting," recalls Loren Madsen, the first Sunday School Superintendent at Trinity, "church services began in my home in the living room. We would move out the furniture and set up folding chairs for the worship service." Such was the historic occasion of the 1952 establishment of Trinity Church of the Nazarene.

The Madsen home was only a birthing-room for a congregation conceived in the hearts and minds of Christian men and women five years earlier. Due to their prayer and planning the young congregation already "owned" a parsonage and the land on which to build a more permanent home for the church. At the 1953 Colorado District Assembly, the District Superintendent, Rev. C.B. Cox, could report: "We have undertaken some heavy financial obligations in the building of our new church in Colorado Springs but it is marvelous how God is helping us there."¹

The genesis of the new church can be traced back at least to 1947. By this date there were already three churches in Colorado Springs: Central, First, and Southside. By the 1949 Assembly, the number of churches had been reduced to two as Rev. Glenn Griffith reported:

We disorganized the Southside church in Colorado Springs, which had no place for worship, in thought of organizing a new church in the new settlement known as Nob Hill in Northeast Colorado Springs. We lost no members to the church, as they joined the other churches. Now we have two fine lots paid for and about \$2000 in a special fund to start a campaign for a new church. It was arranged to have a revival in May this year, but upon request of one of our good pastors to wait a little while . . . we postponed it, for we wanted the full cooperation of the other two churches. Soon I believe we can have a good strong church in Nob Hill.²

Griffith's optimism proved incapable of influencing the turn of events. For the next two years the new District Superintendent, C.B. Cox, could only report, "We have a lot and two thousand dollars for a new work in Colorado Springs."³ The report of the 1951 District Home Missions Board did not even mention the possibility of a new church in Colorado Springs: "Prospects are good for two more new churches, as follows: Rifle and Aurora. However, finances are very limited."⁴

But finally, during the 1951-52 Assembly year, the doors opened for the realization of a new Nazarene church in the Springs. Rev. Cox exuberantly reported to the 1952 District Assembly: "We have purchased six lots and a house in a wonderful section in Colorado Springs. We began work there immediately."⁵

When remodeled, the house served as the place of worship for the congregation as well as the home of the first pastor, Rev. Marvin Powers, and his family. Indeed the financial obligations of the new work were heavy (cf. Appendix I) but were not heavy enough to discourage the small congregation:

We had a wonderful group of people that were really prayer warriors . . . Many times after the morning worship service we had a prayer meeting because the finance was a problem and we didn't have the funds to pay our bills. Prayer was always answered and more than enough would come in.⁶

The life of the young congregation was dynamic and intense. In the early 1900's, Phineas F. Bresee, founder of the Church of the Nazarene, had urged the establishment of spiritually fervent congregations in cities across the country. Certainly, Trinity was one of these "centers of holy fire," as Bresee was fond of saying. "The most significant moments in my memory," recalls one member, "were the times of great outpourings of the Holy Spirit when men responded to God's

call during Spirit-filled singing."⁷ Music was an especially noteworthy part of the worship services. Rev. Verbeck, Trinity's third pastor, remembers:

There was a lot of spiritual enthusiasm, with many outstanding services when the Holy Spirit was manifest in special ways -- real breaking up times! Music was a significant part of it. It just seemed that everyone who came had talents along that line. Revival spirit was a part, a vital part, in the early years.⁸

Rev. Verbeck had assumed pastoral responsibilities for Trinity in 1957 on the heels of a short pastorate of Trinity by evangelist Glen Terry. By this time there were 105 members and an average of 150 in Sunday School each week.

The continued spiritual health of the church resulted in further numerical growth and a need for additional facilities; namely, an educational wing. Though some of the members felt it unnecessary to pay someone to conduct a fund-raising campaign, under the innovative leadership of Rev. Verbeck, the church board commissioned an organization called Counselors National to raise the money for the new facility. The campaign was a success, but other developments delayed the building of the new extension.

During the 1957 Assembly year, Trinity had cooperated with the other Nazarene churches in Colorado Springs to help purchase property for the establishment of another Nazarene church in the city. This effort came to fruition as Trinity prepared to build. Consequently, about 30 people left Trinity to help start the new church. Needless to say, this came at a difficult time for Trinity and delayed the building program. Even so, a good spirit prevailed and the congregation continued its own efforts along with supporting the new work at Southgate. Not until three years later, in 1962, could District Superintendent

Cornelison report, "Trinity Church in Colorado Springs . . . has built a new unit to their building which has greatly enhanced and beautified their church."⁹

From 1957 until 1964, Trinity had a net gain of only fifteen in membership. But it is a significant indicator of the church's sense of mission that 64 persons were received into membership by profession of faith (cf. Appendix I). During this same period of time, several more Nazarene churches were started in Colorado Springs, an effort to which all the existing churches contributed a number of their own people.

During the 1964-65 church year, Rev. Dwight Neuenschwander assumed the pastoral responsibilities at Trinity. It was during his ministry that a new parsonage was built about a mile from the church at 2635 Meade Circle, off Van Buren Avenue and Templeton Gap Road. It was not an easy undertaking. There were some long board meetings and "controversial discussions" as the church leaders sought to run the affairs of the church in the way most pleasing to God. Finally there issued a sense of unity over the matter and a beautiful, tri-level home was constructed.

With the end of Rev. Neuenschwander's pastorate in late 1966, an era in the history of Trinity came to an end. Twenty years earlier, Trinity was an undefined dream for those Nazarenes concerned to reach Colorado Springs with the good news of the Gospel. By 1966 it was one of more than a half-dozen churches in the city and had ministered to hundreds of people. The small congregation of 41 members had grown to over 175 members. Suddenly, this faithful congregation found themselves on the edge of a new adventure as the time approached for the opening of the Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs.

PART TWO:

1967 TO THE PRESENT (1978)

Beginning in 1966, Nazarene families from across the country began moving to Colorado Springs in anticipation of the Fall, 1967 opening of the Nazarene Bible College. The influx of students — most of whom were in their late twenties, married, and had small children — had a profound affect upon Trinity's history. As one long-time member put it, "We enjoyed many of the students, some we didn't enjoy so much. I suppose it was good for us to get out of a rut, but the church was not ever quite the same since."¹⁰

One of these students, Bob Appleby, became the first associate pastor in Trinity's history. Hiring Rev. Appleby was a step of faith for Trinity: finances were down and budgets unpaid. But the people rallied and financed the venture with special "over the hump" offerings.

Rev. Appleby remained to minister at Trinity as the church awaited the February, 1967 arrival of its new senior pastor, Rev. Ronald Rodes of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Rev. Rodes and Rev. Appleby worked well together and church life continued in its vitality.

As suggested earlier, the opening of the Bible college brought both blessings and difficulties to the community and to the existing Nazarene churches. For the most part, the impact of the students who attended Trinity was positive. Their zeal inspired others and they gave of their time, talent, and resources to the church. Of course, there were difficulties, too, both personal and practical. The most acute problem faced by Trinity was its inability to expand its facilities fast enough in order to assimilate the new families. A glance at the

statistics shows that the net increase in membership in the 1967-68 church year was greater than in the four preceding years combined. Membership rose steadily each year until 1970 when the first class was graduated from the college. At this point, non-student members began to experience one of the frustrations which accompanies being a kind of college church: there is high turnover as students come and go, and friendships are enjoyed for only a relatively short time.

In response to the need for more facilities, the church voted in May of 1969, to relocate. This vote resulted in the purchase of twelve acres valued at \$30,000 located in the Craigmoor subdivision near the extension campus of Colorado University. It was undeveloped land and the church waited anxiously for the city council to approve plans for the extension of a major boulevard through the area. It was an ideal location.

As the congregation awaited action by the city council and prepared itself financially for the relocation, the influx of students continued. Finally, in September of 1969 the church began holding double services on Sunday mornings in an effort to accomodate the crowd. This arrangement continued until late 1974 when the congregation finally moved into its new facility.

The earlier decision to construct a new parsonage proved to be a wise one. After Rev. Appleby graduated and moved away, the little parsonage became Sunday School space as did another house purchased by the church. The church continued to grow and continued to wait for the area around the new property to be opened for development. The forecast appeared hopeful and, in anticipation of soon relocating, the church held drive-in services at the new site each Sunday morning at

8:00 a.m. during the summer of 1971. Earlier in the year, three crosses had been erected on the property - which came to be known as Trinity Hill - for the Easter Sunrise service. They remained there all summer as the backdrop for an open-air platform and a pick-up truck the bed of which supported a piano. There were over thirty cars at these early services on some occasions. Indeed, those were, as associate pastor Rev. Bill Kirby put it, "unforgettable times."

However, it soon became evident that the Trinity Hill area would never be developed as earlier expected and the architect's plans would never make it off the blueprints. Trinity was still bulging at the seams so the church hunted for a different place to relocate. Before long, a 5.8-acre tract was located in a fast-developing part of the city just off Academy Boulevard and Flintridge. The land was already developed and sold for \$19,000 an acre. The church voted to purchase the property and arranged for a trade-in of the twelve acres of Trinity Hill to the tune of \$60,000 and paid the remaining portion of the total \$111,000 in cash. All of these changes took place in the 1972-73 Assembly year. One member has summed up the church's efforts at relocation in this way: "Trying to find land and get the building program underway was frustrating. But God had the right place for us and in His timing things fell in place."¹¹

God really was working among the people at Trinity. One of the exciting areas of development was in the youth program. Geron Coale was the youth minister and under his Spirit-led leadership, the youth group began to grow. On Friday nights the youth group used one of the houses next to the church to operate "The Mustard Seed," a Christian coffee house. The youth group formed a choir, too, and in June of 1973,

the choir toured small towns in four different states presenting a Christian musical entitled "Love."

Plans were drawn and the commencement of construction of the new church was not far away when Rev. Rodes accepted a call to Palo Alto, California. The church then called Rev. Allen Dace of Wichita, Kansas as the next pastor. He arrived in the summer of 1973 and led the church into the realization of its relocation plans. In the Fall of 1974, the original sanctuary and accompanying lots were sold to a Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) congregation. On December 29, 1974, the new Trinity Church of the Nazarene worship and education facility was dedicated to the Lord by General Superintendent Eugene L. Stowe.¹²

The challenge of relocation had been met, but other challenges remained — especially in the area of finances. With the building of the new facility, the church incurred a debt of almost half a million dollars. In an effort to raise the money, the congregation utilized the services of fellow member Don Cockroft, a professional football player for the Cleveland Browns.

A contest was set up by dividing the church into football teams. There was a good response and many thousands of dollars were pledged toward the building fund. At the close of the contest, Cockroft awarded National Football League footballs to representatives of the winning teams.¹³

At this high-point in the church's life the congregation came into hard times that threatened to split the church. The congregation was already acquainted with the promise as well as the possible problems inherent in having a team of ministers. Occasionally there are differing concepts of ministry and these are sometimes difficult to iron out.

Such was the case during Rev. Dace's good ministry. It was a difficult time but God brought the church through intact. As one member recalls,

Since we have been at Trinity, we feel the most difficult and testing time Trinity has been through was during a conflict between Pastor (Dace) and his staff . . . The church was divided and was in real turmoil. We were afraid our church would split. Many of the people stood by, stayed faithful, and prayed. God did intervene and healed our church without a split. We praise God and thank Him for it. We learned much and are stronger because we came through this with God's help.

Not long after this hard experience, Rev. Dace moved to a new pastorate and, during the 1976-77 church year, Rev. J. Donald Fresee took the helm of the Trinity congregation. Under his leadership, Trinity continues its ministry into the 1980's.

CONCLUSION

If anything, the difficult struggle during Rev. Dace's ministry witnesses to the ways of God. What a scandal it is that the Almighty chooses to work through what is weak - namely, ordinary people who love God! Indeed, His strength is made perfect in our weakness and His grace and power is sufficient. It is, after all, His church - and, being His, its success and vitality is dependent on Him.

The future history of Trinity will be exciting as dedicated believers serve God out of gratitude for His love. The times, places, and the faces of the congregation have changed since the early 1950's; yet the fellowship of believers continues as Dr. Dean Thoman, the 1978 Christian Life Chairman at Trinity, points out: "We truly love the people at Trinity. They are our family."¹⁴

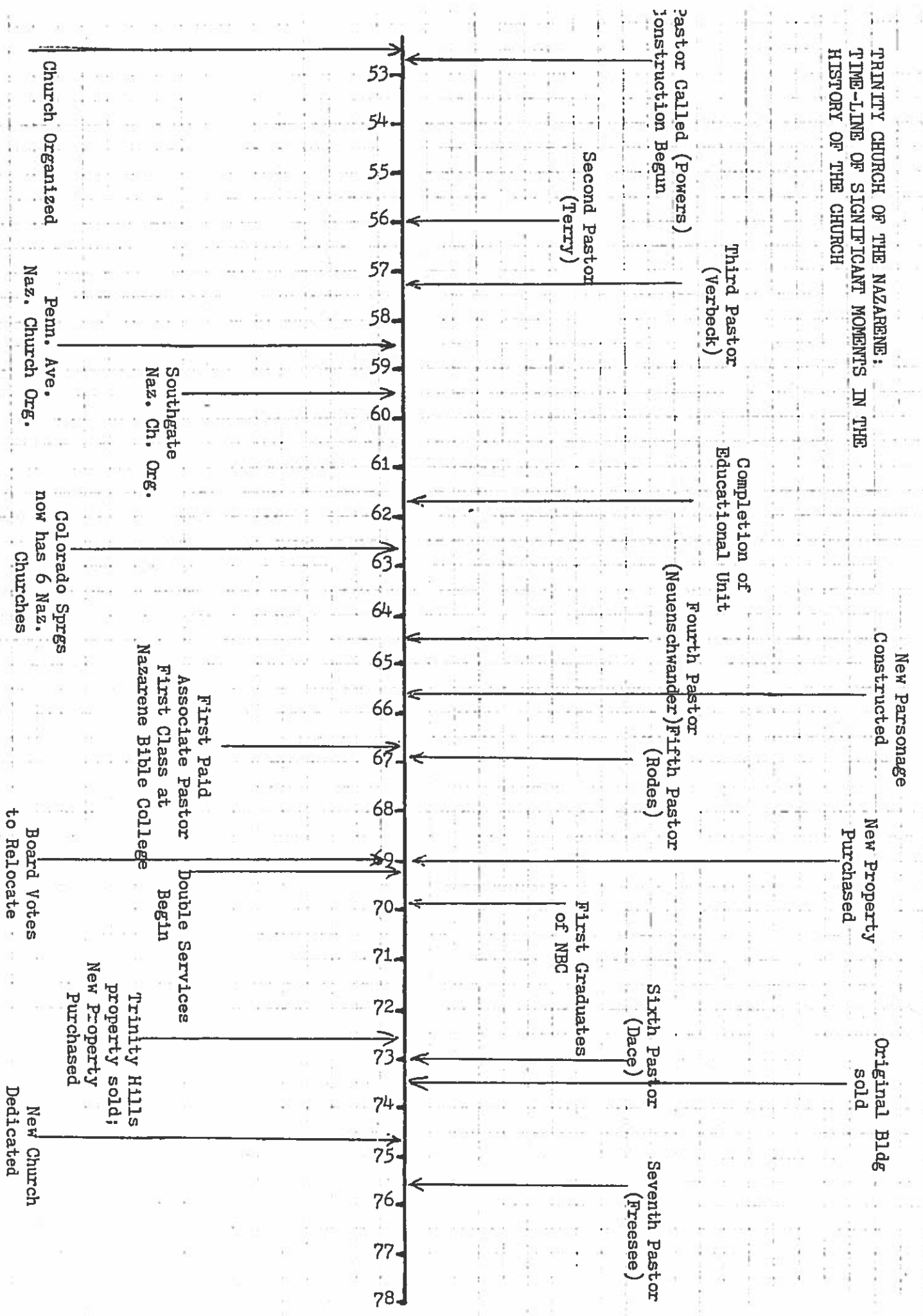
APPENDIX I: Statistical Analysis

The aim of this brief statistical analysis is to suggest another perspective from which to view the history of Trinity. This perspective is important since it helps to correlate and reflect the impact of significant moments in the life of the congregation.

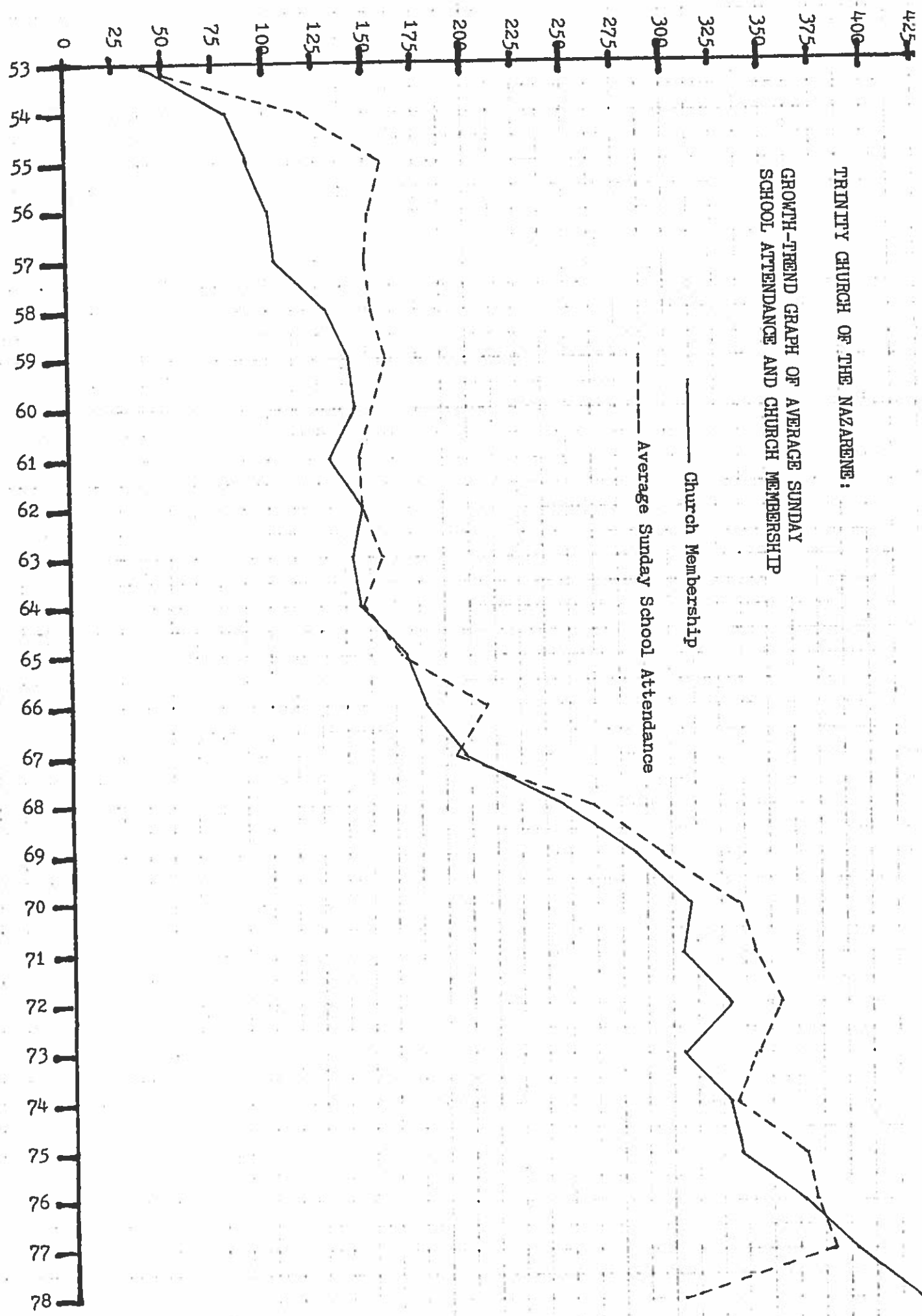
There are three charts included in this analysis. The first shows the growth-trends of the Sunday School and of church membership. A second graph compares the annual net gain (or loss) in total church membership with the annual gains in those received into membership by profession of faith. This graph seeks to reflect the efforts of the church's outreach activity. The third chart is a table of significant statistics for general reference by the reader.

Preceding these charts is a time-line showing when a selected number of significant occasions occurred in Trinity's history. This is meant to give aid in making a meaningful reading of the charts. The dates shown on the time-line and on the charts do not reflect calendar years but church years. For instance, 1953 figures are the final totals of the 1952-53 church year.

TRINITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE:
 TIME-LINE OF SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS IN THE
 HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

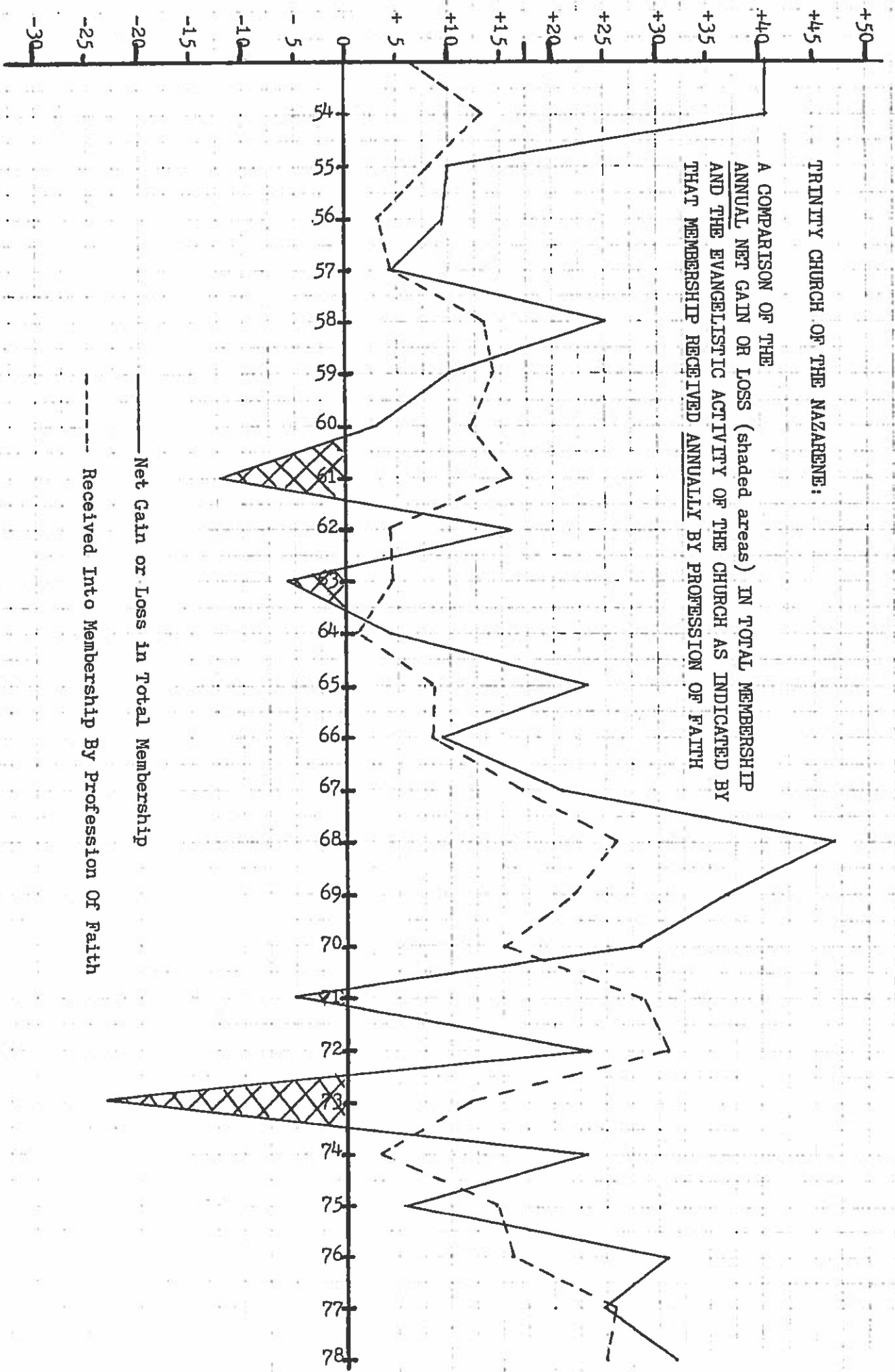


TRINITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE:
 GROWTH-TREND GRAPH OF AVERAGE SUNDAY
 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



TRINITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE:

A COMPARISON OF THE ANNUAL NET GAIN OR LOSS (shaded areas) IN TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND THE EVANGELISTIC ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH AS INDICATED BY THAT MEMBERSHIP RECEIVED ANNUALLY BY PROFESSION OF FAITH



----- Received Into Membership By Profession Of Faith
 _____ Net Gain or Loss in Total Membership

TABLE OF STATISTICS

- TRINITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE -

YEAR	1. MEMBERSHIP PROF. FAITH	TOTAL	2. SUNDAY SCHOOL AVG. ATTENDANCE	3. RAISED FOR ALL PURPOSES	4. VALUE OF PROP. PARS/CHURCH	5. INDEBTED- NESS
1953	7	41	39	-	\$60,000	\$40,000
1954	13	82	119	-	60,000	43,000
1955	8	92	160	-	50,000	36,000
1956	3	101	152	-	50,000	31,800
1957	4	105	150	-	72,500	27,000
1958	13	130	152	-	71,500	22,221
1959	14	140	160	-	69,500	18,462
1960	12	143	-	-	69,500	15,630
1961	16	131	146	\$18,800	69,500	12,706
1962	4	147	146	19,847	104,000	48,000
1963	4	141	157	18,268	104,000	47,000
1964	1	145	147	20,815	104,000	44,500
1965	8	168	165	29,232	108,650	46,261
1966	8	177	209	33,046	132,500	65,000

TABLE OF STATISTICS (Continued)

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1967	17	193	\$38,307	\$140,000	\$65,000
1968	26	261	50,220	135,000	67,581
1969	22	282	66,896	188,750	86,327
1970	15	335	74,094	188,750	-
1971	28	340	80,576	242,000	80,576
1972	31	354	101,264	262,620	72,000
1973	12	342	103,341	385,000	88,000
1974	3	333	124,900	236,900	84,078
1975	14	365	153,704	718,000	444,000
1976	16	369	180,291	721,500	428,625
1977	26	378	160,147	721,500	417,272
1978	25	304	168,168	751,165	396,315

APPENDIX II: Sources

There were primarily two sources utilized in the writing of this history of Trinity Church of the Nazarene. For statistics and for background on the church before its official organization, the minutes of the Colorado District Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene from 1947 until 1978 were studied. The second major source was the results of a survey (with postage-paid return) sent to thirty persons who had held leadership positions in the church for quite some time. There was a 60% response of which approximately two-thirds provided new and/or helpful information and insight. A secondary source is the author's recall of his own years at Trinity (1967-1973) during which time he was in elementary school, junior high, and high school.

SURVEY
(Mail Interview)

NAME: _____ BIRTHDATE _____
_____ (spouse) _____ (spouse)

During what years was Trinity your church home?

During those years were you: A member? _____ Not a member, but a
regular attendant? _____. Were you a charter member? _____.

Did you hold any leadership position (such as Sunday School teacher,
board member, NWMS president, etc.)? If so, list the position(s) and,
if possible, the year(s) you served.

If you attended Trinity after the founding of the Nazarene Bible College
in Colorado Springs, comment briefly on your impressions as to the im-
pact of the Bible college on the church (Trinity).

During your years at Trinity there were, no doubt, some significant
moments in the life of the church. There may have been a particularly
difficult time or occasion; or perhaps a great revival meeting, or a
significant action taken by the church leadership. Try to list with a
brief description, two or three "significant moments" which occurred
while you attended Trinity.

Please add any additional comments that you feel would be helpful to
me in my effort to write an accurate history of the congregation at
Trinity:

ENDNOTES

- 1 Address of the District Superintendent to the 45th District Assembly of the Colorado District of the Church of the Nazarene as recorded in the published minutes, p. 42 (Published by the Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, Missouri).
- 2 District Minutes, 41st Assembly, p. 37.
- 3 District Minutes, 42nd Assembly (p. 39) and 43rd Assembly (p. 42).
- 4 District Minutes of 43rd Assembly, p. 49.
- 5 District Minutes of 44th Assembly, p. 43.
- 6 Mail interview with Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Murray. April, 1980.
- 7 Mail interview with Mr. Harold "Bud" Isham. April, 1980.
- 8 Mail interview with Rev. Eugene Verbeck. April, 1980.
- 9 District Minutes of the 54th District Assembly, p. 53.
- 10 Mail interview with Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hicks. April, 1980.
- 11 Mail interview with Dr. and Mrs. Dean Thoman. April, 1980.
- 12 District Minutes of the 1975 District Assembly, p. 55.
- 13 Mail interview with Mr. and Mrs. Von Wilson. April, 1980.
- 14 Mail interview with Dr. and Mrs. Dean Thoman. April, 1980.