COMPARING THE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTIONS AND GROWTH OF MORMONS, ADVENTISTS AND WITNESSES

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ABSTRACT

Mormons, Adventists, and Witnesses have all felt called to take their teachings to the world and have experienced growth. However, they have varied considerably in both their geographic spread—where they have developed a presence over time — and also in where they have been more successful numerically. The result is sharply differing profiles: Adventists are concentrated more in the Developing World; Witnesses and Mormons are proportionately stronger in the Developed World, but in different parts of it. Within countries, Witnesses and Mormons are more urban, while Adventists are more concentrated in rural regions; Adventists also tend to be poorer than Witnesses and especially practicing Mormons. The article explores why these differing patterns developed. It expands a recently developed theoretical model by Cragun and Lawson that religious growth depends on the synchronization of supply and demand and their corresponding components.

INTRODUCTION

Recent theorizing in both the history and sociology of religion in America points to the constitutional separation of church and state in the United States as a source of religious innovation and subsequent competition between religious groups (Hatch 1989; Finke and Stark 1992). Extant religious groups that developed as a result of this innovation have been dubbed "American Originals" (Conklin 1997). The three Originals that are the focus of this paper—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Seventh-day Adventism (Adventists), and Jehovah's Witnesses (Witnesses)—are among the few that have spread beyond US borders, becoming truly international. All three continue slow growth in the US, but their expansion is now concentrated in the Developing World. While all three have globalized, their geographic profiles vary considerably. This article asks why their geographic spread has varied so much and why their growth has diverged regionally and nationally.

This empirical case study is designed to use and expand a theoretical approach—rooted in secularization theory but combined with economic theory—developed recently by Cragun and Lawson (2010). The factors explored here are not the only contributors to religious growth, for others, such as strictness (c.f. Thomas and Olson 2010), also contribute to it. In essence, the article argues that both supply and demand factors contribute to religious growth and decline. It uses the evolution of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses to illustrate the importance of both.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

In recent decades Christianity has grown rapidly in the Developing World while stagnating or declining in the Developed World (Jenkins 2002). Although Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses have maintained growth in the Developed World longer than most of the Mainline Denominations, their experience generally reflects these patterns.

Cragun and Lawson explain growth as a combination of relevant supply and demand factors (2010). People are usually only susceptible to joining a religious movement that makes overtures to them (*supply*). However, significant growth will not occur if *demand* for spiritual understanding and connection is not present and if the outreach strategies employed do not connect successfully with that demand. Thus, alignment of supply and demand is necessary for a religious group to experience growth in any location. Such alignment is synchronous.

Supply and demand do not, however, simply exist; numerous factors influence them. Supply, for instance, is variable: one group may have greater supply than others. This is shaped by several items that are discussed below. Demand for religion is also shaped by multiple factors, such as modernization, which can increase or limit it. These are also explored below. Demand may be high for one group but much lower for others in the same region simultaneously.

Synchronicity results in rapid growth, but asynchronicity does not. If supply is not present when potential demand is high or if the outreach strategies used do not connect with the demand that is present, growth is unlikely. If demand is sparse when outreach occurs, this, too, can curtail growth. If neither supply of nor demand for religious goods exists in a society, this would be a case of secularization realized.

This article utilizes our understanding of supply and demand to account for the differing profiles of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses. These religious groups provide an excellent test of our theoretical understanding of supply and demand: all have become significant participants in the globalization of Christianity, although their regional presence and growth patterns vary markedly. Our best effort to explain these variations, through developing a theory combining supply and demand within a secularization framework, follows.

DATA

The article uses the official membership data of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses. Both aggregate and national membership data were extracted from the LDS *Church Almanac*, the SDA *Annual Statistical Report*, and the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* for the past decade. Earlier data for Mormons was obtained from the library of Brigham Young University, the website of the Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics and Research, and Witness Yearbooks.

The data differ in noteworthy ways. Adventists count all baptized members but omit unbaptized children. The age at which they baptize their children varies widely, from a mean of 11.9 in America to the later teens in Europe (Gillespie et al. 2004:212-3). It is also Adventist policy to purge their rolls of members who no longer claim to be Adventists or cannot be located. Mormons count baptized members, but also "children of record"—younger children blessed as infants in a church ceremony, who may make up as much as 15% of their US membership (Bennion and Young 1996:9). The age of baptism for children raised in Mormon families is set firmly at eight. Mormons make no attempt to remove missing and inactive members from their rolls. Consequently, the whereabouts of many listed as members is unknown (Knowlton 2005, Mauss 2010). However, the names of children who reach the age of nine without being baptized are removed. Witnesses use the most stringent criterion, counting only "publishers"—those reporting regular witnessing to nonmembers. They exclude baptized members who are not witnessing regularly, but include both children and converts entering the ranks of publishers shortly before baptism (*Watchtower* 2010:25; Chu 2008a, 2008b). Their *Yearbook* lists both "peak" and "average" publishers. This study uses the latter because they are more representative. Tables 1-5 are based on the official statistics for each group.

TOTAL GROWTH OVER TIME

Table 1 shows that their earlier beginnings gave Mormons a head-start over Adventists, and Adventists, in turn, over Witnesses. All three reported strong growth over time. However, in general Adventists grew faster. Their official membership finally surpassed that of Mormons in the late 1990s.

TABLE 1. COMPARING WORLD MEMBERSHIP GROWTH OF MORMONS, ADVENTISTS, AND WITNESSES OVER TIME, 1830-2009

	MORMONS		ADVENTISTS		WITNESSES	
Year	Membership	% Incr.	Membership	% Incr.	Publishers[1]	% Incr.
1830	280					
1840	16,865	5923.2				
1850	51,839	207.4				
1860	61,082	17.8				
1870	90,130	47.6	5,440[2]			
1880	133,628	48.3	15,570	186.2		
1890	188,263	40.9	29,711	90.8		
1900	283,765	50.7	75,767	155.0		
1910	398,478	40.4	104,526	38.0		
1920	525,987	32.0	185,450	77.4	3,868[3]	
1930	670,017	27.4	314,253	69.5	23,988	520.2
1940	862,664	28.8	504,752	60.6	96,418	301.9
1950	1,111,314	28.8	756,812	49.9	373,430	287.3
1960	1,693,180	52.4	1,245,125	64.5	911,332	144.0
1970	2,930,810	73.1	2,051,864	64.8	1,483,430	61.8
1980	4,639,822	58.3	3,480,518	69.6	2,272,278	53.2
1990	7,761,207	67.3	6,694,880	92.4	4,017,213	76.8
2000	11,068,861	42.6	11,687,229	74.6	6,035,564	50.2
2009[4]	13,824,854	28.6	16,307,880	49.1	7,313,173	23.7

Sources: Extracted from LDS *Church Almanacs*, SDA *General Conference Annual Statistical Reports,* and JW *Yearbooks.*

[1] Witnesses list the peak number of active publishers, not total membership.
[2] Although Adventists trace their origins back to 1844, they did not organize formally until 1863
[3] The Bible Students/Witnesses were formed in the 1870s but did not list detailed data until 1940. We searched their other publications and were able to find earlier statistics published there.
[4] The increases given on this line are for the period 1999-2009.

Contrary to the predictions of Stark (1984) and Stark and Iannaccone (1997) that both Mormons and Witnesses would experience exponential growth far into the 21st Century, Mormons have experienced a slowing of their growth-rate since 1990, and Witnesses an even more precipitous decline in theirs since 1995. Adventists showed a shallower decline in their growth after 1990.

ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENCES IN GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

Differences between the geographic profiles of the groups are primarily a result of supply factors—that is, in where they attempted to evangelize. We therefore discuss the factors influencing the supply of religion first. There are six of these: the level of urgency brought to evangelism; variations in the number of missionaries, their training, and hours spent in outreach; how a group's theology limits evangelism; how its attitude towards other religions also limits it; government regulations; and the extent to which wars and revolutions hamper outreach.

We illustrate the variations in the regional distributions of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses from 1960 to 2009 in Table 2. The geographic concentrations of the three religious groups differed considerably by 1960, and these patterns developed and changed further during the subsequent decades. Mormons became especially strong in North America, Witnesses in Europe, and Adventists in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. All, though especially Mormons, grew rapidly in Latin America. However, these concentrations have been shifting: the growth-rates of Mormons and Witnesses have faltered in North America and Europe while their presence has strengthened in some developing countries; Adventists have fallen further behind in much of the Developed World while bounding further ahead in many parts of the Developing World.

Table 3 further illustrates the extent to which the membership of these three groups is more or less concentrated in particular countries and regions. It lists the countries in which they had more than 200,000 members in 2009 (150,000 for Witnesses given their more stringent criterion). The Mormon membership is skewed, with only 8 such countries, which contain collectively 76.9% of their total members; the USA alone contains 43.8%. Adventists present a sharp contrast with Mormons in this respect, with 29 countries having over 200,000 members. These contain 81.6% of its total membership; India, its largest country, has only 9.0%. Witnesses fall between the other two groups in the extent to which their membership is concentrated in a few countries. Their largest country, USA, contains 15.8% of their publishers. Six countries have over 200,000 publishers, and eleven, with 56.4% of their total, over 150,000.

TABLE 2: COMPARING THE REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MORMONS, ADVENTISTS, WITNESSES, 1960, 1990, AND 2009

	MORMONS			WITNESSES			ADVENTISTS		
REGION	1960	1990	2009	1960	1990	2009	1960	1990	2009
Europe	51,535	334,528	501,703	196,779	1,003,284	1,593,511	144,366	244,683	386,925
North America	1,454,645	4,395,702	6,261,847	271,262	946,770	1,242,283	332,364	760,148	1,119,567
Central America	20,487	865,849	1,928,064	26,664	354,518	807,503	13,577	541,516	1,582,595
South America	14,797	1,358,256	3,378,257	35,817	558,509	1,353,690	147,180	1,375,837	2,406,574
Caribbean	0	36,464	139,387	20,253	102,696	153,122	47,322	385,448	1,045,448
Asia	3,767	435,991	977,278	38,648	333,775	606,010	121,551	979,685	3,155,835
Middle East	0	363	1,134	666	2,825	4,884	458	275	1,493
East Africa	0	2,850	51,422	55,455	153,042	384,918	59,299	1,215,705	4,051,398
Mid Africa	0	2,400	30,155	7,387	83,745	262,516	16,689	173,923	1,002,278
North Africa	0	0	0	504	589	1,676	817	3,850	7,519
West Africa	0	25,633	170,799	39,639	183,634	429,166	2,720	262,603	722,236
Southern Africa	2,901	19,365	55,158	17,447	50,036	90,736	17,338	51,673	149,560
Oceania	28,408	251,442	432,582	16,789	68,503	86,773	40,678	239,893	421,078
"Other"*	0	0	0	123,283	196,509	19,004	0	0	0

*Where Witnesses experience or fear persecution, they hide their membership numbers in an "Other" category. In 1960 and 1990 this was especially true of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states; also of its relatively few members in China.

TABLE 3. SKEWED DISTRIBUTIONS: COUNTRIES WITH MORE THAN 200,000 MEMBERS OR 150,000 PUBLISHERS, 2009

	ADVENTISTS		WITNESSES		MORMONS	
Number	Country	Membership	Country	Publishers[5]	Country	Membership
1	India	1,468,642	USA	1,096,502	USA	6,058,907
2	Brazil	1,065,485	Brazil	689,577	Mexico	1,197,573
3	USA	1,043,606	Mexico	668,876	Brazil	1,102,428
4	Philippines	674,816	Nigeria	291,179	Philippines	631,885
5	Zambia	659,336	Italy	240,262	Chile	561,904
6	Kenya	657,447	Japan	217,530	Peru	480,816
7	Mexico	647,484	Germany	162,890	Argentina	380,669
8	Zimbabw	616,875	Philippines	162,647	Guatemala	220,896
9	Congo	504,708	Zambia	140,250		
10	Rwanda	468,384	Russia	154,387		
11	Tanzania	452,199	Congo	144,697		
12	Peru	425,080				
13	China	382,039				
14	Angola	369,317				
15	Ghana	357,260				
16	Haiti	338,223				
17	Malawi	327,131				
18	Colombia	278,933				
19	Nigeria	276,936				
20	Dominican R.	265,905				
21	Papua-New G	249,348				
22	Jamaica	247,448				
23	Mozambique	247,338				
24	Honduras	229,574				
25	Venezuela	217,538				
26	S. Korea	215,227				
27	Guatemala	214,976				
28	Indonesia	207,284				
29	Uganda	205,875				

Sources: Extracted from SDA *Annual Statistical Report* 2008:8-38, and JW *Yearbook* 2009:32-9, LDS *Church Almanac* 2010:182-7

[5] Witnesses list average and peak number of active publishers, not total membership. Average publishers is used here. The cut-off for these was lowered to 150,000 because the rules concerning who is counted as a publisher are more demanding.

Urgency

We now note how the six components of supply listed above shaped the distributions of the three groups. All three of these religious groups see outreach as an urgent responsibility since they believe they are living in the "latter" or "last" days of earth's history and were entrusted with God's final message to humanity. Mormons, who had begun their outreach in the US and Canada in 1830, initially established foreign missions rapidly, entering Britain in 1837 and then extending their program to Northwestern Europe. By 1853 they were also active in several other countries: Australia, New Zealand, Chile, China, India, South Africa, French Polynesia and parts of Southern Europe (Gottlieb and Wiley 1986:132). However, beginning in the 1850s, Mormon leaders made an abrupt change of policy, encouraging all converts to uproot and emigrate to Utah. This "gathering" prevented Mormons from building a strong base in any other country. For example, in Canada, where 2,500 had joined by 1845, only 74 listed themselves as members in the 1861 census (Bennett 1992:251-2). It also slowed Mormon outreach to foreign countries from 1870 until 1950, as they focused primarily on establishing Zion in America's Great Basin and then as world wars and economic upheavals distracted church leaders and severely limited the availability of missionaries (Prince and Wright 2005:358). As a result, Mormon supply was cut severely.

Adventists were slow to launch outreach. Since they traced their origins to the "Great Disappointment" of 1844, when Christ did not return as William Miller had predicted, they continued initially to see that event as imminent. Since only Millerites were eligible for translation, further outreach was pointless. Eventually they were persuaded that the door to salvation had not closed. They finally sent out their first foreign missionary in 1874 to Switzerland; they expanded throughout Europe during the next quarter-century.

Once Adventists embraced missions they expanded rapidly. They entered Australia and South Africa in 1885, and founded schools, clinics and hospitals. These locations became hubs from which they moved into the South Pacific islands and central Africa. Early missions were also established in parts of the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. By 1900 they had established beachheads on every continent and 20% of their members were outside of North America. Expansion prompted Adventism to reshape its structure in 1903, when it created regional headquarters where decisions could be made promptly. These launched missions in rapid succession, as they sought to blanket the world. By 1921 over 50% of Adventists were located outside North America. Over time they extended gradually into poorer countries. Their numerical growth remained relatively slow, for demand in pre-modern societies was modest, but the service provided by their institutions gained them credibility and positioned them for rapid growth when religious demand accelerated during modernization in subsequent decades.

Charles Taze Russell, the founder of what was initially called the Bible Students, urged his followers to share their beliefs with others, and prepared publications for this purpose. Since

participation was not required, he began recruiting full- and part-time colporteurs (Russell 1881:7). These bore the brunt of the publishing work from 1881 until the mid-1930s (Xydias 2011b). However, this approach proved relatively ineffective at building the organization abroad, for colporteurs there had responsibility for large tracts of territory and, having offered the publications, tended to continue on their way rather than following-up with interested people.

"Judge" Rutherford, who succeeded Russell, introduced the expectation that members engage in door-to-door witnessing. This change gradually transformed outreach once congregations began to adopt this as their central purpose in 1922. The program got into full swing about 1933-35, after Rutherford had renamed the group Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931 and had increased the emphasis on door-to-door publishing and the reporting of hours worked. In 1935 publishers and pioneers witnessed in 113 countries, but in half of these there were fewer than 10 active members (Watchtower Society 1993:441).

Witnesses became better organized in the last part of World War II and the following years. In 1943 they chose to revamp their outreach program in an attempt to strengthen geographic expansion, opening the Gilead School, a program to train missionaries for foreign service. They were readying themselves to become truly global in outreach.

Workforce:

Mormons originally relied on married men to staff missionary endeavors, but these were later replaced by young men who volunteered two years of service. These were in short supply during the wars and depression of the first-half of the twentieth century. However, the number of full-time missionaries serving trebled during the 1960s, following the launching of a massive new proselytizing program in the late 1950s (Prince and Wright 2005:230-5; Stewart 2008:356). After almost a century of limited Mormon supply, it was suddenly re-energized. The number of missionaries serving continued to increase steeply, reaching a peak of 60,550 in 2001 (*Church Almanac* 2003:5), declining by 20% since then.

In 2009 Adventists employed 81,977 people in full-time pastoral and other evangelistic roles. This figure does not include the many laypersons active in outreach. However, it was their institutions that set Adventists apart, especially the broad coverage of their educational and medical institutions: in 2009 these employed 134,814 people (*Annual Statistical Report* 2009:4, 55).

In 1943 Witnesses reported having 129,070 publishers in 54 countries; by 1992 these numbers had soared to 4,472,787 in 229 countries. In 2009, 732,912 Pioneers spent 70 hours per month, an average of 6,829,455 Publishers volunteered time each month, and 1,787 international missionaries worked full-time. Combined, 1,488,658,249 hours were spent witnessing (*Yearbook* 2010). The Witnesses' workforce is thus several times larger than either the number of full-time

Mormon missionaries or the salaried Adventists engaged in evangelistic activities.

Theology

A group's theology may shape and limit which countries or peoples are targeted or excluded. The impact on Mormon outreach was notable. For example, it gave them a desire to proselytize Native Americans who are regarded as the descendants of the people described in the Book of Mormon. Consequently, much of their early outreach focused especially on these peoples. However, their theology caused them to neglect areas populated by people of African descent because it held that these were ineligible to hold the priesthood. Since congregations must be led by priests, there was no point in engaging in outreach where no one was eligible to assume leadership responsibilities (Mauss 2003). This policy continued even after other groups began to experience great success in both Africa and the Caribbean following the dismantling of colonization in the 1960s. Mormons faced problems during the 1970s due to the existence of self-started congregations that were waiting to affiliate with them in Nigeria and many mixed-race converts in northeast Brazil who would not be eligible to use a new temple to which they had contributed (Prince and Wright 2005). Missionaries were finally sent to Africa and the Caribbean after 1978, when it was announced that a revelation had opened the priesthood to blacks.

Dominant Religion

The allocation of missionary resources may also be affected by a group's response to the religion dominating a region. For most of their history all three groups chose to focus their prime efforts on Christian regions, for Christians were seen as likely converts. Their evangelism in non-Christian countries has often focused on the small populations of Christians and followed on the heels of missionaries from other Christian groups. Mormons and Witnesses were especially slow to evangelize non-Christian populations. Mormons made some headway among the Shinto Buddhists in Japan when work there was opened by Mormon American military personnel stationed there following World War II; Witnesses were much more successful there. Mormons, and to a lesser extent Witnesses also, have yet to address Muslim and Hindu countries seriously. (Adventist outreach to these religions is discussed below.)

Government regulations

Government regulations can impact supply. Adventist institutions needed licenses in developed countries; however, they were typically welcomed by colonial governments, who were looking to skim off resources rather than expend them. Witnesses, who were seen by governments as contributing nothing useful, were sometimes prohibited, but they nevertheless stubbornly persisted with underground evangelism even though working illegally made their efforts more

difficult. On the other hand, since Mormons sought official approval to enter a country before doing so, their outreach was delayed until such approval was given. For example, in 2010, Mormon leaders engaged in negotiations to enter mainland China; however, in their effort to avoid offending the Chinese government, they offered to limit their work to foreigners: they stated specifically that they were not seeking permission for missionaries to work among Chinese citizens (Dobner 2010).

Wars and revolutions

Conflict slowed Mormons in particular because of their close identification with America and its foreign policy. They had not been active in Russia and the rest of what became the Soviet Union before the Bolshevik Revolution, and consequently did not enter what had been the Soviet bloc until after its collapse in 1989-90 (Tobler 1992:467-75). They also withdrew their missionaries from Nazi Germany and its allies during World War II. Adventists, however, were established in Germany and in what was to become the USSR well before World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. Their response to such situations was set in Germany during World War I, when they agreed to major compromises, which included serving in the military as active combatants and without Sabbath-keeping privileges, in order to protect their organization and institutions. They repeated this stance within both the USSR and Nazi Germany (Lawson 1996). In contrast, Witnesses refused to participate in military forces or to honor national symbols. Consequently, they were banned by several governments and often faced severe repression.

ACCOUNTING FOR GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN GROWTH

Demand, and the interaction between supply and demand, come into play in accounting for geographic differences in growth. While supply is necessary for growth, it is not sufficient. Significant growth will occur only if *demand* for the religious group being offered exists and it connects with the outreach strategies employed.

Like supply, demand is influenced by a variety of factors. Modernization strongly influences demand for religion, as was shown by Cragun and Lawson (2010). Rapid growth can occur initially while those easiest to convert are harvested, but this is then likely to result in saturation and reduced demand. Responses to religious groups vary with socioeconomic status. Cultural norms and values may limit interest in these groups because conversion may result in persecution. Additionally, there are a number of factors flowing from interactions between supply and demand. A group's outreach strategies, a supply factor, interact with receptivity to its messages, a demand factor. Both supply and demand can be impacted by member fertility and the retention of children and converts. Each of these factors is discussed below in greater detail.

Modernization

The level of demand changes over time as societies pass through different phases of economic development from pre-modern to modernizing to post-modern/secular, following a trajectory akin to an inverted-U ("∩"); demand peaks during the modernizing phase (Cragun and Lawson 2010). When Mormons attempted to found missions in Chile, China, India and French Polynesia around 1850, all of which were then pre-modern societies, they found so little demand that they eventually withdrew (Gottlieb and Wiley 1986:132). Early Adventist missions planted in Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific between 1890 and World War II grew relatively slowly due to limited demand. However, the fact that they were often centered on institutions that offered educational opportunities, health services, and employment openings allowed them to survive and build a foundation in those pre-modern societies. We noted above that Witnesses, without institutions, were very slow to put down roots in pre-modern societies prior to 1943.

Once colonization ended during the decades following World War II, these areas began to modernize so that demand increased rapidly. When Mormons and Witnesses launched major mission programs these grew much faster than Adventists had during the earlier pre-modern period. However, Adventist numerical growth was even more rapid because of the foundation laid previously.

Earlier, in the years immediately following World War II, Witnesses and Mormons focused their outreach strategies on Western Europe and Japan, where demand for spiritual things was recharged after the devastation of the war. Witnesses were especially successful, for they were able to build on their earlier work in both regions, and seem also to have benefited from a halo effect in Europe associated with their persistent outreach while suffering persecution from the Nazi regime. Consequently, the presence of Witnesses in Western Europe far surpassed Mormons and Adventists (see Table 2).

As economies in Western Europe recovered and then prospered, becoming post-modern and secular, the established and mainline Christian denominations lost ground there. With time the growth of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses also slowed, eventually declining in some countries. This is in accord with the finding by Cragun and Lawson that once the process of modernization raises the UN Human Development Index past .85 there is a "secular transition" which causes the demand for religion to decline sharply (2010). The main exceptions to this pattern occur in countries where there has been a heavy flow of immigrants from countries in the Developing World who are already members or are receptive to outreach. For example, the Adventist church in England became predominantly West Indian and, to a lesser extent, African, so that its membership continued to climb while the number of white members declined (Lawson 1999). With time, similar patterns emerged in other countries of the Developed World: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and ultimately also the USA and South Korea. For example, the number of Witness publishers in Japan declined from a peak of 222,347 in 1999 to

217,530 in 2009.

Adventists in China provide an excellent example of changes in demand matching the different phases of modernization. They entered China in 1901 and quickly established a publishing house, schools, and hospitals. However, since China was still pre-modern, demand was weak, and their membership reached just 19,000 in 1940 (Gu 2009). Their missionaries were expelled in 1950 following the Communist victory, the church organization was dismantled, and its institutions confiscated. Former missionaries wondered if Adventism would survive there, fearing that many members were "rice Christians" attracted by job opportunities; Church headquarters received almost no information from Adventists in China from 1950 until after the Cultural Revolution (Liu 2010). However, Adventism grew as many members remained active, meeting in homes and evangelizing secretly. When Christian churches were legalized after the Cultural Revolution, all Protestants were required to combine in the Three Self Patriotic Movement. Adventists accepted this and many of their pastors were trained in its seminary. However, because only they used the churches on Saturdays, they were able to retain a separate identity. Their growth spurted as China began to modernize rapidly, maintaining a mean growth-rate of 10% per year between 1986 and 2001, during which time their membership climbed from an estimated 75,000 to 311,347. However, their growth contracted sharply after 2002 to a mean of 2.4%, as the Chinese economy matured and China began to pass through a secular transition (Cragun and Lawson 2010).

This pattern could be illustrated equally well by many other examples, such as Witnesses in Italy and several other countries in Western Europe, where the initial rapid growth after World War II has slowed sharply, or Mormons in Guatemala and other Latin American countries, which show a similar pattern beginning with high growth when missionaries arrived during modernization.

Saturation

Demand also changes over time according to the degree to which a population has been saturated by the religious group: growth-rates are higher initially, but they decline once those easiest to recruit have been harvested (Voas 2008). Disentangling saturation effects from other factors that influence demand, particularly modernization, is difficult as the resulting growth patterns can be quite similar. For instance, when Mormons entered Portugal in the 1970s they initially experienced rapid growth, but this slowed by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Had Portugal's level of development been constant during that time period, the change in demand would be attributable to saturation--those most attracted to that group had converted. However, Portugal's level of development changed dramatically over that time as the country modernized rapidly. Growth declined once Portugal passed through the secular transition at about .85 on the HDI. Thus, this appears to be a result of modernization rather than saturation.

In order to isolate the impact of saturation , a country's level of development has to remain

relatively constant while a religious group experiences both growth *and* decline. This can be seen for Witnesses in the northern, heavily Muslim region of sub-Saharan Africa, especially Chad, Mali, Gambia, Liberia, and the Central African Republic. Although they had initially experienced high growth-rates after entering these countries, these trailed off rapidly. As the Human Development Index of these countries changed little during the changing Witnesses' growth trajectory, its decline is likely because of saturation: those interested have joined.

Another example of saturation, or lack thereof, can be seen in highly developed countries. In most such countries, conversion among indigenous populations has declined and is largely stagnant. However, for Adventists in South Korea, Witnesses in Ireland, and Mormons in Singapore growth continues to be high despite the countries already having passed through the secular transition. This suggests that demand for these specific groups has yet to be slated: saturation has yet to occur.

Socioeconomic Status

Interestingly, demand for these three religious groups varies by socioeconomic status. Table 4 examines the presence of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses in the Developed World in 2009. The countries in Table 4 are all members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The contrast between the groups is striking: 51.3% of Mormons and 36.8% of Witnesses are located in the Developed World, but only 9.5% of Adventists.

Because Adventism was the first of the groups to enter several of these countries, in 1960 its membership was still the largest in Australia, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Portugal and Norway. However, because of its long presence there, its growth-rate was already slowing in most of these countries because it attracts less affluent individuals. By 2009 it was largest only in South Korea, which was not penetrated until after World War II; it has become the smallest in four of the other five countries. For example, in Japan its membership is aging, pastors are retiring, and few seminary students are preparing to fill the vacancies (Bauer 2011).

Table 5 compares the changing distributions of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses between 1960 and 2006 among countries divided into three categories according to Gross National Income (GNI) per capita data. In 2006 “high income” countries had a GNI of $9,386 or more, “low income” countries $765 or less, while “middle income” countries fell between those amounts. Mormons were again strongest in the highest category, and Adventists weakest, but the proportion of members there declined over time for all three groups as growth slowed there and modernization fostered growth in less developed countries; however, distributions varied considerably. Mormons and Witnesses grew mostly in middle income countries, where Adventists were already well established by 1960. Adventists grew in the poorest countries, where their concentration far exceeded that of the other two groups.

TABLE 4. MORMON, ADVENTIST AND WITNESS MEMBERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD[6], 2009

Region	Country	Mormon	%[7]	Witnesses	%	Adventists	%
North America	USA	6,058,907	43.8	1,096,502	15.6	1,043,606	6.4
	Canada	179,801		110,467		60,825	
	Total	6,238,708	45.1	1,206,969	17.1	1,104,431	6.8
Western Europe	Austria	4,023		20,662		3,871	
	Belgium	5,980		23,764		2,022	
	Denmark	4,387		14,153		2,502	
	Finland	4,578		18,940		5,037	
	France	35,427		118,085		12,514	
	Germany	37,796		162,890		35,386	
	Greece	718		28,569		511	
	Iceland	247		340		560	
	Ireland	2,799		5,713		526	
	Italy	23,430		240,262		9,070	
	Luxembourg	291		1,955		*[8]	
	Netherlands	8,901		29,452		4,853	
	Norway	4,206		10,384		4,607	
	Portugal	38,509		48,610		9,322	
	Spain	45,729		105,558		15,254	
	Sweden	9,091		22,054		2,800	
	Switzerland	7,947		17,301		4,310	
	United Kingdom	186,082		128,435		30,002	
	Total	420,141	3.0	997,127	14.2	143,147	0.9
Asia	Japan	124,041		217,530		15,337	
	South Korea	82,472		96,620		216,093	
	Total	206,513	1.5	314,150	4.5	231,430	1.4
Antipodes	Australia	126,767		63,454		55,010	
	New Zealand	100,962		13,462		10,835	
	Total	227,729	1.6	76,916	1.1	65,845	0.4
TOTAL		7,093,091	51.3	2,595,162	36.8	1,544,853	9.5

[6] The Developed World is defined as the high income members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as listed in the UN's Human Development Report, 2005, p.365.

[7] Proportion of world membership

[8] Included with Belgium

TABLE 5. COMPARING CHANGES IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF MORMON, ADVENTIST, AND WITNESS MEMBERS AMONG COUNTRIES CATEGORIZED ACCORDING TO GROSS NATIONAL INCOME PER CAPITA, 1960-2006[9]

INCOME CATEGORY	1960	1980	2000	2006
		MORMONS		
High[10]	94.3	84.4	55.8	53.2
Middle[11]	2.8	11.8	42.0	44.2
Low[12]	0.0	0.1	1.6	2.4
		WITNESSES		
High	57.6	59.2	42.5	39.2
Middle	15.3	20.5	42.6	44.5
Low	12.4	10.7	14.4	16.1
		ADVENTISTS		
High	37.9	23.6	11.1	9.9
Middle	38.4	44.6	45.6	43.1
Low	22.7	30.0	42.5	47.0

The low supply of Mormon missionaries in the poorest countries can be accounted for largely by their concentration in the USA and Latin America. The group's tardy entry into both Africa and the Caribbean and its reluctance to commit missionaries to the 10-40 degrees north quadrant (see below) also help explain this (Stewart 2008:331). Consequently, Mormons have the highest concentration in the most prosperous countries.

International comparisons between countries also translate to the meso and micro level within countries. All three groups have established a strong presence in Mexico. Table 6, which is drawn from the Mexican census of 2000, shows that people identifying as Mormons were highly concentrated in the top two of three income categories, while half of Adventists fell into the lowest category; Witnesses fell between them (Knowlton 2005). This census also shows similar contrasts in educational levels: while 61.0% of Adventists had received only primary education or less, 50.9% of Mormons had post-secondary education. Witnesses again fell between them. Both Mormons and Witnesses were concentrated in Mexico City and the more developed northern states, though Witnesses less strongly so. Adventists, in contrast, were concentrated

[9] The nations belonging to the United Nations were categorized according to Gross National Income per capita in the Appendix to the UN's Human Development Report, 2005, p.364. Geographic areas that are not UN members, usually because of colonial status, are excluded from this analysis.

[10] Countries with a Gross National Income per capita of $9,386 or higher.

[11] Countries with a Gross National Income per capita between $9,385 and $766

[12] Countries with a Gross National Income per capita of $765 or less

in the rural southern states.

TABLE 6. THE PERCENTAGE OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS' ADHERENTS FALLING IN DIFFERENT INCOME CATEGORIES, MEXICO 2000

Income category	Mormons %	Witnesses %	Adventists %
The Minimum Wage or Less	13.2	25.4	**49.5**
Between 1 and 3 Times the Minimum Wage	**45.6**	**50.3**	32.4
Three Times the Minimum Wage or More	**35.2**	19.6	14.0
Not specified	5.0	4.7	4.1

Source: Abstracted from Knowlton 2003 (Mexican Census, 2000)

Data from three other countries suggest the difference found in Mexico between the SES of the active members of the three religious groups is not unique. The large number of people identifying as Adventists in the Papua-New Guinea census (520,623 in 2000 compared with 20,723 Witnesses and 20,586 Mormons) is a good example of the concentration of Adventists in poor countries in the Developing World. The population is heavily rural, but the Adventist membership there is more rural than either Mormons or Witnesses (Papua-New Guinea Census 2000).

Likewise, in 2001 18.4% of Canada's population was foreign-born. However, the percentage of foreign-born was twice that among Adventists, while Witnesses were at the national level and Mormons well below it. The contrast is stronger still when the focus shifts to members who had immigrated during the previous decade: Witnesses then fell below the national level, while Adventists and Mormons diverged further (Canada Census 2001). Adventist growth there continues to be "limited mostly to immigrant populations" (Jackson 2011).

In the USA, a survey conducted by the Pew Forum in 2008 found that 26% of Mormons, 42% of Witnesses and 46% of Adventists earned less than $30,000, and 47%, 65%, and 72% respectively less than $50,000 (Osborn 2011).

These three religious groups thus present distinctive SES patterns. The educational statistics are especially surprising, for while Witnesses prefer witnessing to education, Adventists operate schools and universities all over the world, and encourage their youth to pursue education. Sometimes the impact of Adventist schools is very dramatic, increasing literacy and propelling some members in the Developing World into the highest positions; however, the vast majority of converts there are too poor to benefit. Consequently, only half the students enrolled are Adventists (Department of Education 2008). Beckford helps to explain the contrast by describing Witnesses in Britain as a middle-class movement whose members have lower incomes because

of the amount of time devoted to witnessing and church meetings (1975). In the Developing World, Witnesses' emphasis on reading their publications attracts literate converts (Penton 2010:330).

Persecution of Converts

All three groups have advocated norms whose peculiarity attracted criticism from the press, public, and governments. In some instances the stigma became so strong that it resulted in persecution. This made identifying with them more costly, reducing demand. Hostility engendered by the Mormon practice of polygamy was a key reason for the martyrdom of their founder and first prophet, their decision to uproot themselves several times, and eventually to flee overland from Illinois to Utah. Eventually, in 1890, Mormons chose to abandon the practice in order to avoid further conflict with the US authorities. Persecution of Mormons was largely confined to the USA in the nineteenth century.

Witnesses attracted negative publicity because of their insistence that publishers witness door-to-door and their expectation that members would refuse blood transfusions even when medical doctors thought them necessary to save a patient's life. However, it was their refusal to be conscripted into military forces and to participate in patriotic activities, such as the American Pledge of Allegiance or the Nazi "Heil Hitler," that often resulted in persecution. These problems became clear during World War I, when their leaders were arrested and sentenced to long prison terms in the USA (Watchtower Society 1993). During World War II these stances caused many Witnesses to face imprisonment in the U.S, Canada, Australia, and Greece, and death in Nazi concentration camps (*Awake!* 1946:3). They also experienced severe problems under military regimes in Spain, Portugal, behind the Iron Curtain, and in parts of Africa.

Several of the norms embraced by Adventists, such as those associated with food, dress, and medical treatment, initially brought ridicule. However, their observance of Saturday, a normal work day during the nineteenth century, as their Sabbath imposed especially heavy costs, making them ineligible for many occupations. Consequently, Adventist converts were typically housewives, independent artisans and small farmers, who had autonomy over their work schedule (Graybill 1979). However, when Adventist farmers chose to rest on Saturday but work on Sundays they were, at times, arrested and imprisoned for contravening state "blue" laws. Adventists faced similar problems in many other countries also. When the five-day week became law in the USA and other industrialized countries, this improved their situation.

Strategies

The fit of outreach strategies with the cultures where they are employed has a significant impact on growth. Both Mormons and Witnesses use door-to-door approaches as their prime strategy, their goal being to arrange studies with the occupants that will result in baptisms.

These are essentially one-size-fits-all approaches. The Mormon plan is short and sharp: the format developed in the late 1950s employed a universal syllabus containing only six lessons. The most recent update, published as *Preach My Gospel* in 2004, contains five lessons and missionaries are encouraged to invite prospects to be baptized soon after starting the studies. Witnesses also employ a universal syllabus, but because they teach their beliefs fully in advance of baptism they expect studies to last six months or more.

Adventist strategies have been much more varied and they have become more eager to experiment with new outreach methods in recent years. Where interest was found in early decades, this usually led to public evangelistic meetings and ultimately to Bible studies in homes or classes that were expected to last many months. Adventists built schools, clinics and hospitals to meet the needs of people, to demonstrate and teach their lifestyle and beliefs, and to anchor the communities they formed. As membership expanded in the Developing World, local leadership was transferred gradually to nationals, beginning in Latin America. In the late 1930s such leaders initiated a major shift in evangelistic focus, from Biblical prophecies to family, personal, and social health benefits (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:540). The number of baptisms subsequently doubled, and the new approach spread widely.

Adventists began regular radio broadcasts in the USA in 1930. These were copied eventually in all Adventist regions. They began using television shortly after World War II. In 1971 they began broadcasting on short-wave radio, particularly to regions difficult to penetrate. Meanwhile, their public evangelism became increasingly diverse, ranging from local meetings featuring pastors or lay-persons as speakers to international satellite transmissions with instantaneous translation of professional evangelists (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:576-7). Large meetings have been most successful where little public entertainment is available: for example, a satellite-linked campaign drew huge crowds to a sports field in Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea, before television became available there. Meanwhile, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), formed in 1956 and funded largely by governments, became a significant humanitarian presence in much of the Developing World (ADRA 2008). In 1966, Adventists established an Institute of World Mission in recognition of the high demand that had appeared in many former colonies. The goal was to train missionaries to be culturally aware, in contrast to their earlier one-size-fits-all approach (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* 1996).

While Adventists learned from the Millerite “great disappointment” of 1844 to never again set a date for Christ’s Second Coming, Witnesses persisted in making predictions, using them to stir up excitement and spur growth. Such predictions focused on 1914, 1925, 1975, and the 1980s. Each caused a surge in the supply of publishers, and each failure a falling away (Penton 1997:57-64, 91-99; Xydias 2011a).

Since growth is greatly impacted by the supply of human resources available for outreach, and women form a majority of the active members of all three groups, the openness of each group to women’s input and activity has an important impact on their strategies and growth. The

Witnesses' Governing Body is exclusively male, and women cannot lead congregations nor, since 1986, attend Gilead classes unless their husbands are also enrolled (*Watchtower* 1986); however, they are prominent among those witnessing door-to-door. The majority of Mormon missionaries are men, but women also serve. Women are absent from the highest levels of the Mormon hierarchy, but they play a major role in maintaining congregations locally (Cornwall 1994). The Adventist prophet, Ellen White, was a woman, and during her lifetime women frequently served as officers, pastors and evangelists. However, from 1915, when White died, through 1970 women were increasingly pushed into the background. Since then, however, Adventists have gradually made more room for women once again. Women have been appointed as elders of congregations since the 1970s; lay-women increasingly conduct evangelistic series, especially in the Developing World; the number of women attending seminaries and serving as pastors has expanded steadily; and women hold an increasing number of positions in the Adventist hierarchy (Lawson 2000). In 2011 both the North American and Trans-European Divisions made women eligible for election as president of unions and conferences within their territories. Adventism's embrace of women has strengthened its growth.

The ability of these three groups to adapt their outreach strategies to non-Christians has varied. Adventists in Burma, for example, originally recruited almost exclusively from among minority tribes such as the Karens, who were Christian, rather than Burmese Buddhists, and in India they baptized Baptists and Anglicans rather than Hindus and Muslims. Over time all groups realized that Animists in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific were ready converts. However, they experienced much success when they attempted outreach among Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists. For example, when Adventists made a convert in a Muslim village, he was typically then driven away and therefore prevented from spreading their message among the networks in which he had been embedded.

Mormons provide a useful illustration here. Their missionaries are trained at Missionary Training Centers, where those needing to learn a language spend more time, but the basic course lasts only three weeks (Stewart 2008:329, 355-56). There are no trained missiologists on staff, and therefore no serious attempts to prepare students for the beliefs and cultures of the world religions they may encounter. Mormons have yet to place missionaries in most of the countries of the 10-40 degrees north quadrant, which stretches from northern Africa through the Middle East, Southern Asia, and the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, to China. The dominant religions there are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. Even in Africa, Mormon evangelism has been largely confined to Christian and Animist regions. For instance, in Nigeria, the African country with the highest Mormon membership, all five missions are in the predominantly Christian south of the country: not one is located in the Muslim north. Thus, Mormons have provided limited supply to most countries where non-Christian religions are dominant. Similarly, the training of Witness missionaries at their Gilead School lasts only five months, so that they too are ill-prepared for outreach to adherents of such religions.

In the late 1980s Adventist leaders became very conscious that Adventism had been growing almost exclusively in Christian and animist regions. This resulted in a shift of resources to the 10-40 degrees north quadrant, which contained 60% of the world's population but only 10% of all Adventists. The new program, dubbed "Global Mission," experienced broad success, especially in India, although there the influx has been mostly from the Dalit caste, whose members have reason to feel alienated from Hinduism. Adventists were planting an average of one new congregation per day within this quadrant in 1990; by 2005 there were 11 per day. Between 1990 and 2002 the listed Adventist membership in the 10-40 quadrant increased by 254% while that in the rest of the world grew by 86% (Ryan 2010). Short-wave radio broadcasts have proved important in penetrating this quadrant (Shoun 2010).

The most dramatic impact of Global Mission has been widespread people movements and baptisms among Muslims who, because of the strategy followed, are not listed on the official Adventist rolls. Adventist missiologists noted similarities between Adventism and Islam in the 1960s (e.g., rejecting pork and alcohol; see Oster 1963; McEdward 2011). Study of the *Qur'an* had revealed that Adventists could find support there for many of their beliefs, such as the expectation that the return of Jesus will usher in judgment and the end of the era. Nevertheless, Adventists had converted few Muslims because of the continued use of traditional outreach strategies. In 1989, a Center was established to study Islam and to develop new outreach strategies to Muslims. Similar centers focusing on other world religions were created in quick succession. This new contextualized approach built on one already employed by some Evangelicals: the use of indigenous personnel to foster "Jesus movements" among people groups. It was designed to reach people within their communal and cultural frameworks, leave them in place using the *Qur'an* and involved in their mosques, but accepting the ultimate authority of the Bible and following Jesus (Isa) as Lord and Savior. The result has been not the conversion of isolated individuals as in the past, but the emergence of distinctively Adventist "end-time Jesus movements" among existing social networks. Since those employing this approach have found that it is essential for converts to remain enmeshed in their social networks, they have not urged them to join a formally organized Christian church, whose use of unfamiliar worship and religious language could cause serious security dangers. They fellowship instead with other members of their Jesus movement, which is regarded as indigenous. Most converts are unaware of the movement's Adventist connection. They are able to remain in their communities, witnessing there within the indigenous worldview, rather than facing rejection (Phillips 2011a:281-291).

Opposition to this approach from Adventist leaders resulted in the removal of its mentors at the end of 2008. However, it continues to be used among Muslims by their home-grown missionaries. It was estimated in 2011 that 40,000 Muslims have been baptized as a result of this approach, and massive people movements totaling several hundred thousand people are en route to baptism throughout the Muslim world (Phillips 2011b). A similar approach is also flourishing among Burmese Buddhists, who had previously been almost totally unreached (Maberly 2009).

Fertility

Religious groups have a special opportunity to shape the religious identities of children born to their members. Consequently, variations in birthrates are likely to impact both growth and future outreach (Scheittle 2011). Mormon birthrates have been especially high, dating back to the years when they practiced polygamy, and continuing after they abandoned that. However, their birthrates in the Developed World have declined over recent decades, a broad trend associated with modernization, even though Mormon families continue to average about one child above the norm in the USA. On the other hand, Witness families tend to be smaller than normal, for they are encouraged to wait until after Armageddon to have their children so that child-rearing does not interfere with their publishing activities. For their part, Adventists in the USA and other Western societies tend to reflect the norms when it comes to size, while their families are larger in the Developing World, also following the norms there.

The combination of immigration, polygamy, and extra-large families was the initial foundation of Mormon growth in the USA. In recent decades, as their birthrate has declined, their growth-rate there has fallen behind that of Adventists and Witnesses, who have proved more effective in evangelizing immigrants.

Retention

What appears as strong demand initially may in fact prove to be fleeting, resulting in poor membership retention. Loss of members is related to ineffective socialization and a failure to create strong bonds to the group. Weak socialization and/or loss of members in turn impacts supply to the extent that it lowers internal support for a group's outreach programs.

Early Mormon converts tended to be drawn from the urban and rural working class (Langland 1992:1262-5). However, their descendants in the USA experienced upward mobility over time, so that by the latter part of the twentieth century members had become more prosperous and better educated. Nevertheless, most converts, especially in the Developing World, continue to be poor (Gottlieb and Wiley 1986). It is now clear that the majority of such converts in the Developing World quickly become inactive (Gooren 2008; Prince and Wright 2005:230-252). This pattern is not visible in the official published data because of the Mormon practice of leaving missing members on the rolls; however, it becomes very clear when official data are compared with the much lower numbers who identify themselves as Mormons in national censuses and in lower than expected numbers of stakes among large listed memberships in those areas (Phillips 2006). The areas with the highest membership increases, Latin America and the Philippines, have extremely low retention rates. This is likely due to the use of short-term foreign missionaries, a rush to baptism without sufficient commitment, and low commitment of congregations to continued socialization and nurturing after the attention of missionaries shifts to other potential converts. Gooren estimates that 50% of converts disappear within the first six months, and that the total exit rate ultimately reaches 75%

(Gooren 2008; Stewart 2008: 332). Mormons are more successful in retaining those who have already experienced some upward mobility (Gooren 2010). This finding explains the data from the 2000 Mexican census discussed above, which showed that those still identifying with Mormonism there have relatively high incomes.

A comparison of the number of baptisms by Witnesses with the growth in Publishers during the years from 1999 through 2009 indicated that Publishers expanded at a rate equivalent to 51.5% of total baptisms. That is, just over half of their converts became active Witnesses. The evidence suggests that the loss of children raised as Witnesses is especially high, compared to Mormons and Adventists. Both the latter have education systems designed to socialize their children into the faith, but Witnesses lack such a system. Additionally, several interviewees have mentioned that Witness teenagers often become deeply resentful of their peculiarity.

Among Adventists, losses of converts from large evangelistic campaigns can be high. For example, at a meeting with all the pastors in Kinshasa, Congo, two and three years after campaigns by visiting American evangelists had resulted in a total of 1,600 converts, they reported that only 50 of these (3%) were still attending church. In the Developed World at least 50% of youth become inactive (Dudley and Kangas 1990). Adventists decided in 2000 to audit rolls everywhere. As this has proceeded, Brazil and the Philippines, both of which had experienced rapid growth, reduced their membership by about 300,000; other regions saw losses as well (Lechleitner 2010). The audit continues.

A comparison of the total number of members dropped or missing with the total added through baptism and profession of faith during the past decade shows the impact of the audit during the second-half of the decade. Between 2000 and 2004 the mean number lost was 27.6% of the number added; between 2005 and 2009 this figure rose to 38.4%. These statistics suggest that the loss of new converts, while substantial, is lower than that of Mormons and Witnesses.

EXAMPLES OF ASYNCHRONOUS SUPPLY AND DEMAND

While most of the examples above illustrate synchronous relationships between supply and demand, these need not and often do not align to result in rapid growth. This was so for all three groups in the Muslim countries of the Middle East and Northern Africa until recently. Other examples include Mormons in Africa. Mormons have now had missions in Africa for approaching 30 years and have seen rapid growth in recent years, but they have not yet gained momentum in 27 African countries—mostly those with Muslim majorities. The same is true of Witnesses in several African countries even though their history there is longer. In each of these cases, demand for these two American Originals has been low or, at times, supply limited. (Adventists have experienced much higher numerical growth in most of these countries.)

Examples illustrating supply without demand are fairly easy to find. However, demand without

supply is more difficult to illustrate. Nevertheless, there are some clear examples of this. One has already been mentioned: there were self-started would-be Mormon congregations in Nigeria in the 1970s that wanted supply, but this was at a time when Mormons, because of their theology, chose not to send missionaries to people of African descent.

A second example is found in the Adventist experience in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, where they have added almost one million members since 1995, almost all of whom are Dalits. During this time, Adventists were approached frequently by representatives of the high Brahmin caste, who sought missionaries to work with them also. Adventist leaders were eager to respond, but they insisted that the Brahmins follow the Adventist expectation that converts become part of existing congregations and constituencies: they refused to supply missionaries who would deal with them separately. Since mixing with members of the lowest caste was unacceptable to Brahmins, demand from them evaporated (Watts 2009).

A third example is the experience of Witnesses in Zambia, where their missionaries were banned. However, poorly educated returning migrant workers, who had been converted in South Africa, were able to tap demand (Assimeng 1970).

In short, when supply and demand coincide, growth is rapid. At times demand is low while supply is high and the inverse can also be observed--high demand with low supply. In both cases, growth is either slow or non-existent.

CONCLUSION

Needing to explain the diverse geographic distributions of Mormons, Adventists, and Witnesses, this article further developed the theory put forward recently by Cragun and Lawson (2010), which argues that successful geographic spread and growth depends on a confluence of supply and demand factors. The data analyzed here show that for a group to spread and grow it must have representatives present to make overtures to potential converts and employ outreach strategies that appeal effectively to the population of the targeted locations (supply factors). Success also depends on the readiness of groups within the population being evangelized to respond positively to what is presented to them, and the extent to which converts remain committed and are retained (demand factors). Spread and growth depend on these two groups of factors aligning.

The Cragun/Lawson thesis holds that demand is shaped like an inverted-U: it is low prior to modernization, high during the modernizing process, and trails off again once societies become post-modern, materialistic and secular. When outreach occurs during a period of modernization, the result is rapid growth. The experiences of Mormons, Adventists and Witnesses detailed above confirm this theory. Each group has grown rapidly in countries during periods of modernization but more slowly in pre-modern and modernized countries. Differences in timing

and strategies created significant variations in their geographic spread and in where members are concentrated. Additionally, the differing messages, strategies, and cultures of these three groups resulted in vastly different SES profiles and dissimilar membership retention profiles.

All three groups have experienced a slowing of growth since 1990. This has been especially so for Mormons and Witnesses. The number of converts to Mormonism tumbled from a high of 330,877 in 1990 to a low of 241,239 in 2004 (*Church Almanac* 2003:5). In spite of their impressive workforce, Witnesses' baptisms declined more sharply, from a peak of 375,923 in 1997 to a low of 247,631 in 2005. Baptisms for both groups have increased only erratically since. The amount of effort required per Witness' baptism has increased globally from between one and two thousand hours per convert in 1970-76 to between five and six thousand since 2004 (Xydias 2011c). Three key factors are at work in both cases: 1) the secularization of the Developed World, where both groups were well represented; 2) a slowing of growth in several countries in the Developing World, including parts of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, because of saturation and spreading secularization; and 3) poor retention.

In contrast, Adventist baptisms have increased during these years, from 505,250 in 1988 to 1,022,399 in 2000, to over one million per year since 2004, with a peak of 1,074,938 in 2006. Nevertheless, the Adventist overall growth-rate has declined gradually since 1990, though not as steeply as those of Mormons and Witnesses. Adventists are much less impacted by the secularization of the Developed World because their membership is much less concentrated there, and their retention is higher than that of the other two groups.

The theoretical understanding of religious growth and decline we have outlined combines three important elements: supply, demand, and secularization. When supply synchronizes with demand, growth is the result. When the relationship is asynchronous, growth does not occur. Moreover, all of this occurs along an ever-changing path toward secularization, when both supply and demand diminish, curtailing growth and eventually resulting in decline.

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