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**United Church Prepares For Sweeping Changes**

By MARGARET McLEAN  
While recognizing that it did not provide "final and ultimate answers" the York Presbytery of the United Church accepted recently a report by Project Planning Associates Limited which will see 35 of the Presbytery's churches closed in the next 20 years, 11 new churches created and eight enlarged.

In introducing the report at King City, Rev. Albion Wright, chairman of York Presbytery stated that the church would "not follow minutely every recommendation nor casually cast it aside". It was intended, he said, as a guide to the location and size of churches, the expansion and maintenance of existing churches and the grouping of churches in changes.

Population in the area is expected to double in the next 20 years, Mr. Wright noted and the consolidation of industry, shopping centres, schools and recreation areas will have broad effects on the church, socially and physically.

York Presbytery includes all of North Gwillimbury, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch, Markham, Scott and Uxbridge Townships; large parts of King, Vaughan, Georgina and Reach and small parts of Tecumseth, West Gwillimbury, Scarborough, Pickering and Brock Townships. It consists of 57 churches grouped in 30 charges. While most of York County north of the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway is included, Thornhill is not, but is part of Toronto Presbytery.

The report, recognizing that the average cost of operating a modern church in a Toronto suburb is \$22,000 per year, plus \$15,000 for capital improvements, pointed out that York Presbytery could have churches comparable to those in Canadian urban areas only if fewer churches with larger membership were created.

This would result in churches nearly full every Sunday, large choirs, an adequate number of lay leaders, well-trained ministers and well designed and inspiring sanctuaries and buildings. Based on the assumption that Canadian and Ontario economic growth will continue, the report noted that 90% of future population increase is expected in the corridor along Yonge Street. **EXPECT RAPID POPULATION INCREASE**

Based on existing official plans, development is expected to be rapid between 1965 and 1970 in Markham, Unionville, Concord and Thornhill districts, all located at interchanges of proposed controlled-access highways, close to large industrial development, in areas suitable for sewage disposal and with plants either under construction or authorized.

With sewage plants now operating at existing capacity and no plans for new ones, growth in the Richmond Hill and Aurora areas is expected to be slower for the next few years. Newmarket, Aurora, Richmond Hill, Maple and Stouffville are expected to have a smaller percentage of growth. Although Newmarket has a good physical site for development, Aurora and Richmond Hill are more difficult to service with small streams limiting sewage disposal.

It was noted that while farm population in Canada as a whole had declined 19% between 1951 and 1961, in Ontario it had declined 25% and in York Presbytery by 27%. The trend was strongest near Toronto where the drop in farm population was 38% in these years, compared to 7% decline in Scott and Georgina Townships.

Predicted land use was based on site inspections, interviews with municipal and provincial officials, suitability of site for anticipated development, location of existing and anticipated sewage treatment plants, the report noted.

In the Aurora, Oak Ridges, King City, Sharon and Mount

Albert districts, it was felt that dominant factors in future development would be topography and drainage; peripheral development only was forecast for Schomberg, Sutton and Uxbridge.

No definite prediction was made for development in the areas, already designated future residential, of Steeles Avenue district, Thornhill East, Richmond Hill South and the western portion of the Thornhill area, as it was felt that development here could not be isolated from the general spread of Metro.

However, three possibilities were mentioned for these areas: either they may be found less suitable for development than other areas adjacent to Metro and would therefore grow slowly; they may be equally as attractive as others and grow more rapidly with a possible 50,000 population in the Steeles district, 30,000 in east Thornhill, 14,000 in south Richmond Hill and 22,000 in west Thornhill; 404 and 407 may bring rapid development with 75,000 in Steeles district, 45,000 in Thornhill east, 20,000 in south Richmond Hill and 34,000 in Thornhill west in the next 20 years.

It was felt that the possibility of rapid development in these areas is considerable. **PLAN 21 CHURCH DISTRICTS**

In the light of the foregoing, Project Planning Associates evolved 21 church districts in the presbytery centered on Aurora, Cedar Grove, Georgina Island, Goodwood, Keswick, Kettleby, King, Maple, Markham, Melville, Mount Albert, Newmarket, Oak Ridges, Queensville, Richmond Hill, Stouffville, Sutton, Unionville, Uxbridge, Wesley and Zephyr.

A three and a half mile radius from church sites was used, increasing to five miles in rural areas. Individual churches were evaluated in terms of existing acreage, resident membership, average attendance, seating capacity, condition of buildings,

nearness to existing or future population centres and potential for expansion. It was felt that the minimum sized church should have 257 members, with a 300 seat church on at least two acres of land; a 500 seat church would require three acres.

**TO ACQUIRE NEW SITES**  
It was recommended that a three-acre site be acquired at Concord for a 1,000 member church with a seating capacity of 550. At Goodwood, it was recommended that the present two-acre property be increased to four; at King City, the present 2.1 acre site be increased to 2.5 acres; that an additional 3.1 acres be added to the present 3.1 acre site at Maple; that the present 3.5 acres at Oak Ridges also be doubled; that at Richmond Hill, a further 1.5 acres be added to a present 8-acre site, a further 3 acres be added to the second site, now 5.1 acres, and that a third site of 3 acres be acquired; at Richvale, a 2-acre site be acquired and at Victoria Square, three acres be added to the present 3-acre site.

It was also recommended that the following churches be closed: Ashworth, Ballantrae, Bethesda, Box Grove, Brown's Corners, Calvary, Cherrywood, Dunkerron, Epsom, Ebenezer, Fifth Line, Headford, Hope (already closed), Hartman, Laskay, Lemonville, Locust Hill, Melville, Mount Pisgah, Mussellman's Lake, Pottageville, Ravenshoe, Siloam, Sharon, Stouffville, Snowball, Sandford, Temperanceville, Teston, Udonia, Utica, Virginia, Vroomantone, Wesley and Whitevale.

New churches were recommended, at Aurora, Concord, Kettleby, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Richvale, Stouffville and Wesley. Expansion of eight churches at Cedar Grove, Keswick, Maple, Mount Albert, Schomberg, Sutton, Unionville and Victoria Square, was also recommended.

With respect to Brown's Corners Church, it was noted that the Metro official plan calls for development south and west of the intersection of Highways 404 and 407 (proposed) and if this development takes place, three new churches would be needed in the area in the next 30 years and it was felt that Brown's Corners would not be able to compete.

However, if the development does not occur or spreads easterly, this church could probably remain in existence.

With respect to the closing of the Headford church, while it was found to be a fine church in good condition, it was felt that Victoria Square church was larger, more centrally located and better suited to be a district church. Similarly, it was felt that Ebenezer church was not well placed.

**END THREE POINT CHARGES**  
As well as accepting the report of Project Planning Associates Limited, at the November 23 meeting, the presbytery also accepted a recommendation of its Planning and Development Committee that three point charges no longer be considered acceptable and that the congregations of Goodwood, King City, Sandford-Zephyr, Victoria Square and Whitevale be prepared to eliminate these by June, 1967.

It was also agreed that immediate land acquisition be considered at Aurora, Concord, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Richvale. When a pastoral vacancy occurs at any of the churches recommended to be closed, the planning and development committee (one of which is to be elected for all congregations) will consult with the Presbytery Planning and Development Committee in addition to the Pastoral Relations Committee.

The Presbytery Planning and Development Committee consists of Rev. Binnington, chairman, Rev. A. A. Lavis, Unionville, Rev. A. R. Wright, Markham and Del Booth, lay representative, of Kettleby.

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**Before The Magistrate**  
**Threatening Couple With Beating Brings Conviction For R. Hill Boy**  
A Toronto youth, Gerald Winiarski, 19, who was remanded two weeks ago for decision on his defence counsel's argument in a preliminary hearing on a charge of possession of burglar tools, was committed to trial.

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