

Lyle Schaller, leading church consultant, dies at age 91

by [Christian Century staff](#) in the [April 15, 2015](#) issue

Lyle E. Schaller, a leading church consultant, died March 18 at age 91.

He wrote or edited nearly 100 books, including *44 Ways to Increase Church Attendance* and *The Ice Cube Is Melting*.

For more than two decades, he was affiliated with the Yokefellow Institute in Richmond, Indiana.

David Neff of *Christianity Today* in 2007 called him “the dean of church consultants.”

He was a city planner before he became a United Methodist minister, graduating in 1957 from what was then Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois.

Schaller wrote for the *Christian Century* for decades. In a 1969 article on the high crime levels at the time, he considered how the local church would respond. “Will the primary emphasis be on law and order, and only a residual effort made toward solving the problems at the root of violence?” he asked. “Or will first priority be given to securing social, economic, and racial justice, to curing the causes of alienation and placing rehabilitation ahead of repression and revenge?”

Daniel V. A. Olson, currently professor of sociology at Purdue, wrote in a 1993 *Century* article that one of Schaller’s key insights was that congregational size affects “behavior settings,” so pastoral strategies have to vary with the size of the church.