

Leadership Survey Report for *Adventist Review*

Conducted for the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

By the Center for Creative Ministry

2013

Introduction

A survey of administrators and department directors employed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world was conducted in the fall of 2012 to gather input regarding the *Adventist Review* primary version in English published at the General Conference headquarters. The completed sample included 403 respondents from the General Conference, Division, Union and Conference/Mission levels.

A paper copy of the survey questionnaire was distributed at the 2012 Annual Council and some Division Year-end Meetings and collected during the meetings. An online version of the same questionnaire was made available and an Email announcement with a link sent to all Union officers with instructions to re-send it to their department directors, institution administrators and local conference/mission officers. Although the survey questionnaire was translated into several major languages, this report is largely about responses in English.

The sample represents a significant share of the leadership of the Adventist Church in the English-speaking world. It should be kept in mind that the standard allowance for sampling error in a sample of this size is six percentage points, plus or minus.

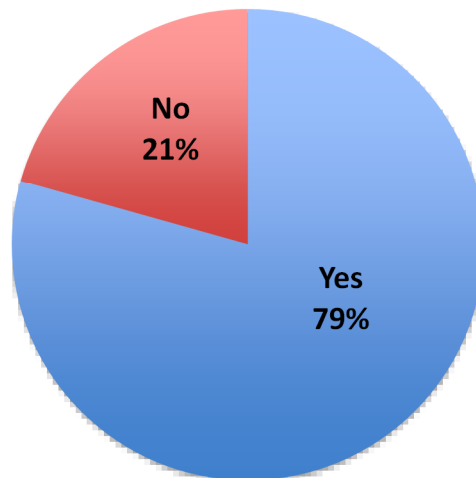
The survey was conducted under a contract with the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics and Research by the Center for Creative Ministry, a research organization affiliated with the North American Division church resources network which has conducted many other survey research projects for the NAD and other Seventh-day Adventist Church organizations over the last two decades.

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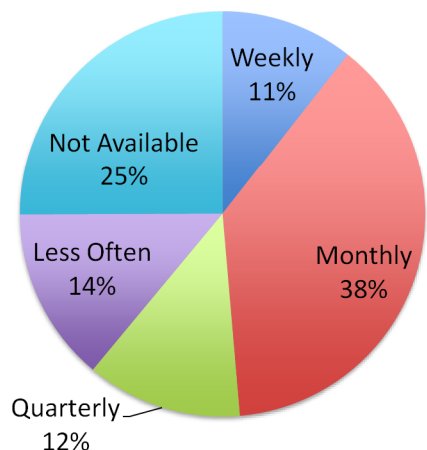
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Do you receive both *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines?



Four out of five Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders receive both the *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World* magazines, although there may be some differences in content based on which edition or language version of each periodical the individual church leader may receive. Church leaders from Australia are less likely to receive both magazines, as are those from Africa. Church leaders at the world headquarters and those working in the North American Division are more likely to receive both publications, as are church leaders from South America.

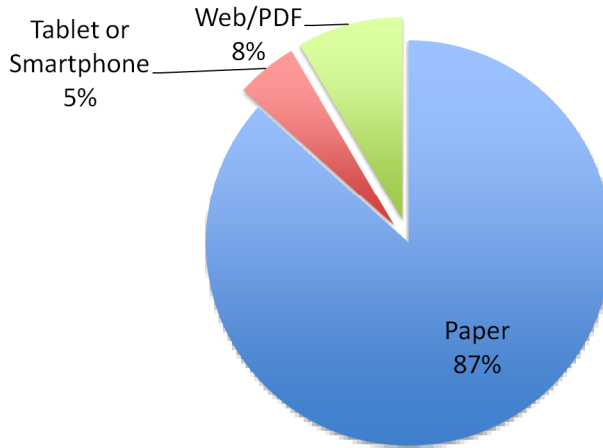
Frequency of Receiving *Adventist Review*



Adventist Review is a weekly publication, yet the majority of church leaders receive it monthly or less often. About one in eight receive only a quarterly edition and two out of five (39 percent) receive it less often or live where it is not available. For many church leaders the *Adventist Review* is not a weekly experience as it has long been assumed to be and is for many older readers in North America.

Four out of five leaders who work in Europe are more likely to receive *Adventist Review* weekly or monthly. Three out of five of those working in Australia receive *Adventist Review* monthly. Church leaders who are employed in the Inter-American Division are more likely to receive *Adventist Review* only quarterly. Those employed in Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division are more likely to receive *Adventist Review* rarely or never, which is true for those employed in the Middle East and South-Asia Pacific Division.

Format in Which *Adventist Review* is Read

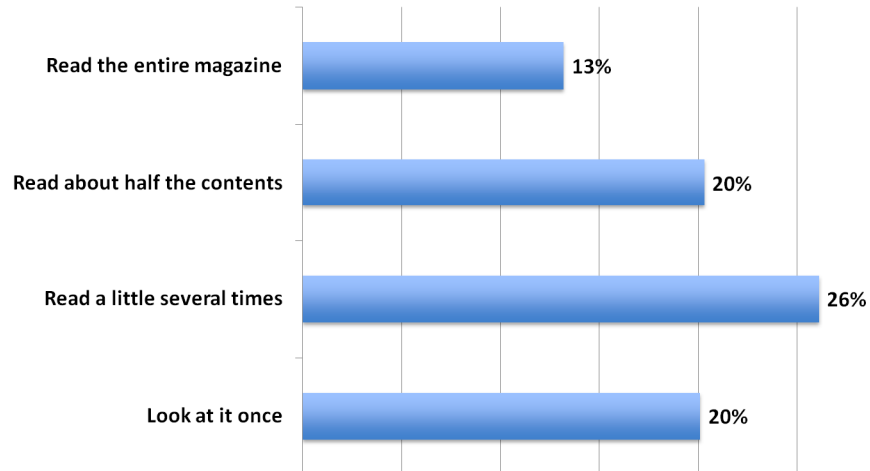


Very few Adventist Church leaders are using the new electronic media when they read the *Adventist Review*. Only about one in eight indicate that they read the magazine in PDF or on the Web or on a tablet computer or a Smartphone. Those leaders who are employed in Asian divisions are more likely to read the magazine in an electronic format.



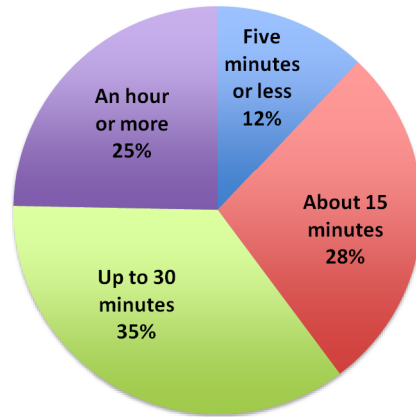
The majority of the respondents to this survey indicate that they usually read the *Adventist Review* in English and another quarter in Portuguese or Spanish. Only four percent read the French version and very few of the respondents read the other language editions. Other reports include information from the readers in the South American Division and the Euro-Asia Division.

When I Look at *Adventist Review* magazine



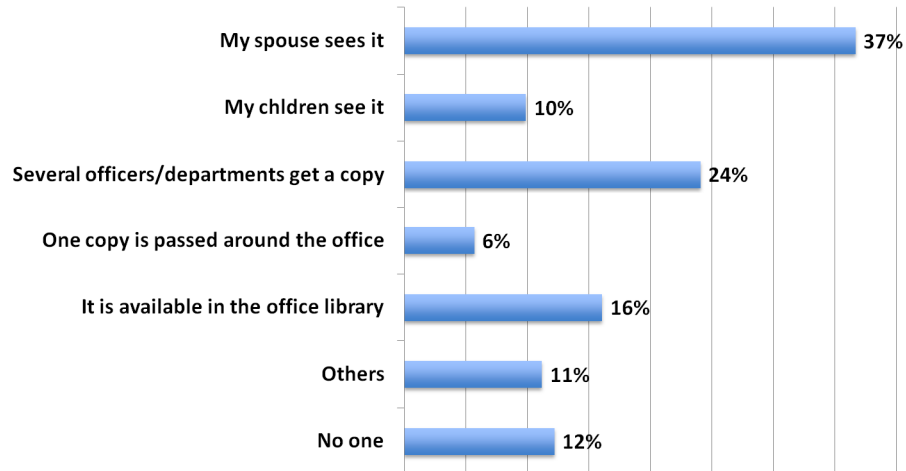
Most Adventist Church leaders do **not** read the *Adventist Review* cover to cover. One in five say that they read about half the contents of each issue that comes to them and one in five say that they only look at it once, while one in four indicate that they read a little over several different times. Just one in eight (13 percent) indicate that they read the entire issue. Women read slightly more of the content than men.

Time Typically Spent Looking at *Adventist Review*



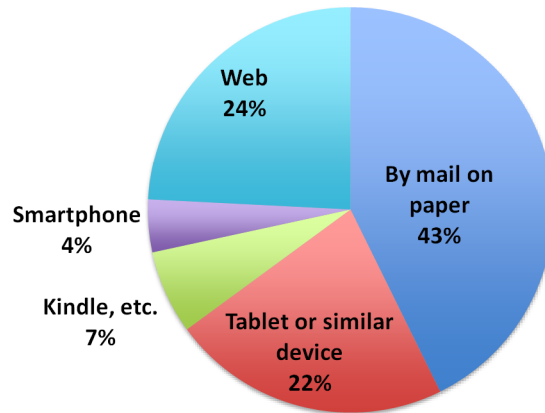
Most Adventist Church leaders spend only a half hour or less looking at each issue of the *Adventist Review* when it comes to them, which is consistent with the answers to the previous question. Clearly, most church leaders do not read carefully every article included. Only one in four report that they spent an hour or more reading the magazine. It gets a quick scan by most church leaders, not an in-depth study. Secretaries and Department Directors spend the less time reading *Adventist Review* whereas Institution executives followed by presidents spend more time reading it.

Who else in your family or office looks at your copy of *Adventist Review*?



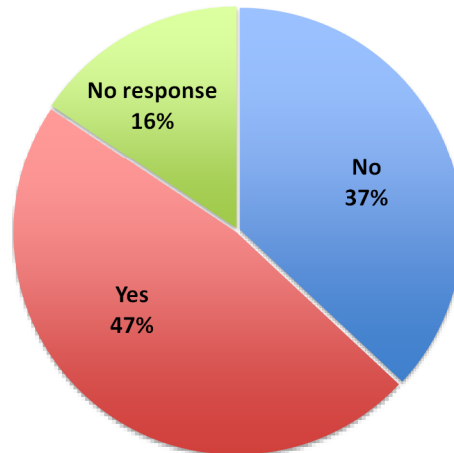
Nearly half (46 percent) of church leaders indicate that copies of the *Adventist Review* go to several different departments, are available in the office library or are passed around the office in their denominational organization. About a third of Adventist leaders share their copy of the *Adventist Review* with their wife or husband. Just one in eight respondents said that they are the only person who sees their copy of the *Adventist Review*. This clearly indicates that most copies of the periodical are read by a number of individuals. The number of copies produced can be multiplied to get an estimate of the actual readership.

Delivery System Preferred for *Adventist Review*



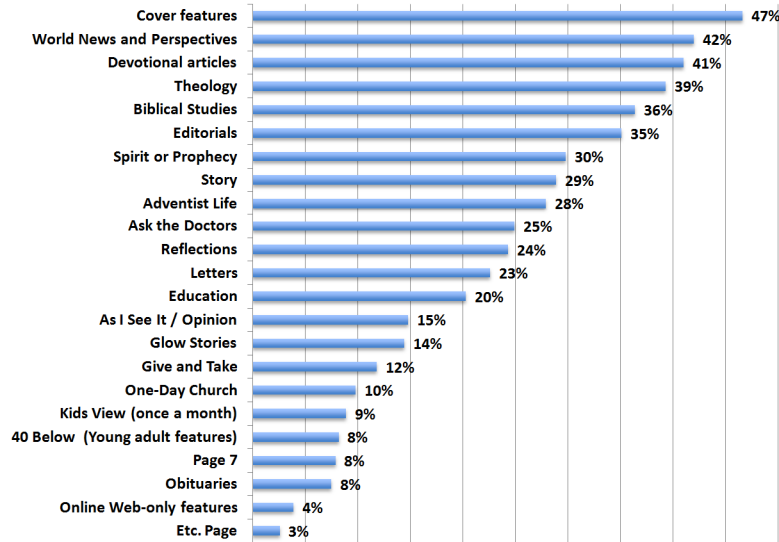
The majority of Adventist Church leaders would prefer to receive the *Adventist Review* through an electronic device of one kind or another. Those who are employed in the South Pacific Division or South American Division are even more likely to give one of these responses, as are those who hold other than Bachelor's degree. Two in five Adventist leaders prefer to continue to receive *Adventist Review* printed on paper. Those who were born before 1946 are more likely to give this response, as are those who are employed in Africa.

Would you use a downloadable audio version of *Adventist Review*?



Nearly half of the respondents indicate that they would make use of a downloadable audio version of the *Adventist Review* which they could listen to while traveling or exercising. Just a little more than a third indicated that they definitely would not use a version of this type. It seems as if the interest in this product may be near a threshold where careful consideration should be given to this possibility.

What parts of *Adventist Review* do you usually read?



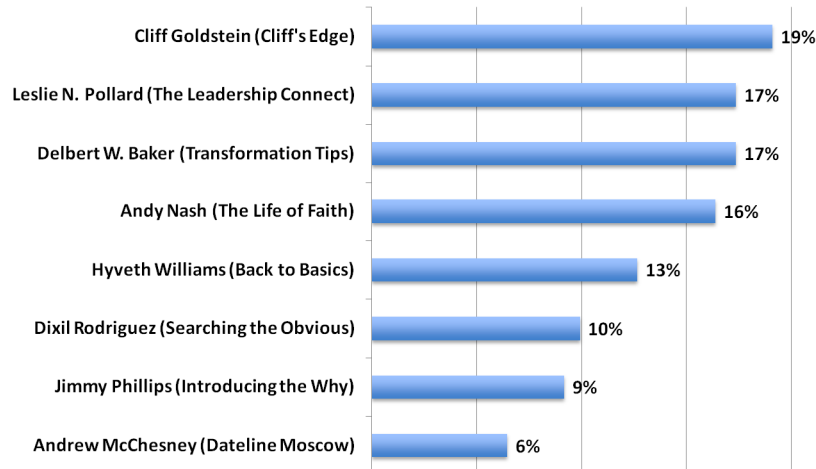
The majority of Adventist Church leaders do not usually read any specific feature in the *Adventist Review*, although nearly half say that they usually read the cover article. About two out of five read the news section, the devotional articles and articles on theology. Better than a third read articles on Biblical studies and the editorials. Less than a third usually read the other materials published in each issue. Six features have readership by church leaders in the single digits.

Features Most Favored by Church Leaders Reading *Adventist Review*

Devotional articles	18
Biblical Studies	10
World news and perspectives	10
Education	9
Theology	8
Spirit of prophecy	6
Cover story	5
News updates from the world church	5
Adventist Heritage	4
Adventist Life	4
Reflections	4
Features	3
Health	3
Letters	3

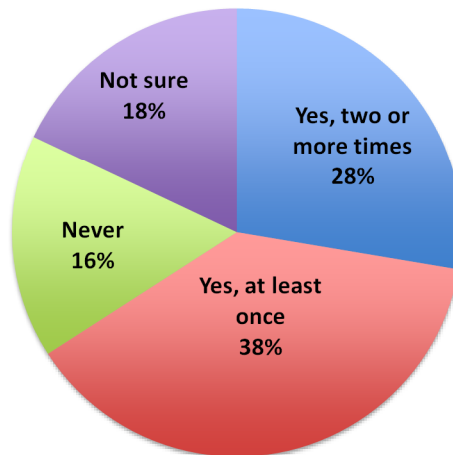
Asked to identify their most favorite feature in the *Adventist Review*, respondents expressed a wide range of opinion and relatively small percentages selected each type of feature. As in the previous item, devotional articles, news and articles about Biblical studies and theology topped the list. The wide range of preferences indicate how hard the editors have to work to meet the needs of their readers among church leadership.

Frequently Read *Adventist Review* Columnists by Church Leaders



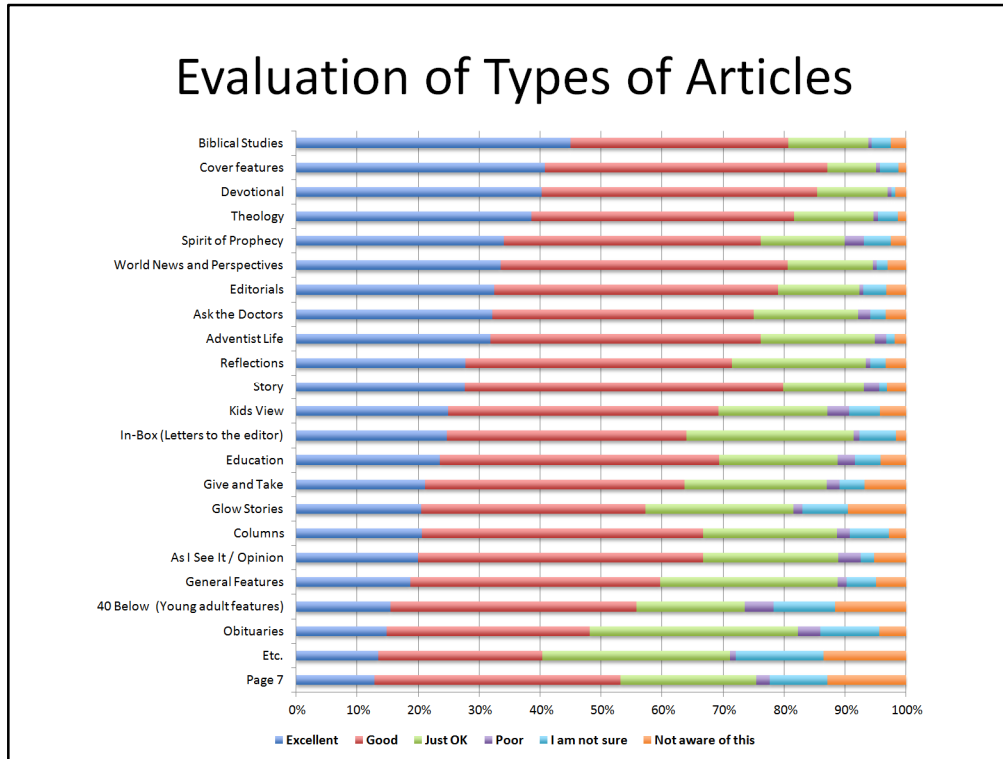
Cliff Goldstein is the most popular columnist among church leaders, although less than one in five picked him. Almost an equal share went to three other columnists—Leslie Pollard, Delbert Baker and Andy Nash. Women columnists are significantly less likely than men to be picked as favorites by the respondents. Again, the wide spread of responses indicates how much work the editorial staff has to put into finding writers and material that satisfies a majority of the respondents.

Have you seen a story in the *Adventist Review* from your region?



The majority of church leaders report that they have seen a story from their part of the world in the *Adventist Review* at least once. A little more than a quarter say that they have seen an article for their region more than once and nearly two in five report they have seen such a story at least once. About two out of five church leaders from Latin America indicate that they have never seen a story from their area, about a third of all participating church leaders indicate that they have never seen a story from their area or that they do not remember.

Evaluation of Types of Articles



The majority of respondents rated almost all of the types of articles listed as “excellent” or “good,” the two most positive choices in a five-point scale. At the same time no item received an “excellent” rating from a majority of the respondents. The strongest ratings—in which 80 percent or more gave an “excellent” or “good” evaluation—went to cover stories, devotional articles, pieces on theology and Biblical studies, news stories and the “Story” feature. Editorials came very close to the same very positive rating. A combination of the top two ratings were given by about 70 to 75 percent of the respondents to Spirit of Prophecy materials, Adventist Life, Ask the Doctor, Reflections, Kids View and articles on education. Only two features fell below a majority in the top two categories; Etc. and obituaries. In both cases the percentage of respondents who gave a positive evaluation was larger than the percentage that gave a negative evaluation. These items fell below 50 percent because of large numbers who said they were not sure or not even aware.

Other Topics Church Leaders would Like to Include in *Adventist Review*

Adventist heritage, history, identity	14%
Family, marriage, sex	12%
Testimonies	9%
Doctrinal issues	7%
Answers to difficult questions	5%
Eschatological issues	5%
Leadership articles	5%
Prophecy issues	5%
Women's issues	5%
Articles from outside the US	4%
Biblical studies	4%
Cultural issues	4%
Youth issues	4%

One in seven of the respondents or just under 14 percent of the total answered this question. The responses were spread over many topics and a large number of the responses were mentioned by only one person and cannot be clustered. The table above displays the percentages of the respondents to this item who gave a response that at least two individuals wrote.

The largest number of these responses are suggestions for more articles on the Adventist heritage, history and identity. Almost as many respondents wrote suggestions for more articles on family life, marriage and sexuality. About one in ten of the responses to this question suggested publishing the personal testimonies of church members. Smaller numbers made other suggestions, including some categories that were included in previous questions.

Suggestions and Comments on *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*

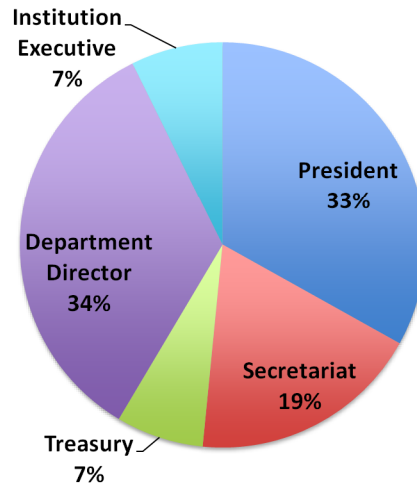
Better, wider and more timely distribution of both magazines	38
Positive appreciation of Magazines	30
Greater global representation of writers/News from all regions	10
Cost (combine the two periodicals into one)	4
Electronic (online) distribution	4
Lack of open view (diversity in church, include world outside Adventists)	3
Articles too long, duplicate information in AR and AW	3
More mission minded and sensitive to Muslim issues	2
Fewer articles from president; no leader-worship	1
Less office updates	1
More Biblical, less contemporary	1
More focus on Adventist lifestyle	1
Not worth continuing	1
Use more scientific research to support the Bible	1

A total of 100 respondents or about a quarter of the total wrote general suggestions and comments. The numbers displayed above are both raw numbers and percentages of the responses to this item. Because the questionnaire covered both publications, it is impossible to separate those comments referring to the *Adventist Review* from those referring to *Adventist World*.

The largest number of comments addressed distribution problems with the magazines not being delivered on time, not being accessible at all in some parts of the world, not being translated into some languages, not being distributed or promoted widely enough. These comments assume that both magazines are important and good. Another 30 comments expressed appreciation and affirmation for both magazines.

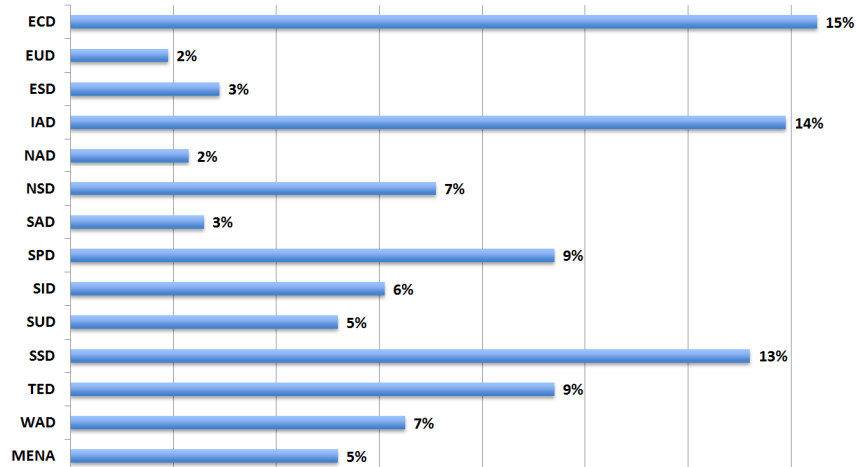
One in ten comments suggested a need for content (especially in the *Adventist Review*) to be more widely representative of the global church, publishing articles and news from all regions. Four comments expressed concern about the magazines being too costly in some parts of the world and two of these suggest that the two publications might be combined into one. Four respondents suggested that more be done to distribute the magazines in electronic versions (iPad, smartphones, Internet, etc.). Three comments suggested that the magazines include articles showing greater diversity within the church and more material from outside the Adventist world and that they simply be more open-minded. Three comments expressed concern about too much information (long articles, duplication in both magazines, etc.).

Church Role



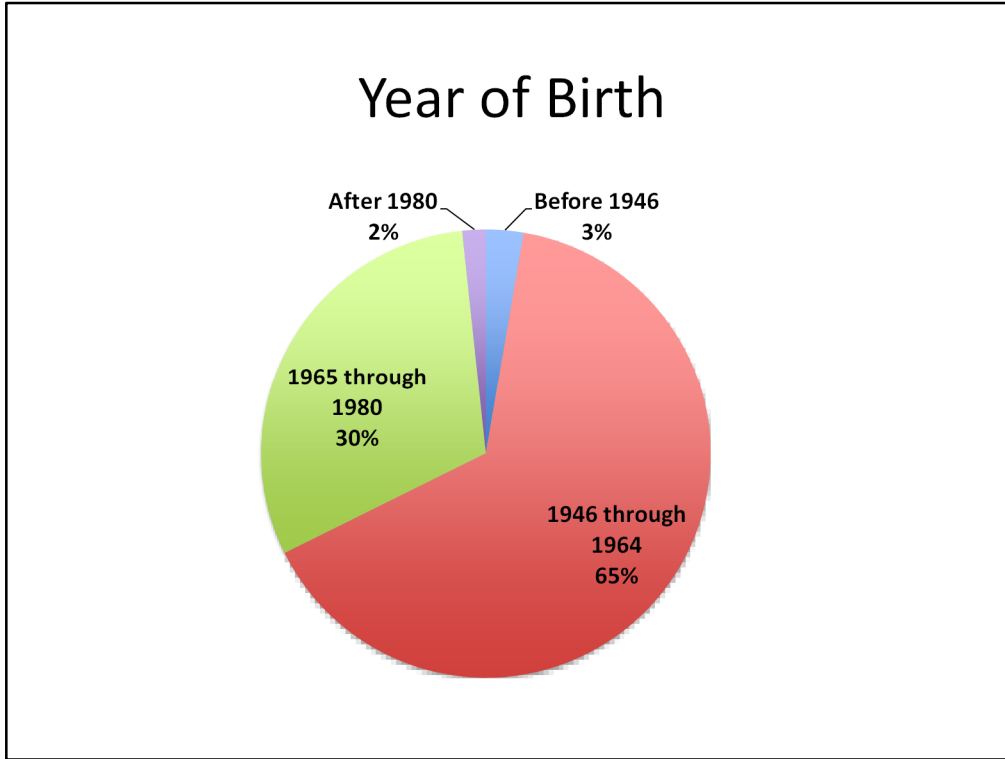
Two thirds of the respondents are field and institutional administrators and a third are department heads. This survey includes responses from administrators at all levels of church organization: General Conference, Divisions, Unions, Local Conferences and Missions. The number of administrators here is out of proportion to the actual number of employees in each category, as is the low percentage of treasurers and institutional administrators.

Respondents by Divisions

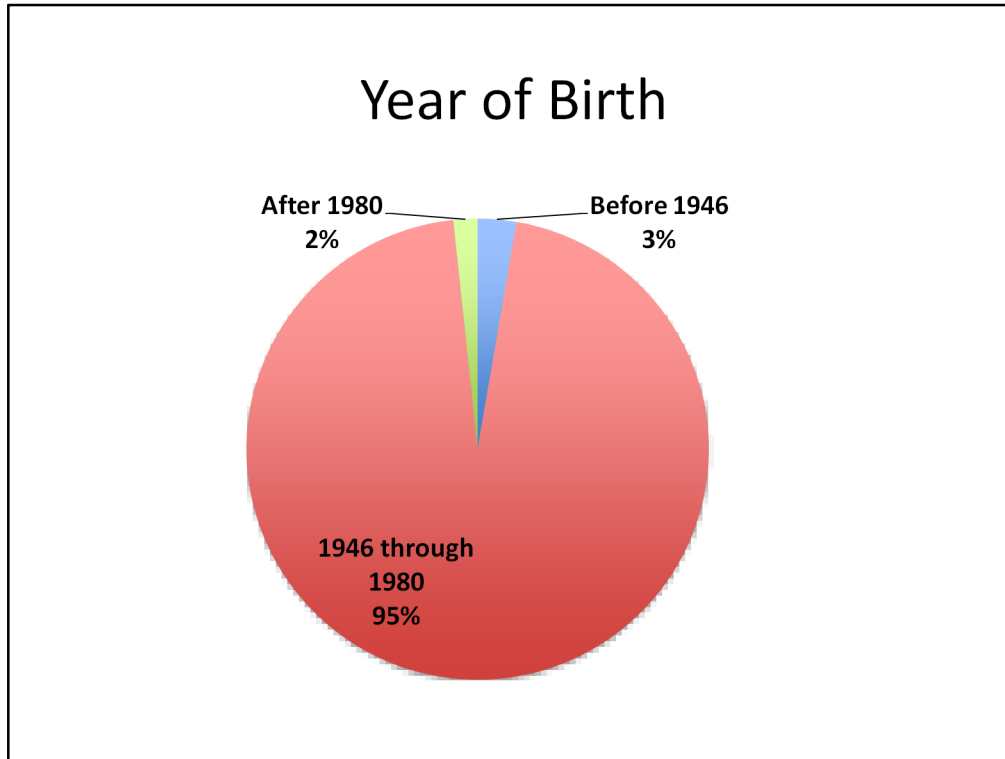


The respondents provide a good representation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership around the world. The largest number (28 percent) are from Africa and another 25 percent are from Asia. A total of 19 percent are from the three divisions in the Americas and 14 percent from Europe, including the entire Euro-Asia Division (ESD). Nine percent are from the South Pacific and five percent from the Middle East and North Africa.

The area least represented in this sample, considering that it contains one of the largest reader segments for the *Adventist Review* is the North American Division. Only two percent of the respondents are from the NAD. It is recommended that the same survey be conducted at a future date during the next NAD Year-end Meeting.

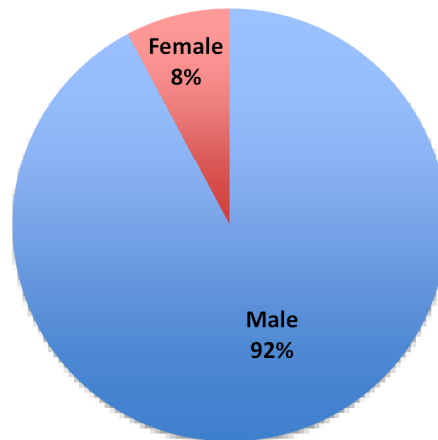


Two thirds of the Adventist Church leaders responding in this survey are middle-aged, 49 to 67 years old in 2013. Almost another third are 33 to 48 years of age in 2013. Very few of the respondents are under 33 years of age in 2013 or over 67 years of age. This survey has a decidedly older skew than the respondents to the *Adventist World* survey conducted at the same time. Leadership expectations may push the *Adventist Review* toward an older perspective than *Adventist World*, although the readers may not have the same demographic slant.



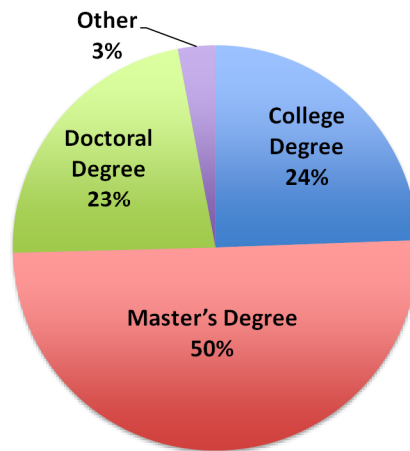
Almost all of the church leaders responding to this survey were 32 to 66 years of age in 2012. Only one in 20 (five percent) are either young adults or senior citizens. Although this is probably to be expected given the realities of current career patterns, retirement policies, etc., it does represent a certain “blind spot” in the perspective of these respondents about various topics covered in this survey and their general attitude toward the *Adventist Review* and denominational publications in general.

Gender



Only one respondent in twelve reported their gender as female. This is consistent with the strong male dominance in the leadership of the Adventist Church and this gender skew may relate to the importance placed by the respondents on some materials and topics in the *Adventist Review*. Men and women often express differing needs in reading materials and areas of interest. Women for example are slightly more appreciative of the Ask the Doctors, Page 7, One-Day-Church or interestingly of the Spirit of Prophecy type of articles, men are more likely to like World News and Perspectives, Editorials, Obituaries, etc.

Education



Nearly three quarters of the Adventist Church administrators and department heads included in this sample have completed a graduate degree, which is one indicator of a need for high-quality reading material and high standards of professionalism in the *Adventist Review*. Almost all of the other respondents have a college degree. Only three percent may have less than a college education, although the “other” category may include some who were trained for an entirely different profession at a level equivalent to higher education but not academic in nature. Altogether this is a remarkable level of education considering the fact that a large portion of the church organization is located in developing nations where access to higher education has been difficult for most people. It is tangible evidence of the value placed on education among Adventists and the achievement of the denomination in building and operating colleges and universities.