

Seventh-day Adventists in Ohio

Survey of Members: 2008

Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Office of Research & Special Projects



By Monte Sahlin
2009

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Introduction

A yearly survey of church members is conducted under the auspices of the Office of Research and Special Projects in the Ohio Conference. This is the report on the survey conducted in 2008. The topics to be addressed in this survey came as the result of discussions with the Ohio Conference administration and department heads.

A total of 20 congregations was randomly selected as the sample for this survey. One package went astray in shipping and never arrived, reducing the sample to 19 churches. A total of 18 churches administered the survey and returned completed questionnaires, for a response rate of 95 percent.

A total of 462 usable questionnaires was returned. These were coded for data processing and processed using SurveyTab software. The responses are presented in this report. The standard allowance for sampling error at the 95th percentile of reliability for this survey is five percentage points, plus or minus.

Comparisons have been made with the latest U.S. Census data for the State of Ohio and a number of national surveys conducted for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The sources of these data are listed in the bibliography.

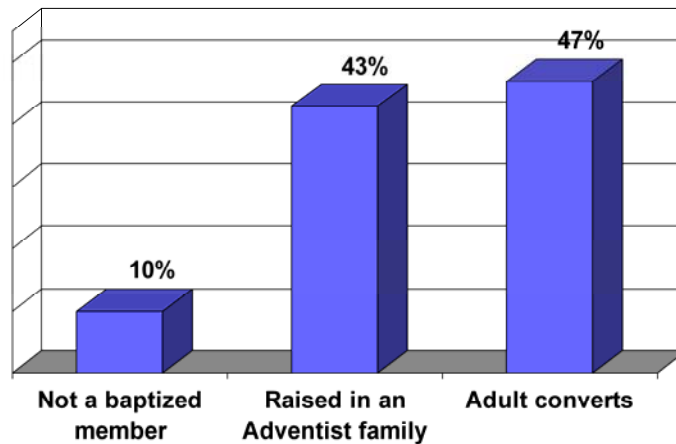
The PowerPoint version of the graphs in this survey have been shared with the Ohio Conference staff, the Pastoral Advisory Committee of the Office of Research and Special Projects, and the Ohio Conference executive committee. The questions and suggestions of the colleagues in this groups have been helpful in the preparation of the complete narrative report.

Appreciation is due the pastors of the local churches included in the sample for administering the data collection and returning the completed questionnaires. I want to acknowledge the work done by Paul Richardson, executive director of the Center for Creative Ministry and his staff, including Norma Sahlin, the primary research assistant on this project.

I am responsible for the overall research design and the narrative report. I am happy to answer any questions or receive suggestions for future surveys.

Monte Sahlin
Director of Research and Special Projects
Ohio Conference

Church Membership Status

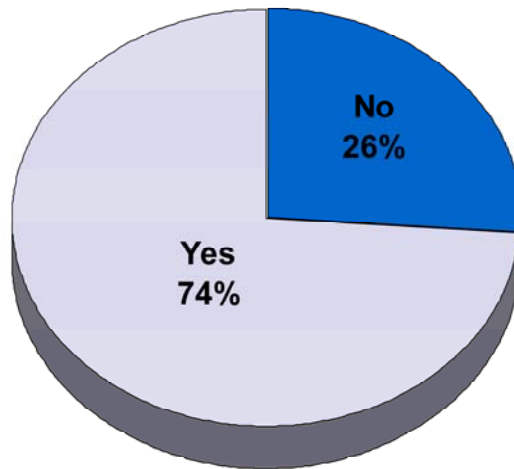


One in ten of the people in the pews in local churches in the Ohio Conference are not baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. About half of these are under 45 years of age and two-thirds of them attend often. This means that many of the local churches in the conference have a significant pool of prospective members already coming to church.

A larger proportion of the active membership is made up of adult converts as compared to those who grew up in Adventist families. In this way Ohio is different from the Adventist Church across North America where the majority of members (51 percent) were raised by Adventist parents.

Adult converts make up the majority of active members in the Ohio Conference and seven in ten of these (71 percent) are over 45 years of age. Recent converts are more likely to fall into this category, while long-term members (more than 20 years) are more likely to have been raised by an Adventist parent and more likely to be under 45 years of age.

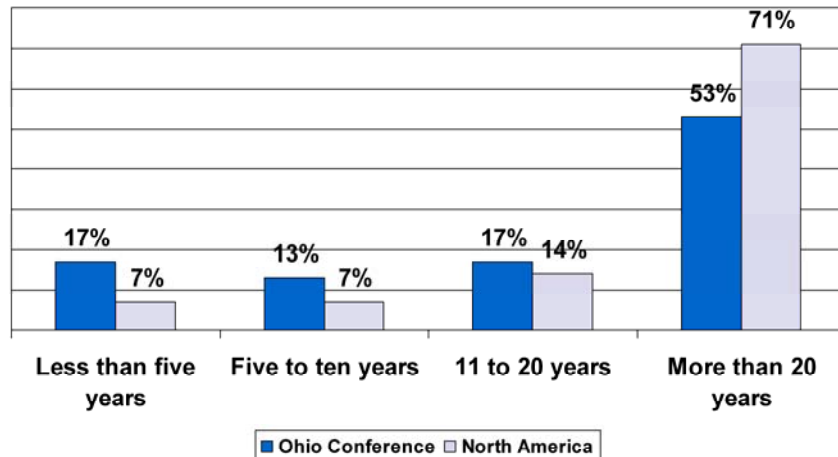
Is your spouse an Adventist?



One in four of the people in the pews report that their spouse is not a member of the Adventist Church. This is somewhat higher than what has been found in national surveys of Adventists in the United States.

Those married to a non-member spouse are more likely to have lower attendance. Those who have been Adventist Church members for more than 20 years are more likely to report that their spouse is also a church member.

Tenure as a Baptized Adventist

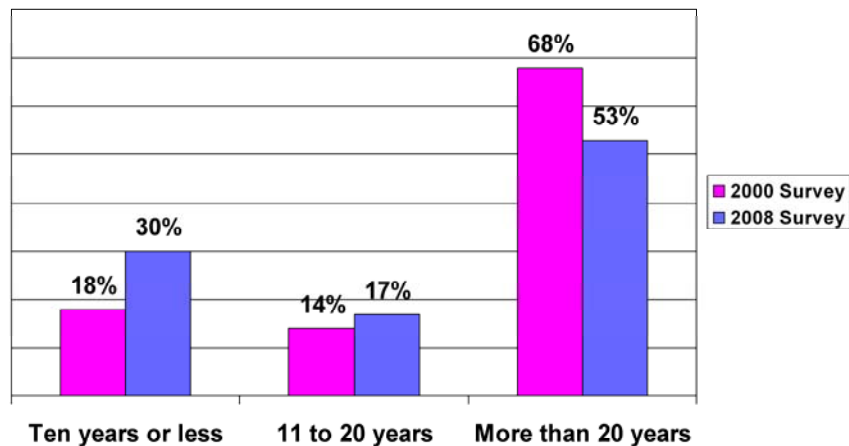


Ohio Conference churches, on the whole, have more recent converts than the average congregation in North America. In fact, the percentage is more than twice that of the North American denomination. This trend continues through the middle categories with a narrowing gap and ends with the percentage of the longest-term members which is significantly less than for North American membership. In church growth studies this is a clear indication of a church that is more effective at reaching and winning people to the faith. These data are evidence that the Ohio Conference is more effective than most conferences in the Adventist Church in North America at reaching and baptizing new members.

There is a definite age correlation with tenure as a baptized member. The older a member is, the more likely they have been a baptized Adventist for a longer time. At the same time, two-thirds of those who were baptized in the last five years are over 30 years of age. Among young adults in Ohio churches the majority were baptized in the last five years.

Five out of six recent converts report high attendance. There is a small drop off in attendance among those who were baptized 11 to 20 years ago. This indicates that the dropout problem in local churches is not so much among recent converts as it is among those with longer tenure.

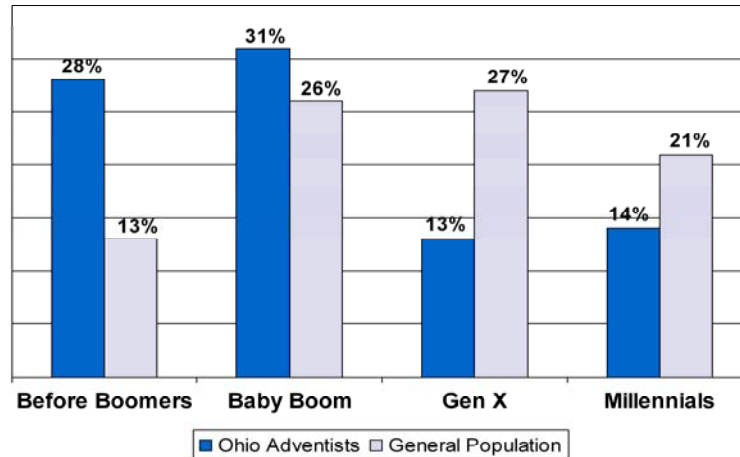
Tenure as an Adventist - Trend



The Ohio Conference has significantly increased the percentage of recent converts over the last decade. This is an indicator of a conference that has become more effective at winning and holding new members. These data provide further confirmation of the key finding on the previous page.

It is reasonable to ask how the data displayed here can be accurate in view of the fact that the total membership of the conference has not changed significantly over the last ten years. In fact, it is today almost precisely the same that it was at the close of 1999. The reality is that Ohio Conference churches have been effective at baptizing new converts while at the same time they have experienced a significant loss in transfers as people have moved out of state as well as a significant number of “missing” members who have evidently moved away without even leaving a new address. This is consistent with the economic difficulties that the State of Ohio has experienced over the last decade. Many residents have lost their jobs and, unable to find employment where they lived, were forced to move elsewhere to hunt for a job. This has impacted the Ohio Conference membership during a decade when the churches have actually been more effective in winning new members. Ohio has helped to grow other Adventist conferences in the “Sunbelt” and elsewhere.

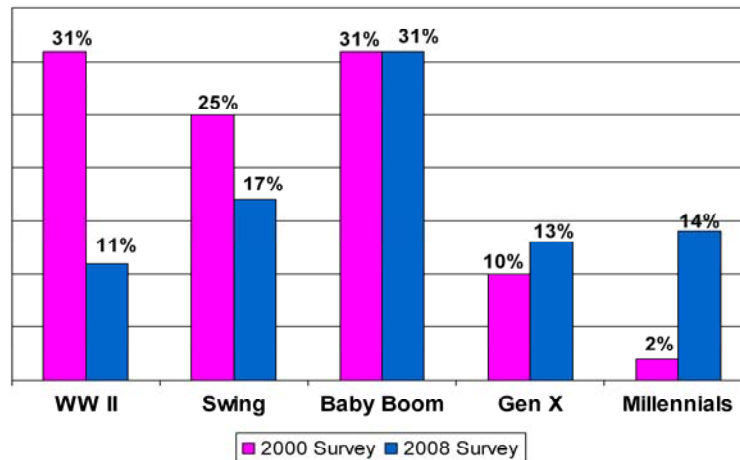
Age Groups by Generation



The “graying of Adventism” is clearly at work in the Ohio Conference. Among the generations over 45 years of age there are significantly greater percentages among the active membership than in the general population of the state. Among the generations under 45 years of age the reverse is true. Especially among “Generation X,” now in their 30s and early 40s—the crucial years of family formation—the percent of church members is half that in the general population. As a recent article in the *Adventist Review* asked, “Where are the young families?”

A significant missional and institutional issue for the Ohio Conference is engaging with new generations. Young adults are crucial to the mission of the church because of the evidence that as Americans get older, they are less likely to convert. Young families are crucial to the schools, summer camps and other major programs operated by the Ohio Conference.

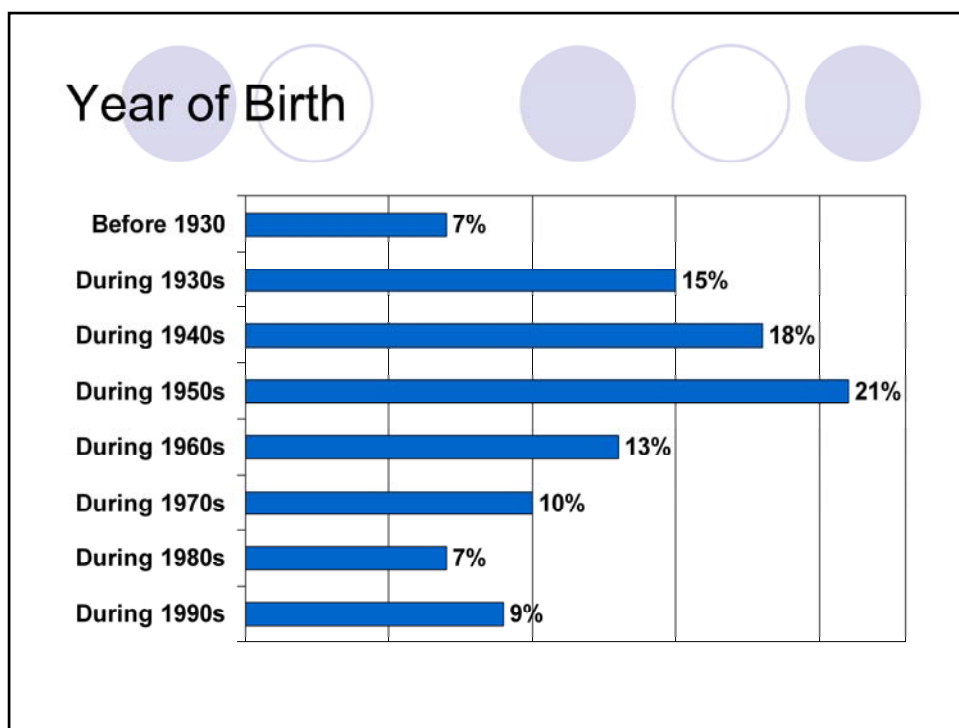
Generational Trends



The percentage of Ohio Conference members who grew up during the Great Depression or World War II has declined significantly over the last decade, while there has been a great increase in the percentage who came to late adolescence and adulthood around the turn of the 21st century. Of course this changes things in local churches.

The World War II generation started many of the local churches in the Ohio Conference and built many of the buildings we still use today. They have been very loyal to the denomination over the years and continue to strongly support it financially both through regular giving and bequests as they pass from the scene. Their children (in general) constitute the Baby Boom generation which has been, by turns, rebellious and fractious, and provide the majority of pastors and church board members today. The grandchildren of the World War II generation (by and large) make up the Millennial generation, the teens and young adults who are coming into the church today. Research indicates that, although their taste in music and dress may be different, they share the instinctive denominational loyalty of their grandparents' generation.

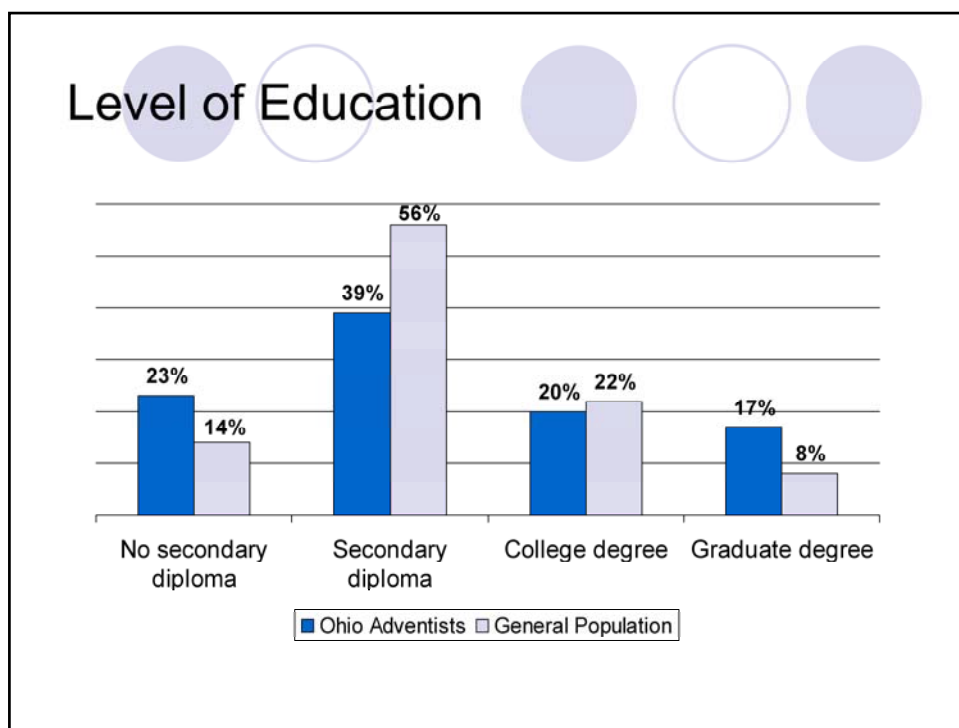
The Swing generation was too young to fight in World War II and is a smaller demographic cohort. They have excelled at maintaining unity in the church despite major conflicts. Their children (in general) make up Generation X, another small cohort and the parents of today's children.



The largest segment of the Ohio Conference membership are adults who were born in the 1950s when television became mass media, Rock and Roll music became popular and the Cold War was mounted. They went through adolescence in the tumultuous 1960s and came to adulthood in the Vietnam War era. They raised their children during the 1980s when the Adventist Church was convulsed with major conflicts.

The attitudes and experiences of these middle-aged adults are often dominate in our congregations and pulpits today. And these memories and values are sometimes quite different from those of the younger adults born in the 1970s and 1980s who make up the rising generations in our churches.

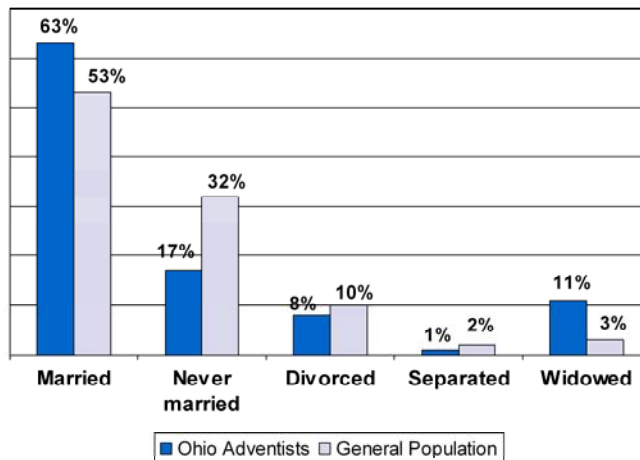
Passing the faith from one generation to the next is an essential task of the church as we wait for the return of Christ. The success of this passage in the Ohio Conference today is on the shoulders of those members and clergy in their 50s and 60s. Their ability to engage younger people, empower them for leadership and support the changes they feel led to make will determine the future of many of our congregations over the next few years.



Adventists in Ohio have greater diversity in education than does the general population of the state. There are significantly higher percentages at both ends of the spectrum—both those who have not completed a secondary education and those who have a graduate degree. Overall, 37 percent of Ohio Conference members have a college degree, while only 30 percent of the state’s population does. Consequently many of our congregations expect preachers who are well-prepared, rich learning experiences and tolerance of divergent ideas.

Those in the Millennial generation are more likely to have no secondary diploma since this includes teens who are in secondary school, but more than three quarters of the members who have no secondary diploma are over 30 years of age. The majority of the members over 64 years of age have only a secondary diploma and no college degree. Those members in Generation X—now in their 30s and early 40s—are most likely to have a college or graduate degree.

Marital Status

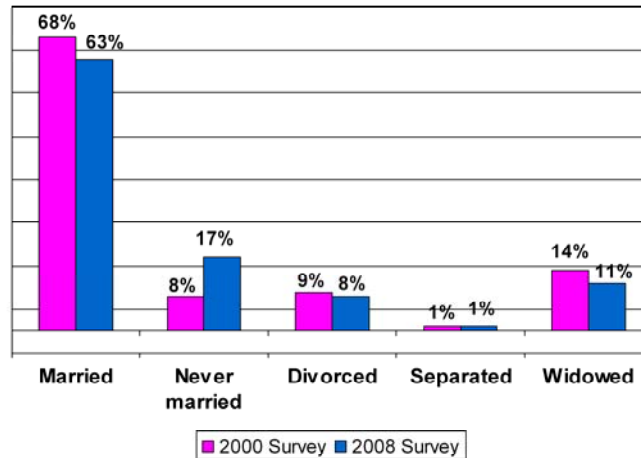


Adventist Church members are more likely to be married or widowed than the general population of the state, and significantly less likely to be young singles who have never married. Nearly three out of four are either currently married or widowed and not remarried. Almost universally in Protestant churches, congregational life tends to be dominated by married people even when many husbands often do not attend church with their wives. Single adults report in many studies that they do not find that congregations go out of their way to meet the needs of singles. The data displayed above indicate that this is likely to be true in many of our local churches in the Ohio Conference.

Never married single adults are half as likely to be present in our congregations as in the general population. This is, in part, a function of the general failure to engage young adults, but singles who are divorced or separated also make up smaller percentages of Ohio Conference active members than the general public.

The small percentage of divorced individuals among our active members does not prove that the divorce rate is smaller in the Ohio Conference than in the state's general population. This figure is the residual percentage of divorced people who are still single; it does not include those who have remarried since their divorce. The divorce rate is measured on a year-by-year basis. Research in the past has shown that Adventist Church members do have a lower divorce rate than the general public in the U.S. and 25 years ago a current calculation of the divorce rate among Ohio Conference members did yield a lower rate than the general population. More up-to-date figures are being developed.

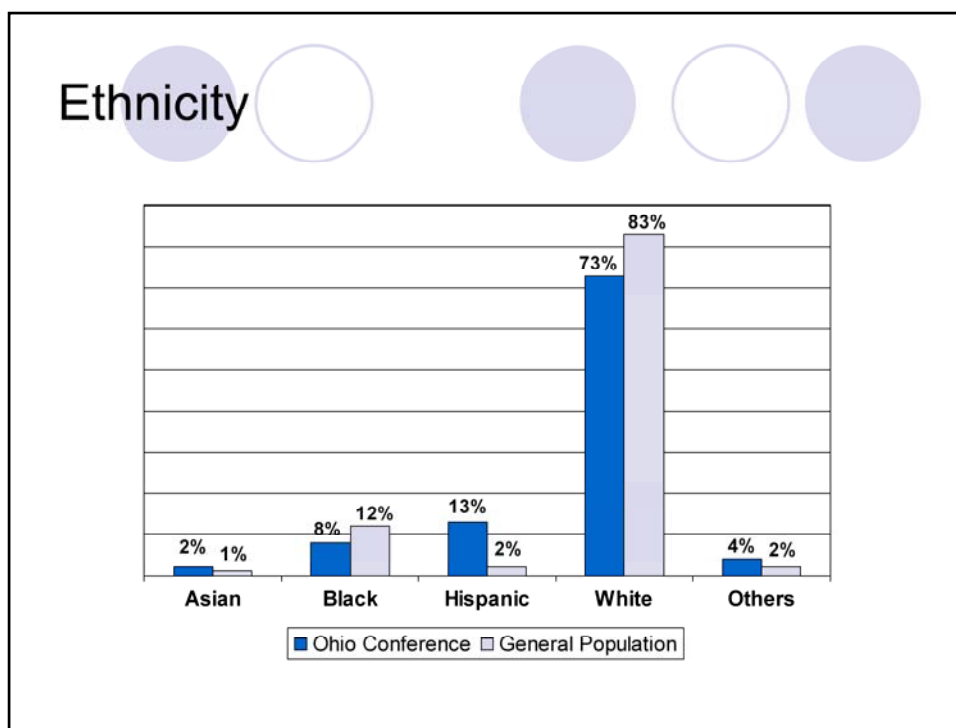
Trends in Marital Status



Over the past decade the percentage of active church members who have never married has more than doubled. At the same time there has been a relatively small decrease in all of the other categories except for the one percent who are separated, which has remained the same.

Nearly two thirds of the never married are under 30 years of age and fully three quarters are under 45 years of age. The increase in the percentage of never married church members is very likely related to the national trend toward later marriages. New generations of Americans are waiting longer and longer to get married. Many researchers believe that this is related to higher rates of cohabitation, a topic about which we did not inquire in this survey.

Two thirds of the members who report that they are widowed and still single are over 63 years of age. Six in ten of the members who report that they are divorced and still single are from the Baby Boom generation, who are 45 to 63 years of age in 2009. Blue Collar workers are also more likely to be divorced.

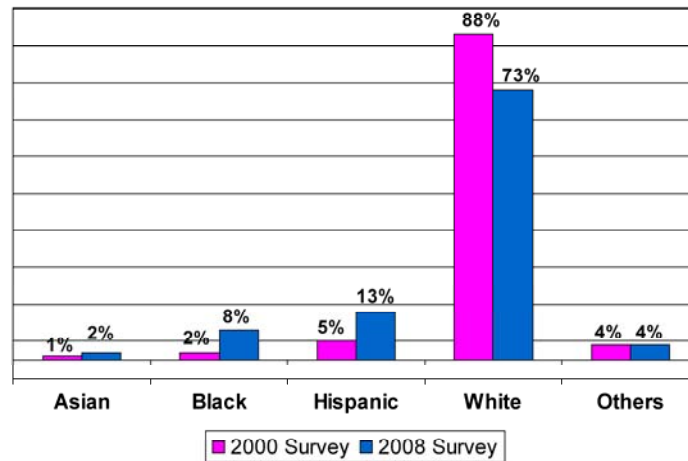


The Adventist membership in Ohio has greater ethnic diversity than the general population of the state. The Ohio Conference membership has many times more Hispanics than the general population and significantly more Asians and those of multiethnic and other backgrounds. The black membership is significant, although less than the total black percentage in the state due, in part, to the fact that almost all of the historically African American congregations in the state are affiliated with the Allegheny West Conference, a Seventh-day Adventist Church entity which shares the state with the Ohio Conference.

The white percentage of the membership, although less than the white percentage of the general population in the state, does constitute a large majority at nearly three quarters of the total. More than nine out of ten members over 63 years of age (92 percent) report their ethnicity as white, as do 79 percent of those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years.

Younger members, those under 45 years of age, are more likely to report their ethnicity as Hispanic, black, or Asian. African American members are twice as likely among new converts baptized in the last five years—13 percent as compared to the overall rate of seven percent.

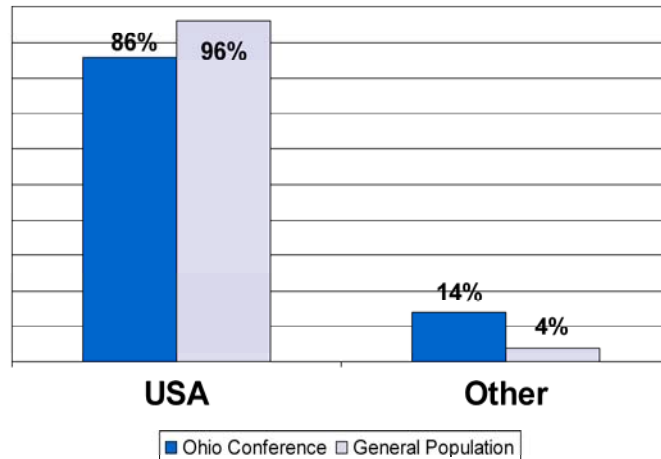
Trends in Ethnicity



The Hispanic, black and Asian membership in the Ohio Conference has more than doubled over the past decade, while the white share of the membership has declined. The white segment has had a somewhat smaller share of the recent baptisms—63 percent of those baptized in the last five years compared to 73 percent of the overall membership—but not an overwhelming difference. As mentioned on the last page, there are higher percentages of Hispanics, blacks and Asians among younger members.

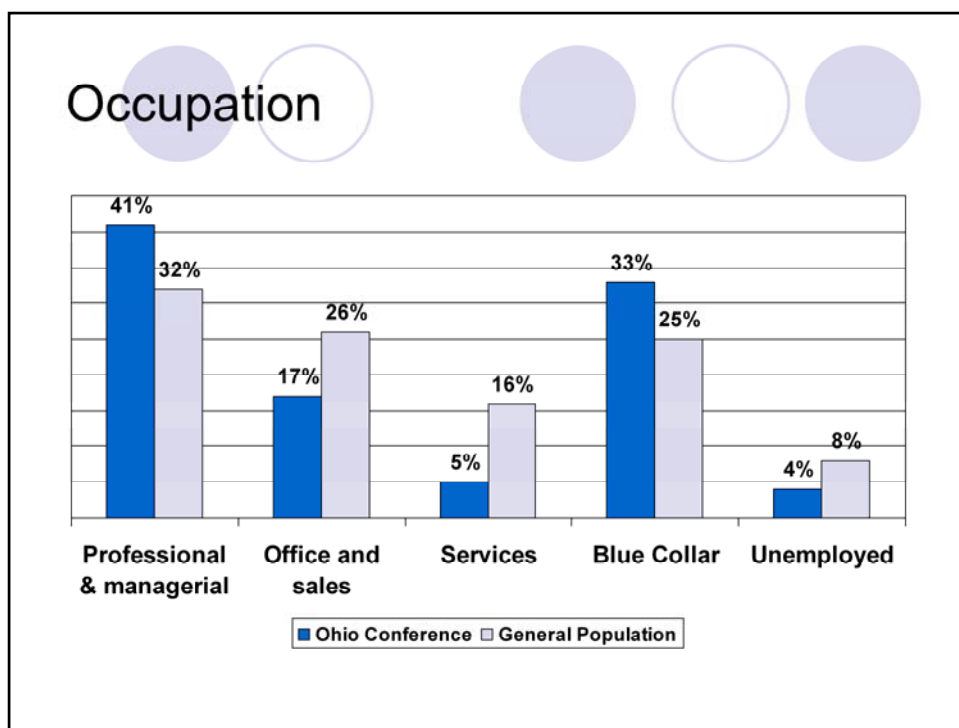
As a Midwest state, Ohio will continue to have a predominantly white demographic profile for the foreseeable future. Therefore vital, growing congregations that target a primarily white community will continue to be important to the mission of Christ in this state. At the same time it is important to celebrate the overall diversity of the Ohio Conference as it mirrors the vision of the remnant in Revelation 7:9, “a great multitude ... from every nation, tribe, language and people.”

Citizenship at Birth



The Ohio Conference membership includes three and half times the percentage of immigrants as does the general population of the state. This is evidence of the success of a number of church plants among Hispanic, Korean, Ghanaian, Haitian and other immigrant groups. It is also true that many congregations that are not specifically immigrant churches have a higher percentage of immigrants. The Adventist faith is a truly global movement and the globalization of Adventism has come home to Ohio.

Members who are in the generation that is currently in its 30s and early 40s are more likely to report that they were born as citizens of other countries. Middle-aged members from the Baby Boom generation are more likely to report that they were born as American citizens.

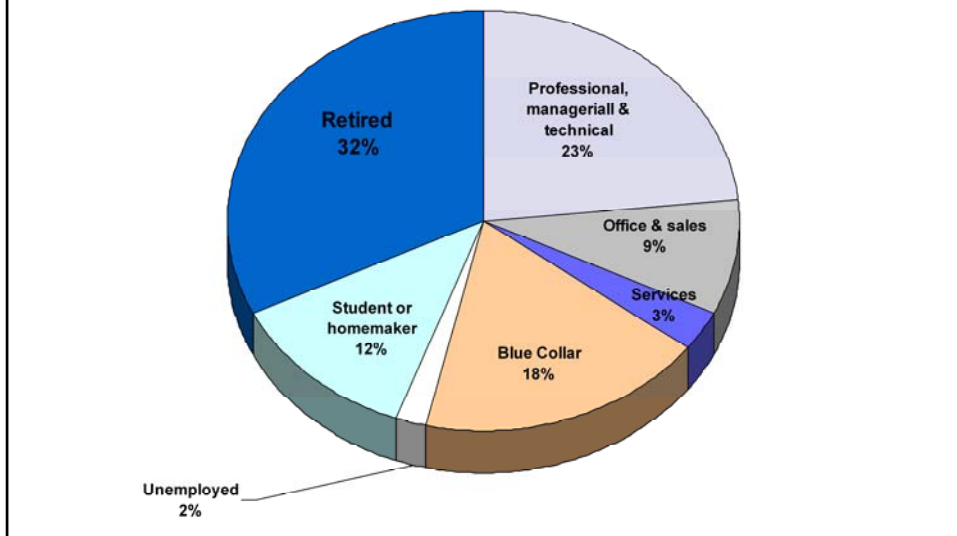


Church members in the Ohio Conference are more likely to have jobs in professional, technical and managerial occupations and in Blue Collar occupations, such as construction, factory jobs, driving trucks, auto repair, etc. Those occupations account for nearly three out of four (74 percent) of the church members who are in the work force.

Church members are less likely to be found in office, sales and service occupations. These tend to be more poorly paid occupations in the State of Ohio and in the service sector there is the greatest opportunity for Sabbath employment problems since more of these jobs function on weekends and during evenings.

Adventists are not only more likely to have higher-paying jobs, but also have an unemployment rate which is half what it was in the state at the time of the data collection in late 2008. There were significantly more unemployed church members among those in their 30s and early 40s and among those baptized in the last five years. It is also true that the method of data collection used in this survey tends to exclude non-attending members and there is research that indicates that inactive members are more likely to be unemployed. People often quit attending church when they are laid off.

Occupation, including those not included in the official definition of “work force”

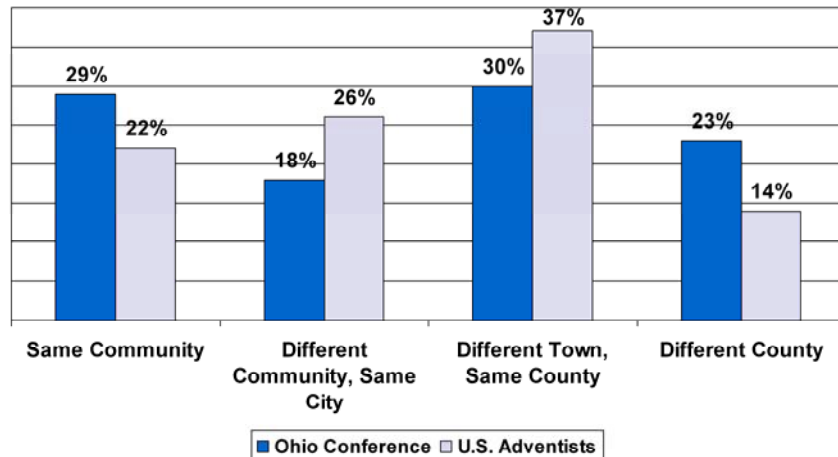


The work force data provided by the U.S. Census and the State of Ohio does not include those adults considered to be not in the work force. This includes the retired, full-time homemakers and full-time students. Our survey included these categories and this graph displays the full range of responses.

Nearly half (44 percent) of the Adventist Church members in the Ohio Conference are not part of the work force, according to official definitions. The largest share of these are retired people. A third of church members report that they are retired. Four out of five of these are over 63 years of age. Members who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years are also more likely to be retired.

There are relatively few members who identify themselves as full-time homemakers. The majority of that 12 percent is made up of full-time students. About two thirds are under 30 years of age. They are more likely to have been baptized in the last five years.

How far is your home from the local church where you are a member?

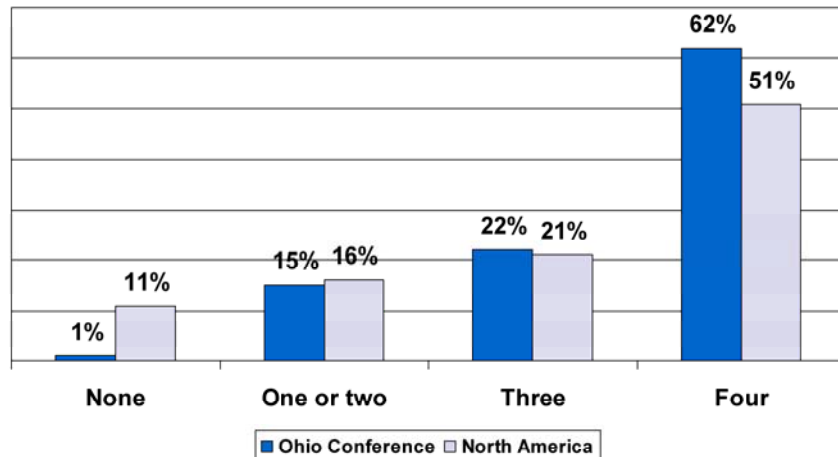


Less than a third of Ohio Conference members live in the same community where their church is located. This is somewhat better than the 22 percent of Adventists in the United States who live in the same community where their church is located, but that may simply be due to the fact that more Ohio members live in small towns where the communities cover more territory. “Community” in this study is defined by Zip Code due to the extensive research that shows the Zip Code area to be the best definition of local community that is easily available in America. Members from the Baby Boom generation—currently in middle age—are more likely to live in the same community as their church.

Another one in five Ohio Conference members live in the same city as their church, but in a different neighborhood. These are largely from major metropolitan areas. Those employed in Blue Collar occupations are more likely to be in this category. Another third of church members live in the same county where their church is located, but in a different town. Older church members—those now over 63 years of age—are more likely to give this response.

Nearly a quarter of Ohio Conference members commute from a different county to go to church. Those in their 30s and early 40s are more likely to report this. It may be due to the fact that families drive some distance to go to a church that has activities for their children.

Worship Attendance During the Last Four Sabbaths

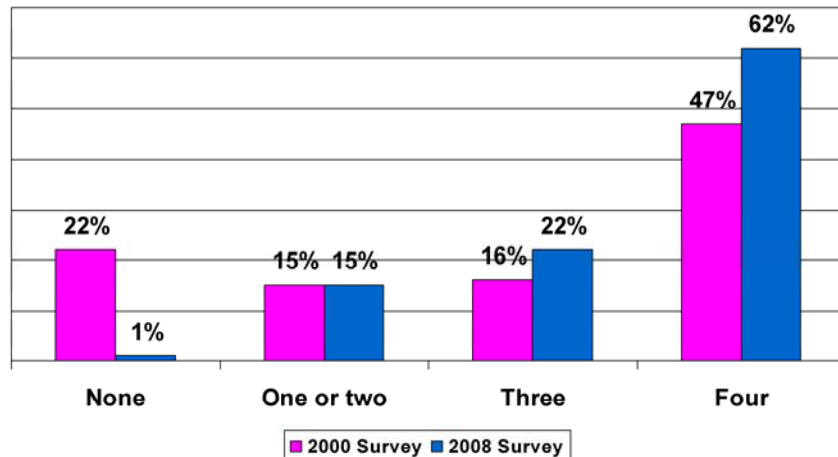


The attendance pattern of the active members in the Ohio Conference is generally stronger than the average Adventist church across North America. This is an indicator of greater loyalty to their local church and the spiritual vitality of the churches.

Members who are over 63 years of age and those who have been baptized for more than 20 years are more likely to report that they were in church all four of the last four Sabbaths. Younger members and those baptized in the last five years are more likely to indicate that they were at their local church three out of the last four Sabbaths.

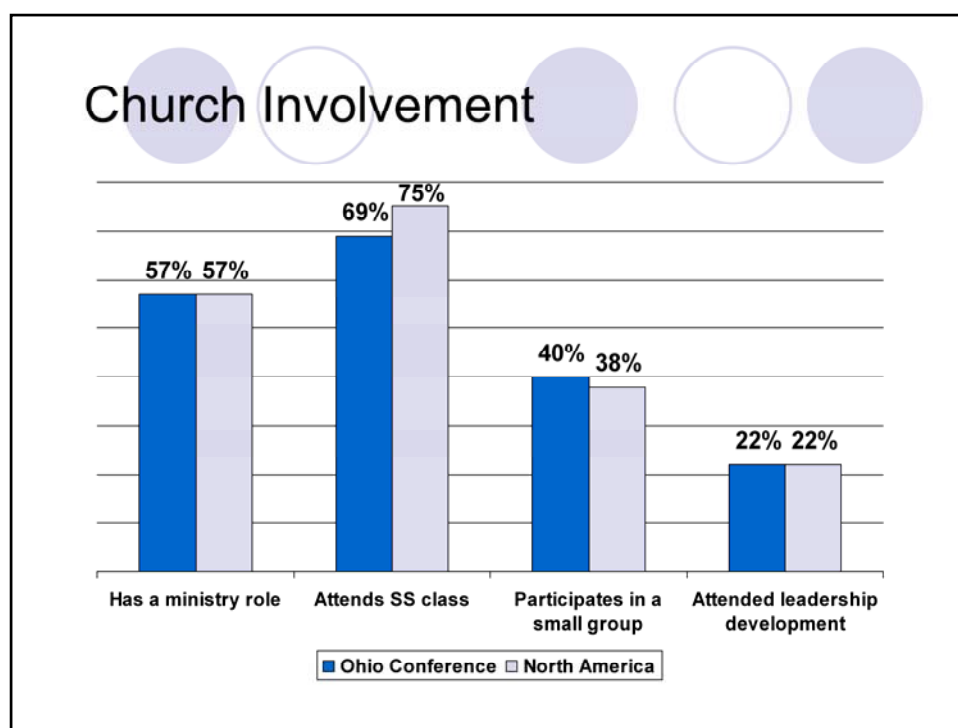
Church attendance is perhaps the most sensitive indicator to the vitality and growth of a congregation and its members. Unfortunately, about a third of the local churches in the Ohio Conference are still not turning in consistent attendance reports despite the fact that it was voted in 1985 as a basic requirement.

Worship Attendance Trends



The Ohio Conference appears to have significantly improved its church attendance patterns over the last decade, but that is probably just a result of the different data collection methods used in the two surveys. In 2000 a random sample of church members was interviewed by telephone, while in 2008 the survey was conducted in the churches on Sabbath. The result of the data collection method used in 2008 is that almost all of the non-attending members were excluded. This new survey has a definite skew toward the active members of the Ohio Conference instead of the wider picture.

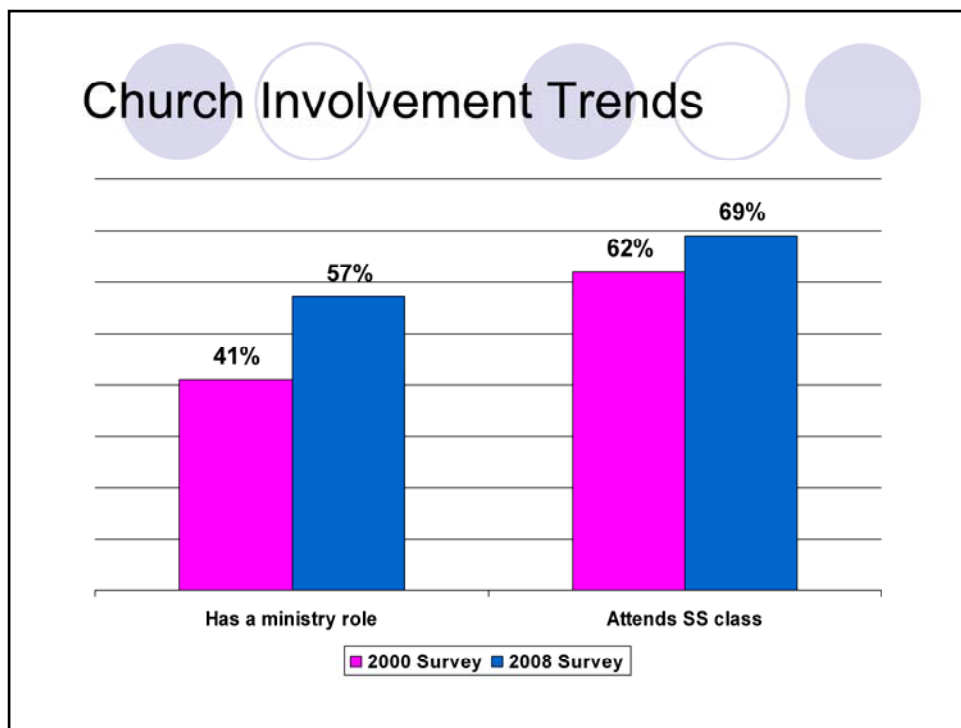
In most congregations a quarter to a third of the members listed on the official roster almost never attend. In many cases a number of these no longer live in the state of Ohio. These inactive members were picked up in the 2000 sampling since even out-of-state members were interviewed. The fact that the percentage of respondents who report attending once or twice out of the last four Sabbaths is the same in both surveys is an indicator that there has been no real change in attendance patterns despite the data displayed above.



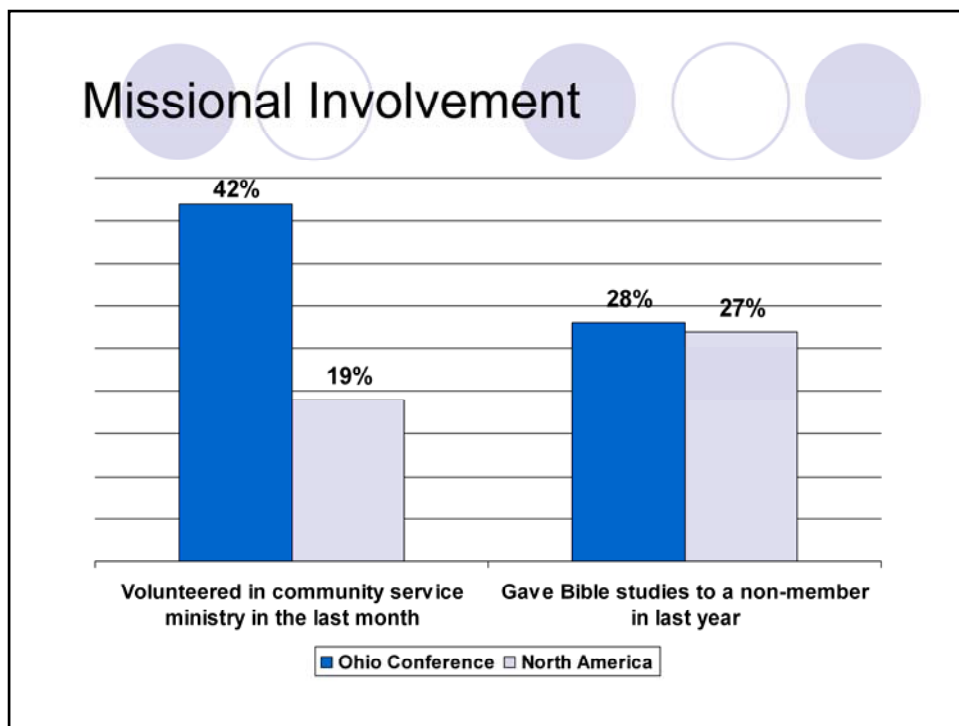
Except for participation in adult Sabbath School classes, the involvement of Ohio Conference members in their local church is not statistically different than for Adventists across North America. This difference is likely due to the large number of small churches in the Ohio Conference which require a larger percentage of the adults to help with children's Sabbath Schools.

There is a strong correlation with age and holding a church office or other volunteer ministry role. The older a member is, the more likely he or she is to have an assigned role in the ministries of the church. Those who attend more regularly and those who have been baptized for more than 20 years are also more likely to have a ministry role. Older members are also more likely to participate regularly in an adult Sabbath School class.

Younger adults, specifically those in their 30s and early 40s, are more likely to have attended a leadership development or training event of some kind in the last year. The same is true for those who have a job in a professional, managerial or White Collar occupation.



Only two of the church involvement items were asked in the previous survey of Ohio Conference members in 2000. It initially appears that the conference may have increased the level of church involvement among its members, but it is important to remember that the 2000 survey included a higher percentage of inactive members due to the difference in data collection methods. The additional number of non-attending members probably explains the difference in the percentages who have a volunteer ministry role, but it probably does not explain the difference in Sabbath School class participation. That is more likely an indicator of actual progress in getting more of the members involved in Sabbath School. Ohio Conference is evidently making real progress in Sabbath School class participation.

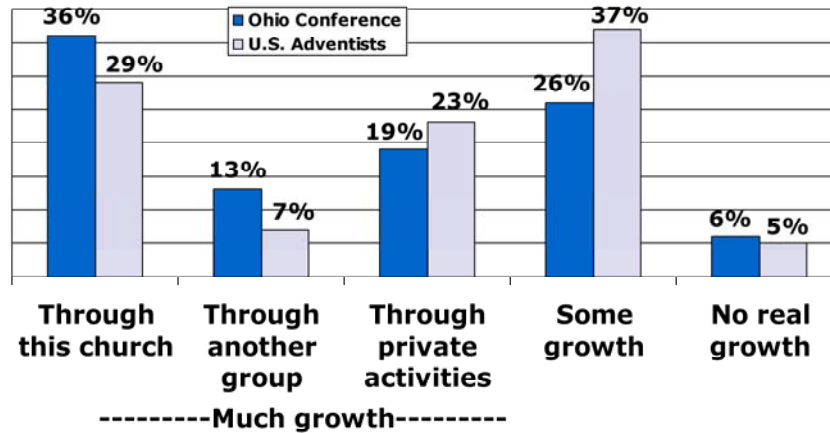


Ohio Conference members are clearly much more involved in community service than is the norm for Seventh-day Adventists across North America. It has twice the percentage of members who report that they have volunteered in church-sponsored community service programs during the last month. Members with professional, managerial and White Collar jobs are more likely to be involved in community service, as are those in their 30s and early 40s.

Ohio Conference members are also above the norm on giving Bible studies to non-members, although the difference is not statistically significant. Members who joined the church in the last five years are more likely to give Bible studies, as are those in their 30s and early 40s.

Overall, Ohio Conference is doing better at getting its members involved in Christ's mission than are most Adventist churches in the U.S. and Canada. And it is particularly doing so among younger adults with families. That is a significant indicator of strength and vitality in Ohio Adventist churches.

How much have you grown in your faith in the last year?

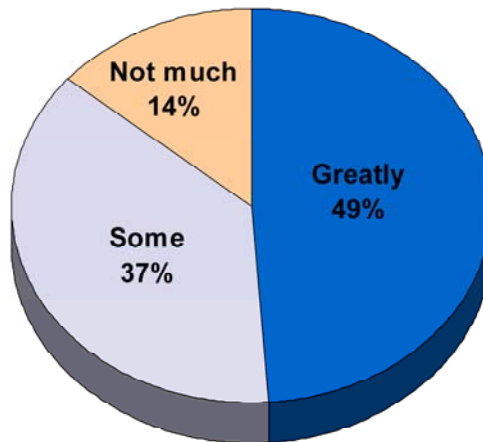


Ohio Conference members are growing in their faith. A total of 68 percent report that they have had “much growth” in the last year as compared to 59 percent of members in the average conference in the United States. The differential is statistically significant, and the difference is significant in the subset that reported “much growth” through their local church. These are important indicators of the spiritual strength of local church life in Ohio.

Older members are more likely to indicate that they have experienced “much growth” through their local church, while young members are more likely to indicate “much growth” through some other group they participate in and through their private devotional activities. The “other” groups include, in some cases, small groups sponsored by their local church and conference activities such as youth events, retreats, etc. It also includes independent ministries, nondenominational para-church groups and groups sponsored by churches of other denominations.

One third of the active members (32 percent) report that they have had only “some growth” or “no real growth” in the past year. Those who have low attendance at church are more likely to report “some growth,” as are those in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations. Reports of “no real growth” are a little more likely among the youngest respondents—those under 30 years of age.

How much does worship in your local church help you with everyday life?

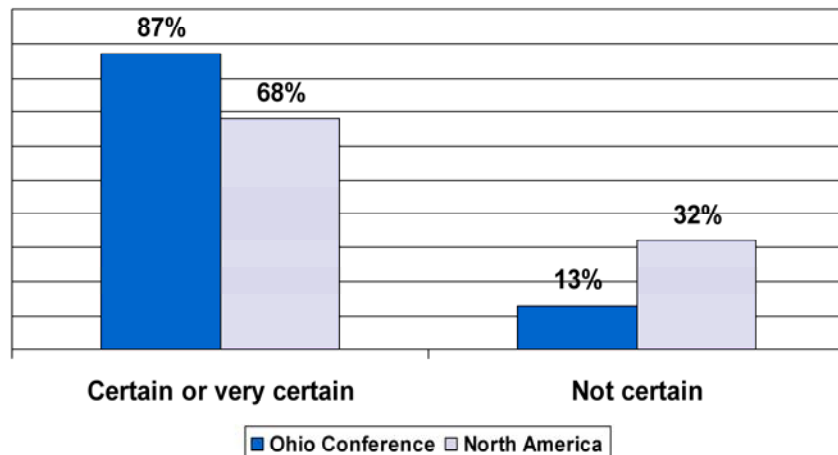


Half of the active members in the Ohio Conference say that worship in the local church they attend helps them “to a great extent” with their everyday life. Members over 63 years of age are more likely to give this response, as are those in their 30s and early 40s.

More than a third report that worship helps them “to some extent.” Young adults and teens are more likely to give this response, as are new converts who have been baptized in the last five years.

Just one in seven members indicated that attending worship in their local church was only helpful to “a small extent” (10 percent) or “not at all” (4 percent). Those who attend less often are more likely to say “not at all,” while those under 30 and those employed in Blue Collar occupations are more likely to say “a small extent.”

Assurance of Salvation



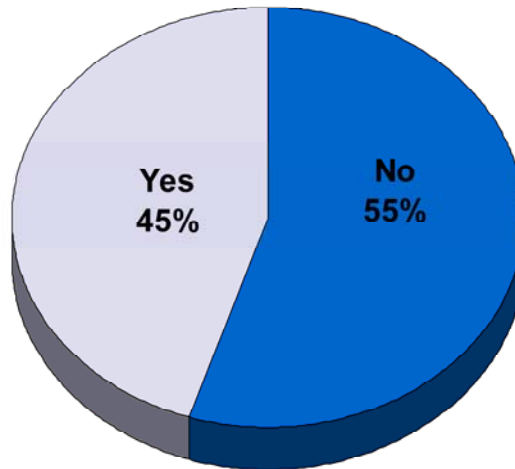
This item has been used for three decades to measure spirituality among Seventh-day Adventists: “Circle the number that shows the assurance that you have of eternal life.” On a five-point scale, five equals very certain and one equals not sure.

We replicated this item in the current survey and found that Ohio Conference members are significantly more likely to indicate that they are very certain or certain of eternal life than is the average across the Adventist Church in North America. They are half as likely to circle a one, two or three on the five-point scale.

Members over 45 years of age and those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years are more likely to be “very certain,” circling a five on the scale. Those under 45 years of age are more likely to circle a four, as are those who were baptized in the last five years.

Members who are young adults and teenagers are more likely to circle a one or a two and indicate a lack of assurance of their salvation. We can only speculate as to why they are more likely to give a less positive response, but these data clearly indicate that after a number of years of continuing to live a Christian life in fellowship with a congregation people are more likely to feel certain of eternal life. It may be due to spiritual growth or simply a sense of perseverance in church life.

Know someone personally who joined the Adventist Church in the last year

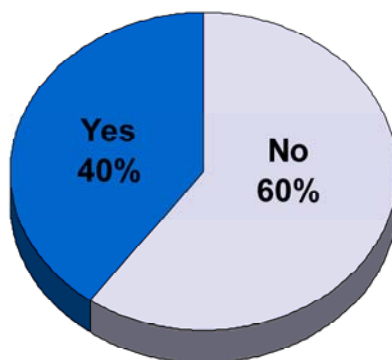


Nearly half the active members of the Ohio Conference know someone personally who joined the Adventist Church in the past year. That is another indicator of the fact that the churches in this conference are effective in bringing new converts. It is a measure of how personal evangelism is at the grass roots.

Members from "Generation X," currently in their 30s and early 40s are more likely to say they know someone personally who became an Adventist in the last year. The same is true for those members with jobs in the professional, managerial and White Collar occupations. These data may indicate that younger, middle class members are more involved in personal evangelism.

Were you personally involved in the process of their conversion?

Including only those who answered "Yes" to the previous question:

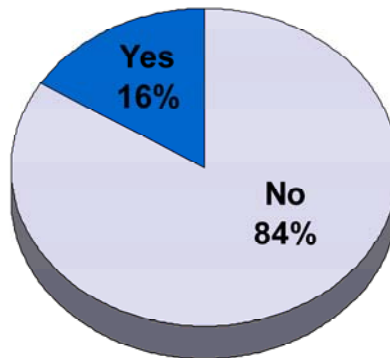


Two in five of the respondents who said that they know someone personally who joined the Adventist Church in the last year responded affirmatively to a follow-up question indicating that they had a role in the conversion of this person or persons. That is 18 percent of the total sample or about one in five Ohio Conference members. This is further evidence of the effectiveness of Ohio Conference local churches in personal evangelism because church growth experts like Win Arn, director of the American Church Growth Institute, and Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, have long held that if a congregation has more than 10 percent of its members involved in the conversion of new members, it will have above-average evangelistic impact.

Members from the Baby Boom generation, 45 to 63 years of age in 2009, are more likely to indicate that they have been personally involved in the conversion of one or more persons in the last year. So are members employed in Blue Collar occupations.

Is this person a relative of yours?

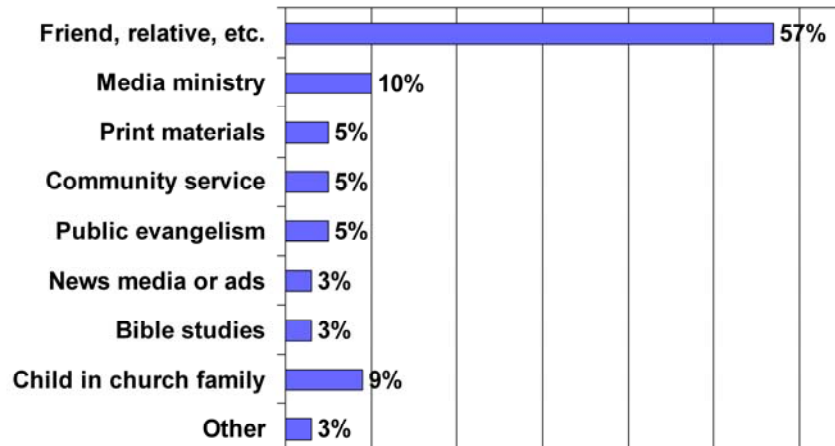
Including only those who answered "Yes"
to the first question in this series:



An additional follow-up question was asked of the 45 percent of church members who said they know someone personally who became an Adventist in the last year. "Is this person a relative of yours?" About one in six answered affirmatively. That is about seven percent of the total sample. Family relationships often serve as avenues for new conversions, but the vast majority of the recent converts known to Ohio Conference members are not relatives.

Young adults and teens are more likely to say that the new convert they know about is a relative. New converts themselves—those who were baptized in the last five years—are nearly three times as likely to have a relative who joined the church in the last year. This illustrates how "friendship evangelism" is a natural process of growth through social networking. This process is working well in the local churches of the Ohio Conference.

How did this person first become aware of the Adventist Church?



Personal relationships constitute the single most important avenue for evangelistic outreach in the Adventist Church. The same is true in most Christian denominations. The majority of the new converts in the Ohio Conference first heard of the Adventist faith from a friend, coworker, relative or neighbor. Respondents who are young adults or teens are even more likely to report this reality, as are those who were baptized in the last five years and those with professional, managerial and White Collar jobs.

One in ten respondents say that the new convert they know first heard of the Adventist Church through one of the denomination's media ministries, such as the Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, It Is Written, etc. Respondents with a Blue Collar occupation are twice as likely to report this reality.

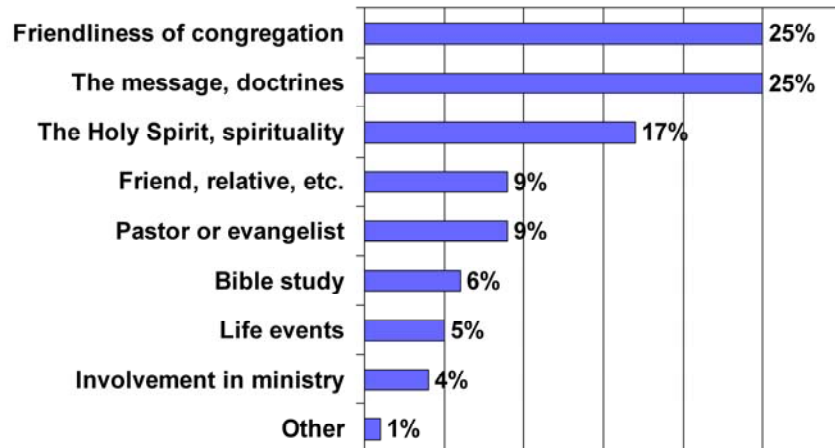
Literature, community service programs and public evangelism each account for just five percent of the cases reported in this survey. Respondents employed in Blue Collar jobs are three times as likely to mention literature. Respondents who do not attend church very often are nearly three times as likely to mention community services. This indicates that these two methods are important for specific segments of the community. Print materials are important among those who may have less education and community service programs are important in reaching the very large segment of the population who do not have Adventist relatives or acquaintances. (A survey of the general

public in 2004 indicated that only about six percent of Americans and Canadians know someone who is an Adventist.)

Other methods are either not widely used, such as advertising and publicity, or are evidently unsuited to the task of building public awareness of the Adventist Church. Only small percentages of the cases reported in this study found these methods to be important and there is no specific demographic segment for which they are strategic.

Just nine percent of the new members who were baptized in the last year were identified as the children of church members. This means that the data displayed here is almost entirely related to adult converts and can be useful in planning outreach strategies.

What was the deciding factor in their decision to join the Adventist Church?



How a person first becomes aware of the Adventist faith is one element in their joining the church. Getting decisions to be baptized and become an Adventist is another element. Research has shown that in the typical conversion story these two points are usually three or four years apart. This is why we asked an additional follow-up question.

Two factors are reported to be the most important in the new converts from the last year in the Ohio Conference: A friendly congregation and the Adventist message. The warmth of the congregation is seen as more important by respondents in the Baby Boom generation (now middle-aged) and those who have been baptized members for more than 20 years, while the message is seen as more important by respondents in their 30s and early 40s and those who were baptized in the last five years.

One in six respondents reported that the Holy Spirit or some similar spiritual element was the deciding factor in the cases they had observed. Young adults and teens were more likely to give this response.

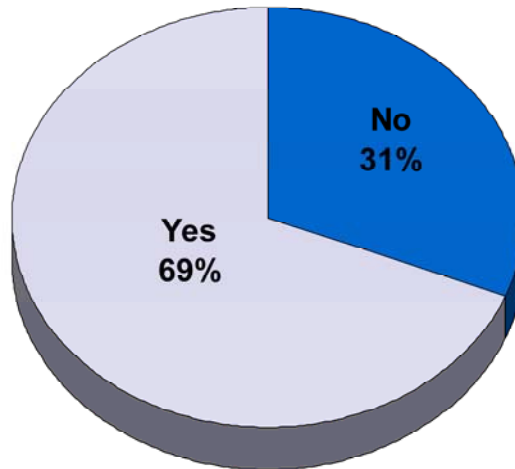
In nine percent of the cases reported a church member who was a friend or relative of the convert played a key role in getting a decision. And in an equal number of cases it was a pastor, evangelist or Bible worker who was instrumental in getting a decision to join the church. Members who do not attend very often were more likely to mention the involvement of a clergy person.

Other factors were mentioned in only a few cases as important to getting a decision to join the church. Bible study, major life events and getting the prospective member involved in ministry—items often cited in various books and stories—seem to be relatively rare or less decisive in recent conversions in the Ohio Conference.

It should be kept in mind that the observations reported in this study are not those of the converts themselves, but the views of friends and relatives who were involved in the process or heard the story. Strictly speaking these are perceptions as much as they are reports of reality. Yet perception often is reality in a voluntary organization such as the church.

These data give us a window into the reality of evangelism as it actually occurs in the life of local churches. This reality is often different from the perceptions of church administrators, journalists and evangelism professionals. The objective truth may fall somewhere in between, but in order to build a missional culture in the church it is essential to understand this grass roots reality.

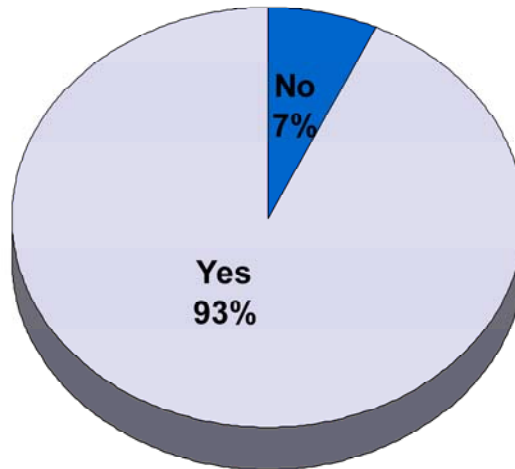
Do you have a relative or friend who has dropped out of the Adventist Church?



More than two thirds of the members in the Ohio Conference have a relative or friend who has dropped out of the Adventist Church. Members with jobs in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations are more likely to give this response, as are those who have been members for more than 20 years and those from the Baby Boom generation.

The dropout problem is a major wound in the Adventist Church. This is especially true for middle class, native-born, middle-aged members in the Midwest—the backbone of the Adventist Church in Ohio. Continued criticism and divisiveness can only exacerbate this wound and further demoralize many of the members. An atmosphere conducive to healing is essential to the advance of the Adventist movement in this state.

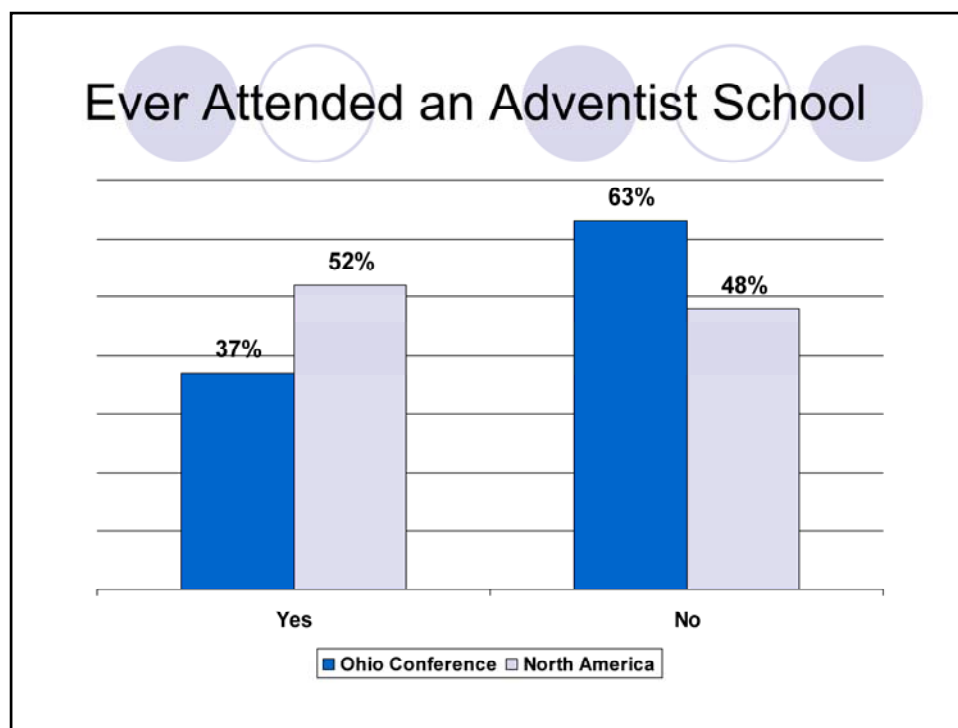
Should the Adventist Church expand its programs to meet the needs of the poor?



More than nine out of ten Ohio Conference members believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church should expand its programs to meet the needs of the homeless, inner city poor and unemployed. No single item in this survey received a more decisive response than this one! Ohio Adventists are strongly united around this concept.

Members with jobs in the Blue Collar sector are 100 percent in agreement with this statement. Almost every member in “Generation X,” now in their 30s and early 40s, is in agreement with this view. Most of the respondents who disagreed with this statement are over 63 years of age, although 87 percent of this age segment agree with it.

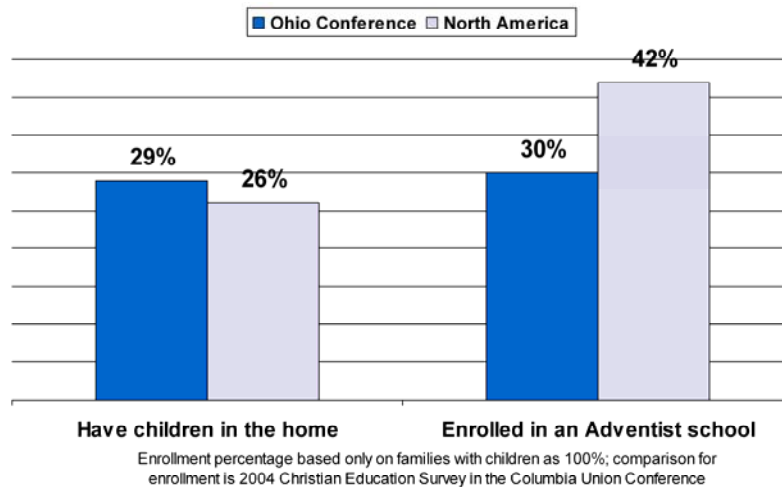
The Adventist movement in those parts of the world where there is the greatest growth—Africa, Asia and Latin America—has a much stronger humanitarian ministry than it does in North America. This is provided by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Church members in Ohio want to see a similar emphasis here.



About a third of the church members in the Ohio Conference have attended an Adventist school at some point in their education. This includes everyone from the person who completed their entire education—possibly from Kindergarten through a doctoral degree—in Adventist schools and those who attended only one semester, perhaps in elementary school. Young adults and teens are more likely to have attended an Adventist school, as are those who have jobs in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations. This is also true for those who have been baptized members for more than 20 years and those who do not attend church very often.

Two thirds of Ohio Conference members have never attended an Adventist school. Older members—those over 63 years of age—are even more likely to give this response. This is significantly different than the data for Adventists across North America in which the majority have attended an Adventist school at some point. It may make it more difficult to recruit students for our church schools in this state.

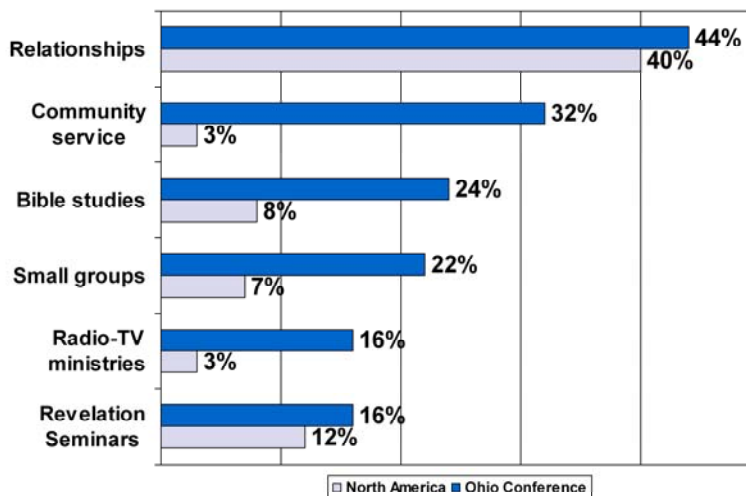
Children in the Home



Less than a third of the families in the Ohio Conference (29 percent) have children under 18 years of age living in the home, but that is a higher percentage than the average across North America. Members in their 30s, 40s and early 50s are more likely to have children in the home, as those who were baptized in the last five years and those employed in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations.

Among the 29 percent who have children in the home, about a third are enrolled in an Adventist school. This is significantly less than the average for Adventist families across the Columbia Union Conference in the 2004 Christian Education Survey. Younger families—members under 45 years of age—are more likely to have their children enrolled in an Adventist school, while new converts baptized in the last five years are less likely to give the same response. A more recent enrollment percentage for the entire North American Division was not available, but survey findings for the Columbia Union Conference are almost always the same as the entire NAD.

What have you observed to be the most effective method for bringing in new members? (Part 1)



Church members were asked, “What have you observed to be the most effective method for bringing new members into this local church?” They were allowed to select one or two items from a comprehensive list a dozen items or write in other methods not included in the printed list. This question is an attempt to understand what is really working in terms of evangelism and church growth in the local church based on the observations of church members. These data will take three pages to display.

The method that is most widely observed to be effective in bringing in new members is a personal relationship with an Adventist relative, neighbor, coworker or acquaintance. Ohio Conference members are even more likely to report this observation than are Adventists across North America. Those with jobs in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations are even more likely to give this response, as are those in their 30s and early 40s and those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years.

The second most effective method they have seen bring in new members in their local church is community service of one kind or another. Ohio Conference members are ten times more likely to make this observation than Adventists in other conferences. There is a clear negative correlation with age on this item. The younger an Ohio member is, the more likely he or she is to give this response.

One in four Ohio Conference members (24 percent) report that Bible studies with individuals and families are among the most effective means for bringing new members in their local church. This is three times the rate across North America. Respondents in Blue Collar occupations are even more likely to give this response, as are recent converts baptized in the last five years.

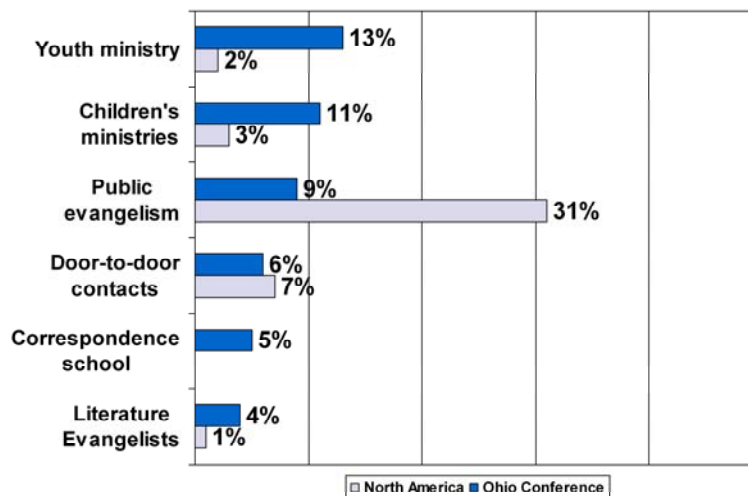
Almost the same number (22 percent) observe that small group Bible studies constitute one of the most effective methods of evangelism. This is three times the rate across North America. Members in "Generation X," currently in their 30s and early 40s, are even more likely to make this observation.

About one in six Ohio Conference members (16 percent) indicate that they have observed people joining their local church due to radio and television ministries. Another 16 percent mentioned Revelation Seminars and similar Bible seminars. Respondents who do not attend church very often are more likely to select media ministries, while those in Blue Collar occupations and over 63 years of age are more likely to select Revelation Seminars.

Ohio Conference members are about five times as likely to report that media ministries bring members into their local church as the average for local conferences in the North American Division. The percentage of members in the Ohio Conference who listed Revelation Seminars as the most effective method is not significantly different than the percentage across North America.

The observations about radio and television ministries are somewhat perplexing due to the very few denominational broadcasts on local stations in the state of Ohio. Data could not be found on this specific item, but it is possible that Ohio has a higher percentage of households on cable television systems that include the religious channels which carry the Adventist denominational programs.

What have you observed to be the most effective method for bringing in new members? (Part 2)



About one in eight Ohio Conference members (13 percent) have seen youth ministries as among the most effective ways of bringing new members in their local church. This is more than six times the rate across North America. Those under 45 years of age are more likely to make this observation.

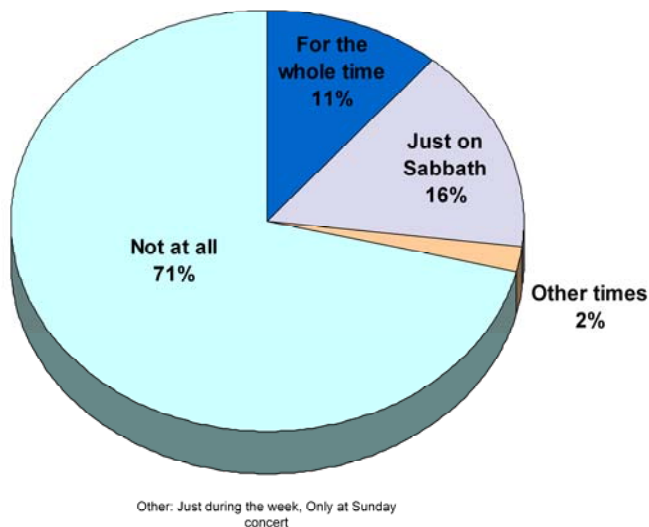
About one in ten Ohio church members (11 percent) indicate that they have observed children's ministries as important to bringing new members into their local church. This is nearly four times the rate across North America. Young families in their 30s and early 40s are more likely to give this response.

Fewer than one in ten Ohio Conference members (nine percent) have seen public evangelism, including satellite-linked meetings, to be effective in bringing new members into their local church. This is less than a third the rate across North America. Those members who do not attend church very often are more likely to give this response.

Small percentages mention other methods of evangelism as being effective in their local church. These responses correspond to similar observations by Adventists across North America.

Camp Meeting Market Research

Did you attend camp meeting in Mount Vernon during the summer of 2008?



More than seven in ten of the active members in the Ohio Conference report that they did not attend the most recent camp meeting. Those who do not attend their local church very often are even less likely to have attended camp meeting.

Of those who did attend the most recent camp meeting, nearly two thirds attended only on Sabbath. Recent converts baptized in the last five years are even more likely to give this response.

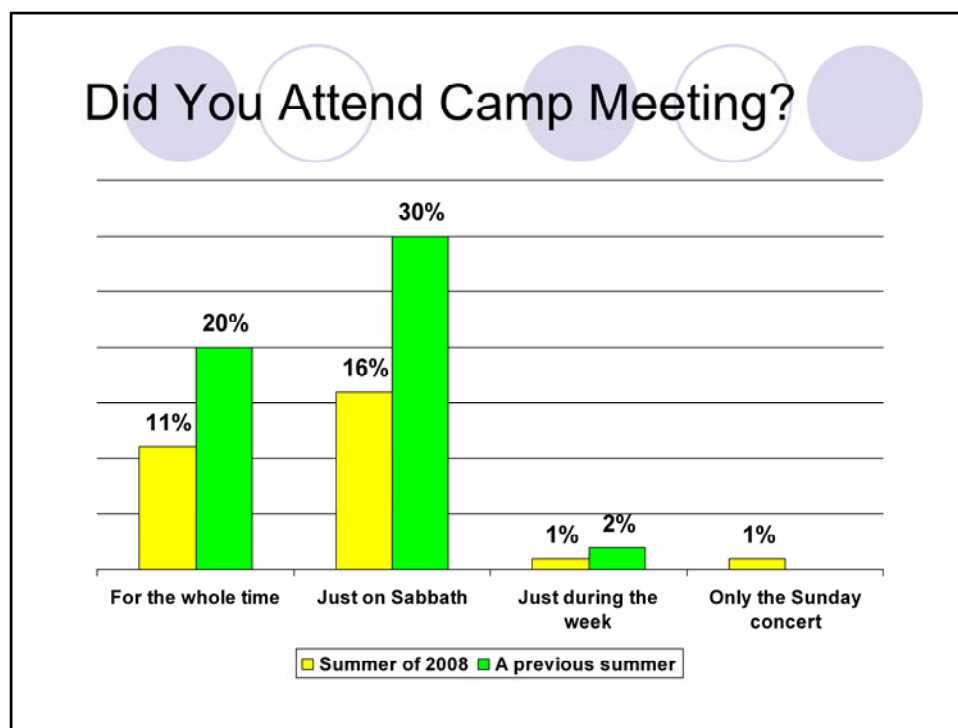
Just 11 percent of the active members in the conference attended camp meeting for the entire time. Young families in their 30s and 40s were somewhat more likely to do so.

How Many People Actually Attend Camp Meeting?

Overall, some 29 percent of the active members in the Ohio Conference indicated that they attended camp meeting at Mount Vernon in the summer of 2008. This includes respondents who were there the whole time, those who attended only on Sabbath, those who attended during the week and not on Sabbath, and those who attended only the concert on Sunday evening.

The membership of the conference was 11,370 on July 1, 2008. It is estimated—based on a number of studies across North America as well as membership audits in a few of the local churches in Ohio—that 65 percent of the total membership are active members who attend church at least once a month, and 65 percent of 11,370 equals 7,390, while 29 percent of 7,390 equals 2,143. The standard allowance for sampling error in this survey is six percentage points, so 29 percent could be as few as 1,700 and as many as 2,586.

Actual head counts indicate that no more than 1,200 people attended, so there is very likely a “halo effect” in the numbers of respondents who say that they attended the most recent camp meeting. The “halo effect” is a well-documented phenomenon in survey research. For example, surveys taken during the week after an election usually find that more people claim to have voted than the actual vote totals. It is not that people are conscious that they are lying, but that there are those who want to show support for the institutions and traditions that they value.

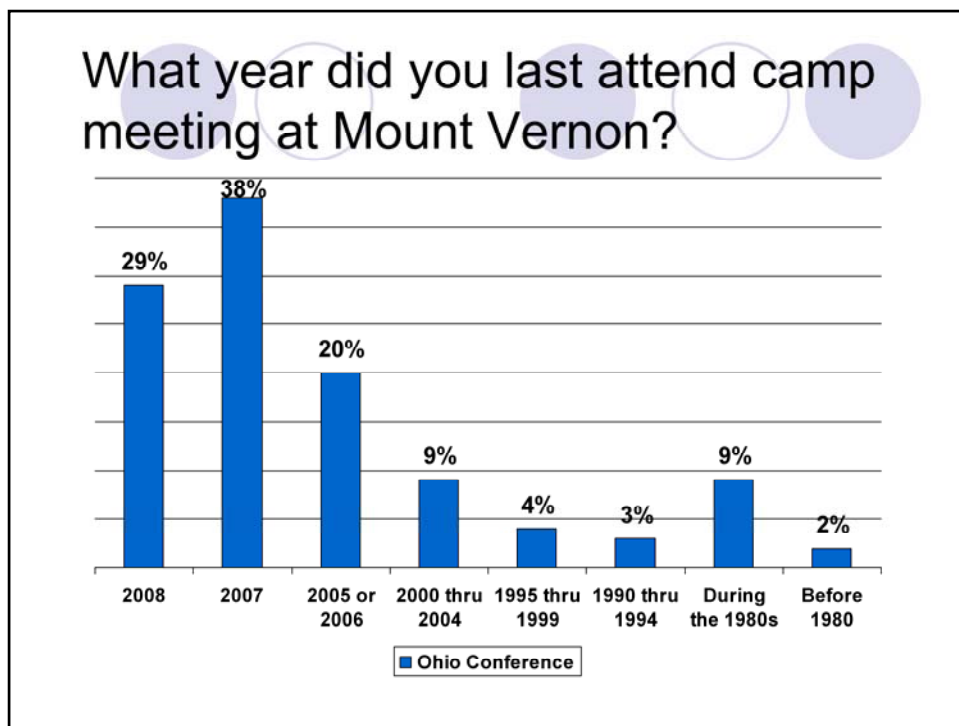


Church members were also asked if they had attended camp meeting in earlier years, which added to the pool of respondents who could help evaluate the activities at camp meeting. It also suggests that attendance at camp meeting has been declining for some time.

Nearly twice as many members reported that they had attended for the entire time in previous years. Almost all of those who attended in 2008 are included in this segment also. Two thirds of these are people over 45 years of age and the majority have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years.

Three in ten Ohio Conference members have attended camp meeting on Sabbath at some point—again this is about double the percentage who attended in 2008. Again, long-term members and those who attended in 2008 are more likely to give this response.

Nearly half of the respondents to this question (48 percent) reported that they have never attended camp meeting at Mount Vernon. The percentage is much higher among younger people under 45 years of age and new converts baptized in the last five years.

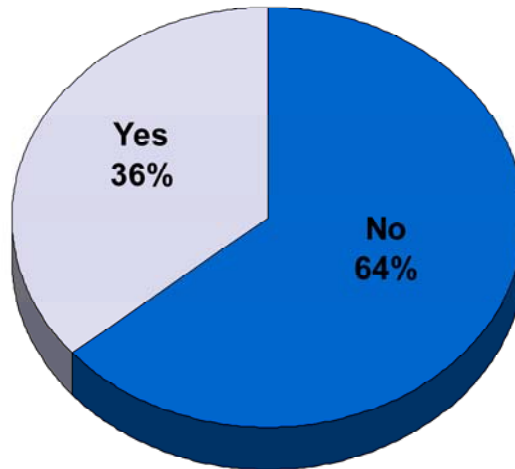


There has been a long term decline in attendance at camp meeting in the Ohio Conference. Nearly one in five members indicate that the last time they attended camp meeting was more than a decade ago. The majority of those stopped attending in the 1980s or earlier. The response is similar across all demographic segments. Surveys in a number of other conferences show the same results and several conferences have made the decision to no longer have camp meeting.

Nearly two in five (38 percent) attended in 2007 and half of these also attended in 2008. Respondents with professional, managerial and White Collar occupations were more likely to report attendance in 2007 as were middle-aged respondents from the Baby Boom generation.

One in five reported that the last attended in 2005 or 2006 and about a third of these also attended in 2008. Young adults and teens were more likely to be in this group.

I have never attended the Ohio Camp Meeting at Mount Vernon

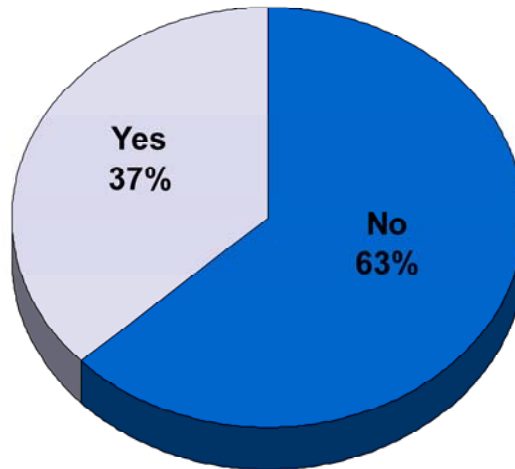


This question served as a double-check on the previous questions which did not ask respondents to definitely say they had never attended camp meeting, but arrived at that observation by counting the “left over” respondents who did not specifically report attendance in 2008 or an earlier year. Evidently some who did not specifically indicate that they attended in a specific year do remember attending at some point.

A third of the respondents specifically indicated that “I have never attended the Ohio camp meeting in Mount Vernon.” The majority of young adults and teens gave this response as did new converts baptized in the last five years.

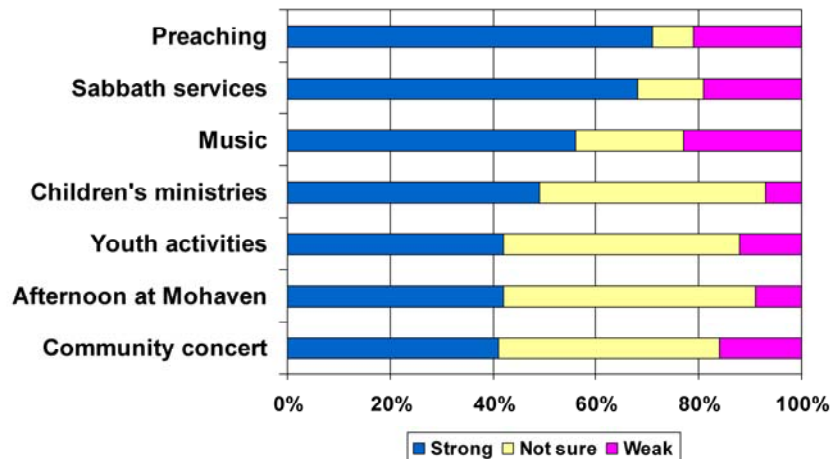
The gap between the 48 percent who did not report attendance in the specific questions about 2008 and earlier years and the 36 percent who affirmed that they have never attended in this item is, in part, due to lack of specific memories necessary to answer the earlier questions. It is also undoubtedly influenced by “halo effect.” There are those who are unwilling to say they have never attended because they want to be supportive of camp meeting even if they do not attend.

I do not have enough information to
evaluate camp meeting



Nearly two thirds of the active members in the Ohio Conference feel that they have some experience or information on which to evaluate activities at camp meeting. A little more than a third specifically affirmed that they do not feel they have enough information to respond to a series of evaluative questions. Recent converts baptized in the last five years and members with professional, managerial and White Collar occupations are more likely to have given this response. A little more than half of those who said they did not attend the 2008 camp meeting also made this affirmation, while 46 percent of those 2008 non-attenders went ahead and answered the evaluative questions.

Evaluation of Camp Meeting, pt 1



Seven in ten active church members (71 percent) rate the preaching at camp meeting as strong. Older members are more likely to give this evaluation as are those with Blue Collar occupations and those who attended in 2008. Only one in five members (21 percent) are unhappy with the preachers that have been invited to camp meeting over the last several years.

More than two thirds of church members (68 percent) rate the Sabbath services as strong. Older members and recent converts in the last five years are more likely to give this response. Less than one in five members (19 percent) are negative in their evaluation.

The majority of members (56 percent) are positive about the music at camp meeting. Those under 45 are even more positive about it, as are recent converts baptized in the last five years and members with Blue Collar occupations. Less than a quarter (23 percent) are negative.

Half (49 percent) are also positive about the children's ministries at camp meeting. A significant percentage said they are "not sure" how to rate this aspect of camp meeting, probably because they do not have children. Very few (7 percent) rate it negatively.

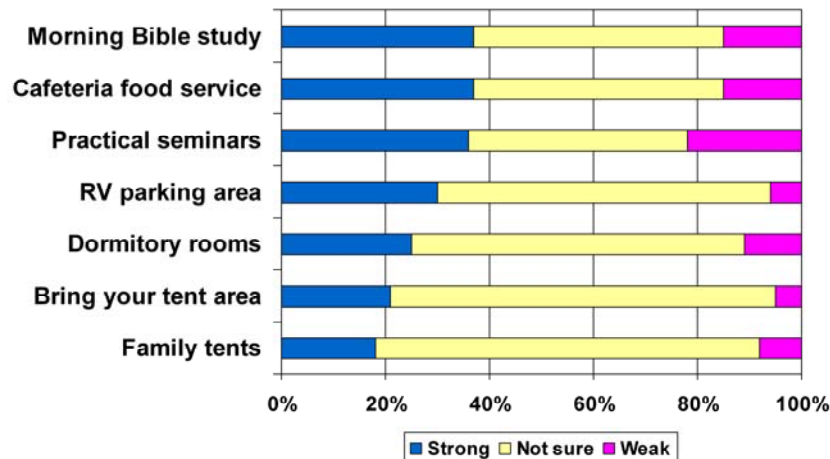
Two in five church members (42 percent) rate the youth activities at camp meeting as strong. New converts baptized in the last five years are more likely to give the youth activities a positive evaluation, as are those employed in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations and those who attended in 2008. Less than one in eight church members (12 percent) give youth activities a negative evaluation, although young adults and teens are twice as likely to do so.

The same percentage give a positive evaluation to the afternoon trip to Camp Mohaven for recreation, swimming, riding horses, etc. Younger members are even more likely to be positive about this aspect of camp meeting, as are new converts baptized in the last five years and those who attended in 2008. Less than one in ten (nine percent) respondents are negative about this activity.

Almost as many (41 percent) are positive about the community concert on Sunday evening. Again, younger members are even more likely to feel this is an excellent part of camp meeting including the majority of young adults and teens and those of all ages baptized in the last five years. Only 16 percent of the respondents are negative about the community concerts and most of these are over 63 years of age.

There is a segment of young families in the Ohio Conference—members in their 30s and early 40s—who consistently ranked every aspect of camp meeting as strong except for two: the RV parking area and the cafeteria food service. There is evidence that in each of these two items very few of this particular age group utilizes those services. There may be 50 to 75 families from across the conference who are in this cluster of young families who are strong fans of camp meeting. This is corroborated by the disproportionate number of children and teens attending during the week compared to much higher percentages of adults present on Sabbath.

Evaluation of Camp Meeting, pt 2



More than a third of church members (37 percent) rate the early-morning Bible study event as strong. New converts baptized in the last five years are even more likely to give a positive response. Clearly a large number of camp meeting attenders do not get up early enough for this particular feature. Only 15 percent give it a negative evaluation.

Another 37 percent rate the cafeteria food service at Mount Vernon Academy as a positive aspect of camp meeting. A larger number indicate that they are not sure how to respond probably because they do not use the cafeteria. Just 15 percent are negative about the cafeteria food service. Young adults and teens and recent converts baptized in the last five years are more likely to be positive.

Almost as many (36 percent) give a positive evaluation to the practical seminars provided in the afternoon during the week at camp meeting. Those in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations are more likely to give this response as are those in 30s and early 40s. More than one in five (21 percent) are negative about the seminars while a larger number said they are “not sure” evidently because they did not participate in this aspect of camp meeting.

Evaluations of the lodging options for camp meeting at Mount Vernon Academy include large segments of those who indicated they are not sure how to respond. This reflects the fact that a large number of those who attend camp meeting do not use these facilities. Many live close enough to Mount Vernon to commute from home and others use the motels in the area.

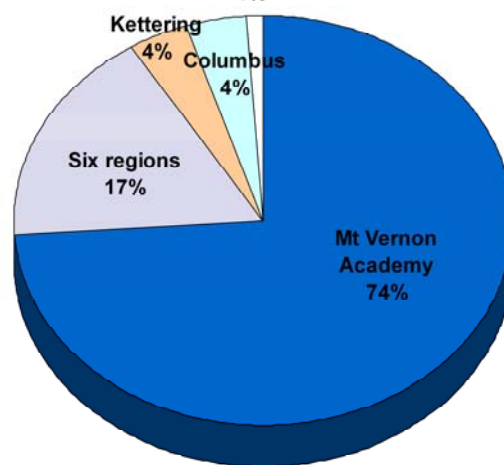
About a third (30 percent) give a strong rating to the RV parking area. Young adults, teens and recent converts are more likely to give this response. Very few (six percent) are negative about the RV parking area.

One in four respondents give a positive evaluation to the rooms in the Academy dormitories. These are more likely to be under 45 years of age and have jobs in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations. Relatively few (11 percent) give a negative evaluation.

One in five respondents (21 percent) rate the bring-your-own tent camping area as strong. Again, those under 45 years of age, recent converts and those in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations are more likely to be positive. Very few (five percent) are negative.

The fewest positive evaluations (18 percent) are given to the family tents. Those under 45 are more likely to give a positive evaluation. Very few (eight percent) respondents rate the family tents negatively, although a very large portion of the respondents have no evaluation for this type of lodging and evidently never use it.

Recommended location for the Ohio Conference Camp Meeting



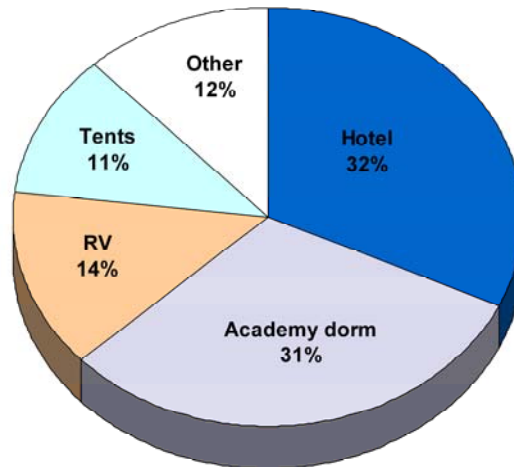
Church members were asked to indicate which location they prefer for camp meeting. Most of those who responded to this question are those who have actually attended camp meeting in recent years.

Three out of four prefer to stick with the campus of Mount Vernon Academy where camp meeting has been held for many decades. There is a negative correlation with age on this item. The older a member is the more likely they are to prefer the academy, while the younger they are the more likely they are to select another option. Long-term members and those who attended camp meeting in 2008 are also more likely to prefer the academy campus.

One in six active church members would prefer to have multiple camp meetings in each of the six regions of Ohio. Those who did not attend in 2008 are nearly three times as likely to prefer this option as are new converts baptized in the last five years.

Very few members (four percent in each case) would prefer to see camp meeting located in Columbus or Kettering. Those who do not attend in Mount Vernon are more likely to prefer one of these options.

Preferred Lodging for Camp Meeting



The largest number of respondents prefer to stay in a motel or hotel in the Mount Vernon area instead of use one of the on-campus lodging alternatives. Mid-life adults in their 30s, 40s and 50s are more likely to prefer a hotel, are those in the professional, managerial and White Collar occupations and those who did not attend in 2008.

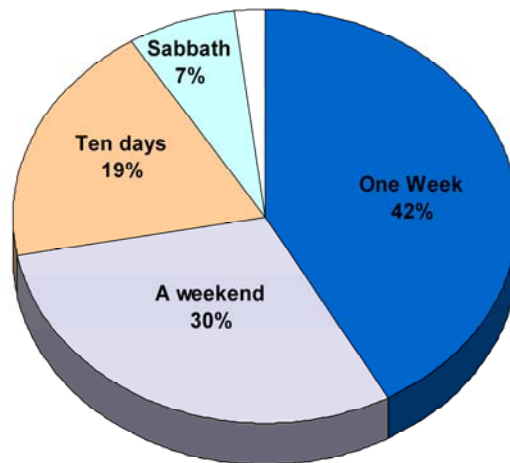
Almost an equal number prefer the rooms in the academy dormitories. Those who are over 63 and under 32 are more likely to prefer the dorm rooms, as are those in Blue Collar occupations. It appears that financial considerations may be a primary factor in their preference.

Just one in seven church members prefer staying in an RV at camp meeting. Recent converts baptized in the last five years are more likely to express this preference, as are those who attended camp meeting in 2008.

Only one church member in ten prefers to live in a tent at camp meeting. No demographic segments stand out here, so it is likely that this group is simply those who like tent camping.

A number of other possibilities were written in by respondents. There is no clear pattern in these data. They reflect a large range of personal views.

Length of Time for Camp Meeting



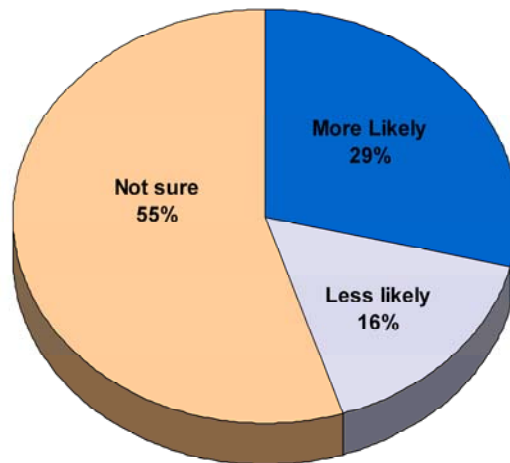
The largest number of respondents (42 percent) prefer a week-long camp meeting. Young adults and teens are more likely to prefer this option and those who have not attended camp meeting recently are less likely to prefer it than those who attended in 2008.

Nearly a third of respondents prefer a weekend camp meeting. Those who are in their 30s and 40s are more likely to select this preference, as are those in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations, new converts baptized in the last five years, and those who have not attended camping in recent years.

One in five respondents would like to go back to the ten-day camp meeting, including two weekends, that was the norm from the 1950s through the early 1980s. Those over 45 are more likely to prefer this option than are those under 45. Blue Collar workers are also more likely to want this option.

Just seven percent of the respondents want camp meeting to be one day—all day on a Sabbath. This groups includes all demographic segments in roughly equal proportion. A handful of respondents wrote in additional options, other than the four listed. There were no clear patterns in these suggestions.

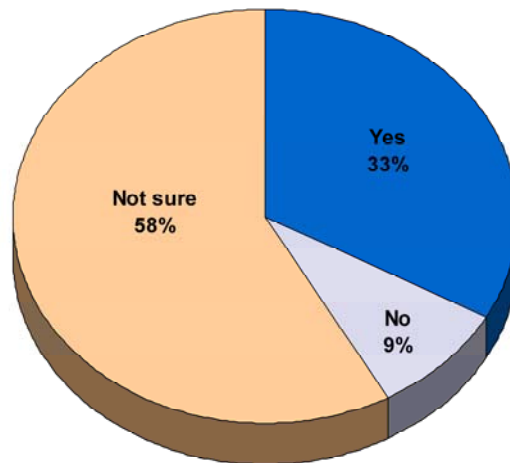
More or less likely to attend if we adopt a shortened format?



The respondents to this question includes a larger number of active church members who have not attended camp meeting in recent years. The overall majority of respondents did not answer the basic question, but took the “not sure” option. This is most likely an indication of the significant number of church members who will not attend camp meeting no matter what changes are made, no matter who the speakers are, etc.

Among those respondents who did answer this question, those who are more likely to attend if camp meeting has a shortened format out number two to one those who would be less likely to attend. Segments which have an even stronger preference for a shortened format include those with professional, managerial and White Collar jobs and new converts baptized in the last five years. The only segment with a stronger preference against a shortened format are those who attended in 2008.

Should we use facilities at Kenyon College?

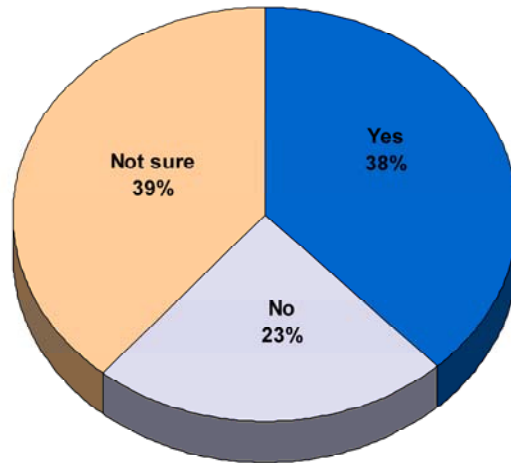


Several specific new ideas for camp meeting were tested in this survey. One concept is to provide more lodging by using facilities at Kenyon College six miles from the Mount Vernon Academy campus. All of the available rooms at MVA are used for camp meeting and a large number of members stay at local motels and hotels. Kenyon College has a new conference center that would provide enough lodging for everyone who attends and then some.

This item did not specify several details. The meetings could continue to be held at MVA or at Kenyon College. Lodging at MVA could continue to be used or discontinued if lodging were obtained at Kenyon College. If both facilities were used, would a shuttle bus be provided between the MVA and Kenyon College campuses? How much less cost would the conference center rooms at Kenyon College be as compared to the motels and hotels in the area?

The majority of the respondents did not really answer this questions, selecting the "I am not sure" response. This may be due to the unspecified details related to this concept. Or, it may simply be another indication of the members who will not attend camp meeting no matter what changes are made.

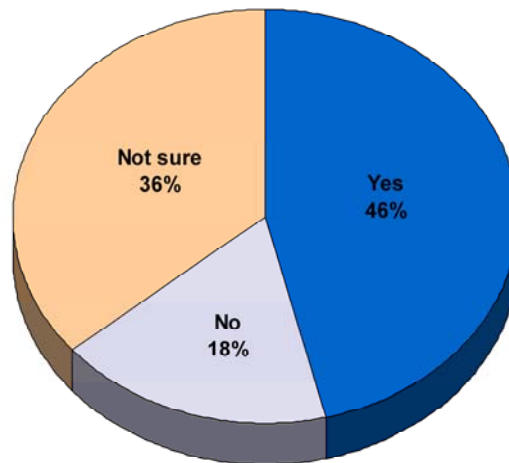
Move Camp Meeting to Camp Mohaven



Another concept tested in this survey is the idea of “moving camp meeting from the campus of Mount Vernon Academy to Camp Mohaven where a wider range of resources are available for children’s ministries, nature study and recreational activities.” Those who favor this option outnumber nearly two to one those who are against it. Members under 45 are more likely to respond positively to this idea as are new converts baptized in the last five years and those employed in professional, managerial and White Collar occupations.

Again, the largest share of the respondents selected the “not sure” response. A significant portion of these are people who have not attended camp meeting in recent years. Although some of the respondents who avoided a clear answer to this question probably just did not have enough details to decide about the concept presented, it is likely that most are among those who will not attend camp meeting no matter where it is located nor what changes are made.

Would You Attend a Family-centered Week of Camp Meeting ... ?

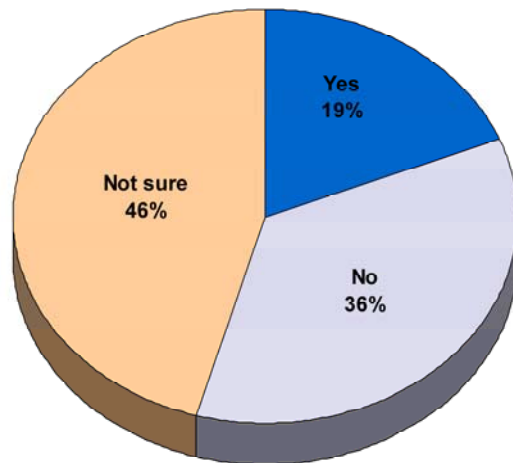


Another concept that was tested in this survey is “a family-centered week of camp meeting with good preaching, adult seminars and children’s ministries in the morning, and recreational field trips for the whole family in the afternoon such as a bus trip to Amish Country, swimming and horse-back riding at Camp Mohaven, etc.”

Nearly half of the respondents (46 percent) responded positively to this concept—nearly three times the negative response. Again, church members under 45 years of age and recent converts baptized in the last five years are even more likely to favor this concept with about two thirds responding positively. Nearly half of those who did not attend camp meeting in recent years are positive about this idea.

Again, a very large percentage of respondents selected the “not sure” option. And, again, there is evidence that many of these are likely to be people who will not attend camp meeting no matter what plan is implemented.

Switch from Camp Meeting to a Family Retreat format ... ?

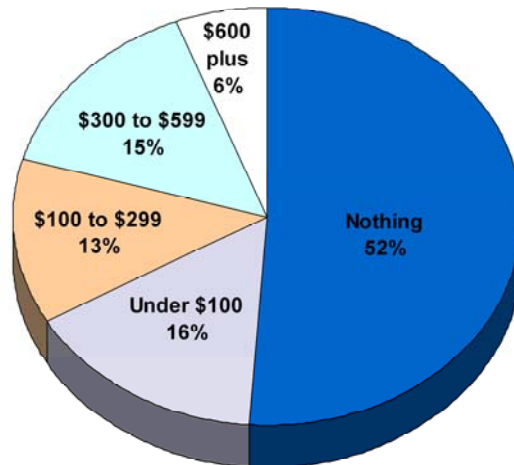


Another idea that was tested is to “switch from a camp meeting format to a family retreat format in a state park, a retreat center or hotel.” The idea here is to make use of one or more of the several excellent lodges that are operated by the Ohio State Park Service or something similar.

Those who responded negatively to this concept out number the positive responses almost two to one. Middle-aged Baby Boomers are more likely to favor this concept. Again, the largest percentage of respondents are those who did not really answer the question and there is evidence that many of these are people who will never attend camp meeting under any plan.

A review of the several concepts tested in this survey suggests that when it is suggested that camp meeting is replaced by a new concept there is a more negative and uncertain response than when it is suggested that camp meeting be reformatted. Clearly there is a significant number of church members who want to hold onto some version of a “camp meeting,” although the majority of church members will not actually attend.

What would you be willing to pay for a
Camp Meeting cruise?

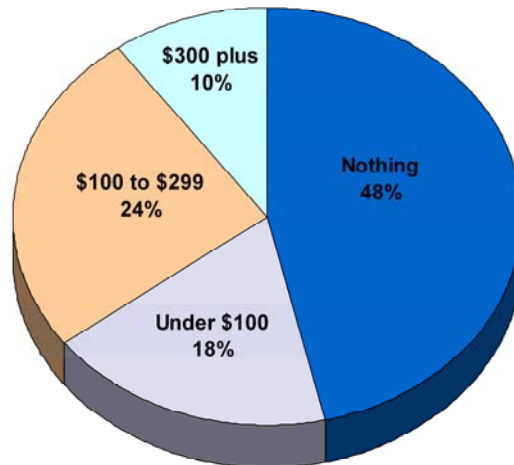


The concept of a cruise as a venue for camp meeting was introduced by asking how much respondents would be willing to pay. Most of the respondents simply skipped this question and the majority of those who did respond it said they were not willing to pay anything or, perhaps, did not think they had the ability to pay. Those over 45 are much more likely to be unwilling to pay, while those under 45 are much more likely to name an amount they are willing to pay. Long-term members and those who attended camp meeting in 2008 are also more likely to say they would not pay anything.

The actual responses of amounts church members are willing to pay for a camp meeting cruise are quite unrealistic compared to the cost of cruises on the open market. The majority said they are willing to pay less than \$300 for a cruise, a price point unheard of in the open market and group travel. Only three percent said they would be willing to pay \$1,000 or more.

It is unlikely that this is a feasible option for the Ohio Conference camp meeting. It appears to fall so far outside the experience of the vast majority of members who might attend camp meeting that it would be impossible to come up with a plan that would fly.

What would you be willing to pay for a Family Retreat instead of Camp Meeting?



An additional question about the family retreat concept asked what respondents would be willing to pay and left a blank to be filled in with numbers. These data suggest that this might be a more feasible plan.

Although most of the survey sample simply skipped this question, a slight majority of the respondents did write down an amount they are willing to pay. Overwhelmingly, those over 45 years of age are unwilling to pay anything for a family retreat. The same is true for those who have been baptized members for more than 20 years.

Those under 45 years of age and new converts baptized in the last five years are much more likely to state a specific amount they would be willing to pay. And the amounts they have suggested are largely realistic considering the costs involved. More than two thirds of those who wrote down an amount suggested they would be willing to pay more than \$100. Although it would not meet the needs of many of the older members who value the camp meeting tradition, there is evidence that this concept could be implement. Perhaps it should be seen as one choice among many events instead of a single camp meeting event.

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Ohio Conference—2008 Survey of Church Members

Church leaders need your honest opinions. Please do not sign your name.

1. Check each statement that is true for you:

- ☐₁ I am **not** a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
☐₂ I was raised as a child by an Adventist parent or parents

2. **If you are a member**, how long since you were baptized?

- ☐₁ Less than 5 years ☐₂ 5 to 10 years ☐₃ 11 to 20 years ☐₄ More than 20 years

3. In the last four Sabbaths, how many times have you attended church? _____

4. Do you hold a church office or responsibility in your local church? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

5. In the last year, have you attended a church leadership development event? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

6. Have you volunteered time during the last month for a community service program of some kind that is sponsored by your local church?

- ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

7. Circle the number that shows the assurance that you have of eternal life:

Not Sure 1 2 3 4 5 Very Certain

8. Have you held Bible studies with a non-member during the past twelve months? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

9. Do you usually meet regularly with a small Bible study or fellowship group? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

10. Do you regularly participate in a Sabbath School class? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

11. Do you know someone personally who joined the Adventist Church in the last year? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

If your answer to Question 11 is "No," please skip to Question 16.

12. Were you personally involved in the process of their conversion? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

13. How did this person first become aware of the Adventist Church?

14. What do you think was the deciding factor in their decision to join the church?

15. Is this person a relative of yours? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

16. As a child or young person, did you ever attend an Adventist school? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

17. Do you have a relative or a friend who used to be an active member of the Adventist Church, but has dropped out of the church?

- ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

18. Do you think the Adventist Church should expand its programs to meet the needs of the homeless, the poor in the inner city and the unemployed?

☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

19. Do you currently have children living in your home or away at boarding school? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

20. Are any of them enrolled in an Adventist school? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

21. **If not**, Why?

In your local church, what have you observed to be the most effective method for bringing in new members?

Check no more than 2 items from the list below.

- ☐ Relationship with an Adventist relative, neighbor, co-worker or acquaintance [22]
- ☐ Going door to door [23]
- ☐ Bible studies with individuals and families [24]
- ☐ Small group Bible studies [25]
- ☐ Revelation Seminar or similar seminar [26]
- ☐ Public evangelism, including satellite-linked meetings [27]
- ☐ Radio or TV ministry [28]
- ☐ Bible correspondence school [29]
- ☐ Literature Evangelist (selling books) [30]
- ☐ Community service; meeting the needs of people [31]
- ☐ Youth ministries [32]
- ☐ Children's ministries [33]
- ☐ Other: _____

34. Did you attend camp meeting last summer (2008)?

- ☐₁ For the whole time
- ☐₂ Just on Sabbath
- ☐₃ Just during the week—went elsewhere on Sabbath
- ☐₄ Only the concert on Sunday evening
- ☐₅ Not at all

35. Did you attend camp meeting in a previous summer?

If so, what year? _____

- ☐₁ For the whole time
- ☐₂ Just on Sabbath
- ☐₃ Just during the week—went elsewhere on Sabbath
- ☐₄ Only the concert on Sunday evening
- ☐₅ Not at all

36. Please check the statement that is true for you:

- ☐₁ I have never attended the Ohio camp meeting in Mount Vernon
- ☐₂ I last attended the Ohio camp meeting at Mount Vernon in _____.

What should be done to improve camp meeting?

How would you rate each of the following elements of the Ohio Camp Meeting at Mount Vernon:

☐₁ Check here if you do not feel you have enough information upon which to base any evaluation, and skip to Question 52.

| <i>Check the box that comes closest to your evaluation of each item. Skip those items with which you have had no experience.</i> | Very weak | Somewhat weak | Not sure | Somewhat strong | Very strong |
|--|-----------|---------------|----------|-----------------|-------------|
| 37. Preaching—speakers morning & evening | | | | | |
| 38. Practical seminars in the afternoon | | | | | |
| 39. Early-morning Bible study event | | | | | |
| 40. Sabbath services | | | | | |
| 41. Children's ministries | | | | | |
| 42. Youth activities | | | | | |
| 43. Afternoon trip to Camp Mohaven for recreation, swimming, riding horses, etc. | | | | | |
| 44. Music | | | | | |
| 45. Community concert on Sunday evening | | | | | |
| 46. Rooms in the Academy dorm | | | | | |
| 47. Family tents | | | | | |
| 48. RV parking area | | | | | |
| 49. Bring-your-own tent camping area | | | | | |
| 50. Cafeteria food service | | | | | |

51. Which location would you recommend for the Ohio Conference Camp Meeting?

☐₁ Mt. Vernon Academy ☐₂ Columbus ☐₃ Kettering area ☐₄ Each of the six regions of Ohio.

52. What kind of lodging would you prefer for the Ohio Conference Camp Meeting?

☐₁ Academy dorm ☐₂ RV ☐₃ Tents ☐₄ Hotel(s) with reasonable prices ☐₅ Other: _____

53. What length of time would you recommend for the Ohio Conference Camp Meeting?

☐₁ Ten days (two weekends) ☐₂ One week ☐₃ A weekend ☐₄ All day Sabbath ☐₅ Other: _____

54. Should the Ohio Conference relieve the over-crowded dorm lodging at Mount Vernon by using facilities at Kenyon College six miles away?

☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No ☐₃ I am not sure

55. Many conferences have gone to a shortened format—Wednesday or Thursday night through Sabbath or the weekend only. Are more or less likely to attend Camp Meeting if we adopt a similar schedule?

☐₁ More likely to attend ☐₂ Less likely to attend ☐₃ Not sure

56. Would you be in favor of moving Camp Meeting from the campus of Mount Vernon Academy to Camp Mohaven where a wider range of resources are available for children's ministries, nature study and recreational activities?

☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No ☐₃ Not sure

57. Would you attend a family-centered week of Camp Meeting with good preaching, adult seminars and children's ministries in the morning, and recreational field trips for whole family in the afternoon such as a bus trip to Amish Country, swimming and horse-back riding at Camp Mohaven, etc.

☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No ☐₃ Not sure

58. Should the Ohio Conference switch from a Camp Meeting format to a Family Retreat format in a state park, a retreat center or hotel?

☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No ☐₃ Not sure

59. What would you be willing to pay for a Camp Meeting cruise? \$_____

60. What would you be willing to pay for a Family Retreat instead of Camp Meeting? \$_____

61. Over the last year, how much have you grown in your commitment to Christ and understanding of the Bible?

☐₁ No real growth ☐₂ Some growth ☐₃ Much growth, mainly through this church
☐₄ Much growth, mainly through other groups or ministries
☐₅ Much growth, mainly through my own private activities

62. To what extent does worship in your local church help you with everyday living?

☐₁ A great extent ☐₂ Some extent ☐₃ A small extent ☐₄ Not at all

63. How far is your home from the church where you are a member?

☐₁ In the same Zip Code as the church ☐₂ In a different Zip Code, but in the same city ☐₃ In a different town, but within the same county
☐₄ In a different county

Please answer these demographic questions so we can classify the data from this survey:

65-66. In what year were you born? _____

67. What is your gender? ☐₁ Male ☐₂ Female

68. What is your marital status?

☐₁ Married
☐₂ Single, never married
☐₃ Single, widowed
☐₄ Single, divorced
☐₅ Separated

69-70. What year was your spouse born? _____

71. Is your spouse an Adventist Church member?

☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

72. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

☐₁ Less than secondary diploma
☐₂ Secondary diploma
☐₃ College degree
☐₄ Graduate degree

73. What is your occupation?

74. Were you born a citizen of the United States? ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

75. Which of the following list best describes your ethnic background?

☐₁ Asian or Pacific Islander ☐₂ Black, African American ☐₃ Black, Caribbean
☐₄ Hispanic ☐₅ White ☐₆ Multiethnic
☐₇ Other

Thank you!

Technical Appendix

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error. That is the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had been interviewed or completed a questionnaire. The size of such sampling errors depends on the actual number of interviews or questionnaires, *not* the number of responses as a percentage of the population.

The following tables may be used in estimating the sampling error of any percentage in this report. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedures, the same interviewers and/or the same questionnaire.

Table A shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of any percentage reported. This table would be used in the following manner: If a reported percentage is 33 for a group that includes 1,250 respondents ... then, go to the row that says "percentages near 30" in the table and go across to the column headed "1,250." The number at this point is 3, which means that the 33 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. This means that very probably (95 chances out of 100) the actual figure would be somewhere between 30 percent and 36 percent, with the most likely figure the 33 percent obtained in the survey.

In comparing survey results in two sub-samples, for example, men and women, the question arises as to how large a difference between them must be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. Table B and Table C indicate the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons to make them "statistically significant." Table C is for percentages near 20 or 80. Table B is for percentages near 50. For percentages in between, the factor to be allowed for is between those shown on the two tables.

Here is how these tables are used: If 50% of men respond a certain way and 40% of women respond that way also, for a difference of 10 percentage points between them, can we say that the 10 point difference reflects a real difference between the two groups on that question? Let's say the sample contains about 750 of each gender.

Since the percentages are near 50, consult Table B. Since the total sample is 1,500, look for the number in the column headed "1,500." Since the two sub-samples are 750 persons each, look for the row designated "750." Where the row and column intersect, you will find the number 6. This means that the difference between the two groups must be greater than 6 percentage points to be "statistically significant." In other words, we can conclude with considerable confidence that a real difference exists in the answers of men and women to this question.

Table A
Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error

| Size of Sample | 1,500 | 1,250 | 1,000 | 750 | 500 | 250 | 100 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Percentages near 10 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 |
| Percentages near 20 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Percentages near 30 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 11 |
| Percentages near 40 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 12 |
| Percentages near 50 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 12 |
| Percentages near 60 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 12 |
| Percentages near 70 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 11 |
| Percentages near 80 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Percentages near 90 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 7 |

Table B
Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference
In Percentage Points for Percentages near 50

| Size of Sample | 1,500 | 1,250 | 1,000 | 750 | 500 | 250 | 100 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1,500 | 4 | | | | | | |
| 1,250 | 5 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1,000 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | | |
| 750 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | | | |
| 500 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 8 | | |
| 250 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 11 | |
| 100 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 17 |

Table C
Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference
In Percentage Points
For Percentages near 20 or Percentages near 80

| Size of Sample | 1,500 | 1,250 | 1,000 | 750 | 500 | 250 | 100 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1,500 | 4 | | | | | | |
| 1,250 | 4 | 4 | | | | | |
| 1,000 | 4 | 4 | 4 | | | | |
| 750 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | | | |
| 500 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | | |
| 250 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| 100 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 14 |

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