

Christ's Mission in Collegedale

A report by
Elder Monte Sahlin
Senior Consultant
Center for Creative
Ministry
May 2010

Who is Monte Sahlin?

- An ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister for 40 years who has done assessments of more than 1,000 local churches. He is currently employed by the Ohio Conference after spending two decades at the General Conference and union conference level directing research and development. He teaches in the Doctor of Ministry program at Andrews University and the urban studies program at Eastern Baptist University. He is the author of 20 books, 50 research monographs and many articles.

What is the Center for Creative Ministry?

- One of the research and information centers affiliated with the North American Division, the center provides information, resource materials, training and consultants to help local churches develop new approaches to outreach, evangelism and church growth. It provides the *Sharing Scripture* small group Bible study guides, *Friend2Friend* training videos and other materials.

Goals of this Study

- Provide an assessment of the Seventh-day Adventist mission in the Collegedale area
- Profile the life and vitality of the Collegedale Church
- Put information on the table for strategic planning

Outline

- Background & trends
- The mission field
- Congregational survey
- Analysis & recommendations

Background

- Collegedale Church was organized in 1916 with 50 members (most students) soon after the Southern Training School moved to the present campus
- In 1918 some 17 students were baptized
- 1921 – church gives \$22.65 per month for home missionary work, distributing *Signs of the Times* to every home in Ooltewah, Apison, and Howardville

Background

- 1921 – Spanish SS class started
- 1926 – Southern Junior College enrollment reaches 197
- 1932 – The Great Depression cuts college income by two-thirds
 - Teachers salaries cut by 10% in January and cut again in the fall
 - Collegedale Church launches Relief Book Campaign to raise \$10,000

Background

- January 1941 Week of Prayer
 - C. S. Longacre wrote: "There was a real hungering and thirsting after God. ... Tears flowed freely ... It seemed like the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost."
- 1946 – "complete" Spanish Sabbath School organized January 19
- 1952 – attendance was 1,400

Background

- 2,000 non-members enrolled in Bible lessons during fall of 1953
- 1954 – \$5,000 raised in one-day Ingathering campaign
- 1961 – \$225,000 pledged for construction of a church facility
- 1965 – moved into the building
- 1967 – dedicated free of debt

Background

- Collegedale sponsored church plants in the 1960s: Apison, Ringgold, Ooltewah, Birchwood
- First engaged couples retreat held April 20, 1968
- 1984 interior renovation including the largest tracker organ built in North America with 4,926 pipes

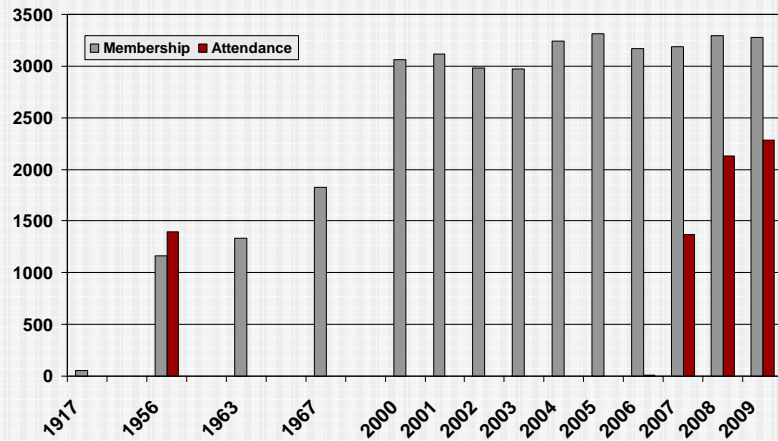
Background

- 1985 – Conference on Smoking & Health held to mark 25th anniversary of Five-day Plan to Stop Smoking
- 1990 – Hurricane Hugo; volunteers from Collegedale Church go to South Carolina to help with the response
- 1991 – Addition to the building totals 45,000 square feet

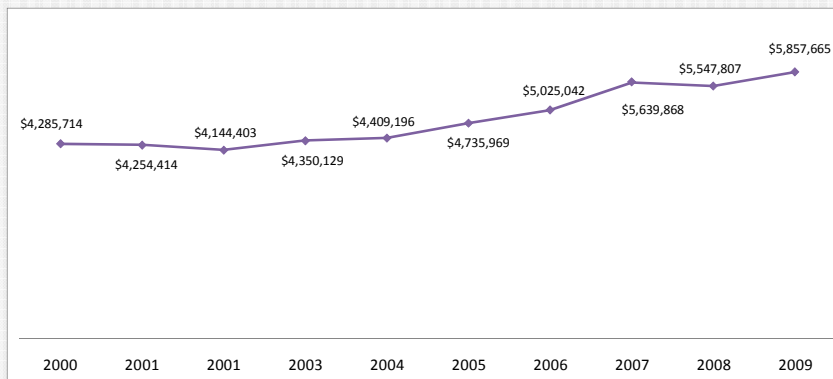
Background

- Spring of 1994 a student-led worship service called Koinonia began in Pierson Chapel with average attendance of 200
- In 1995 the first satellite-linked evangelism campaign was uplinked from Chattanooga (NET 95)

Membership & Attendance



Total Yearly Tithe

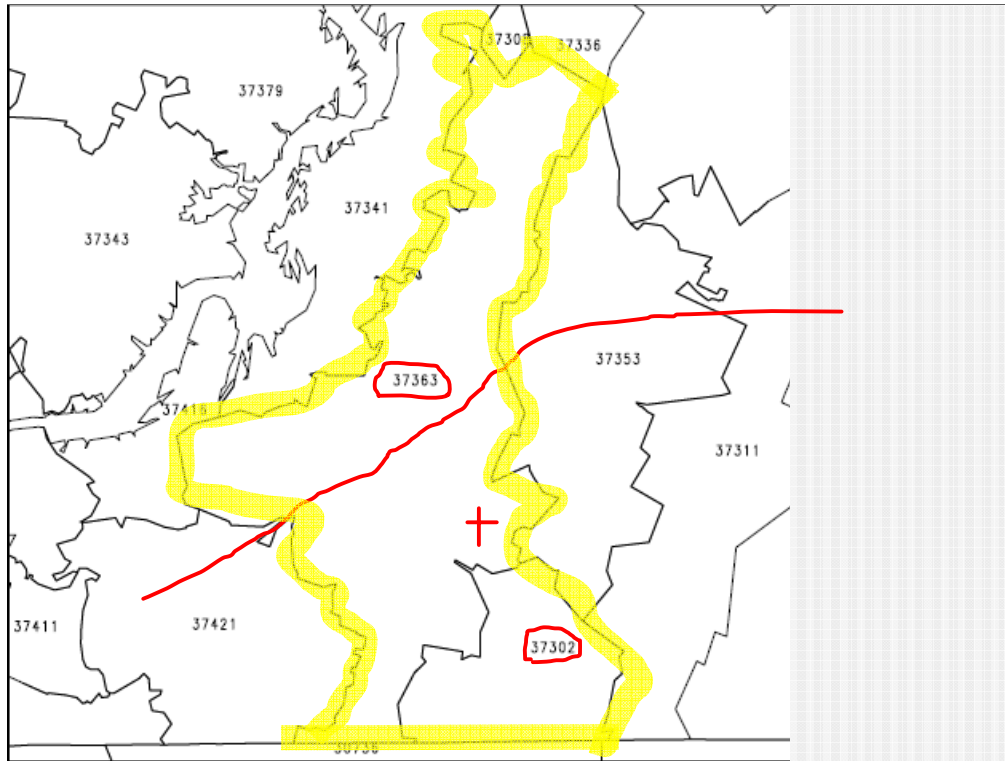


Collegedale as a Mission Field

- Collegedale has 32,791 people living in 11,774 households
- It is part of the Chattanooga metro area
- One Adventist for 39 people
 - USA: 1 to 305
 - New Guinea: 1 to 25
 - Zambia: 1 to 22
 - Jamaica: 1 to 14
 - Belize: 1 to 10

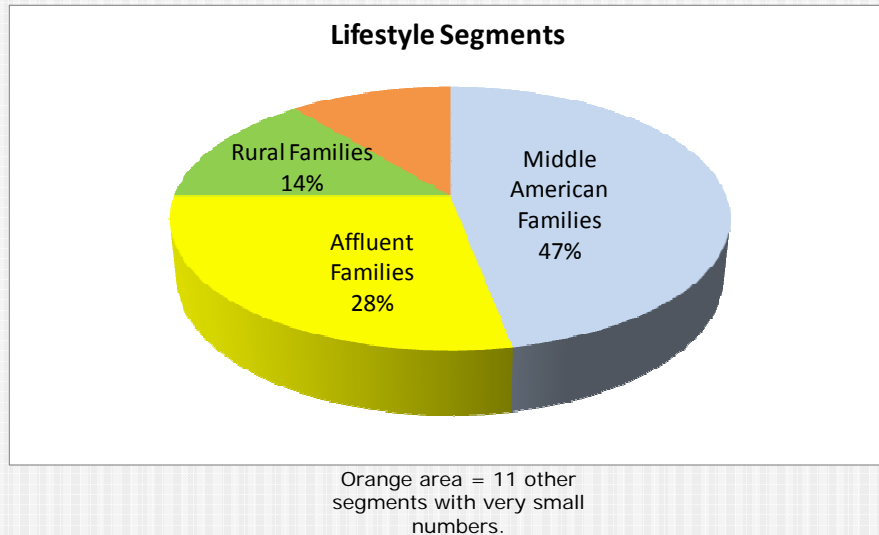
The Collegedale community is defined here as Zip Codes 37363 and 37302.

How many Adventists live in this area? An estimate of 857 is arrived at by the following calculation: 3,277 members of Collegedale Church of which 61 percent are active attenders (1,999) and 36 percent of those indicated in the survey that they live in the same community as the church (720), to which 19 percent is added to allow for unbaptized children in these households. The penetration index of one Adventist for 39 population is based on that estimate.



This map shows the boundaries of the two Zip Codes that define the Collegedale community in this study. The actual Zip Code used by the church is 37315 which contains no geographic territory, only the PO boxes in the Collegedale post office. All of the homes in Collegedale itself are in Zip Code 37363, which also includes Ooltewah, etc. Zip Code 37302 includes Apison and some surrounding area. The cross shows the approximate location of the church and campus. The red line running through the map is Interstate 75.

Who are the people living in this community?



Segmentation is a new concept developed in the last 20 years largely by market research companies to provide a better focus on specific people groups in the American population. For more information on the concept and a chart comparing the various segmentation typologies with demographics, etc., see Chapter 5 in *Understanding Your Community* (2004, Center for Creative Ministry/Center for Metropolitan Ministry). These data were purchased on behalf of Collegedale Church from Percept Group, Inc., the only market research company in America that serves the specific needs of Christian churches and ministries. Percept Group uses the segmentation framework of Urban Dynamics, Inc., and adds information about religion from its own annual surveys and many other sources. These data are developed from the use of proprietary algorithms that are updated continually and therefore represent information for the current year.

Middle American Families

- Largely adults 30 to 64 years of age and most are married; high percentages of Blue Collar workers (precision production, crafts); a little above median income; own high numbers of riding lawn mowers, chain saws and trucks
- Needs—Child care, parenting skills, finding spiritual teaching, time for recreation
- Above average preference for Adventist, Congregational, Methodist, Lutheran, Reformed
- Interested in churches with Divorce Recovery, Marriage Enrichment, youth activities, family activities, and Bible study groups

This is the largest group of people in the Collegedale area, making up nearly half of the households (47 percent). They are the middle class, suburban population that is related to employment in the greater Chattanooga metropolitan area.

Affluent Families

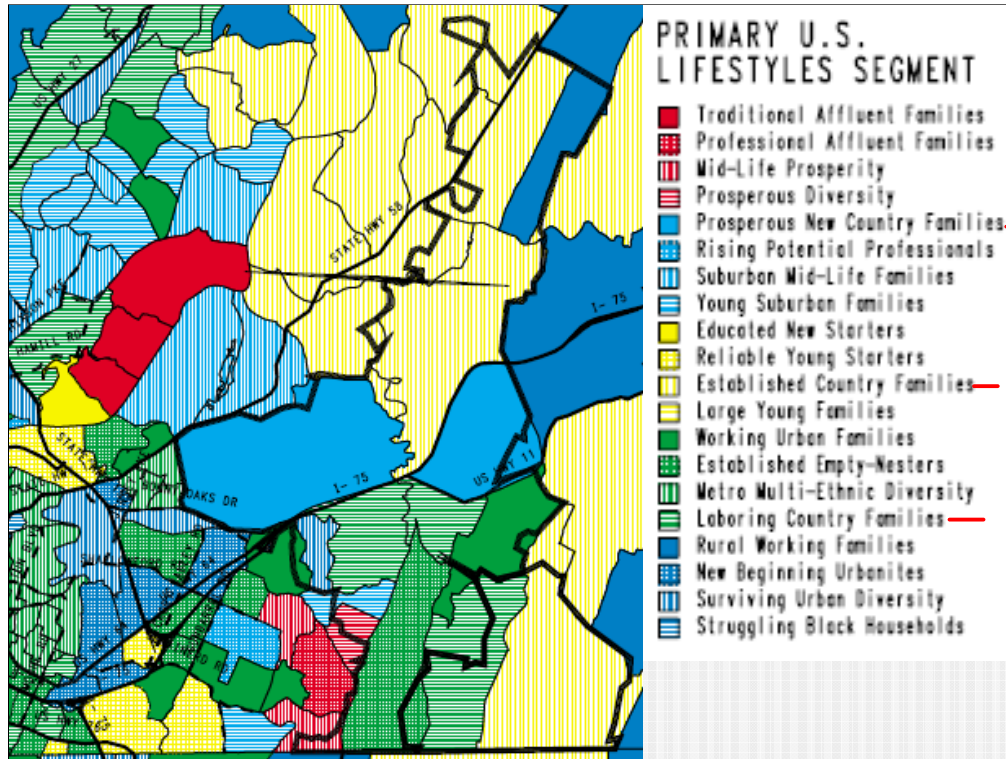
- Commuters who live in a “rural” setting, but work in the city; own high numbers of vehicles as well as garden and power tools
- High numbers of children; high incomes
- Needs—Parenting skills, Fulfilling marriage, Life direction, Getting education, Aging parents
- Somewhat lower faith involvement, but higher preference for Congregational, Episcopal, Catholic
- Want churches that offer Marriage Enrichment, parent training, day care, youth ministries, social activities

These are the more affluent residents of the Collegedale area, making up more than a quarter of the households (28 percent). These are families seeking a more exurban setting for their homes although their livelihoods are connected to the Chattanooga metropolitan area.

Rural Families

- All age groups, below average incomes, Blue Collar workers, home ownership is high; half of the women are in the work force
- More involved in religion; high preferences for Adventist, Holiness, Pentecostal, Baptist, JWs
- Primary needs—Divorce, abuse, finding spiritual teaching, finding a good church, teen/child problems, and parenting skills
- Interested in churches with Divorce Recovery, Bible study groups, emergency food pantry, counseling services, family activities

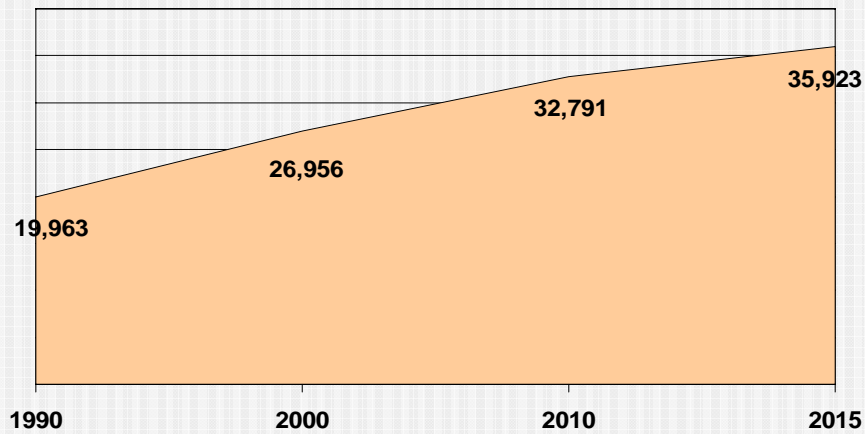
About one household in seven (14%) represents the rural families who have lived in this area from long before it became a suburb of Chattanooga. Their economic standing is not as well off as the other two large segments. This group includes many of the poor in Collegedale.



This map shows all of the lifestyle segments at the level of census tracts. It is important to remember that physical space does not represent numbers of people.

The three largest segments are flagged with a red mark to the right of the listing. The “Prosperous New Country Families” here equals the Affluent Families segment in the previous four pages. The “Established Country Families” here equals the Middle American Families in the previous four pages. The “Laboring Country Families” equals the Rural Families in the previous four pages.

Population Growth

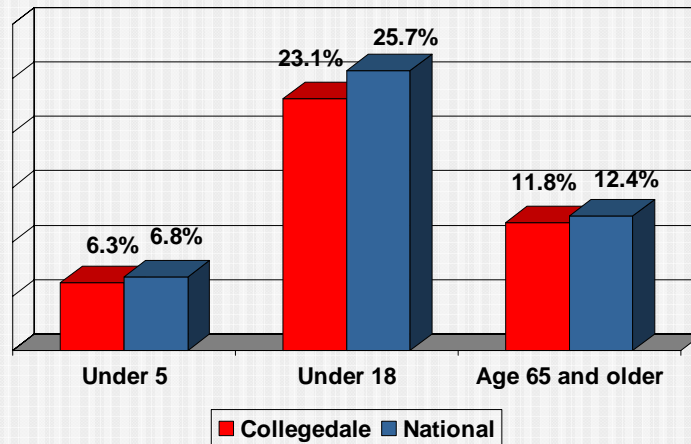


2015 is a projection

Collegedale is experiencing significant population growth. As new families move in, this opens a missional opportunity for Newcomer Outreach.

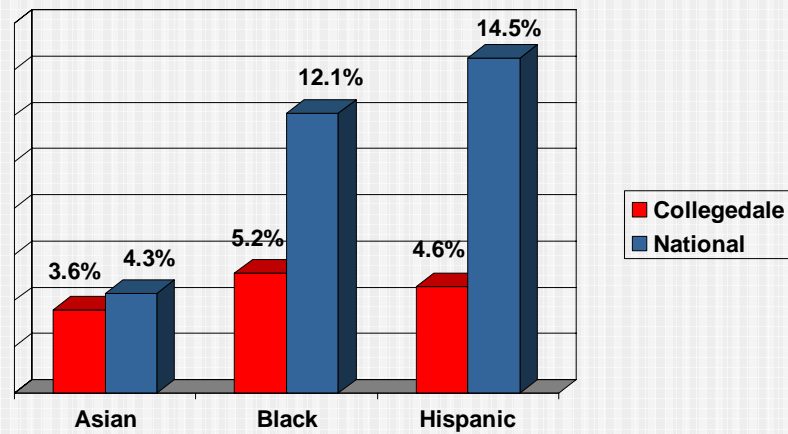
The 1990 and 2000 data here are from the U.S. Census. The 2010 figure is from data supplied by Percept Group, Inc., as is the projected population for 2015.

Age Groups



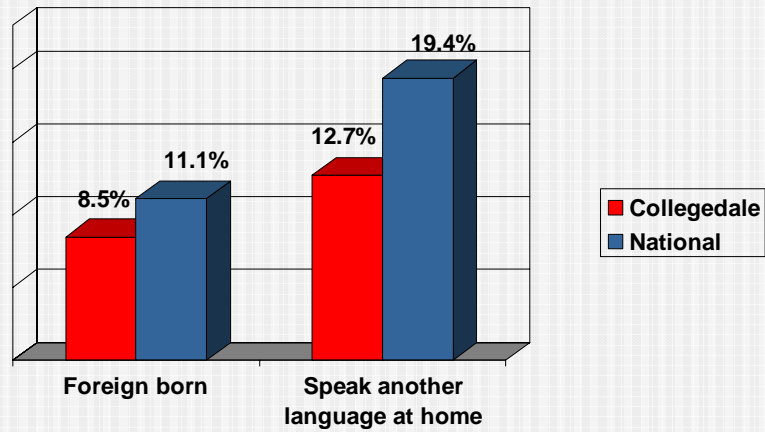
Collegedale has relatively fewer young people and senior citizens than the average community in America. That means there is a larger than average share of adults ages 18 through 64.

Ethnic Minorities



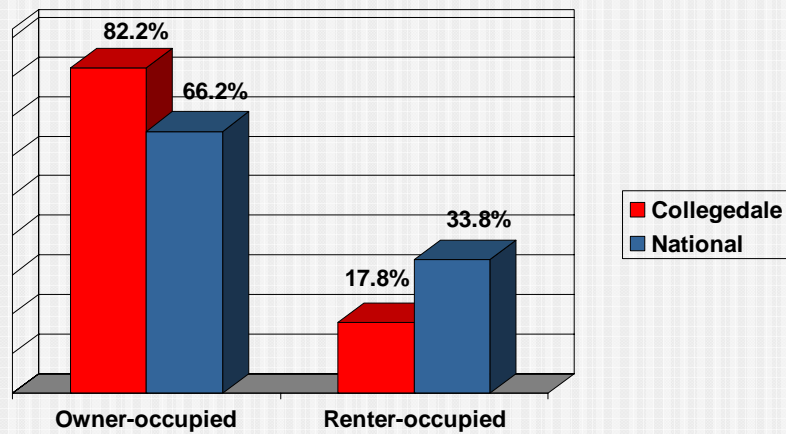
Collegedale has a relatively smaller population of ethnic minorities than the average community in America. It is important to note that despite the historic dominance of whites in this community, there are a growing number of ethnic minorities, about one resident in seven now.

Immigrants



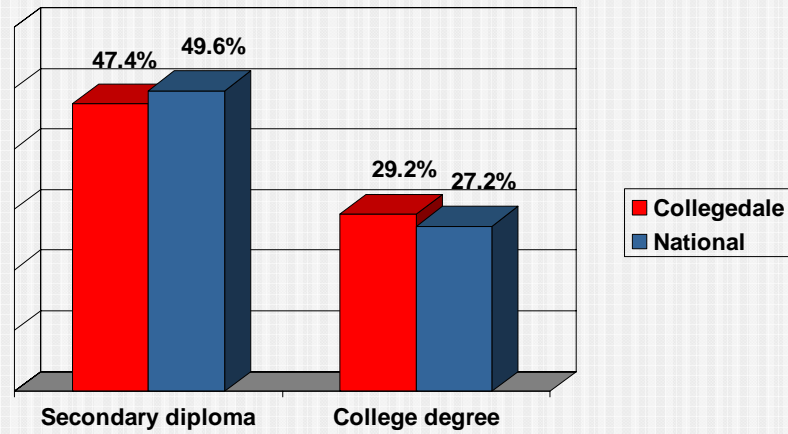
Collegedale has relatively fewer immigrants than the average community in America.

Housing



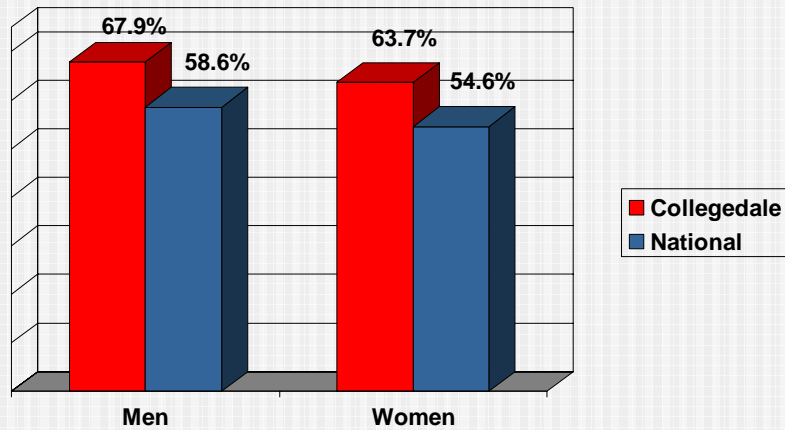
Collegedale has historically had a larger share of homeowners than the average community in America. These data are from the 2000 census and the rate of home ownership is likely to have declined in the intervening years, but not sufficiently to put the rate below the national average.

Education



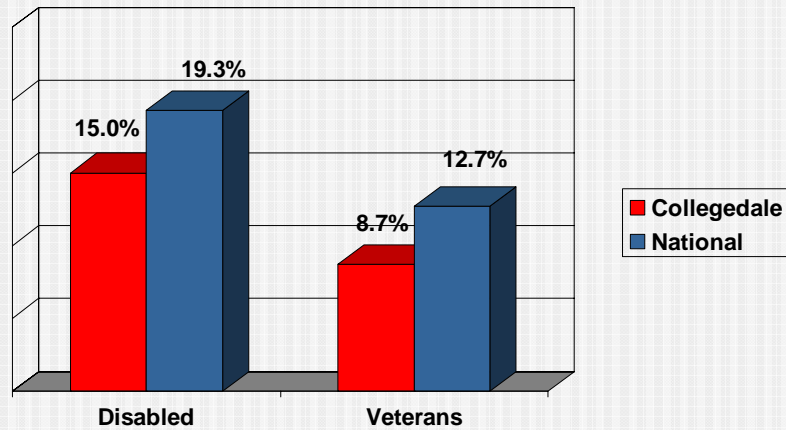
Collegedale has a somewhat larger proportion of residents with higher education. This is very likely linked to the Southern Adventist University faculty who live in the area.

Married



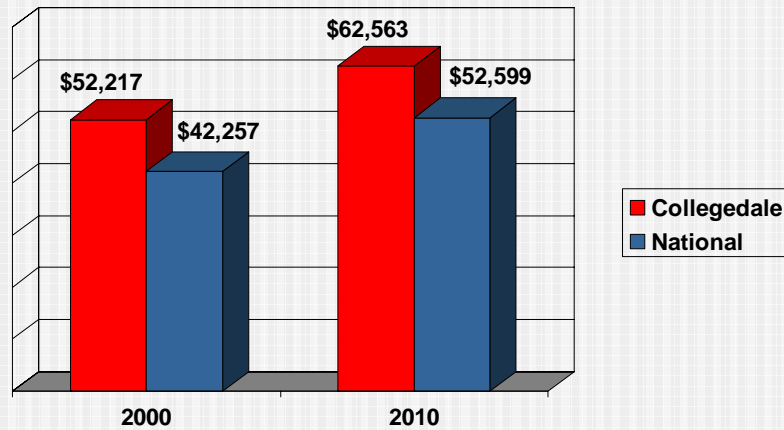
Collegedale residents are more likely to be married than in the average American community. This means, of course, that there is a smaller portion of single adults in this area.

Special Needs



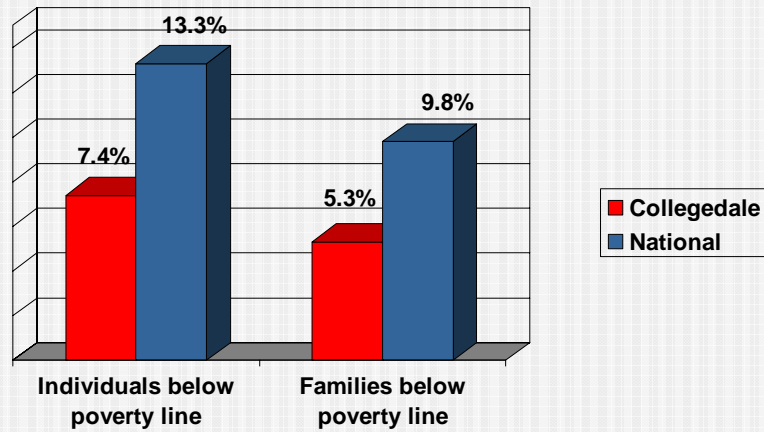
Collegedale has a smaller percentage of people with disabilities and veterans than the average community in America. These two figures cannot be totaled together because there is an unknown degree of overlap in these data, veterans who are also disabled.

Median Household Income



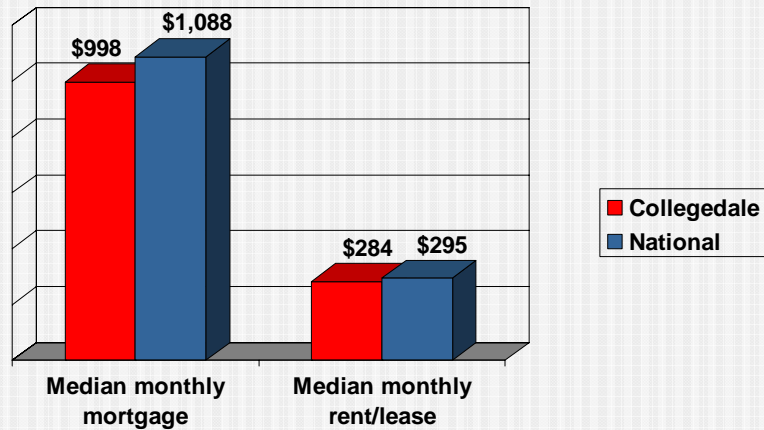
Collegedale families are generally better off than the average economic situation in America. Their economic well-being is further enhanced by the below-average cost of living in this area.

Poverty



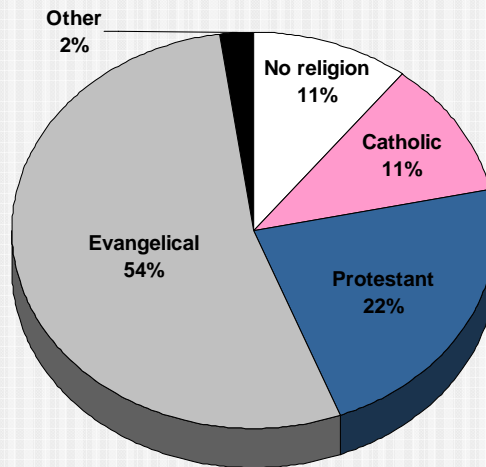
The Poverty Line upon which these data are based is the one officially established by the Federal government, adjusted for local economic conditions; \$17,603 for a family of four. These data are from the 2000 census and have not been recently updated for this local community. Given the economic downturn of the last couple of years, I would estimate that the number of families below the poverty line today in Collegedale is at least 10 percent.

Cost of Housing



The median monthly mortgage payment in the Collegedale area is lower than the national average because the price for homes here is generally lower. There is relatively little rental property and some of it has been rented continuously to the same tenants for many years, which generally serves to depress the rental cost. More recent rentals and those with year-at-a-time tenants will cost much more than the median.

Religious Preferences of Collegedale Residents



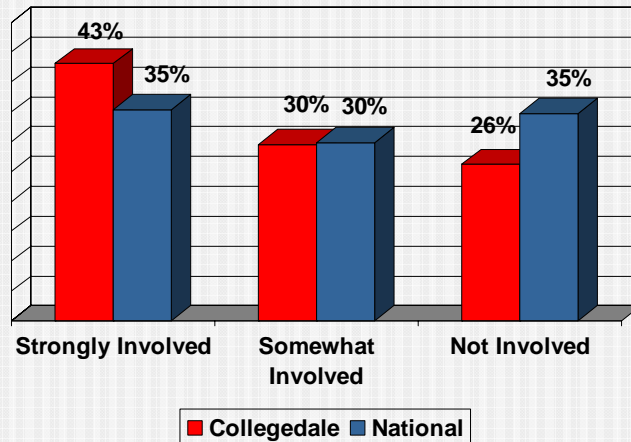
Source: Percept Group, Inc.

This is a very religious community compared to the average level of secularization in America today.

Evangelical = Southern Baptist, Nazarene, Lutheran Missouri Synod, Conservative Presbyterian, Mennonite, etc.

Protestant = "Mainline Protestant," such as Methodist, Presbyterian USA, ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), Episcopal, etc.

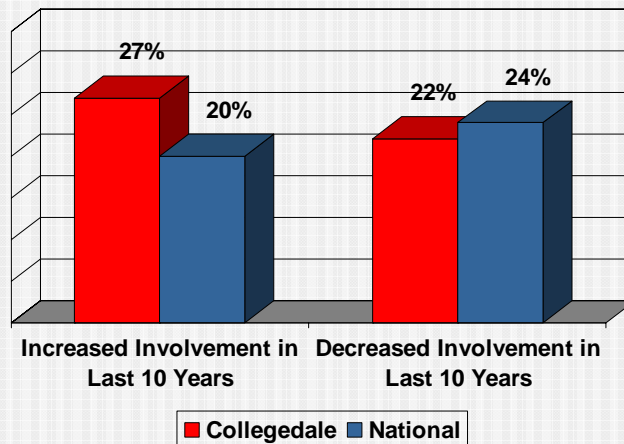
Religious Involvement of Collegedale Residents



Source: Percept Group, Inc.

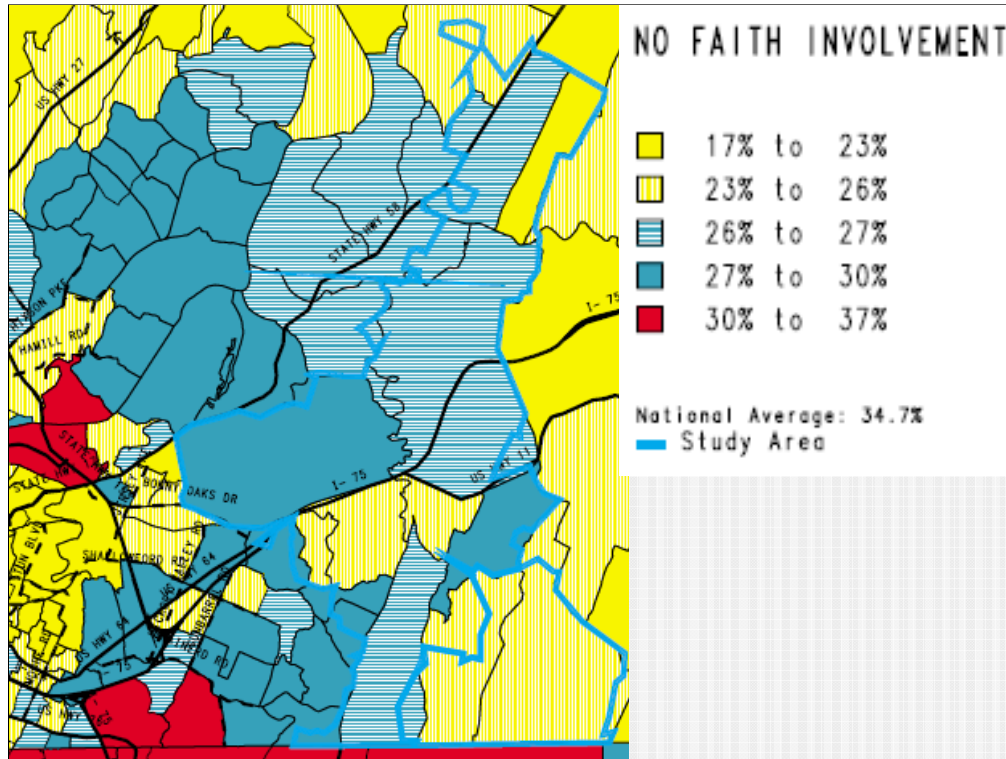
This is further evidence of how religious the Collegedale area is. There is a significantly larger portion of the population that is strongly involved in some church or religious group and a significantly smaller percentage that is not active in any congregation of any faith.

Religious Involvement of Collegedale Residents



Source: Percept Group, Inc.

A significantly greater percentage of Collegedale residents have increased their involvement in religion over the past ten years and a lower percentage have decreased involvement in religion. “Involvement” here refers to attendance at a church, Bible study group or some other regular religious activity.



This map shows the percentage of people who are “unchurched” or not active in any religion in each census tract. There are generally fewer unchurched people in the more rural areas and greater percentages of unchurched people in the more urban areas. “No faith involvement” does not mean that people are not believers. Many of the unchurched believe in God, consider themselves Christians and have quite orthodox beliefs on most doctrinal topics, but they do not actually attend church or some similar, regular activity.

Top Needs in the Community

- 48% Achieving financial security
- 40% Maintaining personal health
- 30% Getting health insurance
- 29% Day-to-day financial worries
- 28% Dealing with stress
- 28% Achieving a fulfilling marriage
- 25% Finding good schools
- 24% Dealing with teen/child problems

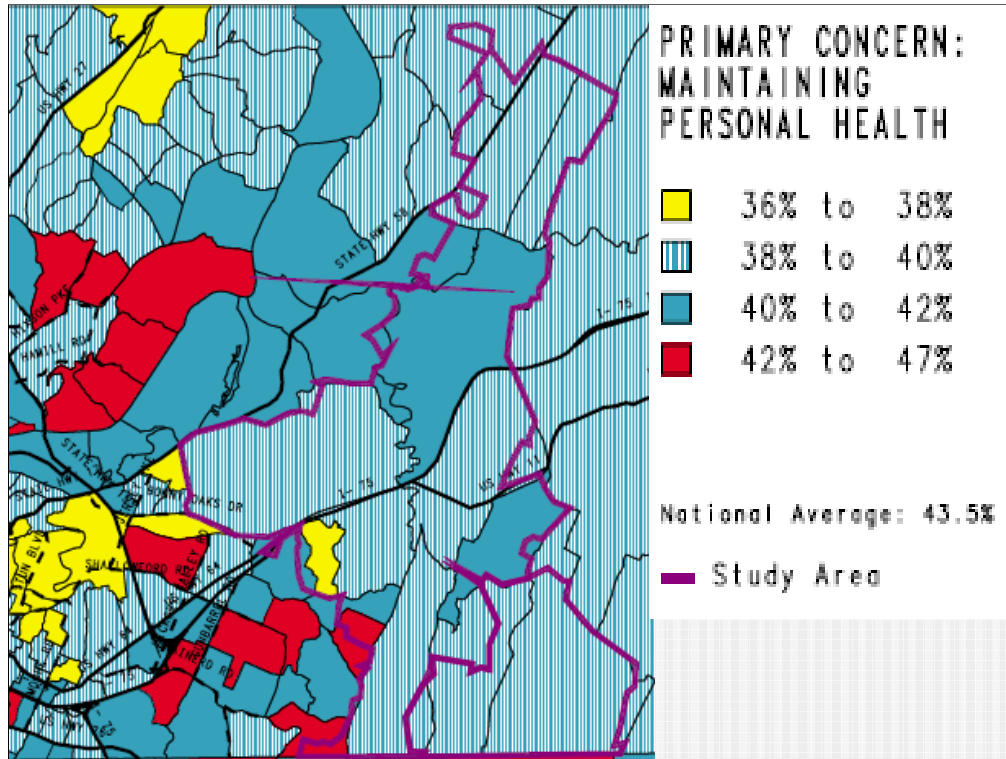
Source: Percept Group, Inc.

This page and the next four pages provide a community needs assessment for the Collegedale area. A total of 30 areas of human need were measured using an attribution algorithm based on propriety data purchased from Percept Group, Inc., for the Collegedale Church. The percentage in each case is the percentage of households feeling that particular concern or need.

Given the current economic situation, it is not surprising that the concern felt by the largest number of households is financial security, which refers to long-term considerations such as saving money for retirement, the value of retirement benefit funds, etc. “Day-to-day financial worries” refers to concerns about having enough income to make house payments or pay the rent, or running out of groceries before the next paycheck, etc.

Maintaining personal health is a need that the Adventist Church has long addressed through its community health ministries such as cooking schools, stop-smoking programs, community health fairs, etc. The CHIP program is the latest ministry of this type. More about this need on the next page.

Notice that the last four needs in this cluster of the top needs in the Collegedale area all relate to family life. Family ministries are another area that the Adventist Church has developed and seems to fit well with the major needs in this community.



The second largest number of households in this needs assessment are those where maintaining personal health is a primary concern. This map shows the percentage of households in each census tract where this is a need. The Collegedale area is defined by the purple boundaries ("Study Area") and much of Chattanooga is also included to the west. The range is between 36 percent and 47 percent of the households. The Collegedale area is almost entirely in the mid-range (color-coded blue) with 38 percent to 42 percent of households reporting this concern or need. The need is higher (color-coded red) in some of the more affluent neighborhoods of Chattanooga and lower (color-coded yellow) in some of the areas with larger numbers of young people.

Needs in the Community

- 23% Obtaining better quality health care
- 23% Finding a good church
- 23% Neighborhood crime & safety
- 22% Finding time for recreation
- 20% Finding a satisfying job/career
- 19% Planning for retirement
- 19% Finding spiritual teaching

Source: Percept Group, Inc.

Health continues to be a concern (with a different perspective) among these middle-intensity areas of need. The need to obtain a better quality of health care is associated with lower incomes and lack of health insurance or benefits. The first overtly-religious need comes in at the same level; about a quarter of the families in the Collegedale area are concerned about finding a good church. These would include newcomers who have not found a church to connect with as yet and longer-term residents who are dissatisfied with the church where they may have attended for many years. “Finding spiritual teaching” does not overlap entirely with “finding a good church,” although certain some families are in both categories. This is generally a more secular group that is focused on spirituality more than organized religion.

Needs in the Community

- 18% Alcohol/drug addiction
- 17% Problems with school
- 17% Developing parenting skills
- 17% Caring for aging parents
- 15% Finding direction in my life
- 14% Finding friends
- 13% Finding a job
- 11% Dealing with racial/ethnic prejudice

Source: Percept Group, Inc.

The needs listed on this slide move more toward the negative problems in life. These are generally experienced for shorter periods of time and thought of as a need to be filled or a problem to be fixed instead of an opportunity to grow or develop. Consequently smaller percentages of households are dealing with these needs at any given time.

Low-priority Needs in the Community

- 9% Dealing with neighborhood gangs
- 8% Dealing with social injustice
- 8% Obtaining adequate food
- 7% Finding affordable housing
- 6% Affordable child care
- 6% Getting an education
- 5% Dealing with divorce

Source: Percept Group, Inc.

This slide displays the low end of the community needs assessment. These needs involved relatively small groups of households.

It should be noted that, although nine percent of the households worry about “dealing with neighborhood gangs,” that does not mean there are necessarily any neighborhood gangs or related problems in the Collegedale area. Just because people worry about something does not mean that it exists.

Church Programs People Want

- 57% Bible study & prayer group
- 33% Family activities & outings
- 32% Youth activities
- 23% Family & personal counseling
- 23% Doctrinal study group
- 21% Active retirement program
- 15% Marriage enrichment seminar
- 13% Care for the terminally ill

Source: Percept Group, Inc.

This slide and the next one view similar data to the previous five slides, but from a different perspective. The respondents were asked, “If you were to be looking for a church, what programs would you look for in a church that you might attend?” Some of those responding (perhaps most) are not, in fact, looking for a new church at this time, but that is the framework of the question. The percentages are the percent of households that indicate they need or want that particular kind of activity in the church they prefer.

Collegedale is a very religious area compared to typical American communities. The majority of the households (57 percent) are looking for a church with small group ministries. This the only item that gets a majority response. Clearly small group ministries are a key to church growth and evangelism in the Collegedale area.

Notice how many of the items on this slide, with the items that received the highest response, are related to family life. The residents of Collegedale prefer churches that are family-friendly and family supportive.

Church Programs People Want

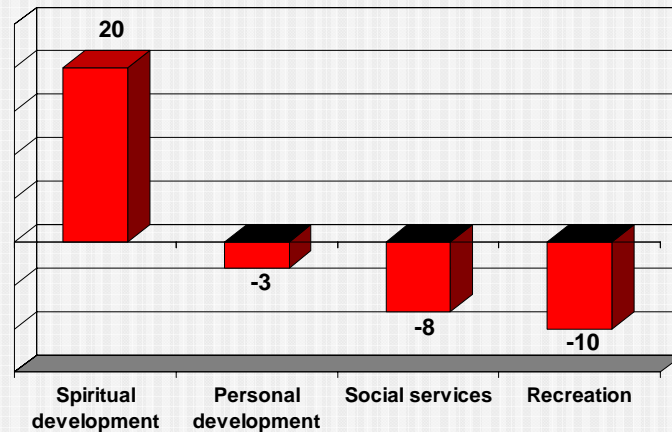
- 12% Music/art/drama programs
- 11% Spiritual retreats
- 10% Clothing & food for the needy
- 8% Parent training class
- 5% Church school (day school)
- 5% Day care
- 5% Sports or camping
- 2% 12-step group for addictions
- 2% Divorce Recovery program

Source: Percept Group, Inc.

This slide displays the low end of the data on preferences in church programs. The two programs with the lowest response—twelve-step group and Divorce Recovery—relate to people with relatively short windows of need. Consequently, there are small numbers who want these programs at any given time.

It has long been said that the availability of a church school is key to growth in Adventist churches. In this case it appears that relatively few residents in the Collegedale area see this as something they prefer in a church. It is possible that in this area either the market for parochial schools is saturated or that many families feel that the character of the public schools is sufficiently religious.

Church Program Preferences Index

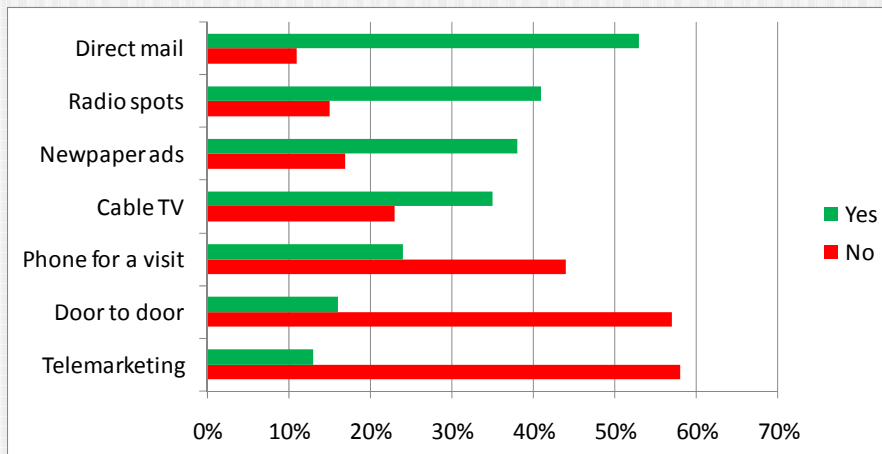


Source: Percept Group, Inc.

The middle line here represents the average percent of people with a preference in communities across the United States. Collegedale has 20 percentage points more than the average community in the area of spiritual development activities and 10 percentage points less than the average community in the area of recreation. This is further evidence of the religious orientation of many of the people who live in the Collegedale area.

The four categories in this graph were created by taking the 17 church programs listed in the previous two slides and clustering them together into four clusters. The percentage of preference for each cluster represents averaging the percentages from the items in the previous two slides.

How I prefer for churches to contact me ...



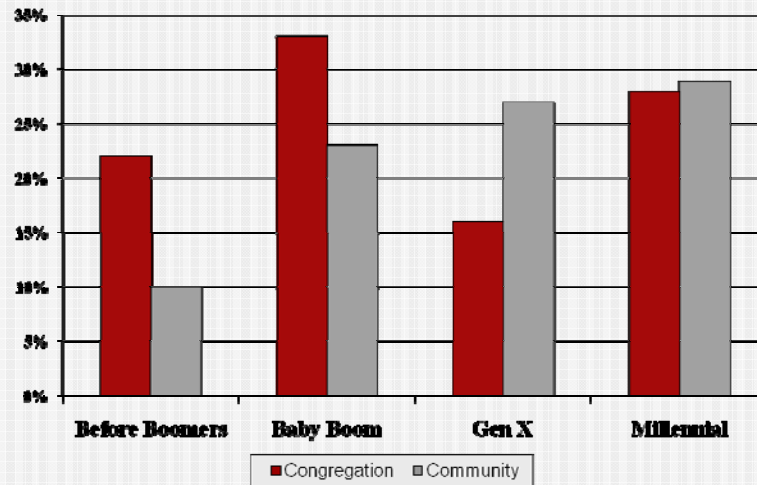
Source: Percept Group, Inc.

Some methods of outreach produce more negative than positive results. There is a residual group (about one out of ten residents in the Collegedale area) who do not want to be contact by a church through any means whatsoever. This group probably includes both the hard-core secular and those who are strongly attached to a church and do not want to hear anything from other congregations or faiths.

Survey of Congregation

- A standard questionnaire was distributed during worship on several Sabbaths early in 2010.
- A total of 511 usable questionnaires were returned which represents about 30% of average attendance for those three Sabbaths—a good response rate within minimum professional standards—thus indicating a reliable sample.

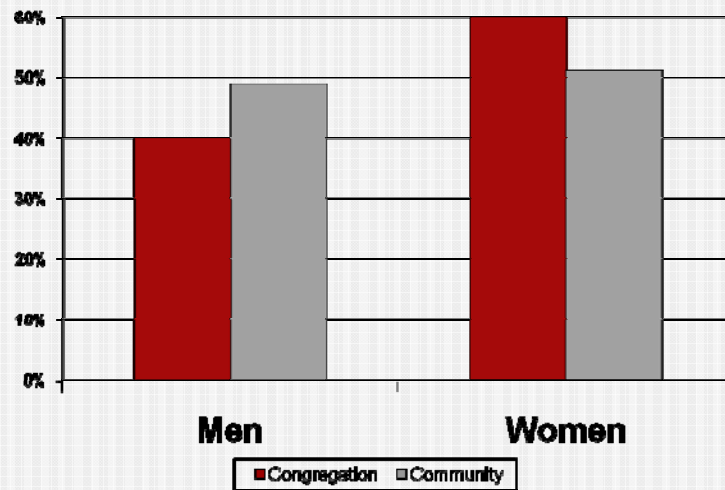
Age groups by generation



Problem – “the graying of Adventism” is present in the Collegedale Church, but there is also a significant percentage of young adults and teens due to the presence of the university. Gen X is the weak point. These are the people in their 30s and early 40s in the family formation state of life. Collegedale Church has a under-supply of young families compared to the surrounding community.

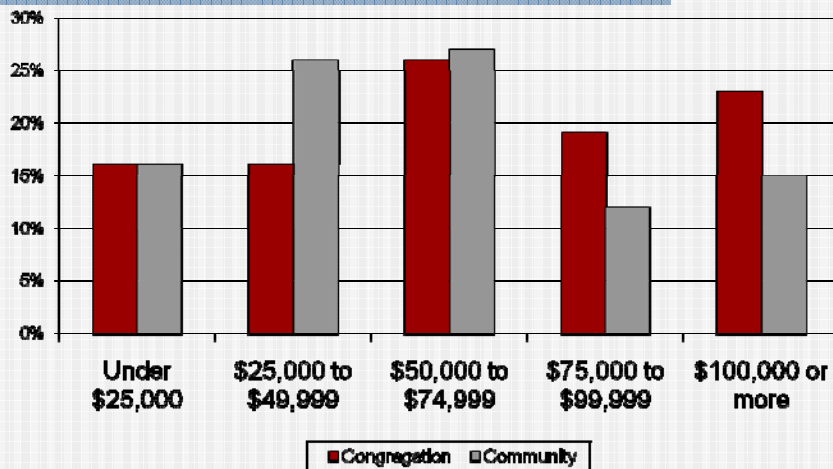
The seniors from the generations before the Baby Boom, people 65 years of age and older in 2010, are more likely to attend Adoration 1 and Adoration 2. Baby Boomers are more likely to attend Adoration 2. Gen X people are more likely to attend Adoration 1 and Connect. Teens and young adults in the Millennial generation are more likely to attend Renewal and Connect.

Gender



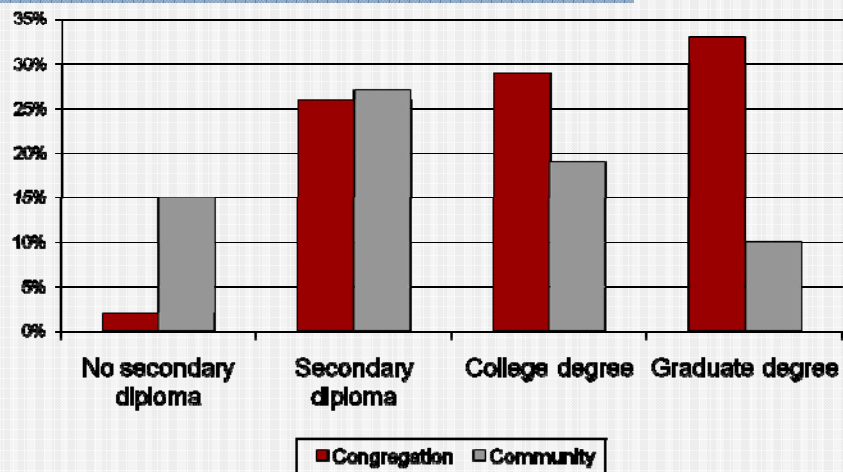
Although women outnumber men in the Collegedale congregation, men are more likely to be present among the new converts baptized during the last four years. They are also more likely to attend Adoration 2.

Annual Household Income



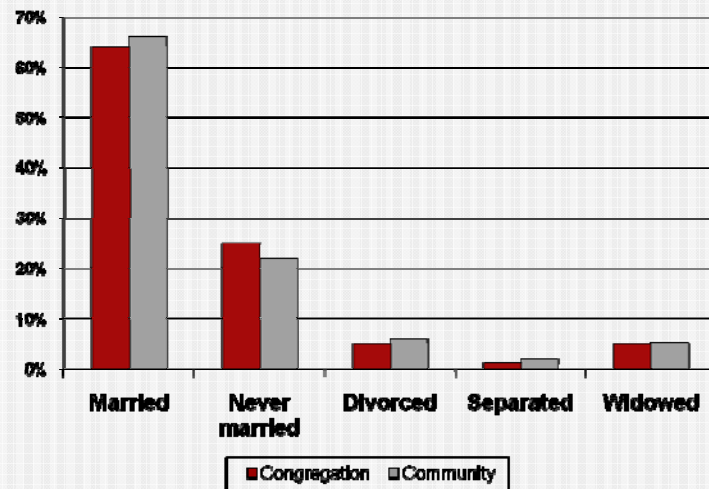
Collegedale Church has larger percentages in the upper-middle and upper income segments and significantly fewer among the lower-middle income segment.

Level of education



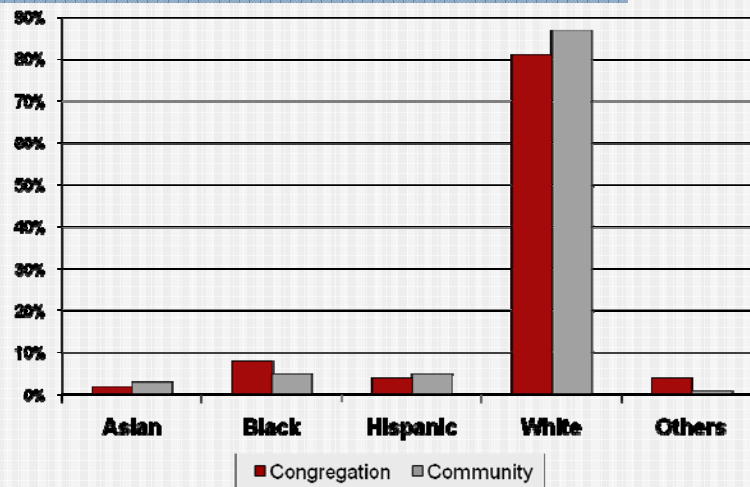
Those who have not yet completed a college degree are more likely to attend Renewal or Connect. Those who have a college or higher degree are more likely to attend Adoration 1 or Adoration 2.

Marital status



Married people are more likely to attend Adoration 1 or Adoration 2. The never married are more likely to attend Renewal or Connect. Widowed individuals are more likely to attend Adoration 1.

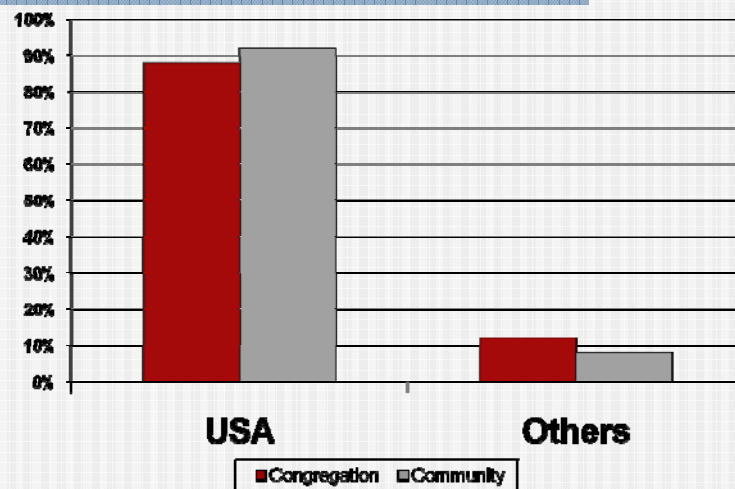
Ethnicity



Collegedale Church has more ethnic minorities in the congregation than is true in the local community. This pattern is typical of almost all Adventist congregations in North America. Respondents under 30 are more likely to report their ethnicity as in a minority group. Only 61 percent of the Millennial generation among the respondents is white, as compared to 85 percent of the Baby Boom generation and 96 percent of senior citizens.

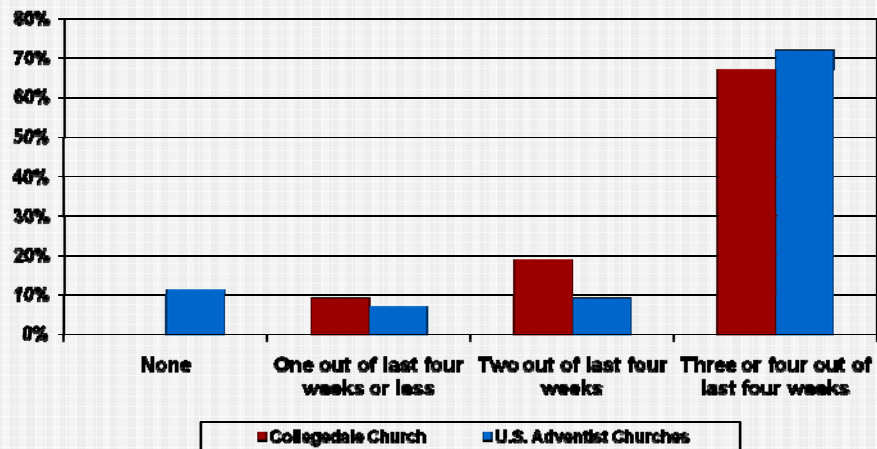
There are larger percentages of whites who attend Adoration 1, Adoration 2 and Connect. Renewal has a larger percentage of ethnic minorities.

Citizenship at birth



Collegedale Church has a higher percentage of immigrants than the surrounding community. This is true of most Adventist congregations in North America.

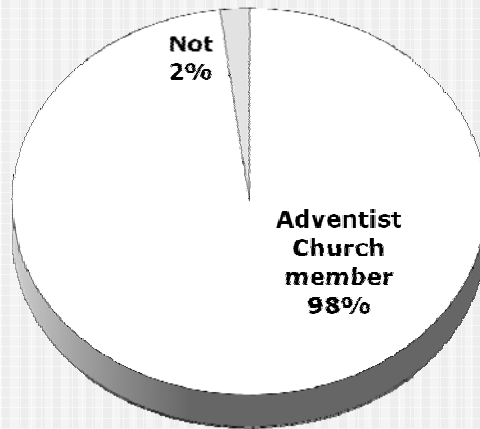
Attendance



The attendance pattern is likely not significantly different than the average Adventist congregation in North America. Young adults and teens are likely to attend somewhat less often than those over 32 years of age.

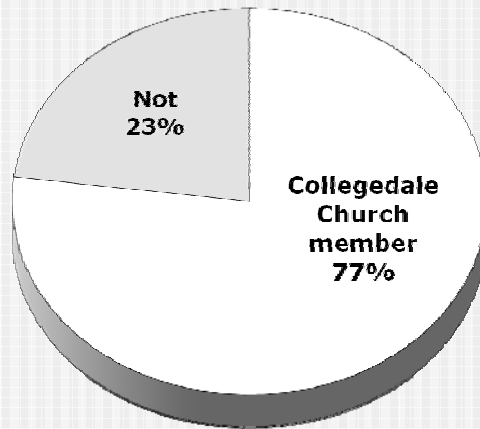
Those who usually attend Adoration 1 and Adoration 2 are more likely to attend three or four Sabbaths each month, while those who usually attend Renewal are more likely to go to church only half the time. The pattern for those who attend Connect follow the pattern of the total sample.

Church Membership



The 2 percent of survey respondents who indicate that they are not baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are about two-thirds people under 45 years of age and one third over 45 years of age. Almost all of this 2 percent attend Connect or Renewal.

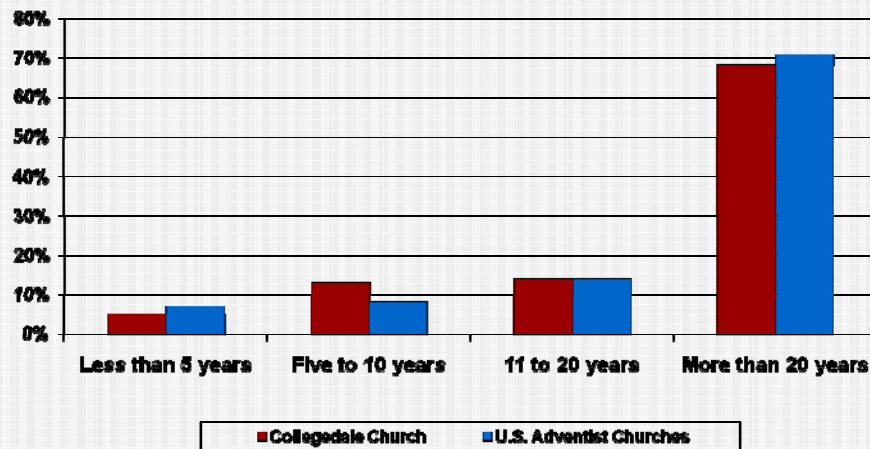
Collegedale Church Member



Nearly a quarter of the people attending the Collegedale Church are baptized Adventists, but not members of this local church. The majority of these are under 30 years of age. It is likely that these are largely students at Southern Adventist University.

Most of these Adventists who are not members at Collegedale attend Renewal or Connect. Less than one in six attend Adoration 1 or Adoration 2. They are also more often to have a low attendance pattern.

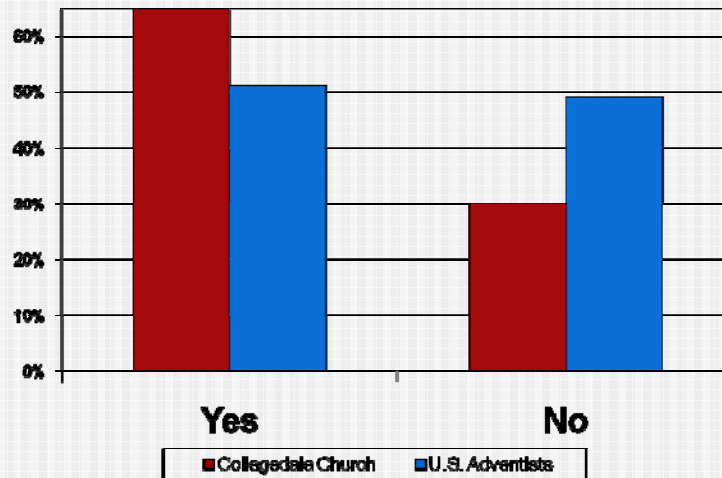
Tenure as a Baptized Adventist



An above-average percentage among those who have been baptized members for five to ten years may indicate that a significant number of people come to Collegedale Church after being baptized somewhere else. Perhaps there is a pattern of young adults being converted in churches across the South or the nation and then coming to attend the university. They may be more likely to transfer their membership to Collegedale Church than are young people who grow up in Adventist homes.

Those who were baptized more than 20 years ago are more likely to attend Adoration 1 or Adoration 2. Those baptized more recently are more likely to attend Renewal or Connect.

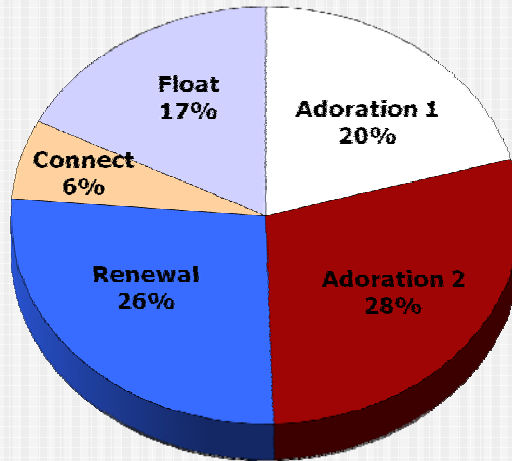
Raised by an Adventist parent



More than two-thirds of the respondents (68 percent) were raised by Adventist parents, while less than a third (30 percent) are adult converts. Collegedale Church has a more larger than average concentration of second and subsequent generation Adventists. This is typical of most congregations associated with major Adventist institutions.

Those who attend Adoration 1 are even more likely to be raised in Adventist homes, while those who attend Adoration 2 are more likely to be adult converts. The pattern among those who attend Renewal or Connect is not significantly different from the total sample.

Worship Service Usually Attend

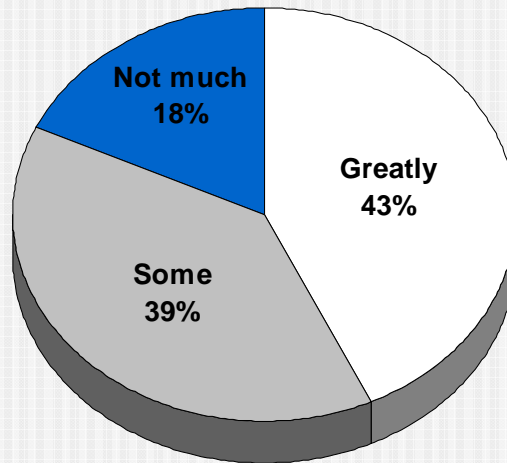


Respondents 65 years of age and older are more likely to attend Adoration 1 or Adoration 2. Respondents under 30 years of age are more likely to attend Renewal or Connect. Nearly a third of Gen X (33 to 45 years of age in 2010) attend Adoration 1. These may be young families with children who prefer to attend worship prior to Sabbath School.

Respondents with a college degree are most likely to attend Adoration 2. Those who have been baptized Adventists for less than 20 years are most likely to attend Renewal.

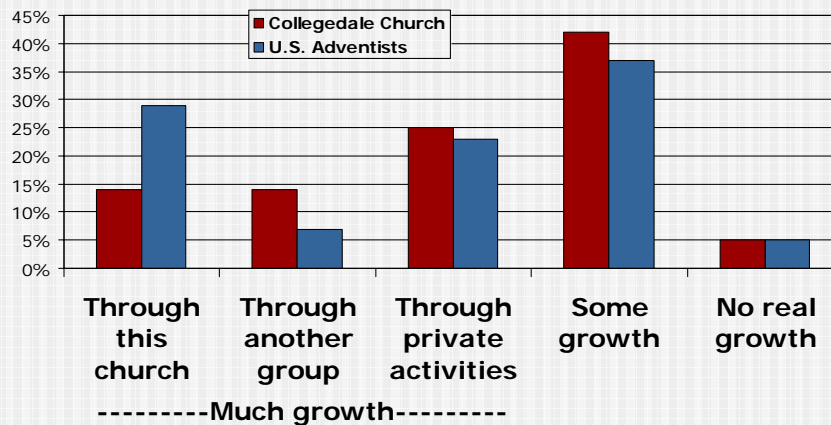
Those who float and do not have a usual attendance pattern are most likely students. Nearly half are under 33 years of age. Two in five (39 percent) have a secondary diploma, but no college degree. One in four have annual household incomes under \$25,000.

How much does worship at this church help you with everyday life?



Respondents over 45 years of age are more likely to say they are helped “to a great extent,” while those in Generation X (33 to 45 years of age) are more likely to say “some” and those in the Millennial generation (16 to 32 years of age) are more likely to say “to a small extent.” Those in lower-middle income households (\$25,000 to \$49,999 annual income) are also more likely to say they are greatly helped. There is no pattern of statistically significant responses among those who usually attend the various worship services.

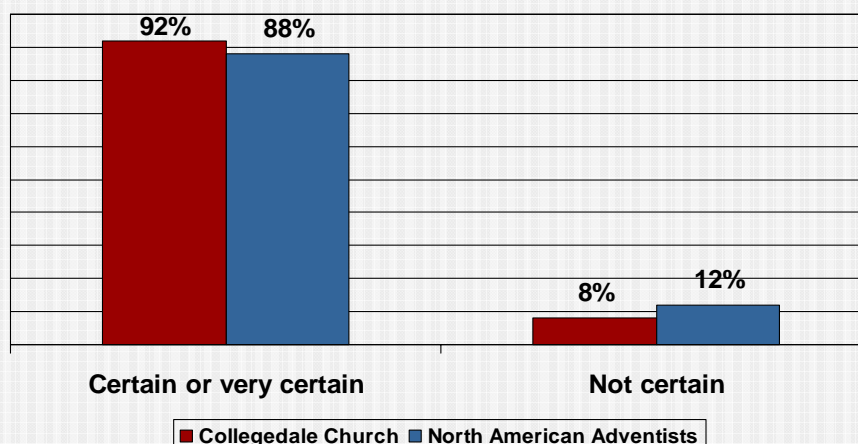
How much have you grown in your faith in the last year?



Overall, the total percentage of Collegedale members who say they had “much growth” does not differ significantly from the average in Adventist churches across the country. There is a significant negative difference for those who report that their spiritual growth was “mainly through this church” and a significant positive difference for those who report that their growth was “mainly through other groups or ministries.” The presence of a number of parachurch ministries, small group ministries and other, less formal religious activities in the Collegedale area is a significant element in the spiritual development of the congregation.

Respondents from the Millennial generation (teens and young adults) are more likely to report no growth in their spiritual lives, while those in Generation X are more likely to report “some” growth. Respondents with little education and from low-income households are more likely to report much growth through other groups, as are those who attend Adoration 1 and recent converts baptized in the last ten years. Those who attend Connect are more likely to report much growth through their involvement with the Collegedale Church.

Assurance of Salvation

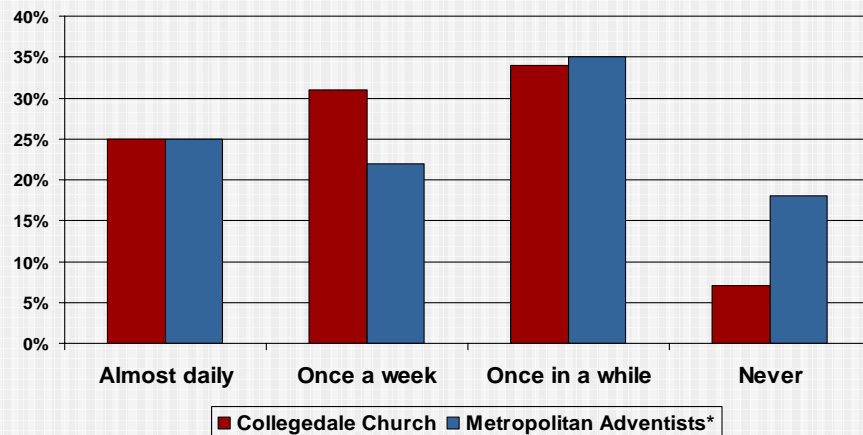


This is a key measure of spiritual strength that has been used in surveys for the General Conference for more than 25 years. “Certain or very certain,” includes those who indicated a 5 or 4 on the five-point scale of responses. “Not certain” includes those who indicated a 1, 2 or 3 on the scale.

This church has a strong response, although it is not significantly different from the average Adventist congregation in North America, which indicates that most of the people in this congregation are growing in Christ and have been blessed by the ministry here.

Respondents in the Baby Boom generation (now middle-aged) are more likely to indicate a strong assurance of salvation, while those in the Millennial generation (the teen and young adult children of the Baby Boomers) are more likely to indicate a weaker assurance. Respondents from upper-middle income households are more likely to indicate a strong assurance, while those from low-income households are less likely to do so. There are not significant differences among the groups who usually attend the various worship services.

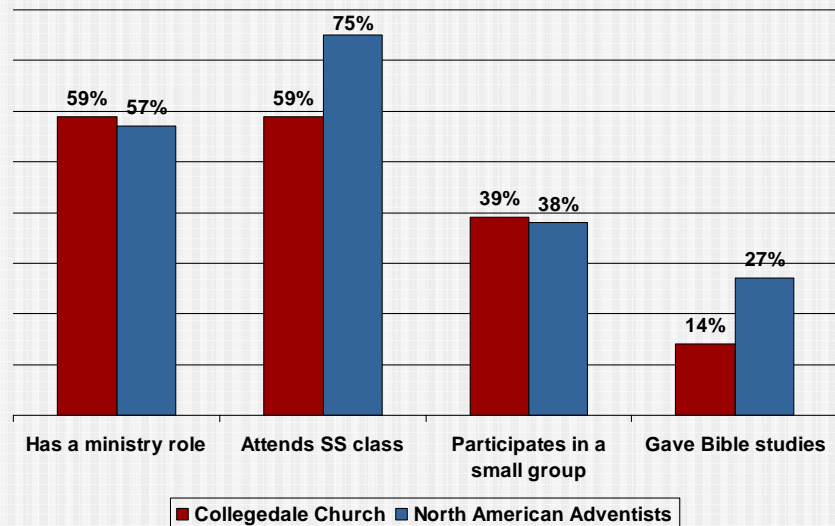
Conversations with Coworkers about their Personal or Family Needs or Spiritual Topics



*Mission in Metropolis, p 110

Collegedale Church members are somewhat more likely than the average Adventist church to be involved in personal ministry, sharing their faith with people they work with and know in the community. Young adults and teenagers in the Millennial generation are less likely to do so, although respondents who usually attend Connect are more likely to do so. Surprisingly, recent converts baptized in the last ten years are also less likely to report sharing their faith with coworkers and friends. In many studies it is the recent converts who appear to have the largest number of contacts with nonbelievers and engage most often in friendship evangelism.

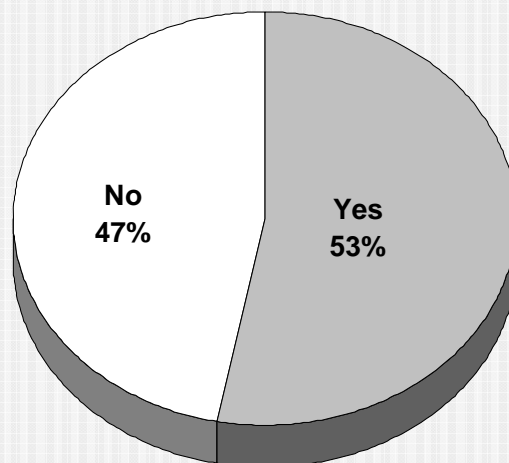
Church Involvement



Respondents 65 years of age and older are more likely to attend a Sabbath School class and/or participate in a small group. Those over 32 years of age are more likely to have a volunteer ministry role in the church, as those with a college degree, those from households with an annual income of \$75,000 or more, and those who usually attend Adoration 1 or Adoration 2. Those who attend Adoration 1 are also much more likely to attend a Sabbath School class (83 percent compared to 59 percent overall).

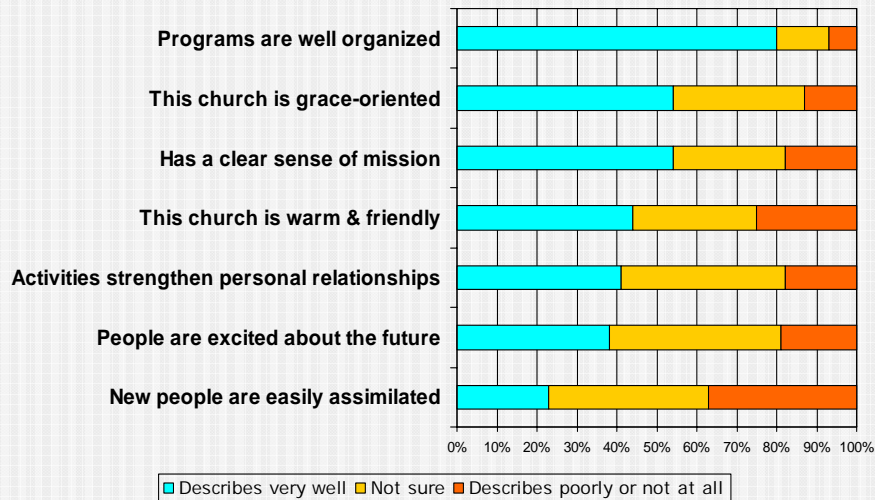
Collegedale members are just as likely as the average Adventist in North America to have a volunteer role in the church and participate in a small group. They are significantly less likely to attend a Sabbath School class and about half as likely to have given Bible studies to a non-member in the last year.

Has anyone asked you personally to volunteer time in the last year?



A little more than half of the active members in the Collegedale congregation have been personally asked during the last year to volunteer time in some ministry of the church or sponsored by the church. Nearly half have not been asked. Those in Generation X (33 to 45 years of age in 2010) are more likely to say they have been asked to volunteer, as are those from households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more, those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years and those who attend more frequently. Those who attend Connect and Adoration 1 are also more likely to have been asked to volunteer.

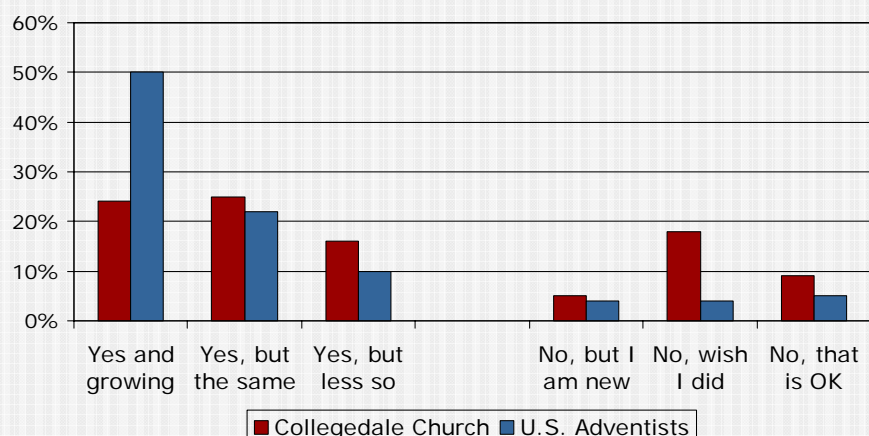
Perceptions of Collegedale Church



Most of these perceptions are typical of Adventist churches across the country. The majority of the members rated three out of seven statements as “describes our church very well.” There is considerable concern that new people are not being quickly or effectively assimilated into the congregation, an attitude present in most large churches. About two in five respondents believe that Collegedale Church is warm and friendly, that church activities strengthen personal relationships among members and that members are excited about the future of the church. About one in five disagree.

Respondents 65 years of age and older are more likely to see the church as grace-oriented, warm and friendly, and that new members are easily assimilated. Young adults and teenagers are also more likely to see the church as grace-oriented and that church activities strengthen personal relationships. Respondents from lower-income households are more likely to agree on all items. Those who attend Connect are more likely to agree with all items. Those who attend Adoration 2 are more likely to think that new members are easily assimilated.

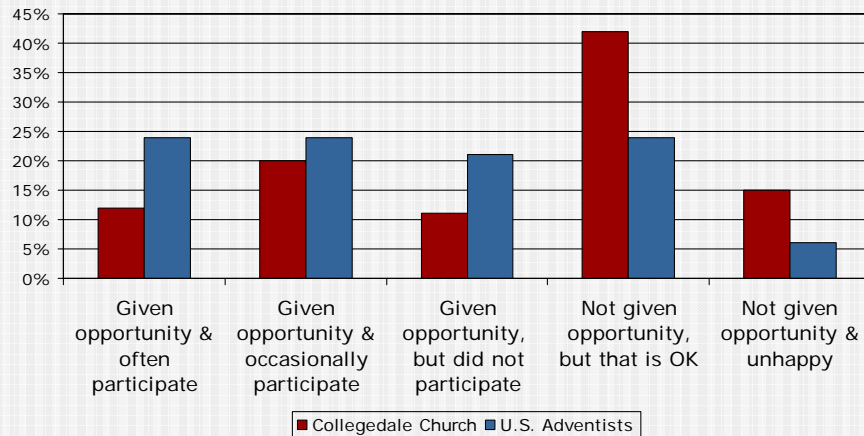
Strong sense of belonging to Collegedale Church



The people in the pews at Collegedale Church have a weaker sense of belonging than is typical for Adventist members in the U.S., and among those who say they have a strong sense of belonging there is an above-average percentage who say that it is not as strong as in the past and half as many who say it is growing. Collegedale Church has nine times as many as the typical congregation who say they wish they had a stronger sense of belonging.

Respondents 65 years of age and older are more likely to indicate they have a strong sense of belonging. Younger people are more likely to say they wish they had a stronger sense of belonging as are those who have been baptized Adventists for eleven to 20 years. Those who attend Connect and Adoration 2 are more likely to say they have a strong sense of belonging.

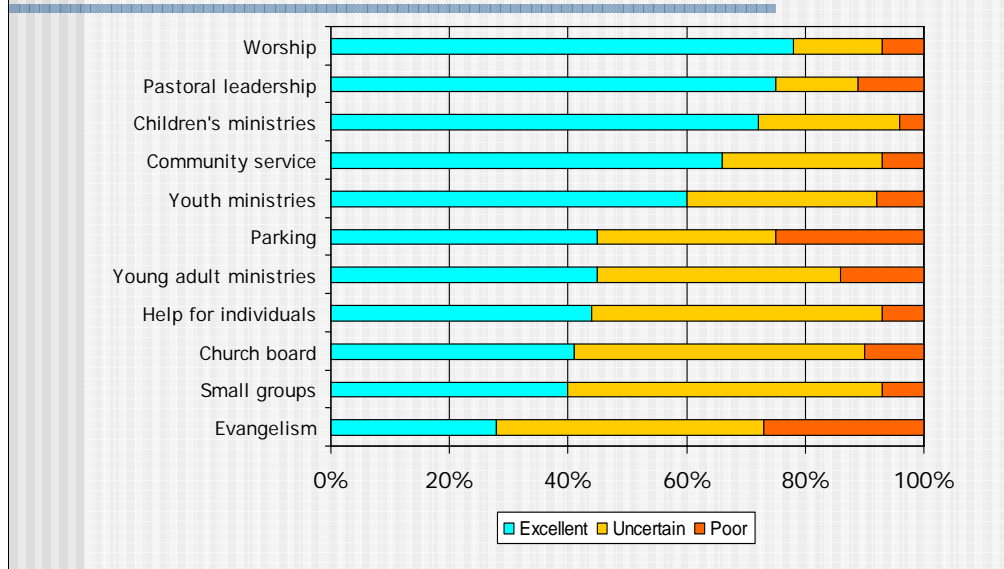
Involvement in making important decisions



Collegedale Church has an above-average proportion of members who feel that they are not given an opportunity to participate in making important decisions for the church. Most say “that is fine,” evidently recognizing that in large congregations it is impossible to involve the entire membership in any but the most rare decisions. About one in seven of the active members say they are not happy because they are not given the opportunity participate in decision-making. That may simply be a “cost of doing business” for a congregation as large as Collegedale Church.

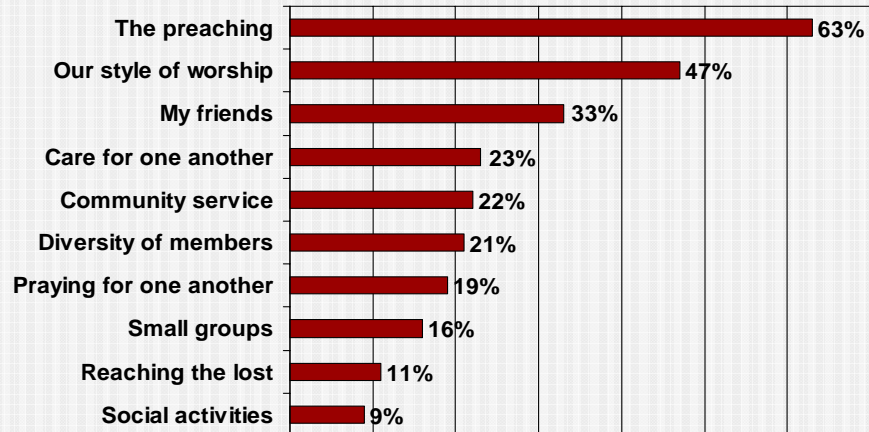
Respondents 65 years of age and those in Generation X (33 to 45 years of age in 2010) are more likely to feel they have been given an opportunity to participate. Those in the Baby Boom generation (46 to 64 years of age in 2010) are more likely to feel left out and unhappy about it. New converts are more likely to say they have had no opportunity participate, “but that is fine.” The same is true for respondents from low-income households, those with little education, and those who attend Renewal.

Overall Evaluation



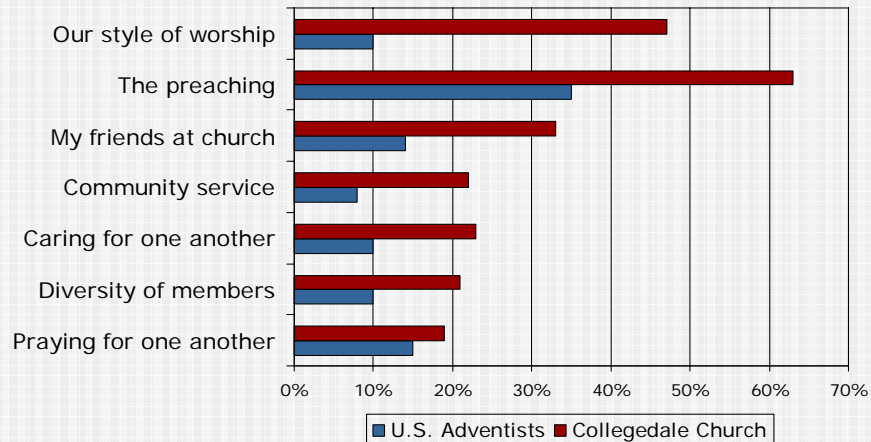
The majority rate five of the 11 aspects of Collegedale Church as “excellent.” Those rating each of the other items “excellent” outnumber those rating them as “poor.” In most cases, those rating these aspects as excellent is around 40 percent and reflects the fact that many members are not involved in these ministries. The two areas where there are significant numbers of members who evaluate things as “poor” are evangelism and parking. Almost equal numbers evaluate evangelism as excellent (28 percent) and poor (27 percent), with a larger percentage uncertain how to evaluate it. This uncertainty likely reflects the fact that Collegedale Church is not well-positioned to do conventional evangelism located as it is in a neighborhood where there are few non-members and considerable institutional barriers to outsiders coming to the church for evangelistic activities.

What I value most about Collegedale Church



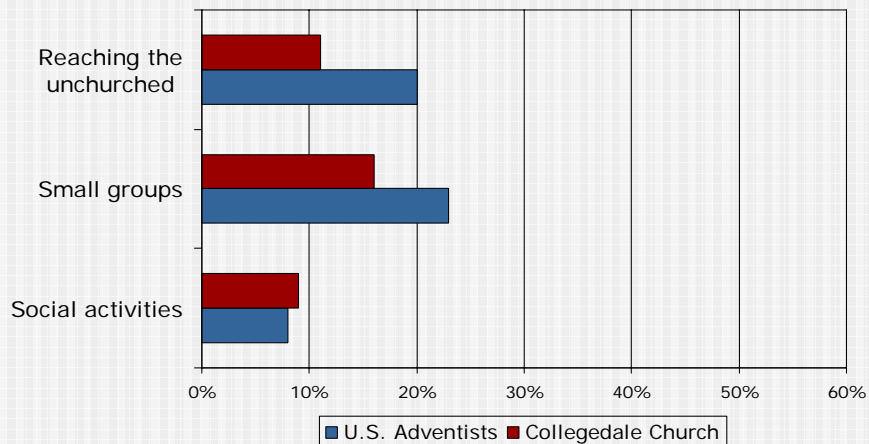
Totals more than 100 percent because respondents were allowed to up to select three items.

What is valued more at Collegedale than U.S. Adventists



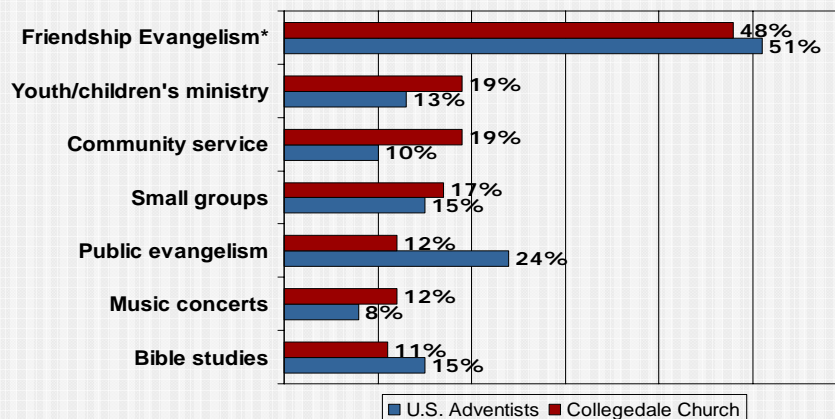
Collegedale Church attenders feel much more strongly about their top three values than do Adventists throughout the U.S. Our worship style, the preaching and my friends at church are deeply valued to an exceptional degree in this congregation.

What is valued less at Collegedale than U.S. Adventists



There are only two areas where the Collegedale Church congregation places significantly less value than do Adventists across the country. These items are reaching the unchurched and small group ministries. The value attached to social activities is the same for Collegedale members and Adventists across the country; the difference is not statistically significant.

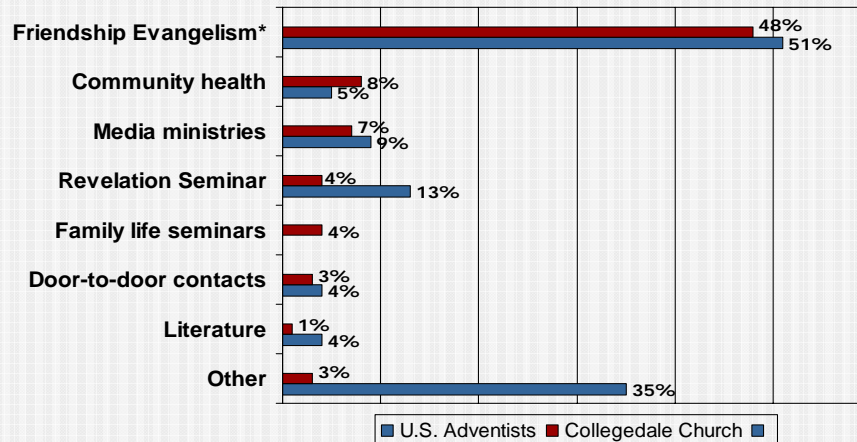
Observed to be Most Effective Methods to Bring in New Members



*Personal contact by
relatives, work associates,
acquaintances

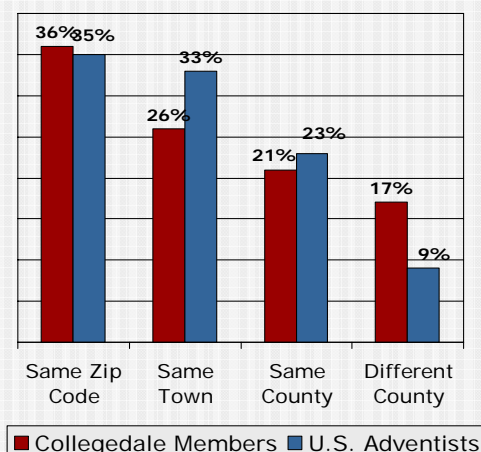
The red line on top shows the percentage of Collegedale Church members who reported that this item is one of two they have observed as being most effective at bringing new members into the Collegedale Church. In other words, What works here. The blue line on the bottom is the average answer to the same question from a random sample of Adventists across the U.S.

2 - Observed to be Most Effective Methods to Bring in New Members



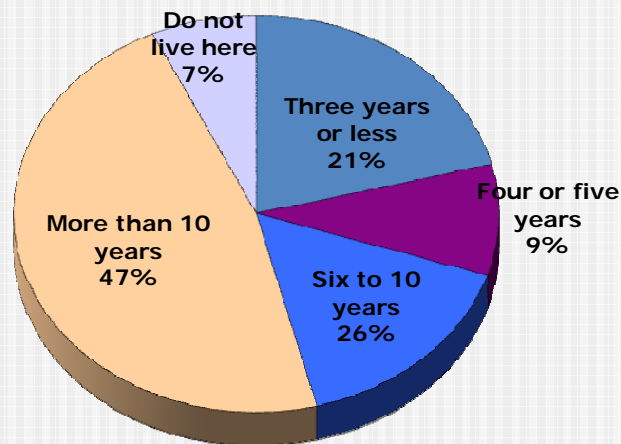
Note the “other” category. Across the country, more than a third of the responses go to things not on the list—creative, new approaches to outreach and evangelism. But in this church almost no one mentions items not on the list. This indicates a lack of creativity in outreach and evangelism.

How Far is Your Home from the Collegedale Church?



Members of the Collegedale congregation tend to live somewhat further away than the average Adventist member in the U.S. Respondents 65 years of age and older are more likely to live in the Collegedale Zip Code, while those under 45 years of age are more likely to live further away. Since a large percentage of young adults report that they live in a different county, it is likely that many of these are university students who live outside the Chattanooga area and may be dormitory residents while at school. Respondents who attend Adoration 1 are more likely to be local residents as are those from lower-income households.

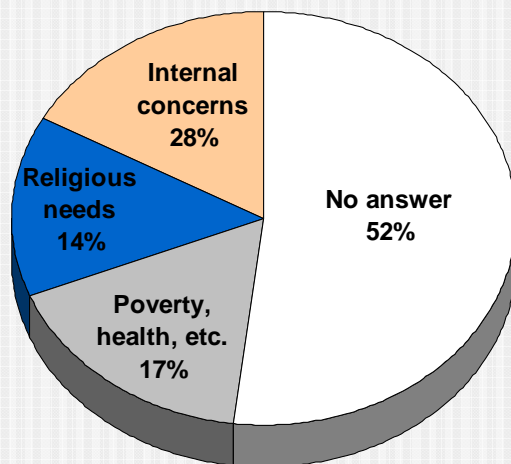
How long have you lived in the Chattanooga area?



Nearly half of the Collegedale congregation has lived in the Chattanooga area for more than ten years. Respondents over 45 years of age are more likely to be in this category, while young adults are more likely to have moved to Chattanooga in the last five years. Those who were baptized in the last ten years are more likely to have moved to the Chattanooga area in the last three years.

Respondents who usually attend Adoration 1 and Adoration 2 are more likely to be long-term residents. Those who have moved to the Chattanooga area in the last three years are more likely to attend Connect.

What major needs in the community should the church address?

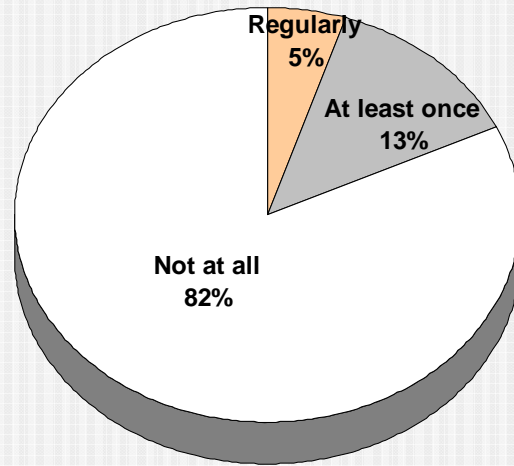


Only 17 percent—one member in six—actually answered the question about needs in the community. Almost twice as many mentioned internal concerns, some of them quite petty in nature, and entirely missed the point of this question. There is a big blind spot in this congregation regarding the mission field that God has called them to reach and caring about the needs of the community.

The question was “what are the major needs in the community,” yet many of those who answered focused on items inside the congregation instead of in the community and the majority of the members did not give any answer at all. The members of Collegedale Church seem to not think about the needs in the community. Six percent mentioned poverty and unemployment; three percent health needs; three percent family life and mental health needs; and five percent other community issues.

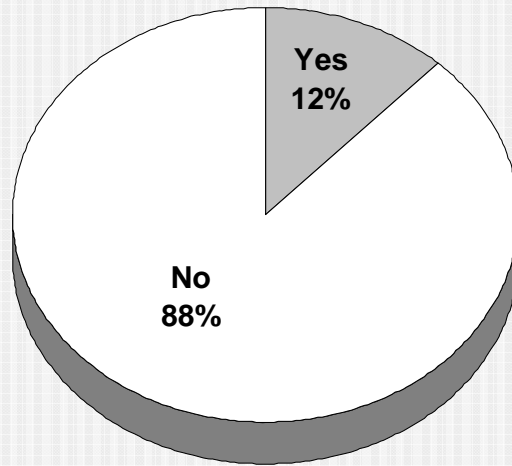
Respondents from the Baby Boom generation were more likely to mention community needs, while those under 45 years of age were more likely to mention religious or spiritual needs and those 65 years of age and older were more likely to mention internal needs of the congregation.

Volunteering at the Samaritan Center



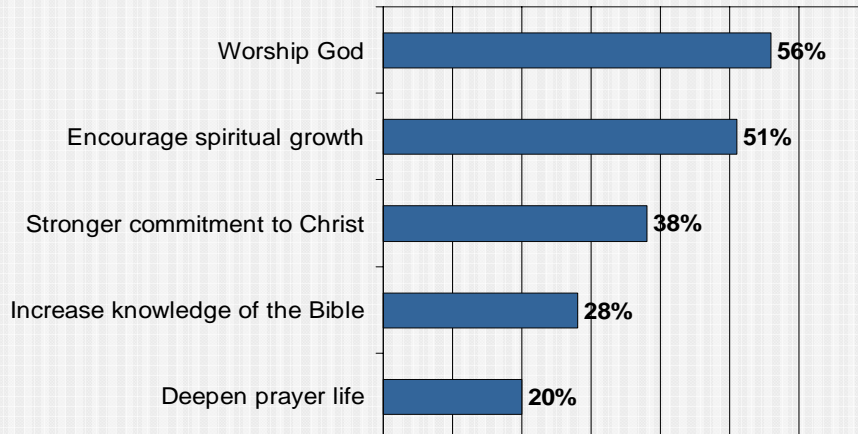
Respondents 65 years of age and older are more likely to be regular volunteers at the Samaritan Center, while new converts baptized in the last ten years are more likely to have volunteered at least once.

Do you belong to a service club or civic group in the area?



Respondents from middle-income households are nearly twice as likely to belong to a civic organization in the area.

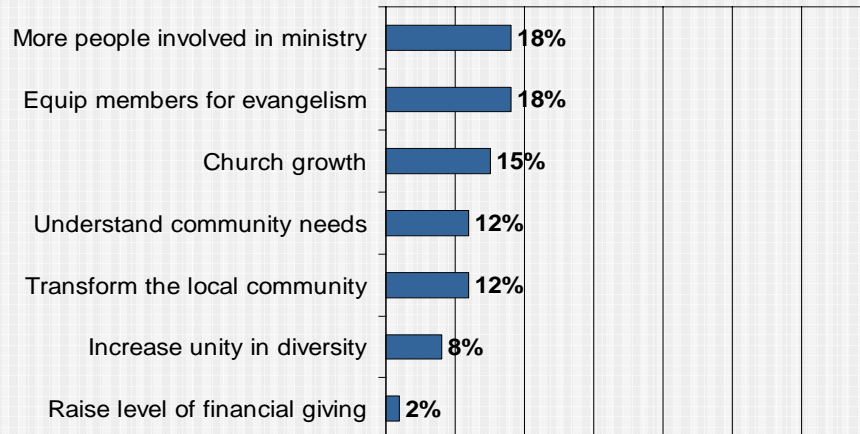
The three most important goals for Collegedale Church – Pt 1



The majority of Collegedale members support only two goals, (1) “to worship God,” and (2) “to encourage the spiritual growth of individuals.” Only two in five support a third goal, “to encourage a stronger commitment to Christ.”

Respondents from higher-income households (with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more) are more likely to support the first goal, as are those who usually attend Connect. Respondents from Generation X (33 to 45 years of age in 2010) are more likely to support the second goal, as are those from low-income households and those who usually attend Connect. The third goal is more likely to be supported by respondents from Generation X, those from middle-income households and those who usually attend Adoration 1.

The three most important goals for Collegedale Church – Pt 2



Missional goals such as getting more people involved in ministry, equipping members for evangelism, church growth, impacting community needs, etc., are supported by less than one in five members in each case. Younger respondents, under 45 years of age, are more likely to support missional goals than are older respondents over 45 years of age.

Analysis

- Research has shown that growth in Adventist churches comes from:
 - Community involvement
 - Rich spirituality
 - Intentionality (goals, planning)
 - A positive atmosphere in congregation
 - Activities for the unchurched on Sabbath

Source: Chapter 2 in *Adventist Congregations Today* (2003, Center for Creative Ministry) and cover article in *Ministry* magazine, November 2004.

An Adventist Missional Paradigm

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"

- *The Ministry of Healing*, page 143

To what extent is this strategy being implemented by Collegedale Church throughout the Chattanooga area?

Recommendations

- Explore launching a Reconnecting Ministry team to visit all of the inactive and unidentified members
- Consider holding a “Ministry Fair” on two Sabbaths each year to get more members involved in ministry
- Is there a worship committee that functions weekly?

More Recommendations

- Consider organizing a Ministries Council with representation from parachurch groups as well as church departments
- Maybe more important: Start a “missional incubator” to regularly launch church plants and new community-based ministries

More Recommendations

- Think about establishing a Parish Cluster system in which elders are assigned (or pick) a cluster of 10 to 20 households which they visit, invite to group meetings at their homes, be accessible to for needs
- Maybe the next staff hire should be a Director of Volunteers

More Recommendations

- Conduct a Vision for Mission weekend to train 200 facilitators to conduct (one-time) house meetings to reach and get input/buy-in from as many members as possible around key missional goals
- Preach a sermon series on mission in preparation

To Contact Monte Sahlin

- msahlin@creativeministry.org
- (800) 272-4664

■ © 2010, Center for Creative Ministry