

A Portrait of the Seventh-day Adventist Church



**in the Eight-State Region
served by the
Columbia Union Conference**

by Monte Sahlin and Paul Richardson

This report presents a comprehensive picture of the members, ministry and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the eight states that make up the territory of the Columbia Union Conference. It is intended to help you gain a wider perspective as a part of the policy-making executive committee and officer group of the Union Conference. We believe you will find this volume a useful reference in the future and something you will want to keep in your library.

We were asked to prepare this report by the administration of the Columbia Union Conference. It is primarily based on information gathered from the annual surveys conducted for the Union Conference by the Center for Creative Ministry which include random samples of pastors and church members in Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

We have supplemented these survey results with information for the United States Census and other published sources for purposes of comparison. And we have included some information from other studies that we have conducted. Full information about the sources and survey particulars are included in the early pages of the report.

Monte Sahlin and Paul Richardson

Monte Sahlin serves as vice president for creative ministries for the Columbia Union Conference. He has directed or collaborated with other researchers in more than 55 survey research projects focusing on the life of the Adventist community over the past three decades, and authored a number of books and many journal articles. He continues to monitor trends and consult with administrators, pastors and local church leaders.

Paul Richardson is the executive director of the Center for Creative Ministry. He has helped implement many research projects for Seventh-day Adventist Church entities over the last fifteen years, as well as publish for the North American Division a number of resource materials designed to encourage and support church growth, church planting, a relational approach to ministry and community outreach.

(c) 2006, Columbia Union Conference and the Center for Creative Ministry

An Information Base for Strategic Planning

Seventh-day Adventist Church
Columbia Union Conference
by Monte Sahlin & Paul Richardson

Contents

- Church Demographics
- Member Attitudes and Needs
- Ministry Trends
- Mission Context and Needs
Outside the Church



Sources

- Annual Survey of Members conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry
- April and May, 1998 -- 296 random telephone interviews
- January, 2000 -- 1,398 questionnaires returned in random churches
- February, 2001 -- 629 questionnaires returned in random churches



Additional Sources

- NAD Office of Human Relations ethnicity data for 1995
- 1994 survey of the general public conducted by Center for Creative Ministry for the NAD -- 1,511 random telephone interviews
- NAD Office of Information & Research annual surveys, 1989-1997



Additional Sources

- Analysis of Zip Code demographics and Adventist household data by the Center for Metropolitan Ministry at CUC
- 2000 Census, STP 1 data from the U.S. Census Bureau
- 2000 Census, Supplemental Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau

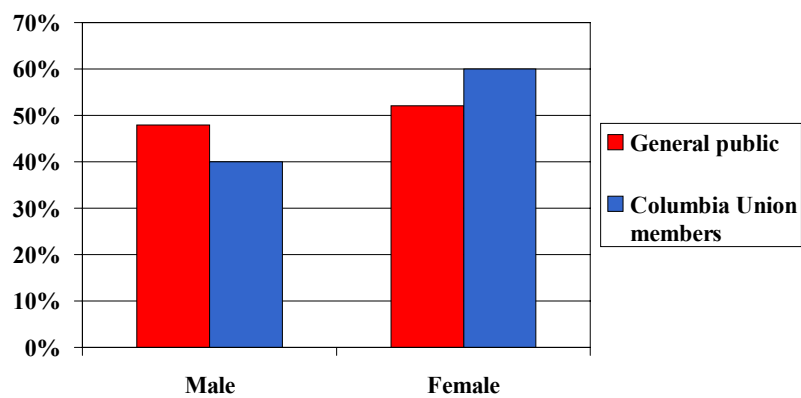


Additional Sources

- *Trends, Attitudes and Opinions: The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America* by Monte Sahlin (1998, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln NE)
- *Churches and Church Membership in the United States* by Martin Bradley, Norman Green, Dale Jones, Mac Lynn and Lou McNeil (1992, Glenmary)

Church Demographics

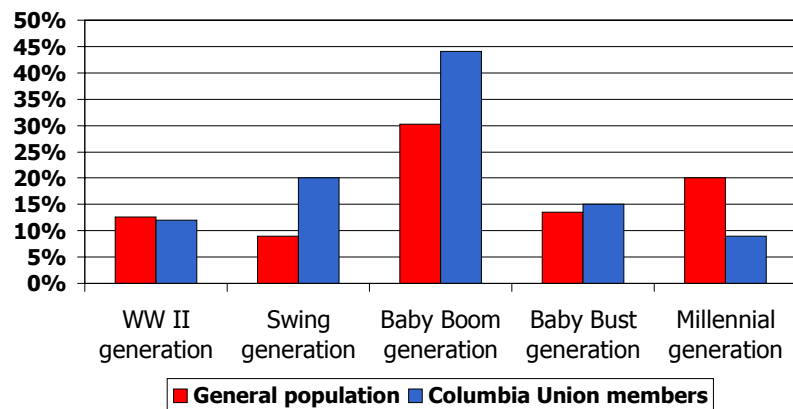
Gender

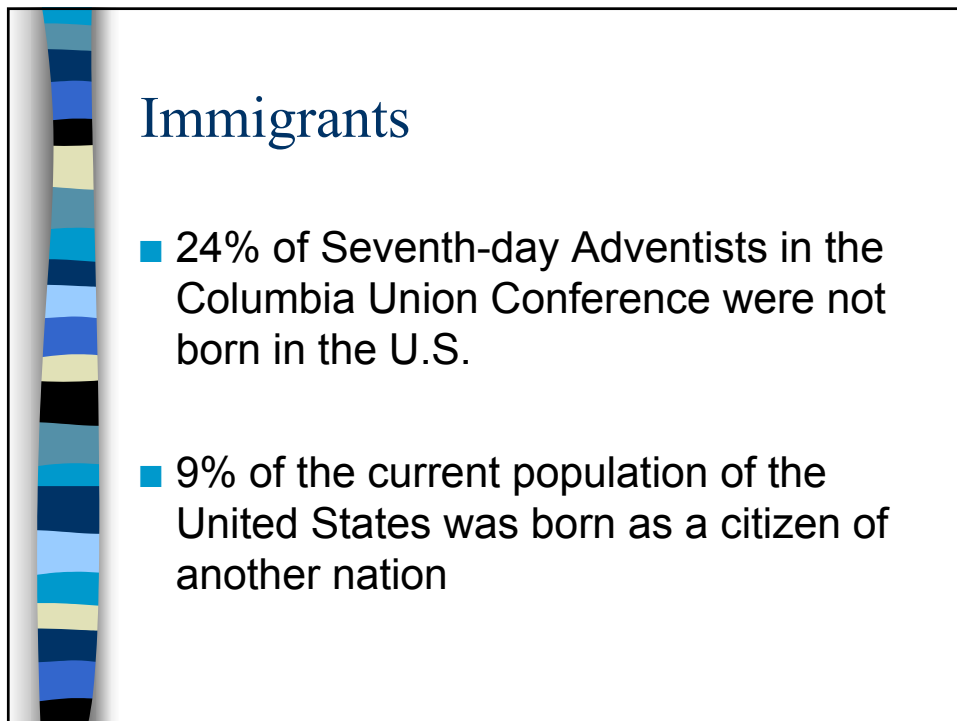
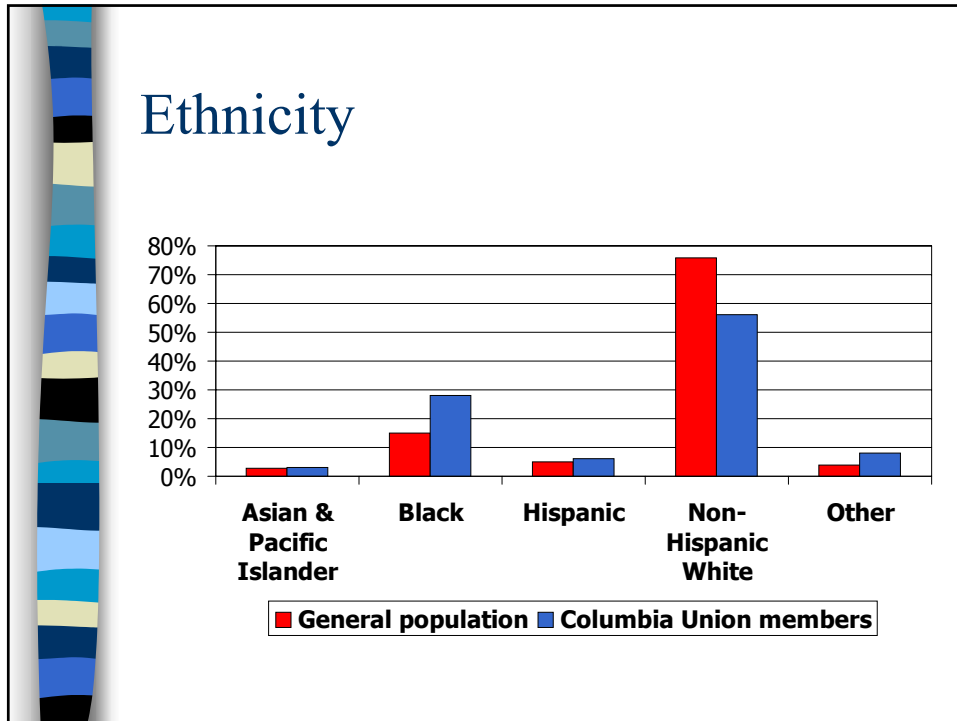


The Generations

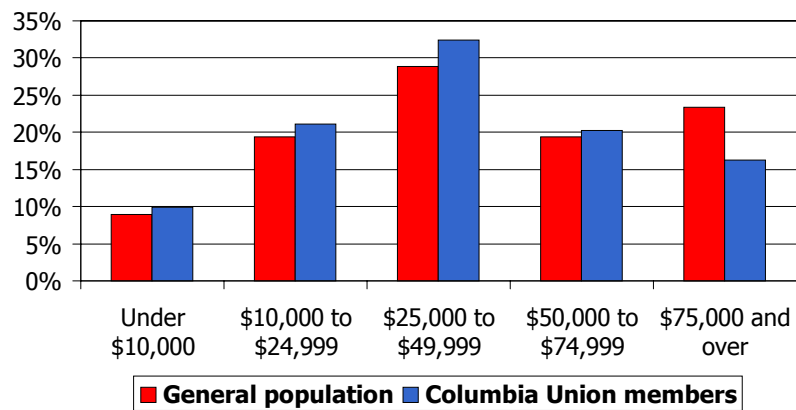
- World War II generation, born 1909-32, now 69 to 92 years of age
- Swing generation, born 1933-45, now 56 to 68 years of age
- Baby Boom generation, born 1946-64, now 37 to 55 years of age
- Baby Bust generation ("Gen X"), born 1965-76, now 25 to 36 years of age
- Millennial generation ("Gen Y"), born 1977-94, now 7 to 24 years of age

Age by Generation

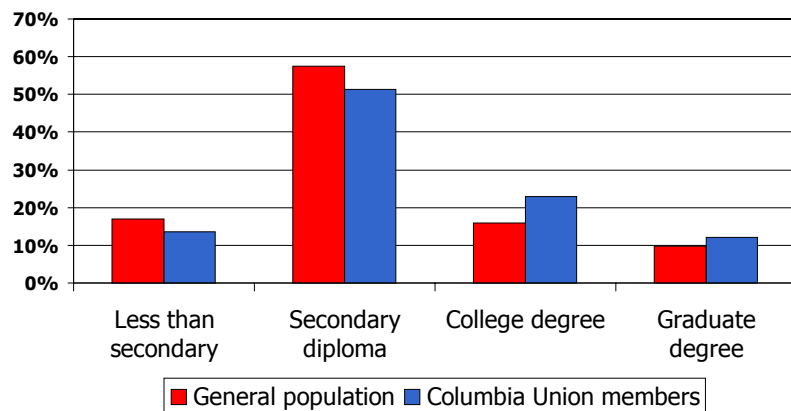




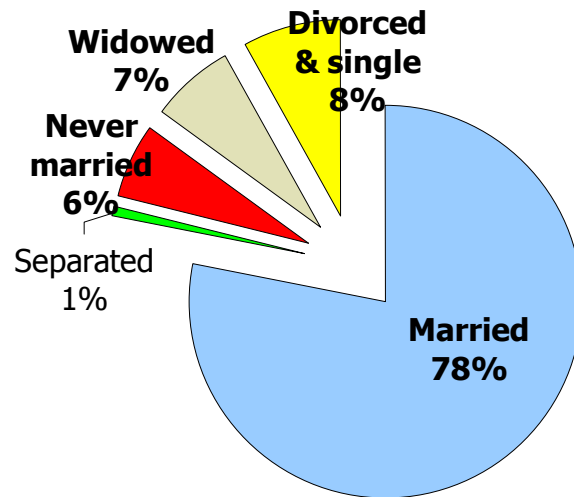
Annual Household Income



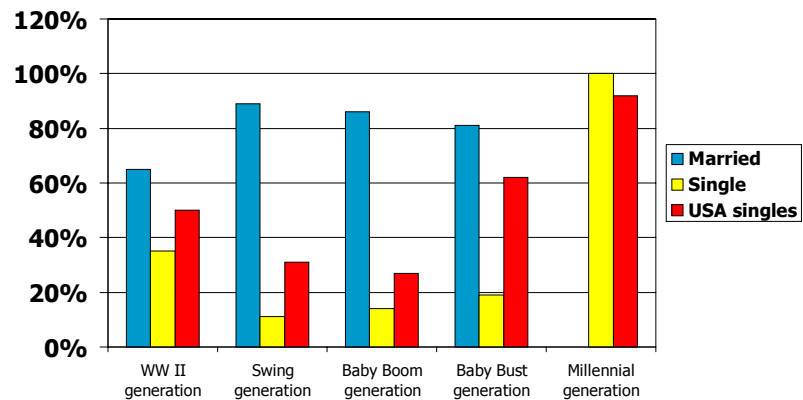
Level of Education



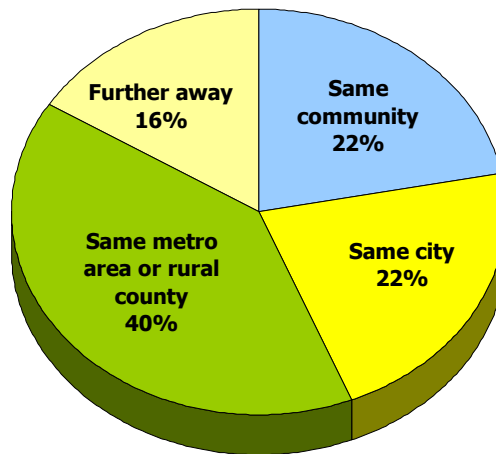
Marital Status



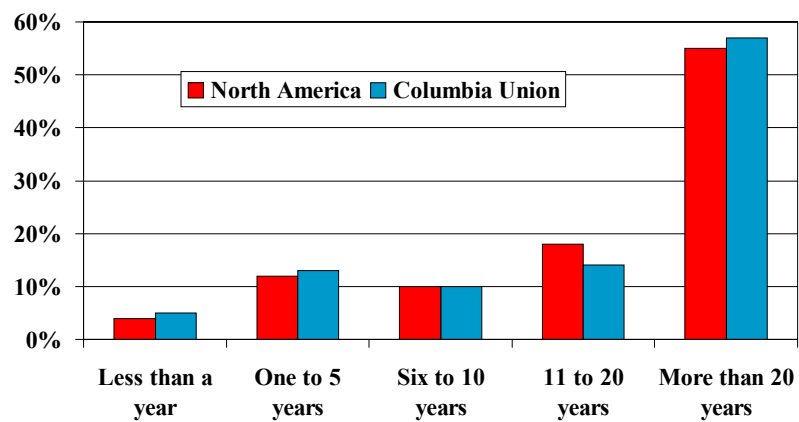
Marital Status by Generation



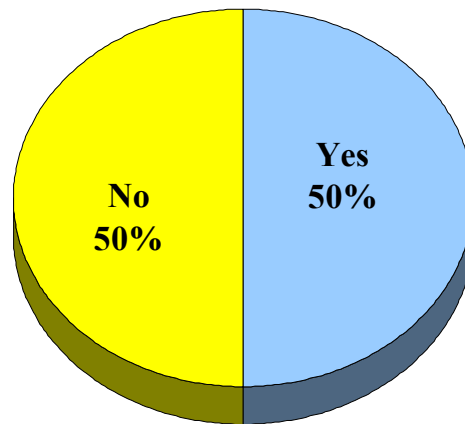
Live how far from church?



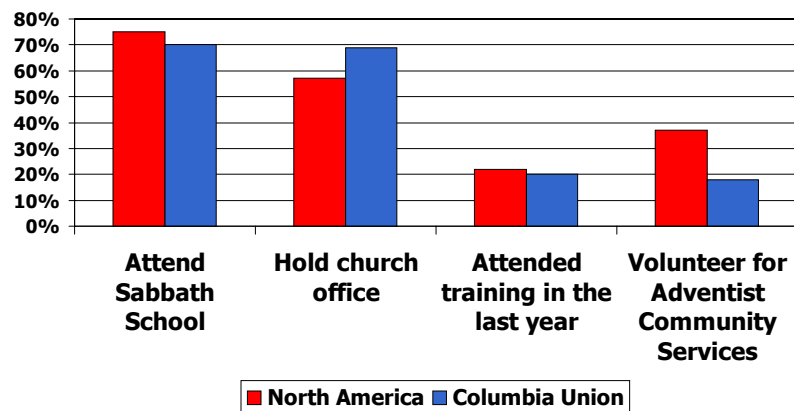
Tenure as an Adventist



Born into an Adventist Home

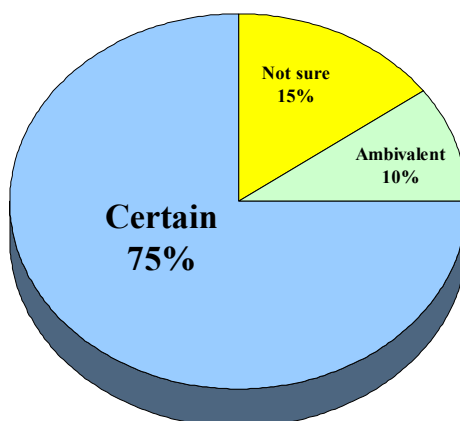


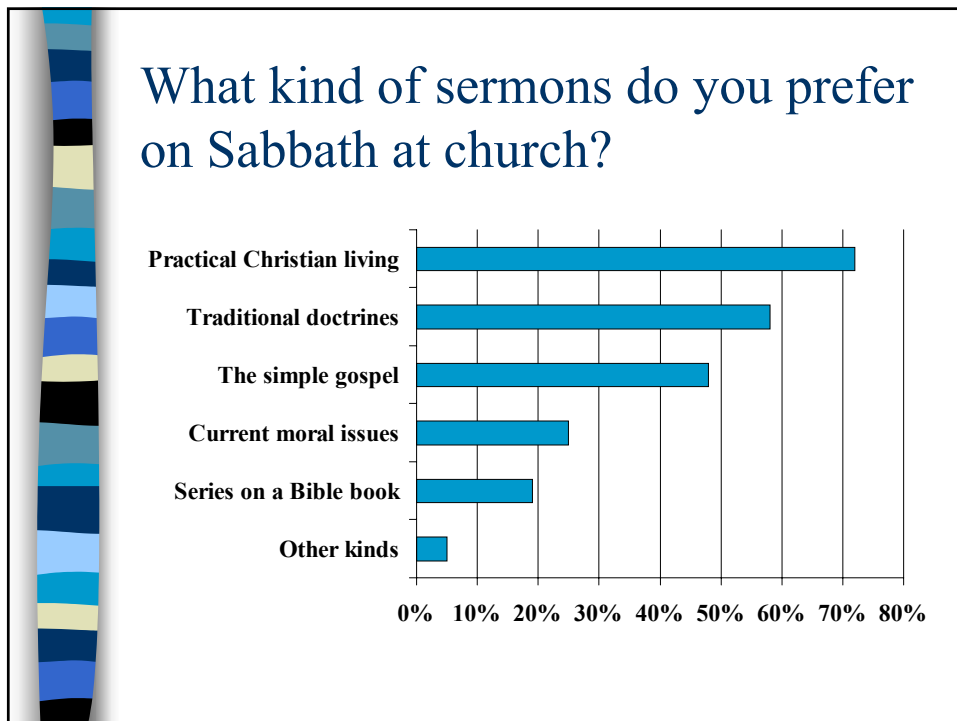
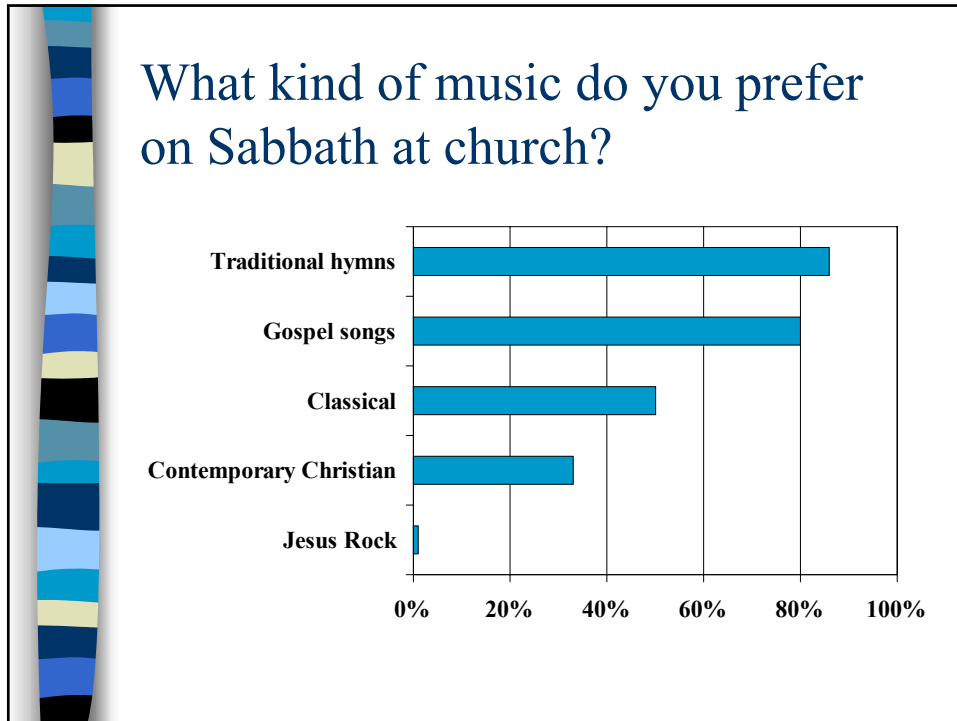
Member Participation



Member Attitudes & Needs

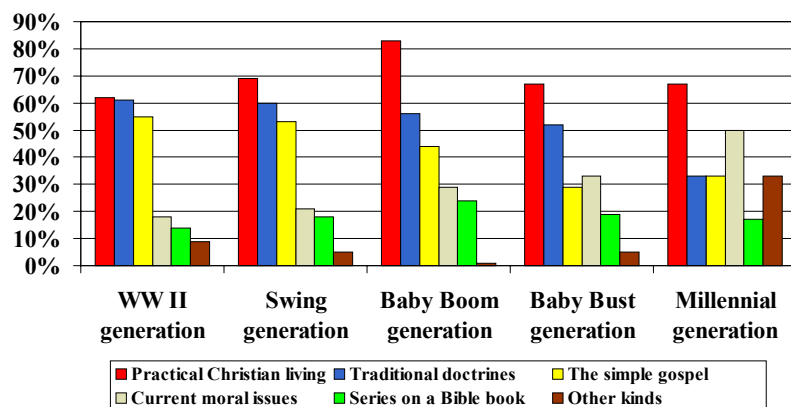
Spirituality: What is your assurance that you have eternal life?



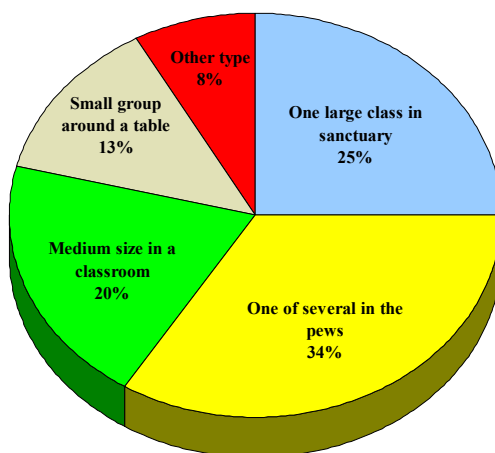


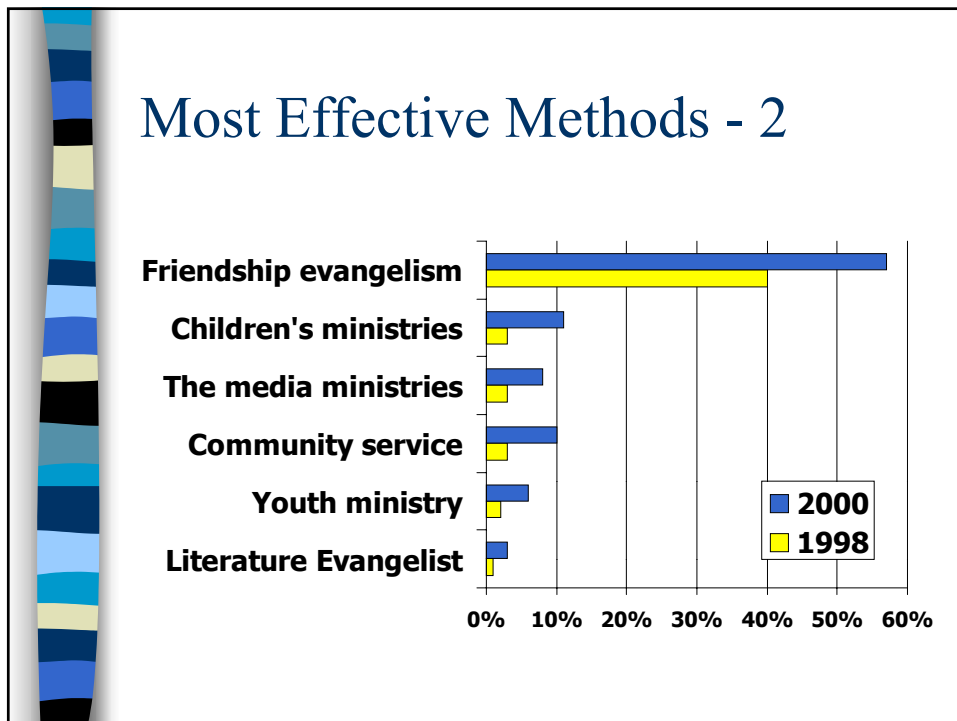
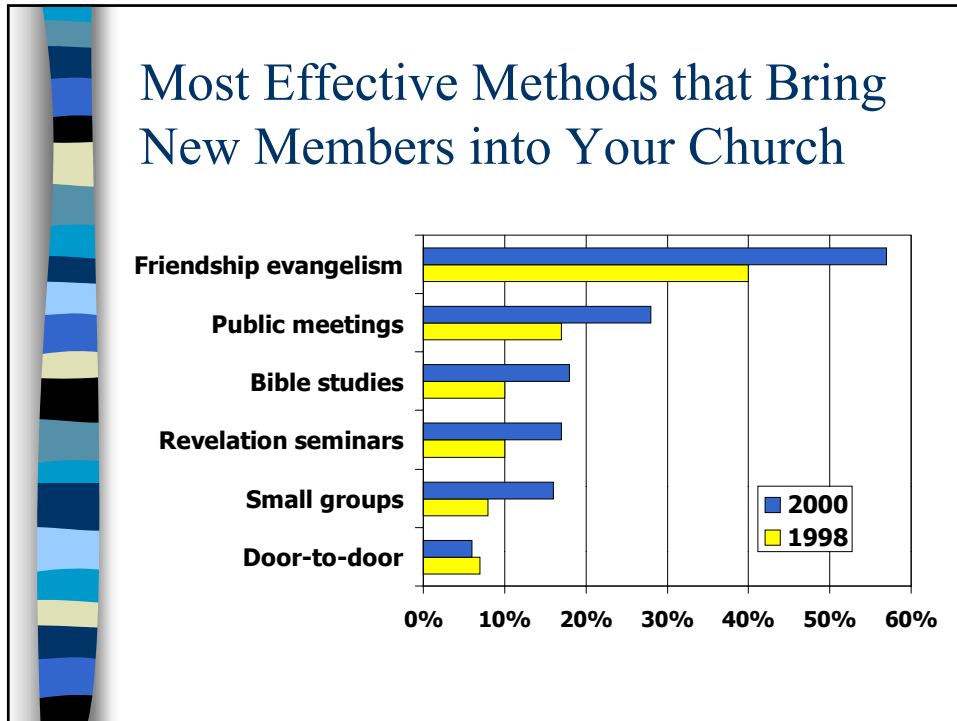
Sermon Preferences

Comparisons by Generation



What kind of Sabbath School class do you belong to?

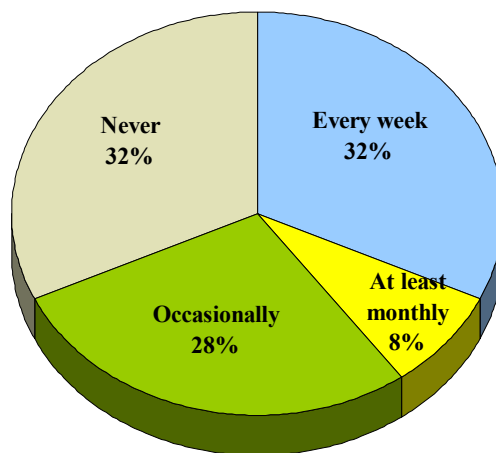




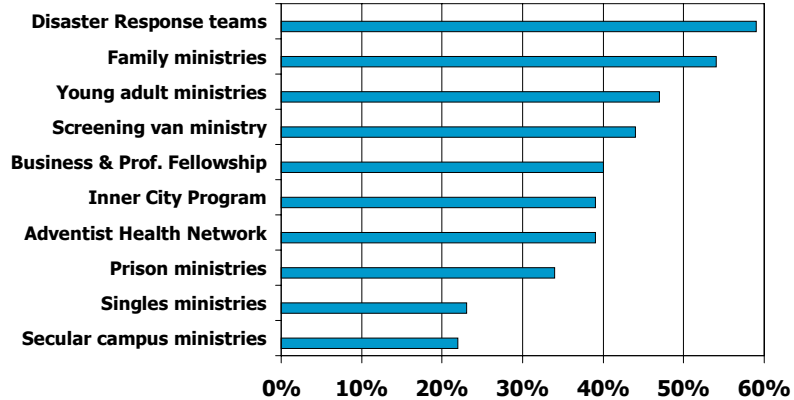
Inactive and Former Members

- 72% of Columbia Union members report that they have a relative or close friend who used to be an active member of the Adventist Church and has dropped out.
- The longer a person has been a church member, the more likely they are to report that they have a loved one who has dropped out.

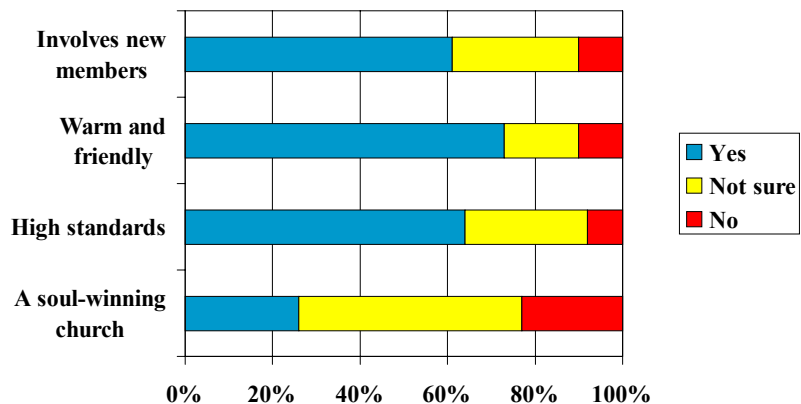
Attendance at Midweek Meeting or a Small Group



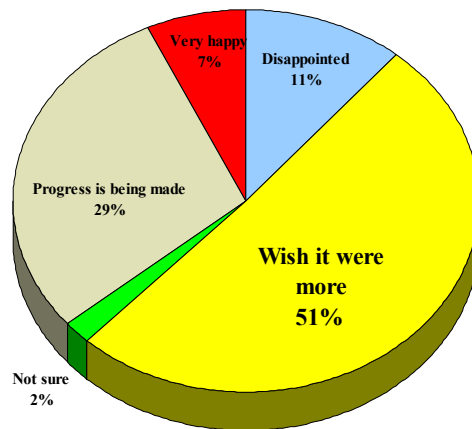
Would Participate in New Ministries ...



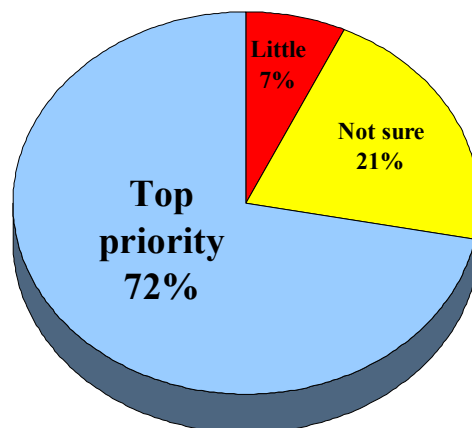
Perceptions of Local Church



Perception of Church Growth



What emphasis does your pastor place on soul-winning?





Evaluation of Local Church

- 70% The Bible is seen as the basis of authority in my local church
- 65% Our Sabbath church services inspire true worship
- 65% My local church presents a positive gospel message
- 55% Our local church leaders take their responsibilities seriously
- 53% My congregation has a strong sense of unity, despite differences



Evaluation of Local Church - 2

- 50% Our local church leaders are accountable to the needs of members
- 49% My church emphasizes a relational approach to evangelism
- 49% My pastor provides leadership by focusing on the development of leaders
- 48% Our local church organizational structure works well
- 47% My local church provides a “safe place” for forgiveness of sins



Evaluation of Local Church - 3

- 47% My church integrates stewardship education into the preaching schedule
- 46% My local church gets people involved in systematic Bible study
- 45% Corporate prayer saturates the life of my local church
- 45% There is intentional effort to bring members to spiritual maturity
- 43% There is a balance between evangelism and nurture



Evaluation of Local Church - 4

- 42% My church emphasizes Friendship Evangelism in my personal network
- 42% There is purposeful direction in local church activities
- 41% My local church has a clear and common vision
- 39% My church is actively pursuing fulfillment of the Great Commission
- 39% My local church visibly serves needy people in the community



Evaluation of Local Church - 5

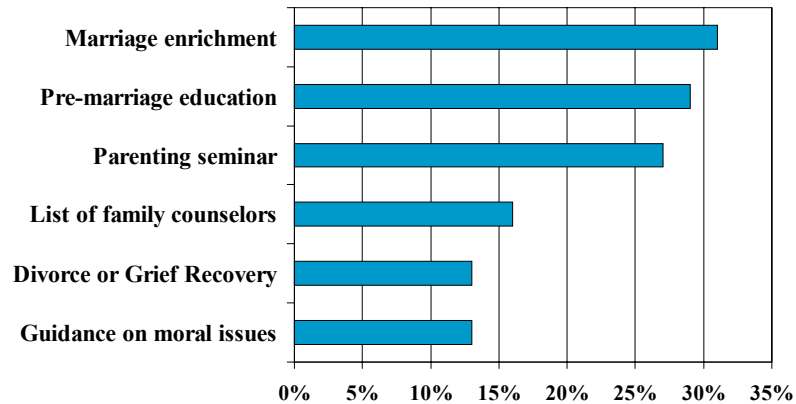
- 34% My congregation is seen in the community as people of hope
- 33% My local church involves/supports volunteers in highly effective ministries
- 32% My local church provides training and/or coaching to develop leaders
- 31% My local church collaborates with other Adventist churches in the area
- 27% My church has a positive impact on the neighborhood and city



Evaluation of Local Church - 6

- 24% My church does an excellent job of reaching out to non-members who visit
- 21% My congregation is excellent at following Matt. 18 instead of gossiping
- 19% My church equips families to deal with family-life issues through mentors

Family Ministries in the Local Church in the Last Year ...



Humanitarian Activities

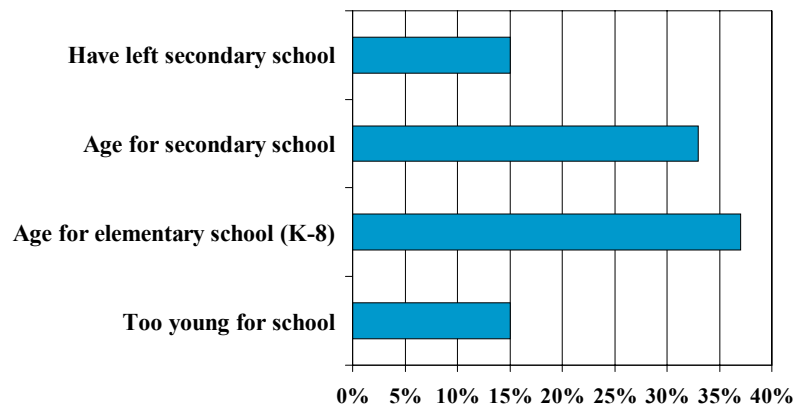
- 83% of the Columbia Union members want the Adventist Church to do more to meet the needs of the homeless, the inner city and families in crisis.

Christian Education

- In 1998, a total of 54% of the members in the Columbia Union indicated that they had children under 20 years of age who lived at home or were away at school, the military, etc.
- In 2001, that dropped to 44% of the members in the Columbia Union

Age Level of Children

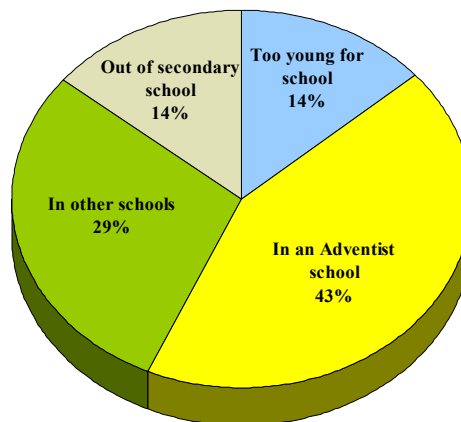
Among the 44% of members who have children in the home



Enrolled in Adventist Schools

- Of those members who have children under 20 in their homes ... 43% are enrolled in an Adventist school
- Another way of looking at the same number; one in five church members in the Columbia Union (19%) have a child enrolled in an Adventist school

Where are our children?





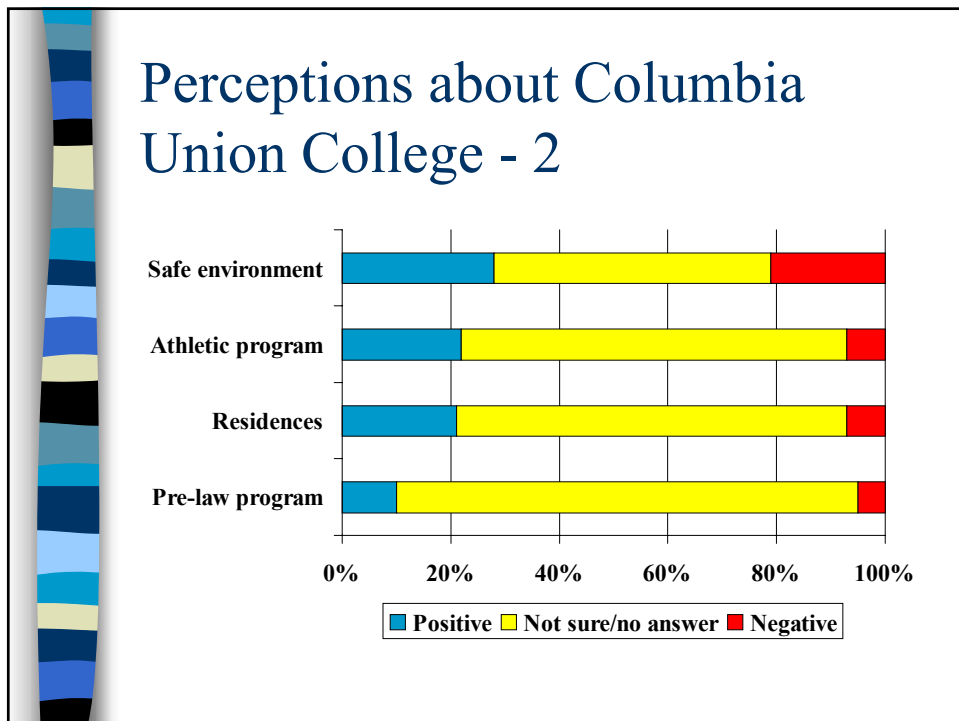
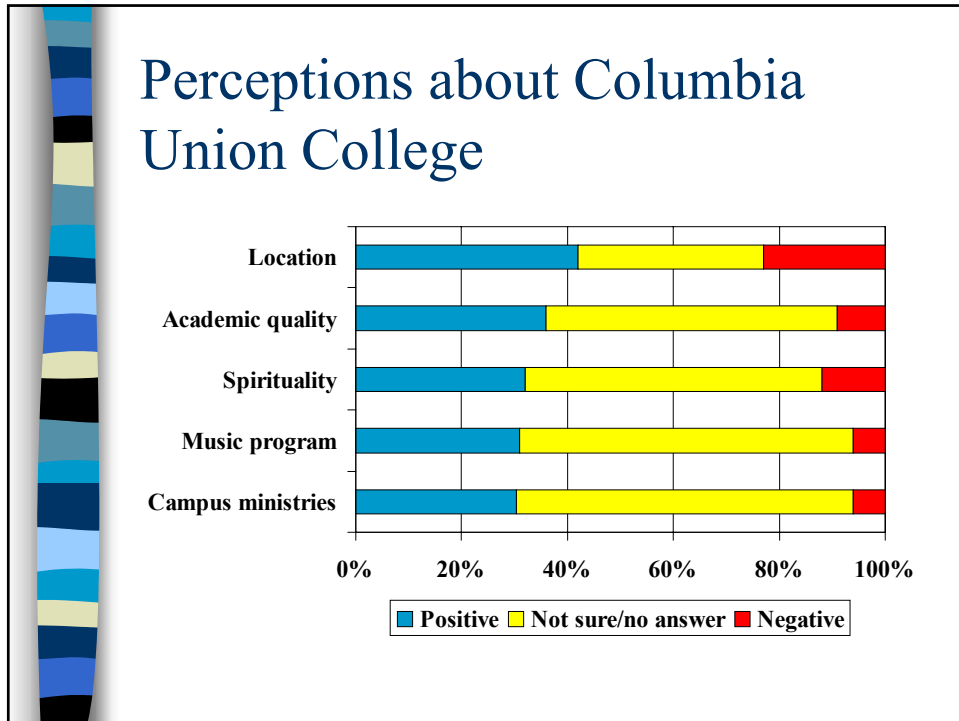
Where are they attending?

- Of those members with children in Adventist schools:
 - 68% are in elementary schools
 - 24% are in day academy
 - 16% are in boarding academy
 - 15% are in a college
 - 6% are taking Home Study International courses

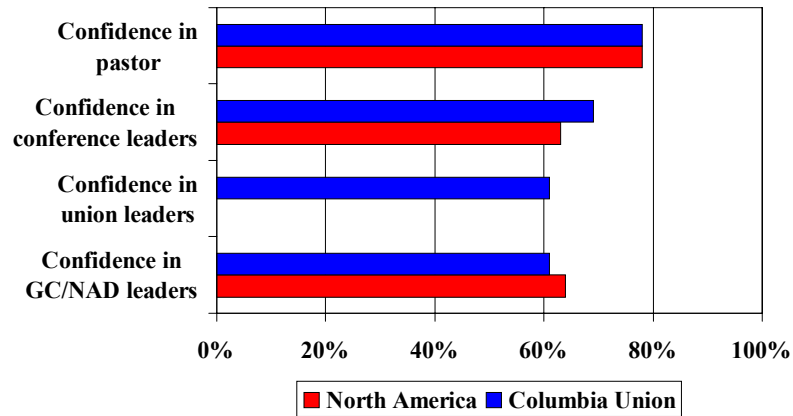


Why are 29% not in our schools?

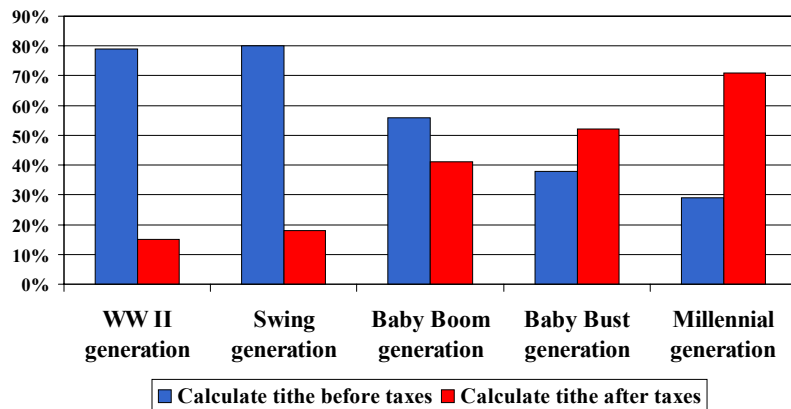
- 15% costs and family finances
- 7% distance
- 6% we don't offer that course/program
- 3% Adventist school is too crowded
- 3% poor academic quality
- 2% poor spiritual life of school
- 1% other parent won't agree
- **63% reasons not on the list**



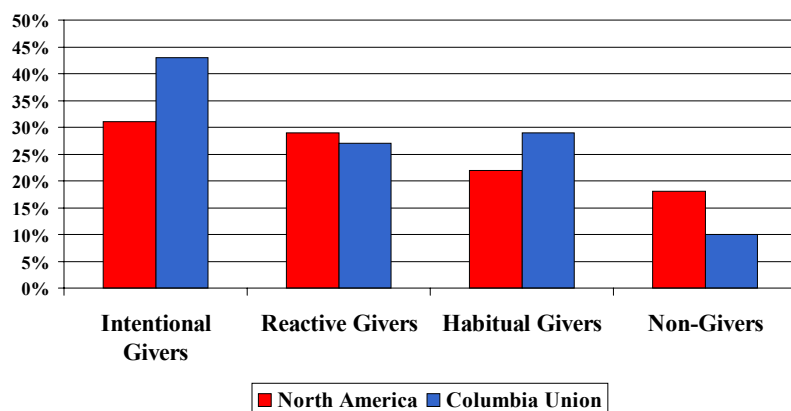
Confidence in Church Leadership



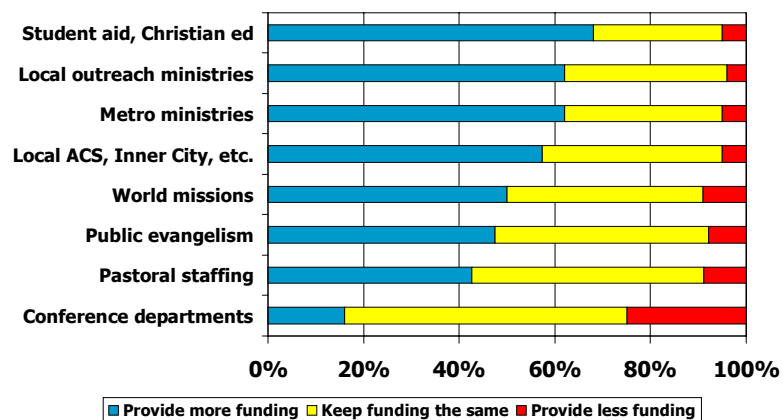
How Members Calculate Tithe

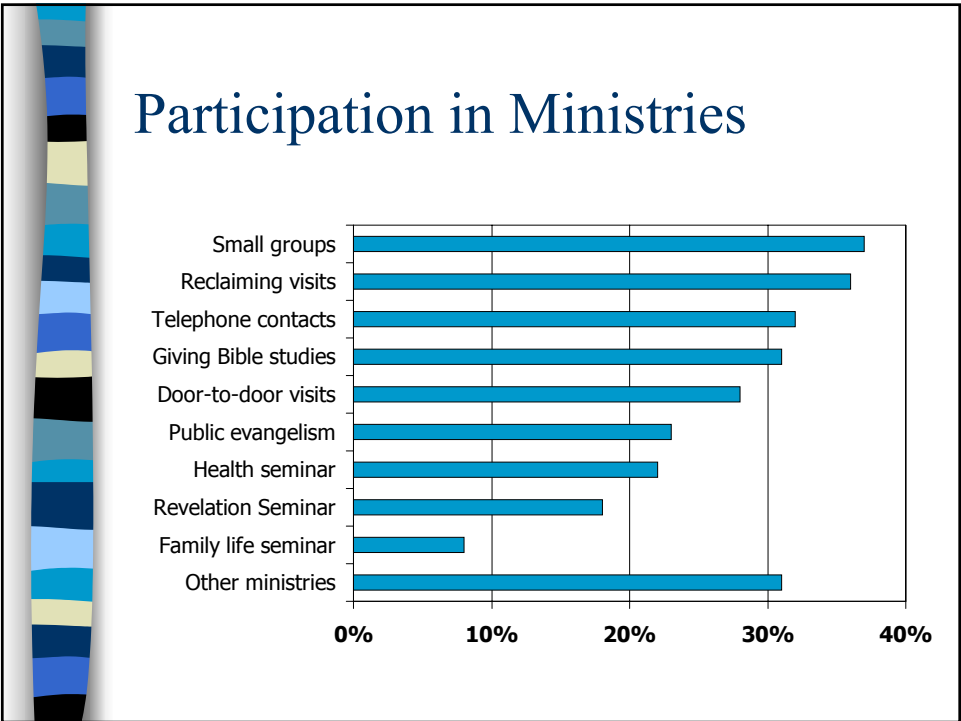


Giving Styles of Members

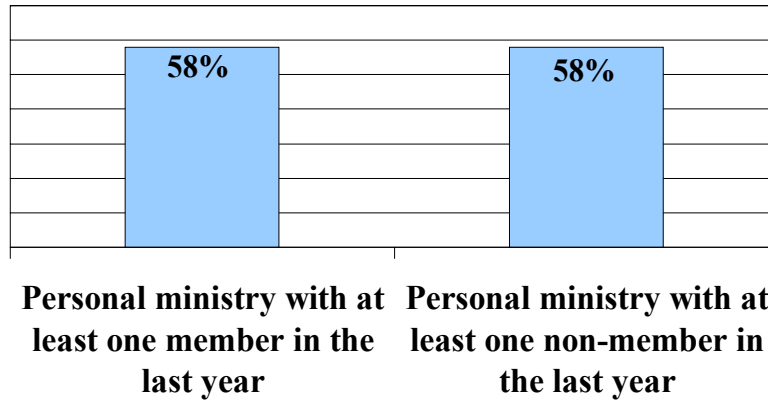


Funding Priorities



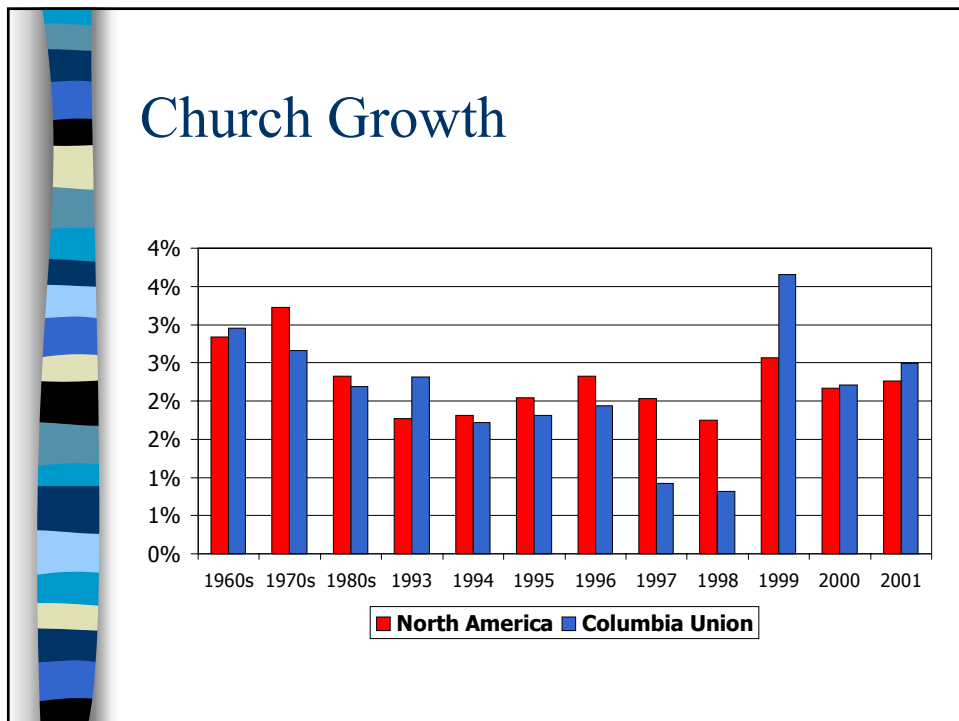
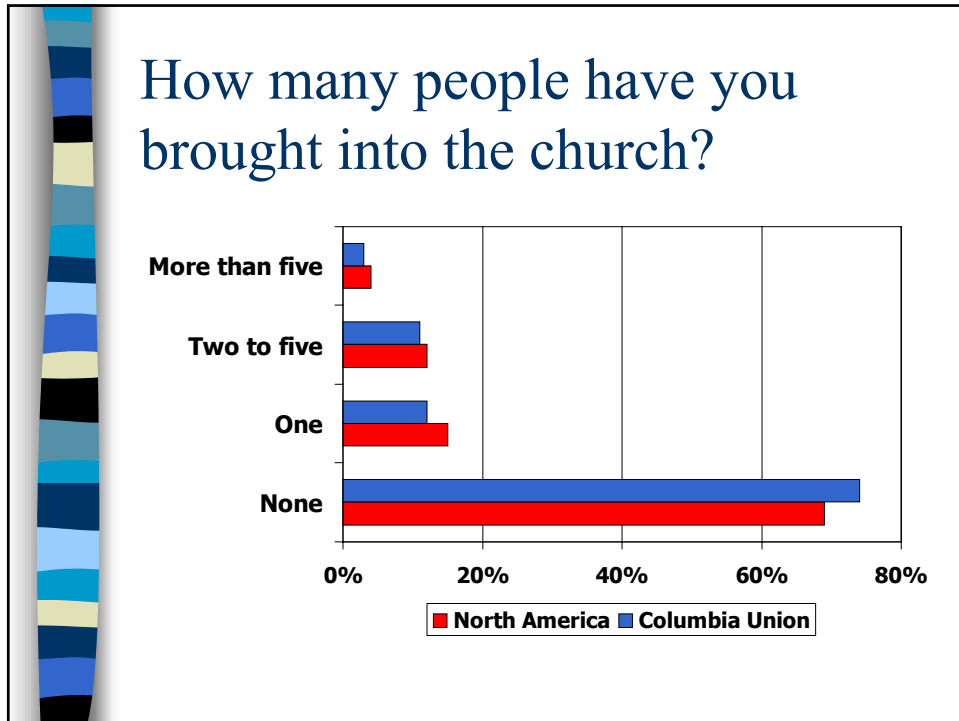


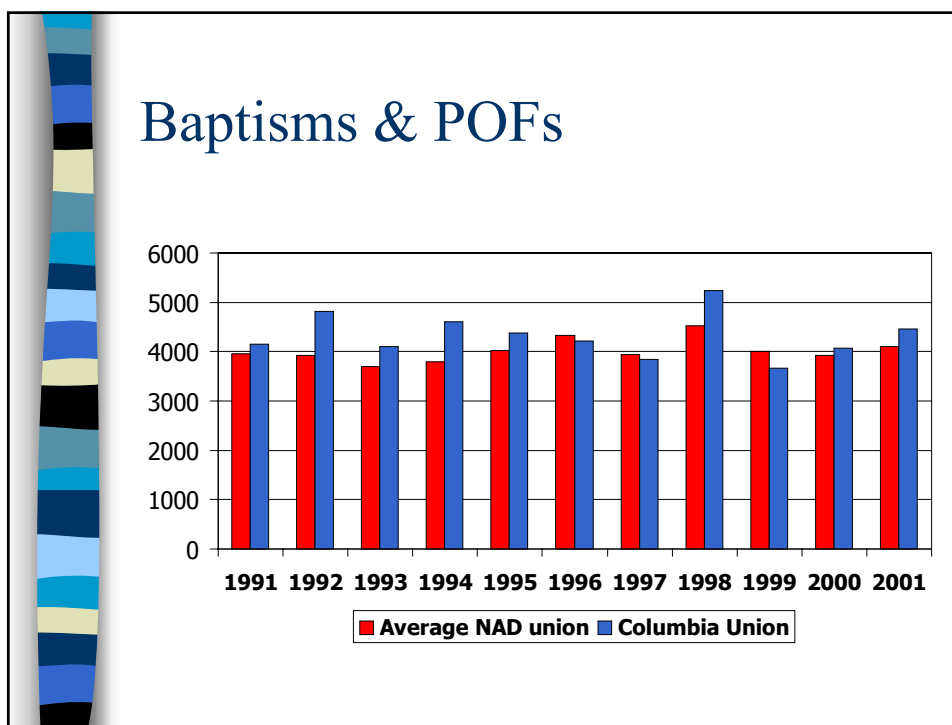
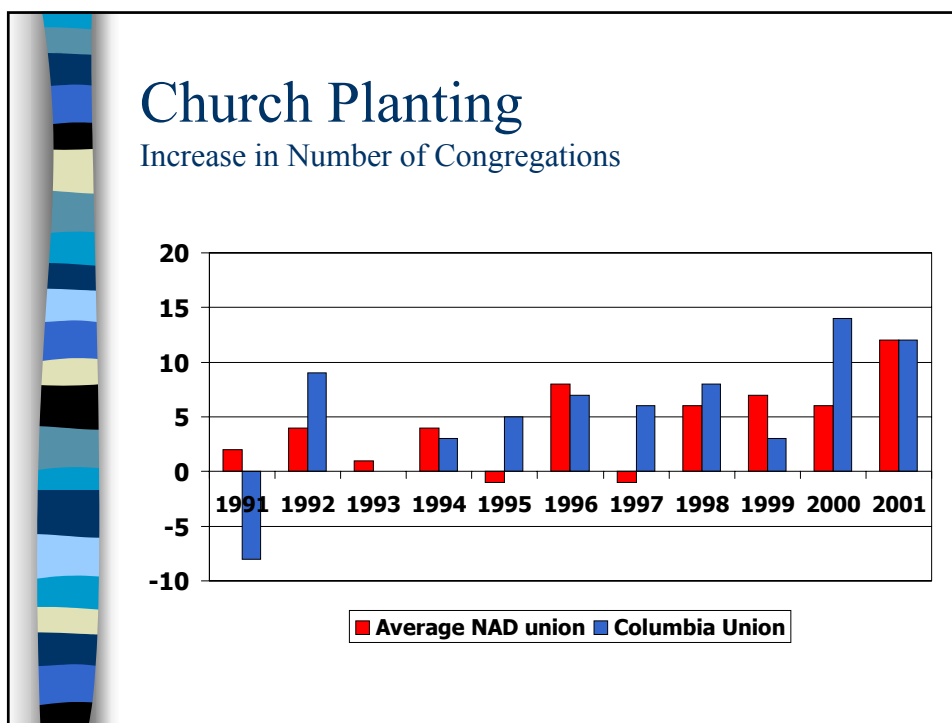
Attending Members who Are Engaged in Personal Ministry



A Place to Bring Friends

- Four out of five attending members (83%) have found a local, Adventist church where they would feel comfortable bringing their colleagues or neighbors to visit on most Sabbaths.







Church Growth Correlates in Columbia Union

- Involvement and impact in the community
- A “safe” environment in the congregation for confession of sin
- The local church collaborates with the other Adventist churches in metro area
- Emphasis on relationships and a “relational” approach to evangelism



Church Growth Correlates - 2 in Columbia Union

- Congregation rates high on “warm and friendly” atmosphere
- High percentage of members involved in some kind of ministry with a non-member(s) in the last year
 - Items above correlate to actual net growth
 - Items on next slide correlate to opinion “we are growing”



Church Growth Correlates - 3 in Columbia Union

- Pastor focuses on leadership development
- Systematic program of faith development through Bible study
- Visible ministries of service to needy people in the community
- Equips families to help themselves through mentors and coaching



Church Growth Correlates across the U.S.

- The congregation helps members deepen their relationships with God
- Excited about the future of this local church
- Sponsors a Community Service Center
- Non-traditional community services
 - Examples: job-finding, substance abuse, family counseling, homeless shelter



Church Growth Correlates - 2 across the U.S.

- Sponsors a church school
- Church is spiritually vital and alive
- Welcomes change and innovation
- Strong ethnic, cultural heritage
[immigrant churches]
- Keeps local community well-informed of church activities

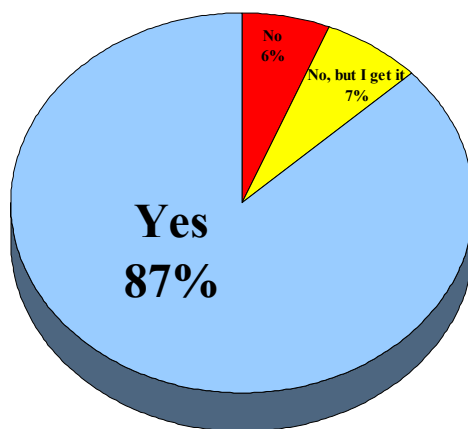


Church Growth Correlates - 3 across the U.S.

- Conducts worship services targeting the unchurched
 - Examples: Friend Day, a seeker service, revivals, special Sabbaths
- Believes in potential for growth
- All church activities focus on growth

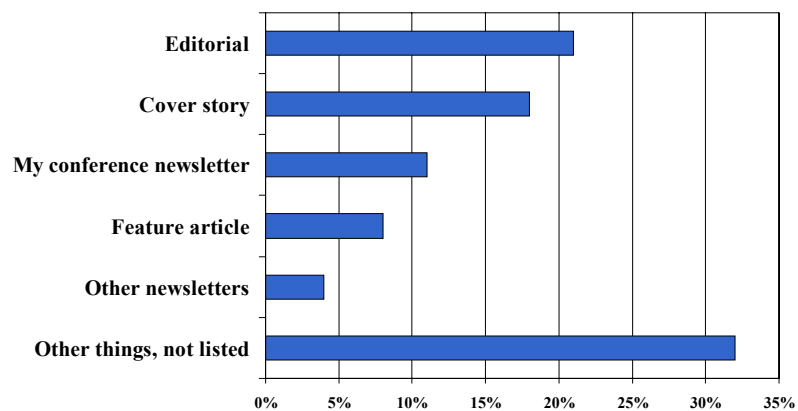
The Visitor

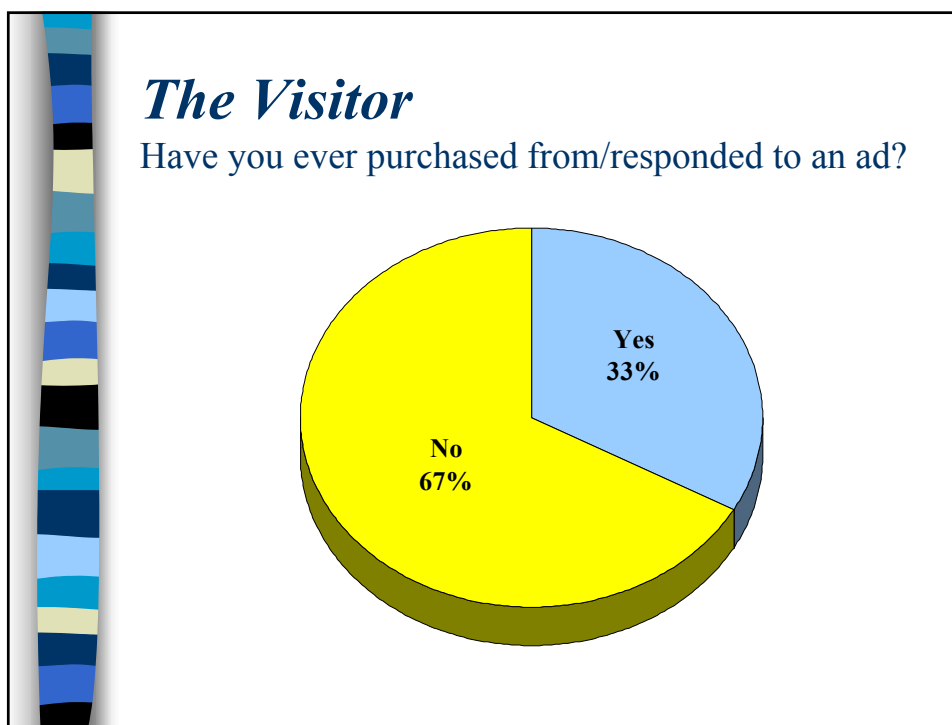
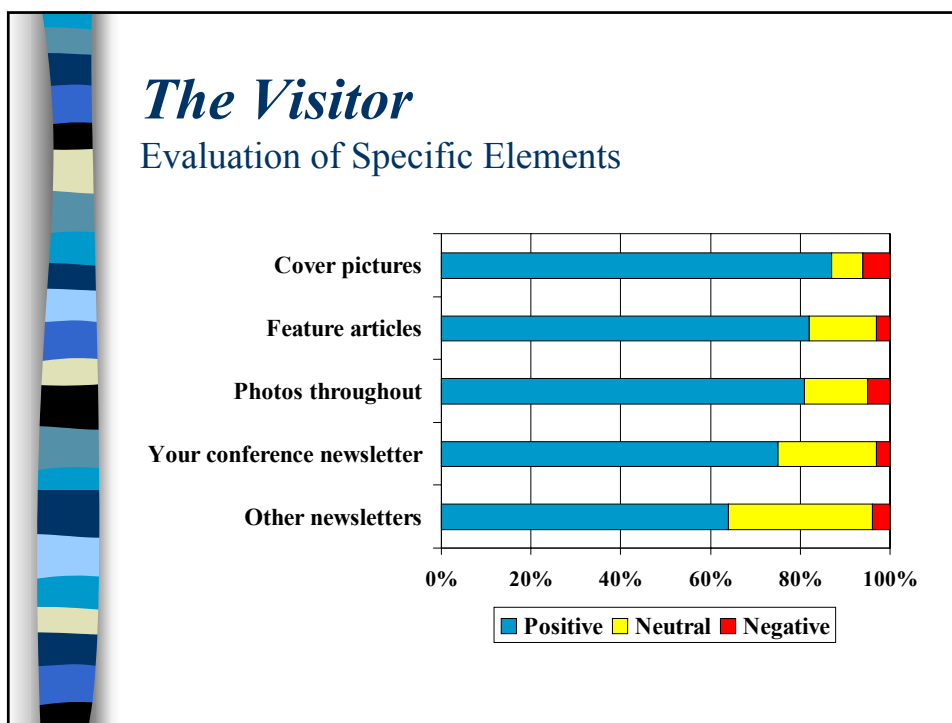
Does it come to your home regularly?



The Visitor

What do you read *first* when it comes?







Context for Mission



An Urban Mission

- At 40 million, the Columbia Union has the largest population living in metropolitan areas of any of the union conferences in the NAD.
- 10 of the 25 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. are located in the territory of the Columbia Union Conference.
- 28.4 million of the 47.7 million people in this eight-state region live in these 10 metro areas (60%).



Major Metropolitan Areas

- Philadelphia -- 5.1 million
- Washington -- 4.9 million
- NJ suburbs of NYC -- 3.5 million
- Newark -- 1.9 million
- Cleveland-Akron -- 2.9 million
- Baltimore -- 2.6 million
- Pittsburgh -- 2.4 million
- Cincinnati -- 2 million
- Norfolk-Va. Beach-Newport News -- 1.6 million
- Columbus -- 1.5 million



Smaller Metropolitan Areas

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| ■ Richmond - 996,000 | ■ Johnson City - 480,000 |
| ■ Dayton - 950,000 | ■ Lancaster - 471,000 |
| ■ Allentown - 638,000 | ■ Canton - 407,000 |
| ■ Harrisburg - 629,000 | ■ York - 382,000 |
| ■ Scranton - 625,000 | ■ Reading - 374,000 |
| ■ Toledo - 618,000 | ■ Atlantic City - 355,000 |
| ■ Youngstown - 595,000 | ■ Trenton - 351,000 |
| ■ Wilmington - 586,000 | ■ Huntington - 316,000 |
| | ■ Erie - 281,000 |
| | ■ Charleston - 252,000 |
| | ■ Roanoke - 236,000 |



Smaller Metropolitan Areas

- Johnstown (PA), Lynchburg (VA), Mansfield (OH), Charlottesville (VA), Lima (OH), Wheeling (WV), Parkersburg (WV), Vineland (NJ), State College (PA), Steubenville (OH), Hagerstown (MD), Altoona (PA), Dover (DE), Sharon (PA), Williamsport (PA), Danville (VA), Cumberland (MD) -- each with over 100,000.
- The 36 smaller metro areas have a total population of 12 million.
- Total metro population in our eight-state region is 40.4 million of 47.7 million (85%).



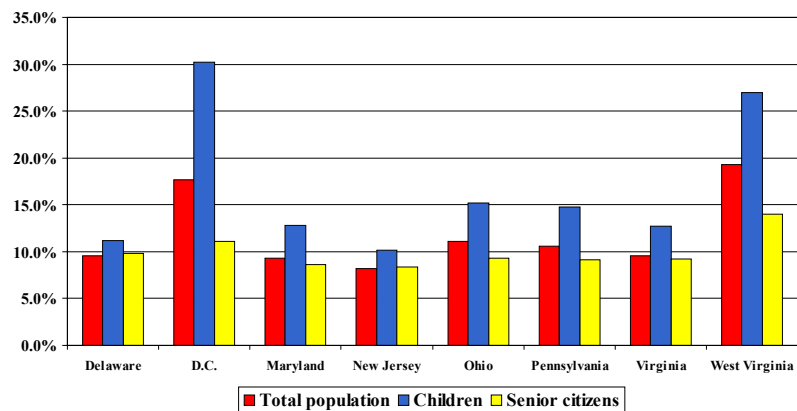
Appalachia

- Half of the population of Appalachia is in the Columbia Union
 - West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia
- It is America's poorest rural region.
- It also represents an unreached people group for the Adventist Church.

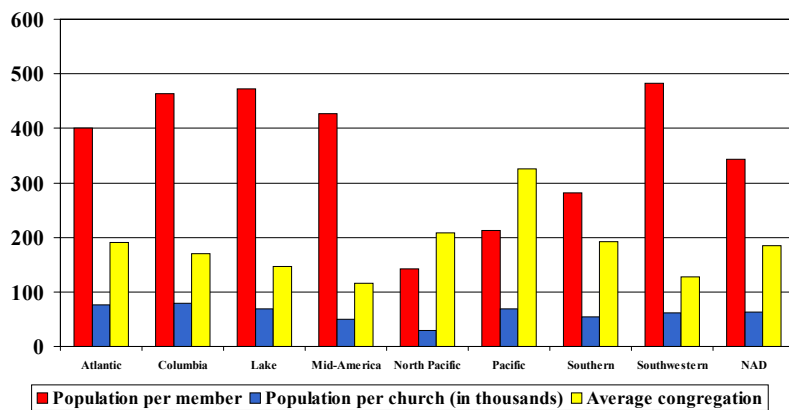
Poverty

- Poverty correlates with most other human needs and social concerns
 - Malnutrition, disease, addictions, crime, lack of education, unemployment, domestic violence
- 5 million people in our eight-state territory live in poverty
- 2 million children are among this group

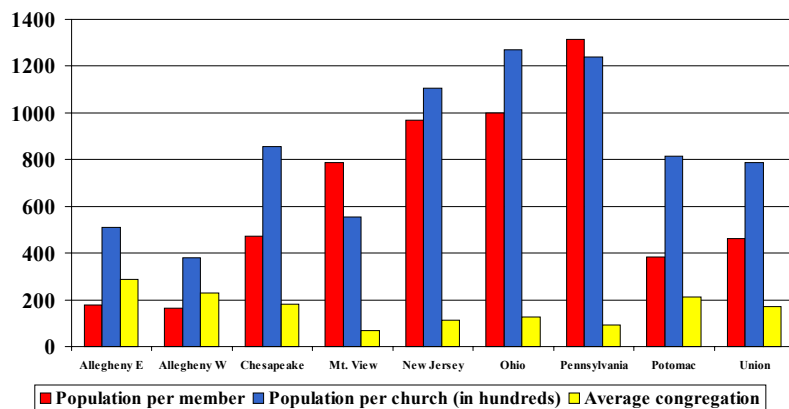
Percent of Population in Poverty



Adventist Penetration



Adventist Penetration In the Columbia Union Conference





Communities

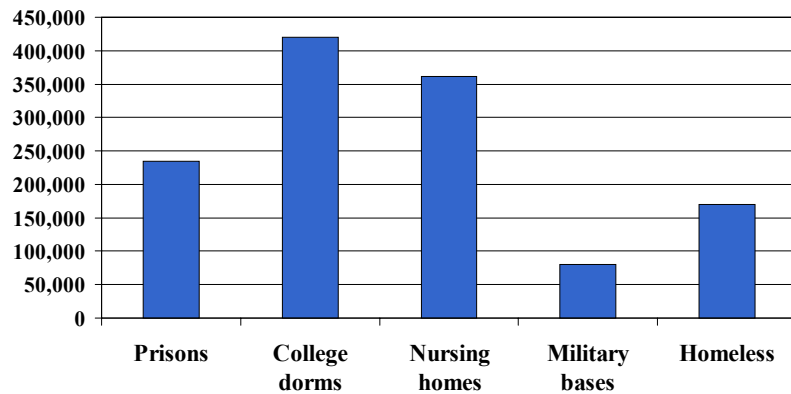
- There are about 6,000 communities in our eight-state region
- Only about 500 have an Adventist Church or local ministry
 - 1,400 with no church, but 2 or more Adventist families live there
 - 1,300 with no church and only 1 family
 - 2,800 with no church and no members living there



Unreached Communities

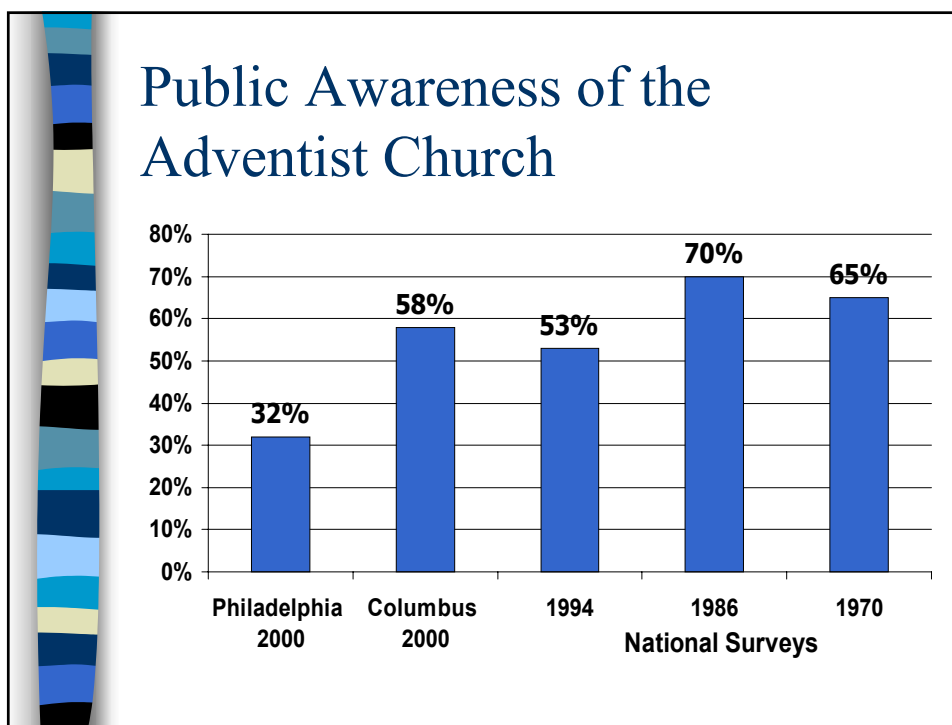
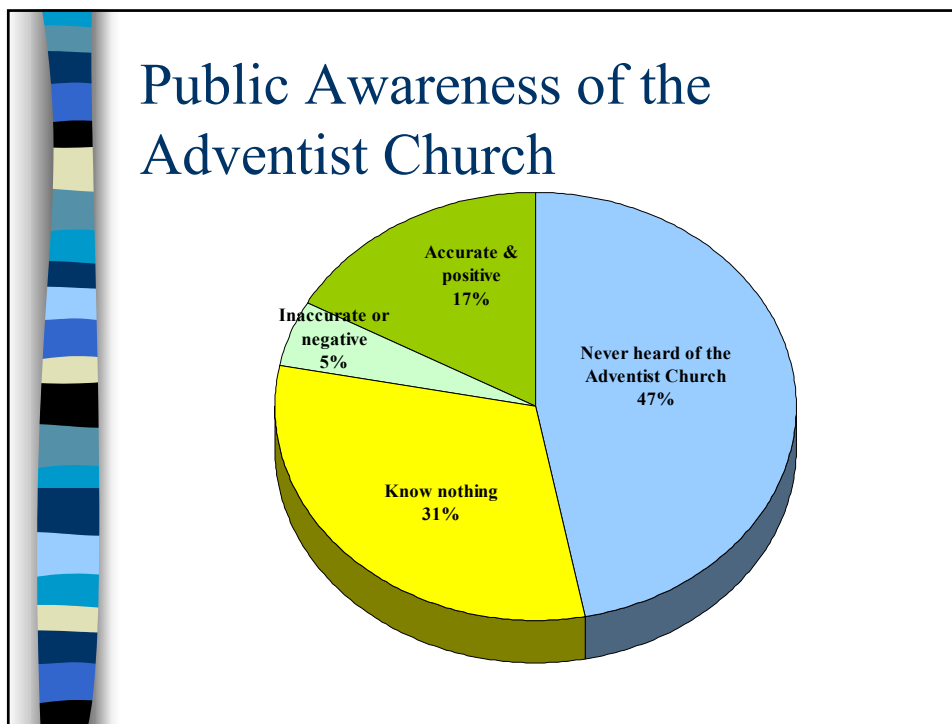
- Two major kinds of unreached communities ...
 - Younger, middle and upper middle class, educated families ... most in DC, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia
 - Blue Collar neighborhoods with somewhat lower levels of education and income, but single-family, owner-occupied homes ... most in Maryland, Ohio and West Virginia

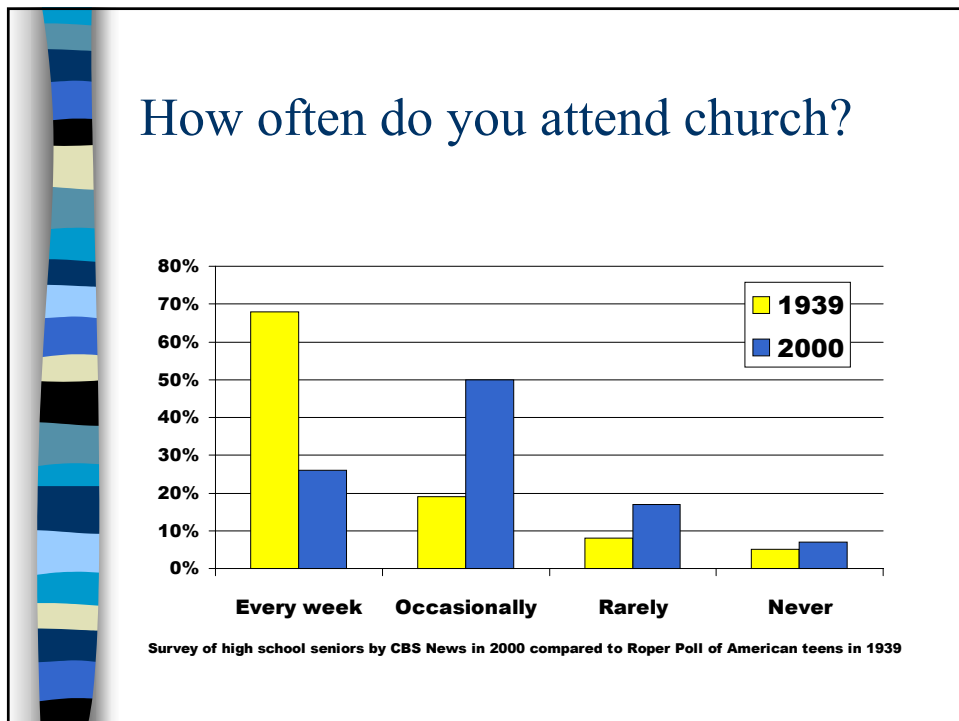
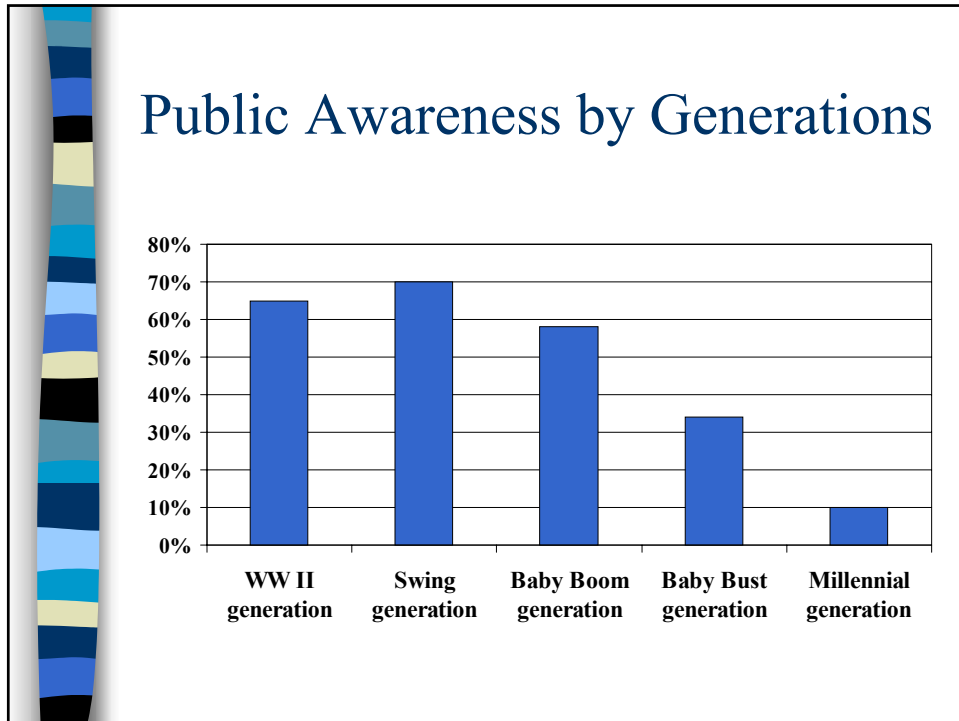
People in Institutions

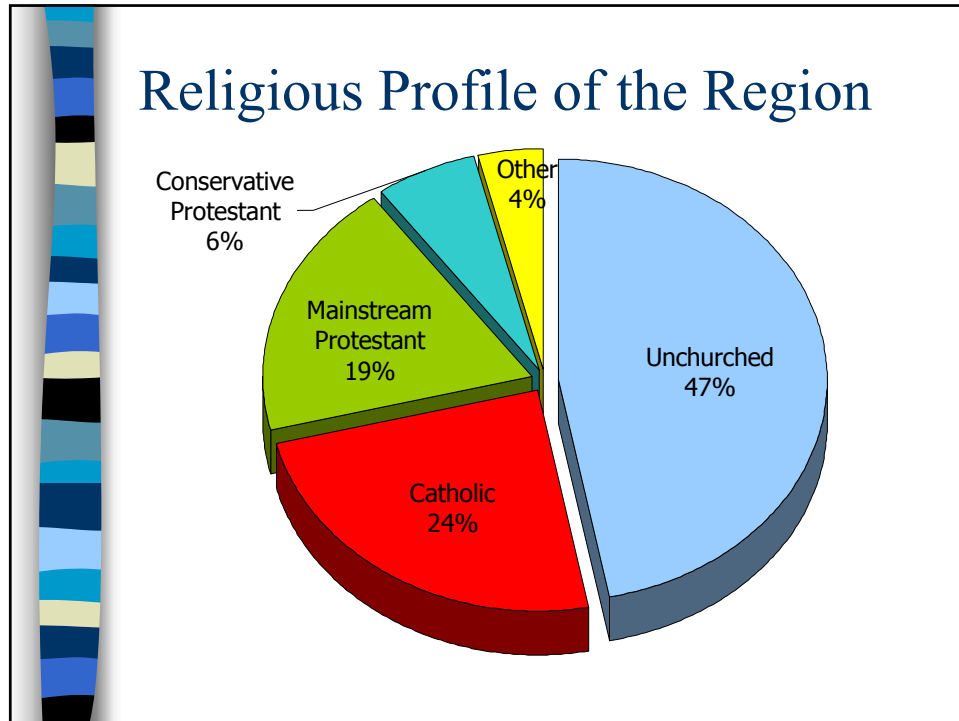


Secular Campuses

- Students on the largest campuses
 - Ohio State - 50,000
 - Maryland - 35,000
 - Temple - 28,000
 - Pittsburgh - 27,000
 - Akron - 25,000
 - Geo Mason - 24,000
 - Va Tech - 24,000
 - WVU - 22,000
- Number of campuses
 - Delaware - 4
 - DC - 9
 - Maryland - 21
 - New Jersey - 28
 - Ohio - 43
 - Pennsylvania - 55
 - Virginia - 22
 - West Virginia - 13

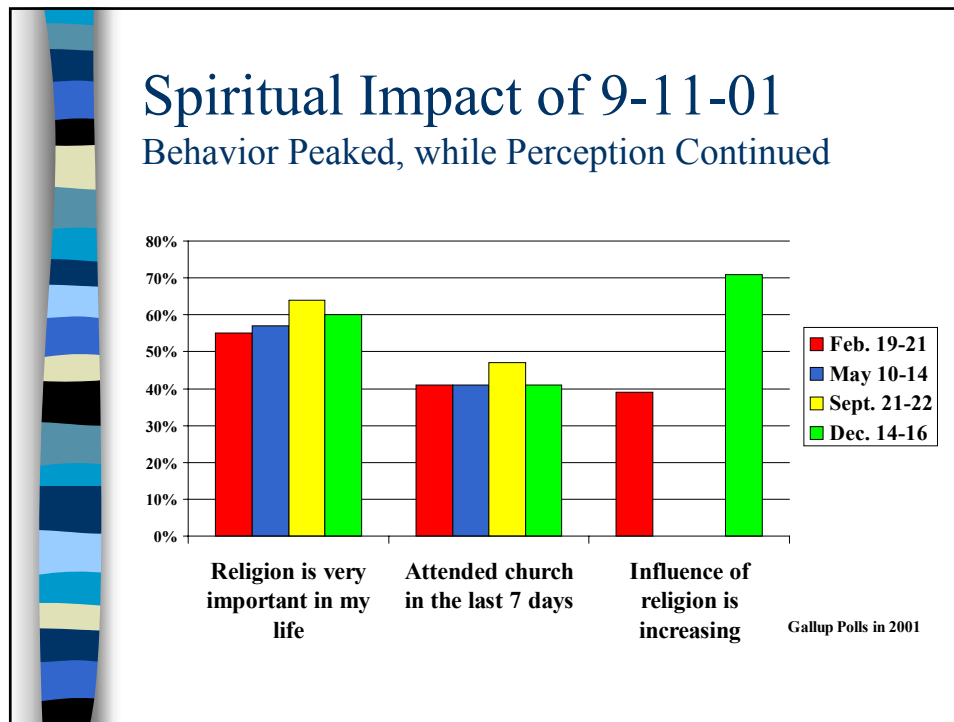






Spiritual Needs

- In the aftermath of the tragic events of Sept. 11, nine out of ten Americans report that they turned to religion or spirituality for support.
 - Survey by the RAND Corporation published 11-15-01 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*



Spiritual Impact Largely Gone

- A poll taken in March (2002) by the Pew Research Center shows that 52 percent now think religion's effect is in decline -- about the same number who felt that way a year ago.
- "Religion was in the air after Sept. 11 in a way that hadn't been the case for a long time... I've never seen such a dramatic change disappear so quickly."
 - Andrew Kohut, Pew Research Center