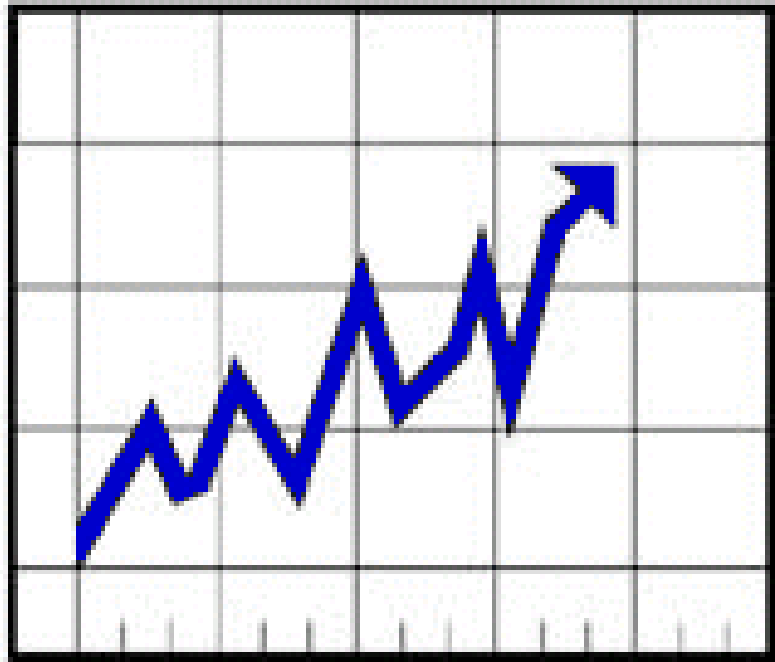


Adventist Opinion about Issues in Church Planting



Introduction

Church planting has become a more prominent part of the mission strategy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America over the last few years. The focus on church planting has also surfaced a variety of issues which can sometimes be controversial in a local church or conference.

The Center for Creative Ministry has conducted two surveys recently in which questions were asked about the opinions of Adventist church members and pastors on issues related to church planting. This report presents the data from these two surveys.

The information on the opinions of pastors (pages 18-32) was collected through telephone interviews conducted with a random sample of 200 pastors in October and November, 2004. The purpose of this survey was to gather information about recent events related to church planting and due to sensitivity of these issues, the interviewers were not Church employees or the spouses of conference officers or staff. At the 95th percentile of reliability, the allowance for sampling error in these data is seven percentage points (plus or minus).

The information on the opinions of church members (pages 1-17) was collected through questionnaires distributed in a random sample of local churches in eight selected states on Sabbaths in late 2002 and early 2003. A total of 1,312 church members returned usable responses. At the 95th percentile of reliability, the allowance for sampling error in these data is three percentage points (plus or minus). The selected states have been repeatedly tested and found to produce a sample that has the same demographic profile as the entire U.S. and to produce the same results as surveys conducted throughout the entire North American Division.

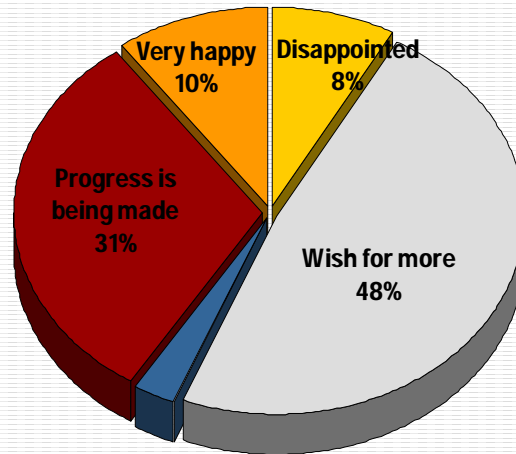
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Opinion about growth in my local church

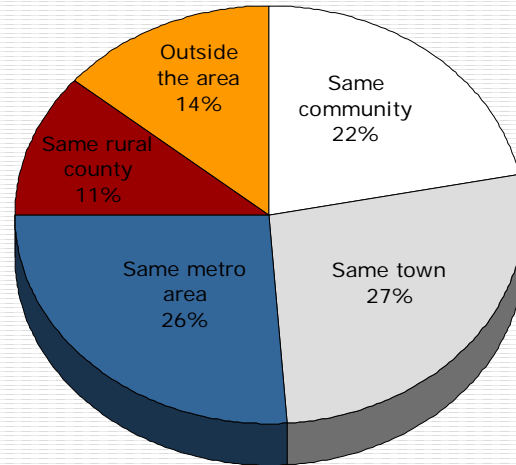


How do Seventh-day Adventist Church members feel about church growth in their local congregation? Respondents were asked to select one of five responses, the one “that best describes your opinion.”

The majority are not happy with the record of growth in their local church; 48% simply “wish it were more” and another 8% are “very disappointed.” Asian members are more likely to wish for more and Hispanic members are more likely to be very disappointed. Those who have been baptized in the last ten years are more likely to be unhappy about current growth rates, as are those born since 1964 from Gen X and the Millennial generation and those from low-income households.

Two in five members are pleased with growth rates in their local church; 31% say “progress is being made” and another 10% are “very happy” about it. Those who have been baptized members for 11 to 20 years are more likely to be pleased, as are those over 70 years of age. The same is true for those with the least education and from low-income households.

Where members live relative to their church ...



Nearly four out of five church members do not live in the same community where their local church is located. Adventists in America tend to be scattered thinly across large numbers of communities in which there is no local church. Research has shown that this is more true in metropolitan areas, than in small towns and rural areas. (See *Adventist Congregations Today*, Chapter 3.)

Only 22% of members report that they live “in the same Zip Code as your church.” The more educated a member is and the higher the household income, the more likely it is that the member will not live in the same community. Older church members are more likely to live in the same community, as are those who are white or Asian.

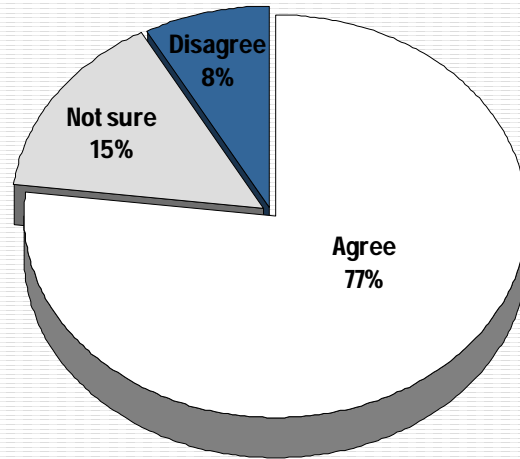
About a quarter of members (26%) live “in a different Zip Code, but the same town” as their local church. African Americans are more likely to give this response, as are older members and those who come from households with incomes of less than \$25,000 a year.

Another 26% live “in a different town in the same metro area” as their church. Most Adventists living in the suburbs of large cities fall into this category. Members born from 1946 through 1976 (Baby Boomers and GenXers) are more likely to give this response, as are those from households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more.

Just 11% of members live in a rural county and drive to church in another town in the same county. Members over 60 years of age are more likely to give this response, as are those who were baptized in the last year.

About 14% of members live even further away from their local church. Those who identify their ethnic background as Asian or white are more likely to give this response, as are those who were baptized in the last year and those under 40 years of age.

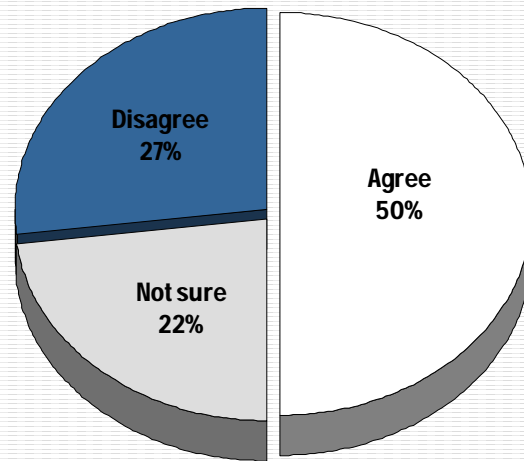
It is important to start new congregations



Three out of four Seventh-day Adventist Church members agree “completely” (54%) or “somewhat” (23%) that, “I believe it is important to start new Adventist congregations or local ministries in the communities in this country where there is no local church at present.” Those in their 30s (from Gen X) are more likely to agree, as are those who identify their ethnic background as African American and those who have been baptized members for 11 to 20 years.

Less than one in ten members disagree with the importance of church planting, 4% “disagree completely” and 4% “disagree somewhat.” Nearly twice as many said they were not sure how to answer this question. Older members, born before 1946, are more likely to express this negative view, as are those who identify their ethnic background as Asian or Hispanic.

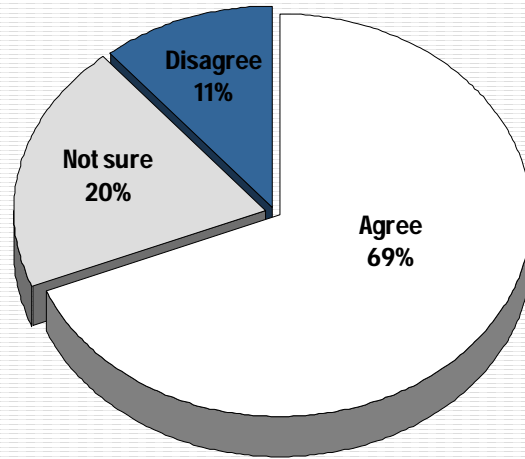
Reaching unreached communities is more important than church growth



Half of Seventh-day Adventist Church members agree that, "Reaching the unreached communities and people groups is more important than the continued growth of our existing local churches." About 28% agree "completely," and another 22% agree "somewhat." Members from low-income households with incomes of less than \$25,000 a year are more likely to agree, as are those with only a secondary diploma and no college degree. The same is true for members who identify their ethnic background as African American or Hispanic.

More than a quarter of church members disagree with the concept of prioritizing the unreached over church growth. Just 12% disagree "completely," while another 16% disagree "somewhat." Those who identify their ethnic background as Asian or white are more likely to disagree with giving priority to reaching the unreached, as are those from middle-income households. Nearly a quarter of the members are not sure how to respond to this question.

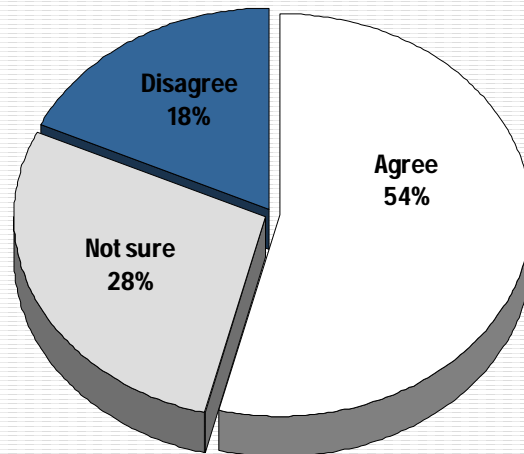
Willing for my local church to sponsor a church plant



More than two-thirds of Adventist Church members say, "I would be willing for my local church to sponsor the planting of a new congregation in a near-by community." Of these, 40% "agree completely" and 29% "agree somewhat." Members who have higher education are more likely to agree, as are those from households where the annual income is \$50,000 or more, and those born since 1945 from the Baby Boom generation, Gen X and the Millennial generation. The same is true for those raised by Adventist parents.

About one in ten disagree. They are not willing for their local church to sponsor a church plant in a near-by community. Older members, especially those over 70 years of age are more likely to express this opinion. Nearly twice as many members say they are not sure how to answer this question.

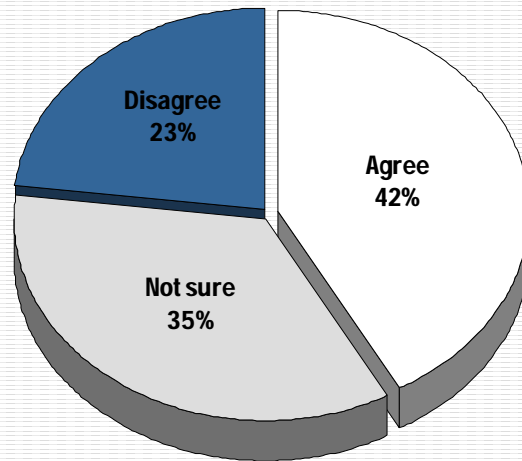
Willing for 2 or 3 key people to leave my church for a new plant



The majority of Adventist Church members agree that, "I would be willing to see two or three key persons in my local church leave and join a core group to plant a new congregation in a near-by community." About 29% "agree completely" and 24% "agree somewhat." There is a strong correlation on this item with education and tenure in the Adventist Church. The more education a member has, the more likely the member is to agree. The longer a person has been a baptized member of the Adventist Church, the more likely the person is to agree. Members from the Baby Boom generation, born from 1946 through 1964, are also more likely to agree, as are those who identify their ethnic background as white and those who are from households where the annual income is \$50,000 or more.

Nearly one in five member disagree with letting two or three key people from their congregation leave and join a near-by church plant. About 9% "disagree completely" and 9% "disagree somewhat." The eldest members (those over 70 years of age) and the youngest members (teens and young adults) are more likely to express this view, as are those with little education and those who have been baptized members for six to 10 years. More than a quarter of church members say they are not sure what they think about this item.

I am personally willing to join core group for a church plant

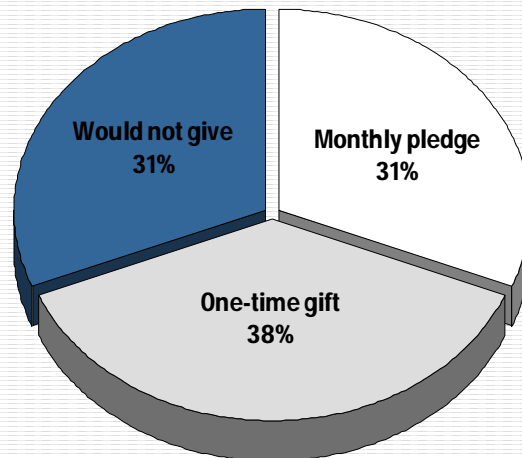


Two out of five Adventist Church members agree, "I am personally willing to become part of the core group to plant a new congregation in a near-by community." About 22% "agree completely," and 20% "agree somewhat." The longer a person has been a baptized member, the more likely they are to agree. Members who identify their ethnic background as Asian or African American are more likely to agree, as are those from the Baby Boom generation, born from 1946 through 1964 and currently in their 40s and 50s. Those with a graduate degree are also more likely to agree, as are those from a household where the annual income is \$50,000 to \$74,999.

Nearly one in four church members disagree, indicating that they are not willing to get personally involved in a church plant. About 13% disagree "completely" and 10% disagree "somewhat." Members who identify their ethnic background as Hispanic or white are more likely to not want to get involved, as are members over 70 years of age. More than a third of church members are not sure how to answer this question, probably because they have never thought about it.

It should be noted that this is a question where majority agreement is unlikely and unnecessary. Even if only the 22% of the membership who are most positive in their response on this item were available, that would mean that at least 100,000 active, adult Church members are ready to get involved in church planting teams. That is a tremendous missionary force waiting to be unleashed!

How much might you personally be willing to give for church planting?



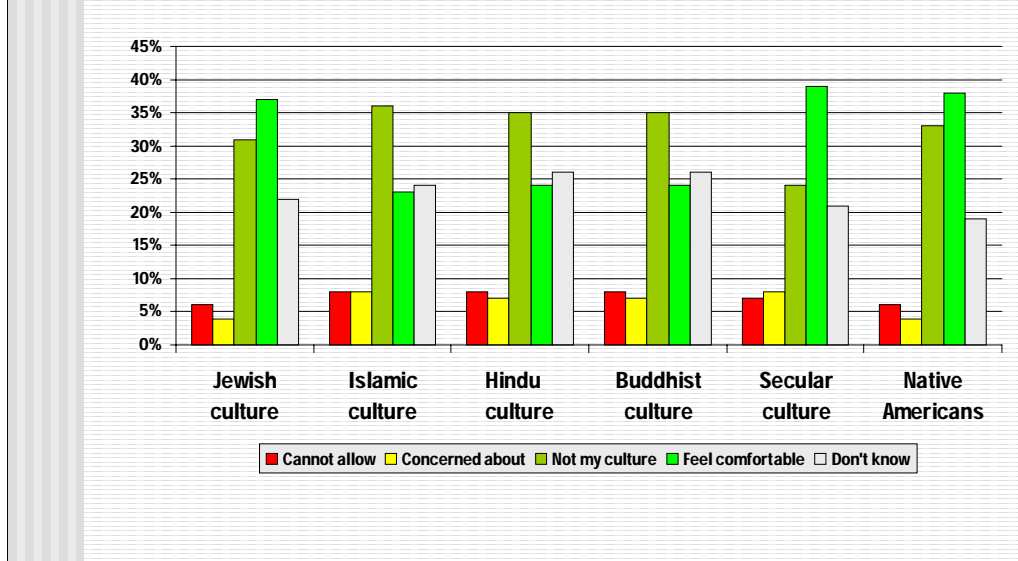
Giving is a potent indicator of support. Members were asked, “How much might you personally be willing to pledge toward a church planting project in a near-by community where there is no Adventist church?” Nearly a third of members say they would make a monthly pledge to a local church planting project: 23% say, “I could pledge less than \$50 a month.” And 7% say, “I could pledge \$50 to \$100 a month.” Another 1% are willing to pledge “more than \$100 a month.” The higher the household income, the more likely a member is to be willing to pledge. There is the same correlation on this item with education. Those who have been baptized members for six years or longer are more likely to pledge, as are those who identify their ethnic background as Asian or Hispanic.

Another 31% of Adventist Church members indicate they will not give to church planting. Just 9% say, “I am unwilling to support this kind of ministry.” Twice that number (22%) indicate they are “unable to make any pledge in the foreseeable future.” It appears that financial limitations are a much larger factor than disagreement with church planting because there is a strong correlation between those unable to pledge and low household income. The same correlation exists with lack of education. The oldest (over 70) and youngest (under 29) respondents are also more likely to say they cannot pledge. Those who have been baptized in the last year are most likely to say they are unwilling to support church planting financially.

The largest number of members (38%) say, “I would prefer to make a one-time donation or contribute to an occasional offering at church.” Those who identify their ethnic background as African American are more likely to give this response, as are those in the Baby Boom generation. The same is true for members from middle-income households.

The most important finding here is the fact that more than two-thirds of Adventists are willing to give to church planting projects. Less than one in ten object to the idea. This is another indicator of strong support for church planting among members.

Feelings toward congregations focused on ...



Church planting often involves contextualization. For a new congregation to thrive, it must fit the local culture to which it is designed to carry the gospel and within which it is to make disciples for Christ. This can be controversial among church members who expect that new congregations will look like what they are used to. In order to measure attitudes on this topic, a series of questions were asked in which respondents could react to various kinds of church planting projects by selecting one of five responses. (See Table 1.)

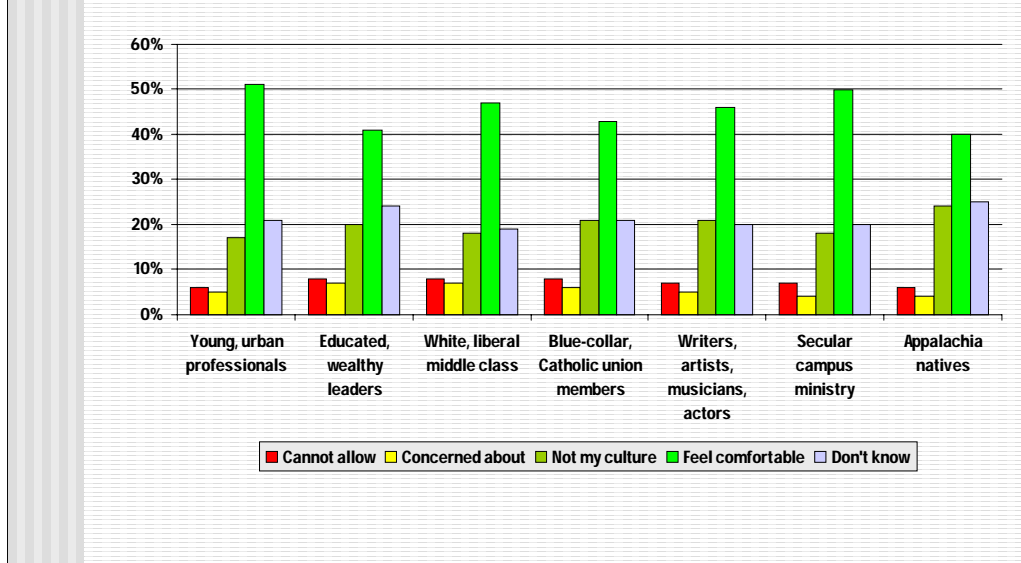
A quarter to a third of members indicate they “would feel comfortable in” these nontraditional Adventist congregations. Those who have been baptized members for more than 10 years are more likely to give this response, as are those who grew up with Adventist parents. The same is true for those who have a graduate degree.

An equal share of members say, “It would be a cross-cultural mission experience for me.” They are supportive, but recognize that it would not come naturally for them to be a part of such a congregation. Those with higher education are more likely to express this view, as are those from households with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more. The same is true for members from the Baby Boom generation and Gen X.

About 4% to 8% of members say, “I would have concerns about an Adventist church of this type.” Those who have been baptized in the last year are more likely to express concern, as are young adults and teenagers.

Just 6% to 8% of members “could not support the idea of an Adventist church of this type.” Those who have been baptized members for less than 10 years are more likely to give this response, as are those from low-income households.

Feelings toward congregations focused on ...



The series of questions about church planting and contextualization also tested a number of nontraditional projects related to segments of the American population with which Adventists have no history of evangelistic success. Again, new congregations designed to reach these unreached people groups can be controversial.

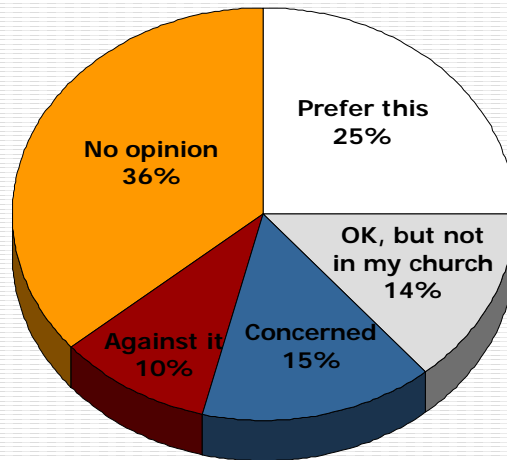
The largest share of members (41% to 51%) indicate they “would feel comfortable in this type of congregation.” The more education a member has the more likely it is that the member will give this response. There is a similar correlation with annual household income. Those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 10 years are more likely to agree, as are those raised in an Adventist family and those born from 1946 to 1976.

About one in five members (17% to 24%) are supportive of these nontraditional church plants, but see it as a “cross cultural experience” for them personally. Those who identify their ethnic background as African American or Asian are more likely to give this response, as are those from the Baby Boom generation.

Some 4% to 7% “have concerns about an Adventist church of this type.” Those who were baptized in the last year are more likely to express this opinion, as are those from low-income households.

Just 6% to 8% of members “could not support the idea of an Adventist church of this type.” Those who have been baptized members for less than 10 years are more likely to have this view, as are those from low-income households and those who identify their ethnic background as Asian.

What if offerings are received by some method other than passing the plate?

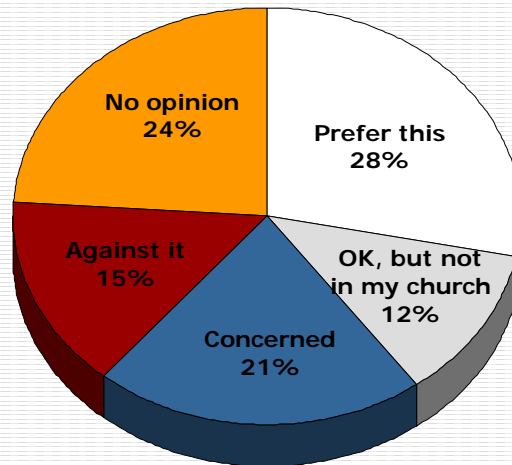


A series of questions were asked about new methods introduced in some church plants that have become controversial. The first asked, What if offerings are received through some method other than passing the plate? Nearly two in five members support this idea; 25% actually prefer the new method, while 14% agree that it is OK in other places, but they do not want the practice adopted in their local church. Younger generations (Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials) are more likely to prefer this practice, as are those with higher education and from households with incomes over \$50,000 a year. Hispanic and Asian members are more likely to not want it in their local church, as are those with graduate degrees and those from households with incomes of \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year.

One in six members “have concerns” about allowing this practice in any local church. Older members are more likely to express concern, as are those who identify their ethnic background as Asian and those with only a secondary diploma.

Just one in ten members are “against allowing this in any local church.” Hispanic and Asian church members are more likely to express this view, as are those from low-income households and those baptized in the last year.

What if people are encouraged to come to church in casual dress?

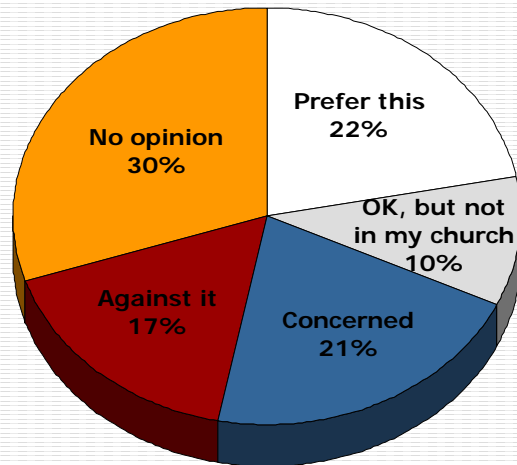


Two in five members support the new practice of casual dress at church; 28% actually prefer this approach and 12% are comfortable with it in new church plants, but not in their local church. Members born since 1945 are more likely to prefer casual dress, as are those who have been baptized members for less than 20 years and those with higher education and from households with incomes over \$50,000 a year.

One in five members have concerns about allowing casual dress in any Adventist congregation. Those born before 1946 are more likely to express such concerns, as are those with only a secondary diploma and those from middle-income households.

Just one in six members say they are definitely against allowing casual dress in any Adventist church. Asian and Hispanic members are more likely to have this opinion, as are those who have been baptized members for more than 20 years.

What if traditional Adventist terminology is not used?

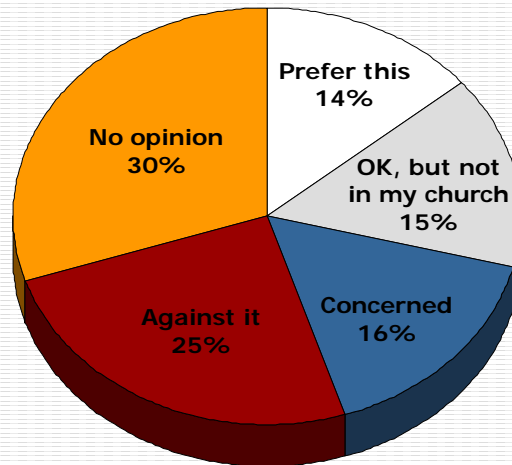


About a third of members approve of attempts to eliminate the use of traditional Adventist terminology in new church plants; 22% actually prefer this practice and 10% are comfortable with it so long as it is not followed in their local church. This item correlates with both education and household income. The more education a church member has, the more likely it is that they support this practice. The same is true of higher incomes among those who prefer this approach. Baby Boomers and GenXers prefer this practice as do members who identify their ethnic background as Asian or white.

One in five members have concerns about allowing this practice in any Adventist church. Hispanic members are more likely to express concern, as are those who have been baptized members for 11 to 20 years.

One in six members are against allowing local churches to ban traditional Adventist terminology. It is possible that one of the reasons they are negative about this proposal is that in the survey there was insufficient space to specify or even give an example of terms that might be excluded. Members born before 1946 are more likely to be against this new practice.

What if neither an organ nor a piano is used for music?



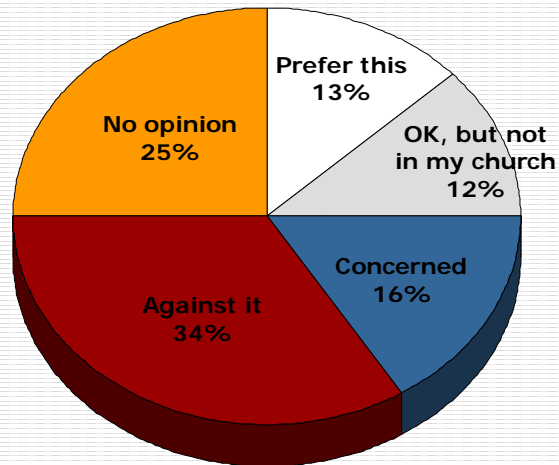
One of the most controversial elements in new congregations designed to reach new generations is the move away from traditional religious music to contemporary Christian music. Attitudes toward this trend were measured with a question about church plants were “neither an organ or a piano is used for music.” It should be noted that this item implies a complete change in church music instead of blending the new with the traditional.

About three in ten members approve of this change; 14% prefer it and another 15% are comfortable with other congregations doing so, but “not in my local church.” Young adults and teenagers from the Millennial generation are more likely to prefer this, as are those who have been baptized Adventists for six to 10 years. There is a correlation with education on both responses. The more educated a church member is, the more likely it is that the member will approve of this change.

One in six members (16%) have concerns about nontraditional music in Adventist churches. Those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 10 years are more likely to express concern.

A quarter of Adventists are against this change and would not allow this in any Adventist church plant. African American members are more likely to oppose this change, as well as those over 60 years of age and those from households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more.

What if worship is on Friday night instead of Sabbath morning?

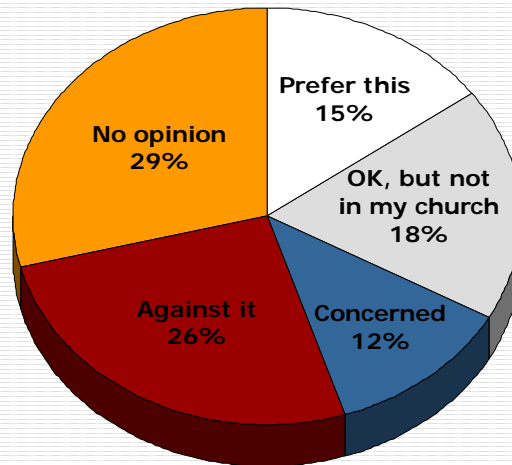


More than a third of church members (34%) are against allowing any church plant to have Sabbath worship services on Friday night after sundown. Asian members are more likely to have this opinion, as are those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 10 years and those raised in an Adventist family. The same is true for respondents from households where the income is over \$25,000 a year.

A quarter of members approve of this change; 13% would prefer it themselves and 12% are comfortable with new church plants doing so, but "not in my local church." Those with the lowest incomes and the highest incomes are more likely to support this change, as are those who were baptized in the last year. The same is true for respondents who identify their ethnic background as white or Hispanic.

It is surprising that there is such a negative attitude toward this possibility. Most Jewish synagogues gather on Friday night and if a church plant were designed to be effective in a Jewish community, it would be a good idea to do the same. Certainly there is no theological reason against it and no denominational policy. Are these data evidence of tradition developing in the Adventist movement after 150 years of history?

What if worship is on Sabbath afternoon instead of in the morning?



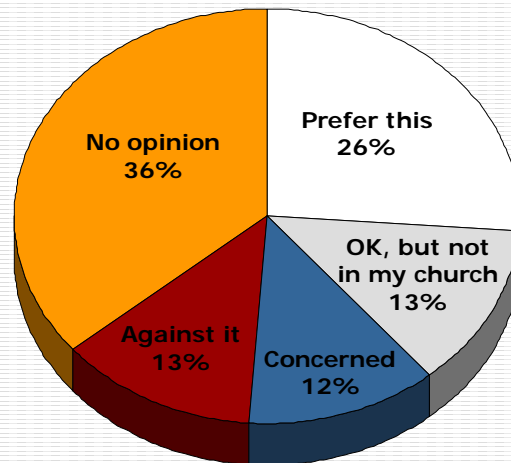
What if a new church plant has its worship on Sabbath afternoon instead of Sabbath morning? A third of members approve of this option; 15% prefer it and another 18% are comfortable with it as long as “it is not in my local church.” Members in the Baby Boom generation are more likely to approve of a church that worships in the afternoon, as are those from households with incomes over \$50,000 a year.

One in eight members (12%) say, “I have concerns about allowing this in any local church.” Those with less education than a secondary diploma are more likely to express concern.

One in four members (26%) say, “I am against allowing this in any local church.” Those who identify their ethnic background as Asian, Hispanic or African American are more likely to give this response, as are those who have been baptized members six to 20 years.

In some ways this finding is even more surprising than the opposition to planting a church that worships on Friday night after sundown. A small but significant number of Adventist churches currently worship on Sabbath afternoon for a variety of reasons and this has been true right from the beginning and throughout the history of the denomination. The idea that it is wrong for an Adventist church to worship at any time other than Sabbath morning has no basis in Adventist theology or heritage.

What if the order of service is very different from the typical?

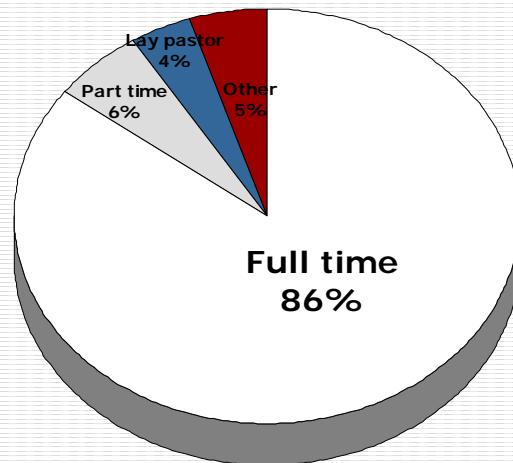


Nearly two in five members support considerable variation in the order of service during worship in new church plants; 26% prefer a “very different” liturgy and another 13% are comfortable with significant change “so long as it is not in my local church.” There is a strong correlation with education and household income on this item. The more education a member has the more likely it is that the member prefers considerable change in the order of service. The higher the household income where a member lives the more likely it is that the member has the same preference. Those who have been baptized Adventists for more than five years are also more likely to approve.

One in eight members (12%) “have concerns about allowing this difference in any local church.” Those over 70 years of age are more likely to express concern, as are those from low-income households and those who live in a different county than where their local church is located.

One in eight members (13%) are against allowing this change in any Adventist congregation. Members of Asian ethnic background are more likely to express this view, as are those over 70 years of age.

Type of Pastor

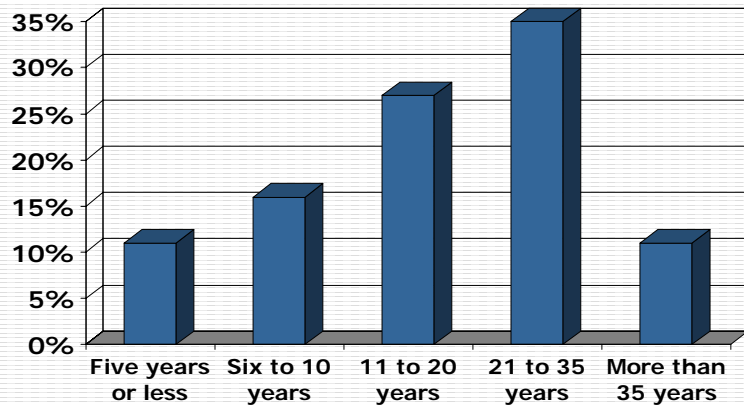


In our random sample of 200 pastors, 86% serve as full-time pastoral employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Just 6% are part-time or bivocational pastors, including “stipend” and “Taskforce” workers, as well as some who hold ministerial credentials by volunteer. Only 4% are “lay pastors” or volunteers who have no ministerial training or credentials. The 5% who fall into the “other” category include some retired pastors who are still pastoring a church and conference staff (administrators and department directors) who spend part of their time pastoring a church.

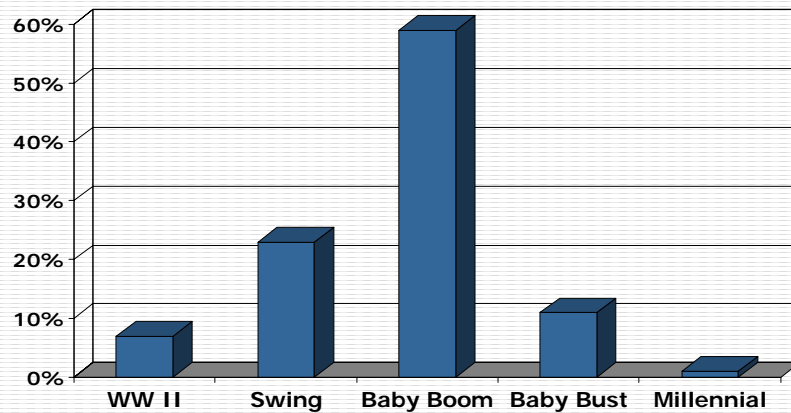
The median number of years served as a pastor is 20, meaning half have served 21 or more years and half have served 20 or fewer years. The profile of the total years of service of Adventist pastors is displayed in the top graph on the next page.

The majority of Adventist pastors today are from the Baby Boom generation, born from 1946 through 1964 and currently in their 40s and 50s. The history, attitudes, values and polarization of this generation are inevitable dynamics in pastoral ministry for the Adventist Church today. The generational profile of pastors is displayed in the lower graph on the next page.

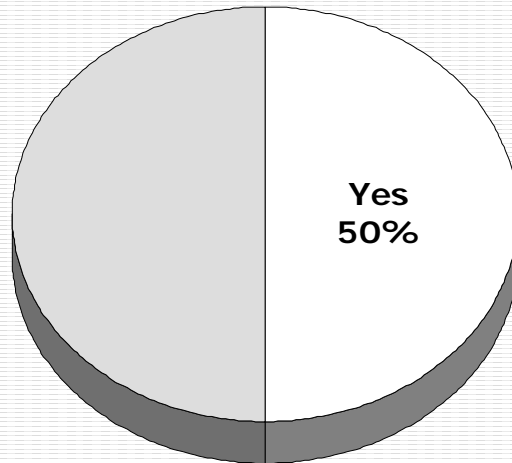
Years in Pastoral Ministry



Generation



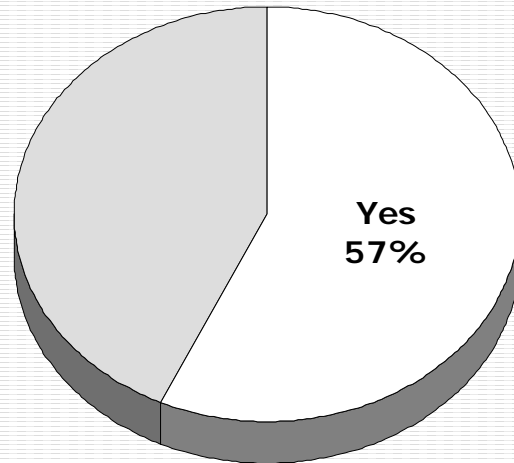
Have you ever served as a church planter?



Half of the Adventist pastors across North America have been involved in church planting at some time; half have not. The interviewers defined a “church planter” in this survey as “a pastor assigned to raise up a new congregation.” This is an unexpectedly high number, but it certainly reflects the great degree of interest in and support for church planting among Adventist pastors across North America.

Pastors 35 years of age and under are less likely to have planted a church. It is unclear if this is an indicator of a reduction in church planting projects in recent years, or the tendency to use more mature pastors in church planting.

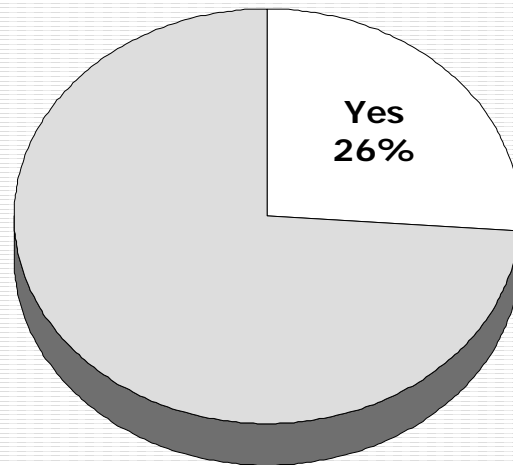
Have you ever been the pastor of a mother church?



The majority of pastors have, at some point in their career, been the pastor of a “mother church” for a new congregation. This may be a surprising number, and at the same time it is further evidence of the widespread interest in church planting among Adventist pastors in North America.

Retired pastors and conference staff who are also serving as pastors are less likely to report having once pastored a mother church for a church planting project. The same is true for lay pastors and part-time or bivocational pastors.

Have you ever decided not to plant or been discouraged?



About half as many pastors have backed off from a church planting project as the percentage who report having served as a church planter. A total of 26% report that, at some point in their career, they “thought of planting a new congregation and decided not to or [were] discouraged from doing so.” Lay pastors are more likely to report backing off from a church plant. Pastors 36 to 45 years of age are less likely to give the same report.

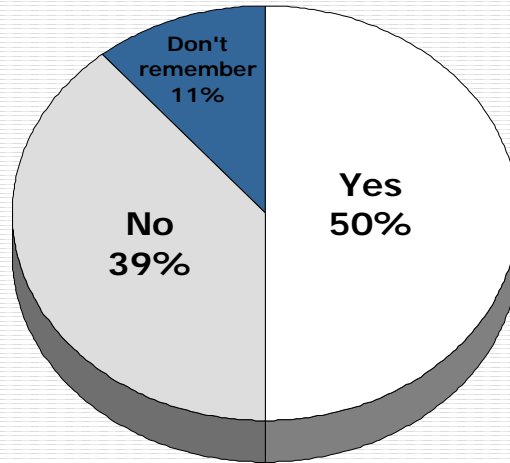
Those pastors who reported having backed off from a church planting project were asked, “What were the factors that made you decide not to go ahead with the church plant?” Their responses are summarized on the next page. The lack of support among church members and lack of adequate financial resources are the most common problems mentioned. A complete, verbatim transcript of the responses of the pastors is included in Appendix A.

Factors that led to decision not to go ahead ...

- 38% Church members against it
- 27% Lack of funding or a financial model that provides resources
- 23% Barriers such as timing, family situation, etc.
- 12% It was too much work.
- 8% Not allowed to by hierarchy

-
- 6% Lack of sufficient commitment by church members involved
 - 6% Poor community fit/relations
 - 2% A prior bad experience
 - 2% Process is too complicated

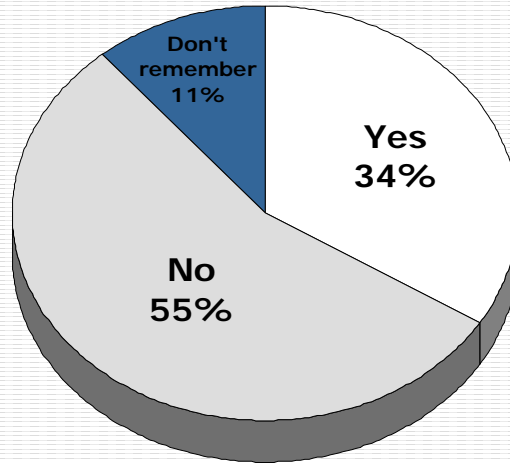
Have you ever read materials by Ron Gladden?



Ron Gladden is an Adventist minister who has promoted church planting over the past two decades. Because of events in the summer of 2004, a series of questions were asked about pastors' knowledge of and attitudes on these events.

Half of Adventist pastors have read materials by Gladden on the topic of church planting. Bivocational and lay pastors are less likely to have read his materials, as are pastors 35 years of age and younger. Pastors 36 to 55 years of age are somewhat more likely to have read his materials.

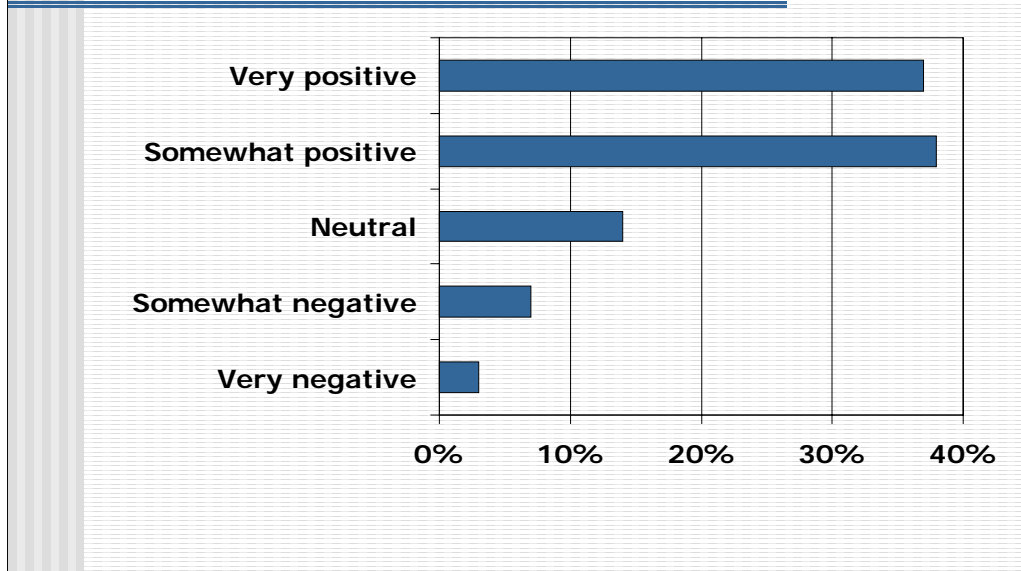
Have you ever heard Ron Gladden speak?



Ron Gladden has been invited to make presentations on church planting at many conference pastors' meetings, the annual Seeds Conference conducted by the North American Division Evangelism Institute at Andrews University and other events. He has also organized a Sprout Conference each year for the past several years. He has become one of the best known spokesmen for the concept of church planting among Adventists in the U.S.

A third of the pastors have heard Gladden speak on the topic of church planting, while the majority have not. Bivocational pastors are less likely to have heard him speak, as are pastors 35 year of age and younger.

Your general reaction to what you read or heard?



The pastors who indicated that they had either read something by Ron Gladden or heard him speak were asked for “your general reaction to what you read or heard.” Those who had not read or heard something by Gladden were not asked this question and are not among the 100% on this graph. This question was asked before current events were introduced in the interview and the pastors were read five possible responses to choose from.

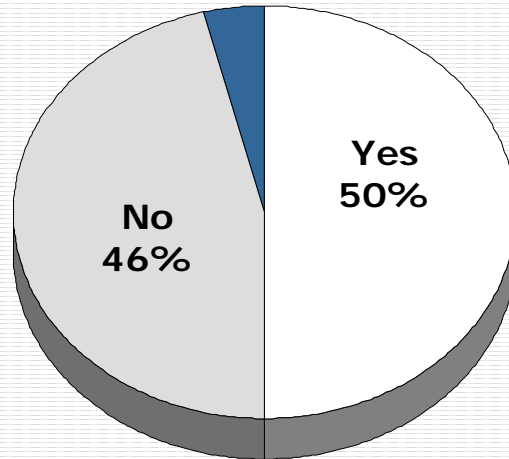
Three out of four pastors (74.5%) gave one of the positive responses. Pastors 35 years of age and younger are more likely to be positive, as are bivocational pastors and lay pastors.

Less than one in ten pastors (9.4%) gave one of the negative responses. All of these negative reactions are from regular, full-time pastors.

About 14% of the pastors expressed a “neutral” response. Those 36 to 45 are more likely to be neutral. Only 2% refused to give an answer to this question.

Clearly, Gladden has been widely influential among Adventist pastors. His efforts have done much to generate the overwhelming support for the concept of church planting among Adventists in North America.

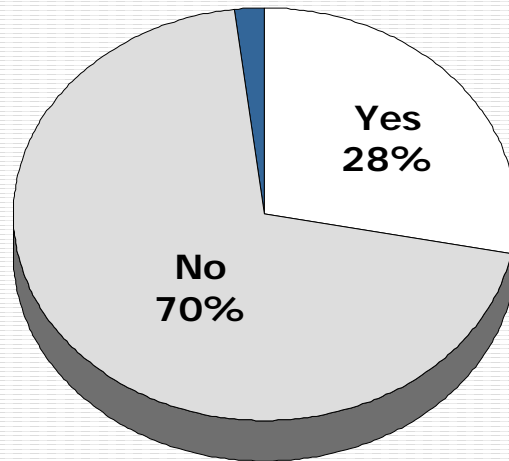
Have you heard/read about Mission Catalyst Network?



Half the pastors had heard of Ron Gladden's new organization, Mission Catalyst Network, by the time of these interviews in the fall of 2004. Bivocational and lay pastors are less likely to have heard, as are those 35 years of age and younger. Pastors over 55 are more likely to have heard.

This is clear evidence that informal communication networks, "the Adventist grapevine," work very well. No extensive formal communication, such as a mailing to all of the pastors in the North American Division or an article in *Ministry* or some other general denominational periodical, had occurred.

Have you looked at Mission Catalyst Network web site?

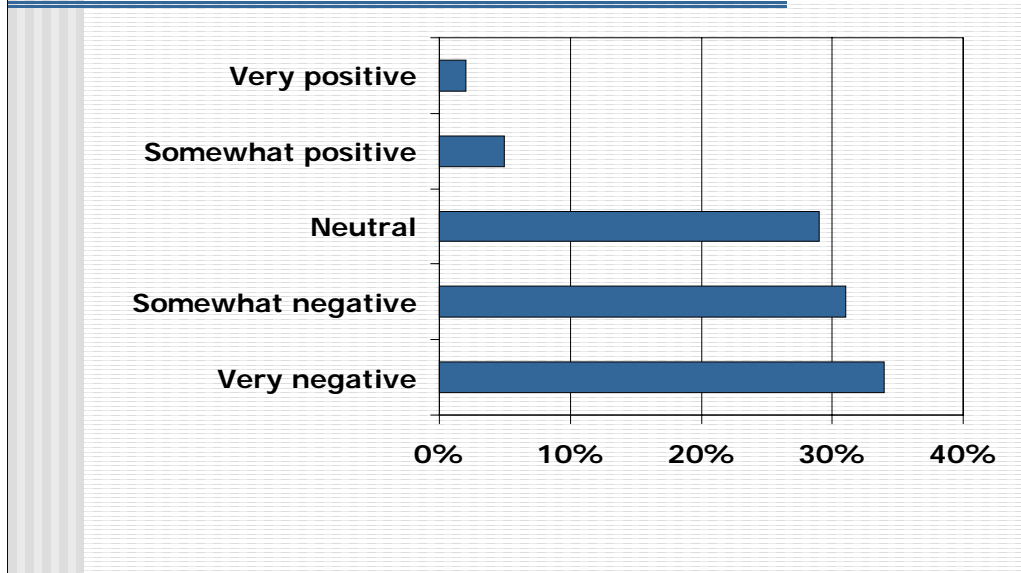


In order to get some idea of what specifics about these events pastors may have read, those who answered “Yes” to having heard about the new organization were asked a follow-up question: “Have you looked at the Mission Catalyst web site?”

A little more than a quarter of the pastors who say they have heard of the new organization have actually looked at the web site. Pastors over 55 years of age are more likely to have read the material on the web site. Bivocational pastors are less likely to have seen the web site, as are pastors 45 years of age and younger.

Despite the fact that half of Adventist pastors have heard about the new organization, a relatively small number can be identified as having read a known set of content regarding the organization. It is impossible to identify what, precisely the others have heard about these events.

Your general reaction to what you read or heard?



The half of the pastors who reported that they had heard about Ron Gladden's new organization were also asked, "What was your general reaction to what you have read or heard?" Interviewers read five responses from which the pastors interviewed could choose.

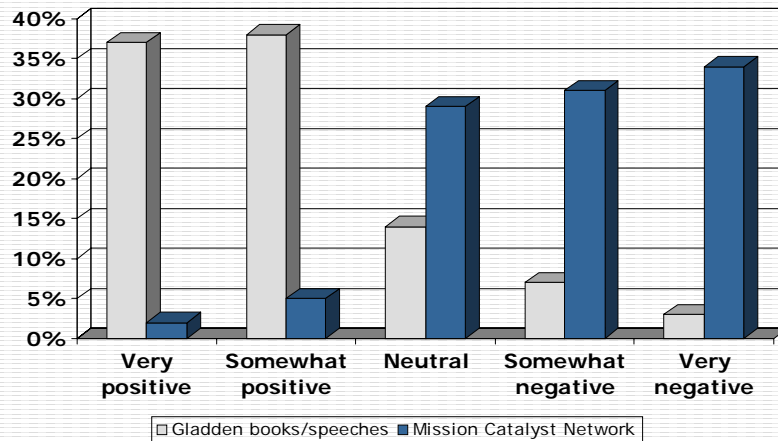
Two-thirds of these pastors (65%) selected one of the negative responses; 34% "very negative" and 31% "somewhat negative." Those under 45 years of age are more likely to be negative, as are bivocational pastors and those who are retired or conference staff who also pastor a church.

Nearly a third of the pastors (29%) said they are "neutral or not sure." Lay pastors are more likely to be neutral.

Just 7% of the pastors interviewed gave a positive response. Those age 46 to 55 are more likely to be positive.

Clearly there has been little positive response to the new organization. The initial reaction among Adventist pastors is largely negative.

Comparison of “before” and “after” attitudes ...



There is a striking contrast between the reaction of Adventist pastors to Ron Gladden’s books and presentations over the years and their reaction to the new organization. Evidently there is something about the most recent events with which pastors do not agree despite their overwhelming support for church planting. Some clues to their thinking can be discerned in the general, unsolicited comments that the pastors made to our interviewers. (See page 36.)

To close each interview, all of the pastors were asked, “What do you think the Seventh-day Adventist denomination should do to encourage more church planting?” A summary of the responses, based on cluster analysis, is displayed on the next page. A full, verbatim transcript of the responses is included in Appendix B grouped by cluster analysis.

The largest number of pastors want denominational leadership to do more to promote church planting, including some who see a need for “a clear message [of support] from top leadership.” Other responses from many pastors include the need for more funding, the idea of building a church-planting movement, and the importance of re-structuring the denomination in order to free up more funding for church planting.

What should the denomination do to encourage church planting?

- 34% Do more to sell the concept
- 16% Increase funding
- 11% Organize a movement
- 9% Re-structure to free-up money
- 5% Get more lay involvement
- 4% Focus on multiplying churches instead of expanding churches

-
- 3% Start with a spiritual emphasis
 - 3% Focus on unreached areas
 - 3% Use innovative methods
 - 3% Use conventional methods
 - 3% We are already doing enough
 - 12% Negative about church planting
 - 6% Other comments

Unsolicited comments

- 38% Mixed positive/negative views
- 17% Most positive views
- 14% Negative views
- 14% Sold on church planting
- 17% Miscellaneous

About one in six of the pastors interviewed volunteered additional comments to the interviewers. These responses were not solicited and therefore reveal feelings and ideas that are strongly held by these pastors. Researchers generally consider that unsolicited comments on the part of a few respondents indicate that larger numbers probably hold the same opinions but did not express them.

Positive views about church planting outnumber those who are negative about the whole concept. The largest number of comments express a mixture of positive views about church planting as an important strategy for the Adventist Church and negative views about certain current events. About half that number volunteered strong endorsements of the church planting concept and some of the needs addressed by recent events. A number equal to the negative views simply wanted to make sure that the interviewer knew that they are sold on church planting, despite any recent events that might be seen as negative.

There were also a significant number of comments that cannot be easily classified. The full, verbatim transcript of all of the unsolicited comments is included in Appendix C grouped according to cluster analysis.

Appendix A

Transcript of Pastors' Responses

Question: What were the factors that made you decide not to go ahead with the church plant?

The ellipses separate the comments of each individual. Some comments, especially short items near the beginning of each cluster, were repeated by many respondents, but are included here only once.

38% — Church members were against it

"Inability to sell the vision. ... The local church did not see the vision. ... I did not have local support from my church members. ... For a pastor to start planting a church is to commit political suicide because the church does not want him to do it. ... I am discouraged. Churches want the pastor to do everything. Pastors are always stuck in the middle. ... I feel that the pastoring model has to be changed, and it has to come from the top down. There is a difference between pastoring and church planting. I would rather plant a church that work with an established church. ... The leadership people involved in planting, described [the project] really bad and discouraged the entire group, so I gave up."

27% — Lack of funding or a financial model that provides resources

"Funding [for church planting projects] is given from the union to the conference and not to the local church. ... Members are frustrated with the way the division directs the funds. ... no money ... I did not have the resources to do it. ... The conference told us we could plant a church only if we would bring tithe in, but Native Americans are very poor. This upsets me about the Church! There is a huge need here in [large Indian reservation]. There are only four of us are on stipend for [an area] the size of West Virginia. ... I did not have enough resources. ... Not the right timing. ... The first church we planted, it was hard to get the concept off the ground in terms of funds. ... The conference thinks it's going to cost too much money. You have to prove that you bring in a good amount of tithe and then you are welcomed with open arms. ... Local conference discouraged it due to budget constraints."

23% — Barriers such as timing, family situation, etc.

"Family matters ... I was relocated. ... Our church is too small. ... strife among members ... I haven't had the opportunity because I have always ministered to small churches. ... I've never been in a position to do this. ... It's not my strength. ... I am trying to build up the present church, it is pretty torn down."

12% — It was too much work.

"Because I did not want to pastor two churches. ... Pastors are overworked, it is almost impossible. ... I am discouraged; I have four churches, to plant additional would be suicidal. ... I am overworked; I cover half of the state of -----."

8% — Not allowed to by administration

"Not allowed to start a church close to my local church. ... The senior pastor was against the idea. ... The area needed a church but the conference was not ready. ... There is no interest from the conference to help plant churches."

6% — Lack of sufficient commitment by church members involved

"I have been discouraged. Some members try to help and then they go to another church or leave the state. It's hard to do it by myself. ... no viable core group among church members."

6% — Poor community fit or community relations

"We have to break through a cultural mentality. Americans don't want to bother their neighbors. ... I had problems with the community where the church was to be started. ... The size of the town was too small."

2% — A prior bad experience

"I had a bad experience and I don't want to do it again."

2% — Process is too complicated

"I gave up on the idea of church planting, because of the complexity. The process should be more simplified."

Appendix B

Question: What do you think the Seventh-day Adventist denomination should do to encourage more church planting?

The ellipses separate the comments of each individual. Some comments, especially short items near the beginning of each cluster, were repeated by many respondents, but are included here only once.

34% — Do more to sell the concept with a clear message from leadership

"Train ... equip ... educate ... inform people about church planting in our publications ... Go to all conferences with Russell Burrill's training programs and not just have it at Andrews. ... Come up with a newsletter on church planting with stories, testimonials, pictures. ... A church planting department should be created that will train people to do it. ... Do more seminars and workshops on the East Coast. ... more speaking for revival ... My passion is actually for church planting but church members do not want this, neither do the conference administrators. ... You cannot rely on the established members because they are strangling the church. ... The conference on one hand applauds church planting and on the other discourages it. They are afraid that the lay members will be unfaithful to the church structure. ... Choose administrators who have a positive view of church planting."

16% — Increase funding

"More funds need to be given to church-planting ... Spread the money more. ... Make seed money available. ... A stipend should be provided to try new things in new places. ... Funding priorities must have more grass roots emphasis."

11% — Organize a church planting movement

"There should be church planting pastors. Give them resources to do this. ... I felt this call. ... We need to become again a church planting movement. ... We have to free pastors to go out and do the job. Make it so that they have the support and freedom to do it. ... support and encouragement from administration to help prevent jealousy feelings from established churches. ... Have a more long range plan for 10 to 15 years, and better assessment."

9% — Re-structure the denomination to free-up money

"Streamline the church organization to make sure funds are available for creative ministry. Go from nine to four unions. Have churches grow large enough for two pastors and when the second pastor comes, his

job [should be] to start a new church. That would save money. ... Pastors should leave churches under the care of elders and go out to plant new congregations and then move to another area. They have to be backed by the church. ... The pastors should move in that area. The only people in the congregation that cannot plant churches are the ministers. ... Too much money is spent on structure/organization and too little on ministry/mission/expanding. We need to rethink the way we distribute our funds. ... Some of the money has to come back to local churches. ... Local churches should be asked if they want to have a subsidy from the conference for church planting instead of a church school. ... Sometimes we have to close down two small churches and make up a large, strong one. ... Terminate all the pastors who are not efficient, who don't baptize people anymore."

5% — Get more lay involvement

"More lay involvement ... The local core group needs motivation."

4% — Focus on multiplying churches instead of expanding churches

"Start teaching in seminary the importance of smaller churches and more churches. ... Discourage churches over 300 members; Let them split after 100 members and start another one."

3% — Start with a spiritual emphasis

"We need to begin with heart-level reform, prayer and church planting will become natural."

3% — Focus on unreached areas

"Reach untargeted groups ... church planting where there are no churches at all ... We need churches near and in the big cities. ... Demographic studies are necessary so there isn't duplication of the same kind of church in the same area."

3% — Use innovative methods

"Encourage dual services, encourage what is already there. ... Start preaching more Christ-centered sermons. ... Churches should be more involved in the community. ... Refocus from the concept of commuter church to community church. Members go to different churches but they have to invest money and time in their neighborhoods. ... Public evangelism does not work, small groups lead to success. ... use of small groups."

3% — Use conventional methods

"The tent-crusades, various seminars (Amazing Facts) to reach the cross-section of people we want to reach ... Have more evangelistic efforts, campaigns. ... Having different worship styles or different names of churches to hide our beliefs isn't a good thing. I think there is power in our name. We are here to preach the truth. ... Stop sending pastors to non-Adventist churches where they get other ideas."

2% — Fix tactical issues

"Pastors should not be moved during a church plant. ... Staff the new church for long-term growth; I've inherited churches that were [recently] planted, that were not doing well. A full time pastor is needed for the new church longer than a couple of years. New churches should not be put in a multiple church after two years. They need a longer time with a full time pastor. ... Leave the [Tithe] money to the local church at least for two years. ... There is too much emphasis on numbers. People are not prepared for follow up."

1% — Invest in facilities for new churches

"We need adequate facilities."

1% — Focus on immigrant churches

"From Indonesia we have a different approach about this. We try to have an evangelistic meeting. ... Provide information on church planting in Spanish."

3% — We are already doing enough

"I think we are doing enough in this area. ... We are doing OK here. [My conference] is heavily involved in church planting."

12% — Negative about church planting

"We need to support our mother church, we are going to have to face problems with separatism. ... We need to strengthen our existing churches, local churches need a boost. ... Church planting has been overstated. ... It is hard to think about planting new churches when the present ones are shrinking. ... I am aggravated that you are not considered a 'cool' pastor by the conference if you don't start a new church with a catchy name."

2% — Miscellaneous comments

"Read *Evangelism* by E.G. White. ... The church has made a mistake by allowing one person to become the specialist and have so much power. We need to keep a committee approach, and not have a model that fits all. Plant the churches according to people's style in that area, with the Adventist message. ... We should involve the youth in evangelism, grade school to college students. You cannot rely on the established members because they are strangling the church. ... Church planters should be brought together once a year to share stories, etc., like Ron Gladden did."

Appendix C

Unsolicited comments.

The ellipses separate the comments of each individual. Some comments, especially short items near the beginning of each cluster, were repeated by many respondents, but are included here only once.

38% — Mixed positive and negative views.

"I see the problems Ron Gladden is trying to avoid, but I come from a different perspective. We need to keep on the mission despite the problems in the Adventist Church. ... Some of his (Gladden's) ideas are good but I don't like separation from the denomination. ... I think Ron Gladden is a good person but I don't think his idea to break out is right. ... He cannot be reasoned with. I share a lot of his opinions but it does not work if you leave the organization. ... I wish Ron Gladden was in a cooperative relationship. ... He is not a team man. He has good ideas but is impatient. ... I was sad when I heard. I wish he wouldn't do it. ... I like Ron Gladden, but his methods are not realistic. They omit essential steps for the Adventist Church. ... Ron Gladden came to our seminary and had important information, but lacked practical advice."

17% — The most positive views

"I like Ron Gladden. I believe church planting is the way our Church will grow. ... I like Ron Gladden, but with a degree of sadness. I would like to see the mainstream Church as visionary and supportive as this new organization is. ... I am a close friend of his. I think we are going to see more of this if the organization does not change. ... I was sad; part of me understands where he is coming from. ... I wish the Church were more progressive."

14% — Negative views

"I totally disagree with what Gladden did. He should have trusted God more. ... I think he is egocentric, very self-centered. ... He is unrealistic and dishonest. ... He has heralded variety, but only his style. He does not practice what he preaches."

14% — Sold on church planting

"We decided to plant a church and we did it! ... I am currently involved in a church plant. ... Spanish-speaking people and pastors decide to do it and just go do it. For English speaking people it is harder. We should imitate them!"

17% — Miscellaneous comments

"I don't think the conference should have sent that letter about Ron Gladden. ... [Mission Catalyst Network has a] very well put together website. I do not understand why they are posing as Seventh-day Adventist, yet separated. Our board was not comfortable with looking at the website. ... I don't think these questions are very strong ones for a church planting survey. ... We Adventists should be the leaders, not the tail in things like the fight against 'same-sex marriages.' ... Making the church more 'user-friendly' is very dangerous."

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