



Consultant's Report

Survey of Church Members with School-age Children in the New Jersey Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Executive Summary

A study has been conducted for the New Jersey Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to gather information and assess attitudes about Christian education. The Center for Creative Ministry conducted a total of 276 random telephone interviews during September 10 through 24, 2001. This report is based on the results of those interviews.

The New Jersey Conference collected a total of 629 names of Church families with school-age children from its pastors. Using standard random selection procedures, a total of 406 were contacted by telephone and five were disqualified because they said that they had no connection with the Adventist Church. This leaves a total of 401 households who form the sample for this study.

A total of 51 individuals refused to be interviewed. Six were scheduled for interview at a later time but could not be contacted a second time and one was too ill to be interviewed during the time of the survey. A total of 67 households were contacted by an English-speaking interviewer and could not be re-contacted by a Spanish-speaking interviewer or could function only in a language other than English or Spanish.

The response rate is nearly seven in ten (69%), an excellent level of response providing a very reliable study. At the 95th percentile of reliability, the standard allowance for sampling error in a study of this size is six or seven percentage points, plus or minus. Additional information about probability and sampling is included in the Technical Appendix.

Tenure as an Adventist

Only 3% of the respondents were baptized or joined the Adventist Church by Profession of Faith during the last year. (See Figure 1.) Another one in eight (12%) have been baptized Adventists for one to five years. Almost all of these recent converts are younger adults, 25 to 54 years of age. Almost half are of Hispanic ethnic background, while a third are non-Hispanic whites. Two thirds are women. The majority are immigrants (not born as citizens of the United States), from households where the annual income is less than \$50,000 a year and have not completed a college degree.

One in seven respondents (14%) have been baptized Adventists from six to ten years, and another one in five (21%) for eleven to 20 years. The largest number of these are adults from the Baby Boom generation (born from 1946 to 1964). The majority are Hispanics, while one in five are non-Hispanic whites. Most are from

lower middle and middle income households (\$25,000 to \$74,999 annual household income), and seven in ten are immigrants. About a third have completed a college degree.

Almost half of the respondents (48%) have been baptized members of the Adventist Church for more than twenty years. Most of these are also from the Baby Boom generation, although a few were born before 1946. A significant number are of Asian/Pacific Islander, African American and Caribbean ethnic background, while 40% are Hispanics and 21% non-Hispanic whites. The majority are from lower middle and middle income households (\$25,000 to \$74,999 annual household income), while one in five are from households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more. Nearly two-thirds are college graduates and seven in ten are immigrants.

Church Attendance

Four out of five of the people interviewed are active church members, attending worship in an Adventist congregation three or four out of the last four Sabbaths. (See Figure 2.) Hispanic and Caribbean respondents are even more likely than Asian/Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic white respondents to be regular church attenders. The same is true for respondents from lower middle income households (\$25,000 to \$49,999 per year) and those with less education than a secondary diploma.

One in five attend church less often; only once or twice in the last four Sabbaths or not at all. In a few cases the interview was conducted with a spouse who is not a baptized member of the Adventist Church. Non-Hispanic whites and African Americans are more likely to be among these less-active members, as are those from households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more.

Generations and Gender

In each interview, the respondent was asked their year of birth. This provides the data necessary to identify which generation they belong to, using the standard demographic reference. (*American Generations* by Susan Mitchell, 1998, New Strategist Publications, Ithaca NY)

Seven in ten of the parents interviewed (73%) are in the Baby Boom generation, born from 1946 through 1964 and now 36 to 55 years of age. (See Figure 3.) This is the dominate adult generation in America today, although the Adventist Church has never really come to terms with the cultural changes brought by this generation. Boomers have heralded a more individualistic, entrepreneurial spirit

in America, approaching life and institutions as “free agents.” They have introduced a more entertaining, visceral approach to communication and learning during the era of the media revolution. They have forced marketing activities to become more sophisticated and complex in order for businesses and nonprofit organizations to survive in a more competitive environment. Christian education cannot escape these realities.

About a quarter of the parents interviewed (22%) are from the Baby Bust generation (disrespectfully, but widely called “Gen X”), born from 1965 through 1976, now 25 through 35 years of age. Three individuals are just a little younger and have been lumped together with this generation in part because of the fact that demographic experts disagree on where to draw the line for the end of Gen X and the beginning of the succeeding Millennial generation (or Gen Y).

The character of the Baby Bust generation is only now emerging. It is demographically a much smaller slice of the population than the Baby Boom generation due to the decline in the birth rate at the end of the boom which defines this generation. At least some segments of the Baby Bust generation appear to be more cooperative with traditional institutions and methods than Baby Boomers are, so this generation may herald a revival of some Church activities that have suffered during the rise of the Boomer generation. On the other hand, there is clear evidence that Gen Xers are even more independent and individualistic in their approach to life. This does not simply things for Christian education.

A few of the parents interviewed (4%) are over 55 years of age. In some cases the “parent” is actually a grandparent who is raising a grand child. These older respondents do often have a somewhat contrasting view in this study.

More than two thirds of the parents interviewed are women, while a third are men. (See Figure 4.) Much of the information collected actually refers to the entire household or both spouses. There are almost no instances in which men and women have significantly different views in this study.

Immigration

Two thirds of the parents in the New Jersey Conference membership (68%) were born as a citizen of some nation other than the United States of America. (See Figure 5.) Although New Jersey has one of the highest percentages of immigrants throughout the country, this is a much higher percentage than the overall 18% of the general population in the state. (See Figure 6.) It should also be noted that

respondents born in Puerto Rico would not show up as immigrants in this item because they were born as American citizens.

Younger parents (those under 35 years of age) are less likely to be immigrants, as are those from middle and upper middle income families (\$50,000 to \$99,999 per year). The same is true for new members baptized in the last five years. Native born parents are also more likely to have a child enrolled in an Adventist school and to plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy, although they are somewhat less likely to have a high level of involvement in the Church.

About one in five families have one spouse who is an immigrant and one that is native-born. A total of 13% of the respondents who are immigrants report that they are married to a native-born American, while 6% of the native-born respondents indicate they are married to an immigrant.

Ethnic Background

Three out of four of the parents interviewed belong to what is identified as an ethnic minority group in the United States. (See Figure 7.) The ethnic profile of the respondents is not much different from that of the general population in New Jersey (in the 2000 census), except for the disproportionate Hispanic and “Anglo” shares. There are three times as many Hispanics among New Jersey Conference families as in the general population, and one third as many non-Hispanic whites. (See Figure 8.)

A total of 45% of the respondents identify themselves as Hispanics. These individuals tend to be younger than the total sample, with less education and from lower-income households. They are also more likely to have been baptized as Adventists about six to ten years ago and to be active in the Church, but less likely to have a child enrolled in a church school or to plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy. About one in five of those who identified themselves as Hispanics are native-born (19%).

One in four of those interviewed (24%) identify themselves as non-Hispanic whites. These individuals are more likely to be found among the older parents (over 55) and the youngest parents (25 and under). They are also more likely to be from upper middle income families and less likely to be active in the Church, although they are more likely to have a child enrolled in an Adventist school and to plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy. Three out of four in this ethnic segment report that they are native-born. There also appears to have been an upsurge in baptisms among this ethnic group in the last five years.

One in eight of the parents interviewed identify themselves as blacks, with 2% as African Americans and 11% of Caribbean or West Indian background. Caribbeans are more likely to be found among both the oldest and youngest respondents and to belong to families with high incomes. Only 10% of Caribbeans report that they are native-born, while 67% of African Americans report the same.

One in eight of the respondents (12%) identify themselves as of Asian, Oriental or Pacific Islander ethnic background. These individuals are more likely to be found among the poorest and wealthiest families, and to have a college degree. They are also more likely to have been baptized recently and to be less involved in the Church. Only 3% of this ethnic group is native-born.

A total of 6% of the people interviewed in this study told the interviewer that they belong to an ethnic background other than the five mentioned above. Seven in ten of these individuals are immigrants, and they are more likely to belong to families with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more.

Annual Household Income

The socioeconomic profile of the parents interviewed in this study clusters more strongly in the lower middle income category than does the general population of New Jersey. (See Figure 9.) The majority of Adventist households have an income of less than \$50,000 per year.

The share of Adventist families with incomes of \$50,000 to \$74,999 is about the same or slightly more than the general population. (See Figure 10.) But among those households with incomes of \$75,000 or more the share of Adventist families is less than half the rate for New Jersey population. This paints a picture of an Adventist community just beginning to emerge from a dominantly working class position into a dominate middle class.

Level of Education

More of the people interviewed have completed a college degree than those who have completed only a secondary diploma. (See Figure 11.) This is very unusual demographic reality as compared to the general population in the 2000 census. Adventist parents in the New Jersey Conference are twice as likely as the average resident of the state to have a college education. (See Figure 12.)

Nearly half of the parents in this study (49%) have completed a college degree. Of these, 41% have completed only a four-year degree and 8% have gone on to

complete a graduate degree also. This is a highly educated group who should place high value on the education of their children. Immigrants are just as likely to be educated as are the native-born.

A total of 43% of the respondents have completed only a high school or secondary diploma. These individuals are more likely to be among the older respondents and among Hispanics. They are also more likely to have been baptized as Adventists in the last ten years.

Respondents with a college degree are more likely to identify themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander, Caribbean or African American. They are also more likely to have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years and to have attended an Adventist school.

Respondents with a graduate degree are more likely to identify themselves as African American. They are also more likely to have a child currently enrolled in an Adventist school.

As would be expected, given the general reality in America, there is a strong correlation between education and income. Those respondents with a college degree are more likely to belong to families with an annual income of \$50,000 or more and those with a graduate degree are more likely to belong to families with an annual income of \$75,000 or more. Those with only a secondary diploma or less are more likely to be found in families with an annual income of less than \$25,000.

Attendance at Adventist Schools

The majority of the parents interviewed (59%) have never attended an Adventist school themselves. (See Figure 13.) Those baptized in recent years and those with low involvement in the Church are more likely to be in this category.

Two in five respondents (41%) have attended an Adventist school at some point during their education. Those who have a child currently enrolled in an Adventist school are more likely to have done so, as are those who plan to send their children to Garden State Academy. Parents from the Baby Boom generation and the Millennial generation are more likely to have attended Adventist schools. (See Figure 14.) The same is true for parents with an African American or Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic background, while non-Hispanic whites and immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean are less likely to have attended Adventist schools. (See Figure 15.)

There is a strong correlation with annual household income on this item. Respondents from families with higher incomes are more likely to have attended an Adventist school, while those from families with lower incomes are less likely to have done so. (See Figure 16.) There is the same kind of correlation with the level of education completed by respondents. (See Figure 17.)

Children in the Home and School Enrollment

Each of the 276 families interviewed were asked to list their children by year of birth, gender and grade in school. They were also asked about each child attending school; if that child was attending an Adventist school. The respondents supplied information about a total of 441 children and this provides a data base from which statistical models can be constructed to estimate the current and possible school enrollment for the New Jersey Conference. (See Table 1 on the next page.)

If it is assumed that the total of 629 families identified by the pastors is approximately the entire number of families in the conference with school-age children, then there are about one thousand children in church-related families. A total of 626 of these are in the elementary grades (one through eight) and 303 are in the secondary grades (nine through twelve). The others are of preschool age or may, in one or two cases, have already completed secondary school.

One in four of the families with school-age children in the New Jersey Conference have at least one child enrolled in an Adventist school. (See Figure 18.) Overall 29% of the children in church-related homes are currently attending an Adventist school. Based on the first estimate above, this is a total of 284 children, 18 in Kindergarten, 200 in grades one through eight, and 66 in the secondary grades.

It is entirely possible that the list of 629 families supplied by New Jersey Conference pastors does not include all of the church-related families with children in the home. If it is assumed that this list represents only half the families with children, then the total would be 1,258 families out of about 4,000 households in the conference membership. The remaining 2,700 households would represent those made up of couples who have not yet had children, couples who's children have grown and left home, and single adults. Based on demographic studies of other conferences, that is reasonable percentage.

The second estimate provides a total of about 2,000 children, 1,252 in the elementary grades and 606 in the secondary grades. Of these, it is estimated that 571 are enrolled in Adventist schools, 36 in Kindergarten, 402 in the elementary grades and 133 in the secondary grades. (See Figure 20.)

Table 1 – Children and School Enrollment Projections

Year of birth	Number of children in homes interviewed		Grade in school	Percent attending Adventist schools	Estimate based on 629 families	Estimate based on 1,258 families
2001	0*					
2000	2*					
1999	2*					
1998	7*					
1997	5*					
1996	13	25	K & Pre	32.0%	57	114
1995	33	37	1	29.7%	84	168
1994	28	31	2	32.3%	71	142
1993	33	33	3	42.4%	75	150
1992	36	37	4	43.2%	84	168
1991	24	26	5	42.3%	59	118
1990	37	37	6	18.9%	84	168
1989	31	34	7	32.4%	78	156
1988	42	40	8	20.0%	91	182
1987	40	33	9	42.4%	75	150
1986	33	32	10	9.4%	73	146
1985	24	37	11	18.9%	84	168
1984	32	31	12	16.1%	71	142
1983	13*					
1982	6*					
	441	433			1,000**	2,000**

*It appears that the pastors who collected the list of families from which this study was drawn may have very carefully selected only families with school-age children. Otherwise, it must be concluded that the birth rate among Adventists in New Jersey is dropping very significantly.

**Approximate total

Reasons for Not Attending Adventist Schools

The three out of four respondents who report that none of their children are currently attending an Adventist school were asked why. The most common response was related to the cost of Adventist education and lack of finances. (See Figure 21.) Nearly six in ten church families (58%) say this is the reason why their children are not attending church school. There is a strong correlation between this response and annual household income. The higher the income of the family, the less likely it is that this response is given. There is an equally strong correlation with the level of education reported; the more education a church member has, the less likely they are to give this response. (Of course, in American society, levels of income and education are highly related.)

Immigration has an even stronger correlation with cost and lack of finances as a reason for not enrolling one's child in an Adventist school. Church members born outside the U.S. are twice as likely to give this response as are native-born respondents.

Respondents over 55 years of age are also more likely to say they have not enrolled their children in an Adventist school because of the cost and lack of finances. The same is true for Hispanic and African American respondents, and those who have been baptized Adventists for less than 20 years.

Nearly half of the parents who do not have a child enrolled in an Adventist school (45%) say that the reason is ***the distance from their home to the nearest church school***. The oldest parents and those in their early 20s are more likely to mention this reason, as are those who joined the Adventist Church in the last five years. The same is true for those who have completed a graduate degree.

Concerns about poor academic quality were mentioned by only one in ten respondents. Parents from middle income households (\$50,000 to \$74,999 per year) are more likely to mention this item.

Only a handful of respondents said they could not enroll their children in an Adventist school because ***their spouse would not allow it*** (3%), or that the available ***Adventist schools do not offer the course of education that their child needs*** (2%), or that ***the Adventist school does not have a strong enough spiritual tone and program of religious activities*** (1%). No significant demographic profile can be correlated to these few respondents.

Nearly one in five respondents (18%) mentioned personal reasons that are difficult to include in a cluster with other responses. These situations include

children who do not want to attend the Adventist school (4), the lack of a program for special needs children in church schools (3), parents who are home schooling their children (2), and parents who feel that the public schools in their community “are very good” (2). In many cases the reasons given were mentioned by only one respondent and are quite personal; siblings who “have too many classes together” in the multi-grade church school classroom, the lack of music classes in the church school, a recently baptized member who had no knowledge of Adventist schools prior to the interview, a parent who said “I can teach them religion at home,” a family who had a negative experience with Adventist schools and therefore is not interested, and a very upset parent who wanted to place their child in church school but “the entrance standard was not met” related to readiness for school.

Other responses mentioned by only one parent include “the Anglo emphasis” at the church school, “bigotry in Adventist schools,” a teenage son who is not a church member, “politics in the church,” a parent who does not like school uniforms, a parent who does “not want my children sheltered from the real world,” and curriculum differences between Adventist schools (evidently a problem encountered when moving from one community to another). One parent says they prefer to have their child attend “a good Catholic school” close to their home and another reports they have been awarded a full scholarship in a private school close to home. One father told the interviewer about marital difficulties that prevent him from placing his children in church school; his wife has filed for divorce, has custody of children and has left the church.

Motivations for Attending Adventist Schools

The one in four families who indicate that they have a child enrolled in an Adventist school were asked about their reasons for doing so. Religious motivations are clearly the most prominent. (See Figure 22.)

Nearly one in ten parents (87%) say, “I want my child to grow up as a Christian” or “as an Adventist.” Respondents from families with annual household incomes of \$75,000 are more likely to give this reason, as are those with a graduate degree, and native-born church members. The same is true for those with non-Hispanic white and African American ethnic backgrounds, those who attended an Adventist school when they were young and respondents who plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy.

Two thirds of the respondents (65%) specifically mention the spiritual emphasis of Adventist schools as why they choose to enroll their child(ren). Those from upper middle income households (\$75,000 to \$99,999 per year) are more likely to

give this response. So are those with a non-Hispanic white ethnicity and those who plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy.

Another 10% say they want their child to take Bible classes and that is why they have enrolled the child(ren) in an Adventist school. Those who are less active church members are more likely to give this response.

One in eight parents (12%) report that the excellent academic quality of the Adventist school is a major motivation for enrolling their child(ren). Non-Hispanic whites and native-born church members are more likely to give this response.

Only 7% of the respondents mention the fact that they attended an Adventist school as a child or that their parents did so as motivation to do the same for their own children. Half that many (3%) say that a teacher or school representative came to visit their family and that helped them to decide to enroll their child(ren). A number of other reasons that were included on the check-list interviewers used were mentioned by only one respondent; convenient location, encouragement from their pastor, reasonable cost, and availability of financial aid.

Nearly one in five (17%) of those interviewed give motivations that are highly personal and individual. These responses have not been clustered for demographic analysis. Four parents say they have enrolled their child(ren) in an Adventist school because there is “more security” or “less violence.” One of these parents reports they are “terrified of the public high schools.”

Two men say that their wives work at the church school so it is easy to send their children to the same school. Another father says he does not know why his children are in church school; his wife (who we did not interview) made the decision. Other parents mention the “good behavior” in Adventist schools, the “loving, home-like environment,” the small classroom size and the fact that vegetarianism is taught.

Boarding School Enrollment

Only one in eight of the families who have a child of the age for secondary school (13%) report that their child is enrolled in an Adventist boarding academy. (See Figure 24.) Respondents from a non-Hispanic white ethnic background are more likely to have their child in boarding academy, as are those who are native-born and those who have a graduate degree.

The 87% of the families with secondary-age children who are not enrolled in an Adventist boarding academy are more likely to include African American and Hispanic respondents. The same is true for those who have been baptized Adventists for ten years or less.

Interest in Boarding School Experience

The 87% of respondents who indicate that they do not have their teenager enrolled at an Adventist boarding academy were asked, “Is a boarding academy experience of any interest to you?”

Half say they are interested, while half are not. (See Figure 25.) There is a strong correlation with annual household income on this item. Parents from families with incomes of less than \$25,000 a year are more likely to be interested, while those from families with incomes of \$75,000 or more a year are less likely to be interested.

Grandparents raising teenagers and the youngest parents (those under 35) are more likely to be interested. So are those who have been baptized Adventists for less than ten years and those who plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy.

Middle-aged parents are less likely to be interested. So are parents from an Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic background, those who attended an Adventist school themselves, and those who are less-active in church.

Motivations for Attendance at Boarding Academy

All parents with children of secondary age were also asked, “What would need to happen in order for your child to attend an Adventist boarding academy?” The individual responses have been clustered in order to give a statistical profile. (See Figure 26.)

The majority of these parents (53%) say that boarding academy must be made “more affordable” in order for their child to attend. One in five (19%) would send their child if the academy were closer to home. About 7% say their child must want to attend a boarding academy or they will not send the child. “Something to catch the child’s interest,” explains one of these parents.

Some 5% will not send their child unless additional courses are added to the curriculum and the academic quality of the program is improved. Only 2% say

that the academy would have to be “more spiritual,” or have “more prayer” or “more consecration.”

Some items were mentioned by only one respondent; fewer students from non-member families and cleaner premises. One person indicated that they were unaware of Adventist boarding schools and would need more information before they could make up their mind.

One in ten families (11%) say “nothing” needs to happen in order to get them to enroll their child in an Adventist boarding academy. “I would never not send my child to a boarding school,” one of these parent says. Another reports that they live close to Garden State Academy in order to send their child to GSA.

Almost an equal number indicate that there is nothing that would convince them to enroll their child in an Adventist boarding academy. About 5% believe that during secondary school “children are too young to live away from their parents,” and 4% report that their child is already in the last two years in high school and it is “too late” to send them to another school.

Only one of the parents with secondary age children was decidedly negative about Garden State Academy. She plans to move to another conference to send her child to a different Adventist boarding school. She say, “GSA should be closed down. It is not effective.”

The Need for More Financial Aid

Financial assistance for students and families emerges as the major issue in this study. Nine out of ten parents (92%) agree that “a way must be found to provide more financial aid so more students can afford to attend Adventist schools.” (See Figure 27.) All demographic segments are strong on this opinion, although non-Hispanic whites and African Americans are somewhat less likely to agree, as are respondents from upper middle income households (\$50,000 to \$99,999 per year).

The Need for Transportation

Nearly nine out of ten parents also see transportation for their children as a key issue for Christian education in New Jersey. Some 88% agree that “a way must be found to provide transportation so more children can attend Adventist schools. (See Figure 28.) Again, all demographic segments are strong in holding this view, with the wealthiest parents—those from households with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more—somewhat less likely to agree, as are middle-aged parents and

the youngest parents (those under 25 who may not yet have children attending school any distance from their homes).

Preference for Day Academy

The majority of the parents interviewed (55%) believe that “children of academy age should be with their parents, not at boarding academy.” (See Figure 29.) Grandparents sponsoring children in school and respondents who have been baptized Adventists for 20 years or less are more likely to hold this opinion. The same is true for those from middle income households (\$50,000 to \$74,999 per year).

Believe Adventist Schools are Different

Almost all of the parents interviewed believe that there is a significant difference between Adventist schools and public schools. Only 7% say there is “not ... any significant difference between Adventist Christian education and public school education in New Jersey.” (See Figure 30.) Older parents over 55 years of age and the youngest parents (age 25 and under) are somewhat more likely to say there is no difference.

Problems with Student Behavior

Although relatively small percentages of the parents interviewed see problems with student behavior in Adventist schools, many times more see the same problems in the public schools in their community. (See Figure 31.) Large majorities of the respondents see significant problems with profanity, violence, smoking, drugs, theft or robbery, and vandalism in the public schools. Half see real problems with alcohol and weapons at the public schools in their community.

At the same time, 46% of the parents interviewed say that the public schools in their community provide a safe learning environment. About 40% see no significant problems with weapons, vandalism or alcohol in their local public schools and a third (32%) see no significant problems with theft or robbery. Younger parents and those of African American ethnicity are more likely to have a positive view of the public schools, as are native-born respondents and those baptized as Adventists in recent years.

Parents from higher-income families are more likely to be concerned about problems in the public schools. There is also a strong correlation between a seeing problems in the public schools and plans to send a child to Garden State

Academy. (See Figure 32.) This may be a major part of the motivation for those who want their child in an Adventist secondary school.

About one in four of the parents interviewed (23%) say there is a problem with profanity in the schools operated by the New Jersey Conference. This compares favorably with their perceptions of the public schools in their community, but does worry some segments more than others. Parents from upper middle income families and those with low involvement in the Church are more likely to see this problem. The same is true for younger parents, those with graduate degrees, those with children currently enrolled in an Adventist school, and those from a non-Hispanic white ethnic background.

Less than one in six parents see problems with theft or robbery (16%), violence (15%), smoking (14%) and drugs (14%) in the schools operated by the New Jersey Conference. Again, these are markedly lower rates than the same respondents see in their local public schools. Older parents, those from upper middle income families, those with graduate degrees and those with low involvement in the Church are more likely to express these concerns.

Only one parent in ten among those interviewed says that there is a problem with vandalism (11%) or alcohol (9%) in the Adventist schools. Just 3% see a problem with weapons. Again this compares favorably with large percentages who see the same problems in the public schools.

Pastoral Support for Christian Education

It is vital to a successful Church school system that pastors give strong support to Christian education. In order to measure the perception of pastors attitudes, the parents interviewed were asked to “rate the support that the pastors give to Christian education in the New Jersey Conference.”

Three out of four parents say the pastors give “excellent” (37%) or “good” (39%) support to Christian education. (See Figure 33.) Older parents are more likely to have a positive perception, as are those baptized in the last ten years. Those parents with the highest incomes and the greatest amount of education are somewhat less likely to agree.

Only 7% of parents say that pastors give “poor” support to Christian education, while another 17% rate it as only “fair.” Those parents with the lowest and highest family incomes are more likely to have a negative perception. The same is true for those who attend church less often and those with graduate degrees.

Willingness to Sacrifice for Christian Education

Each parent interviewed was asked, “How much of a sacrifice are you willing to make to have your child attend an Adventist school?” And they were given a list of five possible answers. (See Figure 34.)

The majority of the parents are willing to sacrifice in order to pay the price for a Christian education. More than a quarter (27%) say they will do “whatever it takes,” while another quarter (28%) say they are willing to make “a significant financial sacrifice” to put their child(ren) in an Adventist school.

Men are more likely than women to be willing to sacrifice, as are parents from families with annual income of \$75,000 or more and those with a graduate degree. The same is true for those who have a child currently enrolled in an Adventist school and those who plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy. Non-Hispanic whites are also more likely to say they are willing to sacrifice.

About a third of the parents are willing to do only “what we can afford” (25%) or “some sacrifice” (12%) in order to place their children in an Adventist school. The youngest and oldest parents are more likely to give these responses, as are those with less education and those from lower-income families.

Only 8% of the parents interviewed say they are unwilling to make any sacrifice to place their children in Adventist schools. Most of these individuals are women from the Baby Boom generation, and it is unclear whether their response is related to negative attitudes about the church school system or family situations over which they feel they have no control.

Conference Financial Priorities

In each interview, the parents were read a list of 14 items that make up elements of the New Jersey Conference budget. They were asked to respond to each item in terms of whether the conference should “spend more” on that item, “spend less” or “about the same” as it does now.

The highest priority for increased funding with the parents is “*financial aid to help students attend church school.*” (See Figure 35.) A total of 86% of those interviewed want the conference to spend more on this item. This opinion is the same across every demographic segment, although it is 100% among the youngest parents. This represents a very strong consensus among church members who are parents. Because of the design of this study, there is no way to

know if this priority is shared by those church members who do not have school-age children.

Almost as many respondents (83%) say the conference should spend more on the **church schools**. Again, this view is much the same across all demographic segments, although it is particularly strong among those parents who currently have a child enrolled in an Adventist school and those who plan to send their child(ren) to Garden State Academy.

Again, almost equal numbers want more funding for **youth ministry** (82%), **training** lay leaders, pastors and teachers to be more effective (80%), **planting new churches** (78%), and **new, creative outreach** (77%). In each case older respondents are more likely to see the need for more funding, as are recent converts. Also respondents from middle-income families and those with an Asian/Pacific Islander, African American or Caribbean ethnic background.

Three out of four of the church members interviewed (73%) want the conference to spend more money on **community service centers and disaster response**. Men are more likely than women to express this view, as are church members from upper middle income families and those recently baptized.

A cluster of items that are of lower priority is displayed in Figure 36. About two-thirds of those interviewed believe the conference should spend more money on **Garden State Academy** (68%), **evangelism in the local churches** (68%), and **summer camp** for children and youth (67%). Older parents are more likely to want more spending on GSA and summer camp, while African Americans and Asians/Pacific Islanders are more likely to want more spending on local evangelism. Parents from families with annual incomes of less than \$50,000 a year want more spending on GSA, while those from families with higher annual incomes are less likely to agree.

A total of 61% of the respondents would like to see the conference put more funding into **Metro Ministries**. Support for this is even stronger among older respondents.

About half of those interviewed say the conference should spend more money on **pastors** for the local churches (54%) and **camp meeting** (48%). Older members are more likely to express this view, as are black and Asian/Pacific Islander respondents. Support for camp meeting is strongest among those with the least education and from the poorest families.

Only 42% of church members want the conference to spend more on *conference staff* and operations. This is clearly the lowest priority for New Jersey Conference parents, although there is much stronger support for more spending on conference staff among blacks and Asians/Pacific Islanders and among immigrants.

Perhaps the most significant observation that can be made about these data is the across the board urge for the New Jersey Conference to spend more money on everything listed. On no item did more than 10% of the parents interviewed say that the conference should spend less money. On half the items, only 4% or less of the respondents said the conference should spend less money.

There appears to be an overwhelming consensus that the New Jersey Conference is underfunded in all of the areas included on the list. It would be interesting to explore which areas the members feel need to be cut back. Perhaps there is a lack of understanding and information about the trade-offs necessary in Church funding decisions. It is difficult to avoid in these data the picture of a large group of church members who believe that the Adventist Church can increase funding on all fronts without cutting back anywhere, at least in New Jersey.

Planning to Send Child to GSA

In the interviews, each family was asked simply, “Do you plan to send your child(ren) to Garden State Academy?” (See Figure 37.) The largest number (46%) say, “No.” More likely to be among these respondents are—not surprisingly—those from the lowest income families (under \$10,000 per year) and those with low involvement in the Church. Also more likely to say they will not send their children to GSA are those with a college degree but not a graduate degree, native-born respondents, and those from families with annual incomes of \$50,000 or more.

A third of the families interviewed (32%) say, “Yes.” They plan to send their children to GSA and in some cases they are already doing so. More likely to be found among these respondents are parents under 35 years of age, those who currently have a child enrolled in an Adventist school, and those from lower middle income households (\$25,000 to \$49,999 per year). The same is true for those who have been baptized Adventists for six to ten years.

One in five respondents (21%) have not made up their minds on this question. Younger parents, those recently baptized and those with a graduate degree are more likely to be unsure of their view on this question. So are non-Hispanic whites.

Enrollment Projections for GSA

From the estimates of the number of children at each grade level, Kindergarten through Grade 12, presented on pages vii and viii in this report, it is possible to project future enrollment in Adventist secondary education by New Jersey Conference members. Figure 38 is based on the estimates in Table 1 and calculated year by year into the future. The assumption is that the same number of children will remain in each cohort over the coming decade, and that the percentage of children enrolled in Adventist schools in each cohort will also remain the same. Figure 38 projects a modest increase in enrollment from the current 133 to a high point of 233 in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.

Overall Attitude toward GSA

In each interview, parents were asked a question designed to get a focused answer regarding their overall attitude specifically about Garden State Academy. (See Figure 39.) “Which of the following statements comes closest to your feelings about Garden State Academy?” Then, the interviewer read four options before allowing a response.

About a third (36%) give the most positive response: “It is one of the most important things the New Jersey Conference does.” Respondents over 55 years of age and those who plan to send their child to GAS are more likely to feel that GSA should be top priority for the conference. So are those with an African American or Caribbean ethnic background, those who have been baptized Adventists for 11 to 20 years, and those who have not completed a secondary diploma. There is strong negative correlation with annual household income on this item: families with lower annual incomes are more likely to select this response, while those with higher incomes are less likely to do so. (See Figure 40.)

Almost an equal number (35%) give a somewhat less positive response: “It is a good thing for the families who send their children.” Younger parents are more likely to select this response, as are those baptized as Adventists in the last ten years.

About one in four give the two negative responses. Some 19% say, “The academy is fine for some families, but I would not send my children.” Parents with graduate degrees are more likely to select this response. So are those from families with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more and those who are native-born.

Only 5% of the families interviewed give the most negative response: “The academy should be closed down; it is no longer cost effective.” Those with annual household incomes of \$50,000 to \$99,999 are more likely to select this response.

About 5% of the respondents could not select one of the four statements as closest to their opinion, and told interviewers, “I am not sure,” or “I don’t know.” These tend to be very young parents with low involvement in the Church, very little education and from low-income families.

General Comments by Respondents

Although not requested in the interviews, a number of the parents who were included in this study gave the interviewers unsolicited comments. Those are recorded verbatim here because they provide some additional texture and richness to the opinions and attitudes captured in this study.

Five of the parents interviewed express the view that “the pastors have too many churches.” Another person says, “pastors’ performance should be evaluated more rigorously.”

Three respondents say “Garden State Academy (GSA) should have better management.” A fourth person, more bluntly says, “GSA needs to be fixed.” A fifth respondent is of the opinion that “GSA has undergone too many changes in management. It needs more stable management.” Person six feels that “GSA should have a clear mission statement, a clearer philosophy.” Yet a seventh respondent has “heard GSA is doing better now.”

Two parents feel that “Adventist schools in New Jersey are poor academically.” A third parent says “children in Adventist schools are less prepared academically than children in other schools.” A fourth parent feels “Adventist schools are too evangelistic, although that is a good concept, but there is too much emphasis on this and academic performance is neglected.” Related comments by three other parents:

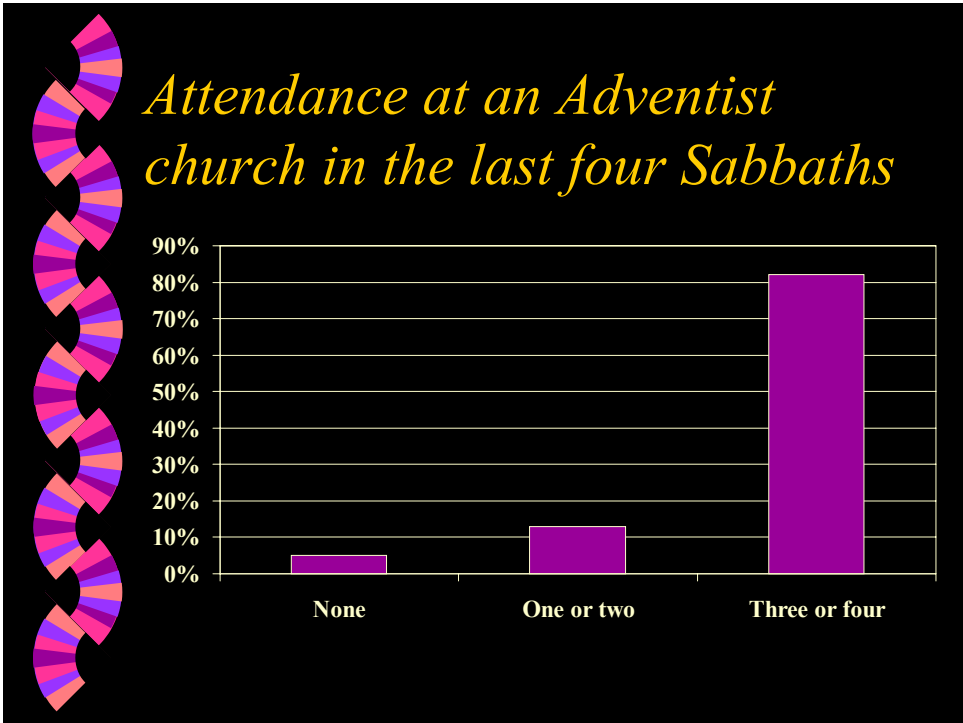
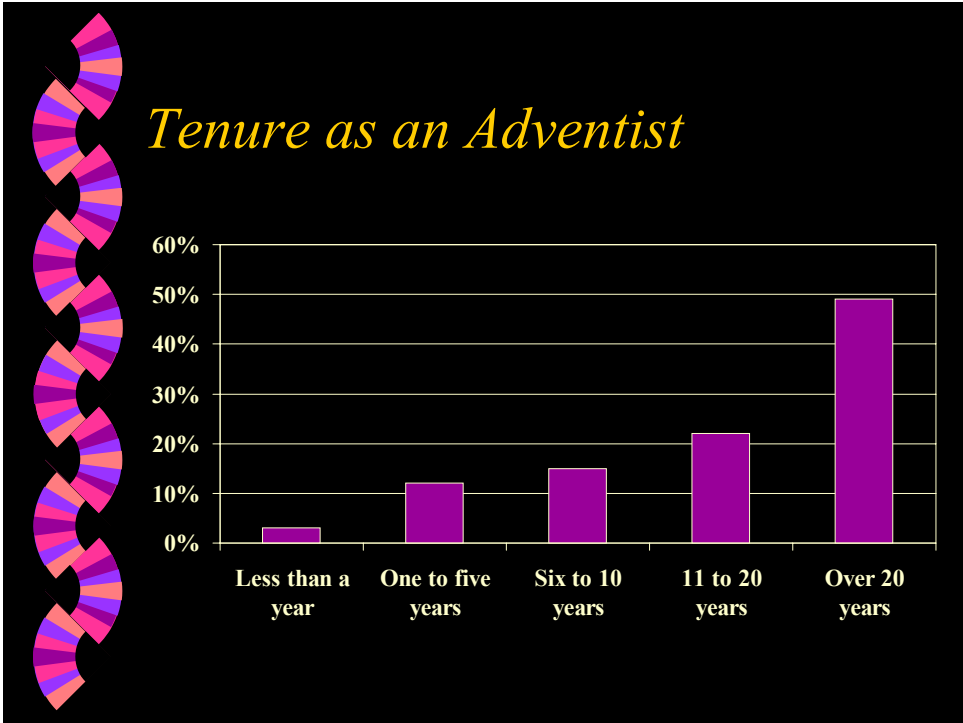
The local church school uses too many different teachers for the same grade at the elementary level. This is not productive.

In Adventist schools, kids are accepted from unstable homes and inner city neighborhoods and my kids are not academically challenged.

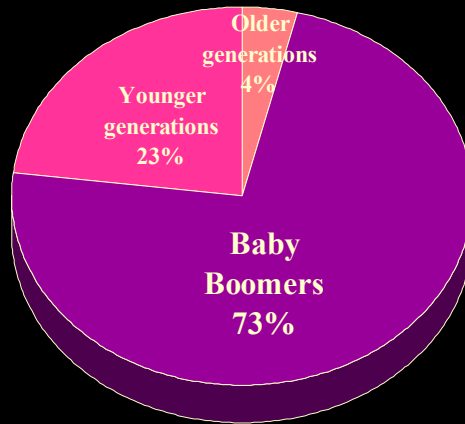
I would not sacrifice my children’s education [by sending them to an Adventist school]. Adventist schools are too challenging academically.

It is difficult to evaluate what may actually be the cause of many of these comments. In this study the interviewers did not have the time to get the full story with all of the details, nor are these stories then confirmed with the administrators and teachers involved.

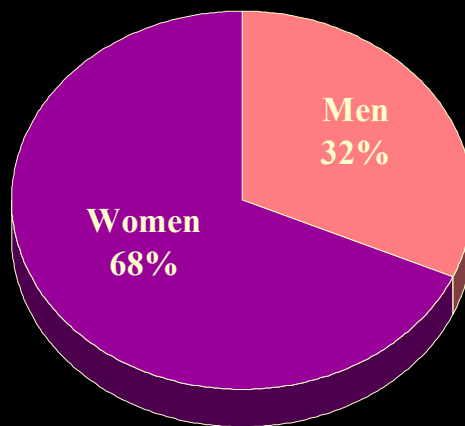
Two other individuals had comments that do not seem to fit with any of the clusters above. One says, “conference staff should be more effective.” It is unclear if this is reference specifically to Christian education, or a more general comment. The other says, “This is a slanted survey” evidently because of the mention of new, creative outreach methods in the question about spending priorities for the conference. “I am for them,” this woman said, “but the way they are done is not what I would like to see.” It is unclear as to precisely what she is objecting to.



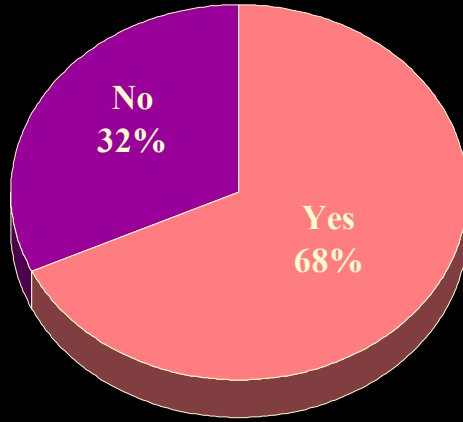
Age by generations



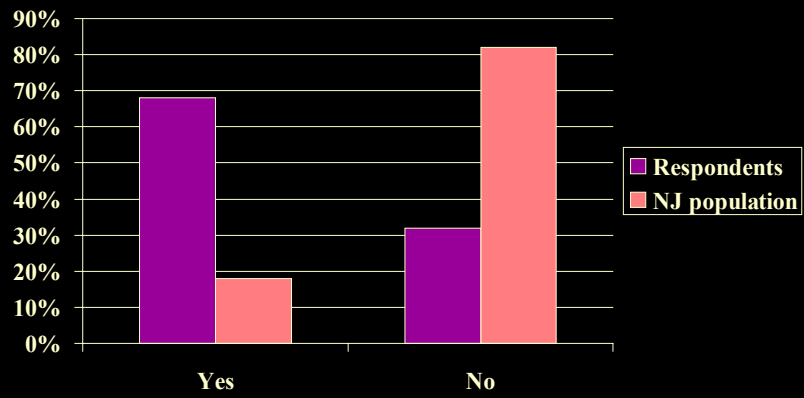
Gender



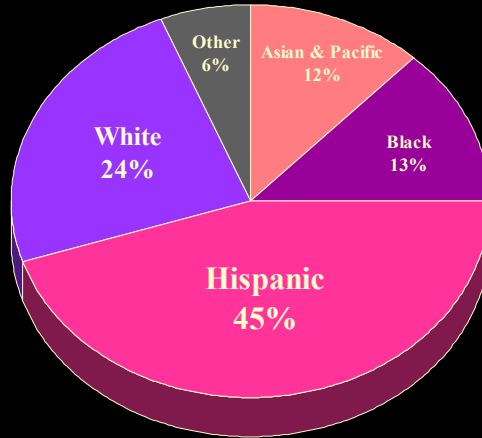
Immigrants



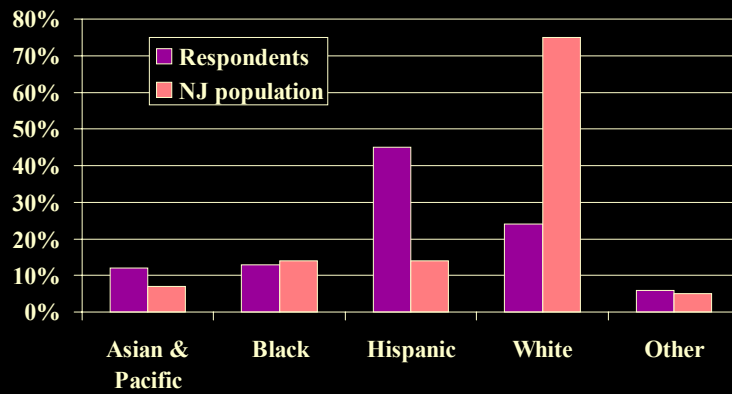
Immigrants



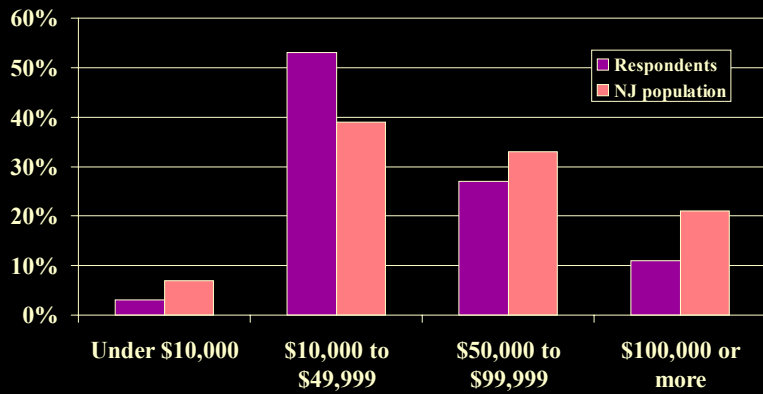
Ethnic background



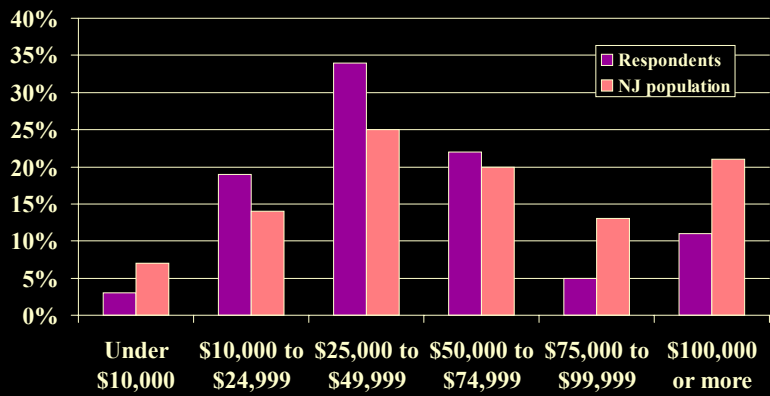
Ethnic background



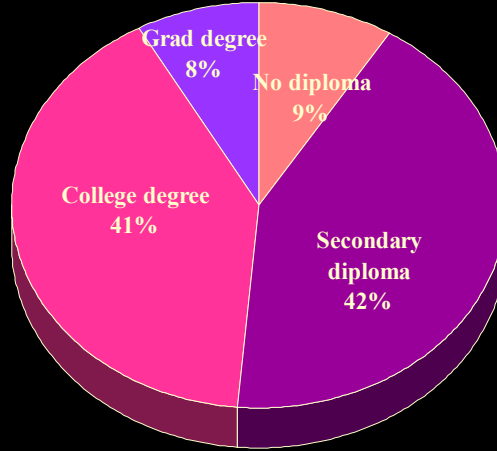
Annual household income



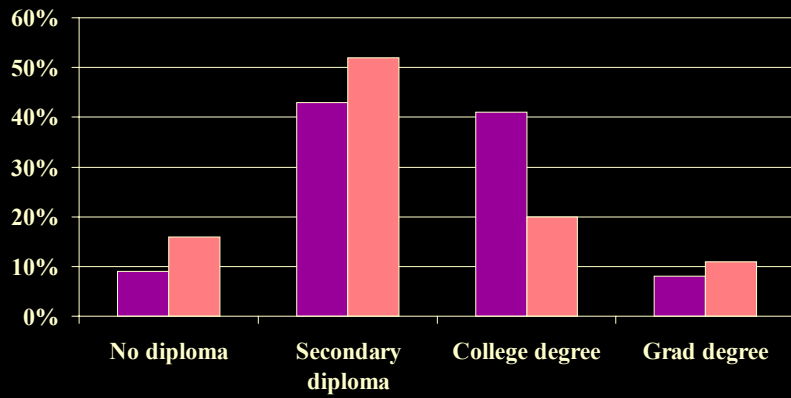
Annual household income



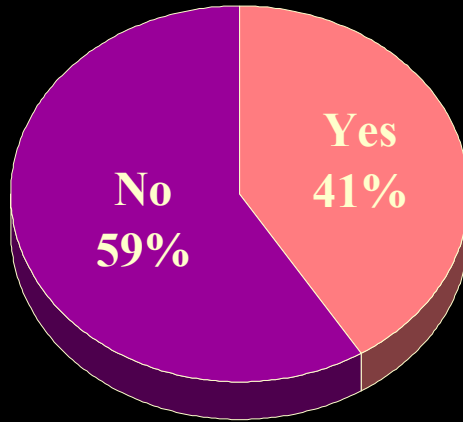
Level of education



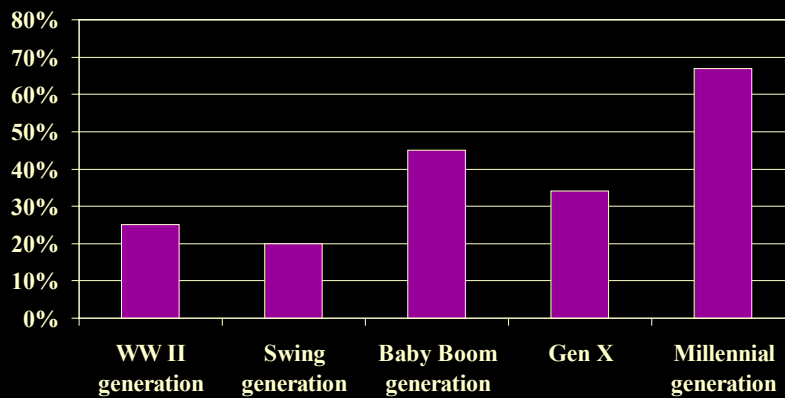
Level of education



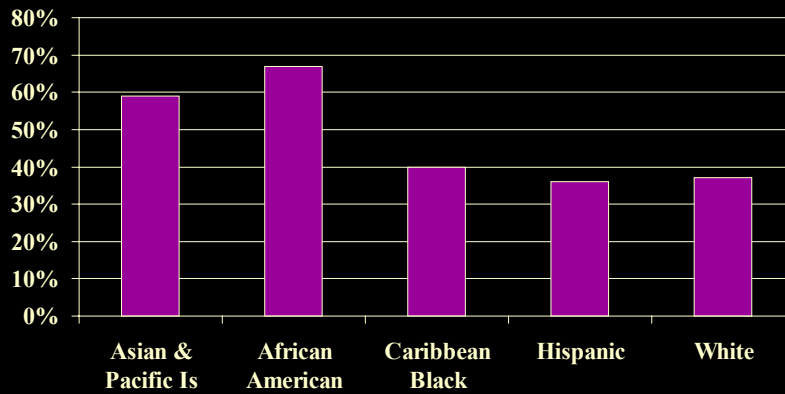
Ever attend an Adventist school?



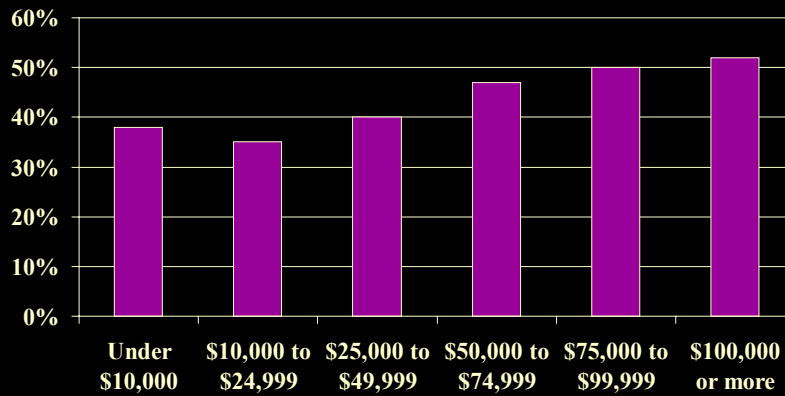
Attended an Adventist school



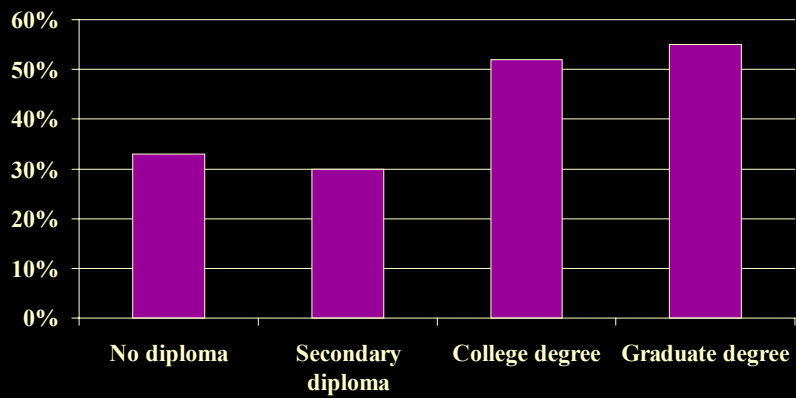
Attended an Adventist school



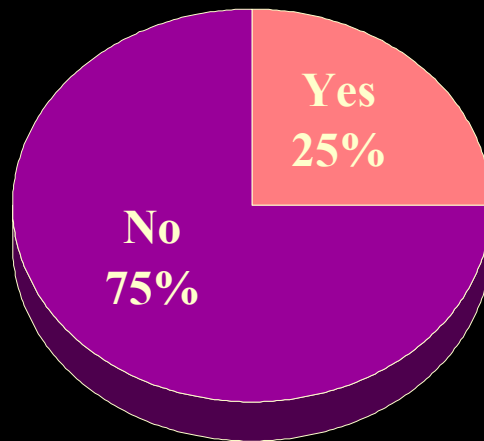
Attended an Adventist school



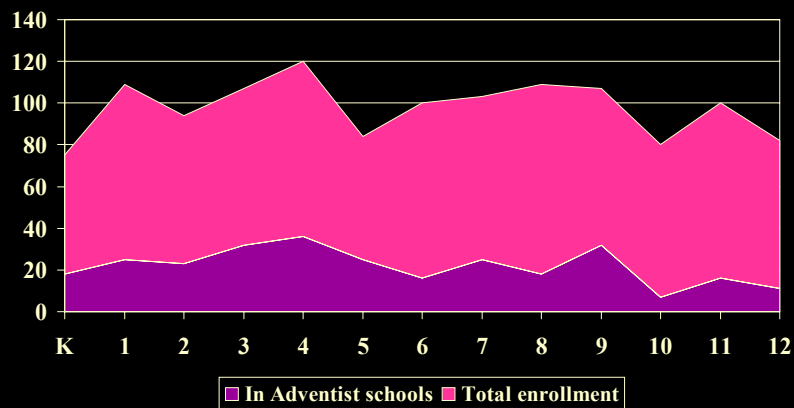
Attended an Adventist school



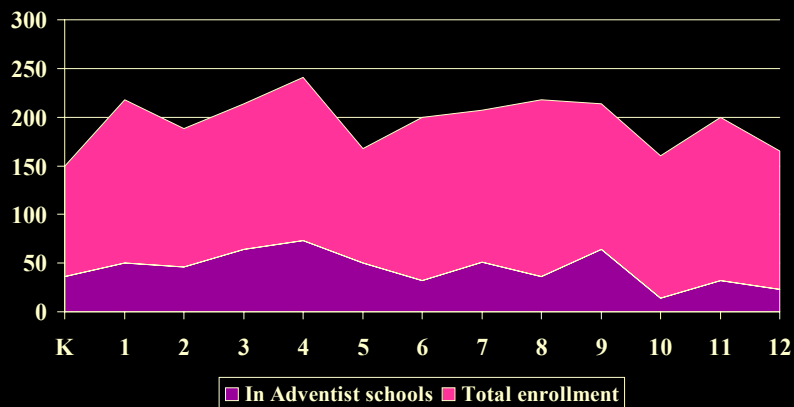
Have children enrolled in an Adventist school ...



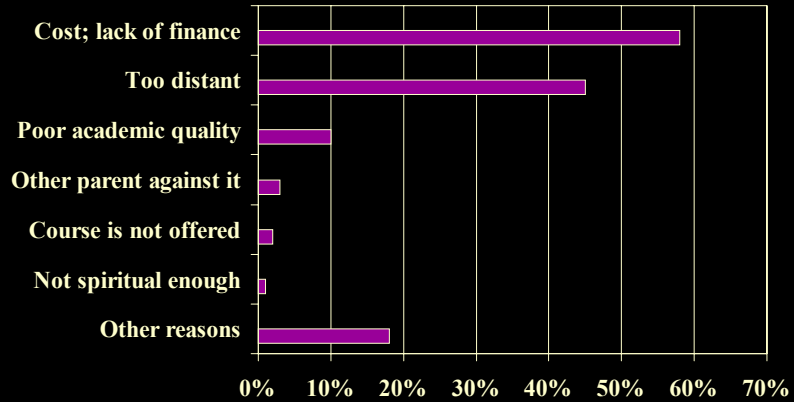
Enrollment estimate #1
629 families



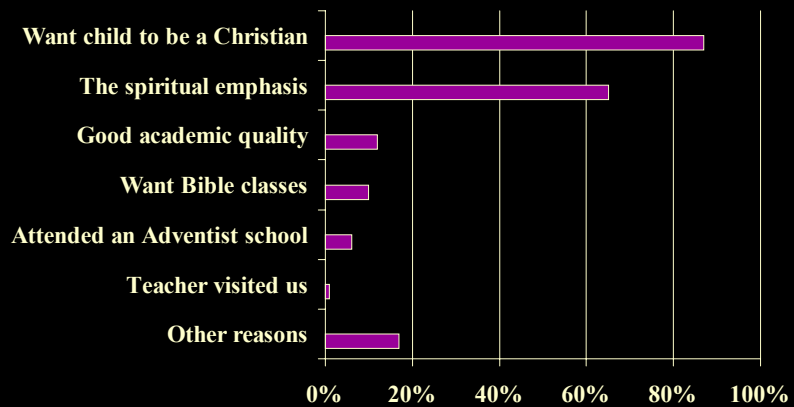
Enrollment estimate #2
1,258 families



Not in Adventist school: Why?

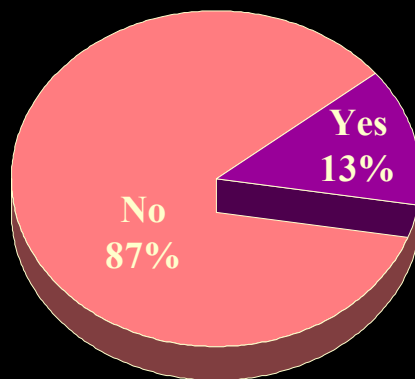


In Adventist school: Why?

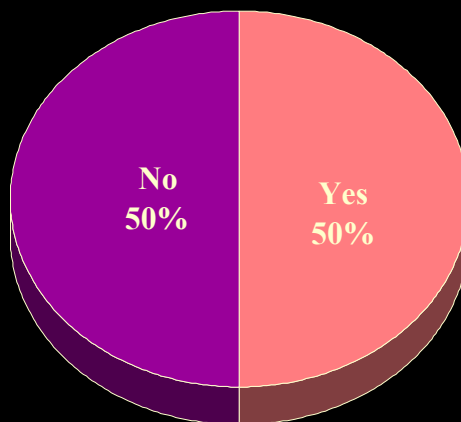


Is your child enrolled in an Adventist boarding school?

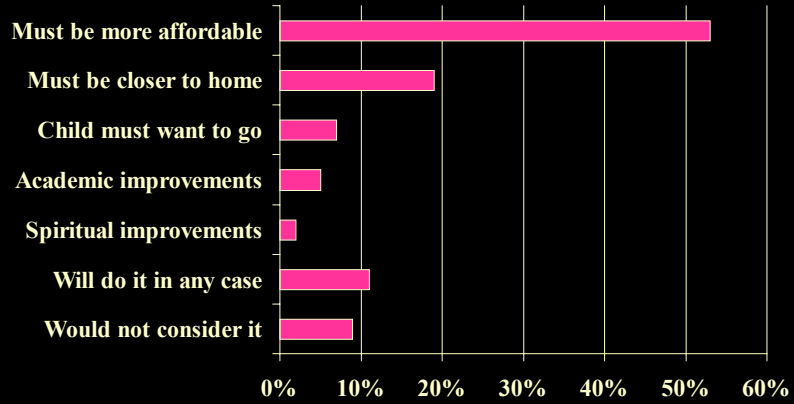
Of those with secondary-age children



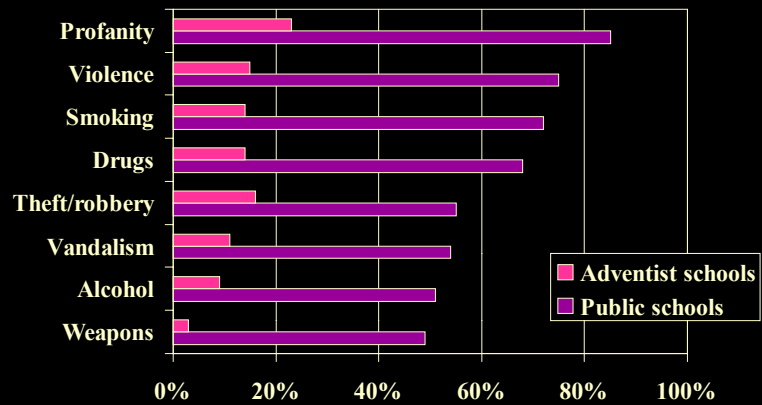
Is a boarding academy experience of any interest to you?



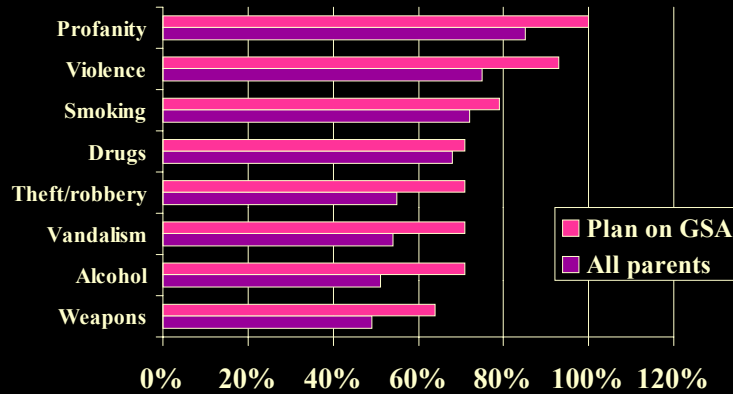
What will it take for your child to attend boarding academy?



Problems with student behavior



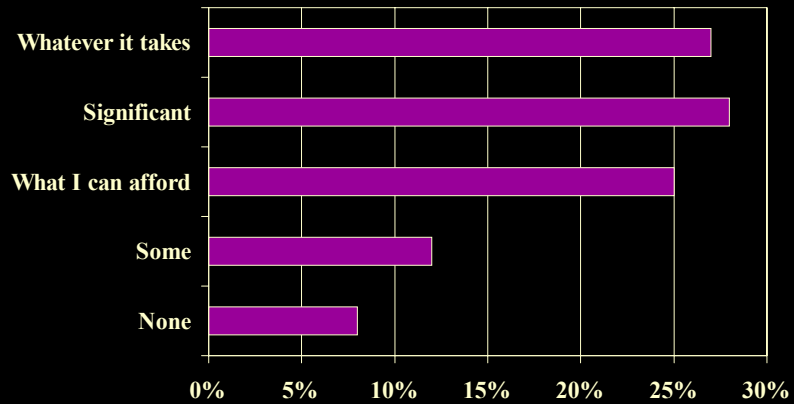
Problems in public schools and plans to send child to GSA



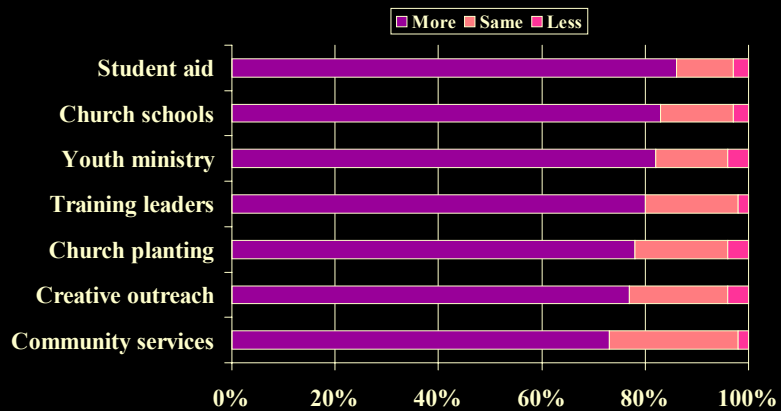
Rate the support that the pastors give to Christian education



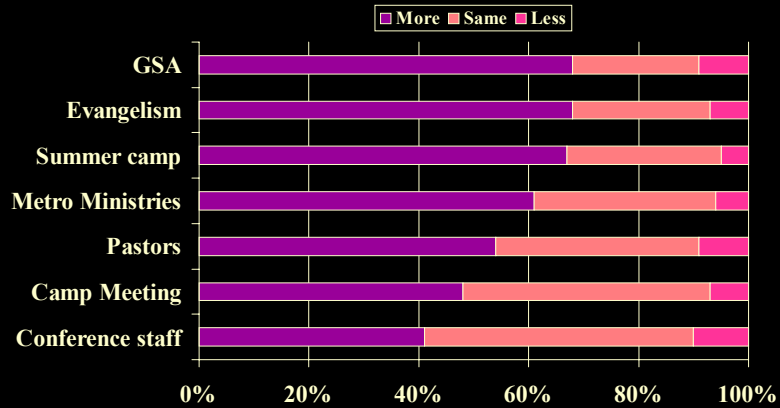
How much sacrifice are you willing to make?



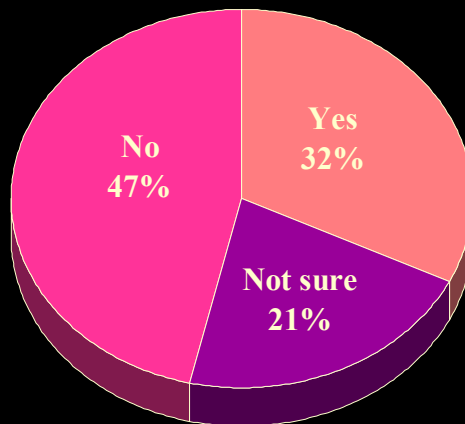
NJ Conference should spend more/same/less money on ...



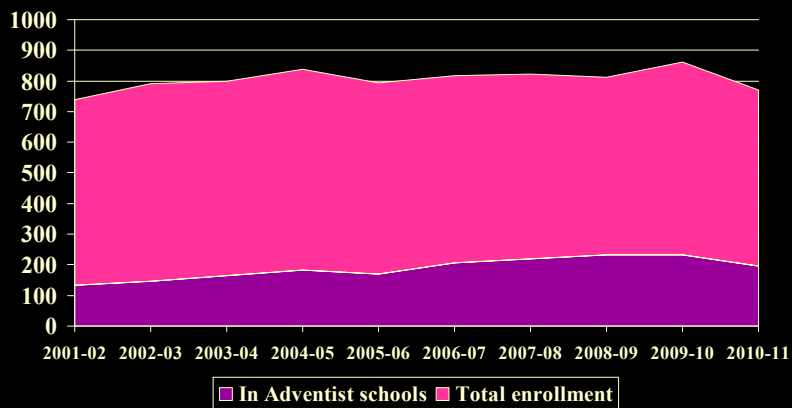
NJ Conference should spend more/same/less money on ...



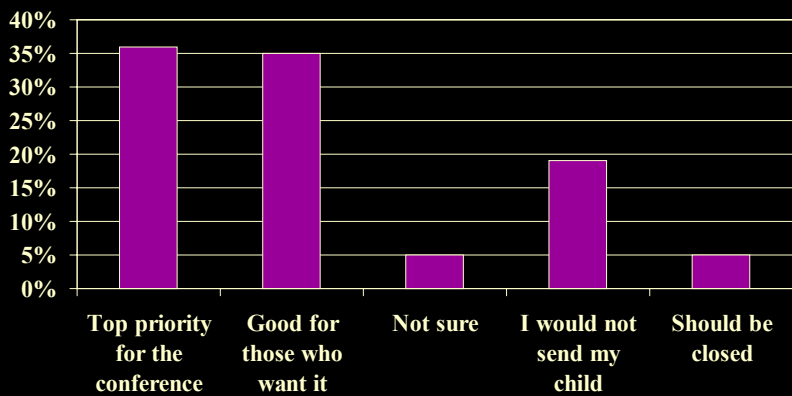
Do you plan to send your child to Garden State Academy?



Enrollment projections based on estimate #2



Attitudes toward GSA



GSA should be top priority for the New Jersey Conference

Respondents by annual household income



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 number 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

New Jersey Conference Education Survey

Phone Number : _____

Alternative Phone Number: _____

Date & Time of First Attempt: _____

Date & Time of Second Attempt: _____

Date & Time of Third Attempt: _____

Date & Time of Additional Attempts: _____

Final Status of this Number: (check only one selection below)

- Interview completed.
- Interview partially completed.
- Interview refused.
- After three or more attempts, ~~no one who met the criteria was present.?~~
- After three or more attempts, no one answered the phone.
- Made an appointment with a person the first time I talked to them, but was unable to begin the interview.
- Other: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Script to be read by interviewer is in bold face throughout.

Hello, my name is _____. I am working for a research organization helping to conduct a survey. This survey is being conducted for the New Jersey Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It's purpose is get information from members of the church in order to develop plans for the future of church schools. This is an anonymous survey. The survey is being conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry, a separate research organization, and no conference employees will see any of the responses until the phone numbers and names are detached and destroyed. I need to talk to a man or woman who is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

If a child answers, ask to "talk to your mother or father," or "an adult" before you get into the script at all.

1. Are you a member of the Adventist Church? Yes No

If they indicate that their spouse is a church member, but they are not, then ask to speak to the spouse.

2. How long have you been a baptized Adventist?

- 1 - Less than one year *Do no read the list.*
- 3 - Six to 10 years
- 4 - 11 to 20 years
- 5- Over 20 years

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

- None One Twice Three Four

4. Do you currently have children living in your home? Yes No

4-B. *If the answer to #4 is "yes," then ask the following question. If not, skip to #5. Please tell me the year each child was born, their gender and what grade they will start in the fall:*

Year of birth:	Gender:	Grade in school:	Question 4-C:
			Yes No
			Yes No
			Yes No
			Yes No
			Yes No

4-C. Are any of these children currently attending a school operated by the Adventist Church? *Indicate answer for each one in last column above.*

4-D. If they have school-age children who are **NOT** in an Adventist school, ask: **We would like to know the reason why you have decided not to enroll your child(ren) in an Adventist school.** Do not read the following list, but listen carefully and check as many of the following items as you hear:

- The cost and lack of finance
- The Adventist school is too distant
- The Adventist school is of poor academic quality
- The Adventist school does not offer the type of course needed
- The Adventist school is not spiritual enough
- My spouse will not allow it
- There is no room in the Adventist school
- Other:

4-E. If they have a child enrolled in an Adventist school, ask: **We would like to know the reason why you have decided to enroll your child(ren) in an Adventist school.**

Do not read the following list, but listen carefully and check as many as you hear;

- I want my child(ren) to grow up as a Christian / Adventist
- Because of the spiritual emphasis
- Because I want my child to get Bible classes
- The pastor encouraged us to do so
- A teacher or representative of the school came to visit us
- The cost is reasonable
- Financial aid was made available
- The Adventist school is conveniently located
- The Adventist school is of good academic quality
- I attended an Adventist school as a child
- The grandparents or other family members went it
- Other:

4-F. If they have secondary-school-age children, then ask the following questions.

Otherwise skip to #5. **You mentioned a child of the right age to attend a secondary school: is this child attending an Adventist boarding academy?**

Yes No

4-G. If the answer is "yes," skip to #6. If the answer is "no," ask: **Is a boarding academy experience of any interest to you?**

Yes No

4-H. **What would need to happen in order for your child to attend an Adventist boarding academy?**

5. Which of the following statements comes closest to your feelings about Garden State Academy? Read the list to them and select only one response.

- It is one of the most important things the New Jersey Conference does.
- It is a good thing for the families who send their children.
- The academy is fine for some families, but I would not send my children.
- The academy should be closed down; it is no longer cost effective.
- I am not sure.

6. Do you plan to send your child(ren) to Garden State Academy?

Yes No Not sure

7. Did you ever attend an Adventist school? Yes No

I will read four statements to you. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. A = Agree D = Disagree N = No opinion or Not sure

A D N 8. Children of academy age should be with their parents, not at boarding academy.

A D N 9. I do not believe there is any significant difference between Adventist Christian education and public school education in New Jersey.

A D N 10. A way must be found to provide more financial aid so more students can afford to attend Adventist schools.

A D N 11. A way must be found to provide transportation so more children can attend Adventist schools.

12. I am going to name several negative aspects of student behavior that are a real concern in schools today. Do you believe there is a significant problem with any of these things in the public schools in your community? Just tell me "yes" or "no" as I read each item.

Smoking on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Alcohol on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Drug abuse on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Profanity on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Aggressive or violent behavior	Yes	No	Not sure
Weapons on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Safe learning environment	Yes	No	Not sure
Theft/robbery on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Vandalism on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure

13. Do you believe there is a significant problem with any of these things in the Adventist schools operated by the New Jersey Conference? *Read list again, if necessary.*

Smoking on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Alcohol on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Drug abuse on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Profanity on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Aggressive or violent behavior	Yes	No	Not sure
Weapons on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Safe learning environment	Yes	No	Not sure
Theft/robbery on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure
Vandalism on school premises	Yes	No	Not sure

14. How would you rate the support that the pastors give to Christian education in the New Jersey Conference?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

15. How much of a sacrifice are you willing to make to have your child attend an Adventist school? Listen to these five answers and tell me which one best describes your answer:

- Whatever it takes**
- A significant financial sacrifice**
- What we can afford**
- Some sacrifice**
- No sacrifice ... I would not put child in Adventist School no matter how little it cost.**

16. I am going to read a list of the major things for which the New Jersey Conference provides funding. Please tell me for each item if you think the conference should spend more money, spend about the same it does now, or spend less money.

Circle the number indicating the response which the respondent gives for each item:

1 = Spend more 2 = About the same 3 = Spend less

- 1 2 3 **Pastors for theological churches**
- 1 2 3 **The church schools**
- 1 2 3 **Garden State Academy**
- 1 2 3 **Evangelism in the local churches**
- 1 2 3 **New, creative outreach**
- 1 2 3 **Metro Ministries**
- 1 2 3 **Financial aid to help students attend church school**
- 1 2 3 **Training lay leaders, pastors & teachers to be more effective**
- 1 2 3 **Summer camp for children and youth**
- 1 2 3 **Youth ministry**
- 1 2 3 **Community Service Centers and disaster response**
- 1 2 3 **Conference staff and operations**
- 1 2 3 **Camp Meeting**
- 1 2 3 **Planting new churches**

To close, there are several questions I need to ask that are will help get a demographic profile of the families related to the Adventist Church.

17. In what year were you born? 19_____

18. Were you or your spouse born as a citizen of some country other than the United States?

Yes No Spouse: Yes No

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

- 1 - Asian or Pacific Islander
- 2 - African American
- 3 - Black Caribbean or West Indian
- 4 - Hispanic
- 5 - Non-Hispanic white
- 6 - Other

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

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

21. I am going to read a list of ranges of annual household income. Please stop me when I get to the level that best describes the yearly income in your household last year.

- 1 - Under \$10,000
- 2 - \$10,000 to \$25,000
- 3 - \$25,000 to \$49,000
- 4 - \$50,000 to \$74,000
- 5 - \$75,000 to \$99,000
- 6 - \$100,000 or more

Thank you for taking the time to answer those questions. The information will be very helpful to the church and its future plans.

Do not ask about gender. Circle your guess: Male Female