
***Report One: What We Know and What
We Don't Know—A Summary of Research***

Reaching a New Generation

***A Strategy for the Seventh-day Adventist
Church in the Pacific States***



***Published by the Center for Creative Ministry for the
Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists***



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Executive Summary

Baby-Boom church members are significantly better educated than are previous generations of Adventists. Half have a college degree as compared to one in four in the GI generation and one in three in the Silent generation. Church members with higher education are very likely to have quite different values and expectations from those without it.

Baby-Boom Adventists are almost all involved in parenting young children and teens. Four out of five report that they have children living in the home. Silent-generation and GI-generation members have seen their children grow up and leave home. Local churches with strong ministries for children and families should have appeal to Baby Boomers over those congregations where the interests of mature adults are given priority.

Despite the high number of children in the home, Baby Boomers are significantly less likely to have family worship regularly. The same is true of other devotional practices. Half as many report that they study the Sabbath School Lesson daily or read daily from the writings of Ellen G. White. Only the incidence of personal, private prayer is the same across generational lines.

Although two out of three Pacific Union Baby Boomers express concern that "some of the traditional standards of the Adventist Church seem to be ignored today," but they are less likely to voice this opinion than are church members from previous generations. And they consistently disagree with the GI generation about whether to disfellowship church members who violate church standards and about giving public emphasis to standards other than those having to do with substance abuse. Baby-boom Adventists evidently support the historic church stands against tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse, but dislike disfellowshipping as a method to support these standards.

There is a correlation between age and the opinion that the Adventist Church should limit its activities to religion and not become involved in social concern. Two out of three GI-generation Pacific Union members hold this opinion, while only one in three Baby Boomers agree. It appears as if a significant shift in Adventist views is underway. Baby-boom members are more likely to agree that the church ought to engage in social action.

Two out of three Pacific Union Baby Boomers express concern that "some of the traditional standards of the Adventist Church seem to be ignored today," but they are less likely to voice this opinion than are church members from previous generations.

Baby-boom members are much more likely than previous generations to express high expectations for fellowship at church. At the same time they are less likely to express satisfaction with the quality of fellowship they find at church. Two out of three Baby

Pacific Union church members in the Baby Boom generation are **less likely to give Bible studies, less likely to help their neighbors, and less likely to volunteer in prison ministry.** They are also less likely to have perceptions that other church members place high priority on the mission of the church or that church programs encourage personal witnessing by members. At the same time there are ways in which Baby Boomers could be influenced to increase their witnessing involvement. A majority of Baby-boomer church members say that if better witnessing literature and improved Bible study materials were made available, it would increase their soul winning activities.

Baby Boomers are only slightly less likely to pay tithe, but are significantly **more likely to turn in a lower percentage of their income.** More striking is the generational shift toward the computation of tithe on the basis of net income after taxes and away from gross income. Baby-boom members are more than twice as likely as GI-generation members to use the after-tax approach.

Baby-boom members are more likely to **give a smaller percentage of their income to church offerings.** They are less likely to follow a personal giving plan and participate in deferred giving. They are also less likely to understand or approve of how the church spends money. The lowest levels of understanding and support focus on the Pacific Union Conference budget.

The majority of church members under 45 **feel left out of the decision-making process in their congregation.** At the same time confidence in the leadership of their local pastor is high.

Areas of Agreement Between Generations

There are items of significant agreement between generations. Nine out of ten Adventists want to base their life on the gospel, like to hear a range of opinions about faith and life, prefer a thinking climate, and believe it is important to tithe. They want lay leaders who are compassionate and unbiased. They would like to see more community action by the church, and they give regularly to offerings.

More striking is the generational shift toward the computation of tithe on the basis of net income after taxes and away from gross income. Baby-boom members are more than twice as likely as GI-generation members to use the after-tax approach.

Four out of five Adventists are unwilling to disfellowship church members who own guns. They like Sabbath School teachers who are well informed about social issues and who don't act like they have all the answers, but encourage the class to find answers together. If they had a better understanding of how church funds are used, they would give more, although they do feel that they have a good understanding of how the local church spends its money. They are convinced that the salaries of ministers should be paid from the tithe and that purchases such as a ski boat for the summer camp should not.

Three out of four church members would like their Sabbath School class to have a service project, and want the church place more emphasis on the health message. They believe that local church office equipment should not be purchased with tithe funds.

careers, and higher incomes. It is a familiar story to the majority of second- and third-generation Adventists. The Adventist belief in Christian education has made this a particularly powerful influence.

Several studies have shown that the majority of dropouts from the Adventist Church are from the Baby Boom generation. Most were raised in Adventist homes, are highly educated and are employed in professional, managerial and technical occupations. (See "Where Are Our Missing Members?" *Adventist Review*, May 4, 1989.)

For the bulk of white, middle-class Baby Boomers, the mobility escalator has stalled. "There are ominous signs that for more and more Americans, especially young people starting out, the traditional middle-class American Dream of a secure, good-paying job, a house and a better life for the children is becoming just that—a dream," comments Connie Lauerman. (See *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, November 1, 1987.) Between 1950 and 1970, men's median income rose 54% after adjusting for inflation. The average man was making nearly \$7,000 more in 1970 than in 1950. The average American worker's real income has not grown since 1973. "Boomers are significantly behind their elders in accumulated wealth; in fact, they could reach retirement age with less than 50% of the net wealth their parents had at a similar age," reports The Urban Institute. The parents of the Baby Boom generation achieved a 524% increase in real net wealth when they were in their twenties, while Baby Boomers experienced an increase of only 34%. (See "Lean Times Ahead for Young Families," *Policy and Research Report*, Fall 1990.)

A very typical Baby Boomer situation is described by Katy Butler in *Mothers and Daughters* (1989, Aperture). "By 1980 my parents had raised three children and achieved all of the American dream on my father's income alone—and after 15 years in the full-time work force, I could not afford a child. . . . It was an index of how middle-class life had changed in the course of a

single generation. And nowhere was the change more striking than in what each generation paid for housing and what they got for it. My parents paid \$190 a month—on a 5% mortgage—for a four-bedroom house on an acre of land in Connecticut. Bob and I, with a combined income slightly lower than my father's, paid \$1,500 a month—on a 9% mortgage—for a five-room bungalow slightly larger than my parents' deck. Yet we felt lucky to afford a house at all."

As Baby Boomers have babies and raise their own children, they exhibit a renewed interest in the church. As they experience difficult mid-life events such as divorce, addiction and unemployment, they often seek fellowship and spiritual guidance.

If the upward mobility of Adventists has come to an end, Bull and Lockhart suggest that the consequences of this change could fundamentally alter the nature of the church membership in America. (See Chapter 20 in *Seeking a Sanctuary*; 1989, Harper & Row, San Francisco.) The Adventist Church has arrived at a crucial moment in its history. Is there a way it can stay with this generation so convulsed with change? Can Adventism provide a mature, sustaining faith as well as an attractive, evangelistic faith? Can it reach beyond itself and connect with the best intentions, the highest values of a generation of Americans searching for authentic spirituality?

2. *Church Member Opinion Survey*, conducted in 1988 with a stratified random sample of 1,875 church members. Not published. Identified in this report as "1988 Survey of Members."
3. *Adult-Youth Sabbath School Opinion Survey*, conducted in 1989 with a stratified random sample in 50 local churches which yielded a total of 2,758 completed questionnaires. Published in *Sabbath School Revitalization* (1990, Church Resource Center, Westlake Village CA). Identified in this report as "Sabbath School Survey."
4. *Stewardship Opinion Survey*, conducted in 1989 with a stratified random sample of 100 local churches which yielded a total of 4,764 completed questionnaires. Published in *Financial Findings: People's opinions about church Tithe & Offerings* (1991, Church Resource Center, Westlake Village CA) Identified in this report as "Stewardship Opinion Survey."
5. *Regional Conference Opinion Survey*, conducted in 1990 in 54 of the 58 Black congregations in the Pacific Union Conference with a return of 2,780 completed, computer-analyzed questionnaires. Published in *Feasibility Study Report: Regional Conference Opinion Survey* (Undated, Church Resource Center, Westlake Village CA). Identified in this report as "Survey of Black Churches."

A detailed portrait of six Adventist churches in the Pacific Union which have had some success in reaching and holding Baby Boomers will be provided in the second report in this project. In-depth interviews with church leaders and recent converts, focus group research with new

members and dropouts, congregational surveys, demographic studies of the contextual communities and church growth data are all used to explore how evangelism actually happens in these Baby Boomer churches. Attention is given to transferable concepts. The third report will survey the opinion of a larger sample of Baby Boomer thought leaders.

The fourth and final report will be a strategy statement for the Pacific Union. It will provide practical steps that can be taken by local churches to reach and hold Baby Boomers, recommendations for local conferences to provide effective support services and encourage the planting of new congregations, and policy recommendations for the Pacific Union Conference.

This report is the first of four that will be produced during the course of the project. It brings together findings about the Baby Boom generation from a careful analysis of five surveys conducted for the Pacific Union Conference Church Resource Center in recent years.

Table 1.2 • Annual Household Income

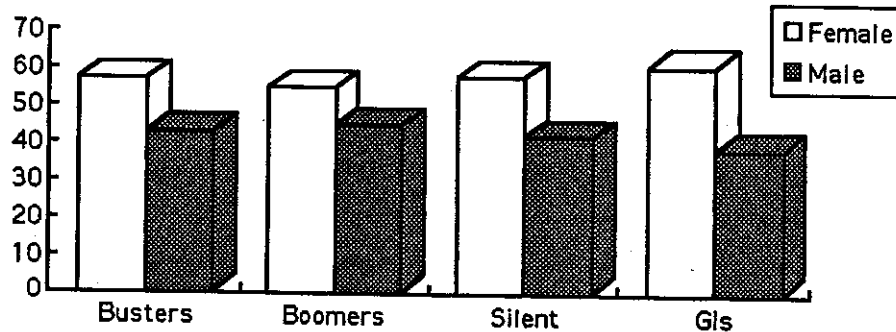
Which of the following categories best describes your total household income for 1988?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Under \$10,000	19%	8%	11%	22%
\$10-19,9	19%	13%	14%	37%
\$20-29,9	20%	14%	19%	19%
\$40-49,9	9%	14%	14%	4%
\$50-69,9	9%	19%	14%	5%
\$70,000 plus	7%	18%	12%	2%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Graph 1.3 • Gender of Survey Respondents

What is your gender?



Source:
Stewardship
Opinion Survey

2. Family Life

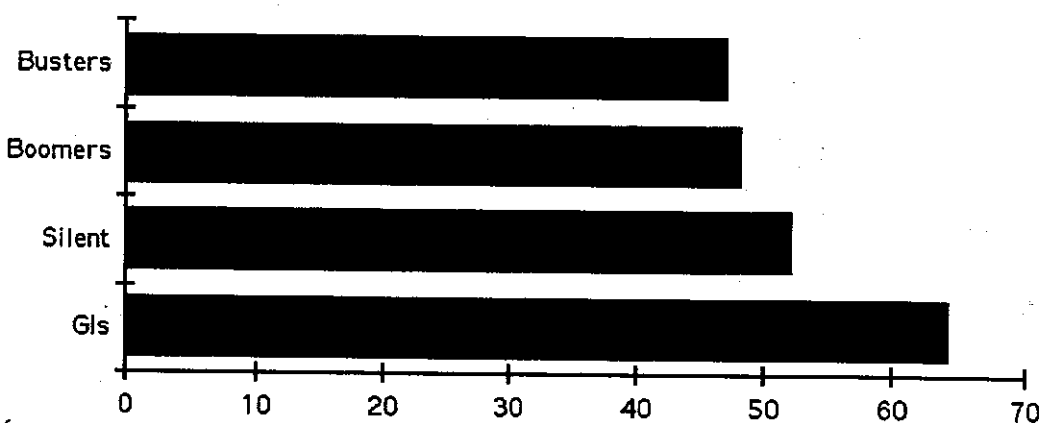
Baby-boom Adventists are almost all involved in parenting young children and teens. Four out of five report that they have children living in the home. (See Graph 2.1.) Almost half of the Baby Bust generation has not yet started a family, and the vast majority of Silent-generation and GI-generation members have seen their children grow up and leave home.

Local churches with strong ministries for children and families should have appeal to Baby Boomers over those congregations where the interests of mature adults are given priority. Preaching that touches on the needs of parents and worship that includes creative ways to involve children are likely to be particularly appreciated. Higher demands may also be put on the family counseling skills of pastors and church staff than has been true in the past.

The frequency of family worship is the one specific family behavior that has been explored by

Table 2.3 • Family Worship Participation

In 1988 I participated in family worship always or frequently. (Percent Yes)



Source:
1988
Survey of
Members

Table 2.4 • Satisfaction with Family Sabbath Activities

How well does your family do at making the Sabbath a delight?

	Church Leaders	Under 40s
Very Well	19%	14%
Fairly Well	44%	50%
Not Well	30%	26%
Very Poorly	6%	6%
No Response	1%	4%

Source: 1987 Survey

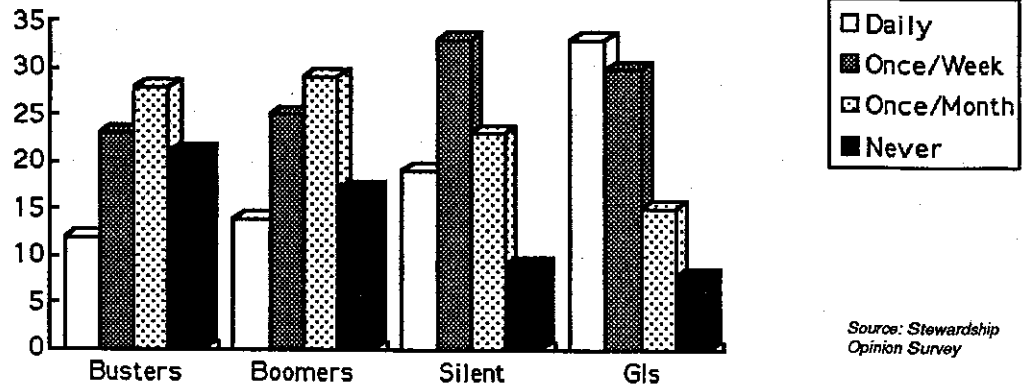
3. Devotional Life

Not only in family worship, but also in other devotional practices, Baby-Boomer Adventists are significantly less likely to report daily participation than are GI-generation Adventists. Half as many report that they study the Sabbath School Lesson daily (see Graph 3.1) or read daily from the writings of Ellen G. White (see Graph 3.3). The difference in the percentages reporting daily reading from the Bible is almost in the same magnitude. (See Table 3.4.) Only the incidence of personal, private prayer is the same across generational lines. (See Appendix A.)

Although the vast majority of both generations believe that tithing is an indication of a person's spiritual condition, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of Baby Boomers as compared with the percentage of GI-generation members who affirm this statement. (See Table 3.5.) And an even lower percentage of the Baby Bust generation affirms the statement.

Graph 3.3 • Reading from Ellen G. White

Indicate how often you read from the writings of Ellen G. White.



Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 3.4 • Reading from the Bible

Indicate how often you read the Bible.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Daily	33%	38%	50%	69%
Once a Week	42%	38%	37%	22%
1-3 x a month	23%	20%	12%	6%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 3.5 • Perception of Tithing as a Spiritual Indicator

I think that tithing is an indication of one's spiritual condition.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	58%	66%	76%	84%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Dancing is another church standard about which there is a clear generation gap in member opinion. The majority of the GI generation want the church to give more emphasis to the topic, while only one in three in the Baby Boom generation agree. (See Table 4.13.)

Four church standards receive less than majority support from all generations. (See Tables 4.14 and 4.15, Graph 4.16 and Table 4.17.) The widest generation gap is on the topic of movie theater attendance. GI-generation Adventists are twice as likely as Baby-boom Adventists to think that renewed emphasis should be given to the practice of shunning the cinema. Emphasis on the standards regarding modest dress, jewelry and makeup is supported by smaller minorities of church members.

The conflict over church standards is not only generational. There are significant minorities of dissenting viewpoints in each generation of Adventists, yet on many of the issues clear majorities pit Baby Boomers against the GI generation. A creative, Christ-centered, Bible-based resolution to these conflicts will not come from the competing values of tradition and tolerance. It can come only from a re-examination and renewal of spiritual disciplines.

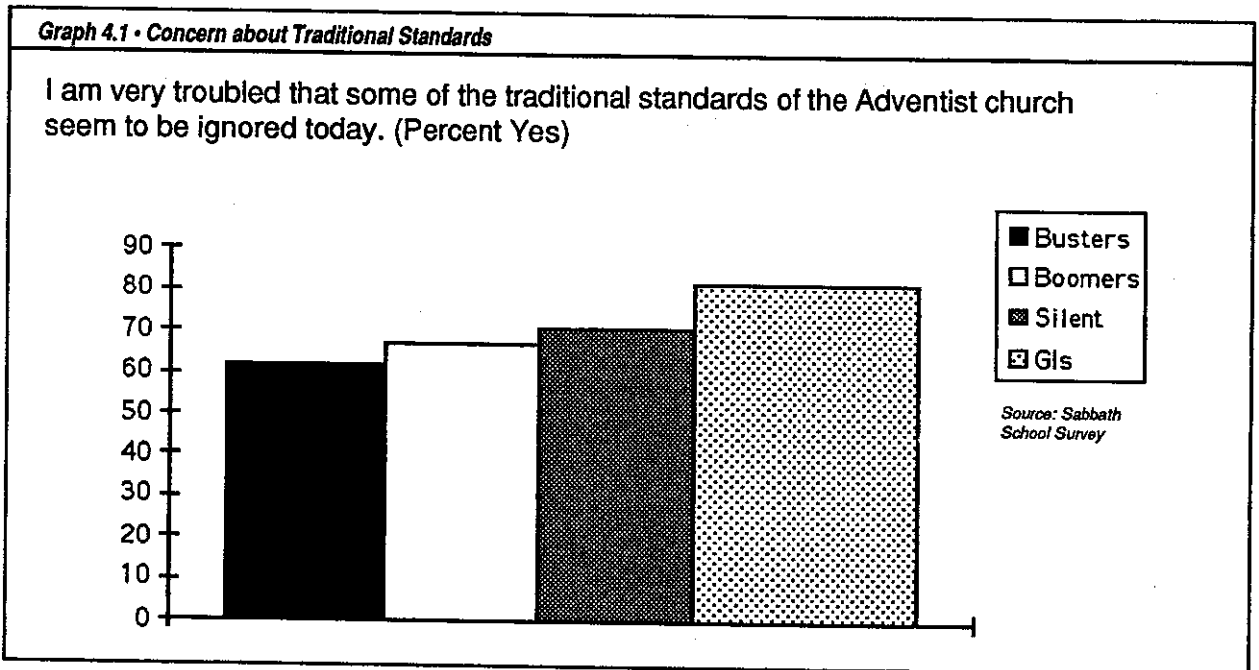


Table 4.2 • Smoking and Church Discipline

Should members of the SDA church be disfellowshipped if they use tobacco?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	27%	35%	49%	65%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Graph 4.6 • Alcohol and Church Discipline

Should members of the SDA church be disfellowshipped if they drink alcoholic beverages?
(Percent Yes)

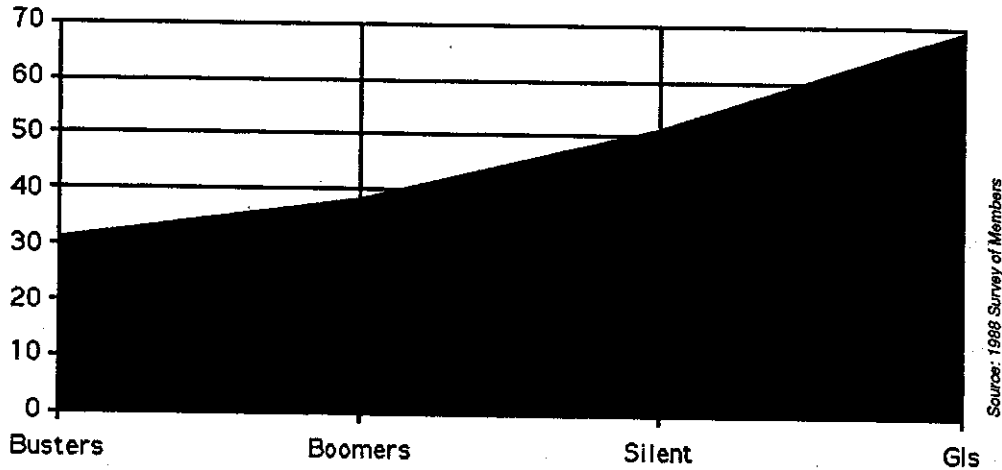


Table 4.7 • Wine and Church Membership

Should church membership be denied for using wine?

	Church Leaders	Under 40s
Yes	41%	28%

Source: 1987 Survey

Table 4.8 • Emphasis on Alcohol

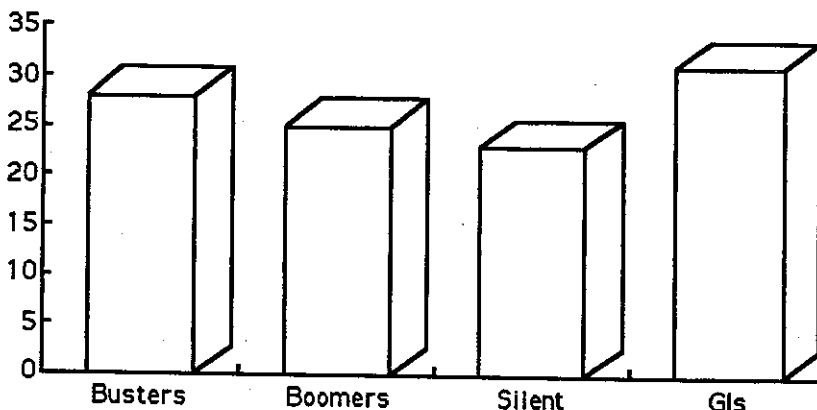
How much emphasis do you think the SDA church should place on use of wine, beer; those answering "a great deal of emphasis" (highest degree of emphasis on scale):

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
	53%	56%	58%	63%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Graph 4.11 • Abortion and Church Discipline

Should members of the SDA church be disfellowshipped if they have an abortion?
(Percent Yes)



Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Table 4.12 • Emphasis on Dating

How much emphasis you think the SDA church should place on standards for dating; those answering "a great deal of emphasis" (highest degree of emphasis on scale):

Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
24%	47%	55%	54%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Table 4.13 • Emphasis on Dancing

How much emphasis you think the SDA church should place on dancing; those answering "a great deal of emphasis" (highest degree of emphasis on scale):

Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
20%	30%	43%	56%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

5. Social Action

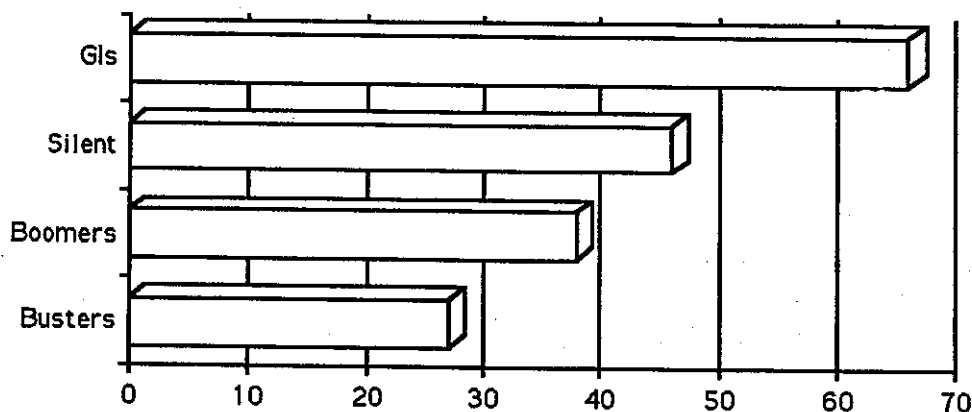
There is correlation between age and the opinion that the Adventist Church should limit its activities to religion and not become involved in social concern. (See Graph 5.1.) Two out of three GI-generation Pacific Union members hold this opinion, while only one in three Baby Boomers agree. It appears as if a significant shift in Adventist views is underway.

Baby-boom members are also somewhat more likely to agree that the church ought to engage in social action (see Graph 5.2), although this viewpoint has surprisingly strong support from all generations. Why has so little been done to implement this strongly held value in denominational programs and structure? Some former Adventists from the Baby Boom generation have stated that this was a primary cause of their leaving the church.

At the same time it is possible that Baby Boomers are somewhat less involved in Adventist Community Services, inner city work and other existing denominational programs of social concern. The 1987 Pacific Union survey which compared the responses of church board members of all ages with a sample of church members under 40 years of age found that the younger members were less likely to report involvement in the Community Services program. (See Table 5.3.) One possible explanation of these data is the narrowness of the question. It does not ask about involvement in non-Adventist programs, and Baby-boom members may feel that existing Adventist programs are out of date or are not serious efforts as compared to common non-Adventist programs.

Graph 5.1 • Spiritual and Social Concern

The church should emphasize spiritual things and not be concerned about other issues.
(Percent Yes)

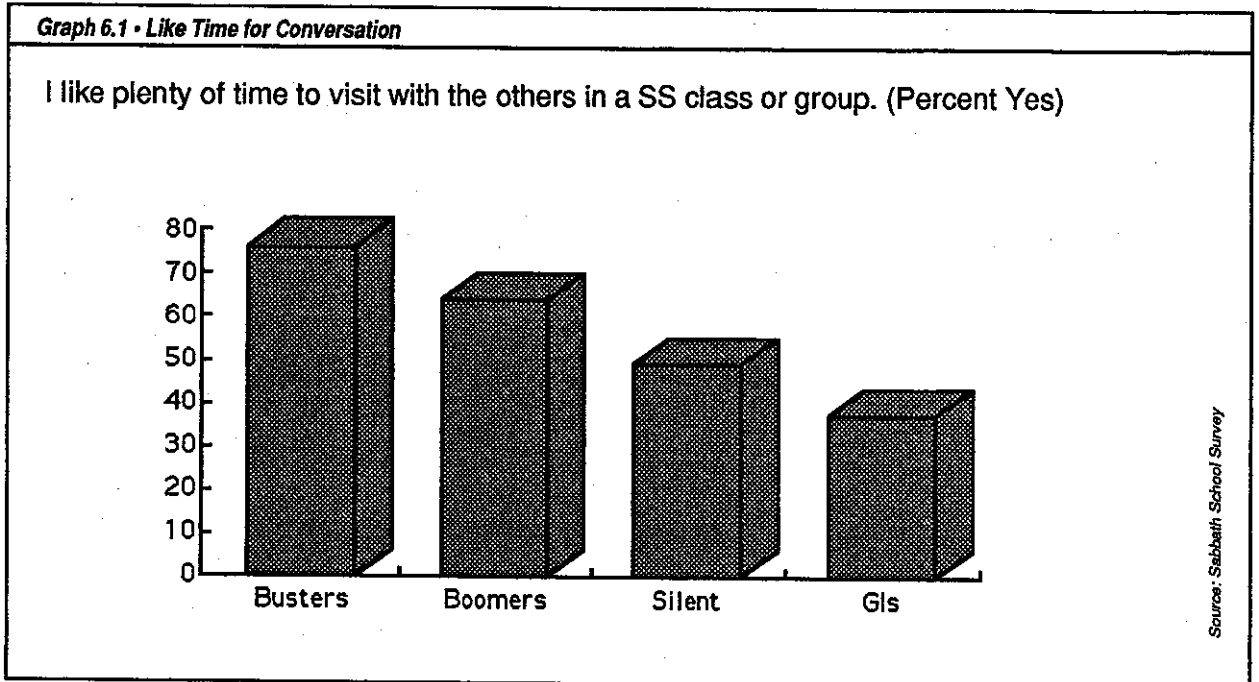


Two out of three Baby Boomers would prefer a Sabbath School class or Bible study group that regularly plans social activities. (See Graph 6.3.) Only half of the GI generation respondents agreed.

Only a very small portion of church members, other than young adults, say that they come to Sabbath School primarily to see other people, but among Baby Boomers that portion is four times the percentage of the GI generation. (See Table 6.4.) For many unmarried church members in their late teens and early twenties, Sabbath School is a major opportunity to connect with other young adults who might be potential dating and courtship partners.

At the same time Baby Boomers express negative views toward some of the elements of fellowship in the local church. Two out of three GI-generation members feel that "most members of my congregation are very much like myself," while only 39% of Baby Boomers agree. (See Graph 6.5.) Baby Boomers are also less likely to report that their local church has a strategy for assimilating new members. (See Table 6.6.) And the majority of younger church members indicate that they do not feel that the church is meeting the needs of single adults. (See Table 6.7.) Does this mean that if a particular local church is doing a much better than average job in these areas, it will attract Baby Boomers? Are there other dimensions of church fellowship which are more important to Baby Boomers?

A number of questions need further exploration in this sensitive area of church fellowship. Some believe that it is the most important aspect of any successful strategy for church growth among Baby Boomers.



Graph 6.5 • Perception of Homogeneity

Most members of my congregation are very much like myself. (Percent, respondents who agree)

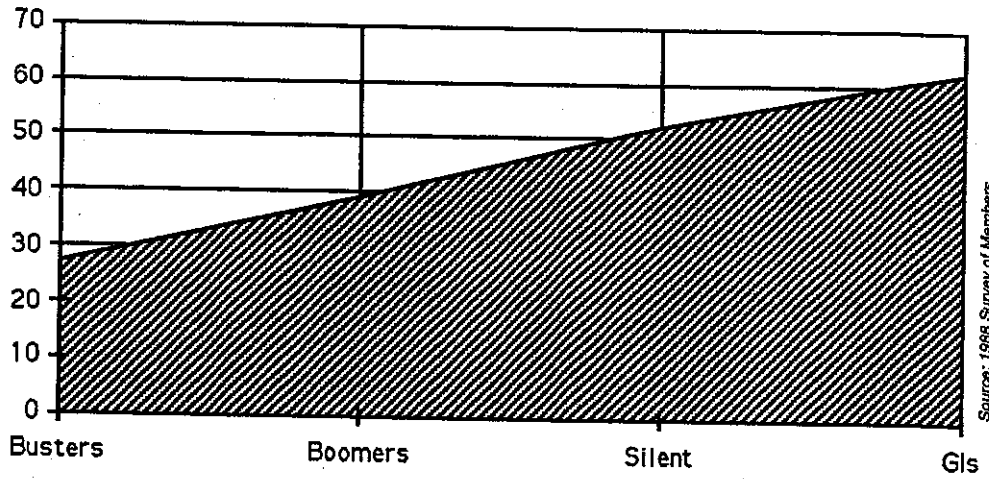


Table 6.6 • Assimilation of New Members

Does your local church have a strategy for helping new members become involved?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	58%	61%	65%	71%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Table 6.7 • Singles Ministries

Our church is providing good opportunities for Adventist singles.

	Church Leaders	Under 40s
Yes	53%	*
No	*	54%

*Data missing in report.

Source: 1987 Survey

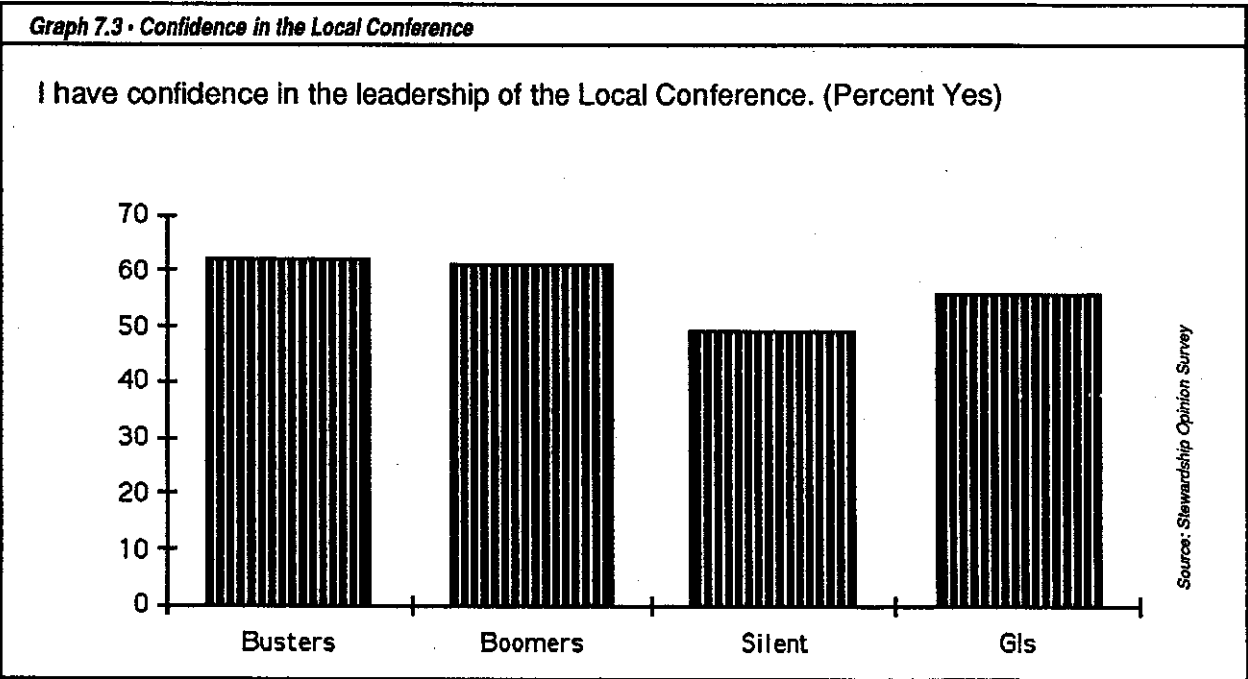
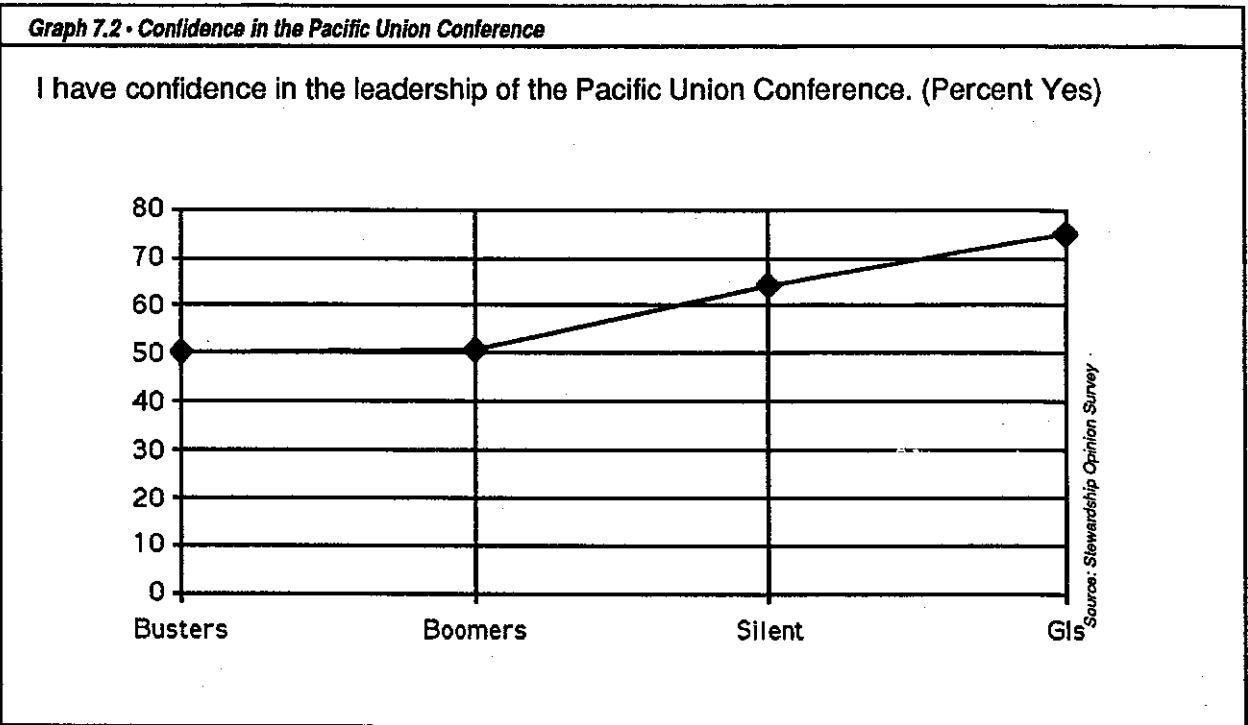


Table 7.4 • Denominational Programs

My congregation should give high priority to denominational events and activities.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	71%	66%	75%	86%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Graph 8.1 • Self-identified "Liberals"

Most persons in our congregation are theologically more conservative than I am.
(Percent Yes)

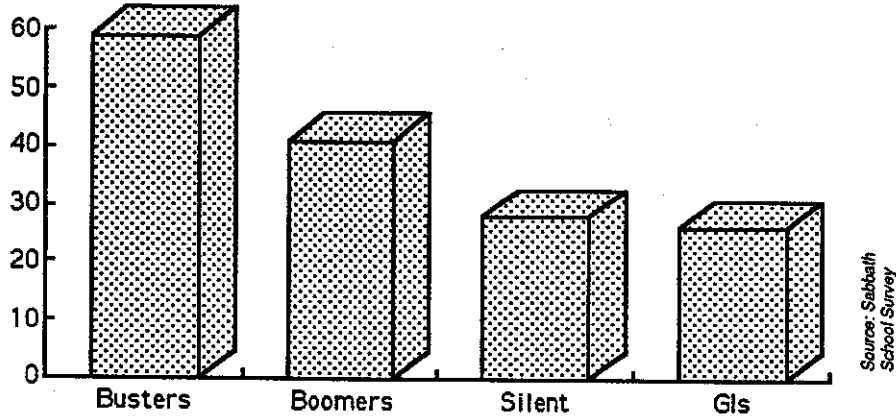


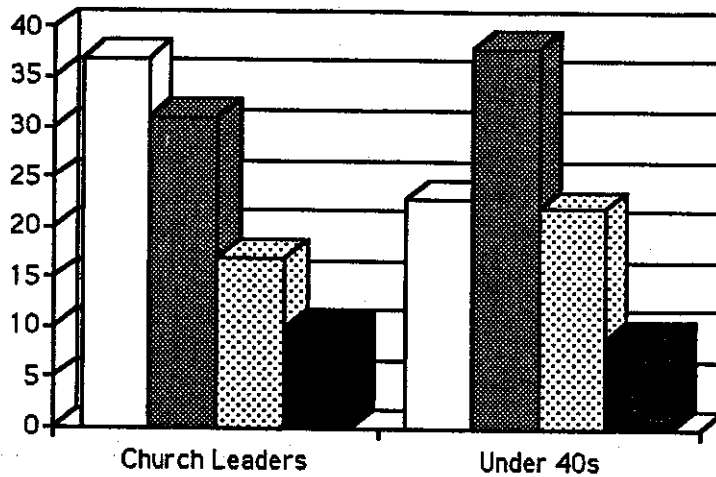
Table 8.2 • Self-identified "Conservatives"

More of the people in my local church are becoming too liberal in their theology.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	48%	44%	47%	57%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Graph 8.3 • Perceptions of the Status Quo



How would you describe your church?

- Too liberal
- Middle of the road
- ▨ Progressive
- Too conservative

Source: 1987 Survey

Table 9.1 • Evaluation of Sabbath School Opening Ceremonies

The Sabbath School program I attend now is interesting, not boring.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	38%	45%	42%	55%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

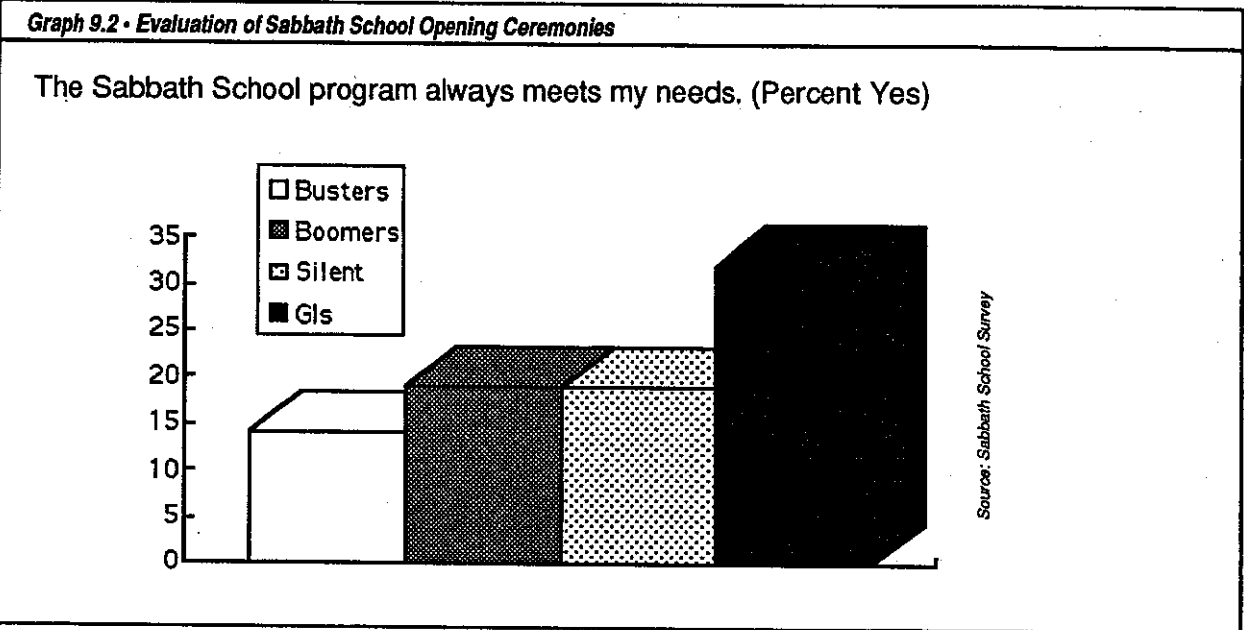


Table 9.3 • Evaluation of Sabbath School Opening Ceremonies

The Sabbath School program I attend now helps spiritual growth.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	48%	52%	48%	60%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Table 9.4 • Evaluation of Sabbath School Opening Ceremonies

The Sabbath School program I attend now is of great value.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	53%	50%	50%	58%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Table 9.9 • Like an Intergenerational Sabbath School

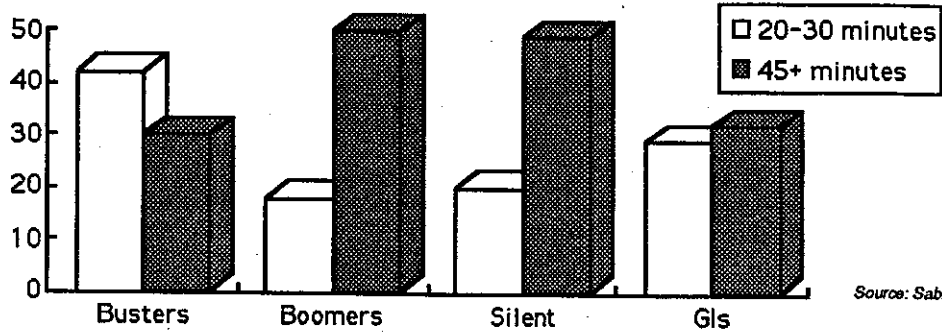
The best Sabbath School program I ever attended involved everyone, including children.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	21%	28%	30%	37%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Graph 9.10 • Sabbath School Class Time

I believe an adequate length of time for Sabbath School classes at church should be . . .



Source: Sabbath School Survey

Table 9.11 • Prefer a Common Curriculum

Should all adult Sabbath School classes study the same material?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	42%	57%	66%	83%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Table 9.12 • Attributes of Sabbath School Teacher

I expect my teacher to be well versed in the Bible and the doctrines of the church.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	71%	83%	93%	95%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Table 9.17 • Warm Climate on Sabbath

A visitor to my congregation would be favorably impressed with the number of members who took the initiative to greet them.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Agree	60%	73%	80%	80%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Table 9.18 • Evaluation of Worship Music

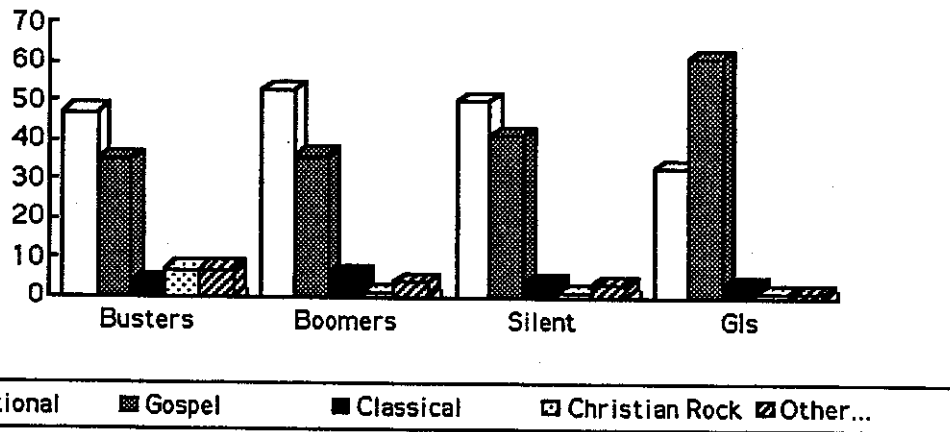
The hymns used during the worship service are relevant and generally assist me in worship.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Strongly Agree	26%	41%	48%	57%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Graph 9.19 • Perceptions of Worship Music

Which category best describes the type of music generally used in the worship service (excluding hymns)?



Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Graph 10.2 • Worship Attendance

In 1988 I always attended church. (Percent Yes)

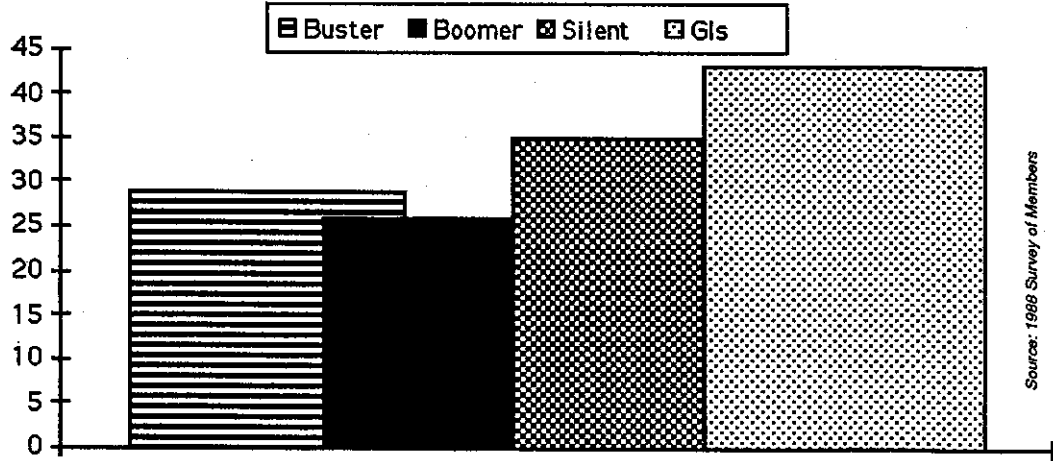


Table 10.3 • Sabbath School Attendance

I attend Sabbath School weekly.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	82%	80%	86%	91%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Table 10.4 • Sabbath School Attendance

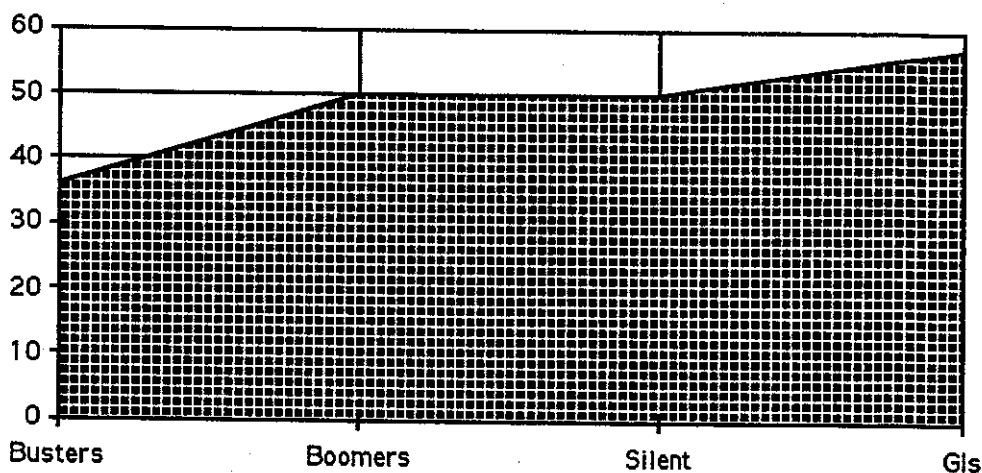
In 1988 I always attended Sabbath School.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	27%	23%	34%	42%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Graph 11.2 • Perception of Church School Tuition as an Offering

I think tuition paid to SDA schools should be considered an offering. (Percent Yes)



Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

12. Witnessing & Evangelism

Pacific Union church members in the Baby Boom generation are less likely to give Bible studies, less likely to help their neighbors, and less likely to volunteer in prison ministry. (See Table 12.1, Graph 12.2, and Table 12.3.) Although they are just as likely to bring non-member friends to visit Sabbath School, they report that they do so less often. (See Table 12.4.)

Baby Boomers are also less likely to have perceptions that other church members place high priority on the mission of the church or that church programs encourage personal witnessing by members. (See Graph 12.5 and Table 12.6.) They seem to believe that the church is not enthusiastically promoting lay witnessing.

At the same time there are clear indications of ways in which Baby Boomers could be influenced to increase their witnessing involvement. A majority of Baby-Boomer church members say that if better witnessing literature and improved Bible study materials were made available, it would increase their soul winning activities. (See Tables 12.7 and 12.8.) It is probable that these survey respondents have more in mind that updated graphics. They apparently want a repositioning and restatement of Adventist beliefs in ways that relate to the world in which they live and make the message persuasive to their generational peers.

Table 12.4 • Bring Friends to Sabbath School

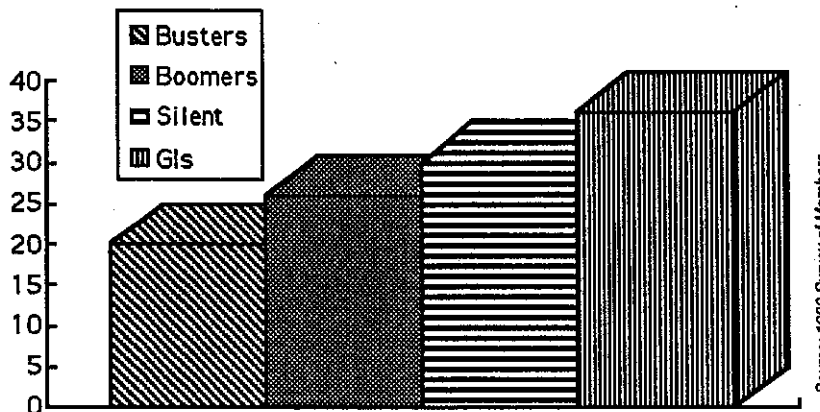
How many non-Adventists have you brought to Sabbath School within the past two years?

	Church Leaders	Under 40s
None	46%	47%
One	7%	17%
Two	9%	15%
Three	10%	7%
Four	8%	4%
Five or more	8%	2%

Source: 1987 Survey

Graph 12.5 • Support for the Mission of the Church

There is an urgency in my congregation for "finishing the work." (Percent "strongly agree")



Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Table 12.6 • Sabbath School Influence for Personal Witnessing

To what extent does the lesson study influence you to invite someone to attend?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Positive	33%	40%	42%	47%

Source: Sabbath School Survey

Overall, the new generation of church members probably have less money to give and are, at the same time, less trusting of traditional, centralized ways of handling money in the church. The cost of promotion and the complexity of fund raising strategies will probably increase if the church is to maintain its incomes levels in the future.

Table 13.1 • Giving of Tithe

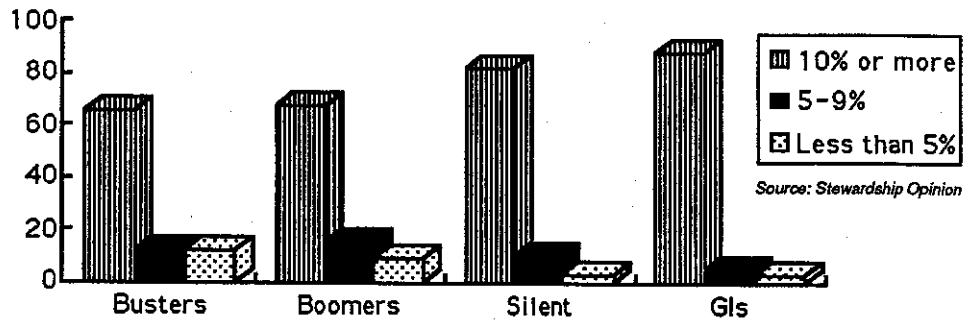
I have given tithe in the past year.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	88%	91%	94%	97%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Graph 13.2 • Percent of Income Given as Tithe

What percent of your annual income did you give as tithe?



Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 13.3 • Method of Calculating Tithe

I base my tithe on:

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Gross Income	40%	40%	51%	71%
Net After Taxes	37%	35%	31%	15%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 13.7 • Tithe Diversion to Overseas Denominational Entities

I gave tithe to overseas denominational organizations.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	13%	19%	14%	14%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 13.8 • Tithe Diversion to Private Ministries

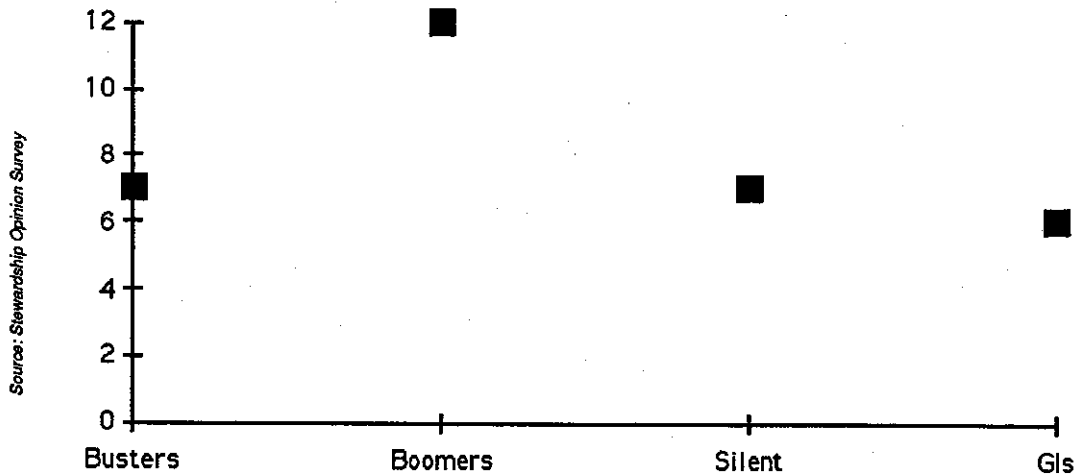
I gave tithe to independent SDA ministries.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	12%	16%	12%	11%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Graph 13.9 • Tithe Diversion to Non-Adventist Ministries

I gave tithe to non-SDA ministries. (Percent Yes)



Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 13.13 • Deferred Giving Plans

I plan to remember God's church in my will.

	Church Leaders	Under 40s
Yes	44%	30%

Source: 1987 Survey

14. Church Finances

Pacific Union members from the Baby Boom generation are less likely to understand or approve of how the church spends money, and the levels of understanding and support decline at higher levels of church organization. (See Tables/Graphs 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7 and 14.8.) The lowest levels of understanding and support focus on the Pacific Union Conference budget.

Baby Boomers are more likely to give the majority of their offerings to their local church and school. (See Table 14.9.) This is consistent with an ongoing trend toward local, participatory organizational processes.

Although they are less likely to feel that tuition paid to Adventist schools should be considered an offering (see Graph 14.10), on a number of other opinions, Baby-boomer members are more likely to disagree with the policy of the denomination. They are less likely to see a need to maintain the distinction between tithe and non-tithe funds, and less likely to agree with policy on the use of tithe alone or other offerings to fund certain expenses. (See Tables/Graphs 14.11, 14.12, 14.13, 14.14 and 14.15.)

Baby Boomers have a clearer sense of priorities in the use of church funds where the GI generation has a more scattered range of opinion. (See Table 14.16.) The first priority for Baby-Boomer members is local church needs, followed by local conference needs, local mission needs, world mission needs and other needs. The only difference in ranking of priorities among GI-generation members is that local mission needs assume higher priority than local conference needs, but there is a much greater spread of responses.

The distrust of centralized denominational funding arrangements, the lack of consensus about priorities, and disagreement with denominational fiscal policies all contribute to an attitude expressed by some younger business professionals that denominational leaders "mismanage" the funds of the Adventist Church. This is not an allegation about dishonesty or waste, but rather an opinion that the time-honored system for managing money in the denomination needs to be changed.

Table 14.4 • Information about the Local Conference Budget

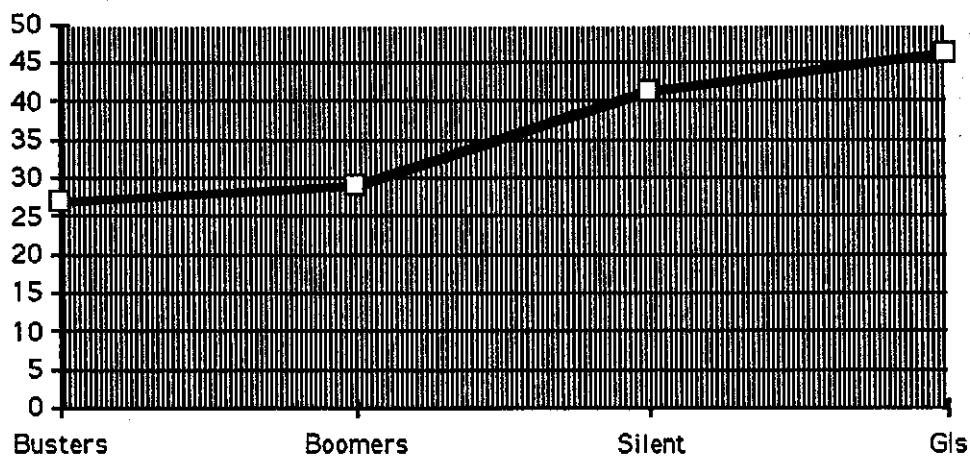
I understand how the local conference spends its money. (moderately and strongly agree)

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	41%	48%	59%	55%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Graph 14.5 • Union Conference Budget

I approve of how the Pacific Union Conference spends money. (Percent Yes)



Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 14.9 • Funding the Local Church

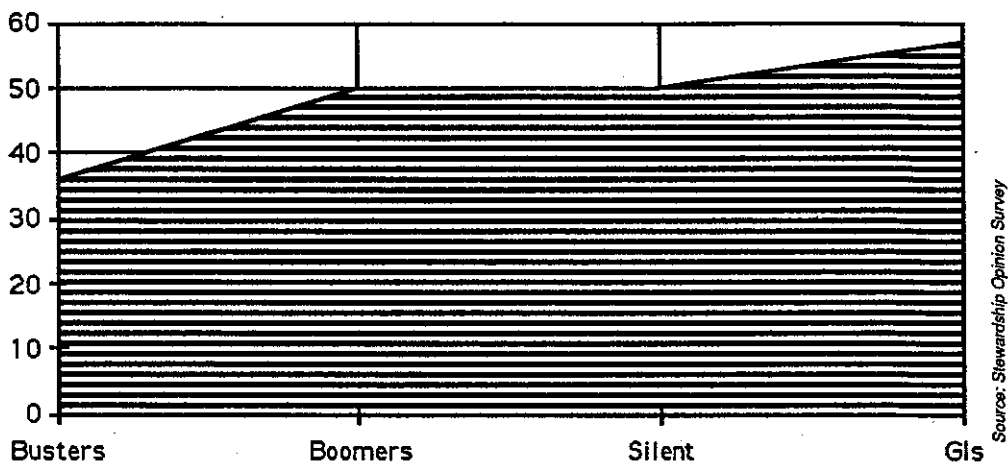
Majority of non-tithe offerings were given to the local church and school.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	25%	34%	33%	21%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Graph 14.10 • Perception of Church Tuition as Offering

I think tuition paid to SDA schools should be considered an offering. (Percent Yes)



Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 14.11 • Distinction between Tithe and Non-tithe Money

I think the distinction between tithe and non-tithe money should be carefully maintained.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	79%	80%	87%	91%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 14.16 • Priority Ranking of Needs

Local Conference Needs (Pastor's salaries, Education, Youth Camps, etc.)

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
#1 Priority	25%	27%	31%	38%
#2 Priority	37%	38%	40%	37%
#3 Priority	19%	20%	17%	16%
#4 Priority	17%	12%	11%	8%
#5 Priority	2%	3%	1%	1%

Local Mission Needs (Inner City, Monument Valley, etc.)

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
#1 Priority	16%	17%	18%	23%
#2 Priority	31%	32%	33%	40%
#3 Priority	33%	33%	29%	17%
#4 Priority	17%	16%	18%	19%
#5 Priority	2%	2%	2%	2%

Local Church Needs (Church budget, Elementary schools, etc.)

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
#1 Priority	63%	73%	75%	68%
#2 Priority	19%	19%	17%	22%
#3 Priority	10%	5%	4%	5%
#4 Priority	6%	3%	3%	3%
#5 Priority	1%	1%	1%	1%

World Mission Needs (Guam Radio, World Budget, etc.)

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
#1 Priority	25%	21%	27%	41%
#2 Priority	16%	22%	26%	31%
#3 Priority	17%	14%	16%	11%
#4 Priority	39%	39%	29%	16%
#5 Priority	3%	5%	3%	2%

Other Needs

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
#1 Priority	14%	17%	15%	18%
#2 Priority	14%	21%	14%	31%
#3 Priority	5%	5%	4%	3%
#4 Priority	3%	5%	6%	4%
#5 Priority	63%	53%	51%	44%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 15.2 • Perception of Decision-making Involvement

I am actively involved in the decision-making process of my local church.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Agree	35%	50%	64%	61%

Source: 1988 Survey of Members

Table 15.3 • Attitude Toward Pastoral Leadership

I have confidence in the pastoral leadership of the local church.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	83%	82%	86%	89%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

16. Stewardship Education Methods

Younger church members are less likely to see participation in tithing as a spiritual issue. (See Graph 16.1.) Baby Boomers are more likely to see giving to the church as a practical issue, and this trend is even more pronounced with the succeeding Baby Bust generation. This means that they are less likely to respond to appeals based on loyalty to God or loyalty to God's church.

Younger church members are also less comfortable with practical elements of the Seventh-day Adventist Church giving system. For example, they are less likely to say that they think the envelope used for tithe and offerings in their church explains clearly what use is made of the monies they donate. (See Table 16.2.)

Three out of five younger members say that if a percentage of the Tithe Fund were allocated for their local church it would positively influence their giving to the church. (See Graph 16.3.) This is in stark contrast to GI-generation members, the majority of whom disagree with this approach. This presents a major dilemma for church leadership, particularly when it is combined with the information in Section 13 of this report which indicates that a significant number of younger members are already placing a portion of their tithe in the local church budget. Is this an ongoing trend? Will failure to modify the allocation of the Tithe Fund completely undermine its role in the future?

Giving by Baby Boomers is less likely to be influenced by special offering envelopes, by appeals from the pulpit by the pastor, by sermons on stewardship, and by audio-visual presentations. (See Tables 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, and 16.7.) Even if the tithe envelope were redesigned to focus on fewer options for giving—a proposal that has been put forth by stewardship specialists to try to reach out to younger church members—Baby Boomers and Busters would be less likely to respond positively than would older church members. (See Table 16.8.)

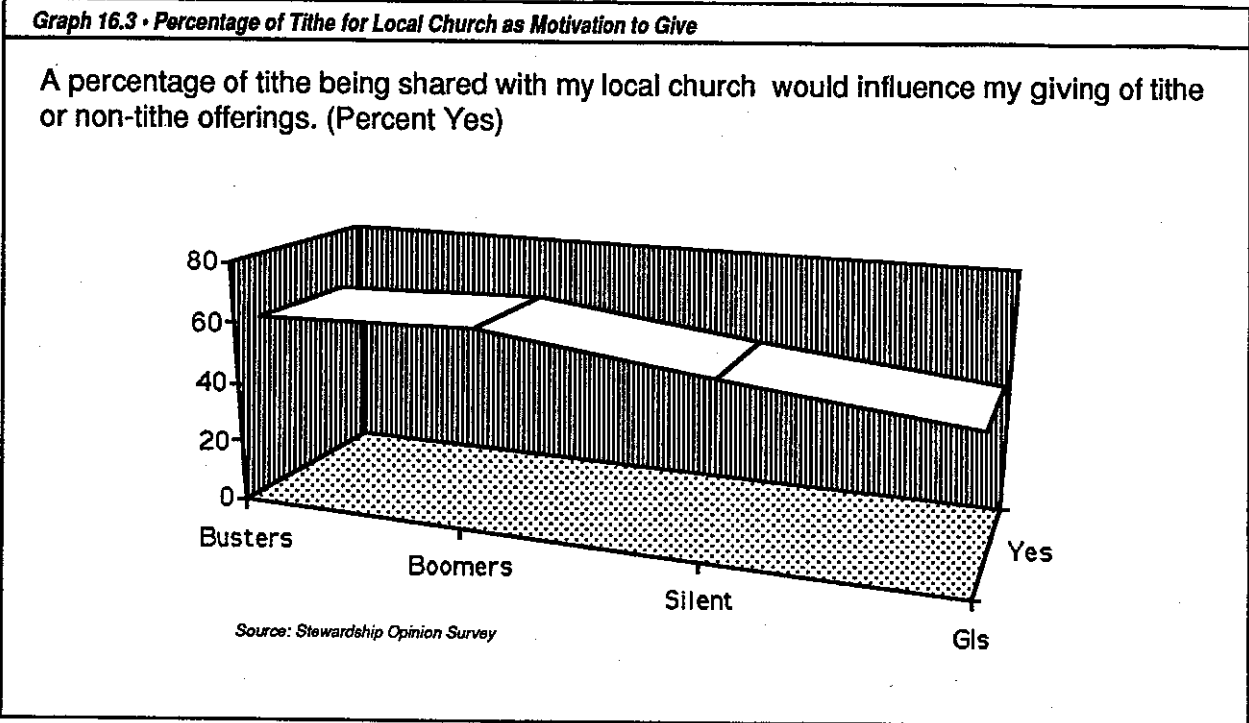


Table 16.4 • Special Offering Envelopes as Motivation to Give

Special offering envelopes would influence my giving of tithe or non-tithe offerings.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	40%	35%	38%	44%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 16.5 • Appeal by the Pastor as Motivation to Give

An appeal by the pastor from the pulpit would influence my giving tithe or non-tithe offerings.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	48%	54%	60%	63%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

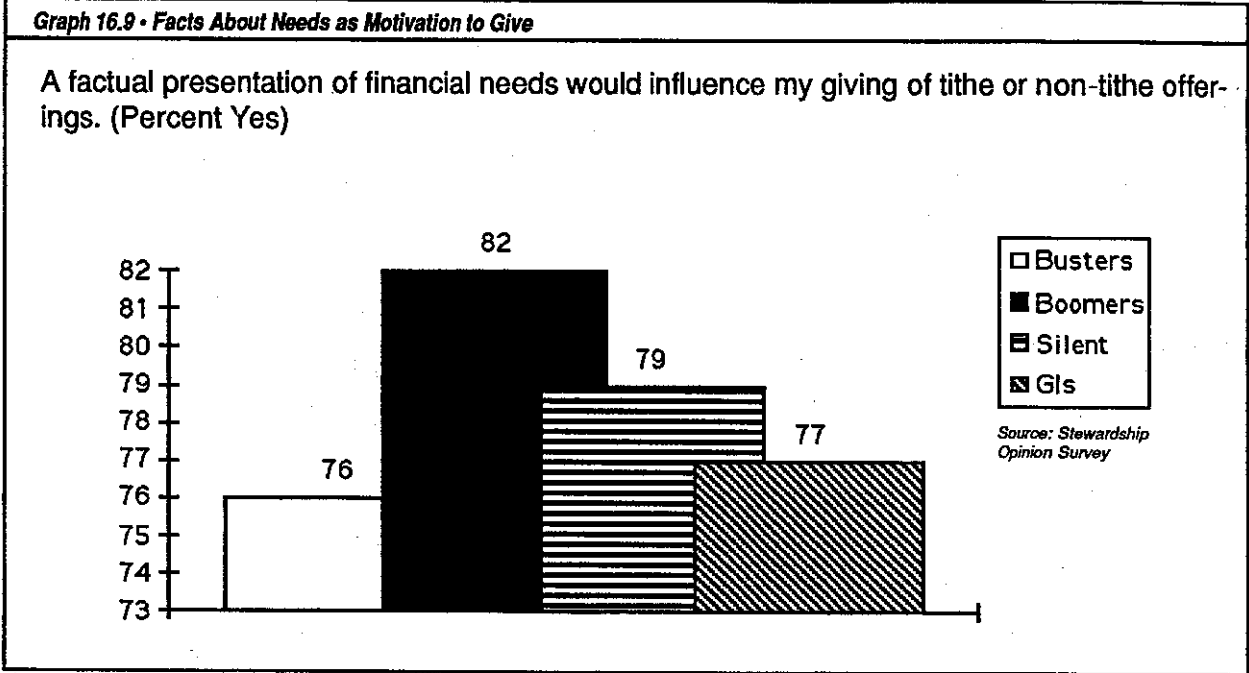


Table 16.10 • Bulletin Inserts as Motivation to Give

Informative bulletin inserts encourage me to give. (somewhat and strongly)

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	52%	50%	53%	48%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Table 16.11 • Income Deflation as Motivation to Give

My giving of tithe or non-tithe offerings would be influenced if my income were not to keep pace with inflation.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	23%	35%	26%	31%

Source: Stewardship Opinion Survey

Black teachers for Black children are more likely to be seen as important by younger church members. (Graph 17.11.) At the same time, they are less likely to want to set up a separate system of Black church schools in the Pacific Union. (Table 17.12.) Clearly a significant goal for African-American Baby-Boomer members of the Pacific Union is to increase the number of minority teachers and administrators in Adventist schools.

Table 17.1 • Support for the Satus Quo

I favor the present system the way it is without any change.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
No	86%	89%	86%	74%

Source: Survey of Black Churches

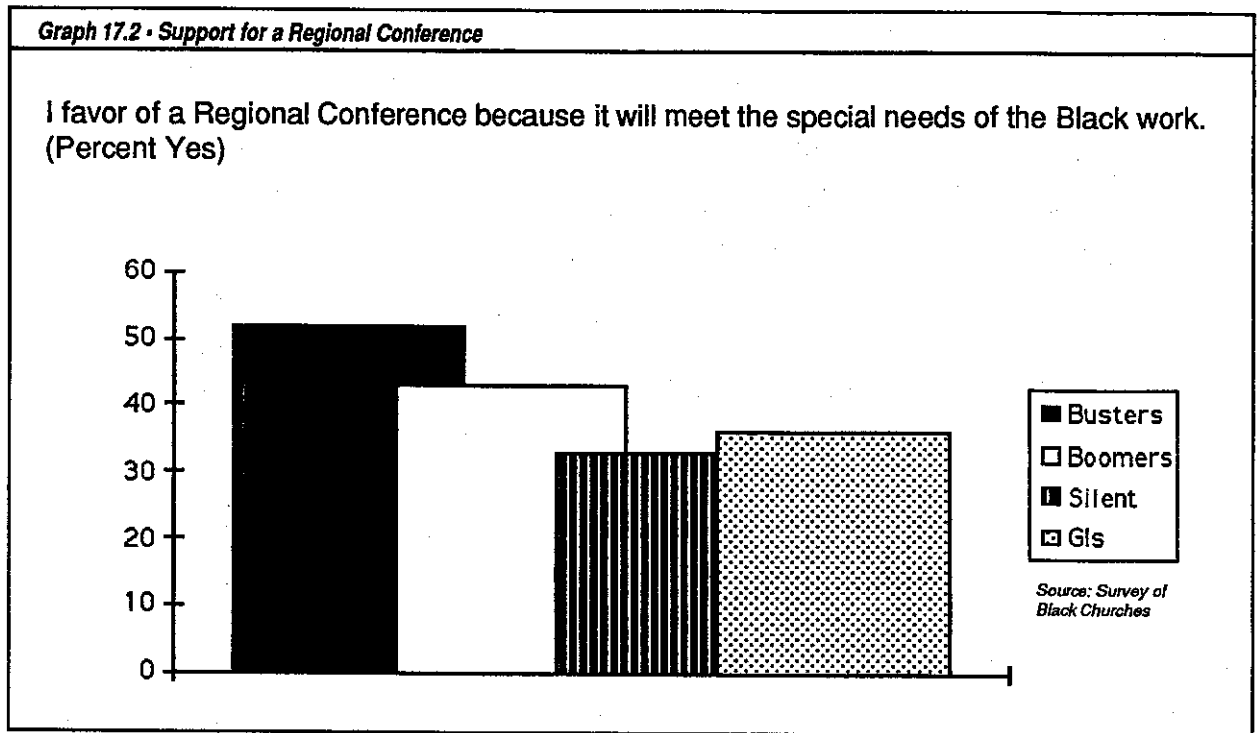


Table 17.3 • Support for a Modification in Present System

I favor the present system but with sufficient modifications to meet the special needs of the Black work.

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	69%	74%	82%	82%

Source: Survey of Black Churches

Table 17.7 • Lay Leadership in Black Church Activities

Are you qualified and would you be willing as a lay person to donate up to 20 hours a month of your time serving [in a leadership or staff role in] an inter-church activity or a community service activity?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	65%	64%	59%	49%

Source: Survey of Black Churches

Table 17.8 • Role of the Pastor in Black Churches

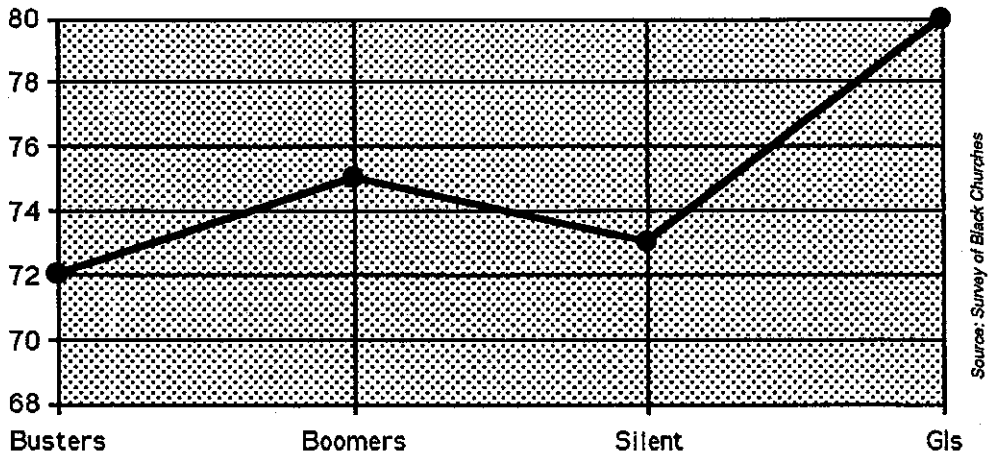
Do you think that someone else, other than the pastor (paid or unpaid), could be in charge of the secular business of the church?

	Busters	BBs	Silent	GIs
Yes	68%	67%	63%	60%

Source: Survey of Black Churches

Graph 17.9 • Evaluation of Preaching in Black Churches

Have most of the sermons you have been hearing on Sabbath morning met your spiritual, intellectual and emotional needs? (Percent Yes)



Appendix A: Items on Which There is No Generation Gap

A number of items from the surveys examined in this research revealed no statistically significant difference between the responses of the generations. These data present a set of opinions, attitudes and underlying values that are shared across generational lines by Seventh-day Adventists in the Pacific Union Conference.

Nine out of ten Adventists want to base their life on the gospel, like to hear a range of opinions about faith and life, prefer a thinking climate, and believe it is important to tithe. They want lay leaders who are compassionate and unbiased. They would like to see more community action by the church, and they give to the offerings taken at church.

Four out of five Adventists are unwilling to disfellowship church members who own guns. They like Sabbath School teachers who are well informed about social issues and who don't act like they have all the answers, but encourage the class to find answers together. If they had a better understanding of how church funds are used, they would give more, although they do feel that they have a good understanding of how the local church spends its money. They are convinced that the salaries of ministers should be paid from the tithe and that purchases such as a ski boat for the summer camp should not.

Three out of four church members would like their Sabbath School class to have a service project, and want the church place more emphasis on the health message. They believe that local church office equipment should not be purchased with tithe funds.

Two out of three Pacific Union members would be more likely to give if they more opportunities to give to specific mission projects, and believe that equipment for the local and union conference offices should not be purchased from tithe funds. They want to learn more about social justice issues.

A small majority of church members would like to see the Adventist Church take a stand on world peace as part of its witness, and respond positively to moving offering appeals. They feel a warm atmosphere at the Sabbath School they attend, and appreciate both the opening ceremonies and the class discussion.

Less than half of Pacific Union members have invited friends to attend Sabbath School with them in the last year, like variety in the Sabbath School Program and want the Sabbath School Secretary's Report brought back again. They would like to see the evangelism funding of the denomination shared equally between personal and public evangelistic projects.

Only about one in four church members respond positively to direct mail fund raising appeals and home visits to explain the financial needs of the church. There is a similar lack of support for paying (elementary-level) church school teachers from the tithe and Sabbath School classes structured around affinity groups.

Less than one in five Adventists report that they frequently invite non-Adventists to visit Sabbath School or worship. A similarly small percentage indicate that they have given some of their tithe to one or more of the Adventist media ministries.

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