

REPORT NUMBER ONE
STEWARDSHIP RESEARCH
OHIO CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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During 1985 there were 45 local churches in the Ohio Conference that experienced less Tithe income that they did during 1984. Two of these churches were disbanded during 1985 although they had actually ceased to function in 1984. All three of the Spanish-language congregations in the Ohio Conference were among the 45, but were excluded from this analysis due to the very different economic conditions existing among the minority group served by them. The following analysis was extracted from a data base of 40 congregations.

Two primary patterns quickly emerge. Of those churches with a Tithe loss greater than five per cent, 72% experienced a change in pastor during 1985. Of those churches with a Tithe loss of less than five per cent, 55% were involved in paying off a mortgage or raising funds for a building project. The analysis also included instances of major conflict, which did not emerge as highly significant. (Full display of data is given in the attached table.)

Only 15% of the churches did not experience a change in pastor or major conflict, were not involved in a building project, and still had a Tithe loss greater than five per cent. These six congregations are Dayton Far Hills, Mansfield, Miamisburg, Napoleon, Van Wert and Zanesville. Two of these congregations have entered into consultations to address the issue.

POSSIBLE CAUSATIVE FACTORS IN OHIO CONFERENCE CHURCHES WITH TITHE LOSSES

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Factor	Total Sample	Loss Over 5%	Loss Under 5%
Congregations with pastoral changes	62%	72%	36%
Congregations with building projects	25%	7%	55%
Congregations with major conflicts	25%	21%	35%
Congregations with one of the above	80%	79%	81%

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INSTRUCTION: PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. For the period of the last 12 months, circle the answer which best describes the degree you have been involved in:

- a. SABBATH CHURCH ATTENDANCE always usually sometimes never
- b. MIDWEEK CHURCH FUNCTIONS always usually sometimes never
- c. TITHING always usually sometimes never

2. If you do not regularly participate in Sabbath church services, please indicate why: (check the one most important reason)

- I don't feel accepted
- the Church doesn't respond to my real needs
- my job interferes
- personal health problems
- I am generally not interested
- home or family responsibilities interfere
- other activities interfere
- other (please write-in): _____

3. If you do not regularly participate in midweek church functions, please indicate why: (check the one most important reason)

- I don't feel accepted
- the Church doesn't respond to my real needs
- my job interferes
- personal health problems
- I am generally not interested
- home or family responsibilities interfere
- other activities interfere
- other (please write-in): _____

4. In your opinion, do the following factors affect church attendance?
(Please circle your response)

- a. Style or content of sermons do affect no affect don't know
- b. Quality of worship service do affect no affect don't know
- c. Friendliness of members do affect no affect don't know
- d. Quality and quantity of music do affect no affect don't know
- e. Influence of pastor do affect no affect don't know

5. In your opinion, do the following factors affect church attendance?
(Please circle your response)

- | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|
| a. Location of church | do affect | no affect | don't know |
| b. Visitation program | do affect | no affect | don't know |
| c. Church building & facilities | do affect | no affect | don't know |
| d. Annoying habits of members | do affect | no affect | don't know |
| e. Cares of the world impact
on members | do affect | no affect | don't know |
| f. Other family members | do affect | no affect | don't know |
| g. Other (please write-in) _____ | | | |

6. Do you understand how the Church uses your Tithe money?

___ Completely ___ Some Understanding ___ Very Little

7. Do you have a concern with how the Church uses your Tithe funds?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Undecided

If yes, what is your major concern? _____

8. If you are not returning a regular Tithe, is this because of: (check all that apply)

- ___ Bad economic times
___ Concern about how the Church uses the money
___ Lack of confidence in church leadership
___ Your own spiritual weakness
___ Hasn't been enough stress on importance of returning Tithe
___ Other, please write-in: _____

9. Is the primary wage-earner in the family: (check one)

___ retired? ___ unemployed? ___ employed?

10. If not retired, what is the occupation of the primary wage-earner?

Please write-in: _____

11. If you are not the primary wage-earner, what is your relationship to the primary wage-earner? (check which)

husband wife daughter son

other, please write-in: _____

I am the primary wage-earner.

12. Is your spouse the only wage-earner in the family? Yes No
If no spouse, check here and go to question 14.

13. If your answer to question 12 is yes, please check the line below that best describes your situation regarding Tithe and offerings. If your answer to question 12 is no, please go to the next question.

My spouse is an active church member and gives Tithes and offerings for both of us.

My spouse is not an active church member, but allows me to give a Tithe of what I earn.

My spouse allows me to Tithe the money he or she gives me.

My spouse does not care if I Tithe any money I may happen to get (from odd jobs, sale of items, gifts, etc.) but he or she will not allow me to Tithe any money he or she earns.

My spouse would be very angry if he or she found out that I gave any money to the church.

None of the above. (Please describe your situation) _____

14. As a member of the Adventist Church, how do you actually relate to the Tithe? (check all that apply)

a. I place it in the Tithe Fund through my church.

b. I keep it in a fund until the need of some individual or ministry is impressed on my mind.

c. I send it to the Tithe Fund at a mission or agency outside the Ohio Conference.

d. I am putting the Tithe in other places than the Tithe Fund because I am not happy with how the Tithe Fund is managed and used.

15. Of the patterns of Tithing checked in question 14, which do you do most often? Circle a b c d

22.

Which of the following actions by the church would tend to increase your giving, which would tend to decrease it, and which would tend to have no effect either way?

	Increase	Decrease	No Effect
Literature on stewardship sent by mail	_____	_____	_____
A series of sermons on stewardship given by your local pastor	_____	_____	_____
A strong stewardship program promoted and staffed by conference personnel	_____	_____	_____
Every member canvass in each church for pledges	_____	_____	_____
A pastor who helped me to know Christ better	_____	_____	_____
An outreach program designed by my local church with which I was personally involved	_____	_____	_____
An overseas mission project with which I could have personal contact	_____	_____	_____
Increased promotion of missions in general	_____	_____	_____
A list of tithing guidelines published by the GC to more clearly define the meaning of tithe	_____	_____	_____
A special weekend at a resort ^{RETREAT} where leadership would present needs and ask for my support	_____	_____	_____
A special weekend at a resort ^{MEETING} where leadership would answer my specific questions on the subject of church finances and ask my help for specific projects	_____	_____	_____
Increased lay representation at the financial decision making levels of church structure	_____	_____	_____
More emphasis on spending for public evangelism	_____	_____	_____
More emphasis on spending for alternative methods of evangelism	_____	_____	_____
More emphasis on spending for Christian education	_____	_____	_____
More emphasis on spending for youth programs	_____	_____	_____
Decreased expenditures for administrative costs	_____	_____	_____
More openness and accountability in church financial administration	_____	_____	_____