

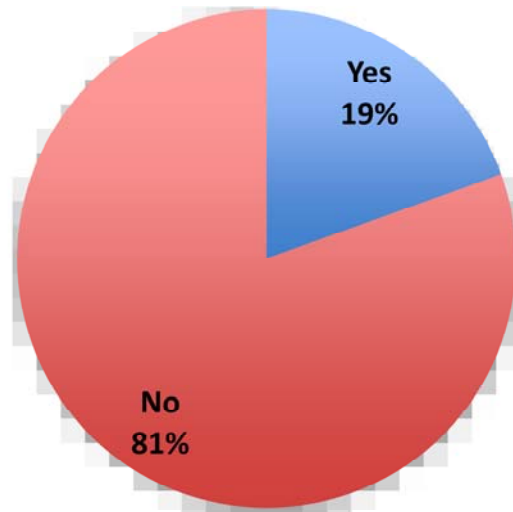
Survey of Teens and Young Adults

Mega Study 1
North American Division of the
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Source of Data in This Report

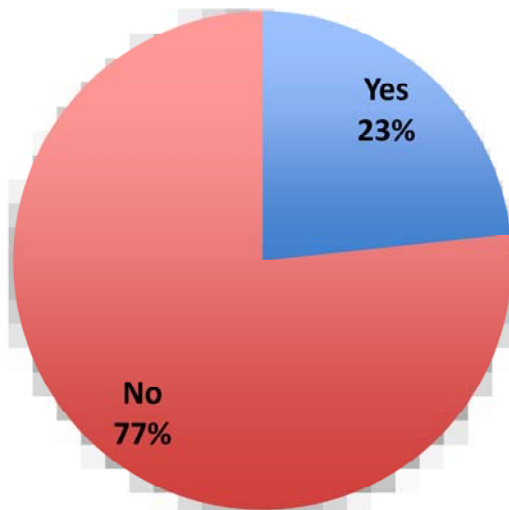
- A random sample of 500 local congregations in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were asked to distribute a questionnaire specifically to the members under 30 years of age. A total of 1,215 individuals returned questionnaires. The standard allowance for statistical error in a sample of this size is two percentage points, plus or minus.
- This study was conducted for the NAD Office of Strategic Planning, Research and Assessments by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University.

Attending an Adventist University, College or Secondary School



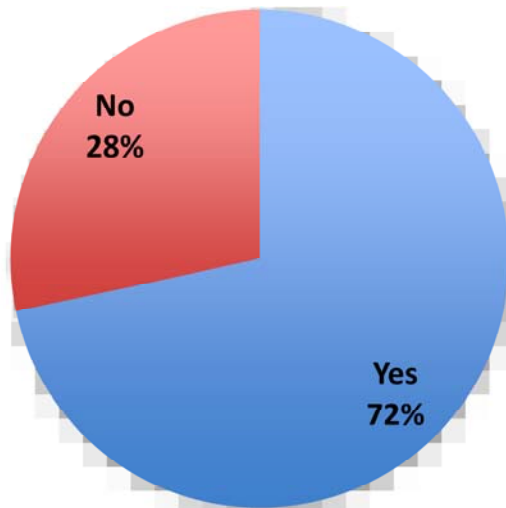
About one in five Adventists under 30 years of age are enrolled in Adventist schools. Four out of five teens and young adults are attending non-Adventist schools or have ended their education and are employed full time or, in a few cases, married and involved as full-time homemakers. The denomination's schools cannot be used as an avenue to connect with the vast majority of Adventist young people.

Member of Church Board



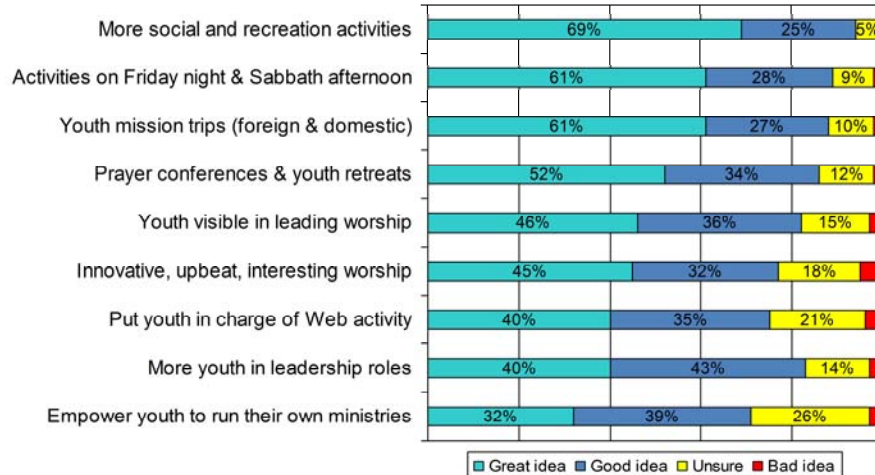
Less than one in four Adventists under 30 years of age serves on a local church board. This suggests that young people have little input or stake in local church planning, decision-making or governance. Do local churches in the North American Division operate largely outside the awareness or involvement of the next generation of Adventists?

Part of Small Group or SS Class



Nearly three out of four Adventists under 30 year of age participate in a Sabbath School class or small group of some kind. This is clearly the front line for youth ministry in the North American Division. It suggests that more attention should be given to equipping local, volunteer youth leaders with group dynamics training and resources designed to be easily used in small-group settings.

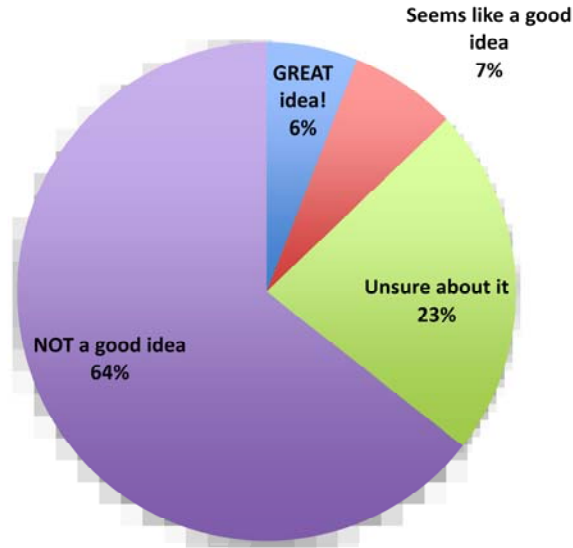
What would help young people become more engaged in the church?



Bad idea responses of 1% to 5% unable to fit in visual.

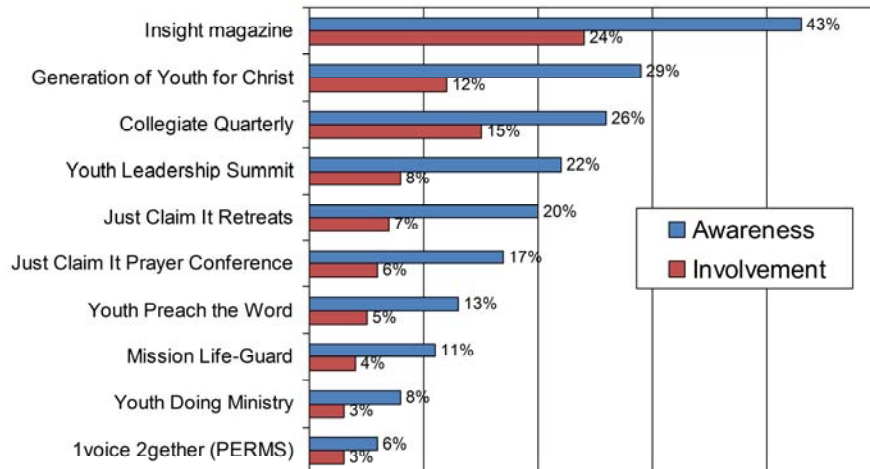
While the majority of church members under 30 years of age approved of all of these methods of engaging young people in the local church, as many as one in four express some ambivalence about the empowerment of their peers in various ways. Very few indicated that any idea was “not good,” and the largest negative (5 percent) appears to be about worship style issues.

Discourage Meetings with Youth from Other Local Churches



The one method of engaging young people in the local church that the majority of members under 30 are negative about is when church leaders attempt to “discourage youth from visiting and attending meetings with youth from other churches.” Policies that seek to keep young people in the local church where their membership is located by discouraging activities at other local churches are rejected by two thirds of the teens and young adults in the North American Division. It would be a mistake to use this approach.

Awareness of & Involvement with Youth Ministry Resources & Programs



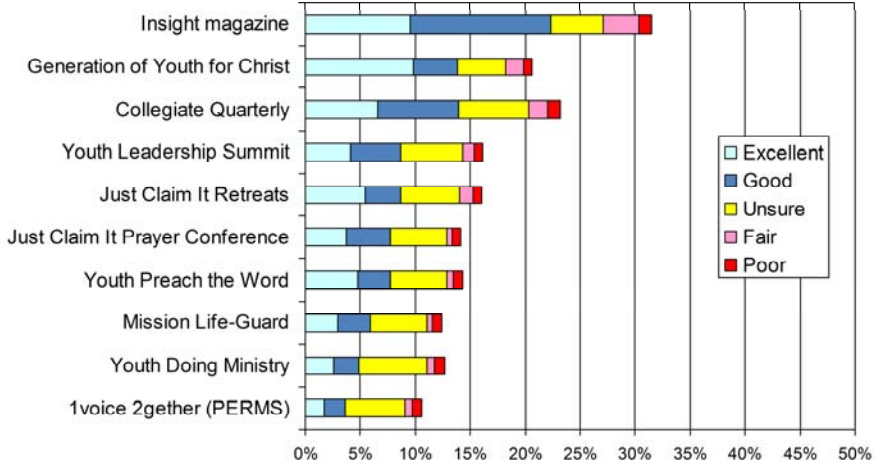
The majority of Adventists under 30 years of age are simply not aware of the resources and programs that the North American Division is currently providing to support youth ministry. The most widely known resource is Insight magazine and only two in five of the young people have any awareness of it. Just one in four actually get a copy of the magazine even occasionally.

The second most widely known youth program is not one provided by the denomination, but an independent ministry, Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC). Less than a third of Adventists under 30 have heard of GYC and less than one in eight has actually attended a GYC event.

About one in four young Adventists have heard of the Collegiate Quarterly. About one in six actually use the Collegiate Quarterly. There is evidence from other research that a significant share of the circulation of Collegiate Quarterly is consumed by adults over 30 who like it because they have a college education, not because they are in the target age group.

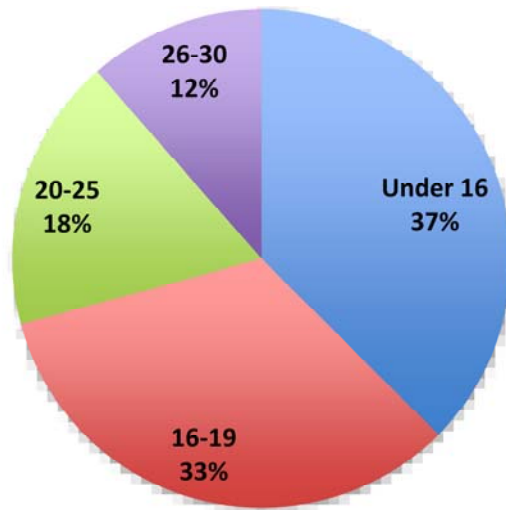
The other seven resources and programs included in this survey were each known to less than a quarter of Adventists under 30 years of age. The percentage of actual participation in these programs is in the single digits for each one. In general, the majority of Adventists under 30 are disconnected from the resources and programs that the Church is using to implement youth ministries.

Assessment of Youth Ministry Resources & Programs



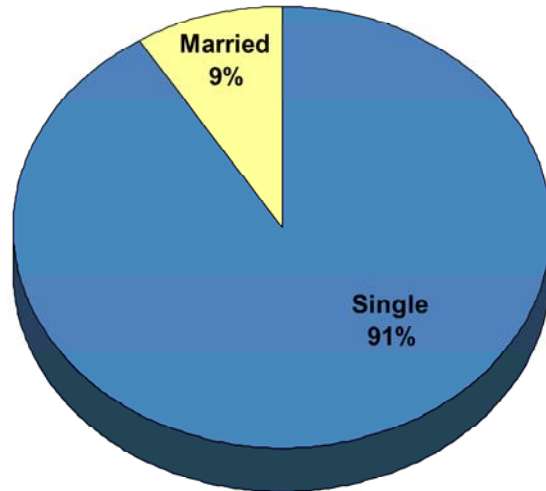
The three more popular youth ministry resources and programs were given a positive assessment by the majority of the respondents in each case. The other seven programs and resources received an uncertain or negative assessment from the majority of respondents. These seven programs are so little known that Adventists under 30 do not really know what to think of them.

Age Profile



More than a third of the respondents in this survey are early teens under 16 years of age and most likely not yet students in a secondary school. This means that a significant portion of the respondents are still children and not yet really in the teen or young adult target groups. Without careful analysis there is the risk that children will continue to have more influence over youth ministries than they should if the primary purpose of youth ministry in the North American Division is to engage and hold teenagers and young adults, the age groups in which the greatest loss to membership occurs.

Marital Status



More than nine out of ten Adventists under 30 years of age are unmarried. Less than ten percent of the oldest individuals in this age group are already married. Consequently, the opportunity to meet and get acquainted with potential life partners is a major personal agenda item among the young people of the church.

- This report was produced by Peter Cincala, Roger Dudley and Monte Sahlin, May 2014.

Institute of Church Ministry
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan
(269) 471-3589