

Seventh-day Adventists in Canada

Survey of Church Members
Conducted for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada
by the Center for Creative Ministry

2011

Introduction

A survey of church members was commissioned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada and conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry. The purpose was to gather information about the demographics, involvement, spiritual life and stewardship patterns of church members as well as get input from the people in the pews.

A random sample of 1,227 individuals was obtained using a customized, four-page questionnaire. A stratified random sampling method was used. A sample of local churches was drawn from the total list of churches for each of the eight conferences in Canada using a random sample generator at www.random.org and these samples were examined (and, if necessary, replaced with new random samples) to make sure that a proportionate number of congregations in various languages and ethnic groups were included. Each of the pastors of the sample churches was phoned by a professional research interviewer working for the Center for Creative Ministry to discover the number of individuals who usually attend and confirm the pastor's willingness to distribute the questionnaires. They were then shipped a package of questionnaires and instructions on how to administer the survey.

Out of the 39 local churches in the sample, a total of 22 returned packages of completed questionnaires. That is a 56 percent response rate, well within accepted scientific standards for probability survey research. Churches from all eight conferences returned questionnaires.

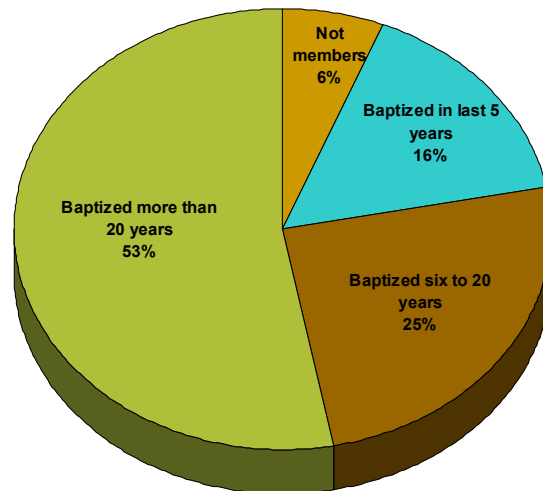
An allowance for sampling error must be made in all survey research. At the 95th percentile of reliability, the allowance for sampling error in this survey is three percentage points, plus or minus.

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Status of Church Attenders

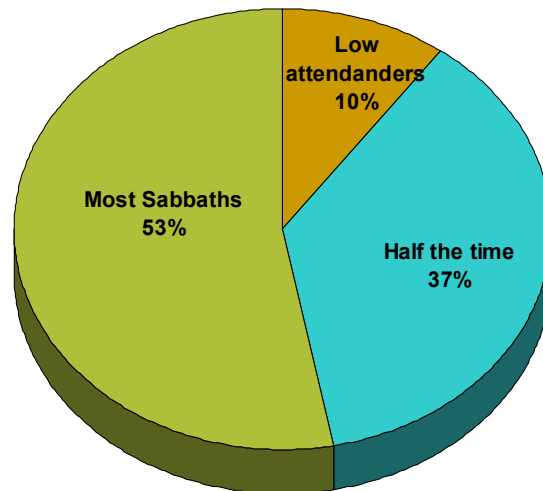


The majority of Seventh-day Adventists in Canada have been baptized members for more than 20 years. Those over 45 years of age are more likely to be long-term members, as are those who have completed a university degree and those who attend church every week. Members who report their ethnicity as white are more likely to be long-term members than are visible minorities.

One in six members (16%) were baptized in the last five years. This is more than twice the rate for the Adventist Church in the United States and indicates the evangelistic effectiveness of the Church in Canada.

About six percent of the people sitting in the pews each Sabbath indicate that they are not baptized members of the Adventist Church. The majority of these individuals are over 30 years of age, so these are largely not children from church families.

Attendance Pattern

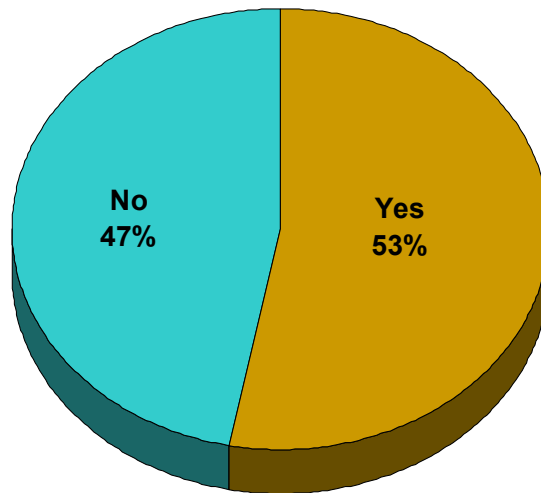


The majority of members report that they had attended church each of the previous four Sabbaths. Although it is unrealistic to think that these individuals never miss a Sabbath due to illness, vacations, business travel, etc., they do attend most Sabbaths. Seniors citizens and those with less education than a secondary diploma are even more likely to attend church most Sabbaths.

More than a third of the respondents indicated that they had attended either two or three out of the previous four Sabbaths. These are active members although they attend about half the time.

One in ten respondents reported that they attended either one of the previous Sabbaths or none. These low attenders are more likely to be young adults and new converts baptized in the last five years.

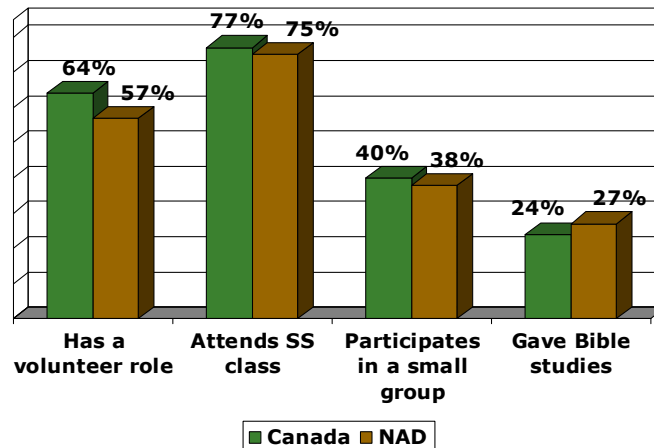
Raised by Adventist Parents



The majority of the members were raised as Seventh-day Adventists. This is even more likely to be true among those under 45 years of age, those who have a university degree and those who indicate they are among the visible minorities. Those who attend less often on Sabbath are also more likely to have been raised by Adventist parents.

Middle-aged and senior church members are more likely to have joined the Church as an adult. The same is true for those who report their ethnicity as white.

Church Involvement



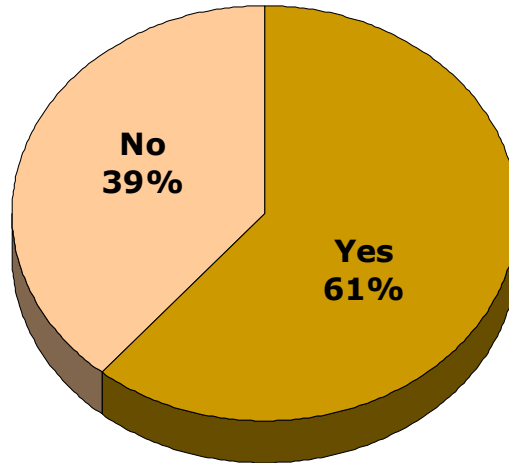
Nearly two-thirds of members have some volunteer role in the church or a related organization. Middle-aged members are more likely to have a volunteer role while young adults are significantly less likely to be involved. Whites are more likely to have a volunteer assignment than are visible minorities.

More than three out of four members regularly attends a Sabbath School class. Those over 45 years of age are more likely to do so while young adults are significantly less likely to participate.

Two in five members indicate that they usually meet with a small group for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. Middle-aged members are more likely to do so, while those under 45 years of age are less likely to participate.

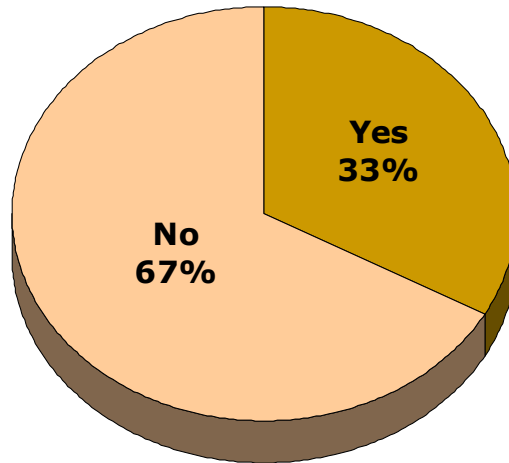
One in four members report that they held Bible studies with a non-member in the previous year. Middle-aged members are more likely to give this response, as are those who indicate they are from a visible minority group.

Were You Personally Asked to Volunteer in a Church Ministry During the Last Year?



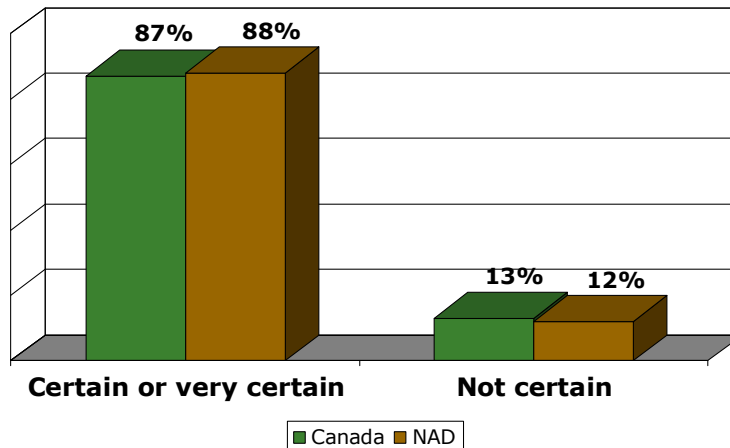
Nearly two-thirds of the members who attend church were personally asked to volunteer time in some ministry of their local church or a program sponsored by their church. Younger adults under 45 years of age were more likely to give this response. So were those who attend regularly, those with a university degree and those who indicate that their ethnicity is white. Seniors over 65 were more likely to report that they were not asked and so were those who attend less often, new converts baptized in the last five years, and those members with little education.

Attended a Training Event in the Last Year



A third of the members who attend church report that they have attended a training event on witnessing or in some area of church ministries during the previous 12 months. This includes training activities provided by the local church, the conference or other organizations affiliated with the Adventist Church. Respondents with a university degree are more likely to give this response, as are those who attend church more regularly and middle-aged members in the Baby Boom generation.

Assurance of Eternal Life

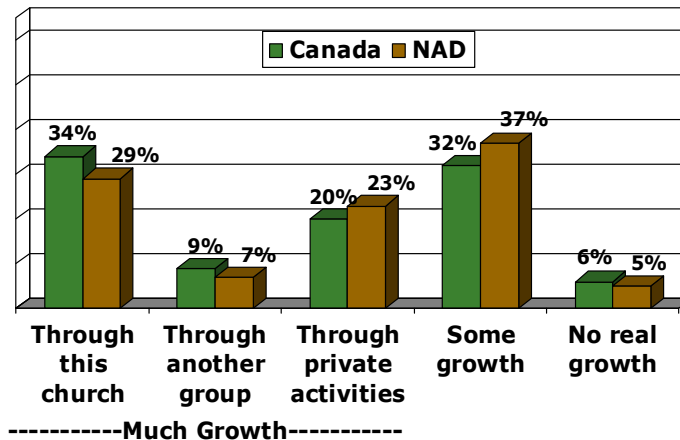


Since 1980 surveys of Seventh-day Adventists in North America have asked this question as a measure of spirituality: Please circle the number that shows the assurance that you have of eternal life. The five point scale runs from “very certain” to “not sure.”

Nearly nine out of ten members in Canada selected one of the top two numbers indicating that they are certain or very certain of eternal life. Less than one in eight selected a number indicating a lack of certainty. This one indicator of a strong spiritual vitality in the Adventist churches in Canada.

New members baptized in the last five years and young adults are less likely to give such a strong response. The same is true for those who attend church less often and those who have less than a secondary education. These data indicate that ongoing discipleship ministry with recent converts, young adult ministries and outreach to the less active members are important avenues to build the spiritual strength of the Church.

How much have you grown in your faith in the last year?

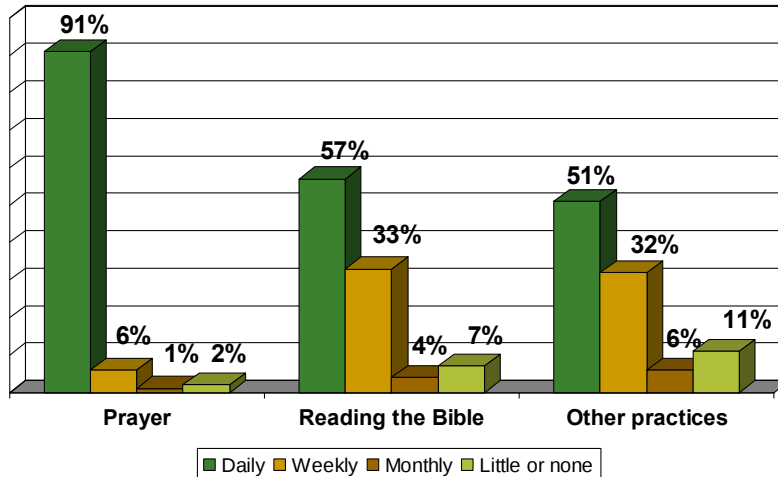


The majority of members report that they have had much growth in their faith during the last year. A third attribute this to their local church while one in five attribute it primarily to their own private devotional activities and one in ten attribute it to other groups or ministries. This last category includes some people who are thinking of a small group or activity sponsored by their local church and some who are thinking of a group that is not connected with their local church, including media ministries, online activities, groups sponsored by other denominations, interfaith groups and independent ministries with an Adventist background.

A third of the members say they have had only “some” spiritual growth in the last year. Low attenders are more likely to give this response, as are those who report their ethnicity as white and those who are young adults.

Just one in seventeen members say that they had no real growth in their faith in the last year. This small percentage is spread evenly across all segments of the respondents and is not concentrated in any particular demographic groups.

How often do you engage in these devotional practices?

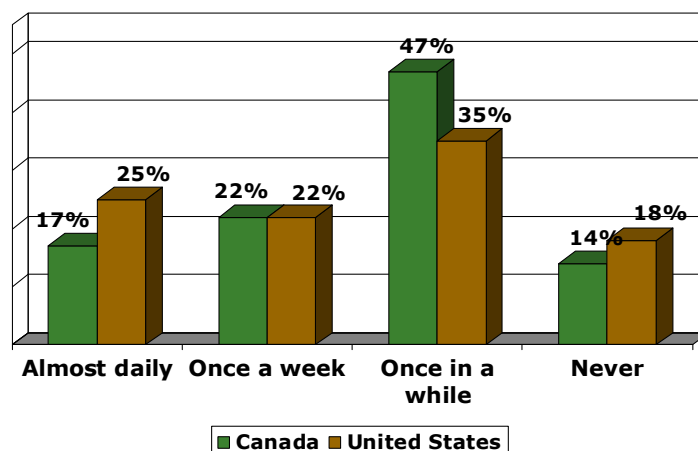


More than nine out of ten members indicate that they pray daily. Low attenders are somewhat more likely to say they pray only monthly or less often. This item correlates with age. The older a member is the more likely they are to pray daily.

The majority of members report that they read the Bible daily. The majority of new converts baptized in the last five years are more likely to study the Bible less often. The same is true for members under 45 years of age.

The majority of members also report that they engage in other devotional practices on a daily basis. Those over 45 years of age are more likely to do so, as are those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years, those who attend almost every Sabbath and those with a university degree. Low attenders, new converts and young adults are less likely to engage in other devotional practices.

Conversations with Coworkers about their Personal or Family Needs or Spiritual Topics

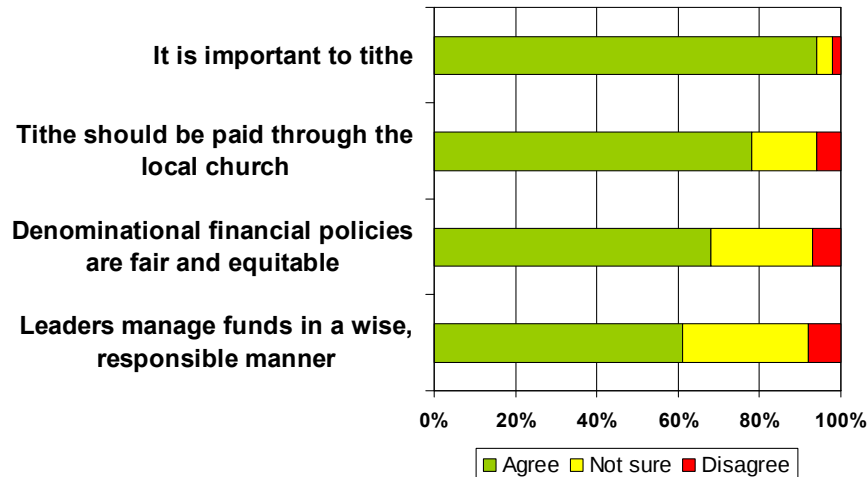


How often do church members engage in “friendship evangelism,” informal conversation about the personal or family needs of acquaintances or spiritual topics? One in six say they do so almost every day while another 22 percent report doing so about once a week. Nearly half (47 percent) indicates that these opportunities only come along once in a while.

Middle-aged members from the Baby Boom generation are more likely to report engaging in conversations of this nature. Seniors over 65 years of age are less likely to do so. Otherwise the responses of various demographic segments do not differ significantly.

Adventist Church members in the United States were asked the same question in a previous survey and were somewhat more likely to report such conversations almost daily while members in Canada are more likely to say they have such opportunities only once in a while. This is consistent with research that shows that Canada is a more secular society than the U.S. It is also significant that within the U.S. conversations of this type are more likely to be reported in the South and Midwest while the responses in the Northeast and West are like these data in Canada.

Attitudes on Key Issues



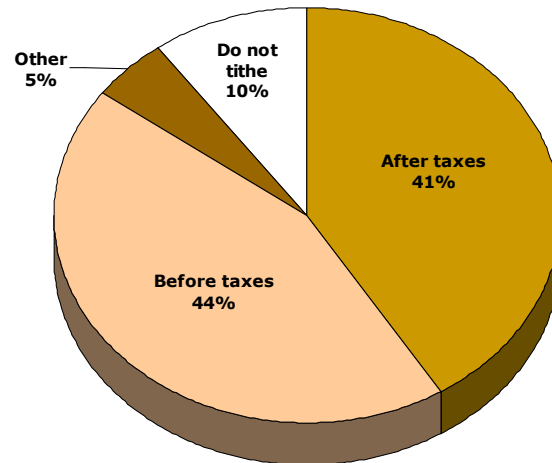
Adventist members almost universally believe that tithing is important. More than 94 percent of the members in Canada agree with this doctrine. There is no significant variance across all segments of the membership.

Nearly four out of five members (78 percent) agree that tithe should normally be paid through the local church. Seniors are more likely to agree with this guideline, while young adults are significantly less likely to agree with it, as are new converts baptized in the last five years.

More than two-thirds of members (68 percent) think that denominational financial policies are “fair and equitable.” Seniors are more likely to agree, as are those who have been members for more than 20 years and those who attend church almost every week.

About 61 percent of members say that church leaders use church funds “in a wise and responsible manner.” Seniors are more likely to hold this view. Small numbers are negative on any of these items. Much larger numbers are not sure probably because they lack information on the topic.

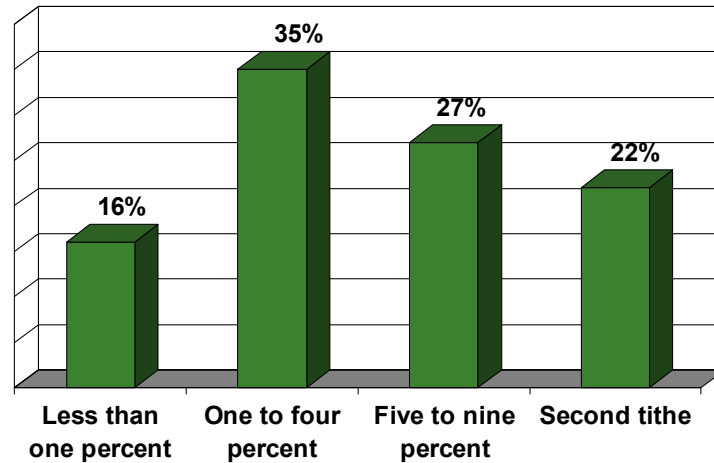
How Do You Calculate Tithe?



Six out of seven active church members in Canada (85 percent) report that they pay tithe either on their gross income before taxes or on their net income after taxes. Either method is within the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Another five percent say they pay tithe on the amount left over after major living expenses. These may include some individuals who are living on social assistance funds that provide amounts of income tied directly to certain costs of living or may actually pay those costs indirectly, outside the control of the church member. This is actually a gray area relative to church teachings about which Adventist theologians have a variety of views. One in ten respondents confess that they do not pay tithe.

Seniors are more likely to base their tithe on gross income before taxes, as are members who identify their ethnicity as white and those who have been baptized members for more than 20 years. Members under 65 years of age are more likely to base their tithe on net income after taxes, as are those with university degrees and visible minorities. New converts baptized in recent years are more likely to not tithe, as are those who attend less often and young adults.

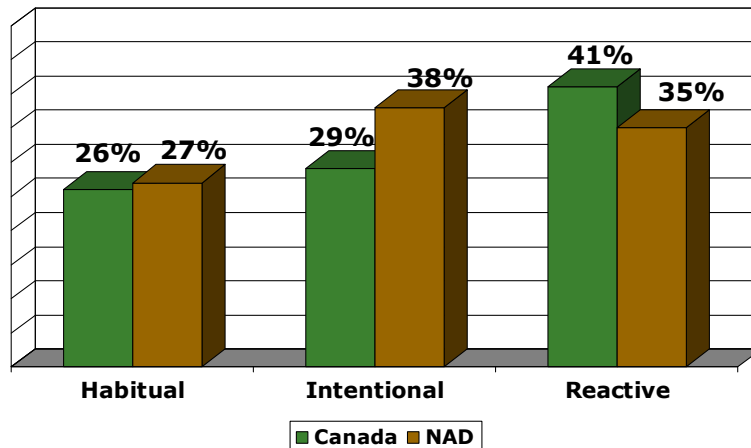
In the last year what percentage of your income did you give to offerings (not tithe)



Most church members give offerings of various kinds in addition to returning tithe. The largest number (35 percent) indicate that the offerings they gave in the past year amounted to one to four percent of their income. The median giver turned in offerings amounting to just under five percent of their income. Nearly one in four (22 percent) gave offerings equal to their tithe or more than their tithe.

Young adults, recent converts and those with a low attendance pattern are more likely to give less than one percent of their income to offerings. Seniors over 65 years of age are more likely to give five percent or more of their income. Adults 35 to 65 years of age are more likely to give one to four percent of their income to offerings, as are those with a university degree.

Giving Styles

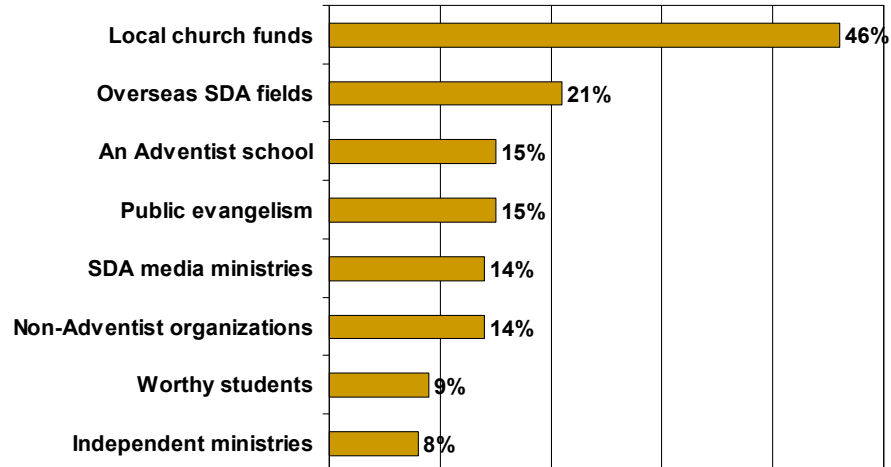


Habitual givers are people who give a set amount of money each Sabbath. Older members are more likely to fall into this pattern; people long ago began a pattern of putting \$20 in the offering plate, for example, regardless of the purpose of the offering.

Intentional givers are people who give a percentage of their income to offerings in much the same way that tithe is ten percent of income. These are people who use the Personal Giving Plan taught by the Stewardship Department or a similar method. Those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years are more likely to be in this category.

Reactive givers are those who give as they are motivated by appeals for certain offerings, who support certain projects or ministries, or decide on the spur of the moment based on what money they happen to have with them. They must be stimulated to give or they may not give at all. Members under 45 years of age and those who attend church less often are more likely to be in this group.

In the last year have you given any of your tithe to these non-tithe categories?

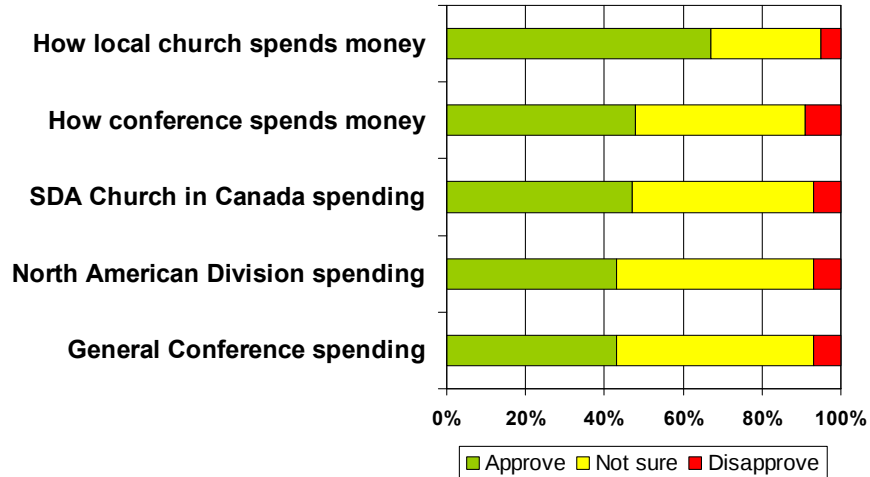


The majority of church members say they have given some of their tithe to other funds in the last year. The largest number report giving some tithe to local church ministries or the building fund. Adults in their 30s and early 40s are more likely to give this response.

About one in five church members indicate that they have sent some of their tithe to a local church, conference or mission overseas. Members who indicate that their ethnicity is white are more likely to do this than those who are visible minorities.

One in seven church members have given some of their tithe to fund raising for an Adventist school, or to a public evangelism campaign, or one of the Adventist media ministries or a charity or Christian ministry not affiliated with the Adventist denomination. Those over 65 years of age are more likely to give tithe to one of the media ministries while those with a university degree are more likely to have given some tithe to a charity or ministry outside the Adventist movement. Less than one in ten church members report giving some of their tithe to support a worthy student or to an independent ministry with Adventist ties.

Opinions About Church Finances

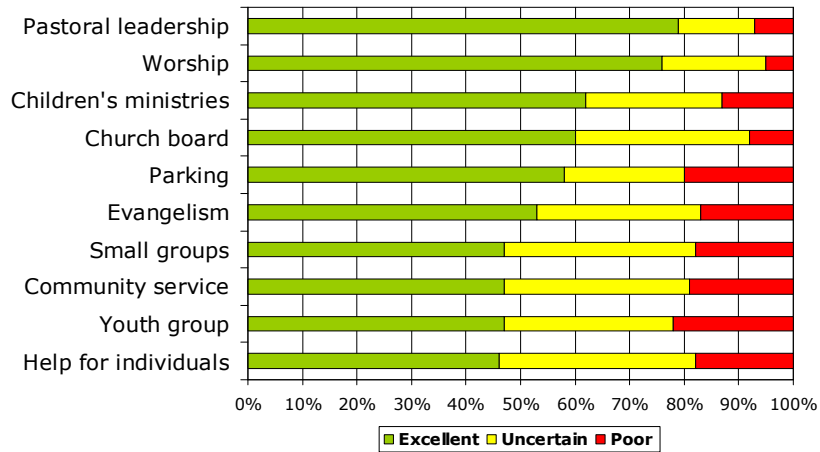


A strong majority of members approve how their local church spends its money. Seniors are more likely to agree than are those under 45 years of age.

Less than half of church members approve of how the various levels of the denomination outside the local church spend the funds they manage. The levels of disapproval do not change much. The lack of affirmation for the spending priorities of the local conference, the union, the division and the General Conference is largely the result of members who say they do not have enough information on the topic to make a judgment. At each level older members affirm the spending patterns with thin majorities while younger members are less supportive. Those with more education are also slightly more likely to affirm the management of denominational funds.

These data seem to indicate that the financial reports presented by various denominational organizations are not communicating well with the constituency. Study needs to be given to find ways to present reports that are simpler, more easily understood and more clear in conveying the reality of denominational finances. The existing report methods undercut the loyalty and support of church members.

Evaluation of the Local Church



Four out of five church members evaluate pastoral leadership in their local church as excellent. Only seven percent say it is poor. Seniors and new members baptized in the last five years are more likely to give the pastor an excellent rating, while those who attend less often are more likely to say the pastor's leadership is poor.

Three out of four members say that worship at their local church is excellent. Only five percent are negative. Older members are more likely to be positive about worship, as are recent converts and those from visible minorities. Low attenders are more likely to be negative.

Nearly two-thirds of church members (62 percent) rate children's ministries in their local church as excellent, while only one in eight (13 percent) rate it as poor. Members under 45 years of age are more likely to give to rate it excellent, as are those who are visible minorities and those with university degrees. Those who report their ethnicity as white and middle-aged respondents are more likely to rate children's ministries as poor.

Continued on the next page >>>>

Six in ten church members say that their local church board is excellent. Young adults and members over 65 are more likely to give this report, while middle-aged members in the Baby Boom generation are more likely to say it is poor. The same is true for those who attend church less often.

The majority of church members (58 percent) indicate that parking at their local church is excellent. One in five indicate that it is poor. Older, white members are more likely to indicate that parking is excellent, while younger members under 45 years of age are more likely to indicate that at their church the parking is poor.

A somewhat smaller majority (53 percent) evaluate the evangelism activities at their local church as excellent, while one in six (17 percent) rate it as poor. Members who do not have a secondary diploma are more likely to evaluate evangelism as excellent, as are members over 65 years of age and those baptized in the last five years. Those who attend church less often are more likely to evaluate evangelism as poor.

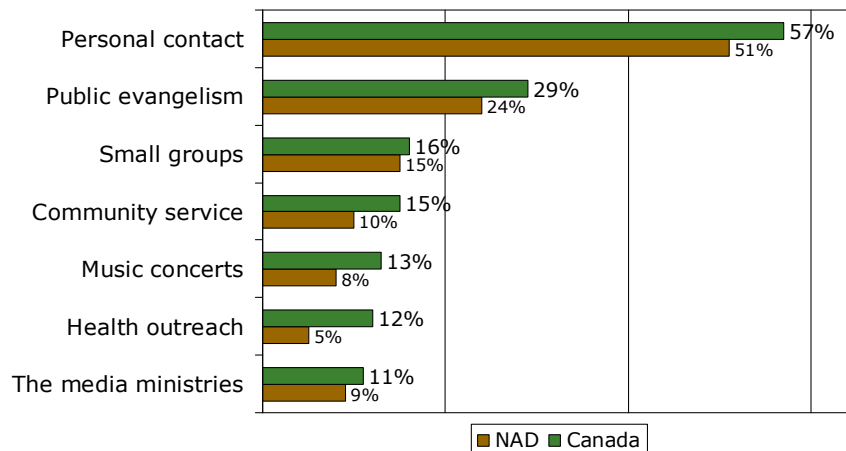
Weaknesses in the Local Church

Four aspects of local churches are seen as poor or mediocre by the majority of members in Canada. The members rating small group ministries, community service, the youth group and help for individuals at their church as excellent is 47 percent or 46 percent in each case. Nearly one in four members (22 percent) rate the youth group at their local church as poor, while 19 percent rate community service as poor and 18 percent rate small group ministries and help for individuals as poor.

Young adults are even more likely to rate local church youth groups as poor, as are white members. Middle-aged adults are more likely to give a negative rating to small group ministries and help for individuals. Members in their late 30s and early 40s give the same evaluation to small group ministries.

These are the four areas that most need to be strengthened in local church ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. Other research has shown that they are related to the fact that one quarter to one third of the members on the official lists have stopped attending church.

Observed to be Most Effective Methods in Bringing in New Members



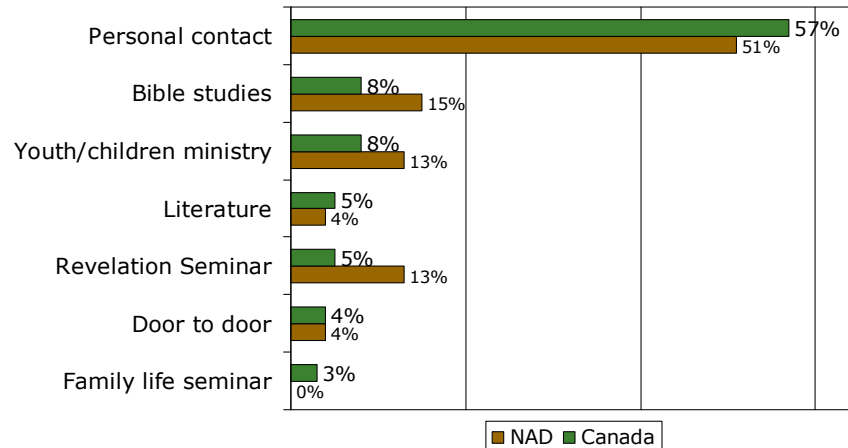
Church members were asked, “What have you observed to be the most effective method for bringing new members into this local church?” The largest source of new members is personal contacts with friends and relatives. This is often called “Friendship Evangelism” and is an even more important source of church growth in Canada than it is across North America. Younger church members are more likely to give this response, as are those with a university degree and those who indicate that their ethnicity is white. This is the single more important avenue for evangelism in Canada.

Public evangelism is also important, especially as a “reaping” mechanism. About one in three members say that this is a source of new members in their local church. Members over 65 are more likely to give this response, while those under 45 are much less likely to do so.

Small group Bible studies and community service are highly effective approaches to church growth, more so in Canada than elsewhere in North America. In each case about one in seven members report seeing these as important sources of new members. Adults in their 30s and 40s are more likely to make this observation and converts baptized in the last five years are more likely to mention community service.

Significant numbers of members also report seeing new members join from music concerts, community health outreach and the denomination’s radio-television ministries. Young adults are more likely to mention concerts, while seniors are more likely to mention the media ministries.

Observed to be Most Effective Methods in Bringing in New Members - Continued

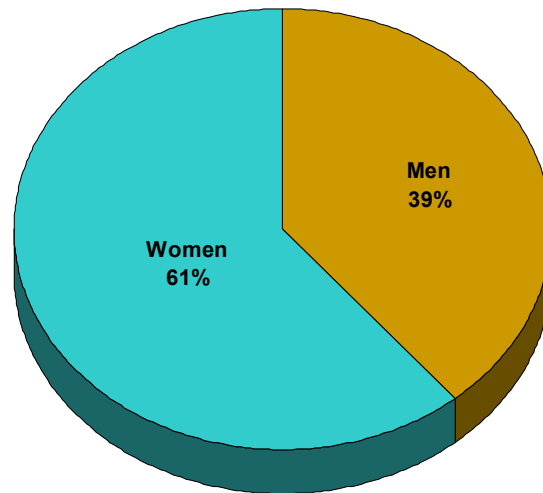


Relatively small numbers of church members report seeing growth in their local church because of personal or family Bible studies, youth or children's ministries, literature, Revelation Seminars, door to door contacts or family life seminars. Three of these methods are significantly less effective in Canada than they are other places in North America. Young people are more likely to have observed conversions from youth ministry, as are new converts baptized in the last five years. Members over 65 years of age are more likely to report seeing new members join due to literature. Members who have not completed a secondary diploma are more likely to see door to door contacts as effective. Otherwise all demographic segments had the same observations in response to the items displayed above.

From the previous page: Community health outreach is significantly more likely to be seen as an effective source of new members by members who identify their ethnicity as white, as well as those who have a university degree and those over 45 years of age.

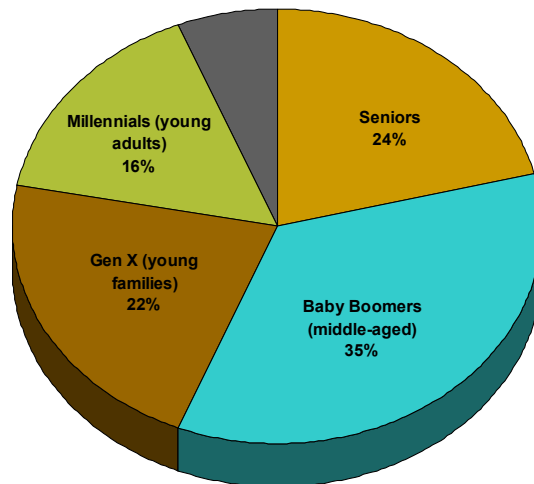
Respondents were told to limit their response by selecting two items off the list. A number selected additional responses and all responses are included in the data displayed on this page and the previous page.

Gender



The Adventist Church in Canada has a much larger share of women among its attending participants than is present in the general population. Just 51 percent of the population of Canada is female and 49 percent are men. This imbalance is a widespread reality in North America among all Protestant denominations. Many theories have been advanced as to why it is true, but none of have been proven in a convincing manner with hard evidence. Nonetheless, women make up the dominant majority in almost all local churches, yet the clergy and the lay leadership is overwhelmingly made up of men. This creates a situation in which it is difficulty to meet the needs of some women in the church, certain temptations may be presented to some men and women, and young adults of both gendersò but especially young womenò are repelled by the apparent inequality. This is one of the fundamental challenges for the Adventist Church in North America today.

Generations



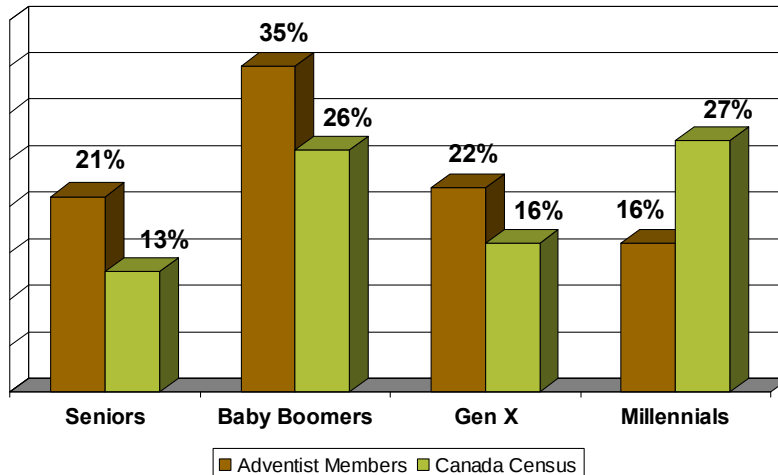
There are currently four generations of adults in Canada. **Seniors** were born in 1945 and earlier. In 2011 they are 66 or older. This is the generation that fought World War II and expanded the Adventist Church in the 1950s when many of the local churches in Canada were planted. One in four church members are in this generation.

Baby Boomers were born from 1946 through 1964. They are now middle-aged, 47 through 65 years of age in 2011. This is an exceptionally large generation, the first raised under the influence of television and Rock & Roll music. More than a third of church members are in this generation.

Generation X is more politely labeled the Baby Bust generation by demographers. It was born from 1965 through 1977 and is 34 through 46 years of age in 2011. These are the parents of young families and a much smaller generation. A little more than one in five church members are in this generation.

The Millennial generation was born from 1978 through 1994. It currently makes up the young adults in the population, 17 to 33 years of age in 2011. Just one in six church members are in this generation.

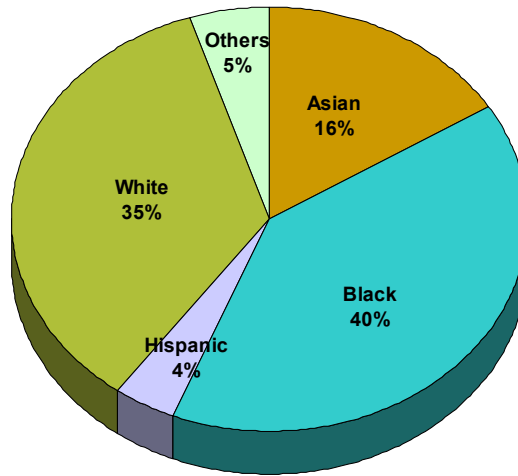
Generations: Adventist Members Compared to the General Population



The people who attend Adventist churches in Canada include more older folk over 45 years of age and significantly fewer young adults than the percentages in the census of adults in Canada. People under 17 years of age are not included in the data displayed above.

Unlike the Adventist membership in the United States, the Church in Canada has a favorable number of members in Generation X or the Baby Bust generation. These are the parents of young families in their 30s and 40s, an age group particularly important to church growth and vitality. The U.S. membership has relatively few in this generation and is, overall, significantly more aged than the membership in Canada.

Ethnicity

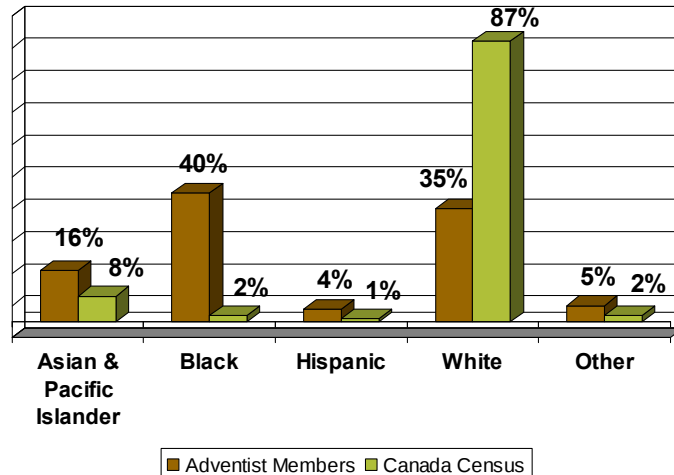


The largest number of Adventist Church members in Canada identify their ethnic background as either “Caribbean” (21 percent) or “black” (19 percent). They are combined in the 40 percent black in the graph above. Nearly half of those who identify their ethnicity as black are under 45 years of age and probably represent the second generation or children of immigrants raised in Canada, a number of them native born. Both responses are more likely among new converts baptized in the last five years.

More than a third of church members identify their ethnicity as “white.” They are much more likely to be older members over 45 years of age. They are also more likely to have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years and to have been born in Canada. About one in six church members identify their ethnic background as Asian or Pacific Islander. They are more likely to be under 45 years of age and to have a university degree.

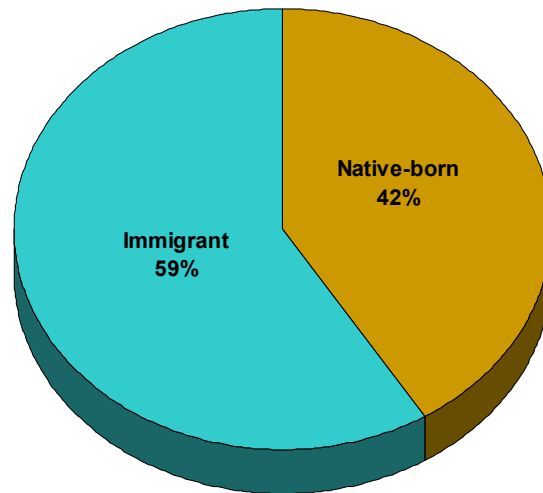
Only four percent of the members identify themselves as Hispanic. They are much more likely to be new converts and under 45 years of age. Few of these were born in Canada. Two percent of the members identified themselves as multi-ethnic. Less than one percent indicated that they are among Canada’s native or First Peoples. Three percent claimed an ethnicity other than the ones listed here.

Ethnicity: Adventist Members Compared to the General Population



The Adventist Church membership is much more diverse than the general population in Canada. There is twice the proportion of Asian and Pacific Islanders among Adventists than in the general population, four times the proportion of Hispanics and 20 times the proportion of blacks and Caribbean immigrants. In each of these visible minority groups the Adventist mission has penetration very successfully. To some degree this is because of the much higher percentage of Adventists in some countries from which immigrants come than has ever been present in Canada. Among white, native-born Canadians the proportion is a little more than one third the percentage in the general population. This group along with the native or First Peoples of Canada represent a major challenge for the Adventist mission.

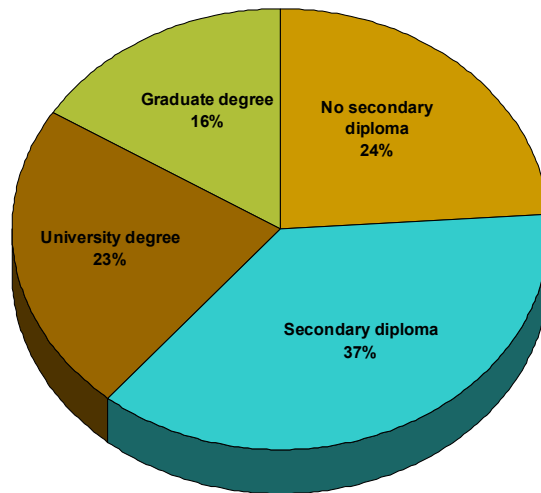
Immigration



The majority of Adventist Church members in Canada are immigrants not born as Canadian citizens. This is a little more than three times the 18.5 percent of the general population who are immigrants. Many of the Adventist members who are immigrants live in the two metropolitan areas with the highest percentage of immigrants in Canada. In Toronto metro area 44 percent of the general population consists of immigrants and in Vancouver it is 19 percent of the general population. One of the missional challenges for the Adventist Church in Canada is the significant number of immigrant congregations who need to take on the task of reaching the native-born population in their immediate community.

The immigrants among the Adventist membership are more likely to be 35 to 65 years of age, while the native-born are more likely to be under 35 or over 65. Immigrants are also more likely to be long-term Adventists baptized more than 20 years ago, visible minorities, regular church attenders and to have a university degree. The native-born are more likely to attend church less often and have less education.

Education

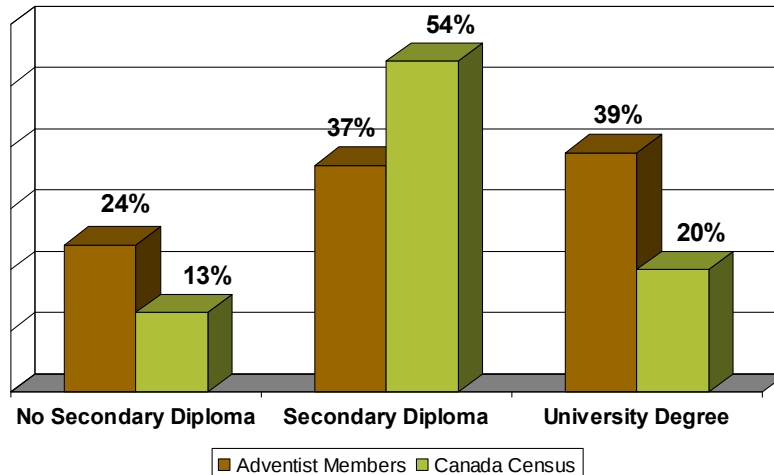


Nearly two in five Adventist members have completed a four-year degree in college or university. One in seven have also completed a graduate degree. Younger members are more likely to have higher education, as are visible minorities.

About a third of members have a secondary diploma and may have attended college or completed additional education less than a four-year university degree. Young adults are more likely to have some college and this may be due to the fact that a number of them are still pursuing higher education. Whites are more likely than visible minorities to have only a secondary degree.

One in four church members have not completed a secondary diploma. Seniors are more likely to be in this category, as are recent converts baptized in the last five years. Whites are more likely than visible minorities to give this response.

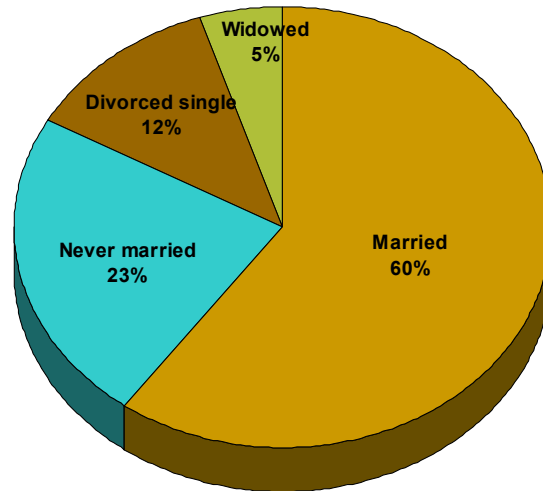
Education: Adventist Members Compared to the General Population



The Adventist membership includes nearly twice as many people who have not completed a secondary diploma as the general adult population, but it also includes nearly twice as many who have completed a four-year university degree. The educational level of Adventist Church members is very diverse, with relatively fewer members in the middle category. Additional analysis may reveal that some local churches have a majority of less-educated adults and others have a majority of highly-educated adults. If that proves to be true it would indicate that a variety of approaches to pastoral leadership and church ministries is necessary to avoid conflict and optimize church growth.

The diversity in education among Adventists in Canada may be greater than its ethnic diversity. It may be related to a number of challenges in terms of preaching, methods of outreach, ways of involving members in ministry and decision-making processes.

Marital Status

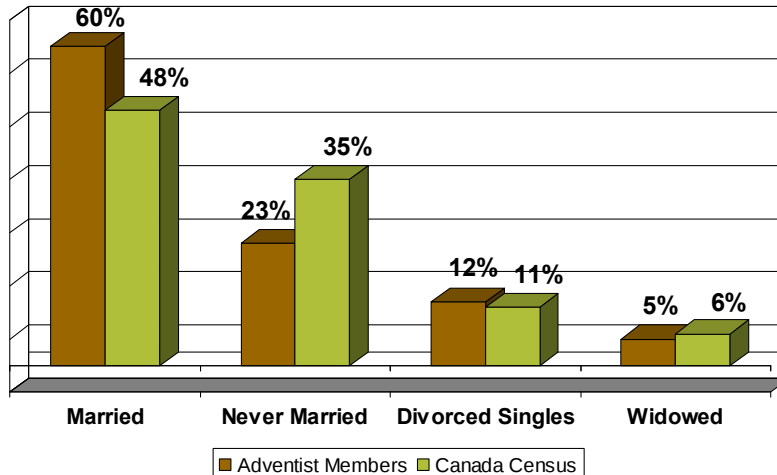


The majority of church members are married. Those who are 35 to 64 years of age are even more likely to be married, as are those who have been baptized Adventists for more than 20 years, those with a university degree, those who report their ethnicity as white and those who are more regular church attenders.

About one in four members (23 percent) are single adults who have never been married. Young adults are more likely to indicate this status, as are new converts baptized in the last five years, visible minorities and those who attend less often.

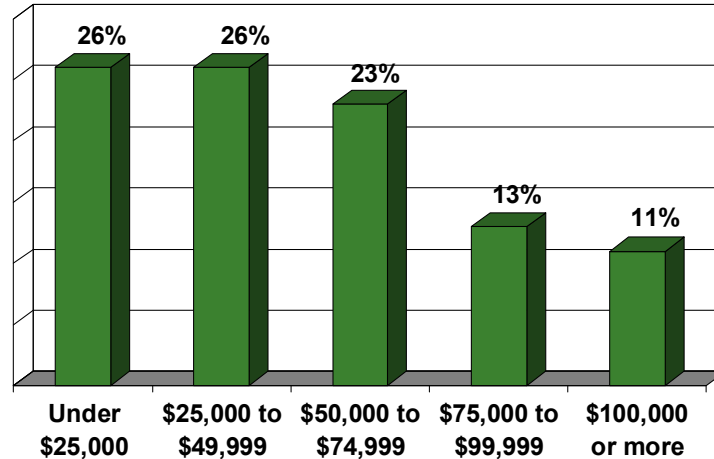
One in eight members are divorced and remain single. Middle-aged people in the Baby Boom generation are more likely to be in this category. About five percent of members are widowed and seniors over 65 are more likely to give this response.

Marital Status: Adventist Members Compared to the General Population



There are significantly more married people and fewer young singles among the Adventist membership than in the general population in Canada. This is related to the age profile of the church membership. It also reflects some significant issues in church growth and ministry. The Adventist Church is "graying" and not as effective in reaching and holding young adults. The difference between the standards taught by the Adventist Church and the common patterns of sexuality among the young adult population in society are one of the issues involved in this situation. The differences between the percentages of divorced singles and widowed individuals among church members and in the general population are not statistically significant.

Annual Household Income



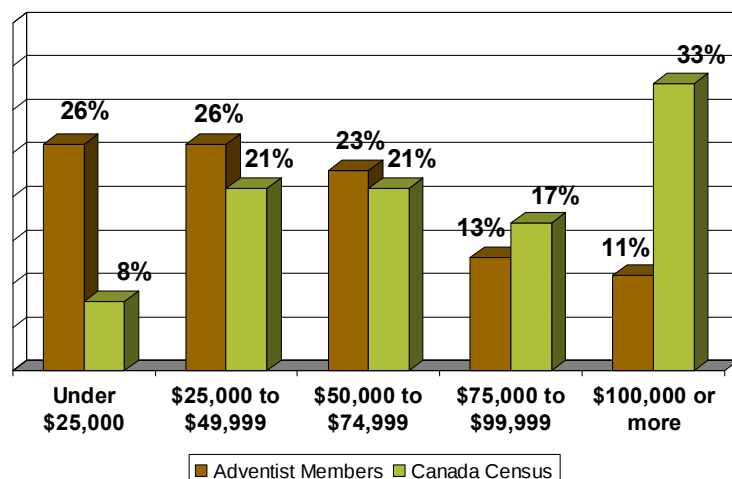
One in four church members live in low-income households with annual incomes of less than \$25,000. Seniors are more likely to be found in this category, as are those with little education and new converts baptized in the last five years.

One in four members live in lower middle-class households with annual incomes of \$25,000 to \$49,999. A little less than a quarter of members live in middle middle-class households with annual incomes of \$50,000 to \$74,999. Adults under 45 years of age are more likely to be in this category.

One in eight members live in upper middle-class households with annual incomes of \$75,000 to \$99,999. Middle-aged members and those with university degree are more likely to be in this category.

About one in ten members live in households with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more. Young adults under 45 are more likely to be in this category, as are those with university degrees.

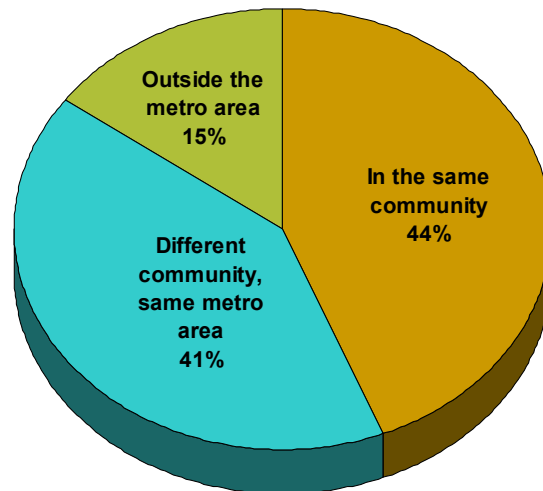
Annual Household Income: Adventist Members and the General Population



Adventist Church members in Canada are more likely to be among the low-income and lower middle-income segments of society and less likely to be found in the upper middle-income and high-income segments. The median household income for Adventists is near \$45,000 a year while the median income for all Canadian families is close to \$75,000 a year.

These data indicate the further diversity of the Adventist membership in Canada with a significant low-income membership and a number of members in the highest income range who are greatly outnumbered in the general population. These data also suggest two missional issues that may, at first, seem contradictory. First, many local churches will need strong community service programs for the poor both among their own members and the community where they are located. Second, there is a need to develop congregations that meet the needs of families with higher incomes.

How far is your home from your local church?



Nearly half of church members (44 percent) live in the same community where their church is located. Those who indicate that their ethnicity is white are more likely to give this response. So are seniors over 65 years of age.

Two in five members live in a different neighborhood than the one where their church is located, but in the same metropolitan area. Young adults are more likely respond this way, as are new converts baptized in the last five years and members of visible minority groups.

One in seven members live outside the metropolitan area where their church is located. These members are more likely to be among those who attend church less often probably, in part, due to the distances they must travel to church.

Suggestions for Church Leaders Most Were About the Local Church

- Need more youth pastors/youth ministries
- Need more personal evangelism training for lay leaders and church members
- Need more visitation by pastors
- Church must do more to meet needs in the community—poverty, hunger, immigration
- Involve all members in outreach/ministry
- Expand prayer ministries

Only items mentioned by many respondents
are included in the slide

An open-ended question was included on the questionnaire asking for suggestions of any kind to Church leaders. The largest number of the suggestions written by respondents focused on local church needs and concerns. The suggestions listed above are in rank order from the most-often mentioned items at the top. Included here are only those items mentioned by many respondents.

There were smaller numbers of respondents who asked for “more sermons on end-time events” and that steps be taken to “discourage favoritism” or “cliques.” A number wrote, “teach grace instead of works.” A significant number asked for more small group ministries. Others wrote about their perception that there is need for more unity of purpose and Christ-like love among church members.

A large number of suggestions were mentioned by only one or two respondents. They are all transcribed in this report, starting on the page following the next page.

Suggestions for Church Leaders Regarding the Denomination

- Leaders should be an example of Christ's leadership [servant leadership]
- Greater transparency in financial reporting; better communication with members
- Reduce number of meetings that require travel expense
- Do a better job of selecting pastors, matching them with churches and evaluating them
- Reduce the layers of organization
- Do better at understanding needs of local churches
- Be more open to new ideas, more progressive

Only items mentioned by many respondents
are included in the slide

The suggestions listed above are in rank order from the items mentioned most often at the top. The items displayed above include only those mentioned by a significant number of respondents. Many more suggestions were written by church members.

A number of respondents stated that they are happy with the way things are going in the Church in general. A few asked for more help from the conference for local churches in obtaining buildings and more support for small congregations. Others suggested that more women should be in leadership roles in the conferences, the union, the Division and the General Conference. A few complained that the Adventist Church is becoming too much like the Catholic Church, too legalistic, too many rules, too formal.

The next page includes a complete transcription of all the suggestions mentioned by only one or two individuals in each case. This data is included not because it is statistically significant, but to honor our promise to the respondents to pass on their comments.

Question 40: Specific Suggestions for Adventist Church Leaders

Additional responses regarding the local church: Only one or two individuals wrote each of the following comments. It is clear that some of these comments are in response to very specific local conditions in a particular church while others are more generally about the local church across Canada. Items are separated with ellipses (...). Comments have been paraphrased and reduced in length but as much of the original flavor and language as possible has been retained. Clearly not all of these comments agree with each other and a few simply do not make much sense.

ôMore media ministry in the local churches ... more church socials ... quit doing long prayers in worship ... more literature distribution ... need more parking ... need a balance between outreach activities and congregational activities ... there is not enough time for Sabbath School ... a mentoring program is needed for young adults and new members ... provide more support for families ... build church buildings that are plain and simple, not fancy ... do background checks on new members to see if they are from God or from the Devil ... better music and up-dated instruments in worship; not just the hymnal.ô

Regarding Pastors: ôPastors need to be more accessible to people facing hard times ... the pastor sets the tone ... I like our pastor! ... the pastor's wife should be a helpmate ... the pastor should be more involved and work at least 40 hours a week like the members do.ô Two respondents mentioned specific criticisms of a unidentified pastors's shortcomings.

Regarding Adventist Schools: ôSupport our schools more ... evaluate the performance and improve the Adventist school system ... more financial assistance for single parents is needed ... stop giving 60 percent of church budget to church school.ô

Regarding the Denomination: ôHelp small churches with resources, training, and pastoral support ... the church is too lax ... stop communicating the offensive ideas that only Adventists are the remnant ... we need more emphasis on Reconnecting Ministries ... use Canadian speakers for camp meeting ... need more discussion of acceptance as different from approval ... promote the health message ... simplify the Adventist Church mission statement and publish it in the Sabbath School quarterly ... have more outdoor camp meetings ... don't use spiritual resources from non-Adventist sources (for example, VBS materials) ... support evangelism by Three Angeles Broadcasting and Amazing Facts.ô

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