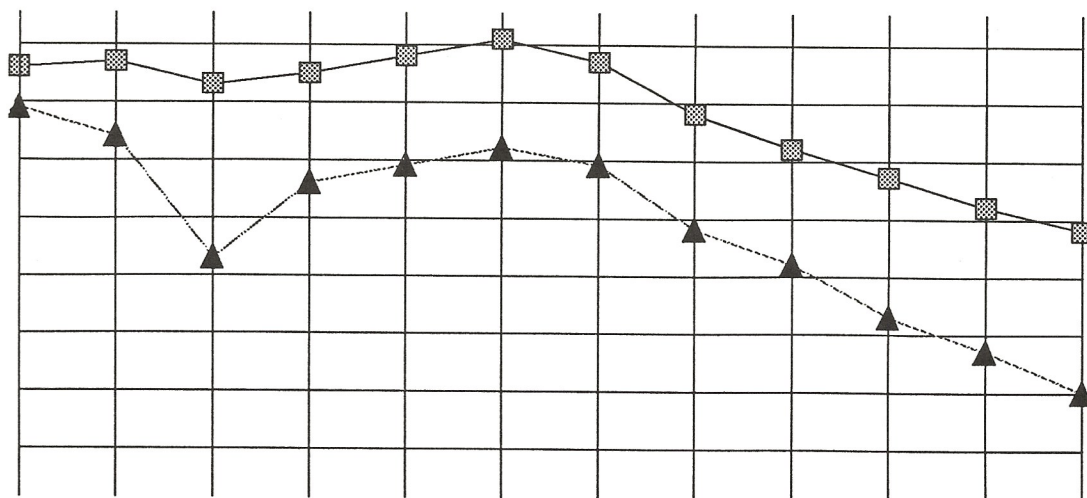


THE ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL A NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Church Ministries Department
North American Division of the General Conference
Seventh-day Adventist Church
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Executive Summary

The adult Sabbath School is the focus of a needs assessment conducted by the NAD Church Ministries Department in 1989-90. Two surveys and five focus groups were completed by the Institute of Church Ministry and Advance Marketing Group, Inc. The findings were compared with a study completed in 1989 by the Pacific Union Conference CM Department, as well as earlier studies and official statistics from the General Conference CM Department.

The adult Sabbath School is in need of revitalization. Average attendance has declined from 80% of church membership in 1960 to 40% of church membership in 1990. The actual number of participants has held at about 300,000 since 1965. Younger adults—the Baby Boom generation, now 26 to 45 years of age—need to be helped to buy into the Sabbath School. Otherwise it is in danger of becoming an institution identified entirely with the generations born before 1946.

The key to revitalization is the lesson discussion. Four out of five church attenders belong to an adult class and value the class experience more highly than they do the introductory “program.” An increase is needed in the number of adult Sabbath School classes positioned to meet the needs of Baby Boomers and other church members who do not enjoy the traditional class located in a few pews in one corner of the main sanctuary.

Three out of four participants come to Sabbath School seeking personal spiritual growth; few are interested in theological study. The adult Sabbath School curriculum lacks specific objectives for spiritual growth such as the measures of spiritual maturity used in the Val-uegenesis study conducted for Project Affirmation.

Two out of three church members would like a longer time for class. The time allowed for classes to meet must be increased. Three out of five report that they expect an opportunity to express themselves during the Sabbath School class. They dislike teachers who lecture. Sabbath School teachers need to improve their ability to observe and listen to their class members—get better feedback—so that they can improve the class as it is experienced by the learners.

Two out of three church members believe that fellowship activities are an important part of the Sabbath School class. The fellowship needs of church members cannot be ignored. Time to welcome visitors, recognize personal events such as illness and anniversaries, and talk about prayer requests is a vital part of the ministry of the Sabbath School. But, these elements are rated as weaker than are the more cognitive elements when church members are asked evaluate their class. **The relational and outreach dimensions of the Sabbath School class need to be improved without weakening the cognitive and spiritual strengths that exist.

Only 26% of current attenders prefer a traditional style of class. A larger number (46%) prefer a small class that uses a participatory, inductive approach to Bible study. Another third would like quite different approaches—relational Bible study, social action-oriented study, etc. A variety of teaching styles and materials are necessary to adequately meet the needs of all Sabbath School members. Attendance at Sabbath School is not likely to increase until a “full menu” is offered in a significant portion of the local churches across the NAD.

Four out of five Sabbath School teachers have had no recent training. The majority have never had any training. Class leaders need training in group dynamics and non-traditional teaching methods in order to make their classes more participative and make good use of additional class time. The NAD and Pacific Union are collaborating in the production of a series of training videos for this purpose. The producers used the raw data from this study in developing these materials.

Less than a third of church members are following a plan of daily lesson study, although there has been a dramatic increase in the percentage who are involved in daily personal Bible study. The devotional practices of NAD members are becoming more diverse and non-traditional. The decline in the use of the Sabbath School lesson is not simply a decline in the devotional practices and spirituality of church members. It is an indicator of the perceived usefulness of the materials.

Nearly half of those who study the lesson are using a quarterly other than the Standard edition. NAD Adventists no longer have a single quarterly, but choose from among five versions of the Adult Sabbath School Lesson. And one in eight are using study guides not published by the denomination.

Asked to rate the quarterlies they use, church members say the materials are strong in doctrinal and spiritual emphasis, but weak in the relational and witnessing elements. Four out of five say the discussion and application questions are the vital elements in the quarterlies. Many church members would appreciate a quarterly that is more concise. Others would like to see the Sabbath School lesson deal more with contemporary life issues. They worry that it is in danger of becoming too scholastic and unrelated to the world in which they live. More effective materials are needed to help church members to make life application of the Bible principles taught in the Sabbath School lesson, especially in sharing faith with friends and family.

Based on a survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the NAD Church Information System in the fall and winter of 1989-90, and a survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the NAD Church Ministries Department in the fall of 1989. The error rate in the larger sample is 3%, and the error rate in the smaller sample is 4%. Comparisons were made with a survey of 2,758 church attenders in the Pacific Union conducted in the summer of 1989 and published in *Sabbath School Revitalization: Adult-Youth Sabbath School Opinion Survey*, Church Ministries Department (Pacific Union Conference, 1990).

Introduction

The North American Division Materials Development and Marketing Committee voted in January, 1988, to request that a needs assessment be completed regarding the adult Sabbath School and the lesson materials. Later in 1988, and again in 1989, an Adult Sabbath School Needs Assessment was authorized by the NAD officers.

The need for such a study is well documented. A series of editorials in the *Adventist Review* in September, 1988, observed that “a growing number of Sabbath Schools across North America are experiencing an increasingly difficult time in generating enthusiasm for their programming and in attracting members. One needs only to arrive at Sabbath School on time to discover the sometimes pathetic paucity of attendance.”¹

“At one point in our history, Sabbath School was the most significant program in the local church. Today it is not necessarily so,” says a 1986 article in *Ministry*. “From my observations, whether it be on the East Coast or the West, in large city churches or small country congregations, the message is the same: Sabbath School is hurting. Frequently, fewer attend Sabbath School than the worship service. It is hard to find qualified leaders. People do not study the lessons. And I have been told by the adult and children’s division leaders in every church I have pastored that the materials prepared for their divisions are not particularly helpful and so are not used. Teachers discard the lesson helps and quarterlies for their own programs, or, unfortunately, for no program at all.”²

One of the earliest programs of the NAD Church Ministries Department was the publication of adult Sabbath School program helps written specifically for North America in the division’s church officers journal—*Celebration!* These materials were field tested in the Southern Union Conference. The editor told church boards in early 1988, “look around next Sabbath morning. Many members of the adult Sabbath School in our churches are beyond 50 years of age. Young adults are often conspicuous by their absence. . . . The big question is not whether these young adults need the Sabbath School, but how greatly the Sabbath School needs them. We must find out why they are not attending and make the needed adjustments in the Sabbath School to attract them. . . . It is my strong conviction that many churches need to reposition the Sabbath School and target it to a young adult audience if it is to be the evangelistic agency God designed it to be.”³

The North Pacific Union Conference convened a special study commission on Sabbath attendance in 1988. Its study resulted in an action by the Union executive committee requesting that the NAD experiment with lesson materials that utilize “a relational approach.” That same year, Calvin Smith, associate CM director in the Michigan Conference, began an experiment in about 20 congregations with what he called “action units”—small group classes that were given twice the usual time to meet and spent the extra 25 minutes in sharing, prayer and planning witnessing activities.

In 1989 the Southwestern Union Conference published an experimental curriculum for the adult Sabbath School which included an intergenerational “Family Time” at 9:15 a.m. and introduced small group processes, training for lifestyle witnessing and other innovations. The Atlantic Union Conference also experimented with these materials in several pilot churches. That same year the Pacific Union Conference executive committee voted to authorize its Church Ministries staff to conduct a survey of Sabbath School attenders and non-attenders to explore such questions as, “Should we maintain the status quo? Should we abandon the present Sabbath School format entirely? Should we revitalize the present program and in what ways? Should we eliminate Sabbath School?”

Funding for the NAD needs assessment did not become available until 1989. The Church Ministries Department contracted with Advance Marketing Group, Inc.,—an experienced market research firm headed by a Seventh-day Adventist—to conduct focus group research in five union conferences in the spring and summer of 1989. Each group included a cross-section of active, dedicated Sabbath School teachers and superintendents. All were lay persons.

Careful analysis of the many, many pages of transcriptions of these twelve hours of group interviews resulted in the creation of two questionnaires for surveys. These were pretested with several consultants and a panel of church members. During this same time period, the Pacific Union Conference was conducting its study, which provided an opportunity for key questions to be replicated again for purposes of cross-checking for accuracy.

In the fall of 1989 Advance Marketing Group, Inc., sent a lengthy questionnaire to 1,088 randomly selected church members; a sample produced by Nth name selection from the union paper mailing lists. A total of 679 questionnaires were returned, of which 651 were complete and usable. This is a response rate of 60%, well within professional standards. The sampling error is 4 percentage points at a 95 in 100 confidence level.

Also during the fall of 1989 a much shorter set of questions was included in the annual survey of church members conducted for the NAD by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University. This survey is conducted on Sabbath morning in the panel of 40 local churches selected by stratified probability sampling from among the NAD list of churches. In 1989 a total of 1,994 church attenders completed the questionnaire. The sampling error is 3 percentage points at a 95 in 100 confidence level.

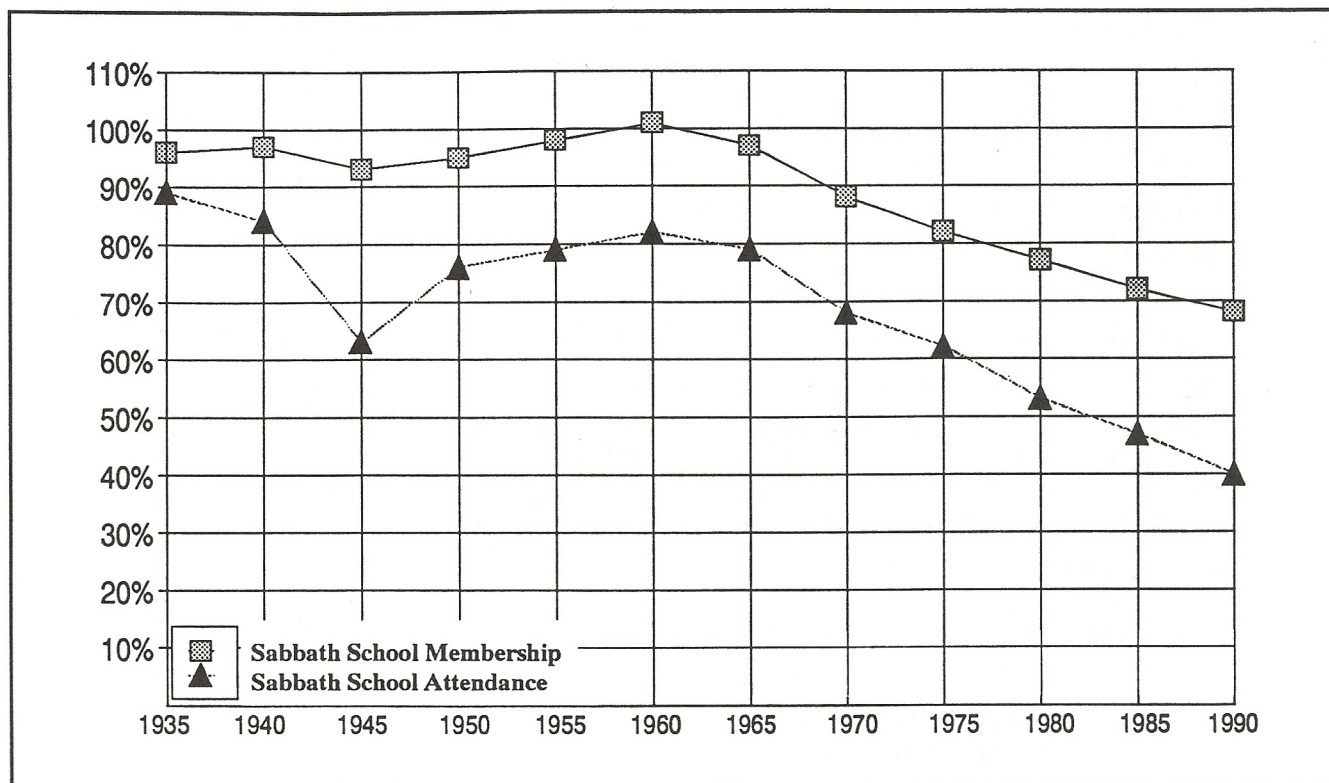
I want to acknowledge the careful and dedicated work of Michael Cafferky, president of Advance Marketing Group, Inc., and his associates; and Roger Dudley, director of the Institute of Church Ministry, and his staff at Andrews University; as well as the professional collaboration and helpfulness of Dan Savino, director of church ministries, and Jose Chavanz-Q., research coordinator, at the Pacific Union Conference. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my colleagues on the NAD Church Ministries staff—J. Lynn Martell, Harold Lee, Ted Wick, and Noelene Johnsson—for reviewing the data at several stages and giving their observations. Rae Patterson, editorial assistant in my office, prepared the graphs in this report as well as the typeset and design, although any errors in the presentation are my responsibility.

Monte Sahlin
January 1, 1991

¹ Myron Widmer, "Sabbath School—In Need of Revitalization," *Adventist Review*, Sept. 22, 1988.

² Lawrence G. Downing, "Fresh Air at 9:30," *Ministry*, August, 1986.

³ Ron Watts, "Needed: Young Adults," *Celebration!*, March, 1988.



Sabbath School Membership and Attendance as a Percentage of Church Membership

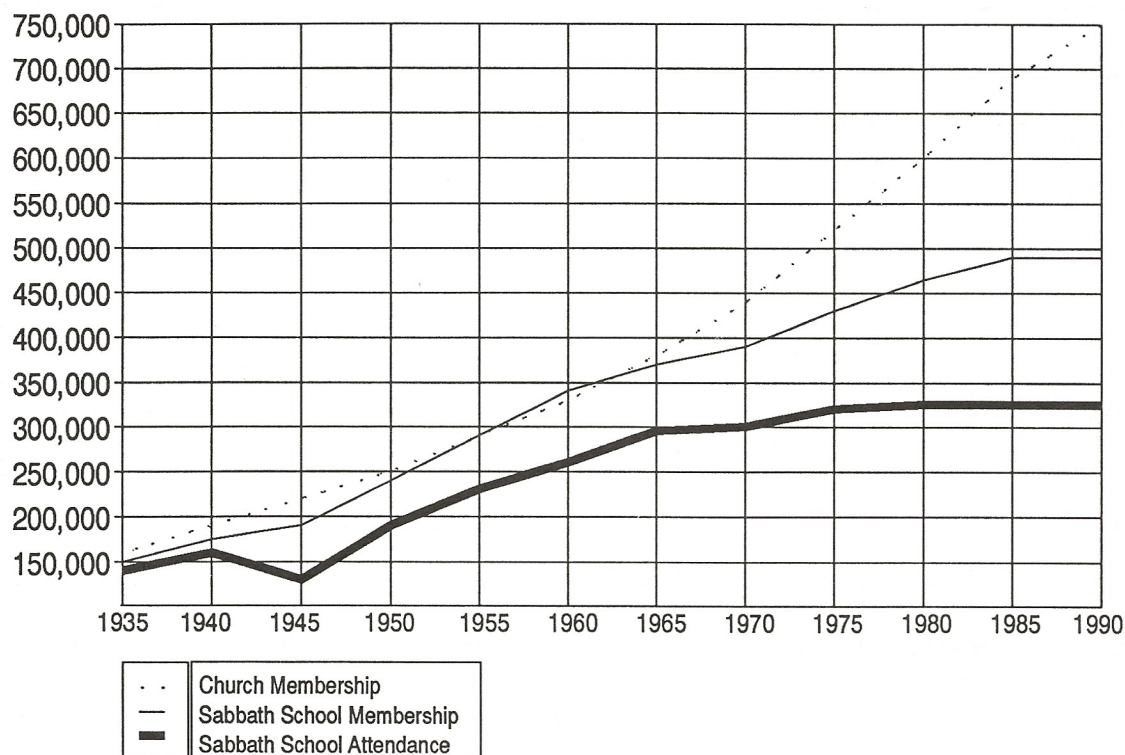
Participation in Sabbath School throughout the North American Division has been in decline since 1960 when calculated as a percentage of total church membership. In 1960 attendance was more than 80% of the total membership recorded in church books, but by 1990 this portion had declined by half. Attendance was less than 40% of book membership.

This is a 30-year trend of significant proportions. It is a crisis larger than the attendance loss caused by World War II in the 1940s.

Identified Need

The Sabbath School is in need of revitalization. It is a long-established program of the Adventist Church in North America that is experiencing a significant decline in participation.

*Source: General Conference Sabbath School Department reports as published in **Ministry**, December 1986, page 16G, and extended to 1990 based on General Conference Church Ministries Department reports.*



Church Membership and its Relationship to Sabbath School Membership and Attendance

The actual number of people participating in Sabbath School in the NAD has held steady at about 300,000 since 1965 while total church membership has doubled. Is this because essentially the same group of people have continued to carry on the Sabbath School in many congregations, while younger adults and new converts have not been assimilated?

Maintenance of Sabbath School membership is in striking contrast with national trends in the United States and Canada where overall Sunday School enrollment has declined by one third. But the flat Sabbath School attendance trend is an early warning signal. If not heeded, Adventist Sabbath Schools will join the national declines in Sunday School enrollment.

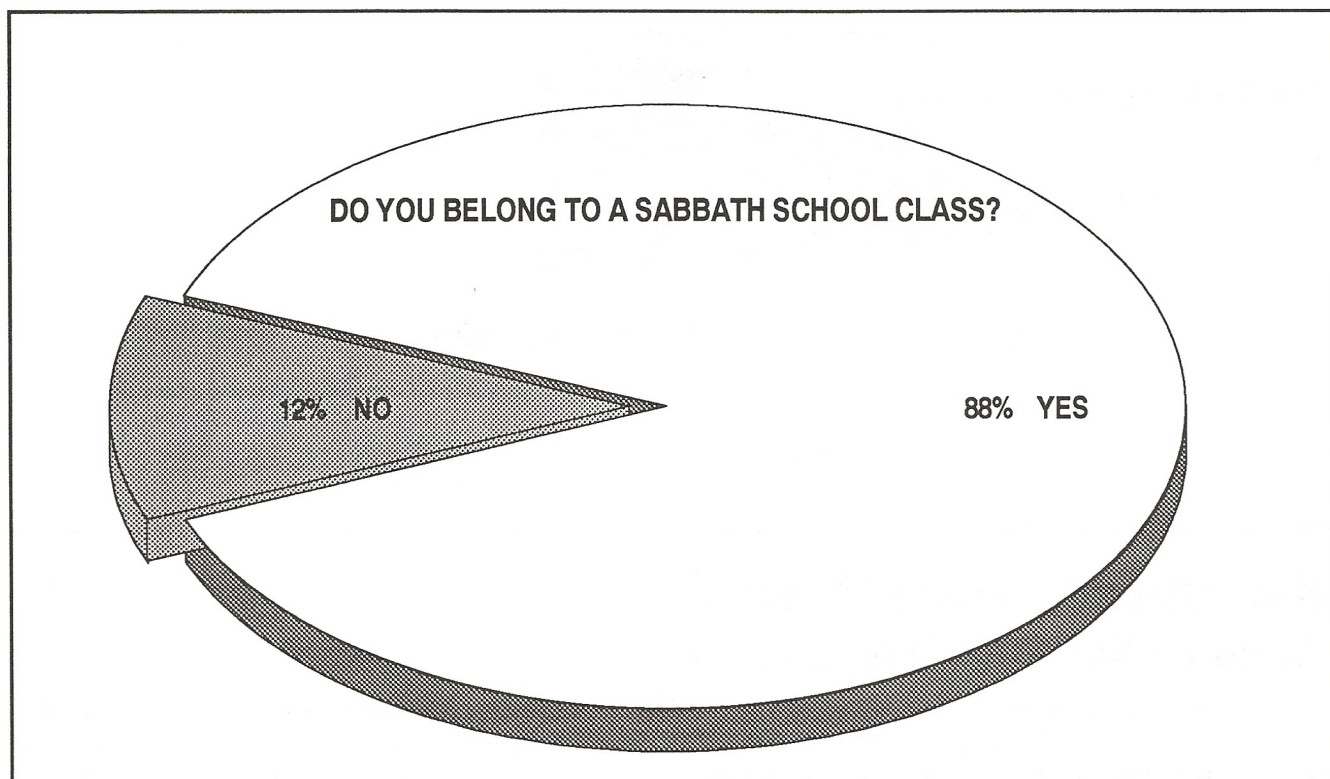
Only 53% of church members say that Sabbath School is an "important" or "very important" influence on their spiritual life. Nearly half no longer see it as important, according to a 1989 survey of North American Division members conducted by Dr. Jan Kuzma.

Does the Sabbath School still have a valid ministry in North America? Or is it "a method in search of a mission . . . a ritual that has lost its purpose," as Dr. Win Arn, president of the American Institute of Church Growth, has asked about Sunday School?

Identified Need

Younger adults—the Baby Boom generation, now 26 to 45 years of age—need to be helped to buy into the adult Sabbath School. Otherwise it is in danger of becoming an institution identified entirely with the generations born before 1946.

Sources: General Conference Sabbath School Department reports as published in Ministry, December 1986, page 16H, and extended to 1990 based on General Conference Church Ministries Department reports. "SDA Sample Survey," by Jan W. Kuzma (Sentinel Research Services, Redlands; 1990) page QI-36. Quote is from The Win Arn Growth Report, Number 19.



The Class is The Key to the Adult Sabbath School

Every Sabbath about 15,000 adult Sabbath School classes meet across the United States, Canada and Bermuda. Some sit in pews and some gather in a circle. Some meet for an hour or longer and some have only 20 minutes because the opening program “went too long” or started late. Membership in some classes is only five or six people, while others have more than 200.

Sabbath School classes are the most important group in the life of the Adventist congregation. In this group adults learn the Bible, find support to live out Bible principles in their jobs and families, get acquainted with others in the church, develop a sense of belonging, and care for one another in Christ’s name.

Four out of five church members say that the Sabbath School class is important to them. Here

is where they see their friends, share their burdens and needs, tell one another about their spiritual pilgrimages, discuss vital issues of faith and ethics, and gain the personal dimension that makes going to church really worthwhile.

Matthew 28:19 says that the mission of the church is to “make disciples.” This involves both helping people to commit their lives to Christ and encouraging them to keep that commitment; two functions that today are called evangelism and nurture. The adult Sabbath School class is the key arena for both in the local church.

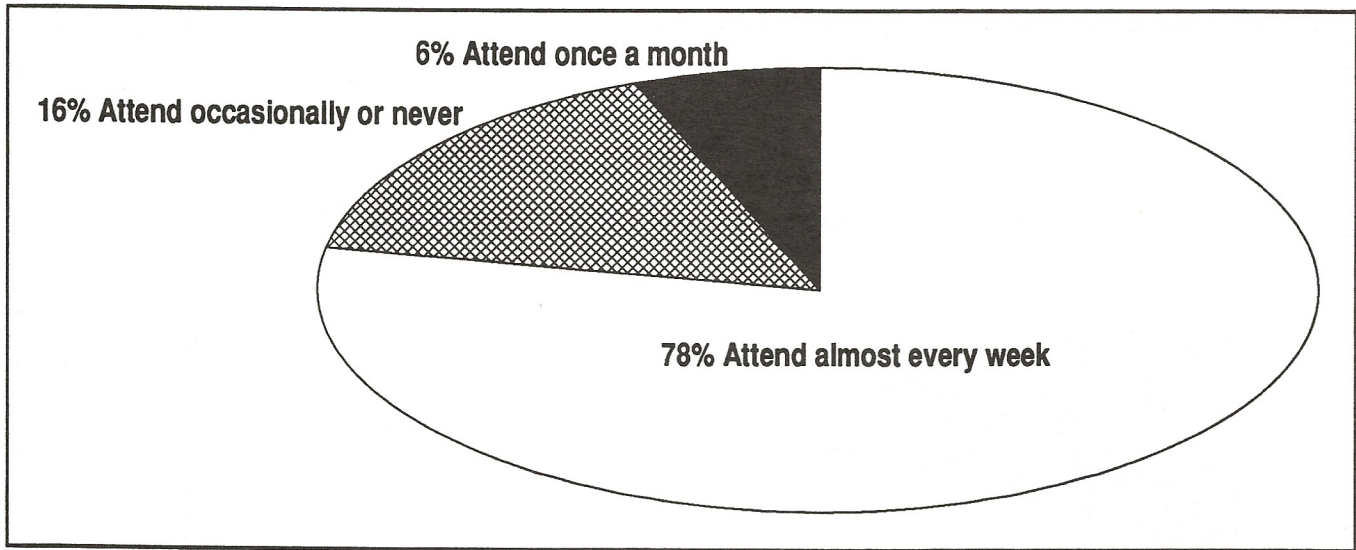
If the congregation is the “body” of Christ, as the New Testament teaches, then the Sabbath School class is a “cell” within the body. The most basic element of life is the cell, so the most basic unit of spiritual life in

the church is “cell life.” For that reason this needs assessment focuses almost entirely on the adult and young adult Sabbath School class.

Identified Need

The key to revitalization of the adult Sabbath School is in focusing on the Sabbath School class. This element of the Sabbath School is more highly valued by church members than is the introductory “program.”

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



How Often do Active Members Attend a Sabbath School Class?

Four out of five church attenders also attend a Sabbath School class, although nearly one in four is irregular in attendance or does not participate at all. At least a third and perhaps as many as 45% of the members of the Adventist Church in North America do not attend church at all and were excluded from the sampling method used in this survey.

Members of congregations with 600 or more members are less likely to attend a class weekly. These large churches also have a somewhat greater percentage of members who report that they have not found a class they are satisfied with.

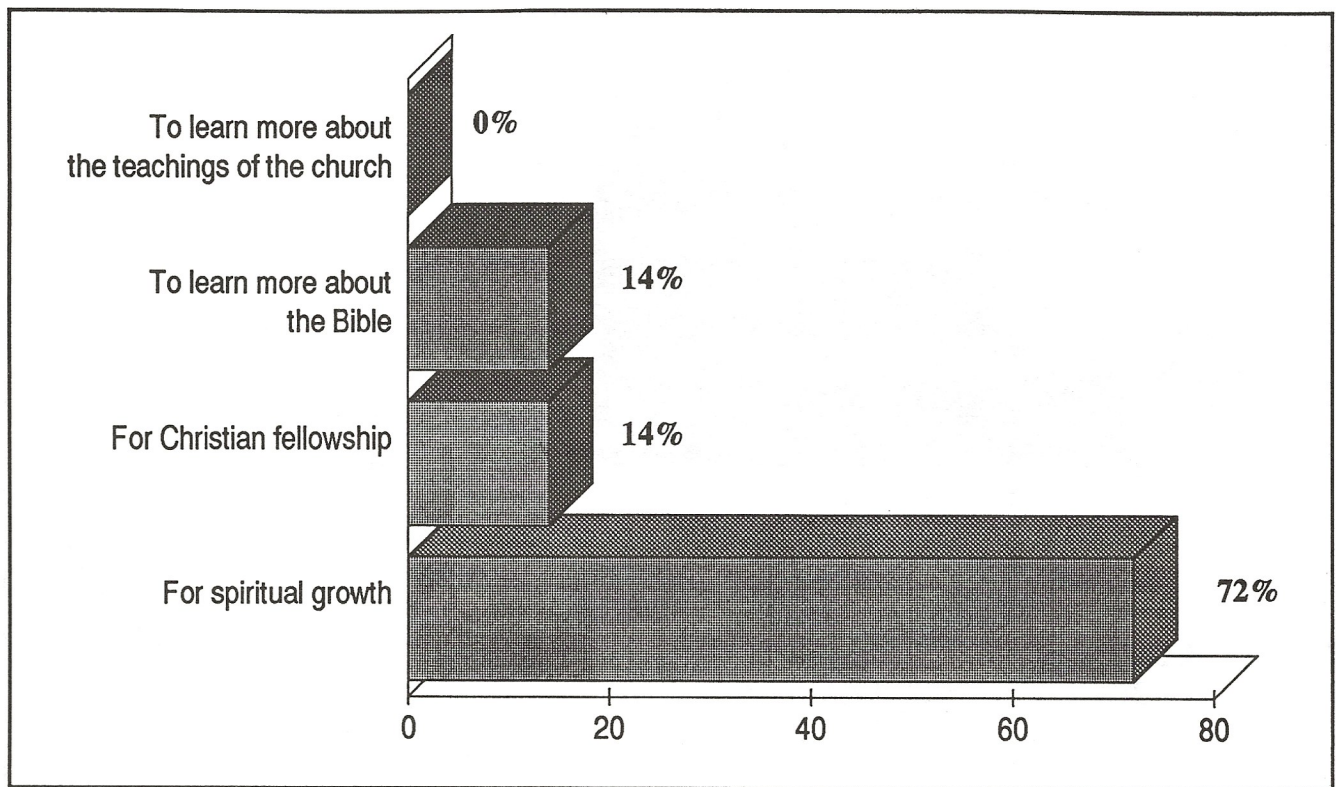
A study conducted in the Pacific Union Conference in 1989 by the Pacific Union Church Ministries Department produced similar findings. A report of that survey has been published as *Sabbath School Revitalization: Adult-Youth Sabbath School Opinion Survey*, CM Department, Pacific Union Conference, Box 5005, Westlake Village, CA 91359 (1990). A number of

comparisons will be made with the Pacific Union study throughout this report.

Identified Need

The problem of decline in Sabbath School attendance is very much related to the church dropout problem. As congregations learn to be more inclusive and solve the dropout problem, there will also be improvement in Sabbath School attendance.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



Why do Church Members Attend Sabbath School?

Three out of four current participants come to Sabbath School seeking personal spiritual growth. One in eight for Christian fellowship and another one in eight to learn more about the Bible.

There is evidence in studies of church dropouts that a significantly larger portion of those who quit attending church seek Christian fellowship. The fact that it is not a priority for the majority of active members may contribute to the dropout problem.

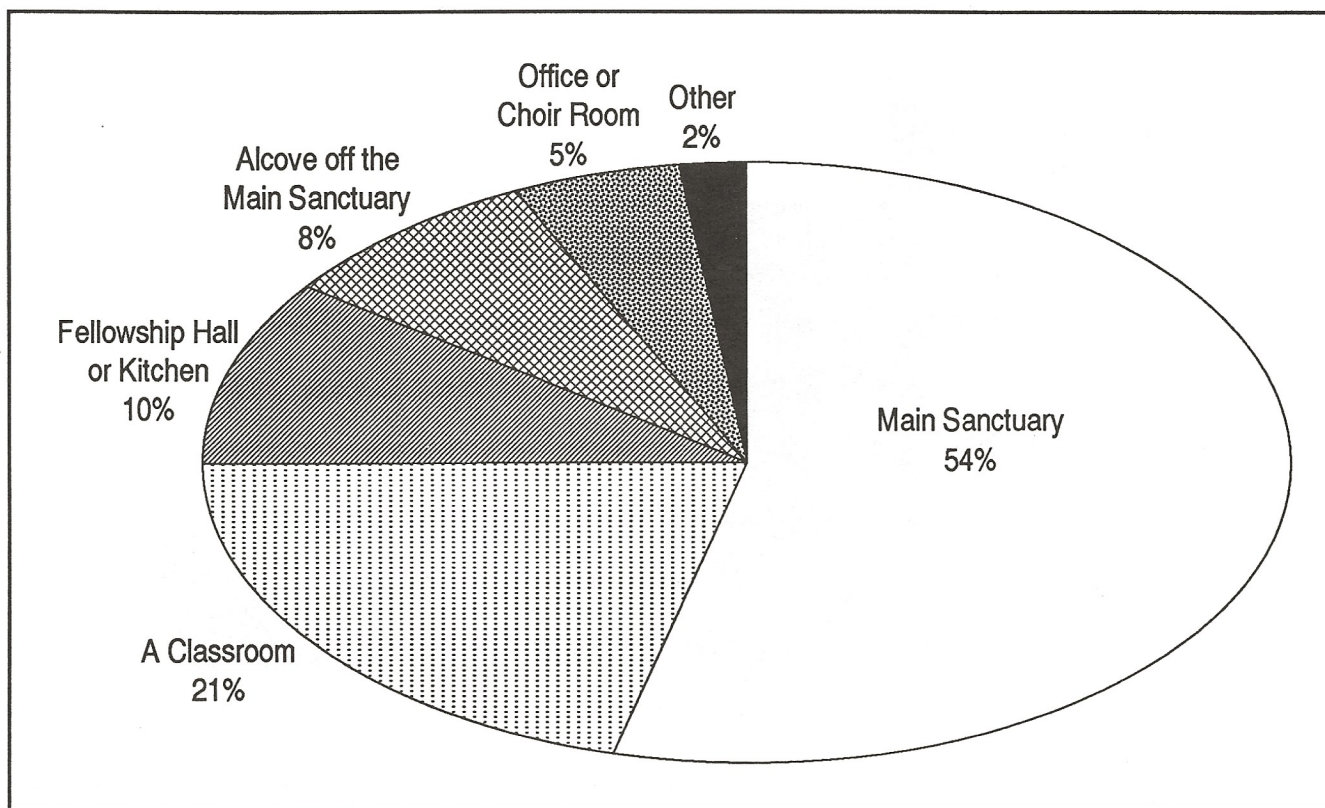
Most significantly, almost none of the survey respondents selected "to learn more about the teachings of the church" as the reason they attend Sabbath School. North American Adventists view the Sabbath School as primarily a personal and local activity and not a function of the denomination.

Identified Needs

1. Adult Sabbath School activities and materials must focus on the spiritual growth of participants. Both lesson content and group activities must contribute to an intentional growth process built around stated goals of spiritual maturity.

2. The adult Sabbath School curriculum lacks specific objectives for spiritual growth. The measures of spiritual maturity used in the Valuegenesis study conducted by Project Affirmation should be adopted as intentional objectives for spiritual growth for the adult Sabbath School in the NAD.

*Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department. A review of recent studies of Adventist Church dropouts has been published in an appendix to the 5th edition of *Seeking His Lost Sheep* by Fordyce Detamore (Review & Herald, 1989) pp. 78-88.*



The Location of the Adult Sabbath School Class

A majority attend a Sabbath School class that meets in the main sanctuary of their church, although almost half meet in other facilities. One in five meet in a classroom, one in ten meet in a fellowship hall or church kitchen and another 8% in alcoves off the main sanctuary.

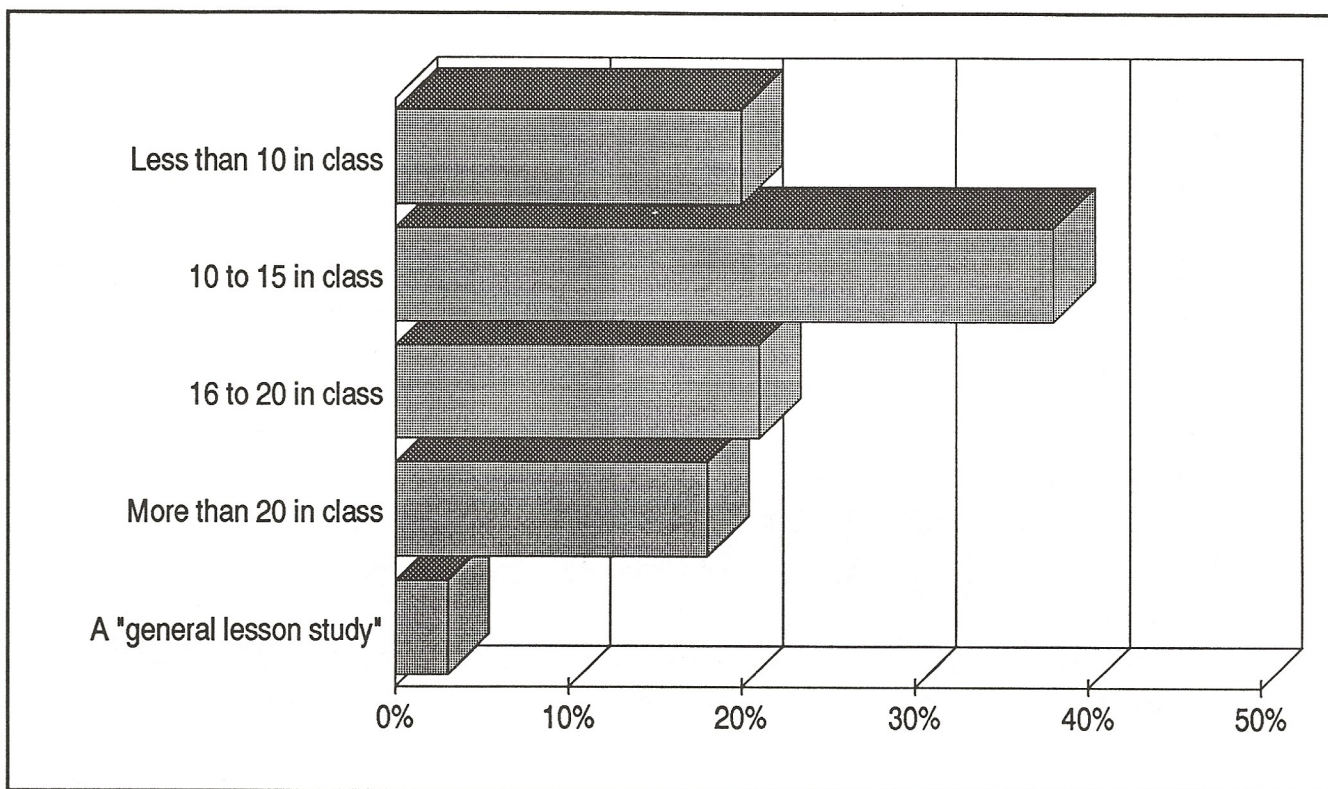
Church members under 40 years of age are less likely to attend a class that meets in the sanctuary and more likely to attend a class that meets in a classroom or fellowship hall. The same is true for those who attend churches with more than 150 members, those who live in the suburbs of large metropolitan areas, those with annual household incomes of \$50,000 or greater and those who live in the western part of the NAD.

Low users of the four current editions of the adult quarterly are significantly less likely to join a class that meets in the church sanctuary, and significantly more likely to join a class that meets in a fellowship hall or an alcove off the sanctuary. This provides a clear pattern for how to reach out to these marginal members.

Identified Need

An increase is needed in the number of adult Sabbath School classes positioned to meet the needs of Baby Boomers and other church members who do not enjoy the traditional class located in a few pews in one corner of the main sanctuary.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



How Big is the Typical Adult Sabbath School Class?

The majority of church members report that they attend a class with fewer than 16 men and women in attendance. Whether or not they perceive it that way, most adults are members of a small group at Sabbath School.

One in five belong to a "medium-size" class with about 20 members. Another fifth belong to larger classes. Low users of the Sabbath School quarterlies prefer these larger classes.

There is a correlation between the size of the congregation and class size. Because Adventist congregations on the west coast tend to be larger than in the rest of the NAD, they also have larger Sabbath School classes. Relatively few congregations have a "general lesson study" instead of breaking out into smaller classes, but many of these are large churches.

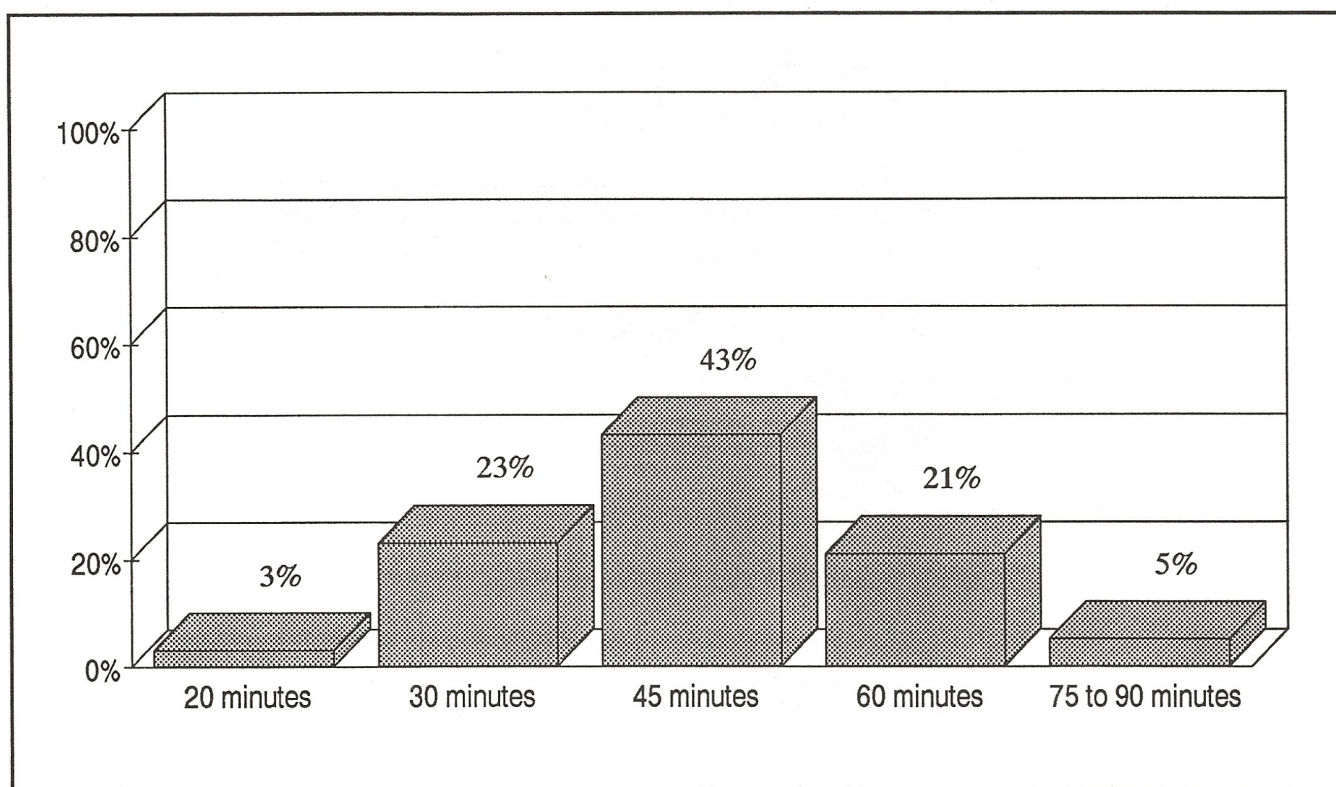
This trend toward larger classes in large churches may be the result of organizational and physical plant considerations, and not the needs of church members. The preferences of church members, as well as the findings of interdenominational church growth research, indicate that Adventist congregations of 600 members or more generally have too few Sabbath School classes.

Identified Needs

1. The key role of group dynamics in Sabbath School classes must be better understood and given a more intentional role in curriculum design, preparation of materials, class models and teacher training.

2. There is a need for a greater number of classes in most of the larger congregations in the NAD.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



Preferred Length of Time for Sabbath School Classes

The most frequent complaint about the adult Sabbath School voiced in Sabbath School workshops over recent years throughout the NAD has been that the time allowed is "too short." The *General Conference Sabbath School Manual* recommends only 40 minutes for class meetings. In practice, most local churches are currently allowing an average of about 25 to 30 minutes for classes to meet.

Two out of three active church members would like at least 45 minutes for their Sabbath School class to meet. One in four would like an hour or longer.

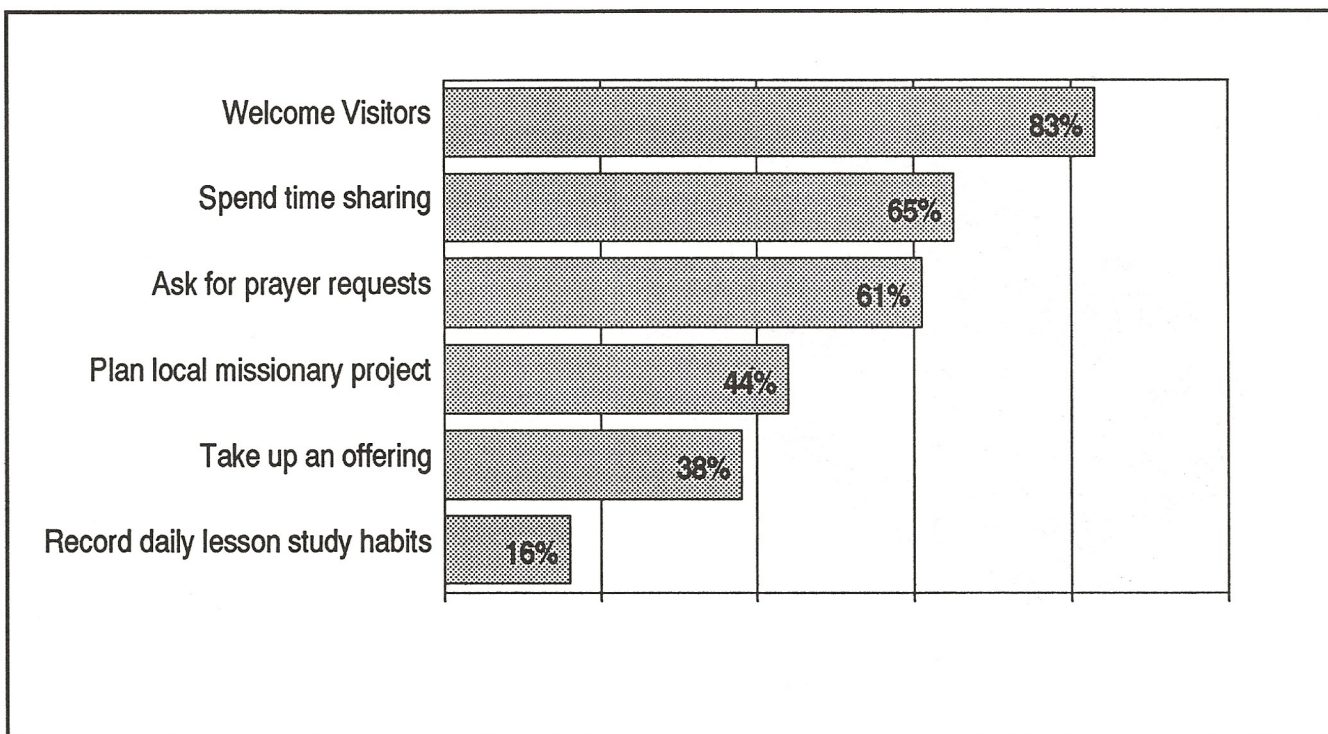
Members who live in the large cities and surrounding suburbs are more likely to want longer class time than are those who live in small towns and rural areas.

Hispanic church members are more likely to prefer a shorter class time; two out of three indicated they would like a class of 20 or 30 minutes. Black church members are more likely to prefer a longer class period.

Identified Need

The time allowed for classes to meet must be increased. At the same time there are significant groups that prefer half-hour class meetings. Since time preferences seem to be related to interest in the large-group Sabbath School Program, one solution is to offer some classes during a collateral time-frame so that, for example, both the Sabbath School Program and a selection of longer classes begin at 9:30 a.m. and additional classes get started at 10 a.m. when the Program is over.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



What Are the Important Activities in a Sabbath School Class?

Church members were asked, “Beside discussing the Sabbath School lesson, how important is each of the following activities in a class?” Six items were displayed, and respondents were asked to evaluate them on a 5-point scale from “low importance” to “high importance.” The graph shows the percentage of respondents who rated each item either a 4 or 5 on the scale.

A clear pattern emerges from the responses. Two out of three church members believe fellowship activities are an important part of the Sabbath School class. They want to welcome visitors, spend time in sharing and hear the teacher ask for prayer requests.

Only two out of five church members feel it is important to emphasize a local outreach project or take up the world mission of-

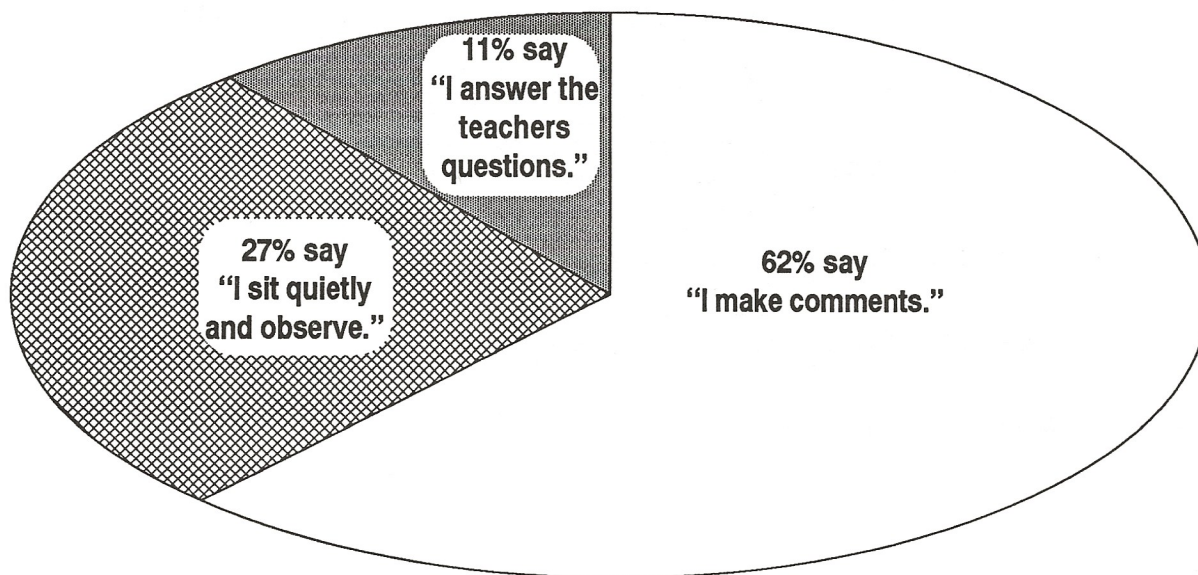
fering. A small minority are interested in taking a record of lesson study.

The Pacific Union survey explored the relational needs of church members in much greater detail, and found the same pattern to a more pronounced degree. A significant majority wanted more time “to visit with the others” in their class. Two out of three would like to take time to recognize birthdays, anniversaries, job changes, etc. Younger adults, singles and recently baptized members were even more likely to feel a need for fellowship activities in the Sabbath School class. (See *Sabbath School Revitalization*, Section 3, pages 40-48.)

Identified Need

The fellowship needs of church members cannot be ignored. The Sabbath School is more than down-loading information about the Bible into the brains of participants. Learner-centered processes are needed in the Sabbath School lesson, and quality time must be provided in the Sabbath School class for bonding and for caring for one another.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



How Much Participation in Group Discussion?

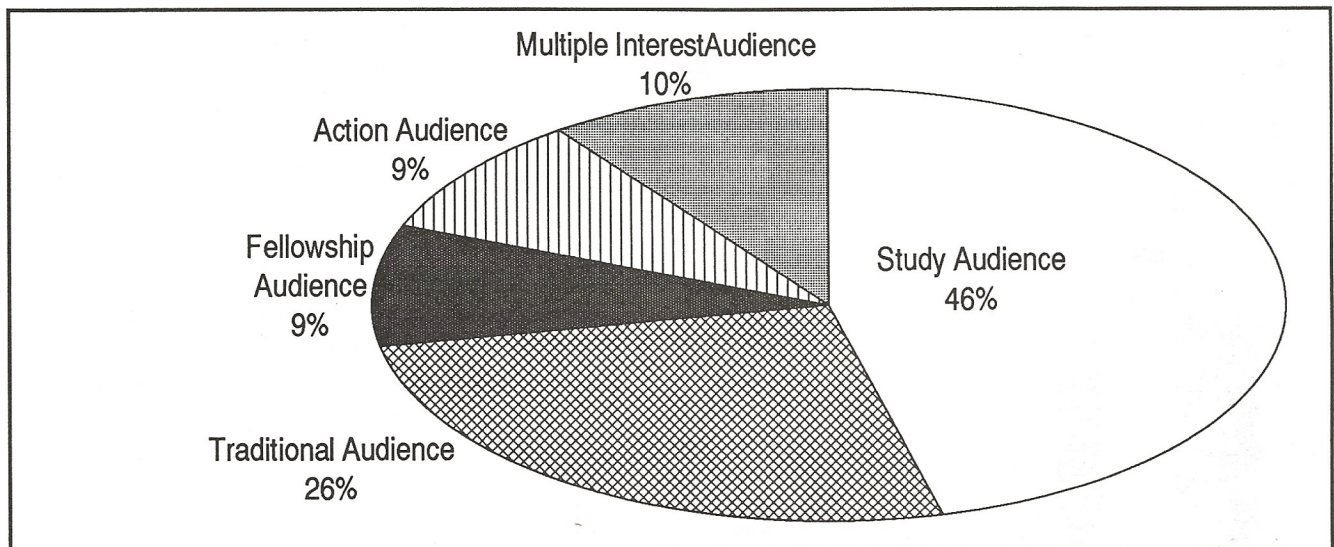
Three in five church members report that when they attend a Sabbath School class they make comments as well as listen and respond to the questions of the teacher. One in four say that they just sit quietly and listen, and another 11% say they speak only when answering a question asked by the teacher.

Suburban church members and younger adults report less participation, and there is a correlation between church size and the level of participation. Members of larger churches are less likely to participate in class discussion than are members of smaller congregations. This may be a result of the smaller number of classes in large churches that are of a size conducive to group discussion.

Identified Need

Most adults expect opportunity to express themselves during the Sabbath School class. Class leaders must provide this opportunity. Classes must also be provided for the smaller segments that prefer to sit and listen to a lecture or participate in a lecture-discussion format.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



The Five Audiences: Adult Learning Styles

Extensive research has demonstrated the fact that adults have a wide variety of learning styles. Warren Hartman was the first to explore how these learning styles function in adult Sunday School classes. His interdenominational study was published in *Five Audiences* by Abingdon Press in 1987. His research was first replicated in five Adventist congregations (not a random sample) in the Columbia Union Conference in 1986-87. In 1989 the Pacific Union Conference conducted a major study that validated the Five Audience model with a significant Adventist sample.

The NAD survey was conducted the same year as the Pacific Union Conference survey. It used a simplified version of the survey questions which clusters the key descriptive statements into a paragraph. The results were quite similar to those in the Pacific Union survey, which validates this simplified method for gathering data on the Five Audience model.

This is a "market segmentation" model for understanding the

needs of the men and women who attend Sabbath School classes. It identifies five basic patterns of interaction that naturally occur in classes and groups because of the preferences of participants. It clearly portrays the nature of the "market" in which a local congregation delivers its adult Sabbath School classes and competes for the time, loyalty, volunteer efforts and offerings of members and prospective members.

The **Study Audience** is the largest segment among those who are regular attenders in Sabbath School across North America. It was identified in the NAD survey by asking, "Which kind of Sabbath School class do you prefer?" The "Study Audience" consists of those who selected the following option:

About a dozen members, sits around a table, digs deep into the Bible, leader encourages discussion, and has plenty of time for discussion of Bible topics.

Congregations of less than 100 members tend to have a larger share of the Study Audience, and congregations of 600 members or

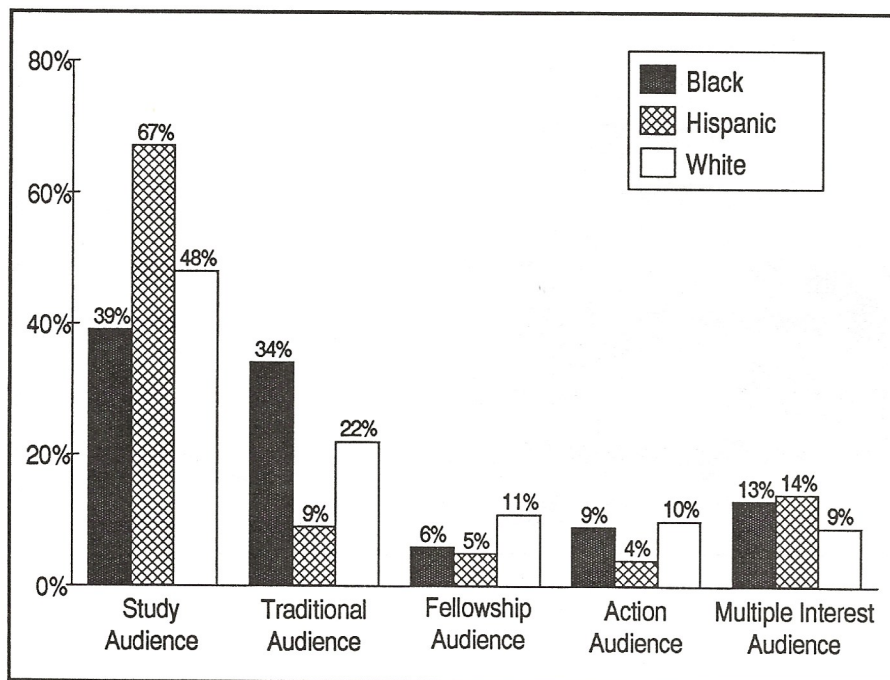
more tend to have a smaller share. Suburban congregations have somewhat fewer members who prefer a Study approach. Hispanic church members are more likely to prefer this category than are white or black members.

The **Traditional Audience** is the second largest segment among current attenders at Sabbath School. In the NAD survey it consists of those who answered the question about what kind of Sabbath School class they preferred by choosing the following option:

A class with a strong, evangelistic teacher who knows the Bible and is able to explain our truths; a good-sized class sitting in one section of the sanctuary.

Black church members are more likely than whites to select this preference, and both are significantly more likely than Hispanics to do so. Half of the respondents who prefer a Traditional learning style are found in urban churches.

The **Fellowship Audience** is a small segment of currently active members across North



Five Audiences (Continued)

America, but it is a very significant “market” because in Hartman’s interdenominational survey it was the largest segment. Also, congregational studies conducted in four Adventist churches suggest that significant numbers of Adventist church members who attend worship, but not Sabbath School, and an even larger portion of Adventist dropouts, fall into this segment. In the NAD survey the Fellowship Audience consists of those who answered the question about the kind of Sabbath School class they preferred by selecting the following option:

Has 25-40 members, sits in a large circle or half circle with maybe two rows, takes time to pray for the needs of members and announce birthdays and anniversaries, leader makes everyone feel comfortable and accepted and there is some time for friendly sharing and conversation as well as the lesson.

White church members are twice as likely as black or Hispanic church members to select

this preference. The Pacific Union study found a somewhat larger share of Fellowship Audience in that field than was found throughout the NAD. (See *Sabbath School Revitalization*, Section 3, page 19.)

The **Action Audience** is the smallest segment of active church members across North America, but significantly larger in the Pacific Union Conference. In the NAD survey it consists of those who chose the following option in response to the question about the kind of Sabbath School class they prefer:

A class that tackles the social issues of today and encourages the class members to get involved in meaningful Christian action in the community.

White and black church members are about equally likely to select this option. Hispanic church members are less likely to do so. The Pacific Union study found almost three times as many church members who prefer a social action approach to the Sabbath

School class as was found in the entire NAD. (See *Sabbath School Revitalization*, Section 3, page 19.)

The **Multiple Interest Audience** is a small segment of active church members who do not have a strong preference toward one of the four kinds of Sabbath School classes described. In the NAD survey it consists of those who answered the question about the kind of class they preferred by selecting, “Makes no difference to me.”

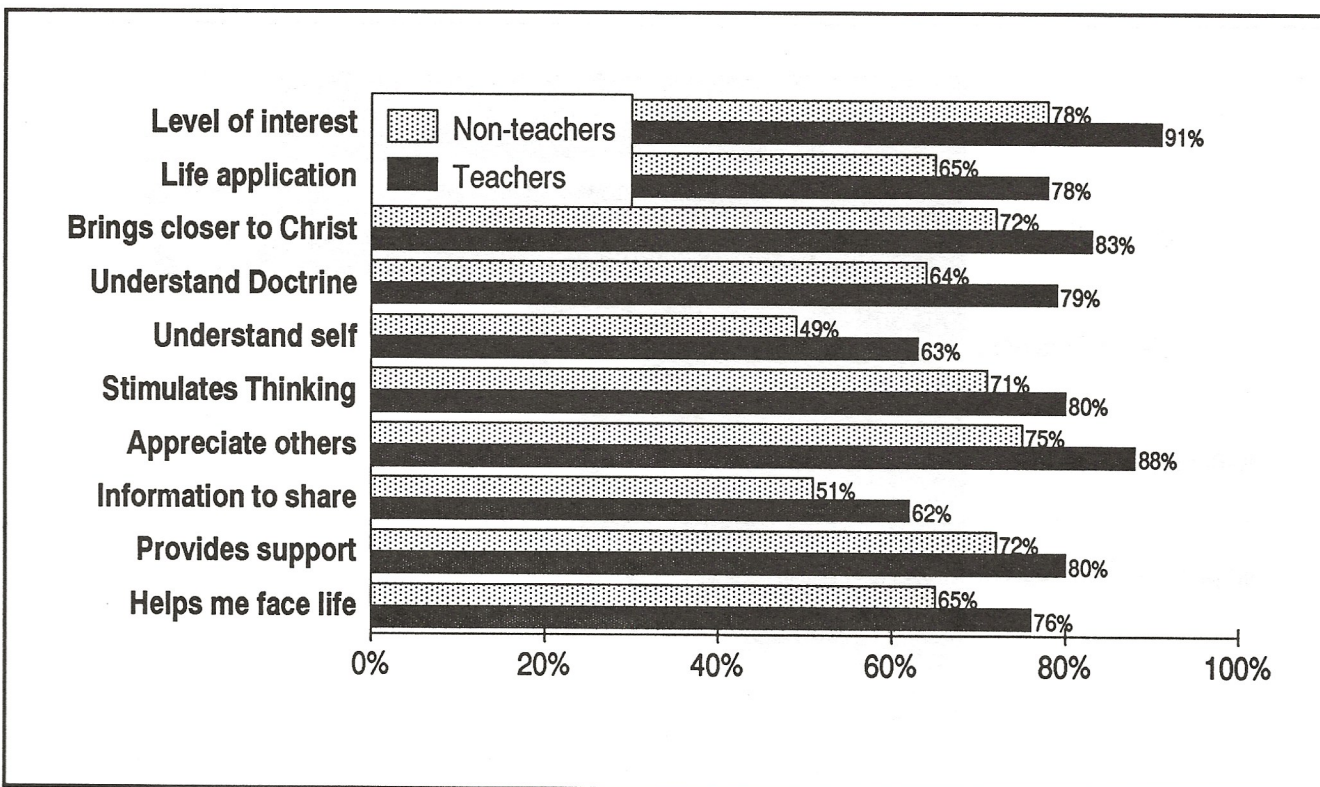
Church members of all ethnic categories are about equally likely to express this lack of preference. Hartman’s research suggests that this audience may include significant numbers of the leaders in the congregation who see the need for a variety of different experiences and approaches in the church program.

Identified Needs

1. A variety of teaching styles and materials are necessary to adequately meet the needs of all Sabbath School members. Attendance at Sabbath School is not likely to increase until a “full menu” is offered in a significant portion of the local churches across the NAD.

2. The Fellowship Audience presents a particular opportunity for evangelism and church growth. There is a need for information and resource materials to help local churches see this opportunity and respond to it effectively.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



Rating the Class Discussion: Teachers and Class Members

Survey respondents were asked to evaluate their Sabbath School class on ten items, rating each item on a four-point scale. Nine out of ten teachers (91%) selected “good” or “excellent” in rating their level of interest in the class sessions, while only three out of four non-teacher (78%) selected the top two levels of the four-point scale.

On all ten evaluation items teachers rated the class better than did class members. The perception of class leaders is that things are going very well, but the perception of their “students” is not so positive.

Three out of four class members rate their over-all level of interest in the class as “good” or “excellent,” and about the same number also give high ratings to three mental and spiritual aspects of the class. The strength of

Strengths of the Sabbath School Class

- stimulates my thinking.
- brings me closer to Christ.
- provides support for my beliefs.

Sabbath School classes as they are presently conducted throughout the NAD have to do with the cognitive-religious dimension.

Half of the non-teachers rate three elements of their class as “poor” or “fair.” These three elements reflect the primary weakness of the status quo across North America—the relational and outreach dimensions.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by the Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.

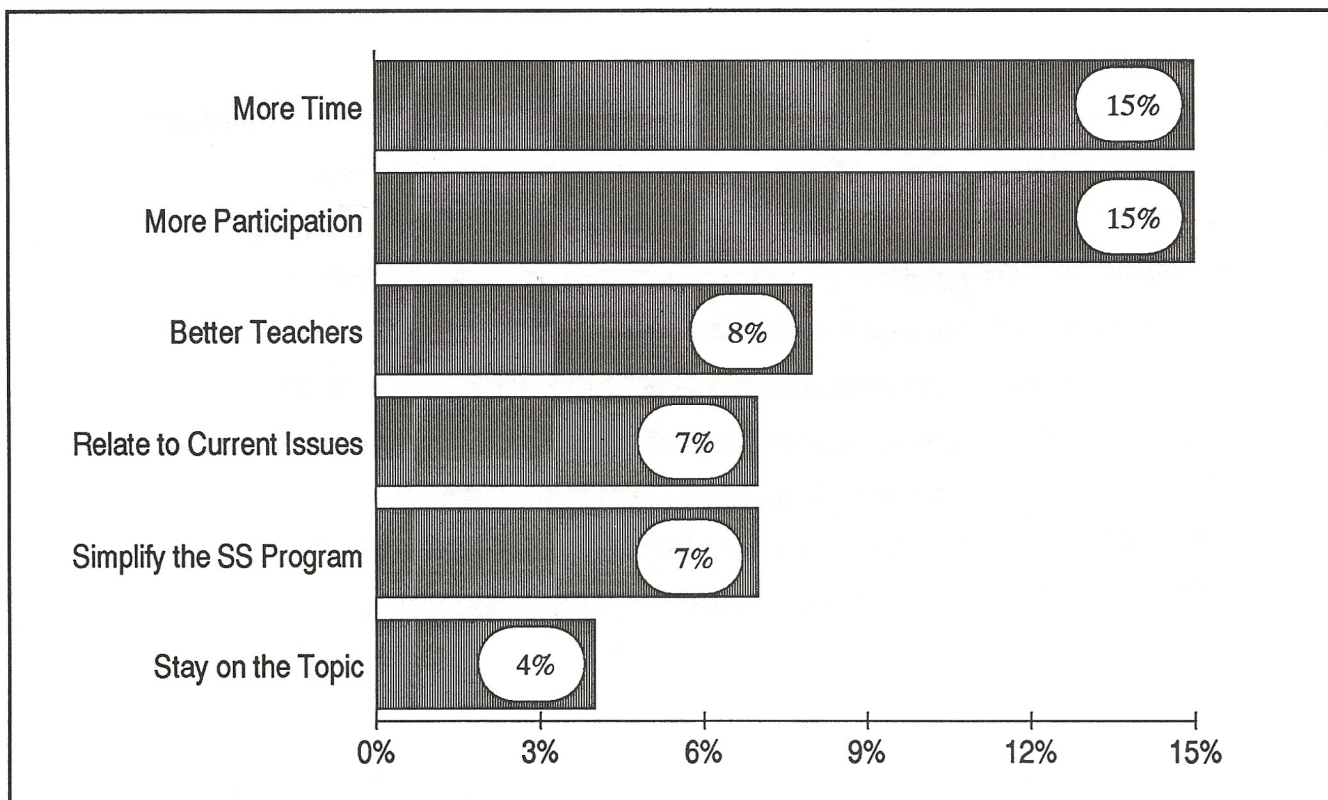
Weaknesses of the Sabbath School Class

- helps me appreciate my fellow class members.
- helps me understand myself better.
- gives me information to share with others to lead them to Christ.

Identified Needs

1. Sabbath School teachers need to improve their ability to observe and listen to their class members—get better feedback—so that they can improve the class as experienced by the learners.

2. The relational and outreach dimensions of the Sabbath School class need to be improved without weakening the cognitive and spiritual strengths that exist.



Suggestions to Improve the Sabbath School Class

Survey respondents were asked an open-ended question about how their Sabbath School class could be improved. A total of 450 of the 651 church members who completed questionnaires took the time to write a sentence or paragraph in answer to this question. Obviously there is very high interest in the topic of improving the adult Sabbath School.

Increasing the amount of time for class sessions and making the classes more participative were the most popular suggestions. Significant numbers also want to improve the quality of leadership in the class and make the lesson more relevant to contemporary issues in Christian living and social ethics.

Those who want to simplify the program reflect a growing

number of church members who are not interested in the traditional opening ceremonies of Sabbath School. They see the large-group activities as mainly ritual and a waste of time that could be better used in the class.

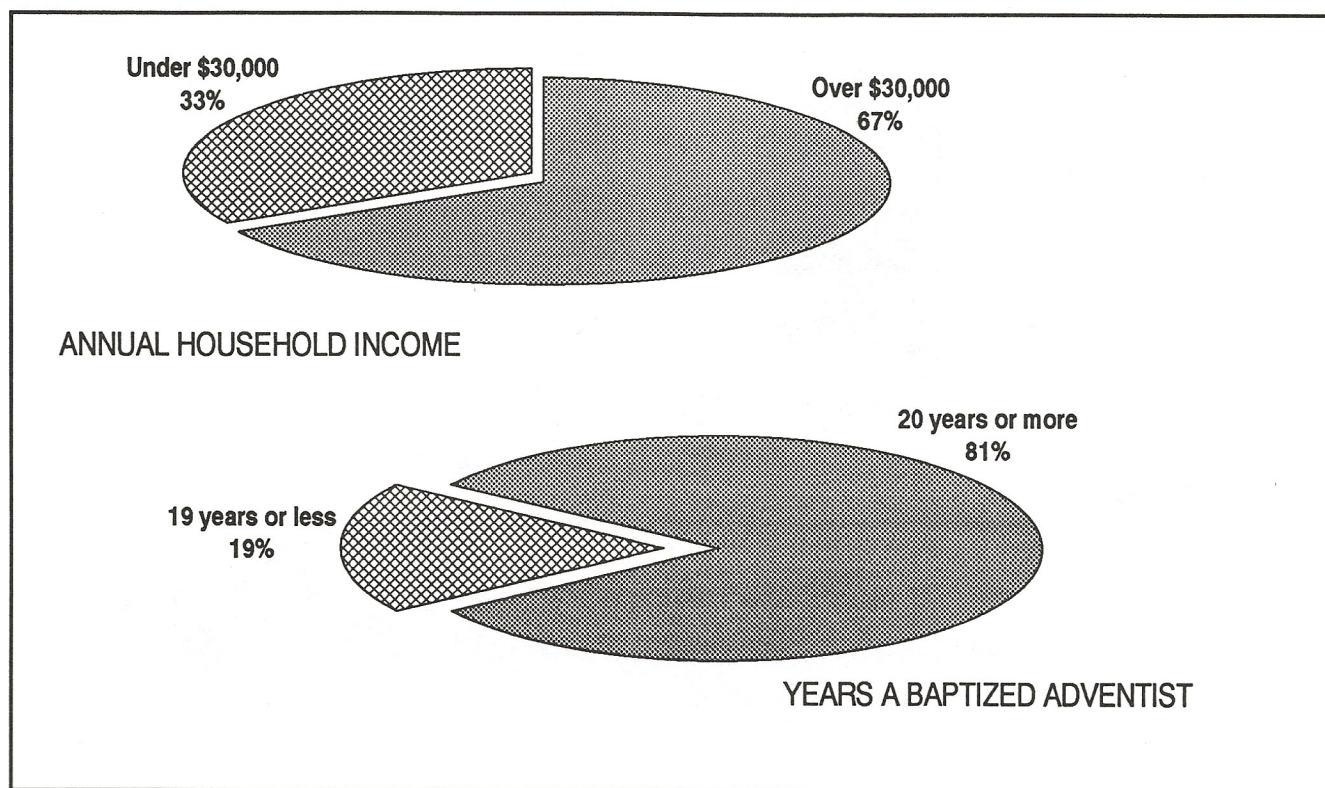
“Stay on the topic” is the plea of a number of class members who feel that their teacher either uses the class to pursue his or her own theological agenda or cannot function as a good discussion facilitator and allows “ax-grinding” church members to dominate.

Identified Needs

1. The Sabbath School class needs to be made the primary focus of the adult Sabbath School, with more time devoted to activities that will increase participation and meet the fellowship needs of members.

2. Class leaders will need training in group dynamics and non-traditional teaching methods in order to make their classes more participative and make good use of additional class time.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



Who are the Sabbath School Teachers or Class Leaders?

About one in ten church attenders is currently serving as an adult Sabbath School teacher—somewhere between 40,000 and 45,000 women and men across North America. They are more likely to be long-term church members and have annual household incomes of \$30,000 or more—stable, middle class people.

Some teach the same group almost every week, others participate in a rotation of co-teachers or a teaching team, and others are “assistant teachers” who teach only once a month or so. They are all volunteers, and about one in five will not teach next year and need to be replaced.

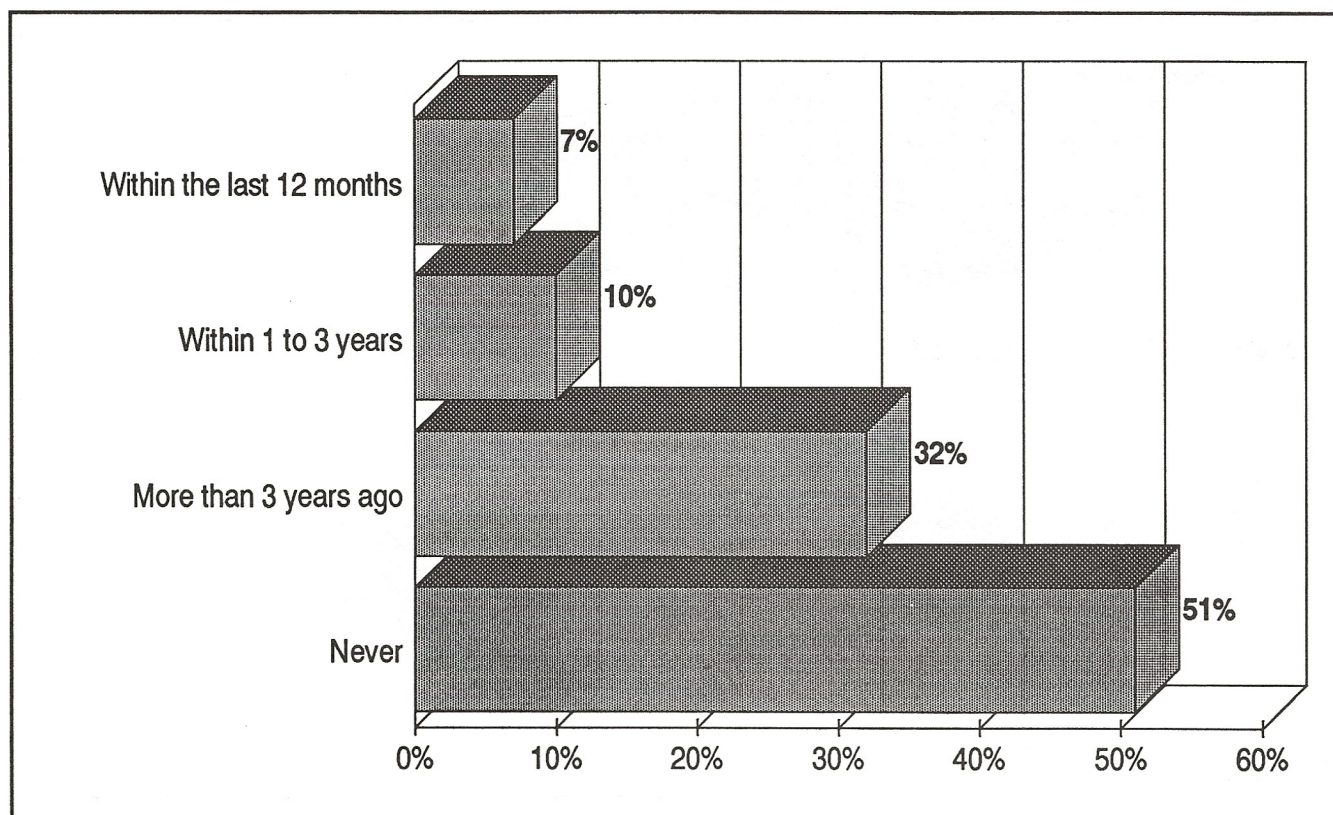
These individuals form the backbone of the Sabbath School.

Any strategy for change must enlist their support in order to be successful.

Identified Need

Sabbath School teachers are some of the most important “opinion leaders” in the Adventist Church, yet there is little information about them. Communication with them is indirect and there is no quick and easy way for their opinions to be expressed to denominational leadership or the publishers of resource materials.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



How Much Training Among Sabbath School Teachers?

Respondents who were currently active as class leaders or had been active as a in the previous year were asked, "When was the last time you attended a Sabbath School teacher training event?" Four out of five have had no training in three years. The majority have never attended a training event.

Teachers with annual household incomes under \$30,000 were more likely to have attended a training event, as were those who have been baptized Adventists for 30 years or longer. Teachers in Canada, Mid-America and on the west coast are less likely to have attended a training event in the last three years.

Identified Need

Teacher training can help class leaders to understand the needs of those who attend as well

as potential attenders, and acquire the skills necessary to conduct a successful class. A training system is needed that can reach the majority of current and future Sabbath School class leaders.

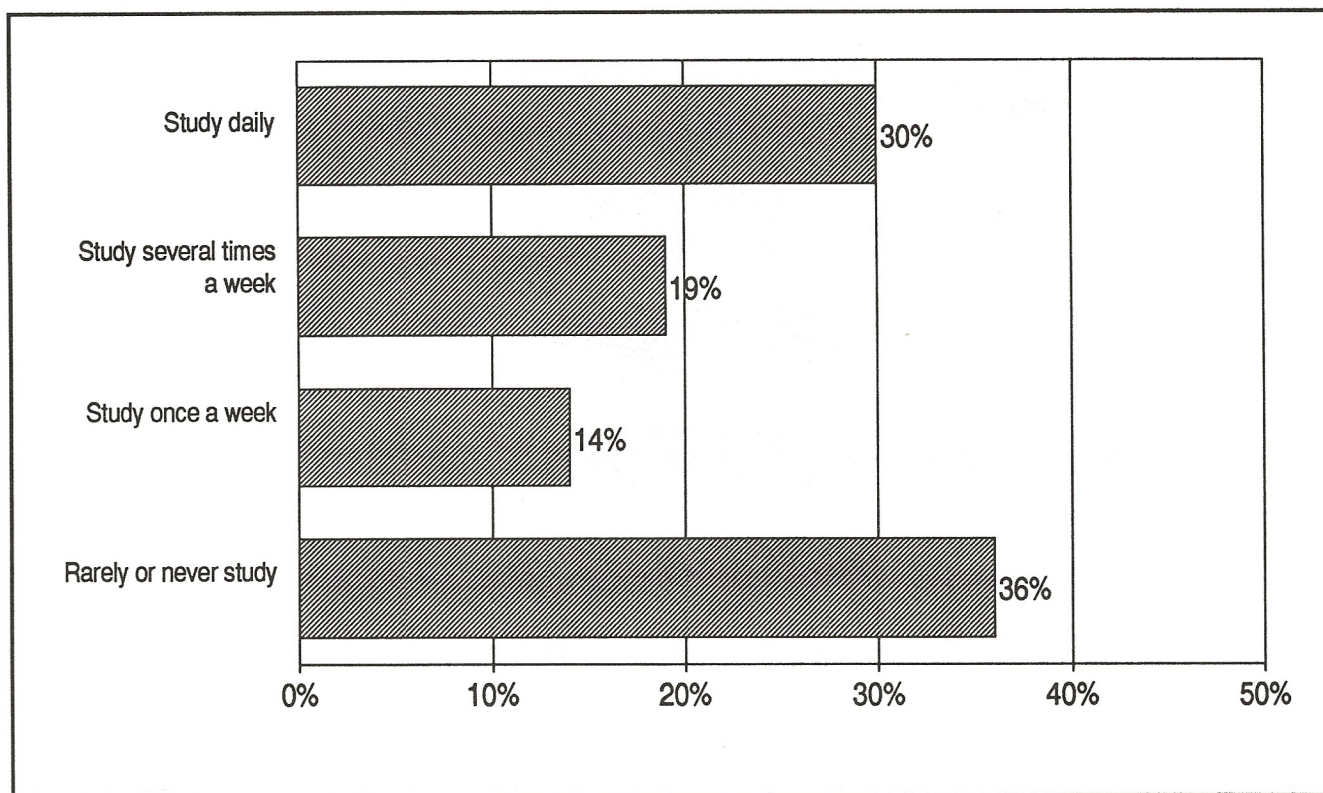
Note: The NAD, and Pacific Union Church Ministries departments have worked together to meet this particular need. A curriculum for teacher training has been developed. It is learner-centered and can be delivered in group events or through independent learning packages. The curriculum is entitled *Adult Sabbath School Teacher Accreditation*. The cornerstone of this curriculum is the new *Sabbath School Teacher Training Series* of video workshops. It has been launched with the release in the summer of 1990 of the first three of five modules. The final two modules

will be released in the spring of 1991. The five units cover:

- Purpose of the Sabbath School class
- Group dynamics
- Learning styles
- Instructional methods
- The caring dimension of the class

The producers of these materials had access to the raw data from the NAD and Pacific Union Conference surveys and have shaped the materials in response to the needs identified in this report and the Pacific Union Conference report entitled *Sabbath School Revitalization*.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by the Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



How Often do Church Attenders Study the Sabbath School Lesson?

Less than a third of regular church attenders are following a plan of daily lesson study. More than a third rarely or never study the lesson, while another third study the lesson one, two or three times during a typical week.

Members of rural and small town congregations are more likely to engage in daily study, while members of suburban and urban churches are more likely to study once or twice a week. This reflects the increasingly hectic lifestyles of two-career families from the Baby Boomer generation who tend to live in the metropolitan areas.

Hispanic church members report that they are significantly less likely to study the Sabbath School lesson. This is probably due to barriers related to poverty and literacy. Black and white

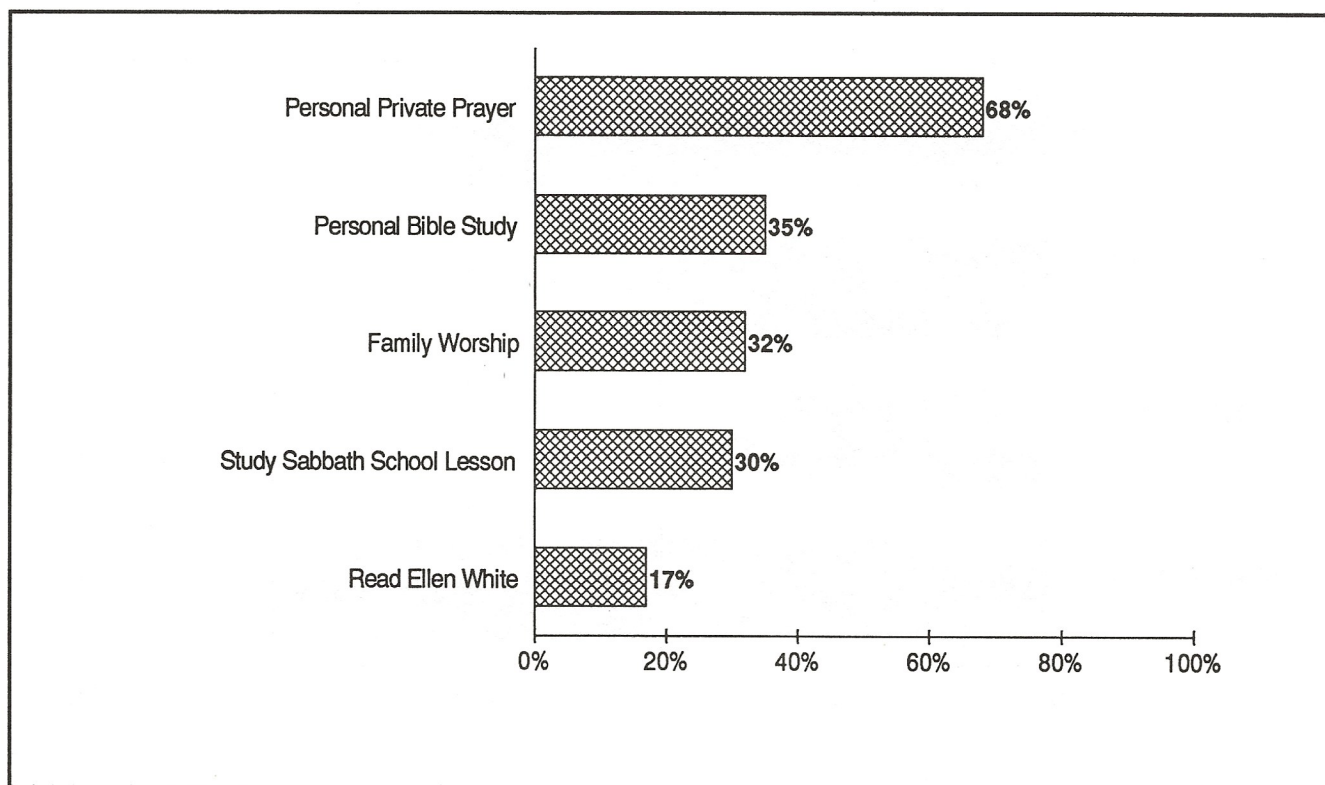
congregations report very similar patterns of lesson study among their members.

The findings of the Pacific Union study were essentially the same as the surveys of the entire NAD. (See *Sabbath School Revitalization*, Section 3, page 71.)

Identified Need

Ways must be found to engage a larger percentage of church members in regular study of the Sabbath School lesson, including a significant number who may study weekly rather than daily due to lifestyle demands.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



What are the Daily Devotional Practices of Church Members?

The study of the Sabbath School lesson ranks next to last among the five most common devotional practices of NAD church members. Members are more likely to pray, study the Bible and have family worship than they are to study the lesson. Only reading from the writings of Ellen White is a daily practice of fewer members.

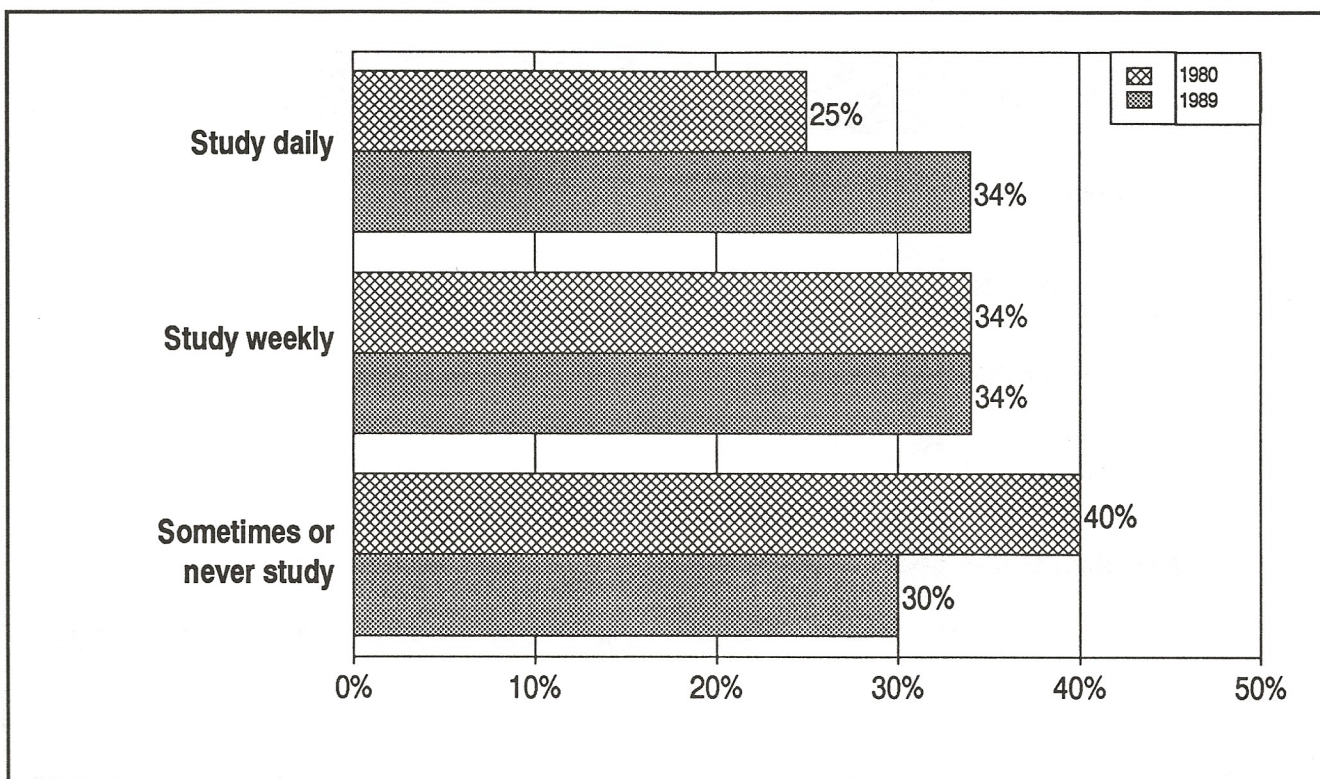
Church members are more likely to engage in devotional practices that they have chosen and structured, than they are devotional practices designed for them by the denomination or by church leaders. Future surveys need to explore the extent of Adventist involvement in devotional practices such as meditation, journaling, reading from theologians and Christian classics, contemplation of Christian art or music, and nature study.

Members of congregations of less than 100 members are more likely to report daily personal Bible study, and in congregations of 600 members or more there is a slightly larger share who report they never engage in personal Bible study. Black and Hispanic church members are less likely to report daily personal Bible study, and Asian and white church members are more likely to do so.

Identified Need

If the devotional practices of church members are becoming more diverse, non-traditional and individually-designed, then greater flexibility and choice will be needed in Sabbath School lesson materials.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



Is there a General Decline in Personal Devotions?

The decline in Sabbath School lesson study could be simply one symptom of an over-all decline in devotional practices and spirituality among Adventists in North America. But the evidence indicates an increase in personal devotions, not a decline.

The same question about frequency of personal Bible study was asked in this research as in a 1980 survey of NAD church members. Comparison of the two indicates a dramatic increase in the number of church members engaging in daily study of the Scripture.

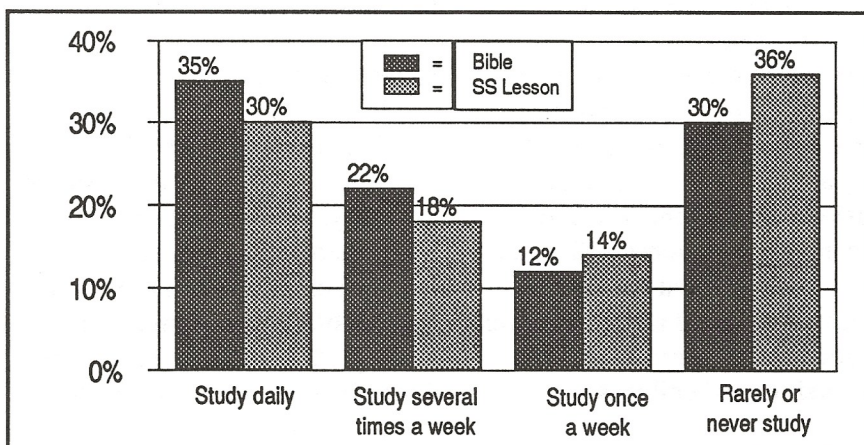
In fact, there is a consistent pattern that Adventists are more likely to engage in personal Bible study than they are to study the Sabbath School lesson. (This comparison cannot be made over the past decade due to the fact that

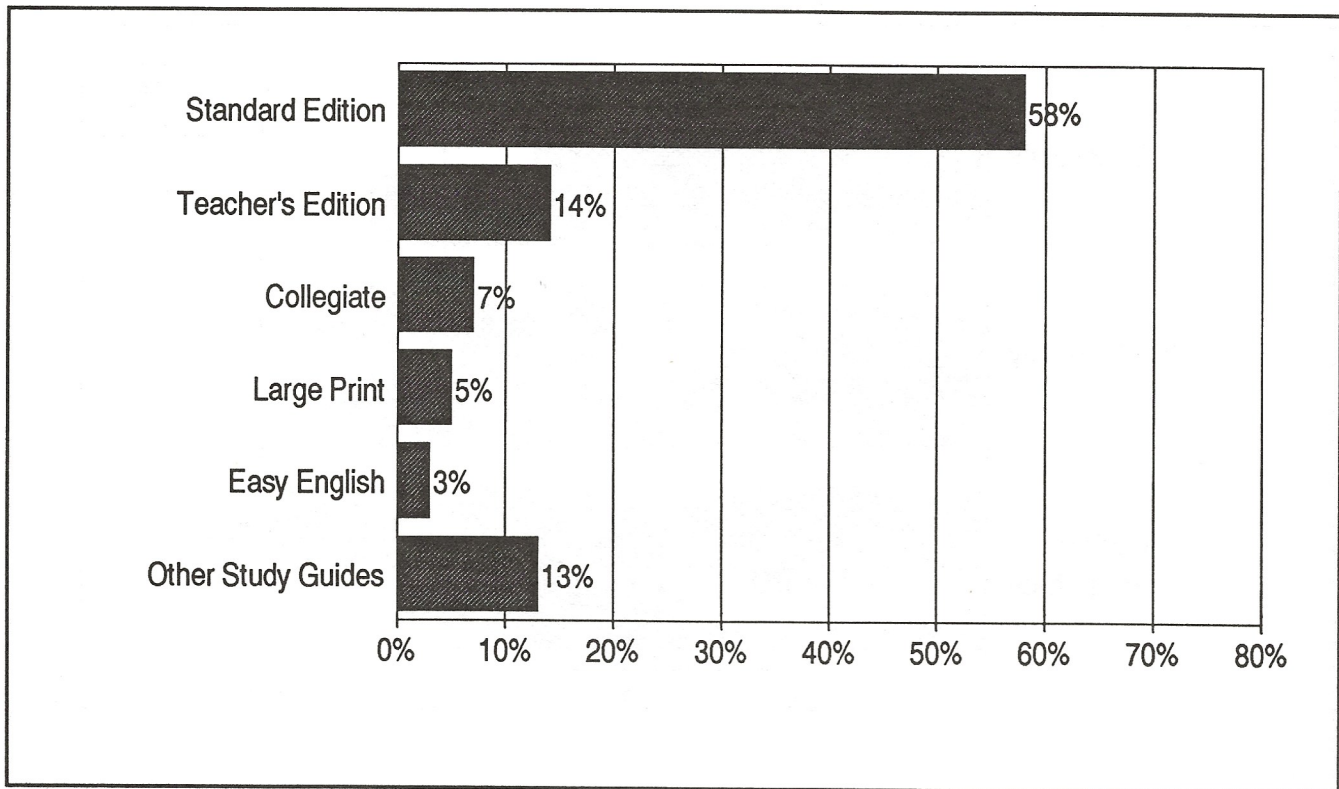
no questions about study of the Sabbath School lesson were asked prior to the current research.)

Identified Need

Decline in the use of Sabbath School materials should not be viewed simply as a decline in the devotional practices and spirituality of church members. It is an indicator of the perceived usefulness of the materials.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5. 1980 data is from Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., A Study of Factors Relating to Church Growth in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, (Institute of Church Ministry, Andrews University, 1981).





Which Quarterly Do You Use?

Among those who do study the Sabbath School lesson, only a little more than half use the Standard edition in English or other languages. One in three use one of the four other editions. One in eight church members are using alternative study guides from interdenominational and independent publishers. Very few are using the *Profiles* series for the Pastor's Bible class.

The Collegiate Quarterly is used by larger segments of the members of suburban and rural congregations. Black and Hispanic church members report that they are less likely to use this version of the Sabbath School lesson. There is some indication that it is being used by college-educated adults of all ages, as well as young adults enrolled in universities and colleges.

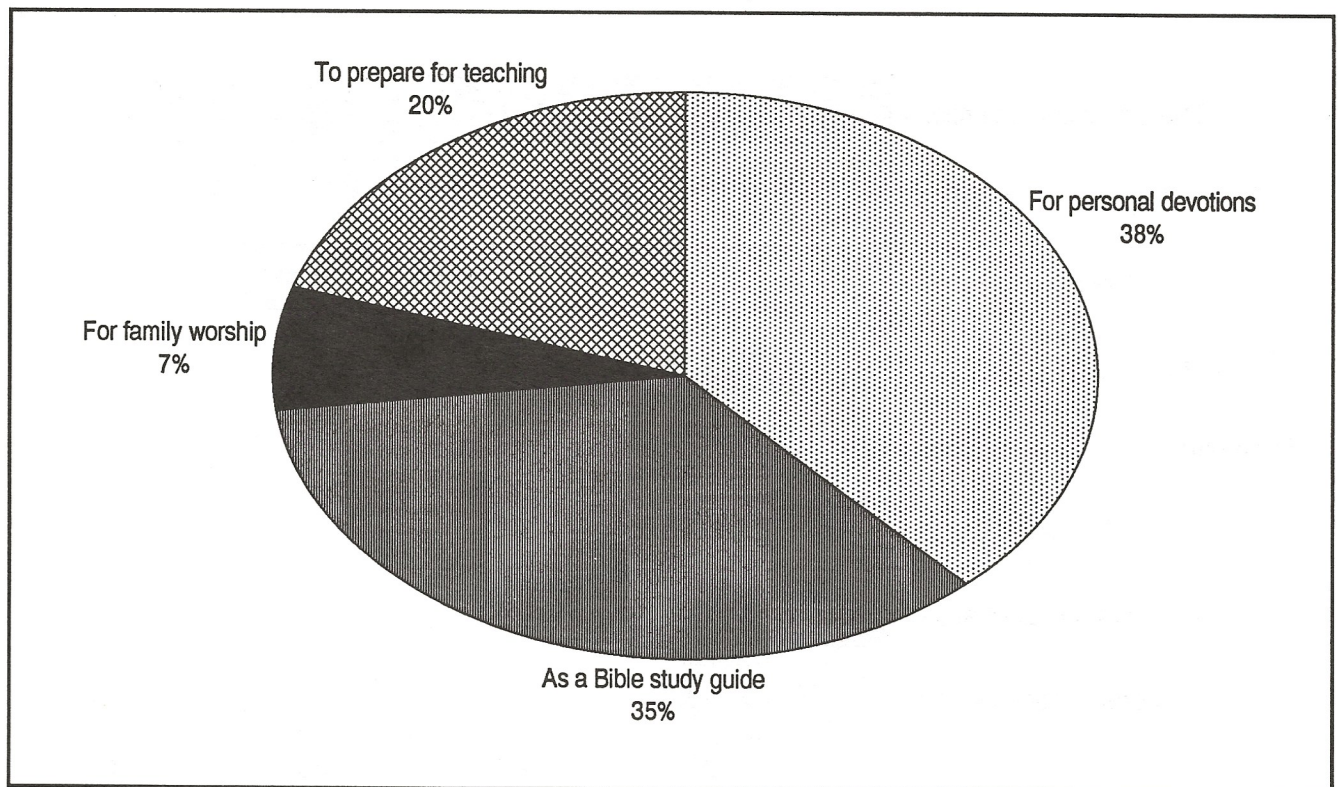
The Easy English Quarterly is more likely to be used in congregations that operate in languages other than English. It is probably being used to help church members who are acquiring skill in the use of the English language.

Rural congregations are less likely to use the Teacher's Quarterly. This may be related to the fact that small, rural churches tend to have only a single adult Sabbath School class.

Identified Need

It is a mistake to focus on "the" quarterly, since NAD Adventists no longer have a single quarterly, but choose from among five versions of the Adult Sabbath School Lesson. And a significant number of members are using study guides not published by the denomination or are not studying any materials.

Source: A survey of 1,994 church attenders conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry for the North American Division Church Information System, Report 5.



How are the Sabbath School Quarterlies Used?

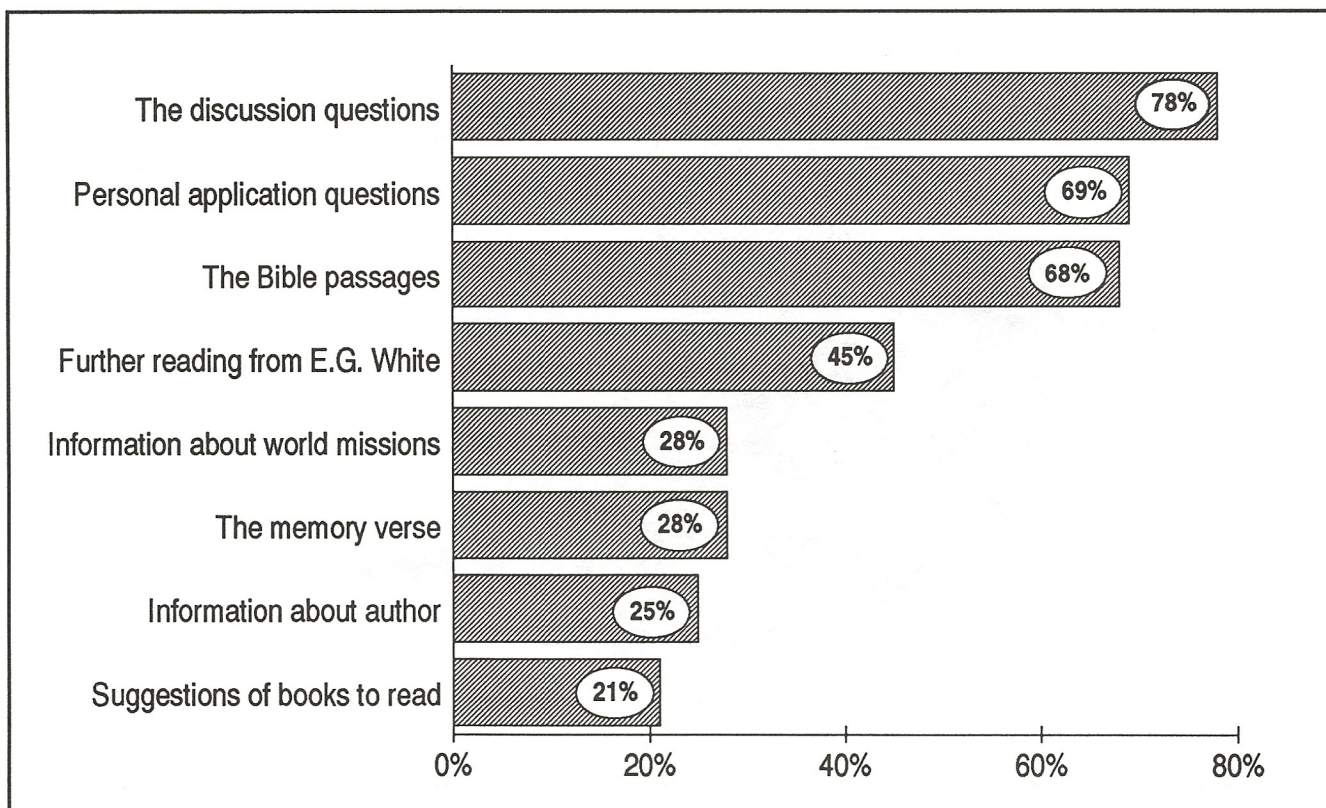
What practical purpose do church members have in mind when they open a Sabbath School quarterly and actually use it? The largest number use it for their personal devotions, and one in 14 use it for family worship. Only one in three use the quarterly primarily as a Bible study guide.

Church members with higher incomes and younger adults are even less likely to use their quarterly as a Bible study guide and more likely to use it for personal devotions. One in 14 users are systematically journaling during their devotions or use a study notebook with their quarterly. One in five discuss the Sabbath School lesson with others during the week between class meetings.

Identified Need

Users of adult Sabbath School quarterlies are more interested in meeting their own personal, spiritual needs than they are in assimilating Bible information.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



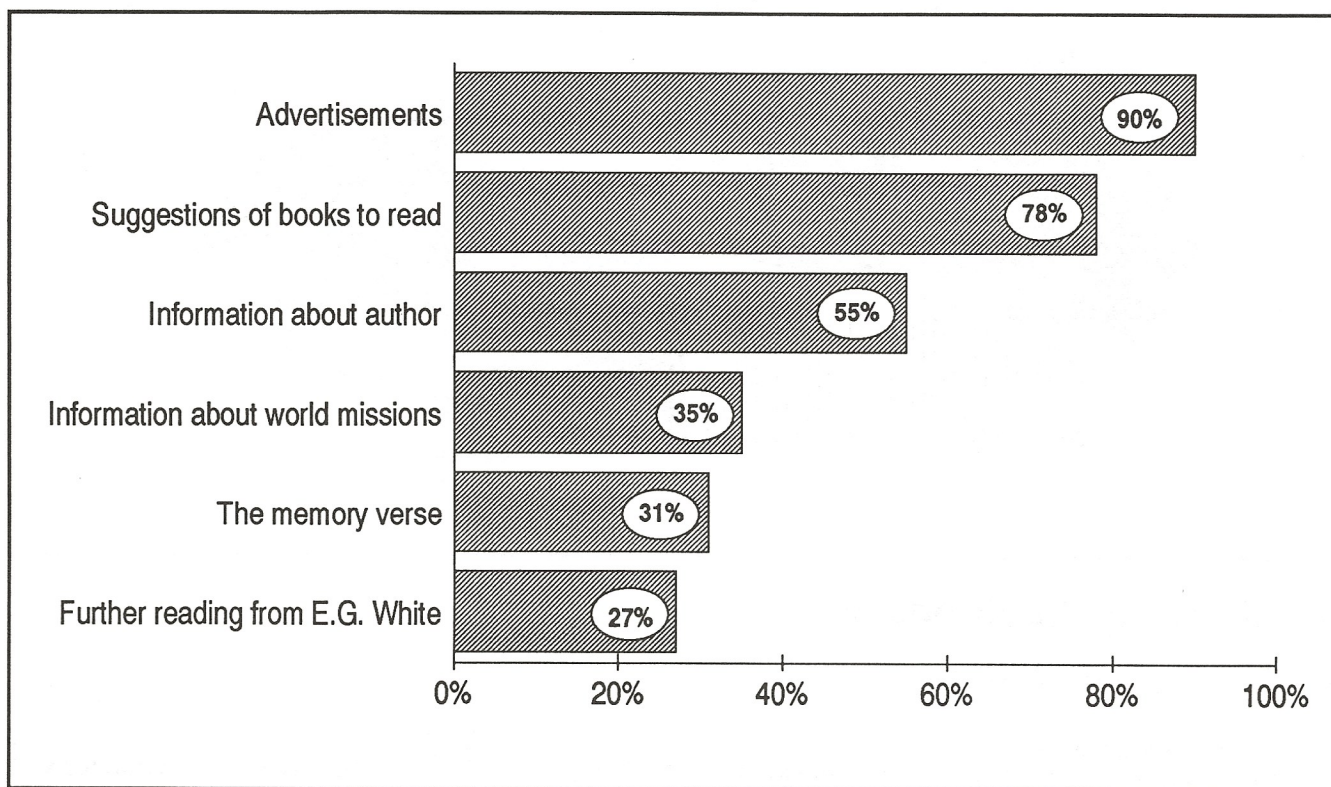
Most-used Features of the Adult Quarterlies

The discussion questions, application questions and scripture passages are the items in the quarterlies that three out of four church members look for and consistently use. Less than half make use of the recommended further readings from Ellen White's writings, and only one in four pay attention to the information about world missions, the memory verse, and other features in the quarterlies.

Identified Need

The discussion and application questions are the vital elements in the quarterlies and greater attention needs to be given by the writers and editors to the quality and usefulness of these questions.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



Least-used Features of the Adult Quarterlies

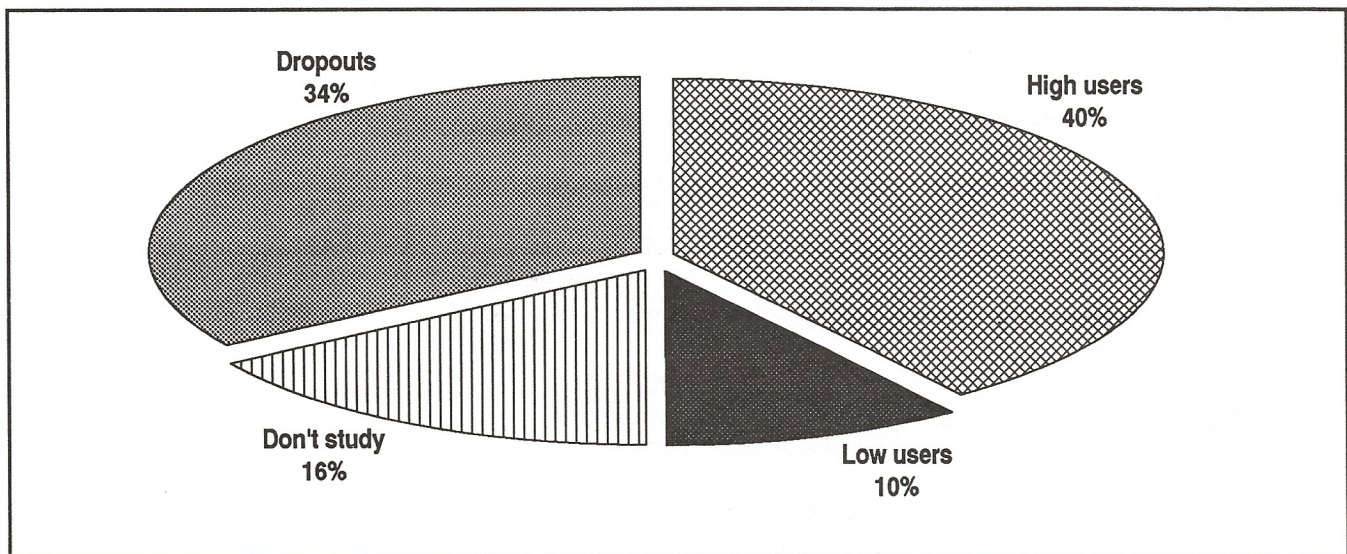
Considering the cost, purchasers of advertising space in the quarterlies will be greatly disappointed to find that nine out of ten church members say they pay little attention to these ads. Three out of four make no use of the suggestions for additional reading, and the majority have no interest in the information about the author or “principal contributor” to the lesson materials.

The feeling that there is “too much” material in most of the current versions of the adult quarterly is reinforced in the focus group research conducted as part of this project. Many church members mentioned that they usually did not have time to read everything in their quarterly. Some stated that they never look at some features in their quarterly.

Identified Need

Many church members would appreciate a quarterly that is briefer and more concise. Some of the current features could be dropped, at least in some versions of the quarterly.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



Evaluating the Sabbath School Quarterlies

Survey respondents were asked to rate how well the quarterly they use meets their expectations on ten different aspects. They answered on a four-point scale—excellent, good, fair or poor.

The quarterlies rate best in providing support for beliefs, preparing members to discuss the lesson, bringing a person closer to Christ, and helping a person to understand the doctrines of the church. The average score for these aspects was “good.”

Members from rural churches, older members, long-time members, and those from low-income households give these aspects of their quarterlies an even higher rating. Members in Canada and the southern United States rate the quarterlies higher than do those in the western and northeastern states.

The quarterlies are rated weakest in the practical and relational aspects of the lesson—help in self understanding, help in witnessing, and in applying Bible knowledge to life issues. The averages on these items are closer

Strengths of the Quarterly

- provides support for my beliefs.
- brings me closer to Christ.
- prepares me to discuss the lesson on Sabbath.
- helps me understand church doctrines.

to “fair.” Ratings of the overall level of interest and the how well the quarterlies do in stimulating the thinking of church members fall between “good” and “fair.”

Members of suburban churches, younger adults from the Baby Boom generation, and those from higher-income households and larger congregations are most likely to say that the quarterlies do not fully meet their expectations. Church members on the west coast, and those in the midwestern and northeastern U.S., are also more likely to give low ratings to the quarterlies.

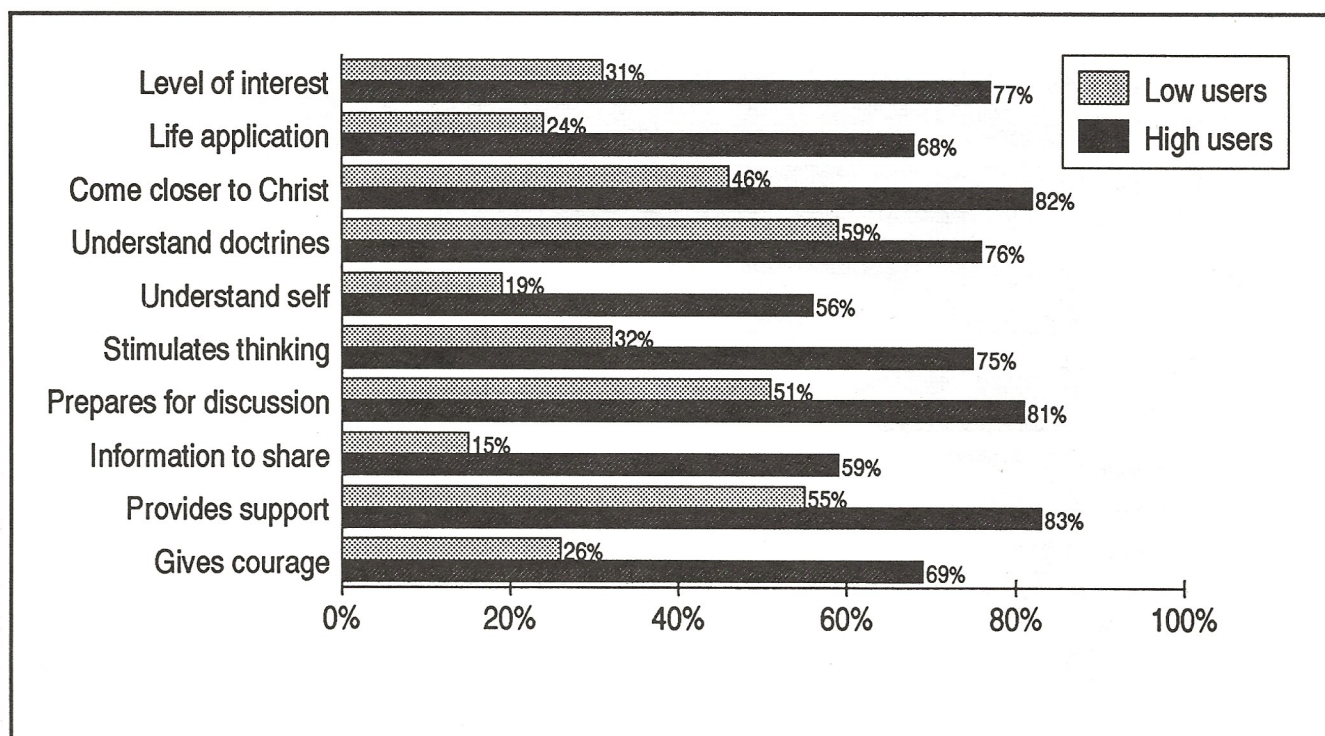
Weaknesses of the Quarterly

- helps me understand myself better.
- gives me information to share with others to lead them to Christ.
- helps me apply what I learn to my life.
- helps me face life with courage.

Identified Need

More effective materials are needed to help church members to make life application of the Bible principles taught in the Sabbath School lesson, especially in dealing with life issues and in sharing faith with friends, relatives, neighbors and work associates.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



Evaluating the Quarterlies: Low Users Vs. High Users

In evaluating the five editions of the adult Sabbath School lesson currently being published in the NAD, it is helpful to contrast the ratings of those who use a quarterly daily or weekly—"high users"—and those who use one less often—"low users." The high user group presumably represents loyal customers, while the low user group may represent those not satisfied with the five current quarterlies.

High users outnumber low users by four to one, although half of the 750,000 Seventh-day Adventists in North America fall into a third category—non-users. Non-users include the one in four active members who report that they never study the Sabbath School lesson and the church dropouts who, in general, no longer have access to a quarterly. Further research and experimenta-

tion is needed to discover what would lure these non-users to begin studying a Sabbath School quarterly.

High users are more likely to attend the same class each week rather than class-hop. Low users express more interest in fellowship, but are more likely to report that they sit quietly and observe in class.

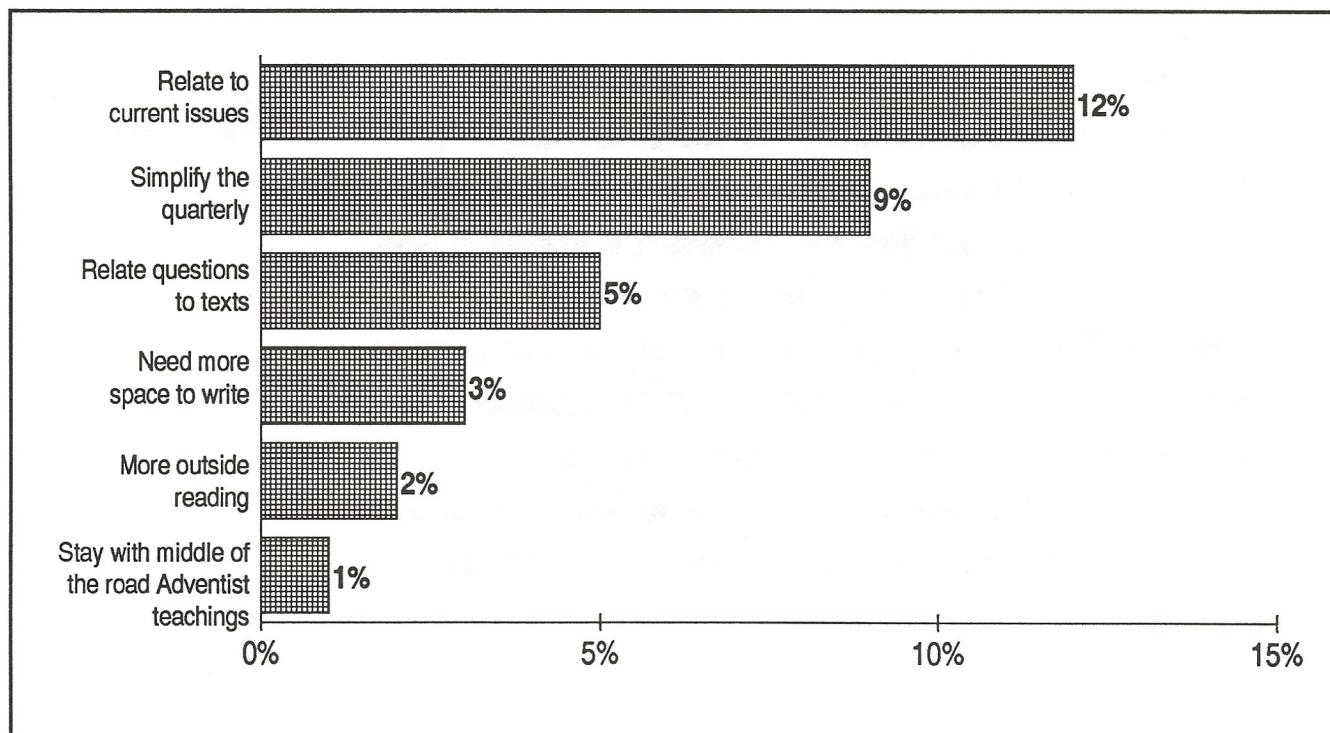
Low users find the edition of the quarterly they use less interesting than do high users. They rate their satisfaction with the quarterly consistently lower than they rate their satisfaction with the class discussion. And they tend to be less involved with the quarterly when they do use it. They typically just glance through it or read the parts which interest them most. On the other hand, high users are more likely to write in the quarterly.

High users are older, with lower incomes and are more likely to be members of rural and small town churches. Low users are younger, with higher incomes and are more likely to be members of suburban churches.

Identified Need

New approaches which emphasize fellowship and spiritual growth, as well as church doctrines, are needed for younger, higher income, suburbanites who are less satisfied with the Sabbath School and the Sabbath School materials currently provided by the denomination.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.



Suggestions to Improve the Adult Quarterlies

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to jot down specific suggestions to improve the quarterlies in an open-ended question. An astounding seven out of ten did so, which clearly demonstrates the widespread concern about the Sabbath School quarterlies among Adventists in North America.

The largest number of the suggestions were sufficiently unique to make it impossible to cluster them for statistical purposes. Many of these suggestions were very specific and technical in nature.

The most widely mentioned suggestions were for improvements that would better relate the Sabbath School lesson to current issues in the lives of church members and the world in which they live, and a request for simplifica-

tion of the quarterlies. Each of these two suggestions was mentioned by one in ten respondents.

This deep concern is corroborated in the Pacific Union study, in which the majority of those who answered a similar open-ended question indicated they would like definite changes in the Sabbath School quarterlies. (See *Sabbath School Revitalization*, Section 3, pages 56-67.) Two out of three respondents said they would prefer a Sabbath School class that discusses current issues and concerns. (See *Ibid.*, p. 22.)

Identified Needs

1. A significant number of NAD members would like to see the Sabbath School lesson deal with contemporary issues—personal, family, church and social issues. They worry that it

is in danger of becoming too scholastic and unrelated to the world in which they seek to live faithful and fulfilling lives.

2. A more concise and straight-forward quarterly is the expressed need of a significant number of NAD members. The current quarterlies (with the exception of the Easy English edition, which is not widely circulated) are too wordy and include too many abstract concepts.

Source: A survey of 651 church members conducted by Advance Marketing Group, Inc., for the North American Division Church Ministries Department.

Identified Needs: A Summary

Reprinted here are the paragraphs from each section of the report which describe specific needs identified in the North American Division Adult Sabbath School Needs Assessment:

1. The Sabbath School is in need of revitalization. It is a long-established program of the Adventist Church in North America that is experiencing a significant decline in participation.
2. Younger adults—the Baby Boom generation, now 26 to 45 years of age—need to be helped to buy into the adult Sabbath School. Otherwise it is in danger of becoming an institution identified entirely with the generations born before 1946.
3. The key to revitalization of the adult Sabbath School is in focusing on the Sabbath School class. This element of the Sabbath School is more highly valued by church members than is the introductory “program.”
4. The problem of decline in Sabbath School attendance is very much related to the church dropout problem. As congregations learn to be more inclusive and solve the dropout problem, there will also be improvement in Sabbath School attendance.
5. Adult Sabbath School activities and materials must focus on the spiritual growth of participants. Both lesson content and group activities must contribute to an intentional growth process built around stated goals of spiritual maturity.
6. The adult Sabbath School curriculum lacks specific objectives for spiritual growth. The measures of spiritual maturity used in the Valuegenesis study conducted by Project Affirmation should be adopted as intentional objectives for spiritual growth for the adult Sabbath School in the NAD.
7. An increase is needed in the number of adult Sabbath School classes positioned to meet the needs of Baby Boomers and other church members who do not enjoy the traditional class located in a few pews in one corner of the main sanctuary.
8. The key role of group dynamics in Sabbath School classes must be better understood and given a more intentional role in curriculum design, preparation of materials, class models and teacher training.
9. There is a need for a greater number of classes in most of the larger congregations in the NAD.
10. The time allowed for classes to meet must be increased. At the same time there are significant groups that prefer half-hour class meetings. Since time preferences seem to be related to interest in the large-group Sabbath School Program, one solution is to offer some classes at a collateral time-frame so that, for example, both the Sabbath School Program and a selection of longer classes begin at 9:30 a.m. and additional classes get started at 10 a.m. when the Program is over.
11. The fellowship needs of church members cannot be ignored. The Sabbath School is more than down-loading information about the Bible into the brains of participants. Learner-centered processes are needed in the Sabbath School lesson, and quality time must be provided in the Sabbath School class for bonding and for caring for one another.
12. Most adults expect opportunity to express themselves during the Sabbath School class and class leaders must provide this opportunity. Classes must also be provided for smaller segments that prefer to sit and listen to a lecture or participate in a lecture-discussion format.

13. A variety of teaching styles and materials are necessary to adequately meet the needs of all Sabbath School members. Attendance at Sabbath School is not likely to increase until a “full menu” is offered in a significant portion of the local churches across the NAD.

14. The Fellowship Audience presents a particular opportunity for evangelism and church growth. There is a need for information and resource materials to help local churches see this opportunity and respond to it effectively.

15. Sabbath School teachers need to improve their ability to observe and listen to their class members—get better feedback—so that they can improve the class as it is experienced by the learners.

16. The relational and outreach dimensions of the Sabbath School class need to be improved without weakening the cognitive and spiritual strengths that exist.

17. The Sabbath School class needs to be made the primary focus of the adult Sabbath School, with more time devoted to activities that will increase participation and meet the fellowship needs of members.

18. Class leaders will need training in group dynamics and non-traditional teaching methods in order to make their classes more participative and make good use of additional class time.

19. Ways must be found to engage a larger percentage of church members in regular study of the Sabbath School lesson, including a significant number who may study weekly rather than daily due to lifestyle demands.

20. If the devotional practices of church members are becoming more diverse, non-traditional and individually-designed, then greater flexibility and choice will be needed in Sabbath School lesson materials.

21. Decline in the use of Sabbath School materials should not be viewed simply as a decline in the devotional practices and spirituality of church members. It is an indicator of the perceived usefulness of the materials.

22. It is a mistake to focus on “the” quarterly, since NAD Adventists no longer have a single quarterly, but choose from among five versions of the Adult Sabbath School Lesson. And a significant number of members are using study guides not published by the denomination or are not studying any materials.

23. Users of adult Sabbath School quarterlies are more interested in meeting their own personal, spiritual needs than they are in assimilating Bible information.

24. The discussion and application questions are the vital elements in the quarterlies and greater attention needs to be given by the writers and editors to the quality and usefulness of these questions.

25. Many church members would appreciate a quarterly that is briefer and more concise. Some of the current features could be dropped, at least in some versions of the quarterly.

26. More effective materials are needed to help church members to make life application of the Bible principles taught in the Sabbath School lesson, especially in dealing with life issues and in sharing faith with friends, relatives, neighbors and work associates.

27. New approaches which emphasize fellowship and spiritual growth, as well as church doctrines, are needed for younger, higher income, suburbanites who are less satisfied with the Sabbath School and the Sabbath School materials currently provided by the denomination.

28. A significant number of NAD members would like to see the Sabbath School lesson deal with contemporary issues—personal, family, church and social issues. They worry that it is in danger of becoming too scholastic and unrelated to the world in which they seek to live faithful and fulfilling lives.

29. A more concise and straight-forward quarterly is the expressed need of a significant number of NAD members. The current quarterlies (with the exception of the Easy English edition, which is not widely circulated) are too wordy and include too many abstract concepts.

Goals for Spiritual Growth

Appendix

The following measures of mature faith development were used in the Valuegenesis study conducted for Project Affirmation. It was recommended by a consultation of religious education specialists from union and local conference staffs on October 31, 1990, that these indicators be adopted as the curriculum goals for adult, non-formal religious education materials produced for use by Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America.

Participation in the Sabbath School, mid-week meetings, seminars, small group ministries and other adult, non-formal education activities of a Seventh-day Adventist congregation will move men and women toward mature Christian faith.

The person with mature Christian faith trusts and believes:

1. Sees God as personal and transcendent.
2. Believes in the disclosure of God through revelation.
3. Accepts the divinity and humanity of Jesus.
4. Trusts in God's forgiveness.
5. Accepts God's love as unconditional.
6. Anticipates the second coming of Christ.

The person with mature Christian faith experiences the fruit of faith:

7. Feels liberated and confident.
8. Experiences a sense of calling and mission.
9. Experiences God's guidance.
10. Has a deep sense of personal assurance.
11. Experiences self-acceptance.

The person with mature Christian faith integrates faith and life:

12. Faith informs lifestyle, decisions and actions.
13. Belief dictates moral principles and guidelines.
14. Commits life to Jesus Christ.

The person with mature Christian faith seeks spiritual growth:

15. Affirms that faith is a journey that necessitates on-going growth.
16. Seeks to increase Biblical knowledge and understanding.
17. Frequently engages in private prayer and meditation.
18. Seeks opportunity for spiritual growth.

The person with mature Christian faith experiences and nurtures faith in community:

- 19. Seeks to nurture the faith of others.
- 20. Shares one's faith story.
- 21. Experiences God in interpersonal and social encounters.
- 22. Seeks opportunities for corporate prayer and worship.

The person with mature Christian faith holds life affirming values:

- 23. Avoids life-threatening behavior.
- 24. Feels responsible for promoting human welfare.
- 25. Affirms spiritual diversity.
- 26. Embraces racial and gender equality.
- 27. Affirms people.
- 28. Affirms the sanctity of creation.

The person with mature Christian faith embraces a theology of service.

- 29. Demonstrates compassion for the disadvantaged.
- 30. Advocates social change.
- 31. Believes the church belongs in the public sphere.
- 32. Applies faith to political and social issues.
- 33. Promotes peace and justice.
- 34. Feels obligation to share personal resources with others.



North American Division
Church Ministries Department