
Report One: Survey of Participating Sites

NET '98
Next Millenium Seminar



***Conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry for the
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists***

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Introduction

Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of 142 participating pastors during the week immediately following the opening weekend. Another survey of a second random sample of 161 participating pastors was interviewed again during the last week of the series. Some of those interviewed are lay leaders in charge of particular sites.

The purpose of these surveys is to obtain information about attendance during the Next Millennium Seminar featuring Dwight Nelson as evangelist, and the results of the NET 98 satellite-linked evangelism initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. A total of 1,985 congregations have been identified as hosting local meetings as part of NET 98 in North America.

Estimates of total attendance, baptisms, etc., in this report are based on statistical models that use the 1,985 local sites as a key element. No attempt has been made by the research team to verify this figure which was provided by the NET 98 management team.

Round one of the interviews was conducted on October 11-16, 1998. Round two was completed on November 8-11, 1998. When reading the results of any random survey, an allowance must be made for sample error as compared to the results that would be obtained if every case had been interviewed. At the 95th percentile confidence level, the allowance for sampling error in this study is 8 percentage points, plus or minus.

This study was conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry for the North American Division. It represents the first phase of three studies that will be conducted to gather information about NET 98.

A larger sample of pastors and local site managers will be interviewed in the spring to get information on baptisms and Professions of Faith several months after the meetings, as well as to get more detailed evaluations of various aspects of the satellite evangelism initiative. This will be reported in a more lengthy Phase Two Report.

About one year later, in the spring of the year 2000, a follow-up survey will be conducted of participating pastors to ascertain how many of the individuals they baptized during NET 98 are still active in the Adventist Church. An additional element in that study will include a survey of NET 98 converts to obtain a demographic profile and their input regarding future evangelism activities of the Adventist Church.

Executive Summary

Telephone interviews with a random sample of pastors and local site coordinators participating in NET 98 indicate that attendance on the opening night (October 9) was more than 161,000. About 36,000 of those attending on the opening night were not church members. Total attendance is about equal to the figures for NET 96, while the non-member attendance is down from an estimated 45,000 in NET 96.

Half the participating churches this year had 55 or fewer people in attendance. Attendance at the up-link site on the campus of Andrews University, was 4,800.

Local churches with an high growth rate during 1997 were more likely to have a larger total attendance. High-growth churches were also more likely to have larger numbers of non-members in attendance on opening night.

In Canada there were larger numbers of non-members in attendance, with churches there twice as likely to report more than 12 on opening night. Smaller numbers were more likely in white, Anglo congregations across North America.

Opening-night crowds in which there were "none" in the audience who were not already members of the Adventist church was most likely in participating Hispanic and multicultural congregations. The same was true at sites on the west coast of the U.S.

The average nightly attendance throughout the five-week series was about 80,000 people. About 25,000 of the average attendance were not members of the Adventist Church when they started coming to the event.

Half of the respondents report having 12 to 41 people in attendance throughout most of the series. Larger groups were more likely in Canada and on the west coast, as well as in African American and multicultural congregations. Smaller groups were more likely in the Midwest and the south, as well as in Hispanic congregations.

Some 8,500 to 9,000 non-members who attended the NET 98 public evangelistic meetings were continuing in Bible studies, small groups, Bible classes or church attendance at the close of the series even though they had not made a decision to join the church. Larger numbers in this category are reported in Canada, in urban and suburban churches, and in African American and multicultural congregations.

Nearly 8,000 baptisms and Professions of Faith will come from NET 98 in North America. The number is down slightly from the estimate of baptisms in NET 96, which was more than 14,000 in a similar survey. In the larger survey conducted in the spring of 1997, the estimate was revised to just under 10,000 baptisms resulting from NET 96.

Pastors were asked, "What is your best estimate of how many you will baptize from these meetings by the end of this year?" Half gave a number from one to four, while 28% gave a number from five to ten, and one in ten (8%) gave a number of eleven or more. One in eight (16%) said they would have no baptisms or Professions of Faith from NET 98.

Larger congregations are more likely to have larger numbers of new members from NET 98. The same report is more likely from churches with high growth rates in 1997, urban and suburban churches, and sites in Canada.

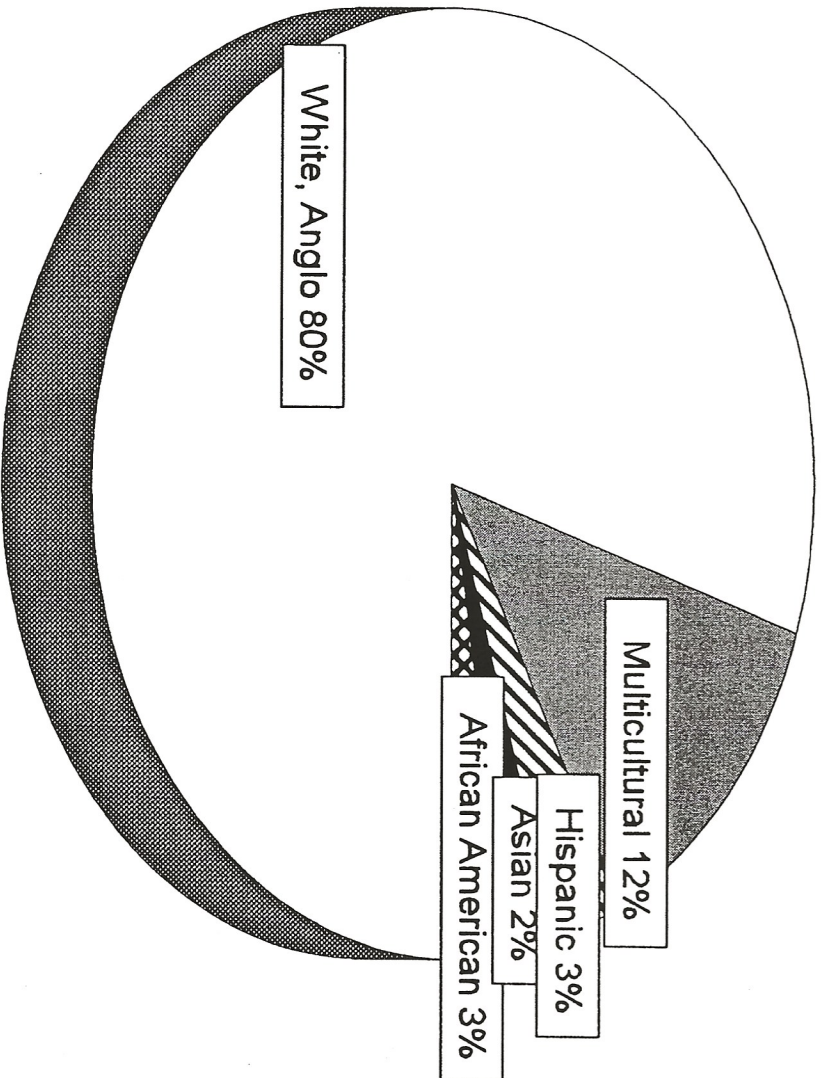
Of the 8,000 new members that pastors expect to add to their congregations as a result of NET 98, only about 1,300 are children from church-member families. Nearly three out of four sites (72%) indicate that they will have no children from church-

member families among those they expect to baptize. One in ten (11%) say they will have one child, and one in seven (17%) report two or more children.

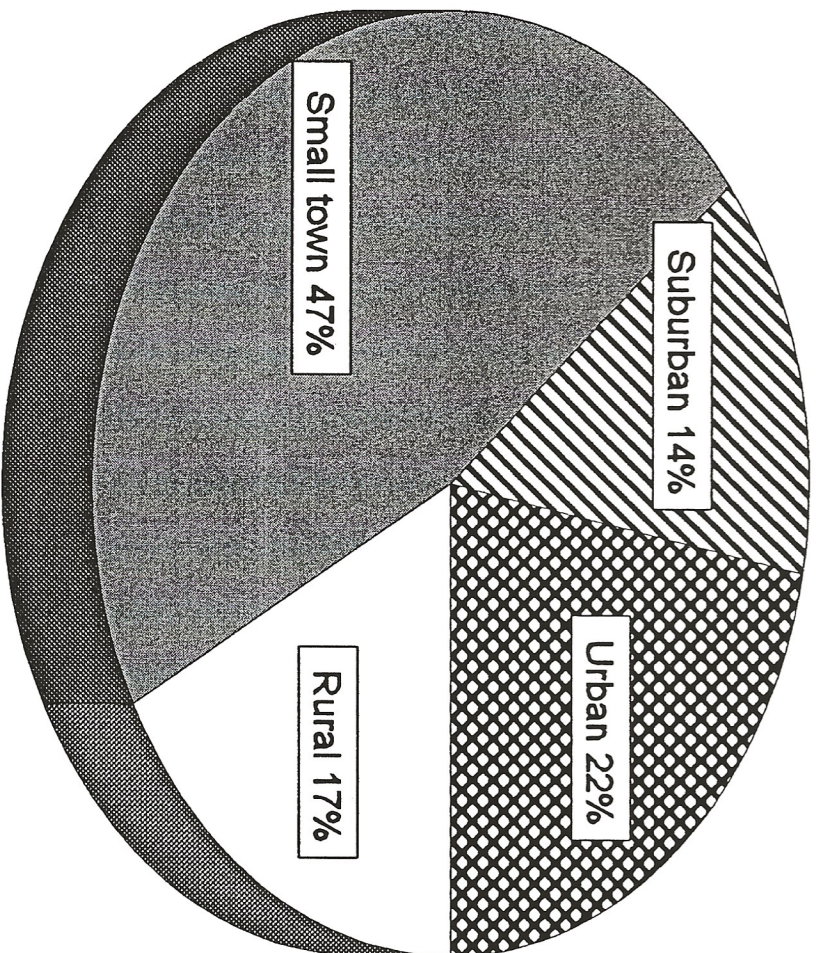
Larger churches are more likely to have children of church-member families among the total they expect to baptize. So are sites in Canada, as are African American and multicultural congregations.

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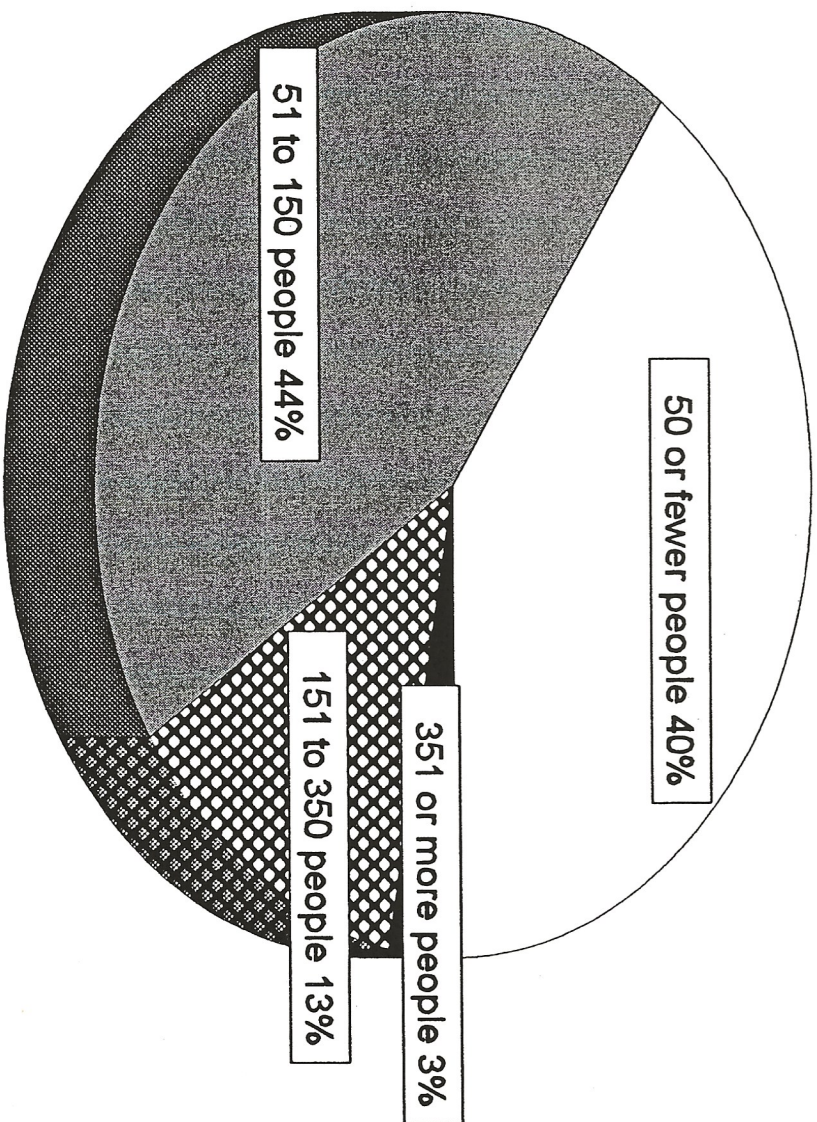
Primary ethnic identification of churches participating in NET 98



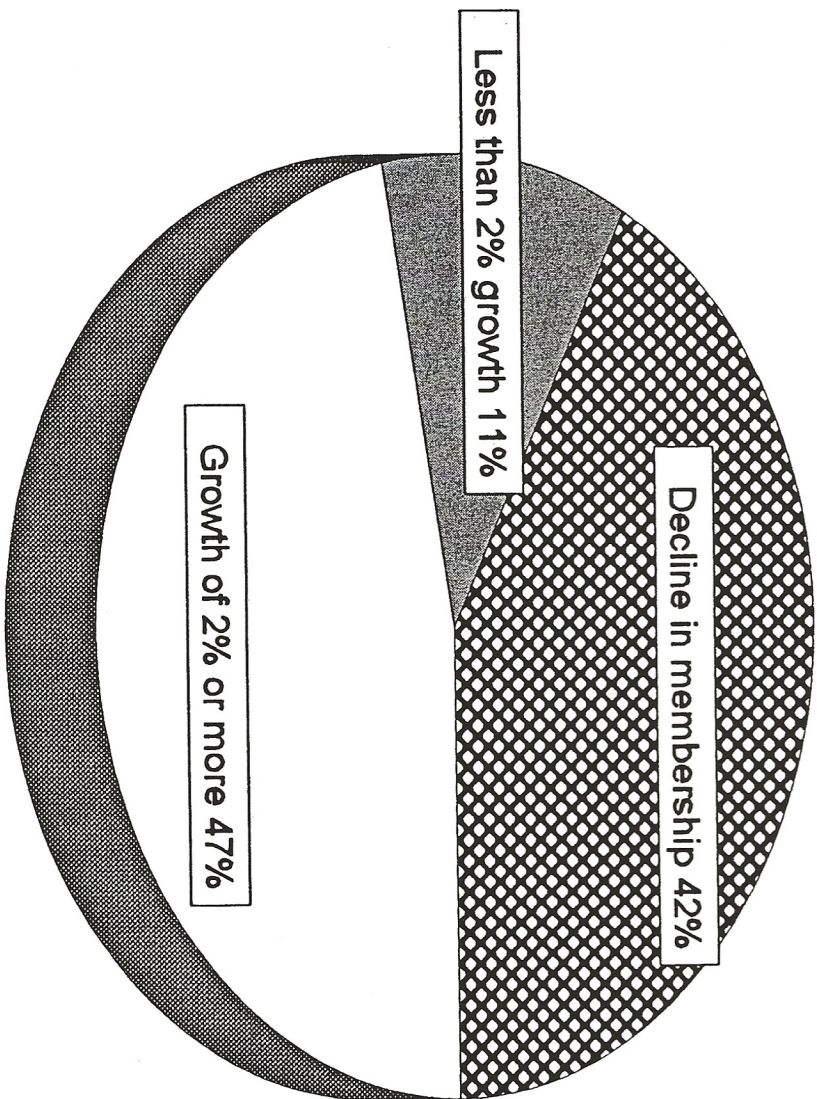
Type of community location of churches participating in NET 98



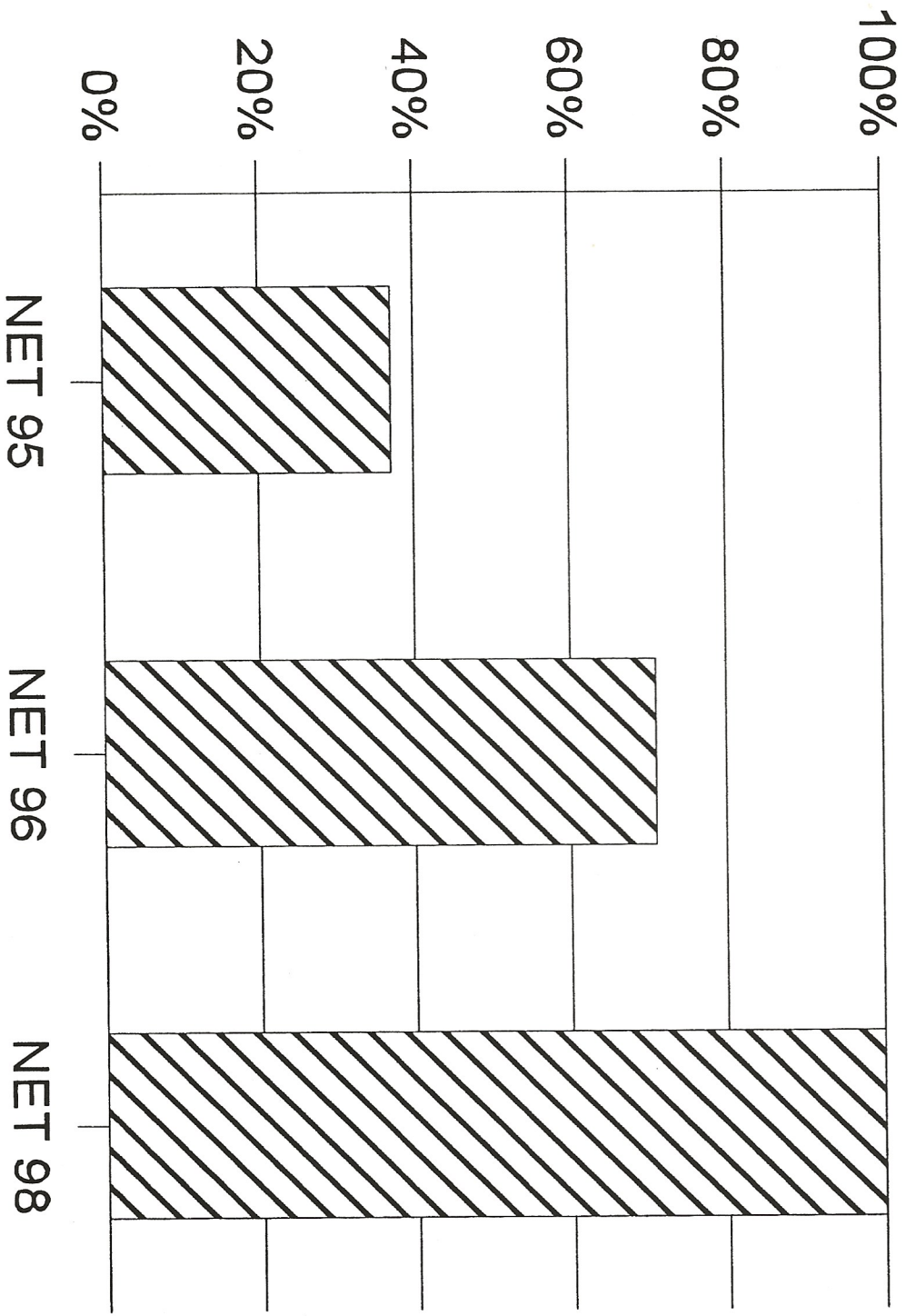
Average Sabbath attendance in September of churches participating in NET 98



Growth rate during 1997 of churches participating in NET 98

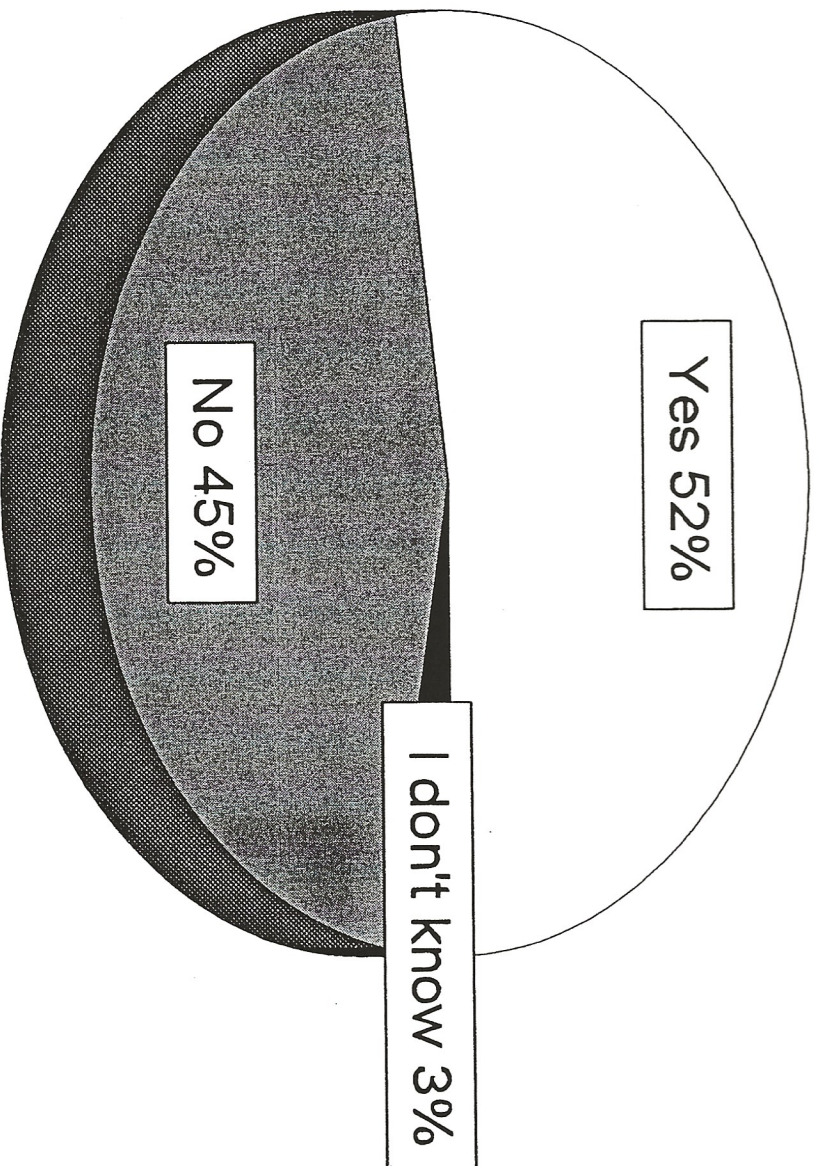


Did you participate in . . . ?



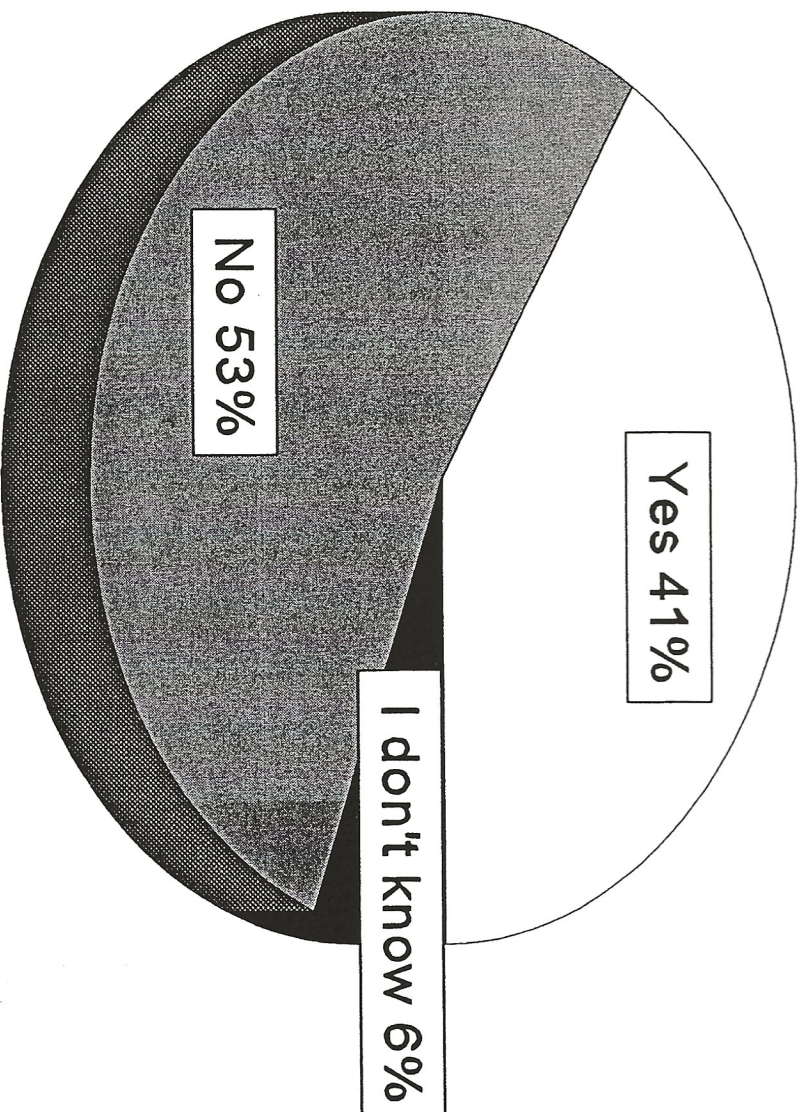
NET 98 advertising

Were radio spots used in your area?

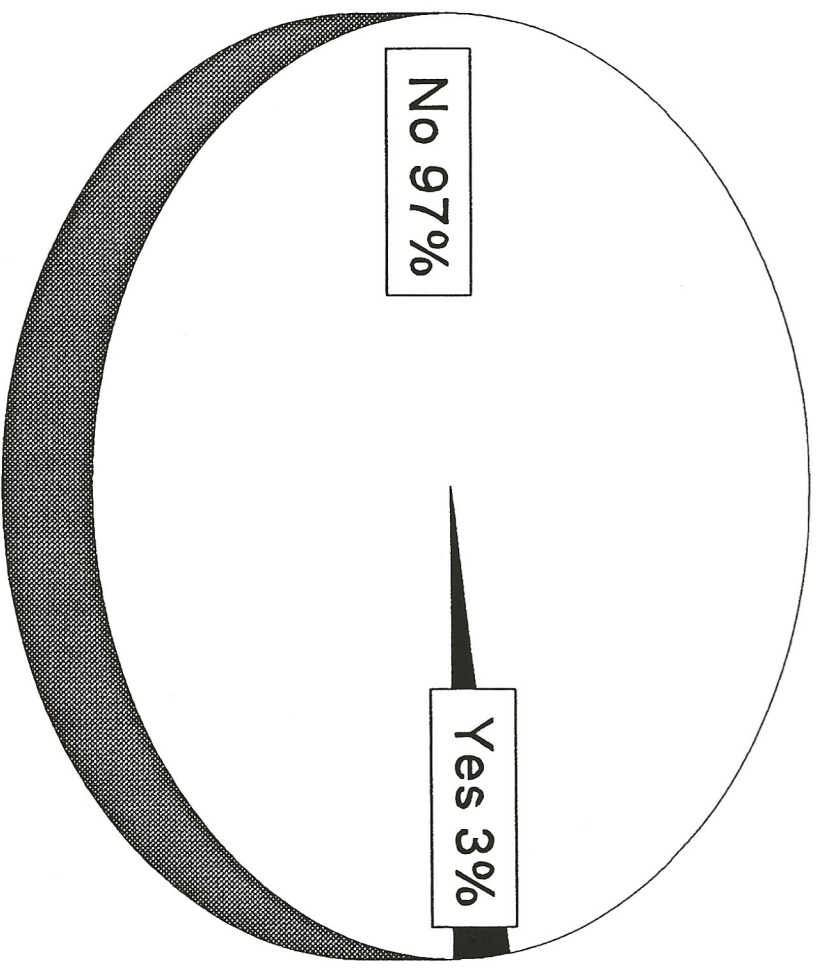


NET 98 advertising

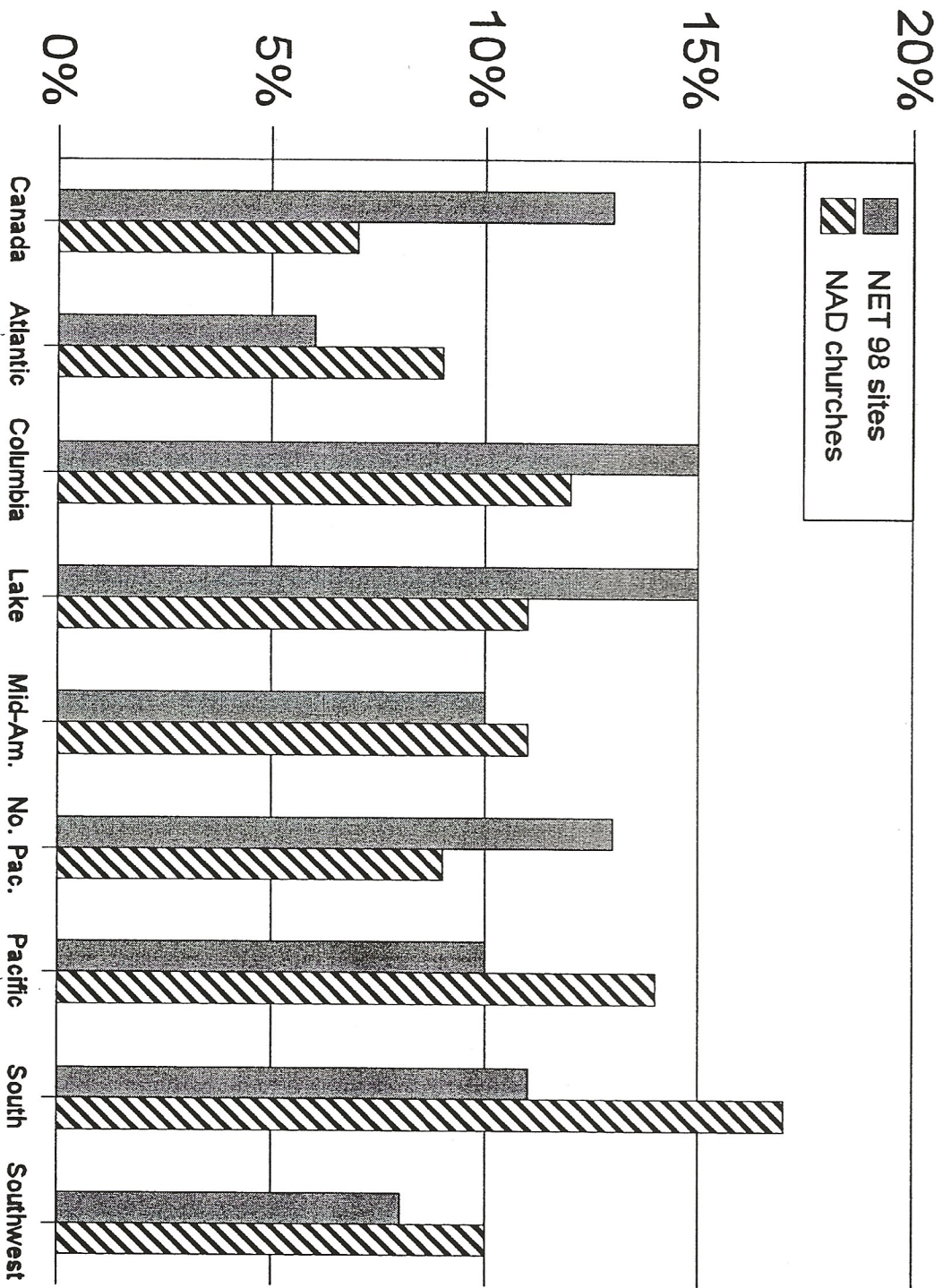
Were TV spots used in your area?



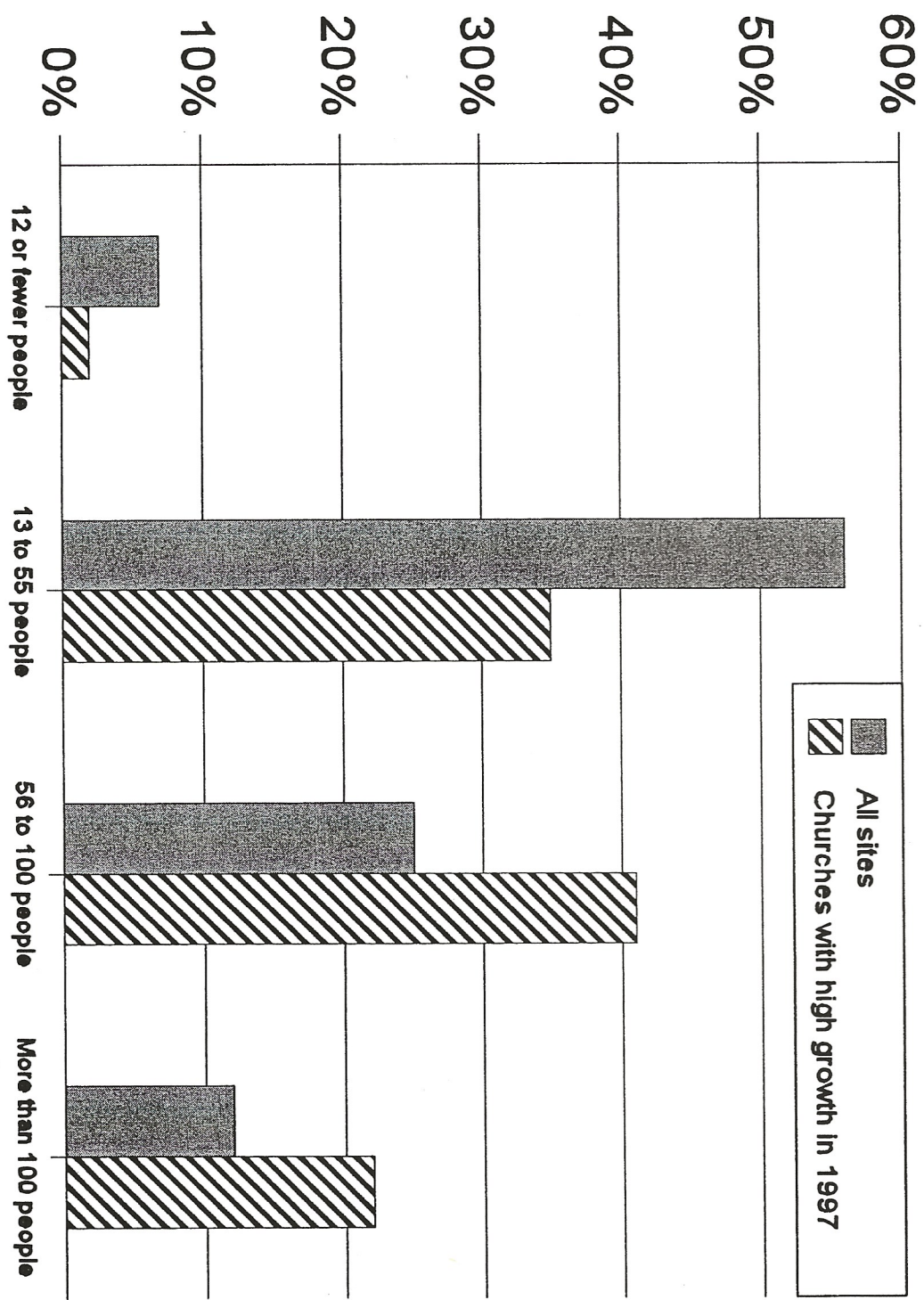
**Did you have a graduation event
for people who took Discover Bible lessons**



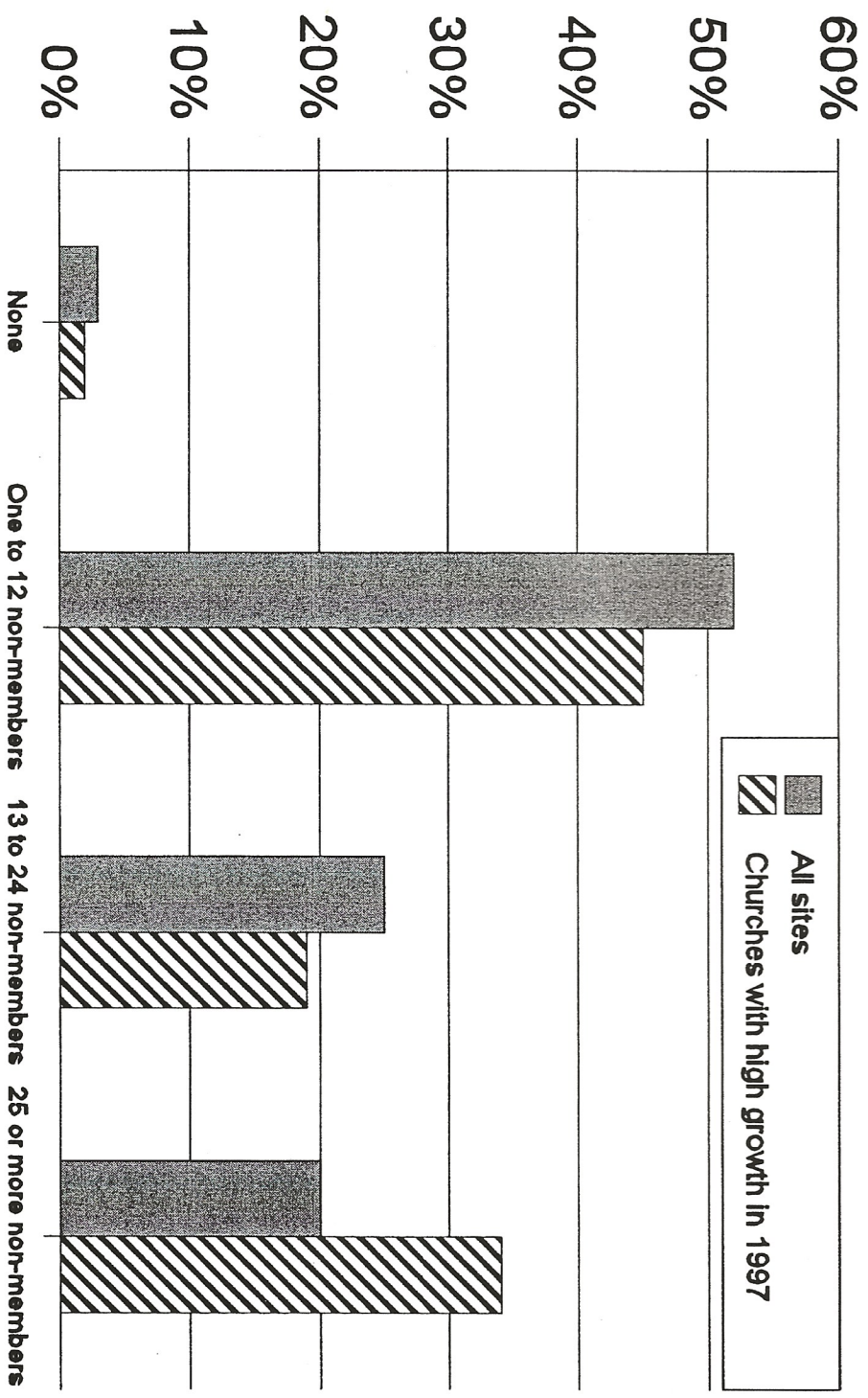
Churches participating in NET 98



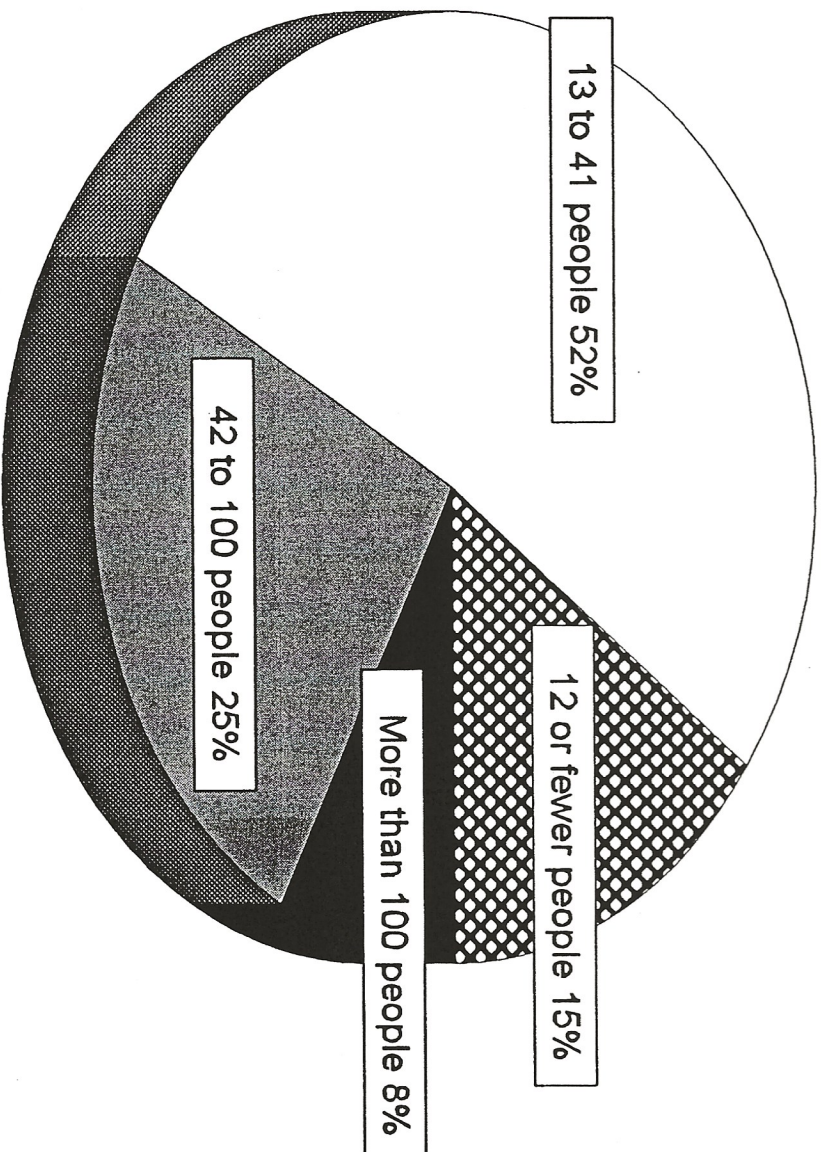
Opening night total attendance



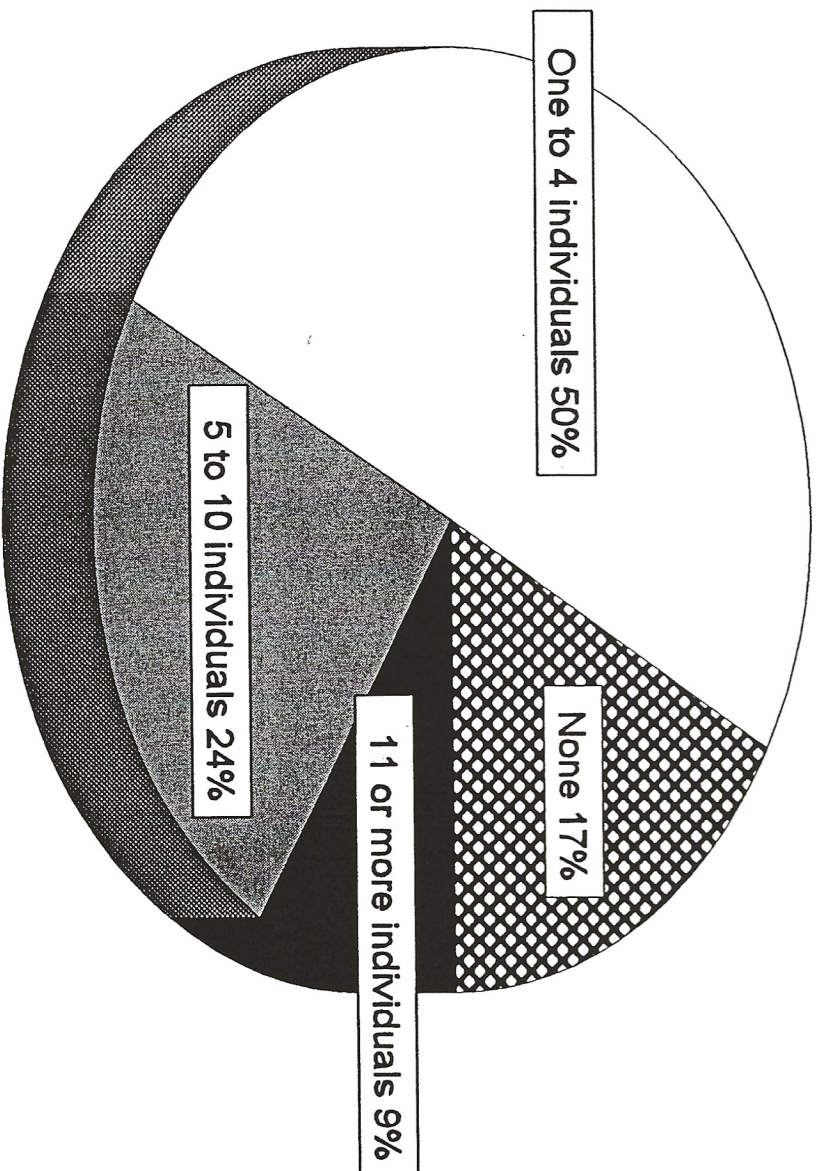
Non-member attendance on the opening night



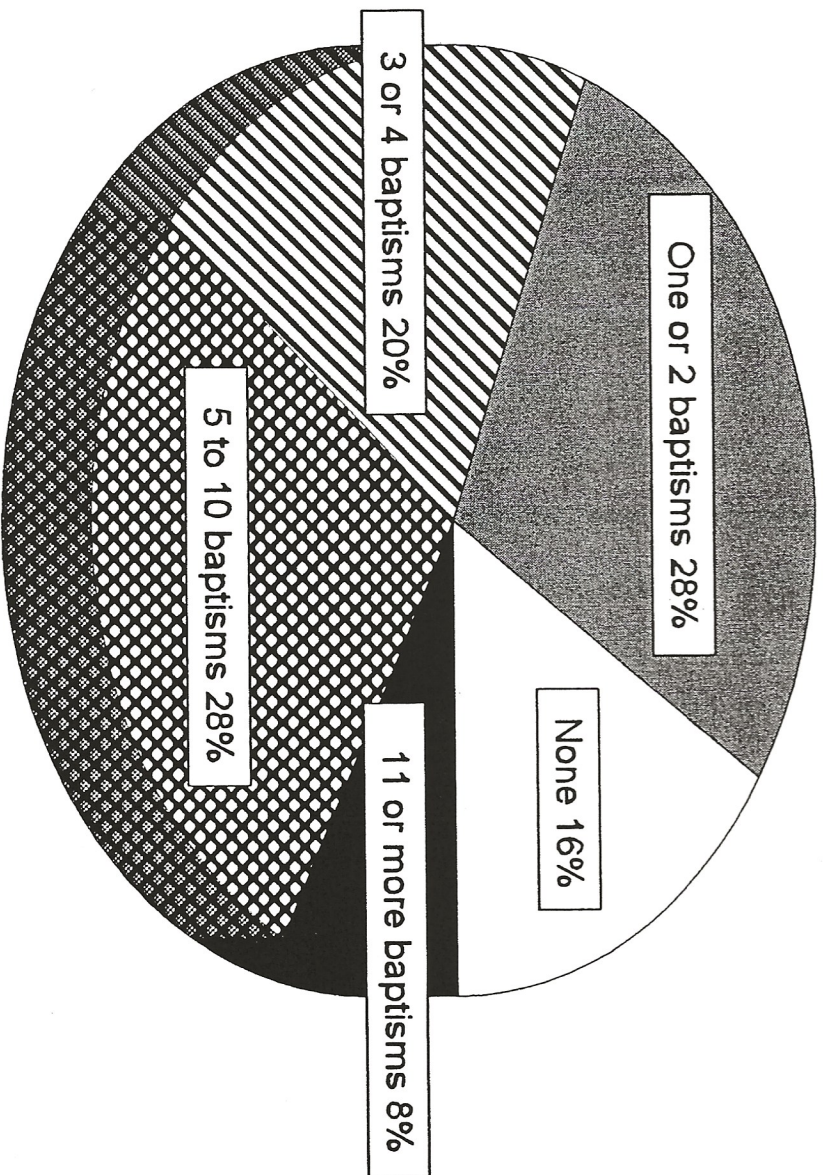
Average nightly attendance throughout the series



Non-members in Bible studies who had not yet made a decision



Baptisms and Professions of Faith confident of by December 31, 1998



Children from member households among the total baptisms from NET 98

