

# Executive Summary

There were 1,745 individuals who were interviewed; 234 hung up on the interviewer at some point during the interview; 1,511 interviews were completed and form the basis for this report.

## What is the level of name recognition of the Adventist Church in the 1990s?

The single most important discovery of this study is that over three decades, name recognition of the Adventist Church has decreased significantly. In 1970, 65% of the public who participated in the study recognized the name Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the 1980s name recognition increased to 70%. The 1994 study finds a drop in public awareness. Only 53% of the 1,511 individuals who were interviewed have heard of the Adventist Church. Among those 53% who indicated that they are aware, there has been an increase in the number who associate Mormon beliefs, values and programming with the Adventist Church.

## What audience segments are not being penetrated by the Adventist Church in this decade?

The 1994 findings show that individuals 30 years of age and younger, males, and Asian/Pacific Islanders are the segments of the population least penetrated by the Adventist church. In general, the public has little contact with Adventists. Of those responding, 7% know an individual who is an Adventist but only 6% have ever visited an Adventist church.

## What is the attitude of the public in the 1990s to the Adventist Church?

The public knows that Adventists observe Saturday as the day of worship, or Sabbath. They also know that the Adventist church is a religious group. They perceive that Adventists are required to follow strict dietary practices and are vegetarians who don't eat pork.

There are individuals in the general public who resent the church and have had a bad experience with it or its members. Others perceive it

as a fundamentalist religion comprised of fine, educated people who run bookstores and operate hospitals that give good service.

### What are the key images or ideas associated in the minds of the public with the Adventist Church in this decade?

- More than three-fourths of those who know the Church's name have no idea if Adventists are concerned with preserving the environment, are active in supporting local community causes, live longer than the general population or what ages make up their congregations.
- The public is more apt to think of Adventists as a sect or cult than as a Protestant, Christ-centered denomination.
- Comments from respondents paint word-pictures of both positive and negative images of Adventists and their church. Named were such things as "good people," "people you can trust," "serious about their religion," "crackpots," "fruitcakes," and "people who bother and pester you."
- Perhaps the most revealing finding is that the majority of those completing interviews have nothing that comes to mind when they hear the words "Seventh-day Adventist."

Because perception is an individual's reality, the public's images and ideas are significant and give cause for reflection as the North American Division develops strategic plans for the next decade.

**Images and ideas associated with the Adventist Church come more from individual assumptions rather than from direct contact with an Adventist member or congregation.**