Office of Information and Research

Report 15

ACN
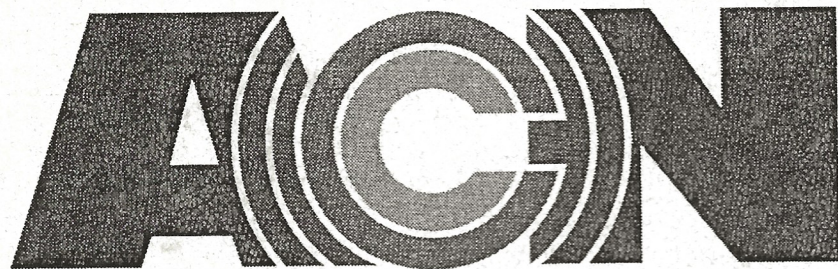
Local Church Usage and Evaluation of Satellite-linked Events

Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Executive Summary
Local Church Usage & Evaluation of Satellite-linked Events

In 1994 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America created a satellite network to link its congregations. Live events and video reports are carried by the Adventist Communication Network, which has grown to more than 2,000 local downlinks.

The first full program year of ACN ran from the spring of 1995, following the Net '95 evangelism initiative, through June, 1996. During that year ACN provided for the first time four types of satellite events each month: church news and inspiring mission stories from around the world; training events for the local church; outreach seminars to which to invite the community; and special denominational events.

During the late summer of 1996 telephone interviews were conducted with the pastor or a local leader in a random sample of 340 participating churches. The purpose was to gather information about which events had live audiences or were used later on tape, the audience size, and opinions about the quality of programs and services provided by ACN. These findings are based on those 340 interviews.

Larger churches are much more likely to have a satellite downlink than are congregations of less than 100 members. ACN market penetration is highest in the Southern, Pacific and Columbia unions, which have the highest proportion of large churches in North America.

Four out of five ACN churches (81%) make use of First Wednesday, the monthly package of mission reports and world church news. The current potential audience for this program is somewhere between 40% and 45% of the total membership in North America. This estimate takes into consideration the home viewing audience of the Three Angels Broadcasting network and several cable systems and low-power TV stations that broadcast First Wednesday. **In half the churches somewhere between 13 and 45 people actually view one or more segments** each month, while in another third of the churches more than 50 people do so.

First Wednesday enjoys a very positive evaluation by the leaders interviewed in ACN churches. **Nine out of ten (92%) give it an affirmative rating.** Three out of four respondents **(74%) give a positive evaluation to the training events** provided by ACN. Two out of three respondents **(67%) give a positive evaluation to the outreach seminars** delivered by ACN for churches to invite their community into. Nine out of ten respondents **(93%) give a positive evaluation to the special events** in the ACN schedule. Only a handful of the 340 respondents interviewed give a negative response to any of the program services offered by ACN.

More than four out of five of the local churches **(84%) regularly make use of satellite-linked events**, although it appears that no more than half the downlink sites participate in any given event. The overall **average for attendance at each ACN event is 28**

people per church. Only one church in eight reports an average attendance greater than 40, which is typical of all meetings in Protestant churches in America other than Sabbath/Sunday worship.

The largest single audience reported for an ACN event is 550. **A third of the participating churches report their largest audience to be more than 40 individuals.** Two out of five churches report their largest audience in the 13 to 40 range.

Seven out of eight ACN churches purchased their satellite dish and receiver package through Adventist Media Services. Only one in twenty (5%) of the churches have old C-band equipment. Only a small fraction feel that they "paid too much" for the equipment. **Nearly two-thirds (62%) say, "we got a good deal."** Another third say the equipment is "costly, but well worth the price."

Seven out of eight churches have found it "relatively easy" or "very easy" to use a satellite dish and receiver. Only one in ten feel that "it should be less complicated" or is "much too difficult."

Eight out of nine **(87%) of the churches that have the automated downlink equipment indicate satisfaction**. Only 2% believe it is a waste of money.

Three out of four ACN churches report that they have experienced problems with their equipment. The vast majority say it has happened a few times or only once. A third of the churches which have experienced problems have solved them locally without every contacting ACN.

Nine out of ten churches (91%) make use of **the ACN 800 number. Four out of five (84%) say the receive excellent or good service**. Only six out of the 340 persons interviewed report an occasion when their call was not returned. Four out of five respondents who have called for technical support express satisfaction with the service.

Among ACN marketing tools, more than **nine out of ten of the respondents who have joined ACN since the close of Net '95 indicate that the made use of the Pastors Kit** to introduce ACN to their church board. Two thirds of the respondents **(67%) have put up the ACN poster** in their church. The majority have made use of the local promotional materials supplied for ACN events.

Introduction

The first full program year of the Adventist Communication Network, the satellite link among local congregations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, began in the spring of 1995 and ran through June, 1996. Immediately following the highly successful Net '95 evangelism initiative[*], ACN began to provide a regular menu of about one satellite-linked event each week. This included each month an outreach seminar, a training event, a package of mission reports, and often a special event important the life of the denomination.

In the summer of 1996, telephone interviews were conducted with the pastor or another local leader in a random sample of 340 of the participating churches. The interviews asked for information about which specific events the congregation participated in either during the live linkage or "time-shifted" by video tape and the attendance patterns at satellite-linked events, as well as the respondents' evaluations of the programs and services provided by ACN.

This report presents the results of these 340 interviews which were conducted for the Office of Information and Research by the Pacific Union Church Resource Center. Jose Chavanz supervised the data collection and computer processing of the completed questionnaires.

All survey research is subject to sampling error. The sampling error in this study averages about 5 percentage points (plus or minus) at a 95% confidence level. Additional information about the statistical sampling method used is provided in the Technical Appendix.

The Office of Information and Research provides regular, up-to-date information about the local congregations and members of the denomination -- demographics, church attendance and involvement, attitudes and opinions related to the goals of the Adventist Church and its varied ministries. In addition to its three primary, omnibus surveys each year -- Survey of Members, Survey of Church Board Members, and Survey of Pastors -- specialized studies such as this one are conducted as commissioned by official entities.

Questions and requests for additional information should be addressed to the office at 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring MD 20904, or by Fax at (301) 680-6464, or by E-mail at 74617.14@compuserve.com via the Internet.
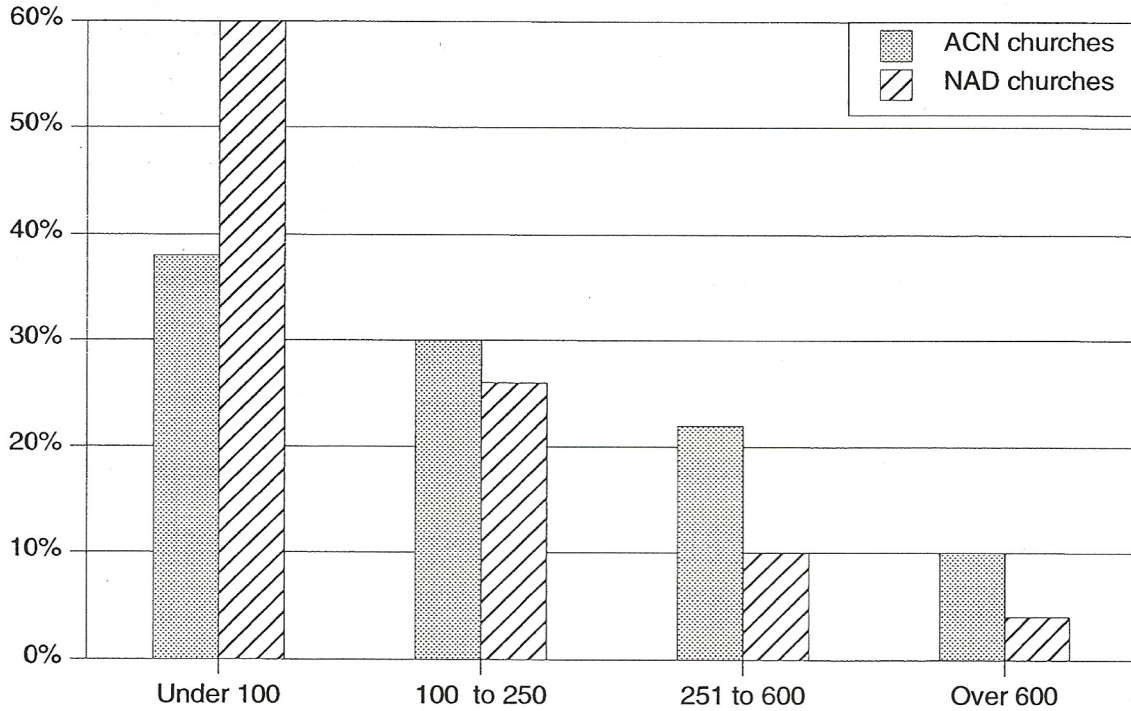
Monte Sahlin
October, 1996

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[*]Complete information on a survey of churches which participated in Net '95 can be found in Report 11.

Market penetration by church size

Based on current book membership

Figure 1

Larger churches are much more likely to have a satellite downlink and be part of the ACN network than are the smallest congregations in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. This increases the potential audience for ACN events due to the fact that half of the North American membership is in congregations of more than 250 members.

Each of the four congregational size ranges displayed in Figure 1 have unique dynamics which must be taken into consideration in understanding behavior relative to the satellite services provided by ACN. Congregational dynamics is a systems view of the life of a local church. It works from the assumption that much of what happens in a community of believers is influenced by patterns developed over many generations in western civilization -- patterns relative to the size of the group and how that influences the perceived role of the clergy and lay leaders.

Rothauge produced the seminal work in this area.[*] He identifies four types of congregational dynamics keyed to the average worship attendance:

Single-Cell Congregation where the average attendance is 50 or less, and the group dynamics are much like those of an expanded small group. Leadership is informal. Entry by newcomers is difficult. Clergy function as chaplains, not leaders. (Based on average attendance reports, NAD churches with a book membership of less than 100 fall into this segment.)

Pastor-Centered Congregation where the average attendance is 51 to 150, and the role of the pastor is primary. Leadership is centered in the pastor and invested in others largely through personal delegation. Newcomers must be personally inducted into the group by the pastor. The highest expectations of the pastor are that he or she play a caretaker role nurturing the fabric of relationships that make up the congregation. (Based on average attendance reports, NAD churches with a book membership of 100 to 250 fall into this segment.)

Program-Centered Congregation where the average attendance is 151 to 350, and leadership is invested in a number of program and cell-group leaders. The core of the congregation is the inner group of leaders who expect the pastor to function as facilitator and/or CEO, depending on the socio-economic status of the congregation. Newcomers
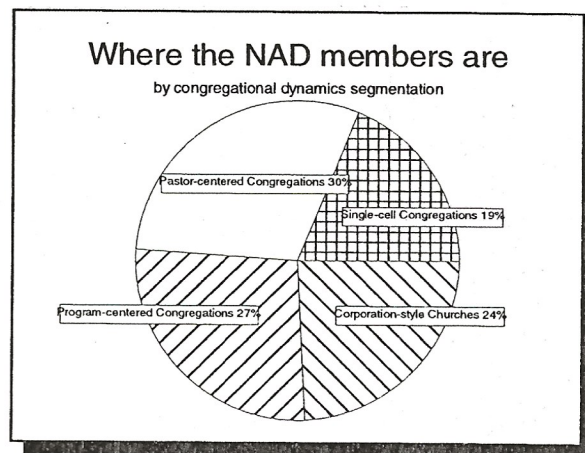

Figure 2

join through small groups and programs affiliated with the congregation. (Based on average attendance reports, NAD churches with a book membership of 251 to 600 fall into this segment.)

Corporation-Style Church where the average attendance exceeds 350, and a close look at the relational realities will reveal that there are a number of smaller congregations functioning within the larger church. Leadership is invested in a professional staff and provides pastoral leadership for each of the congregations. (Based on average attendance reports, NAD churches with a book membership of more than 600 fall into this segment.)

It should come as no surprise that program-centered congregations and corporation-style churches are more likely to purchase satellite downlinks.

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[*]*Sizing Up a Congregation* by Arlin J. Rothauge (n.d.[1984], The Episcopal Church Center, New York).

Market penetration by union

Based on percentage of churches
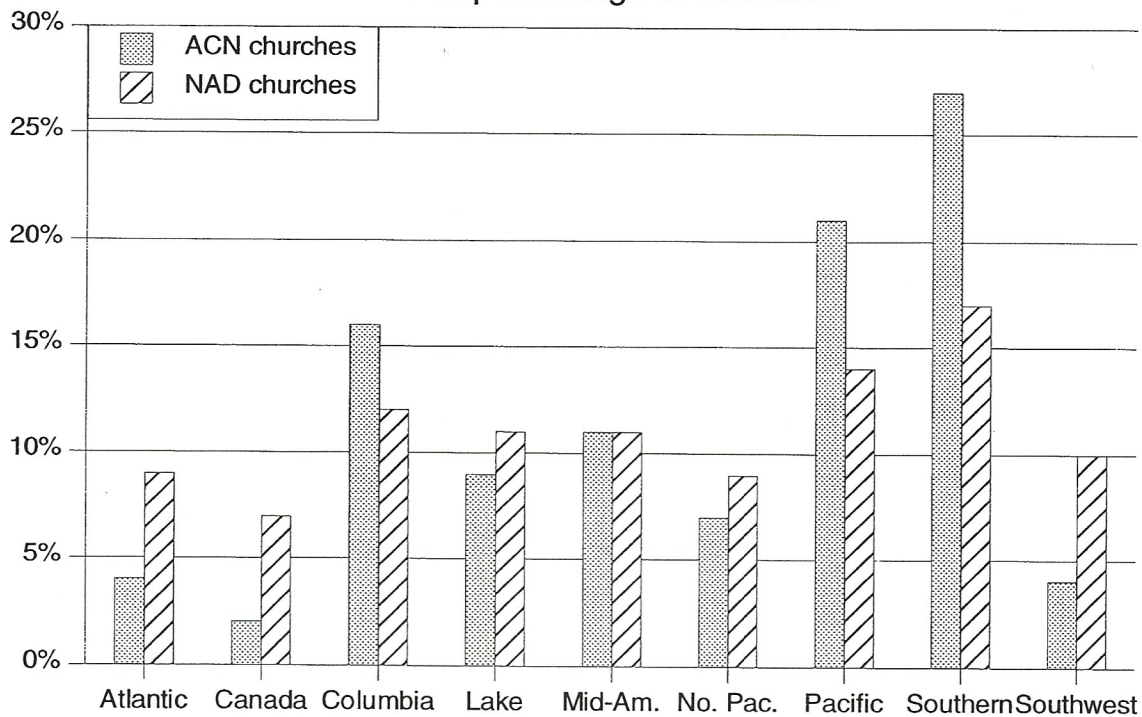
Figure 3

ACN market penetration is highest in the Southern, Pacific and Columbia unions. It is lowest in Canada, the Southwest and Atlantic unions.

It is less likely that this is due to any planning decisions or promotional strategies (or lack thereof) in the various union conferences, than it is due to patterns of congregational size and ethnicity. Canada and the Southwest have the lowest percentages of program-centered and corporation-style churches among the nine unions, and Figure 1 demonstrates that these types of congregations are more likely to install a satellite downlink and join ACN. The Atlantic Union has the highest percentage of ethnic minority congregations among the nine unions, and they have been less involved in ACN also.

Market penetration by ethnicity
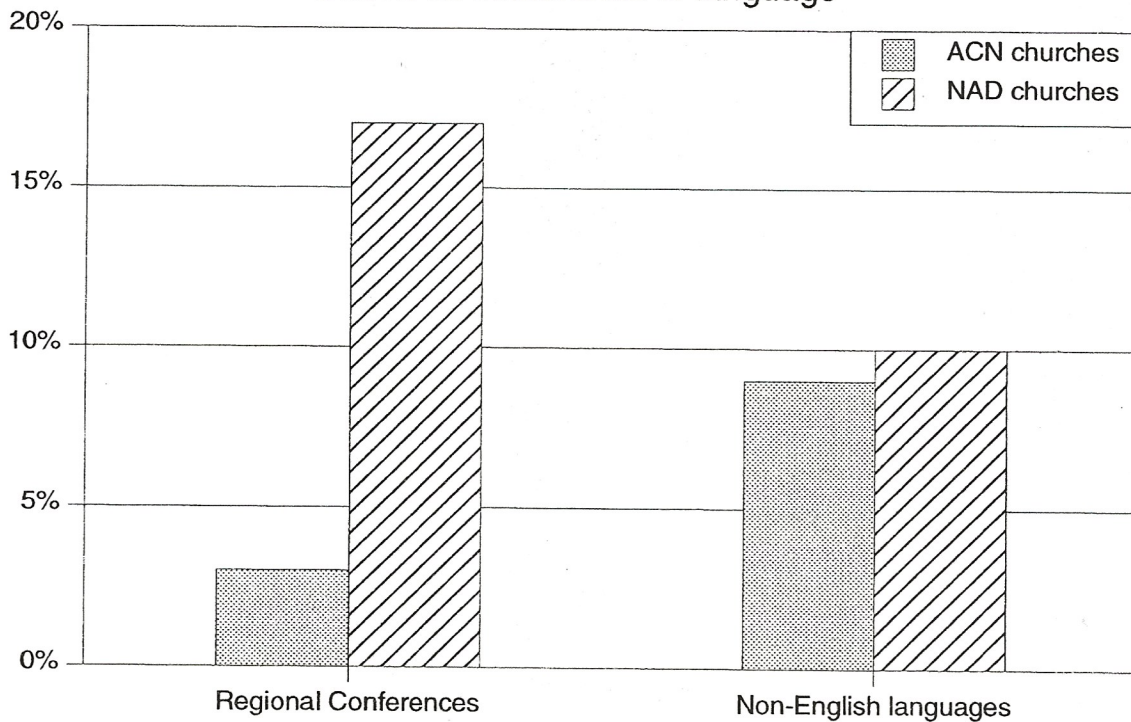
Based on conference or language

Figure 4

At the time the survey sample was drawn in the early summer of 1996, ACN market penetration among the largely African-American congregations of the nine Regional Conferences* was quite low. Through the summer a number of Regional Conferences have announced plans to equip a significant number of churches with satellite downlinks and join ACN.

The portion of ACN churches which operate primarily in languages other than English is the same as the portion among all North American churches. The difference in percentages is not statistically significant. This is surprising in view of the fact that almost all ACN events are offered only in the English language, although most non-English-language congregations have bilingual leaders who can participate in leadership training events without need for translation and provide translation for events designed for the entire congregation or the general public.

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*Black congregations in Bermuda, Canada and the two west-coast unions in the United States are not included in this calculation.

Use of First Wednesday

How do you use this package each month?
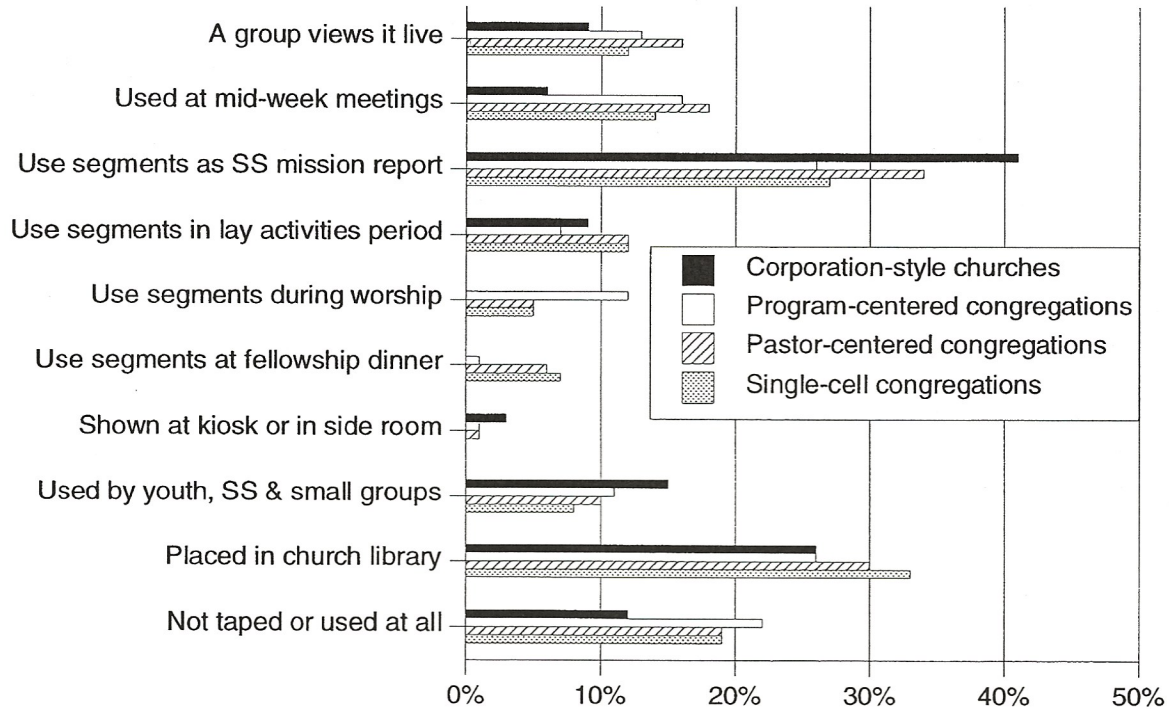
Figure 5

Four out of five of the churches that have access to a satellite down-link (81%) make some use of First Wednesday each month. Currently, about 2,000 of the 4,645 congregations in the North American church are part of ACN, so segments of First Wednesday are currently being viewed in about a third of the congregations on a regular basis.

Because larger congregations are more likely to be part of ACN than are the smallest congregations, it is likely that the current, potential audience for First Wednesday is somewhere between 40% and 45% of the total membership. This estimate also takes into consideration the home viewing audience of the Three Angels Broadcasting network and several cable systems and low-power TV stations that broadcast First Wednesday.

The First Wednesday package is used in a wide variety of ways by local churches, and usage is related to congregational dynamics. The largest churches are most likely to use segments as Sabbath School mission reports, while program-centered congregations are most likely to use it

during mid-week meetings. About a third of the participating churches simply place the monthly video cassette in the church library for individual and family use.

One church in six (17%) uses segments from First Wednesday during worship or the time just prior to worship which is labeled lay activities period, "King's Business" or a number of other things. Program-centered congregations are most likely to use it in this way.

One church in ten reports that its youth organization, Sabbath School classes or small groups make use of segments from First Wednesday. This is mode of usage is directly related to church size. The larger the congregation, the more likely it is to use the video segments in smaller cells.

Only one church in twenty (4.7%) shows First Wednesday during or just prior to fellowship dinners, and most of these are smaller congregations with less than 250 book membership. Very few churches provide First Wednesday through a viewing kiosk in the lobby or in a side-room off the lobby, and most who do are corporation-style churches.

First Wednesday was designed to be a flexible resource to bring information, inspiration and stories about the message and mission of the Adventist Church to members through the range of local-church activities. It is widely recognized and used as a flexible resource, and therefore should not be seen as a mass medium.

Table 1
How do you use First Wednesday* each month?

	Total sample	Under 100	100 to 250	251 to 600	Over 600
A group views it live on the first Wednesday	13%	12%	16%	13%	9%
Segments are used as SS mission reports	30	27	34	26	41
Segments are used in Lay Activities time	11	12	12	7	9
Segments are used in Sabbath worship	6	5	5	12	–
Segments are used during mid-week meetings	15	14	18	16	6
Segments are used during fellowship dinners	5	7	6	1	–
Segments are shown at a kiosk or side room	1	–	1	1	3
Used by youth groups, SS classes, small groups	10	8	10	11	15
Placed in church library & used by individuals	29	33	30	26	26
Not taped or used at all	19	19	19	22	12

*Before interviewers asked the question, they read an explanatory statement: "First Wednesday is an hour-long broadcast on the first Wednesday evening of each month. It contains six short segments to be shown at church as mission stories or reports on the work of the church around the world. Included is On-Line Edition, World Story, etc."

Viewers of First Wednesday

Percent of churches reporting ...
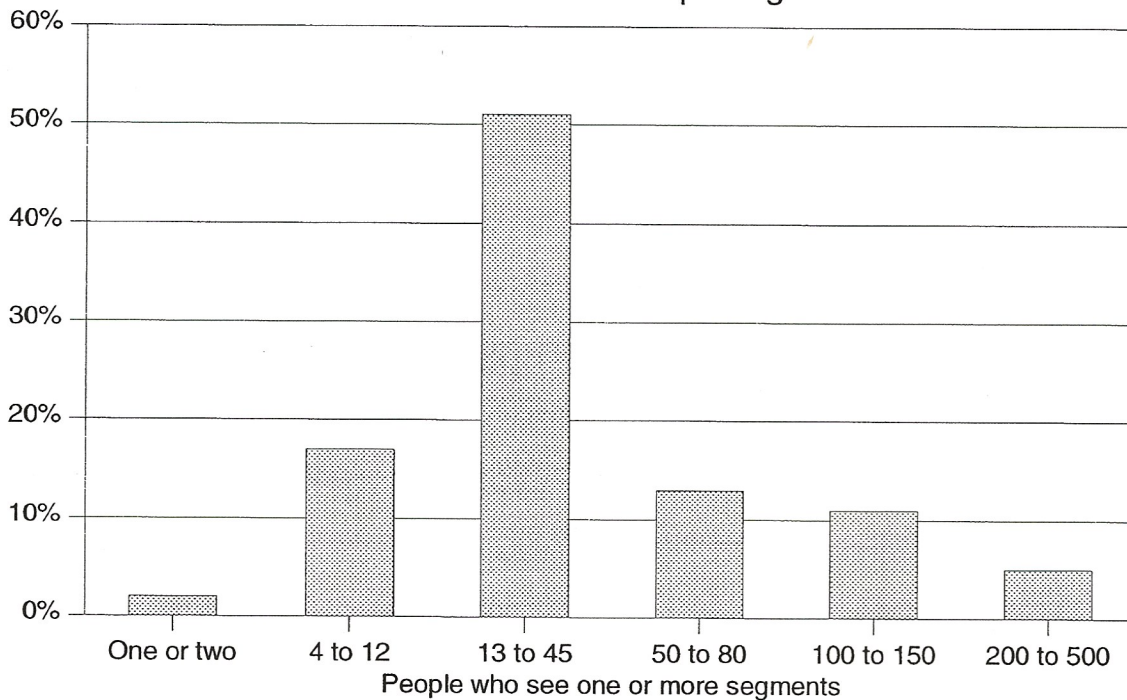
Figure 6

In half the participating churches somewhere between 13 and 45 people view one or more segments from First Wednesday each month. This is consistent with the wide range of uses other than Sabbath worship.* The 17% of congregations where four to 12 individuals view it are primarily small churches with a similar pattern.

*Hartman has shown that, aside from divine worship, almost all classes, seminars, and other meetings in Protestant congregations have an attendance of 45 or less. See *Five Audiences: Identifying Groups in Your Church* by Warren J. Hartman (1987, Abingdon Press, Nashville).

About a third of the participating churches (29%) report that 50 or more people view segments each month. These are larger congregations where video reports are presented in Sabbath School or during a lay activities period or during worship.

In very few churches do only one or two individuals view First Wednesday. If it is used, it is being shared with groups in some manner.

Evaluation of First Wednesday
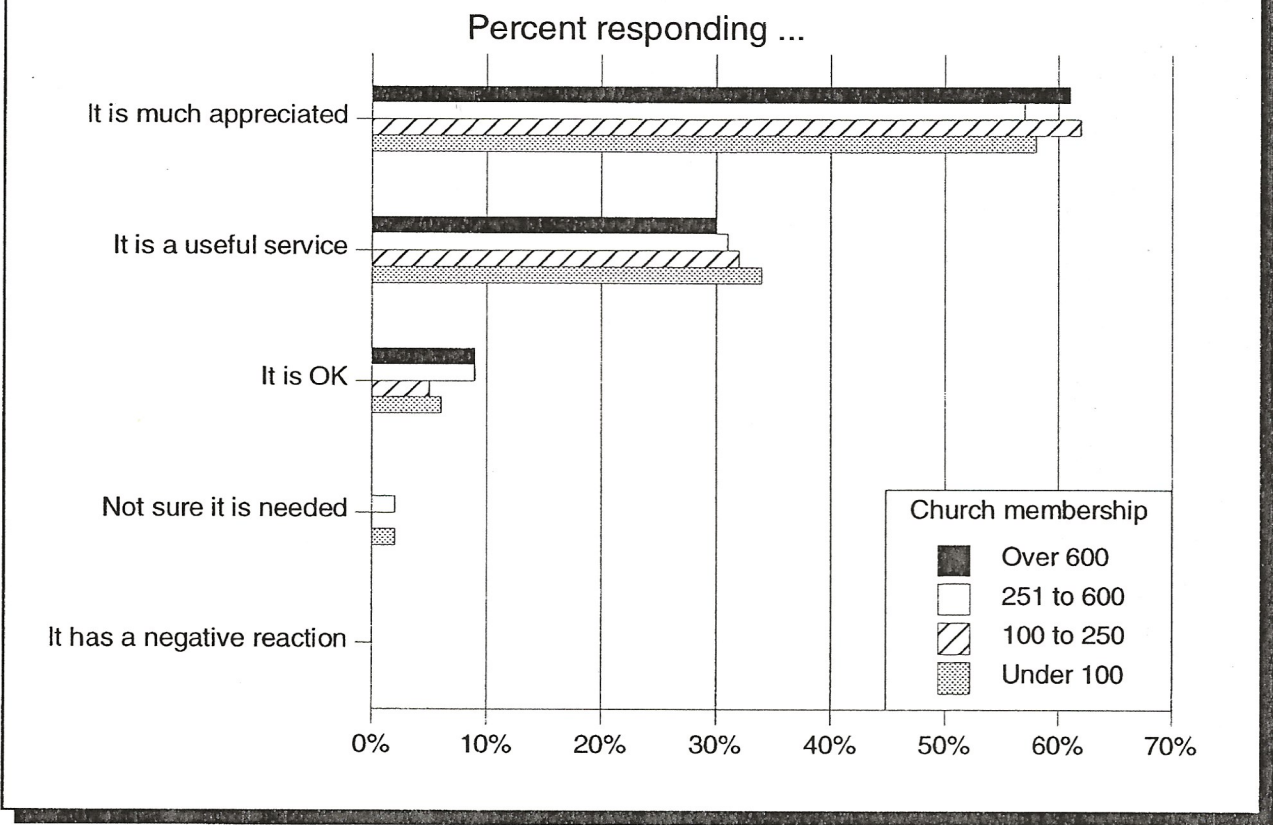
Percent responding ...

Figure 7

First Wednesday enjoys a very positive evaluation by the leaders interviewed in the ACN churches. Nine out of ten (92%) give it an affirmative rating, with a strong majority (59%) selecting the most approving choice in a five-point scale.

There is little variation among segments based on congregational size. All kinds of churches seem to be equally happy with this product.

No respondent selected the most negative option on the five-point scale, and only three of the 340 persons interviewed gave the milder negative choice, "I am not sure it is needed."

Evaluation of training events

Percent who say ...
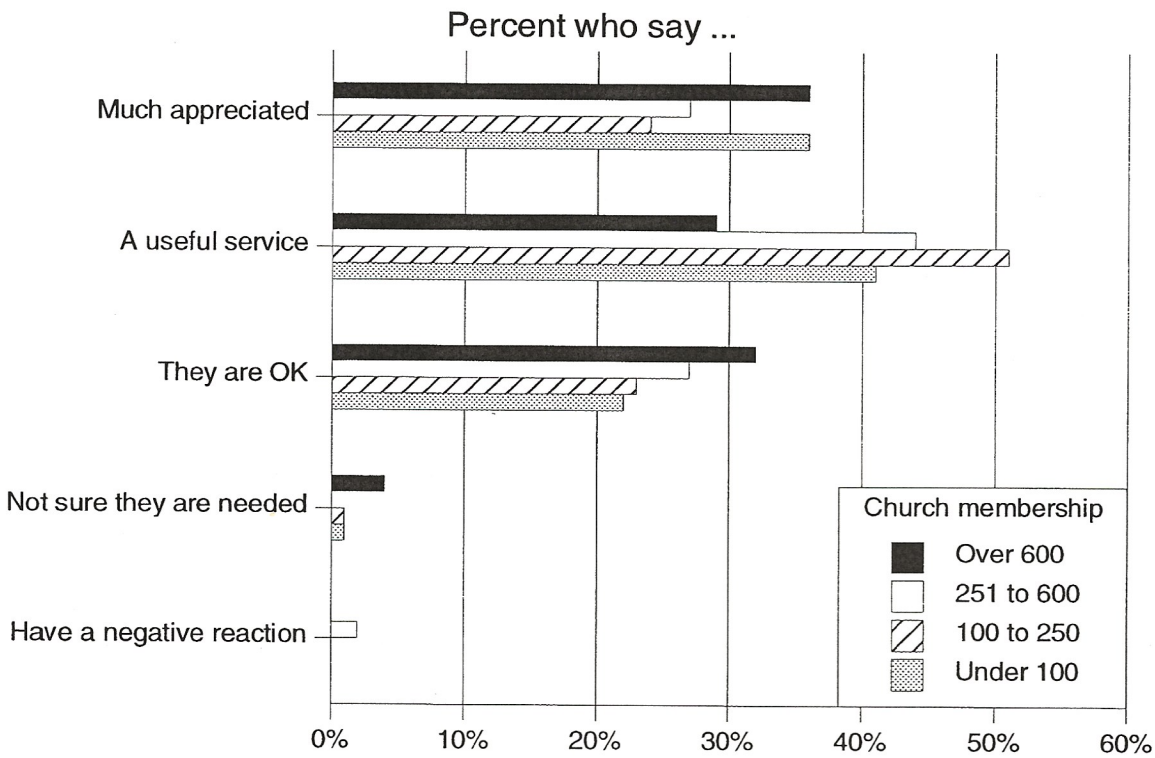
Figure 7

Three out of four respondents (74%) give a positive evaluation to the training events provided by ACN. Another one in four (24%) give a more neutral evaluation, selecting the median response on a five-point scale.

Only four respondents out of 340 interviewed give a poor rating to the training events.

The largest congregations are somewhat less likely to give a positive evaluation than are smaller churches. A number of these large churches are associated with education or health-care institutions, and have access to a wide range of resources, therefore it is not surprising that they may have greater concerns about product quality.

Table 2
Audience Estimates for Training Events

Event	Live & Same-day Sites/Audience		Different Day Sites/Audience		Total Sites/Audience	
May 20, 1995 - Revitalizing SS Jim Zackrison & Brenda Fenderson	77	2,166	117	3,284	195	5,450
Jun 4, 1995 - Disaster Update Larry Buckner & Monte Sahlin	27	762	63	1,761	90	2,523
Sep 9, 1995 - Friendship Evangelism Debra Brill & Ed Schmidt	93	2,594	112	3,142	205	5,736
Sep 10, 1995 - Sharing Food & Faith Faith Crumbly & Dave Woodruff	42	1,190	70	1,952	112	3,142
Oct 21, 1995 - Congregational Renewal Hyveth Williams & Mark Bresee	54	1,513	112	3,123	166	4,637
Nov 11, 1995 - Family Ministry Walter & Jackie Wright	57	1,610	101	2,834	159	4,444
Jan 13, 1996 - Starting a Youth Ministry Jose Rojas	80	3,225	171	4,797	252	8,023
Feb 10, 1996 - Teaching Stewardship Ed Reid	88	2,471	106	2,980	195	5,452
Mar 3, 1996 - VBS Workshop Noelene Johnsson & Edwina Neely	206	7,944	285	7,978	491	15,923
Mar 9, 1996 - Visitation Skills Ben Maxson & Leslie Bumgardner	130	4,059	181	5,077	311	9,136
Apr 20, 1996 - "Connections" Curtis Rittenour	62	2,587	186	5,213	248	7,800
May 11, 1996 - Start a Bible Study Group Don & Ruth James	86	2,863	161	4,519	247	7,382

Evaluation of outreach seminars

Percent who say ...
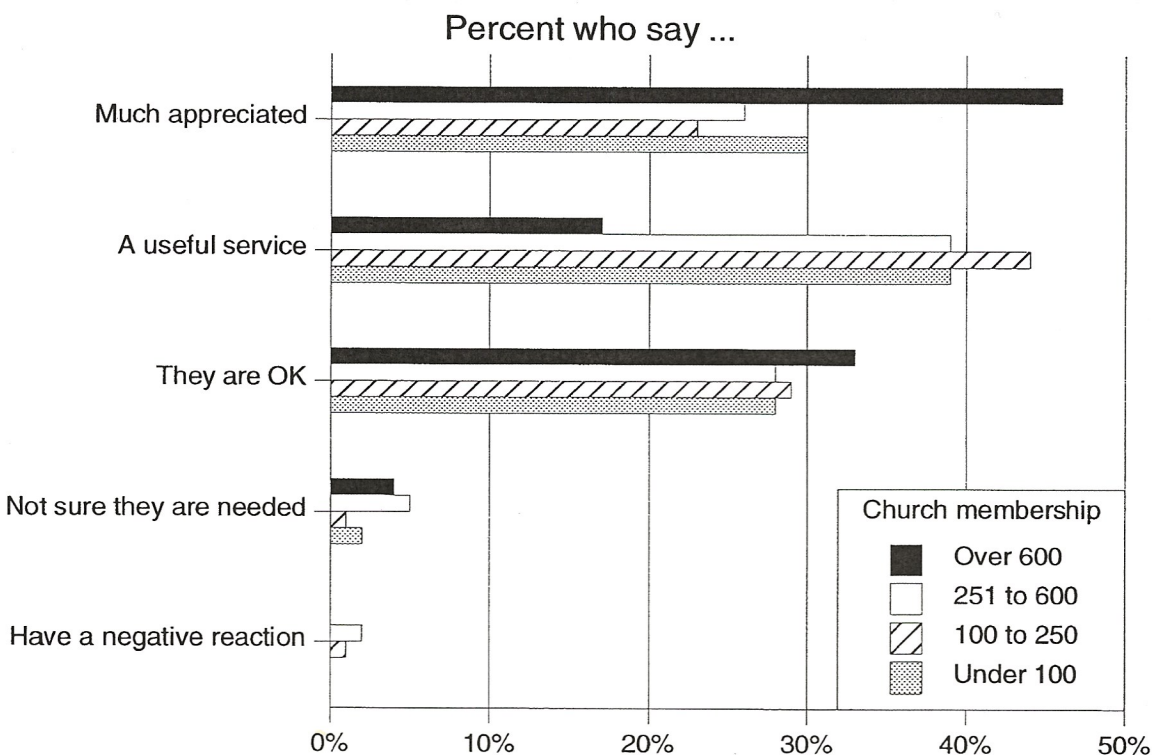
Figure 8

Two out of three respondents (67%) give a positive evaluation to the outreach seminars delivered by ACN. Nearly a third (29%) give a more neutral evaluation, selecting the median response on a five-point scale.

Eight respondents (4%) give a poor rating to the outreach seminars. This is twice as many as react negatively to the training events, and the largest number of respondents who give a negative evaluation to any of the ACN events.
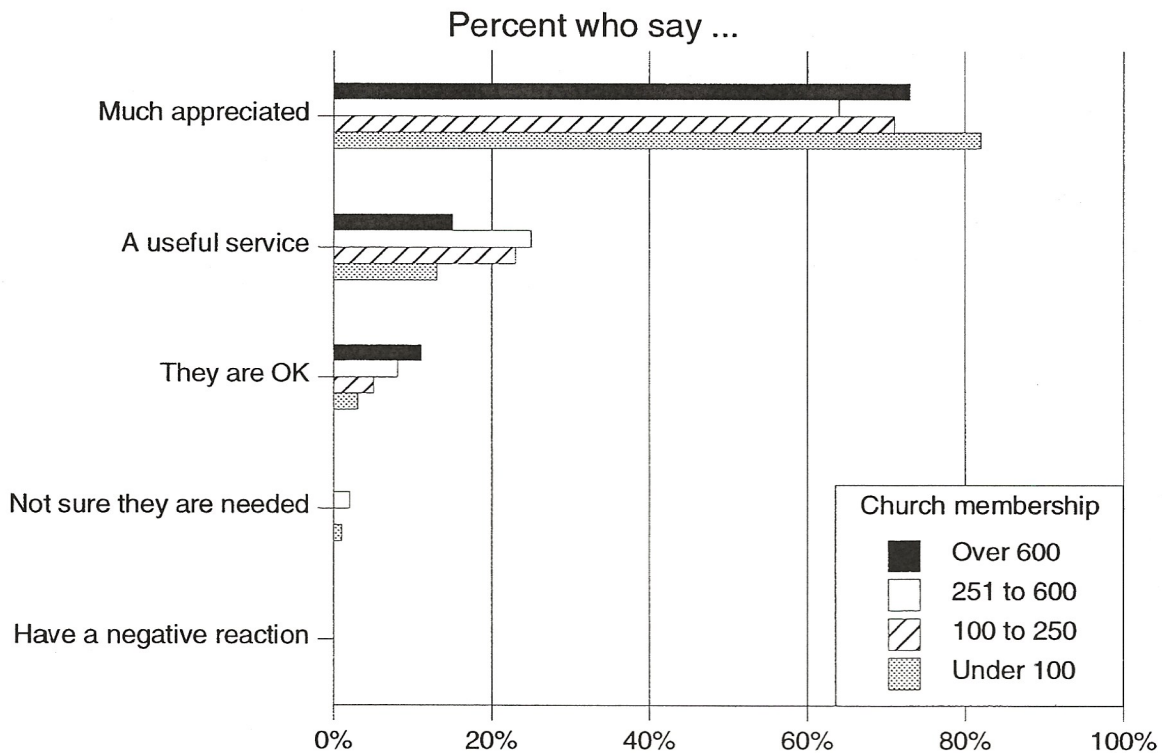
Respondents from congregations of more than 250 members are more likely to give a negative evaluation of ACN outreach seminars. At the same time, respondents from the largest churches (over 600 members) are the most likely to give the most positive rating. It may be that because the general public is invited to these events, they generate a more polarized response related to contextual issues in each local community.

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Table 3
Audience Estimates for Outreach Seminars

	Live & Same-day Sites/Audience		Different Day Sites/Audience		Total Sites/Audience	
Jun 18, 1995 - Managing Mid-Life Kay Kuzma & Len McMillan	42	1,190	80	2,237	122	3,427
Sep 24, 1995 - Gender Differences Harvey & Cathy Corwin	55	1,763	98	2,737	153	4,500
Oct 29, 1995 - Practical Prayer Power Ruthie Jacobsen & Randy Maxwell	71	2,293	152	4,250	223	6,544
Nov 19, 1995 - Parenting & Discipline Kay Kuzma & Len McMillan	71	2,293	132	3,703	204	5,996
Jan 21, 1996 - Conflict with Your Teen Jose Rojas & Dick Duerksen	77	2,144	134	3,743	210	5,888
Feb 18, 1996 - Family Finances Ed Reid & Brenda Fenderson	77	2,144	122	3,416	199	5,561
Mar 17, 1996 - Regaining Your Health Richard Neil	57	1,587	133	3,717	189	5,304
May 19, 1996 - Why Christianity? Jon Paulien	65	2,745	130	3,654	196	6,399

Evaluation of special events

Percent who say ...

Church membership
- Over 600
- 251 to 600
- 100 to 250
- Under 100

Categories: Much appreciated, A useful service, They are OK, Not sure they are needed, Have a negative reaction

Figure 9

Nine out of ten respondents (93%) give a positive evaluation to the special events in the ACN schedule. This is the best rating given to any of the major services delivered by ACN to its participating churches, and may be the result of the significantly higher production budgets provided for these major events.

Not even one respondent selects the most negative response on a five-point scale, and only two out of 340 interviewed give the less positive choice for a poor rating, "I am not sure they are needed."

Respondents from the smallest congregations (with less than 100 members) are the most positive about ACN's special events, although the differences between the various segments based on congregational size are not statistically significant.

Table 4
Audience Estimates for Special Events

	Live & Same-day Sites/Audience		Different Day Sites/Audience		Total Sites/Audience	
June-July, 1995 GC Session from Utrecht	309	14,630*	112	3,142	422	17,772*
Oct 2-3, 1995 - Message & Mission GC Annual Council	78	2,190	98	2,737	176	4,927
Oct 13-15 - Return to Battle Creek NAD Year-end Meeting	287	10,210	166	4,637	453	14,847
Jan 6, 1996 - Net '96 Net '96 Kick-off Event	444	16,993	252	7,051	696	24,043
Apr 13, 1996 - Net '96 Lay Witnessing Training	414	17,734	348	9,746	763	27,480

*This was a multi-day event; audience estimate should be read as per-day figure.

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Average attendance

Percent of churches reporting
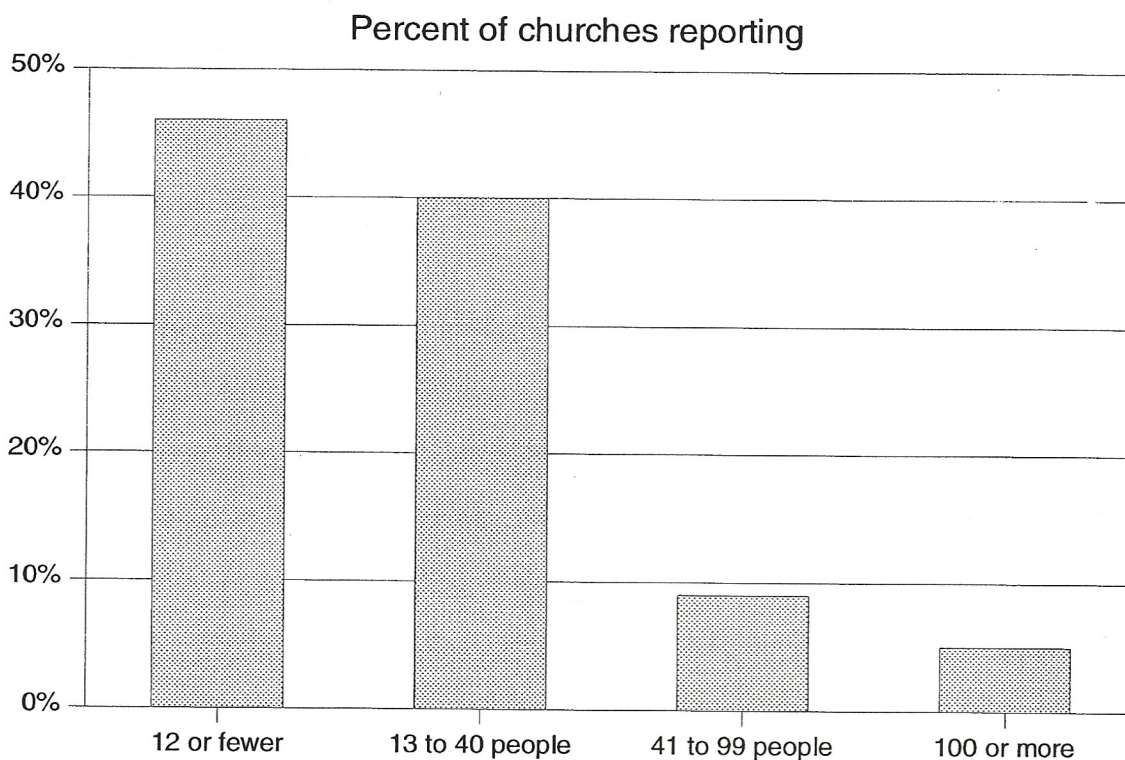
Figure 10

Nearly half the churches report that the average attendance at a satellite-linked event is 12 or fewer -- a small group. Almost an equal number of the participating churches report that the average attendance is 15 to 40. Only one church in eight reports an average attendance greater than 40.

The overall average for attendance at each ACN event is 28 people. This number was used, along with the current total of identified downlink sites at the time of each event, to arrive at the audience estimates in Tables 2, 3 and 4. (Adjustments were made for those events identified in the data as among those events at which respondents indicated their largest attendance. The average attendance for the percentage of sites reporting an event as their largest attendance is 55.)

Events in May through September, 1995, are estimated on the basis of 850 sites, the total identified at the time of Net '95 in February and March. Events during the last quarter were estimated on the basis of 1,150 sites, the total from a revised database compiled by Celeste Ryan in the ACN office during early October, 1995. The

count in that database was 1,298 for January and February, 1996; 1,619 for March and April; and 1,717 for May.

When asked to give the average attendance at events delivered by ACN, 285 of the 340 churches where an interview was conducted (83.8%) reported a number. Only in 16.2% of the cases was the respondent unable to answer. This is an indicator that more than four out of five of the sites regularly make use of satellite-linked events, although it appears that no more than half the downlink sites participate in any given event.

Attendance of the sizes reported is typical of adult education and fellowship activities in Protestant churches in the U.S., according to Hartman.[1] Because Hartman's research pre-dates the usage of satellite-linked events in churches, it is unlikely that some aspect of ACN's satellite delivery system or the quality of the events themselves correlates to the audience sizes reported. In other words, average attendance at ACN events is "par for the course" in terms of attendance at church activities in general.

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[1] *Five Audiences* by Warren J. Hartman (1987, Abingdon Press, Nashville)

Table 5
Events with Largest Local Attendances

	Percent of sites reporting
GC Session coverage (July 1995)	26%
Cumulative total of ACN training and outreach events mentioned	17%
Preparation for Net '96 (April 1996)	14%
Kick-off of Net '96 (January 1996)	13%
Return to Battle Creek/NAD YE (October 1996)	7%
VBS Workshop training event (March 1996)	5%
Youth ministry training event (January 1996)	3%
"Connections" training event (April 1996)	2%
Jon Paulien outreach seminar (May 1996)	2%
Gender Differences outreach/ family life seminar (September 1995)	1%
Prayer outreach seminar (October 1995)	1%
Parenting outreach seminar (November 1995)	1%
Visitation Skills training event (March 1996)	1%
Starting a Neighborhood Bible Study Group training event (May 1996)	1%

Largest audience

Percent of churches reporting ...
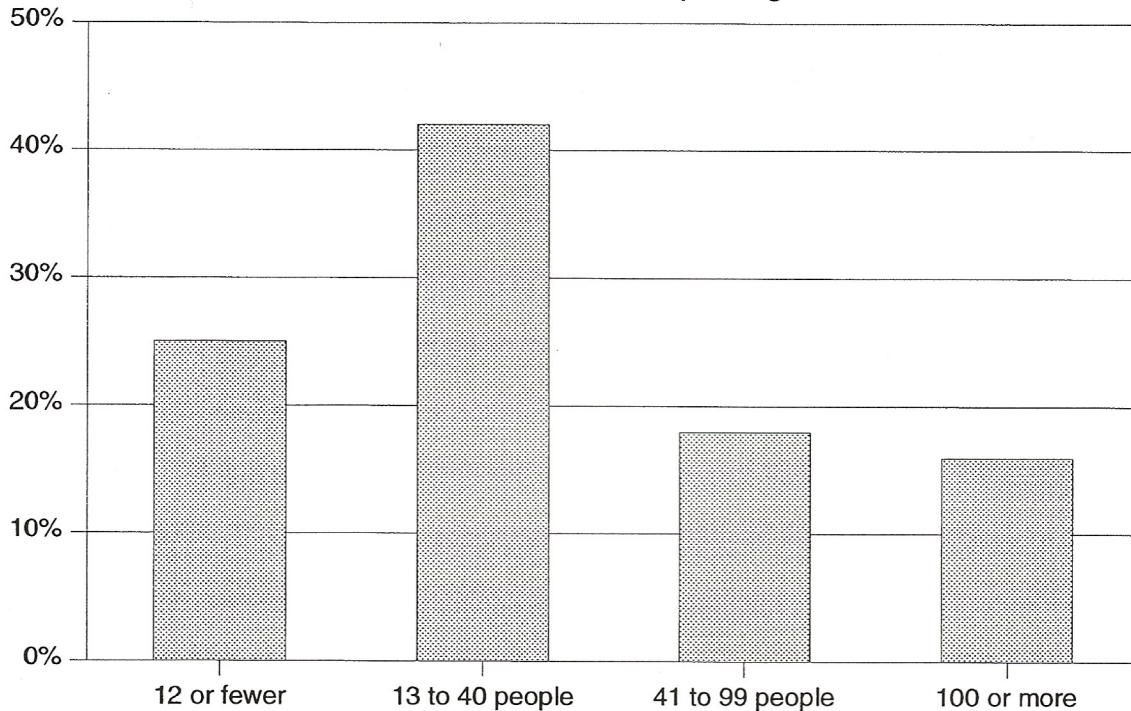
Figure 11

The largest single audience reported for an ACN event is 550. A third of the participating churches report their largest audience to be more than 40 individuals. Two out of five churches report their largest audience in the 13 to 40 range.

These data indicate that some satellite-linked events do break out of the typical pattern for group dynamics in Protestant congregations. The percentages reported here compare with the percentages for church size displayed in Table 1. This means that in most cases, when ACN churches experience their largest attendance for a satellite event, the same size of group is present as attends Sabbath worship.

Additional programing needs

Percent interested in ...
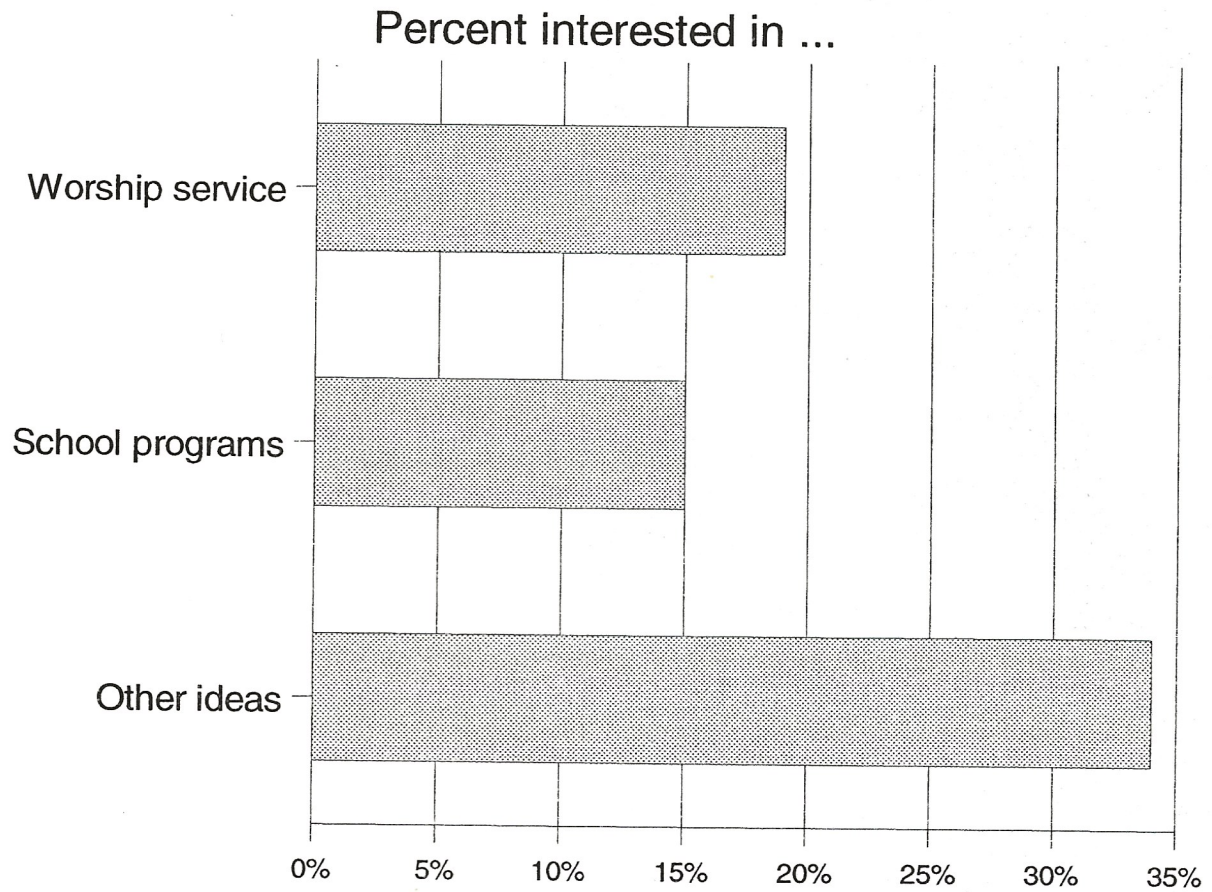
Figure 12

Two additional program services that might be offered have been discussed since the founding of ACN. Both ideas were tested in this research, and opportunity given for respondents to suggest additional concepts.

About one participating church in five has some interest in a regular Sabbath worship service provided by satellite link. Larger churches are somewhat more likely to express an interest than are smaller churches.

About one church in seven has an interest in satellite-linked classroom services for their church school. Unfortunately data are not available to look only at churches which actually have church schools.

The largest number of churches are interested in other ideas. These are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6
## Programing Ideas: "Events we would like to see provided over ACN"

In-service education for pastors from Andrews University, such as the Church Planting Summit and continuing education courses	8%
Electronic camp meeting like those provided from Florida and Northeastern conferences	4%
Community health outreach programs such as Heartbeat, stop smoking and nutrition	4%
Sabbath School workshops	3%
Live mission reports from ADRA, student mission trips, etc.	3%
The yearly Evangelism Council at Oakwood College	3%
Events for young people	3%
Church history programs	2%
Open forum discussions on key issues and "news conference" question-and-answer times with denominational leaders	2%
Lay evangelism training events	2%
Sacred concerts and music events	2%
Home schooling programs and religion classes to supplement children in public schools	2%
Events targeted to minority groups	1%

Type of downlink equipment

Percent of churches with ...
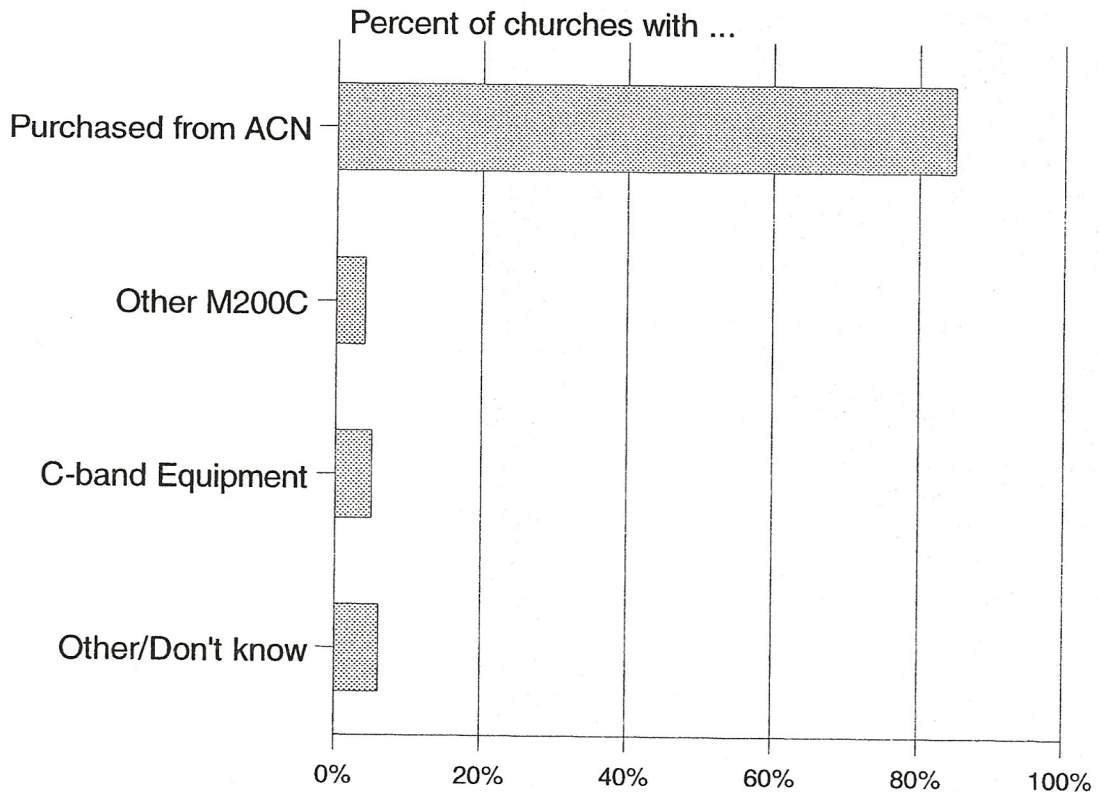
Figure 13

Seven out of eight ACN churches purchased their satellite dish and receiver package through Adventist Media Services which provides this service on behalf of the network, utilizing contracts with manufacturers and Digitron as the installer of each downlink. Another 4% have purchased the M200C receiver that Chaparral designed especially for ACN through some other retail provider, bringing the total of ACN churches with the automated system to nearly nine out of ten.

Only one in twenty (5%) of the participating churches have old equipment that is limited to reception of C-band transmissions. This means that if and when ACN makes the shift to providing its linkages only through Ku band transmissions, that less than 100 local sites will need to be upgraded.

Feelings about price

A good deal 61%

Cost too much 4%

Costly, but worth it 35%
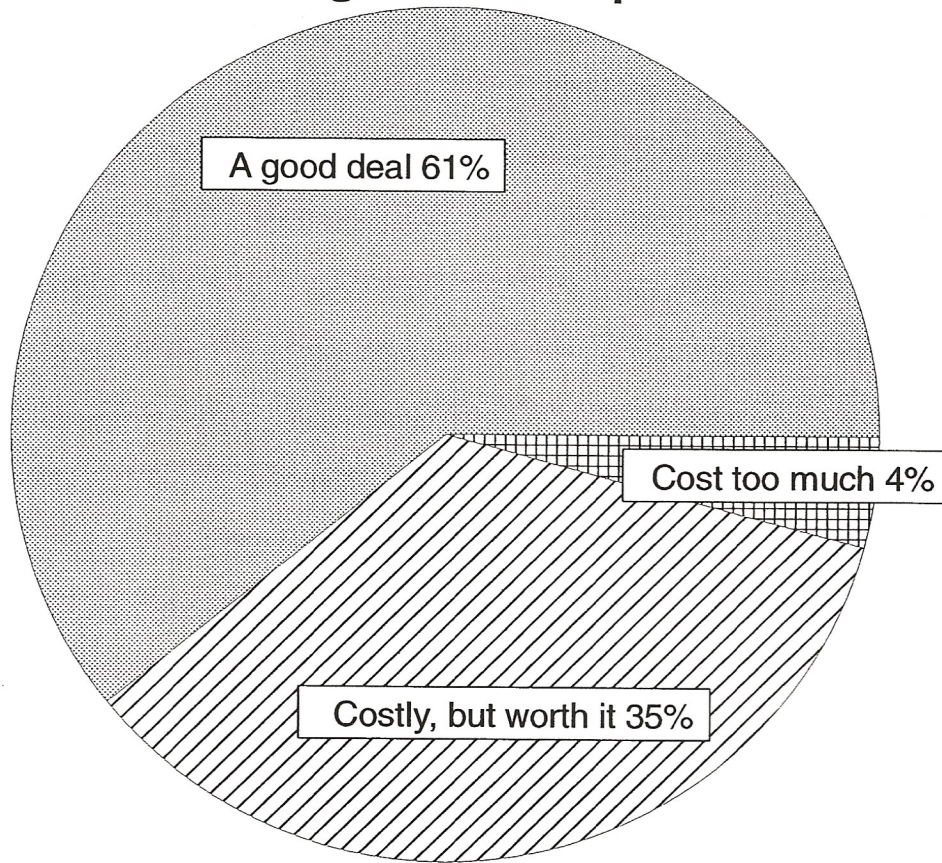
Figure 14

Only a small fraction of the ACN pastors feel that their church "paid too much" for the equipment they purchased to downlink satellite events. Nearly two-thirds (62%) say, "we got a good deal." Another third, agree that their equipment was "costly, but well worth the price."

Larger churches are somewhat more likely to feel they "got a good deal" than are smaller churches, but there is no statistically significant variance among the congregational-size categories in the percentage who feel they "paid too much."

Clearly, cost of equipment is not a negative factor for those churches that have made a decision to join ACN. This study does not include a sample of non-participating churches, which may have a larger percentage of leaders who feel the cost of a downlink package is "too much."

Ease of use

of downlink equipment

Very easy 40%

Too difficult 2%

Complicated 8%

Relatively easy 45%

"OK" 5%
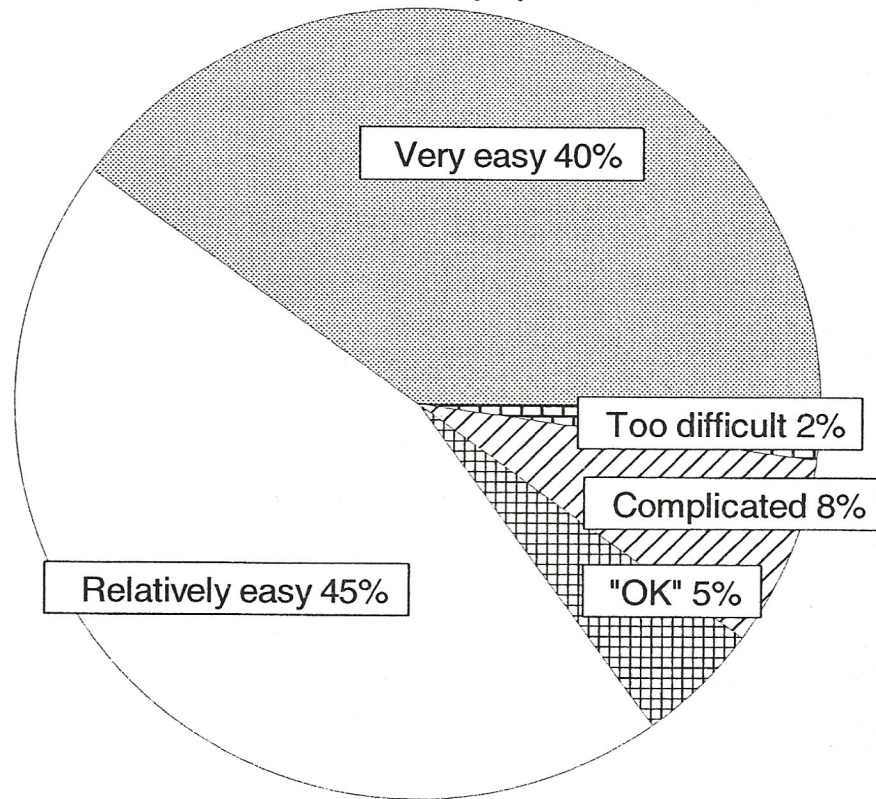
Figure 15

Seven out of eight ACN churches have found it "relatively easy" or "very easy" to use a satellite dish and receiver. Churches in the size range of 251 to 600 members are even more likely to give this positive response.

Only one respondent in ten feel that "it should be less complicated" or is "much too difficult." Churches in the 100 to 250-member range are somewhat more likely to give this response.

Overall, satellite equipment is practical for church use. It is seen by the vast majority of respondents as appropriate technology in the context of congregational life.
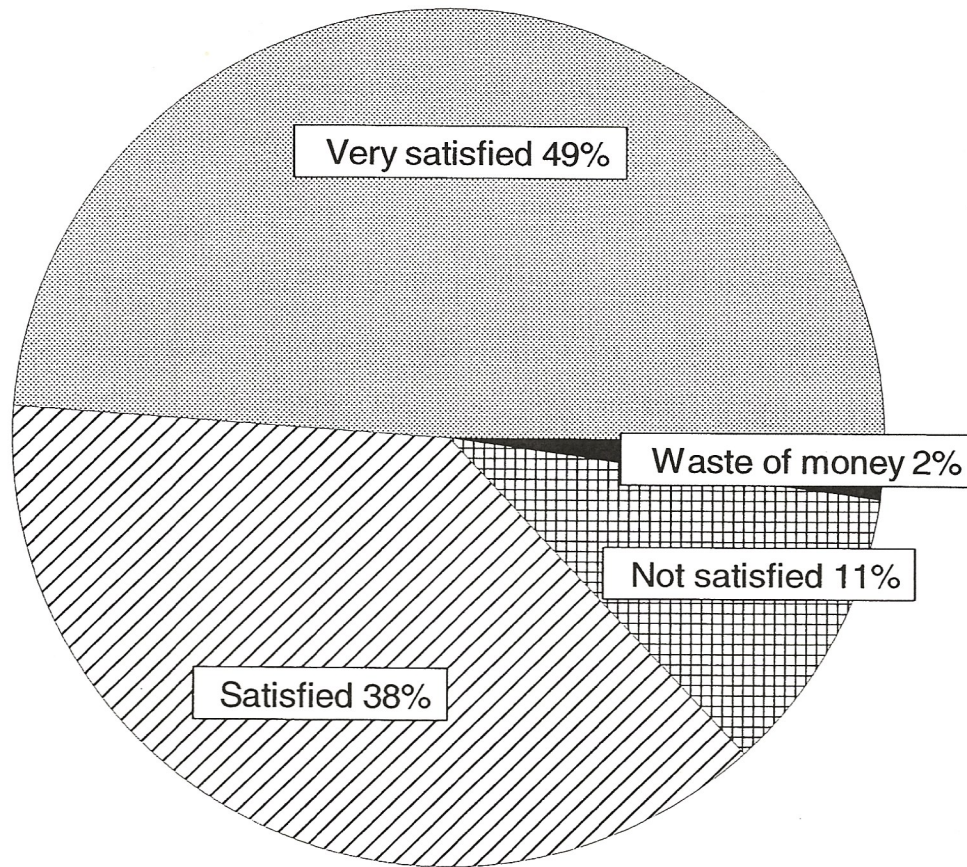
Evaluation of automation feature

Very satisfied 49%

Waste of money 2%

Not satisfied 11%

Satisfied 38%

Figure 16

Eight out of nine (87%) of the ACN churches that have the automated downlink equipment indicate satisfaction with the automation feature. Only 2% believe it is a waste of money to include this feature in the purchase of the satellite dish and receiver.

The smallest churches are more likely to be satisfied with automation. Not a single respondent from a congregation with fewer than 100 members said that including automation was a waste of money.

How often are events taped with no one present?

All the time 48%

Never 12%

A lot 21%

Some times 19%
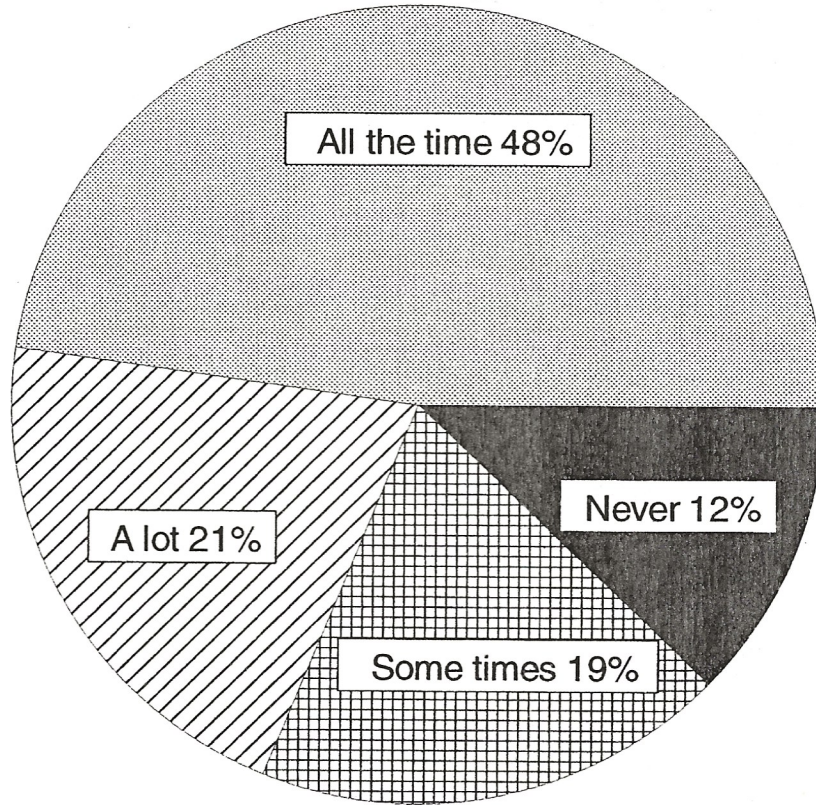
Figure 17

Heavy use is being made of the automated ACN downlink package as an unattended videotape distribution system. Nearly half of the churches which have the automated package indicate that programing is recorded automatically with no one present "almost all the time." Another fifth say they use it "a lot."

The smallest churches are most likely to make use of this feature. Congregations of more than 250 members are somewhat less likely to do so, perhaps because groups within these larger church make more use of the live events at the time of transmission.

# How often does someone check on the receiver and VCR?
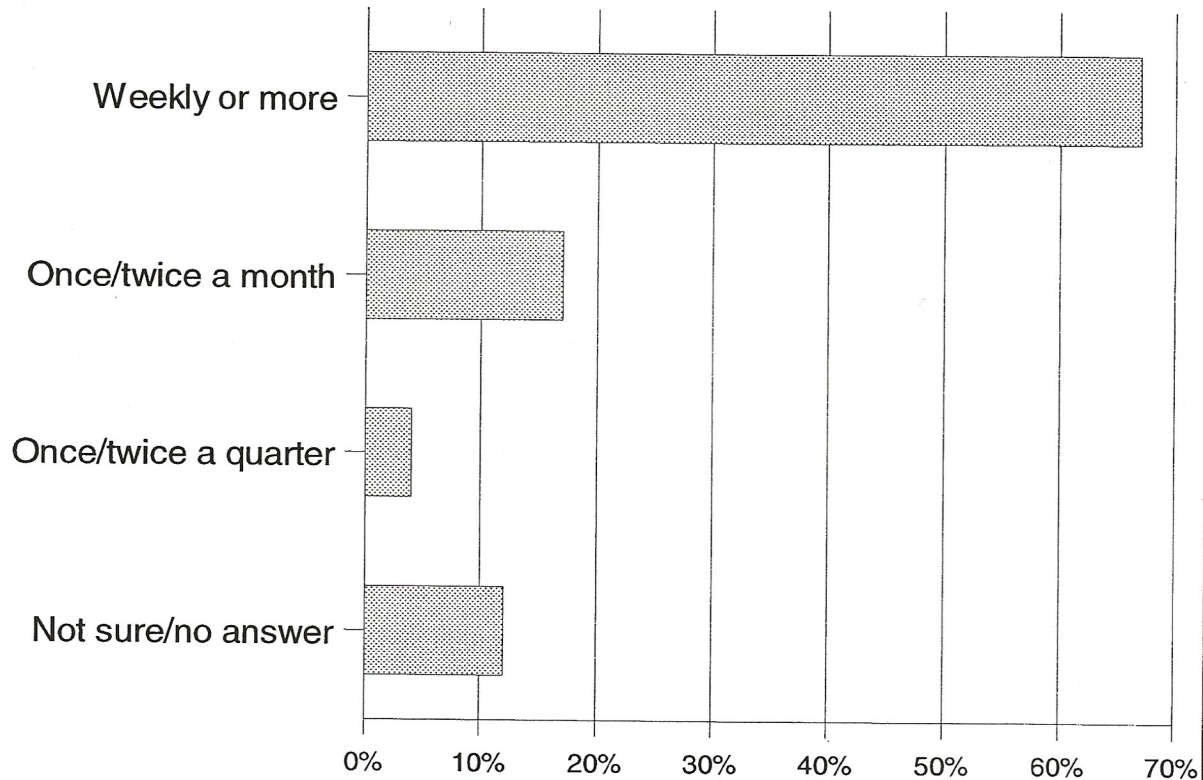
Figure 18

Every week or two in almost all ACN churches, the pastor or a leader or volunteer from the congregation checks the satellite receiver and VCR. They remove the cassette if something has been transmitted and recorded on it, and load a new, blank cassette. They may also check controls to see if various indicators are lit and registering properly, or even read out the programing memory on the receiver to see when the next ACN transmission has been scheduled by the automated system.

Only about one in eight indicate that this tending process is ignored. They are primarily in churches that do not have the automated equipment, where there is little point in checking the equipment unless it is to be turned on and used.

Equipment problems
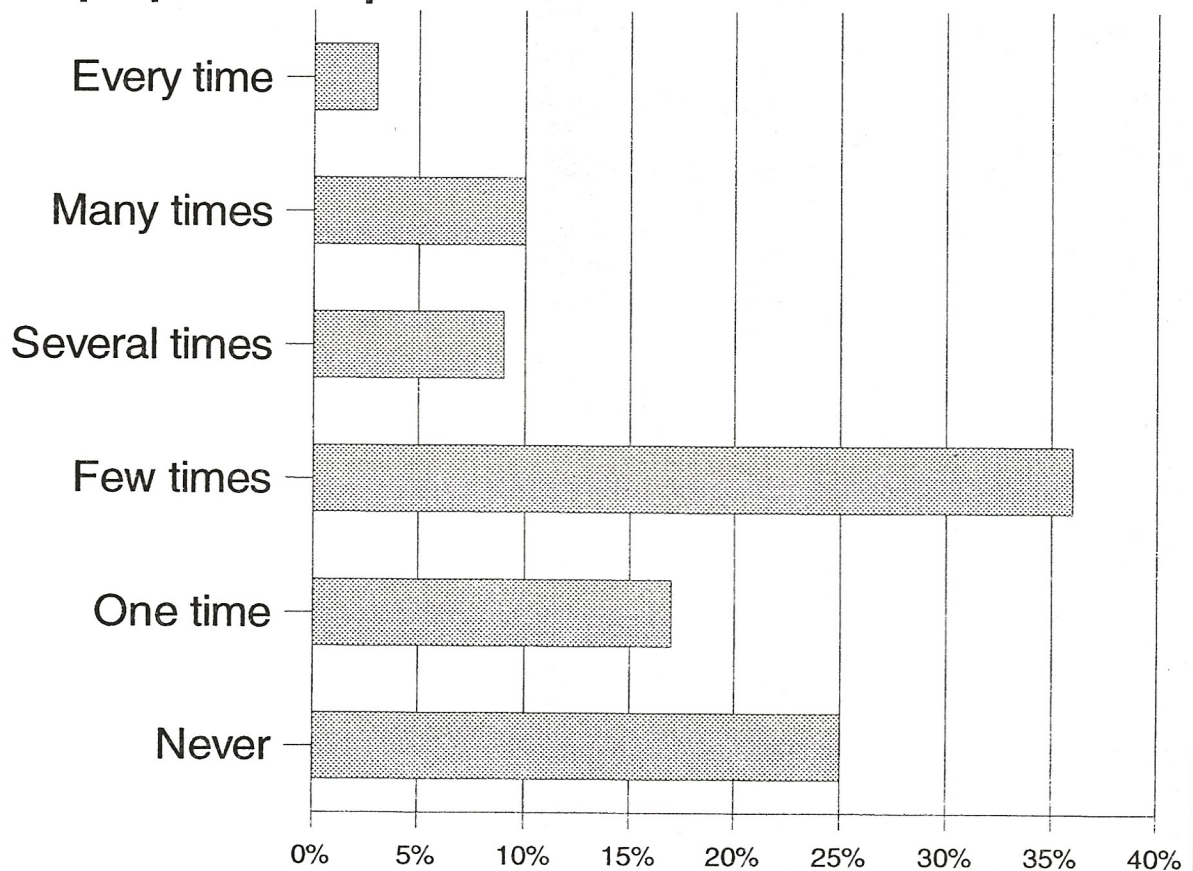
Figure 19

Three out of four ACN churches report that they have experienced problems with their downlink equipment at least once since it was installed. Smaller churches are somewhat less likely to report problems, than are the largest churches.

Yet, the vast majority of the churches that report equipment problems say it has happened a few times or only once. About one church in eight (13%) reports many or constant equipment problems.

Half of the respondents indicate that they have on at least one occasion phoned ACN because of a technical problem. This means that a third of the churches which have experienced problems have solved them locally without any assistance from ACN.

These data supply further evidence of a fact well known in modern society. Sophisticated technology is not perfect. Repair, replacement and support systems must be provided because things will gone wrong.

Ever had service from Digitron?
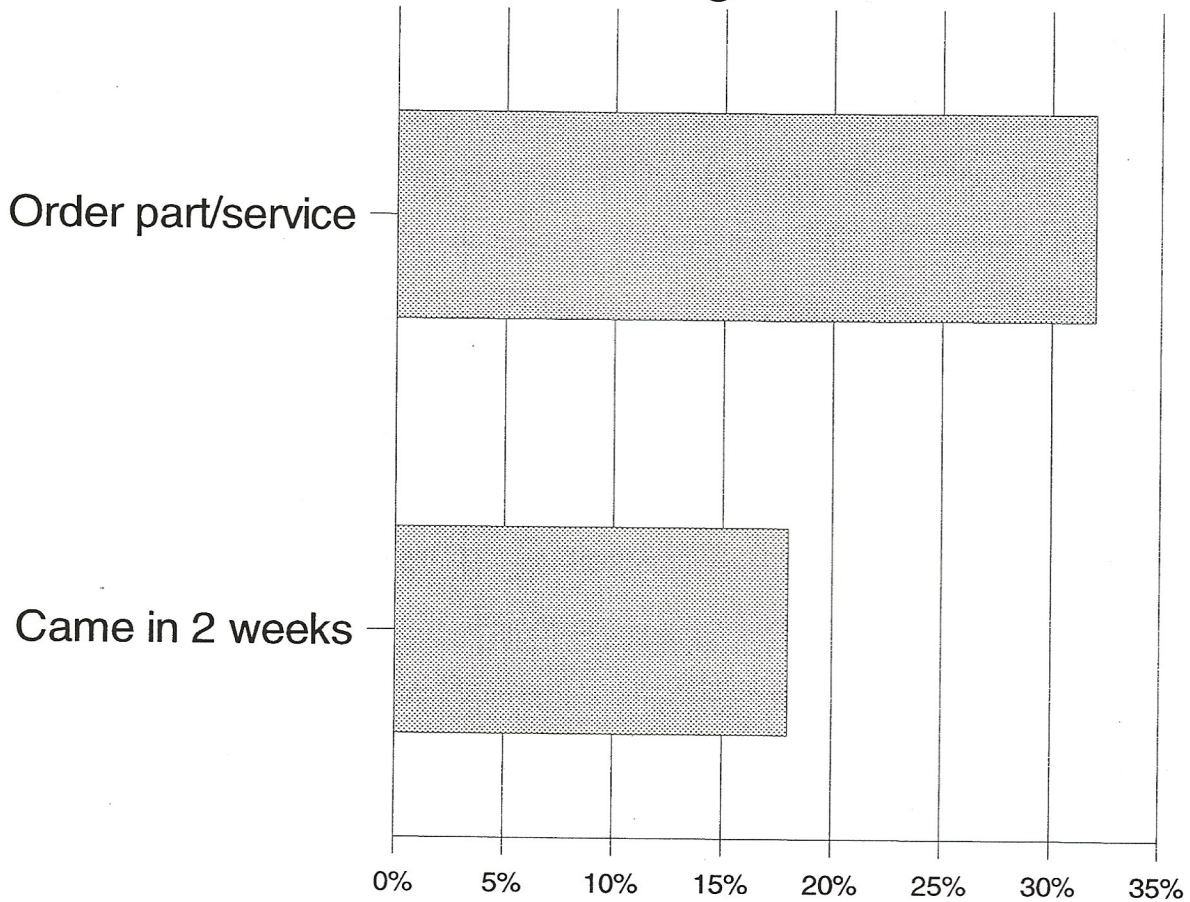
Figure 20

One in three (32%) of the ACN churches report ordering a replacement part for their downlink equipment at some point or having the installer come out again because something was not functioning properly. In almost every case this service is provided through Digitron.

The needs for parts or service is more likely to happen in the largest congregations (those with more than 600 members) and in churches of the "pastor-centered" size category (100 to 250 members), and less likely to happen in the smallest congregations (under 100 members) and "program-centered" churches (251 to 600 members) where church members are more involved in the operation of the equipment.

A little more than 60% of these churches indicate that the parts or service call arrived within two weeks of the request.

Use of 800 number
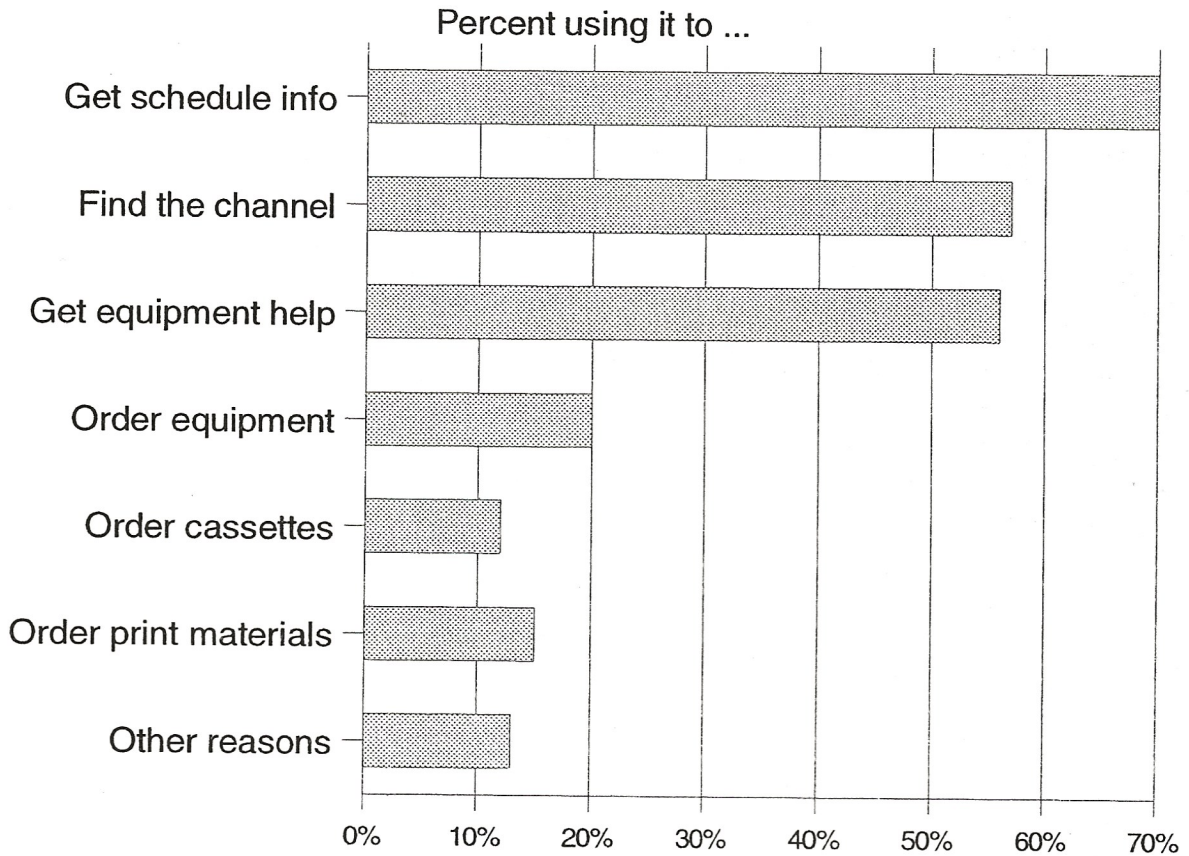
Figure 21

Nine out of ten participating churches (91%) make use of the ACN 800 number. Usage is consistent in congregations of all sizes.

It is most often used to get up-to-date schedule information, or in an emergency to quickly find the correct channel for an ACN transmission. Smaller churches are more likely to use the 800-number for this purpose than are larger churches.

The majority of the respondents (56%) also indicate the 800-number has been used to get help with downlink equipment problems. Smaller numbers use the 800-number to order video cassettes or print materials, and for other needs.

Frequency of use of 800 number
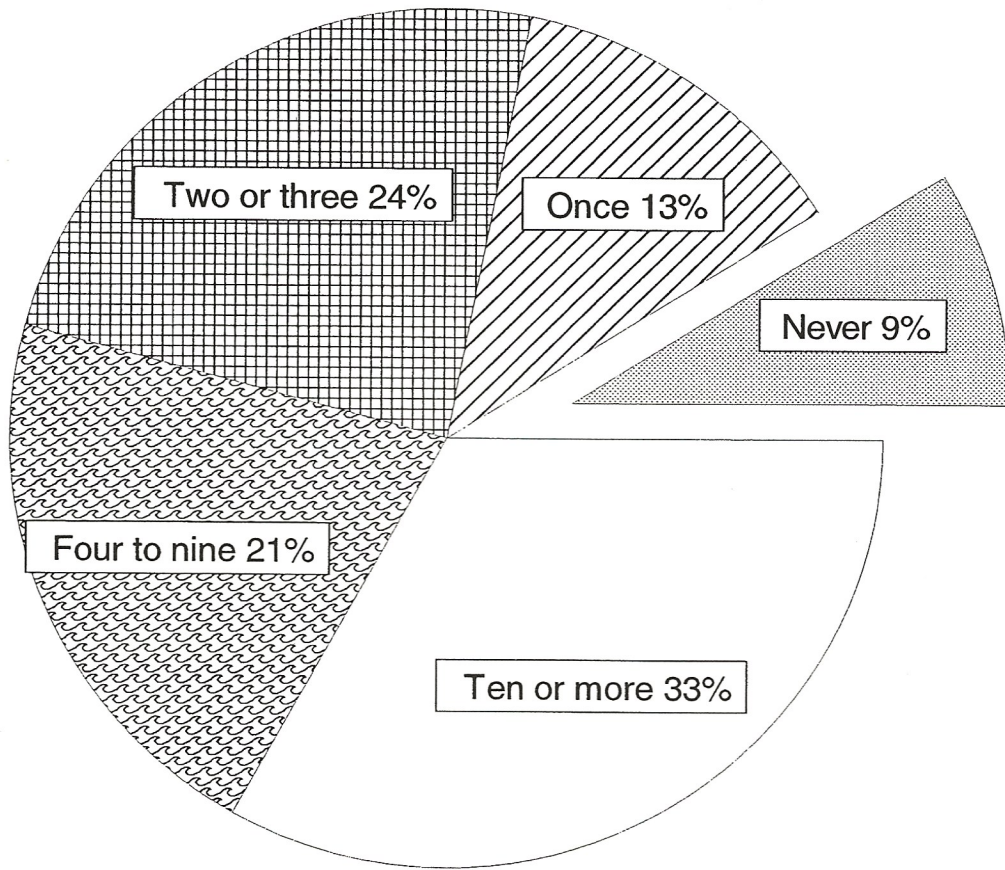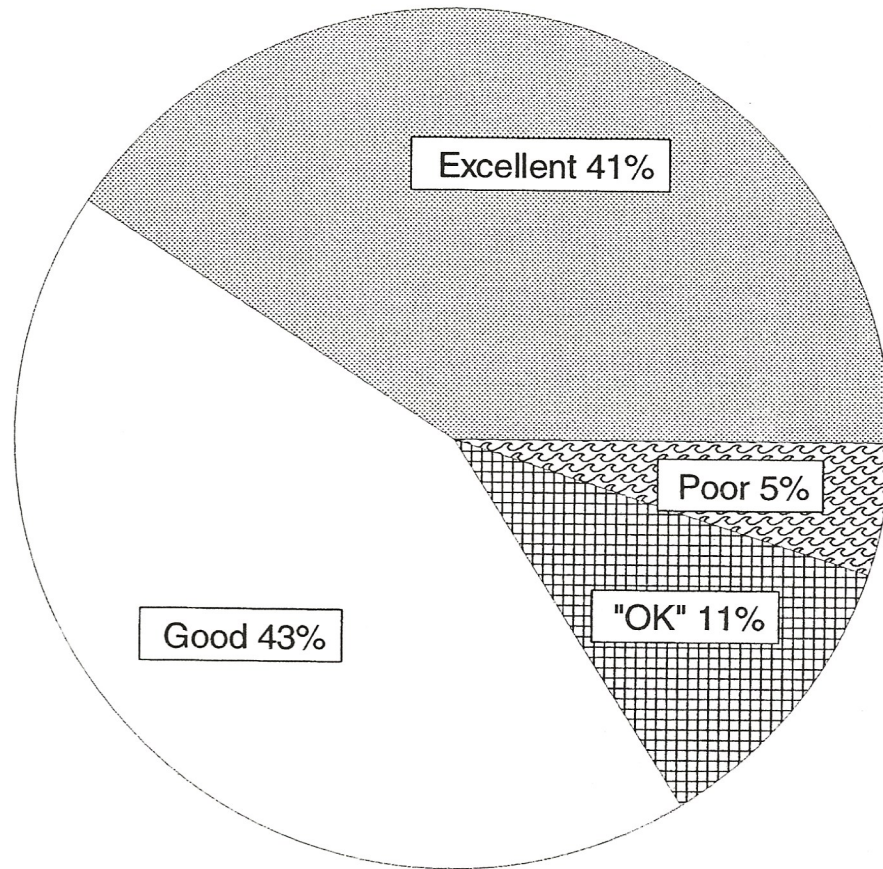

Figure 22

The largest number of respondents (45%) have used the ACN 800 number two to nine times. Another third are heavy users who have dialed the 800 number more than ten times since joining the network.

Most of the heavy users are in the smaller churches. Respondents from larger churches are more likely to report they have never used the ACN 800 number or have used it only once.

Evaluation of 800 number service

Excellent 41%

Poor 5%

"OK" 11%

Good 43%

Figure 23

Asked to rate the service they receive from the individuals who answer the ACN 800 number, four out of five respondents (84%) say it is excellent or good. Only one respondent in twenty indicate receiving poor service. Only six out of 340 persons interviewed (less than 2%) say that on at least one occasion they left a message and no one ever called them back.

Respondents from the largest churches are much more likely to give the ACN 800 number an "excellent" rating, while those from the smallest churches are somewhat more likely to give an "OK" or "poor" rating. It may be that pastors and congregational leaders in small churches have unrealistic expectations about the extent of service that ACN can provide.
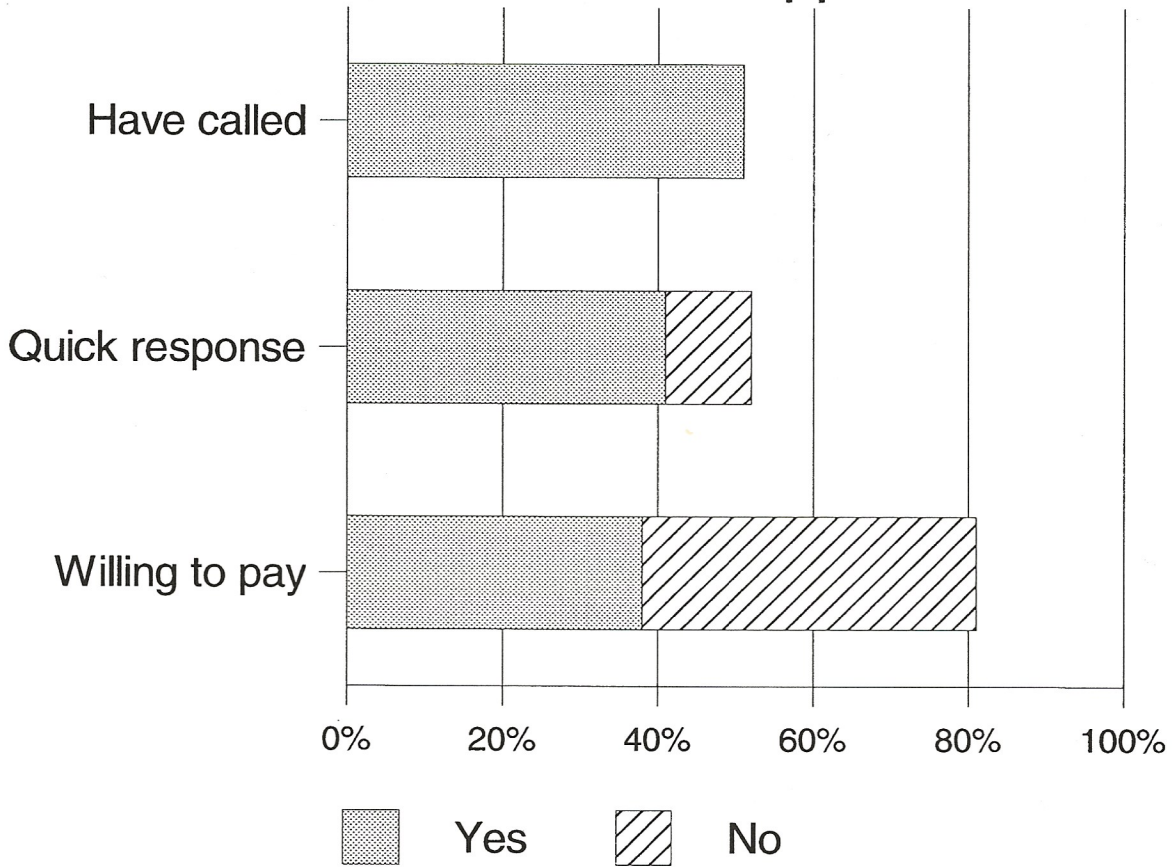
Satisfaction with technical support
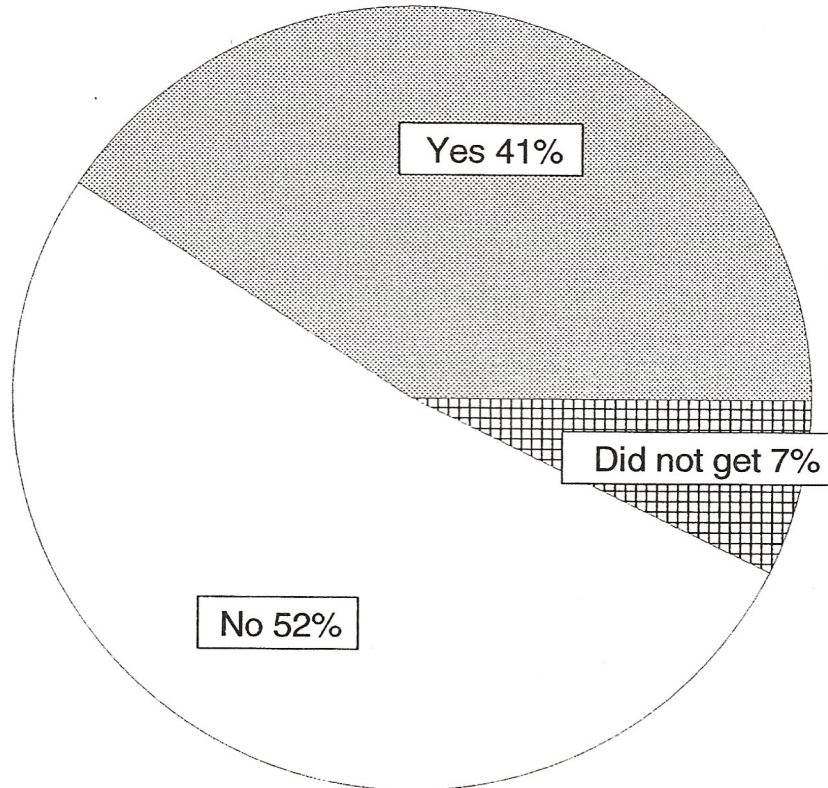
Figure 24

Half of the participating churches report that on at least one occasion they have called ACN's technical support "help desk." The largest churches are the most likely to have called.

Four out of five respondents who have called for technical support (41% of the total sample) say they are satisfied with how quickly ACN's technical support staff gets back to them. Again, the largest churches are the most likely to express satisfaction.

Respondents from churches of 251 to 600 members are more likely to express dissatisfaction.

Almost as many respondents are willing to pay "a small fee" for each call to ACN for technical support as are against the idea; 38% favor it, 43% do not, and the remaining 19% did not have an opinion. Respondents from larger churches favor it, while those from smaller churches do not.

Used introductory kit with overheads to present ACN to church board

Yes 41%

Did not get 7%

No 52%

Figure 25

In the spring of 1995, ACN sent to every pastor in the North American Division an informational package designed to help the pastor introduce the concept of satellite-linked events and the purchase of downlink equipment to the church board. It included masters for a set of overheads, a presentation script, and handouts.

Two out of five respondents indicate that they have made use of this kit with their church board. A little more than half of the respondents indicate

they did not use it, but most of these are undoubtedly from the 850 local churches that already had installed downlinks by the time the kit was mailed. Another 7% never did receive a copy of the kit.

Clearly, the information kit has been a very useful tool in facilitating the tremendous growth that ACN has experienced in the last year. More than nine out of ten of the respondents who could have made use of it appear to have done so.

ACN poster with year's schedule put up at the church
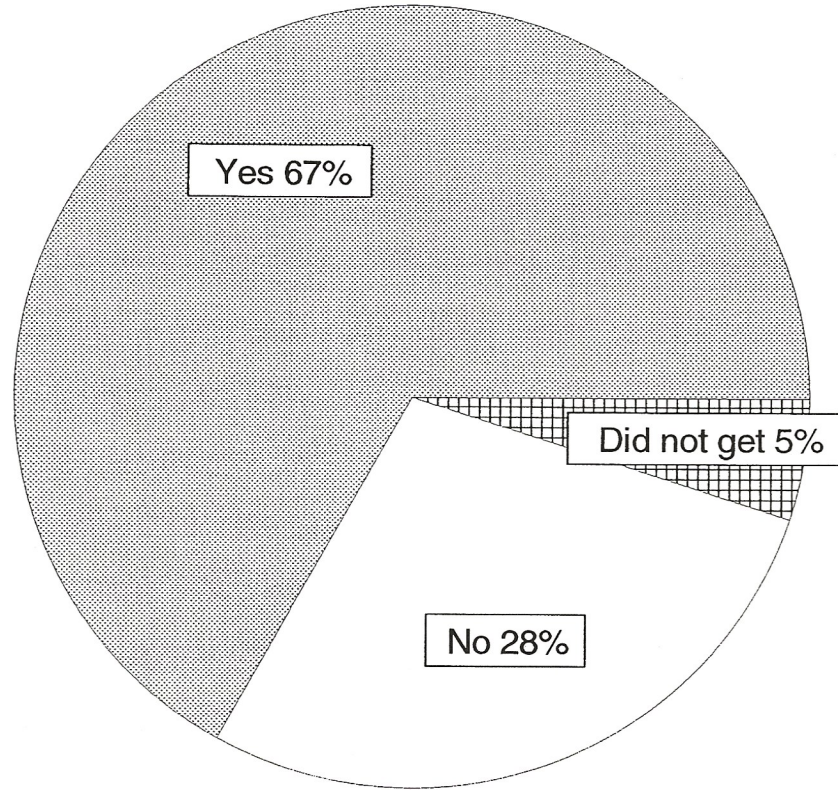
Figure 26

In the spring of 1995, a poster was mailed to every pastor in the North American Division displaying the schedule of ACN events for the 1995-96 program year. This has proved to be a very popular promotional tool.

Two thirds of the respondents indicate that the poster was put up at their church. Larger churches are just as likely to make use of this item as are smaller churches.

Five percent of the respondents were unable to answer this question. It is assumed that this is either because they did not receive the mailing for some reason or did not see it when it arrived.

Use of print materials

Print Material	Percentage
Bulletin inserts	61%
Flyers for outreach	23%
Direct mail piece	14%
News release	20%
Handouts at event	38%
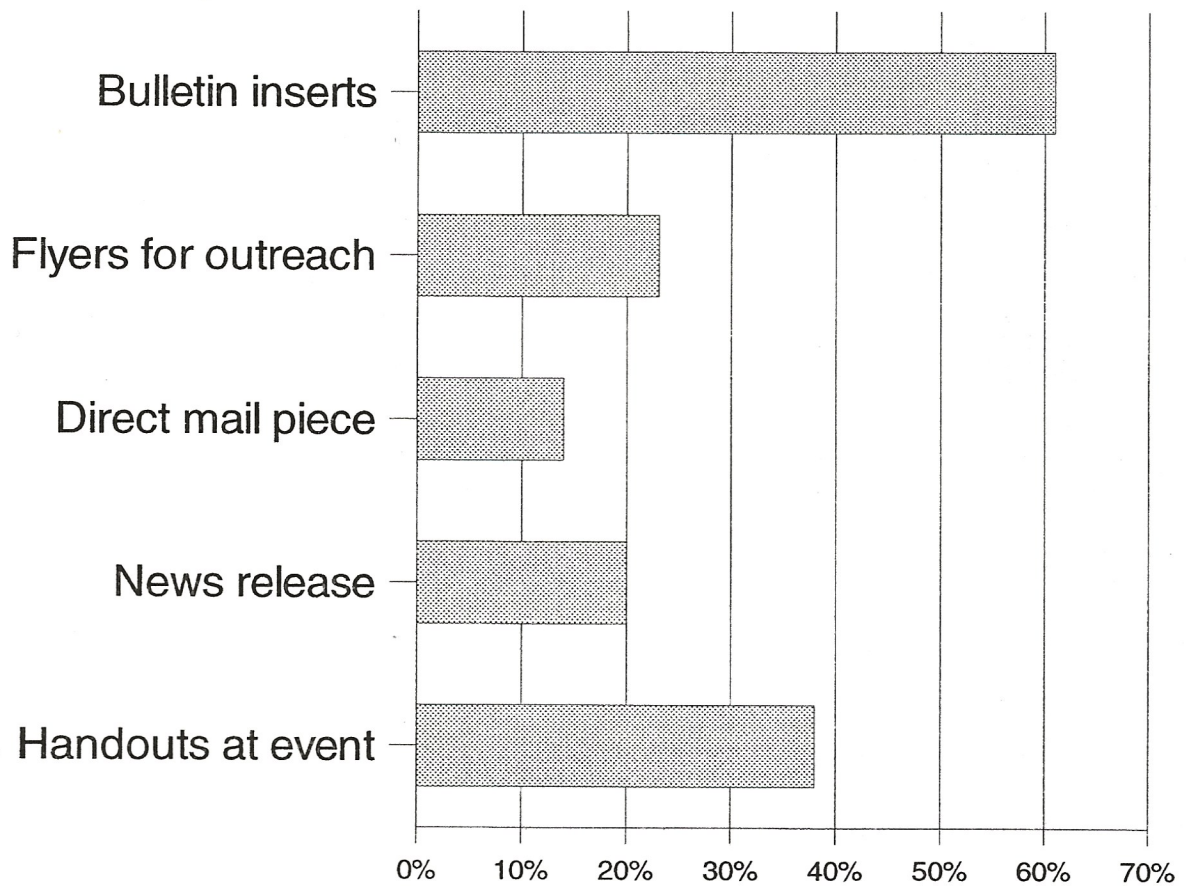
Figure 27

Three out of five participating churches (61%) have made use of the bulletin inserts provided for each training event and outreach seminar. This is one of the items included in the local marketing kit prepared for each event and mailed to all ACN member churches in advance. Larger churches are more likely to make use of this particular tool.

About one in four churches (23%) have made use of the flyers designed to pass out in the community. Small churches are more likely to make use of this item.

One in seven churches (14%) has made use of the direct mail piece. This item requires that a mailing is be used, either an "interest list" maintained by the church or a list rented from some community provider. Larger churches are more likely than smaller churches to use this promotional tool for their satellite seminars.

These items are provided as camera-ready masters into which local

information is inserted. Then, the needed number is printed locally, either with a photocopy machine or by a professional printer.

One in five churches has made use of the news release provided in each local marketing kit. This is designed to be re-typed with local information included, and delivered to newspapers and broadcast news directors. Large churches are more likely to make use of this feature.

Nearly two out of five churches (38%) have made use of the handouts also provided. A kit of masters can be purchased from AdventSource for each event at the cost $25. It includes a copyright license to make as many copies as needed in that congregation or local organization. Large churches are more likely to make use of the handouts.

Overall, roughly half of the participating churches are making use of the print materials associated with training events, while about a fifth of the churches are making use of the items related specifically to outreach seminars. It is likely that this reflects the lower participation by churches in outreach events than in nurture events rather than the comparative usefulness or quality of the materials.

Technical Appendix

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error. That is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends on the number of interviews or questionnaires.

The following tables may be used in estimating the sampling error of any percentage in this report. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedures, the same interviewers and/or the same questionnaire.

Table A shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of any percentage reported. This table would be used in the following manner: If a reported percentage is 33 for a groups includes 1,250 respondents ... then, go to row "percentages near 30" in the table and go across to the column headed "1250." The number at this point is 3, which means that the 33 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. This means that very probably (95 chances out of 100) the true figure would be somewhere between 30 and 36, with the most likely figure the 33 obtained in the survey.

In comparing survey results in two sub-samples, for example, men and women, the question arises as to how large a difference between them must be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. Table B and Table C indicate the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons to make them "statistically significant." Table C is for percentages near 20 or 80. Table B is for percentages near 50. For percentages in between, the factor to be allowed for is between those shown on the two tables.

Here is how these tables are used: If 50% of men respond a certain way and 40% of women respond that way also, for a difference of 10 percentage points between them, can we say that the 10 point difference reflects a real difference between the two groups on that question? Let's say the sample contains about 750 of each gender.

Since the percentages are near 50, consult Table B. Since the total sample is 1500, look for the number in the column headed "1500." Since the two sub-samples are 750 persons each, look for the row designated "750." Where the row and column intersect, you will find the number 5. This means that the difference between the two groups must be greater than 5 percentage points to be "statistically significant." In other words, we can conclude with considerable confidence that a real difference exists in the answers of men and women to this question.

Table A
Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error

Size of Sample	1500	1250	1000	750	500	250	100
Percentages near 10	2	2	2	3	3	5	7
Percentages near 20	3	3	3	4	4	6	10
Percentages near 30	3	3	4	4	5	7	11
Percentages near 40	3	3	4	4	5	8	12
Percentages near 50	3	3	4	4	5	8	12
Percentages near 60	3	3	4	4	5	8	12
Percentages near 70	3	3	4	4	5	7	11
Percentages near 80	3	3	3	4	4	6	10
Percentages near 90	2	2	2	3	3	5	7

Table B
Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference
In Percentage Points for Percentages near 50

Size of Sample	1500	1250	1000	750	500	250	100
1500	4						
1250	5	5					
1000	5	5	5				
750	6	6	6	6			
500	6	6	7	7	8		
250	8	8	9	9	9	11	
100	13	13	13	13	13	14	17

Table C
Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference
In Percentage Points
For Percentages near 20 or Percentages near 80

Size of Sample	1500	1250	1000	750	500	250	100
1500	4						
1250	4	4					
1000	4	4	4				
750	4	4	5	5			
500	5	5	5	6	6		
250	7	7	7	7	8	9	
100	10	10	10	10	11	12	14