Office of Information and Research
Report 17

Net '96
Follow-up Survey
of Participating Churches

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

Net '96
Follow-up Survey
of Participating Churches

Monte Sahlin, Director
Office of Information and Research
North American Division

Jose Chavanz-Q., Research Director
Church Support Services
Pacific Union Conference

Research Consultants

Roger Dudley
Director, Institute of Church Ministry
Andrews University

Harold Lee
Secretary
Columbia Union Conference

Carole Kilcher
Associate Professor of Communications
Andrews University

Paul Richardson
Director
Center for Creative Ministry

Introduction

Net '96 is the largest public evangelism initiative ever undertaken by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. Its success has firmly established a new era of soul-winning and begun to inculcate a mission-driven culture in many congregations. This study is designed to gather information from the pastors who directed local sites in the United States, Canada and Bermuda. No attempt was made to gather information from sites in other world divisions that utilized the Net '96 satellite linkage or video cassettes.

How Many Local Sites Participated?

One of the most difficult aspects of this study has been to determine the number of local downlink sites that actually participated in holding meetings. The database maintained by AIM at Andrews University, which was constructed to assist individuals who phoned the 800 number asking for the nearest place to attend the meetings, has 1,458 confirmed downlink sites holding meetings as part of the series. (Confirmed means one of the AIM staff talked on the phone to the pastor and verified the location for the meetings, the time, the starting night, etc.)

The list supplied by Don Gray, crusade coordinator, has 2,185 churches on it, of which 270 are identified as participating in a Discover Bible School but not hosting a down-linked meeting. So this list has a total of 1,915 downlink sites. Of these, 1,350 are also listed in AIM's database as confirmed. Another 565 are unconfirmed.

I believe it is safe to say that 80% of the 565 unconfirmed sites did, in fact, really participate in the meetings. Why? In September, Don Gray gave the AIM staff an earlier version of his list and AIM personnel phoned 617 that were unconfirmed at the time, of which 496 (80%) were confirmed and added to the database, 113 indicated they had signed up to participate in Net '96 but had subsequently decided not to conduct the meetings, and 8 were unsure whether they would have the meetings or not. A total of 121 (20%) were, therefore, negatively confirmed.

So, the best possible estimate of actual sites holding downlink meetings is 1,910 which results from the 1,458 confirmed sites plus 452, or 80% of the 565 unconfirmed sites. I would be happy to hear any suggestions of how to refine the calculation in order to make it more accurate.

Net '96 Survey Research

The data in this report are based on 500 randomly-selected telephone interviews. At the 95th percentile confidence level, the error factor is 3 to 5 percentage points, plus or minus. The interviews were conducted from March 3 through April 18, 1997.

Two smaller samples of participating pastors were interviewed during the fall of 1996 to get an early estimate of attendance and baptisms. Round one was conducted on October 7 and 8, 1996. Round two was completed during November 11-14, 1996. Each consisted of 100 randomly-selected telephone interviews.

This is a comprehensive report based on the larger sample. It is designed to give information on the actual number of baptisms and Professions of Faith resulting from the Net '96 evangelism initiative, as well as a detailed evaluation of various aspects of the project by the participating local pastors.

This study was directed by Monte Sahlin, assistant to the president and director of the NAD Office of Information and Research. The telephone interviews were conducted by a team from the Pacific Union Conference Office of Church Support Services under the supervision of Jose Chavanz-Q., who also completed data entry and analysis on SPSS software.

Monte Sahlin
May 1997

Churches Participating in Net '96
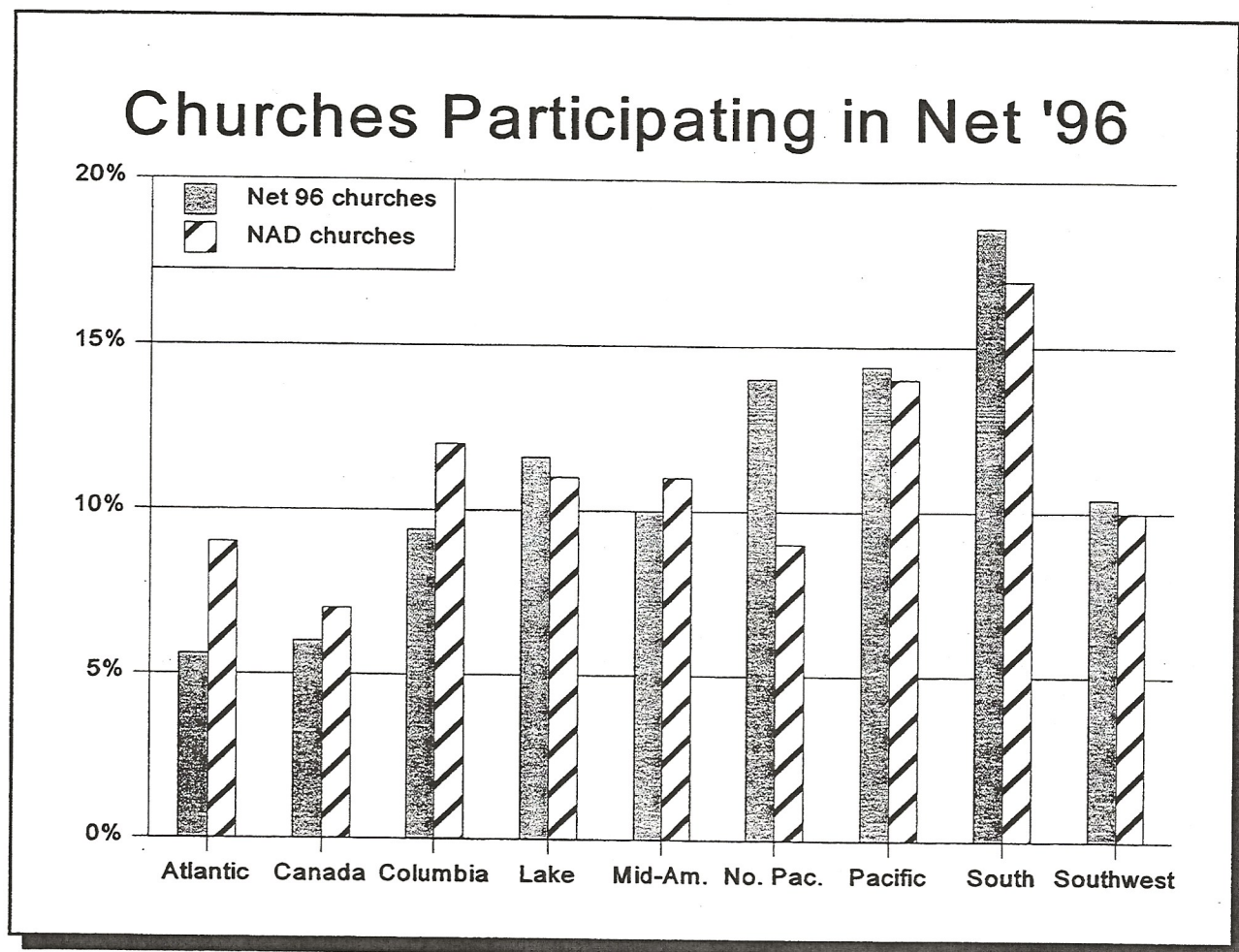
One in four of the local churches that participated in Net '96 are congregations that average more than 150 people during Sabbath worship. This is nearly twice as many as the proportionate share of these larger congregations among the total churches in the North American Division (NAD).

To an even greater degree than in Net '95, a disproportionate share of large churches joined Net '96. They have greater financial resources and also seem to be quicker to adopt new methods of outreach.

Four out of five (81%) of the participating churches are identified by their pastor as primarily white, Anglo congregations. Another one in eight (13%) are described as multicultural congregations. Only 3% are African-American, 2% Hispanic and 1% Asian congregations. Overall, there was a 27% increase in the number of ethnic minority congregations participating in Net '96 as compared to Net '95.

Two out of three (61%) of the participating churches are located in small towns and rural areas. One in five (22%) are urban congregations, and one in six (16%) are suburban churches. These proportions are not significantly changed from the pattern during Net '95.

Opening Night Attendance

Percentage of sites in each category
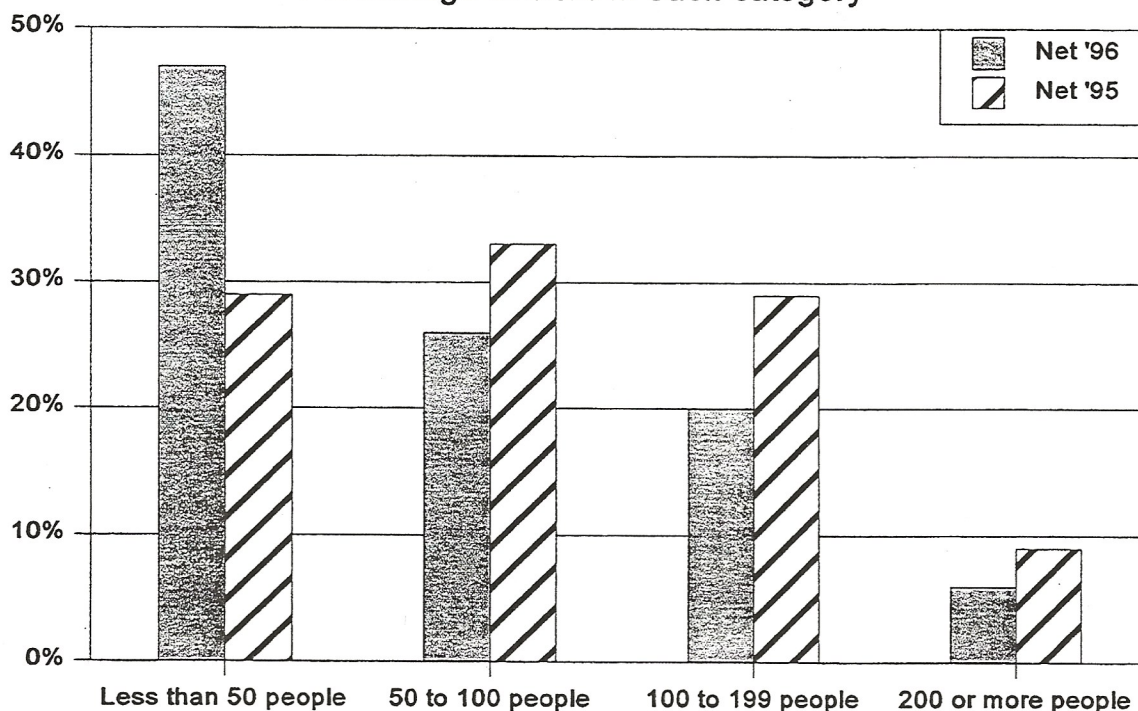
Opening night attendance was 171,682 at the 1,910 downlink sites plus about 2,500 at Forest Lake Academy auditorium in Orlando, Florida. This is a total of 174,182 individuals in North America.

The opening-week telephone survey with a random sample of 100 participating pastors estimated opening night attendance at 170,000. The two surveys provide essentially the same estimate of attendance.

Attendance reports from the participating churches ranged from four to 2,996. The median attendance was 90 individuals.

Non-member attendance on opening night was 51,306. This is a significantly greater number than the 44,000 estimated by the opening-week telephone survey.

The opening-night crowd for Net '96 was two-thirds greater than the opening night for Net '95. The number of non-members in attendance increased by only a third.

Compared to Net '95 there was an increase of smaller groups in attendance at Net '96.

Average Attendance During Series

Percentage of sites in each category
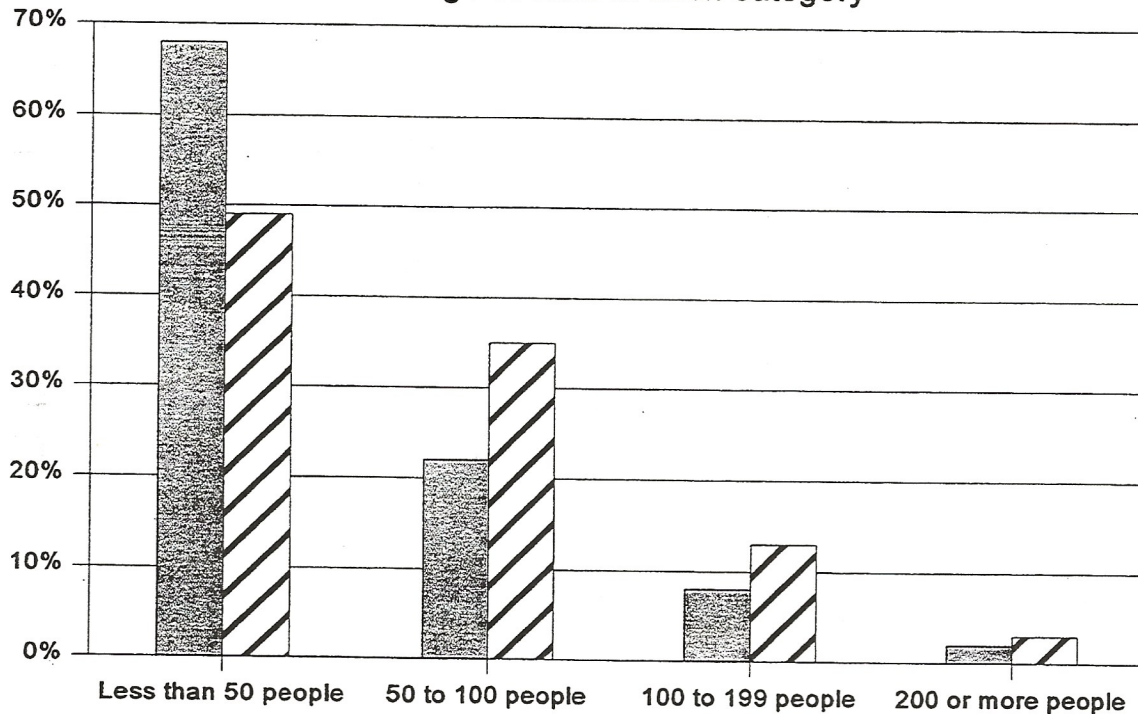
Average attendance throughout the entire series was 106,116 at the downlink sites plus 2,000 at Forest Lake Academy in Orlando, a total of more than 108,000. This is a 72% increase over the total average audience throughout Net '95.

The average attendance ranged from two people in one location to a high of 2,500 in another location. The median average attendance was 56 individuals.

Small churches are more likely to have had small groups in attendance. Participating sites in Canada and the Southern and Pacific unions are more likely to have had higher attendance.

When Net '96 attendance is compared with Net '95 attendance patterns, the trend is toward smaller groups. The cause of this trend is not clear from the available data.

Average Baptisms per Church

Legend:
- November estimate
- March-April report
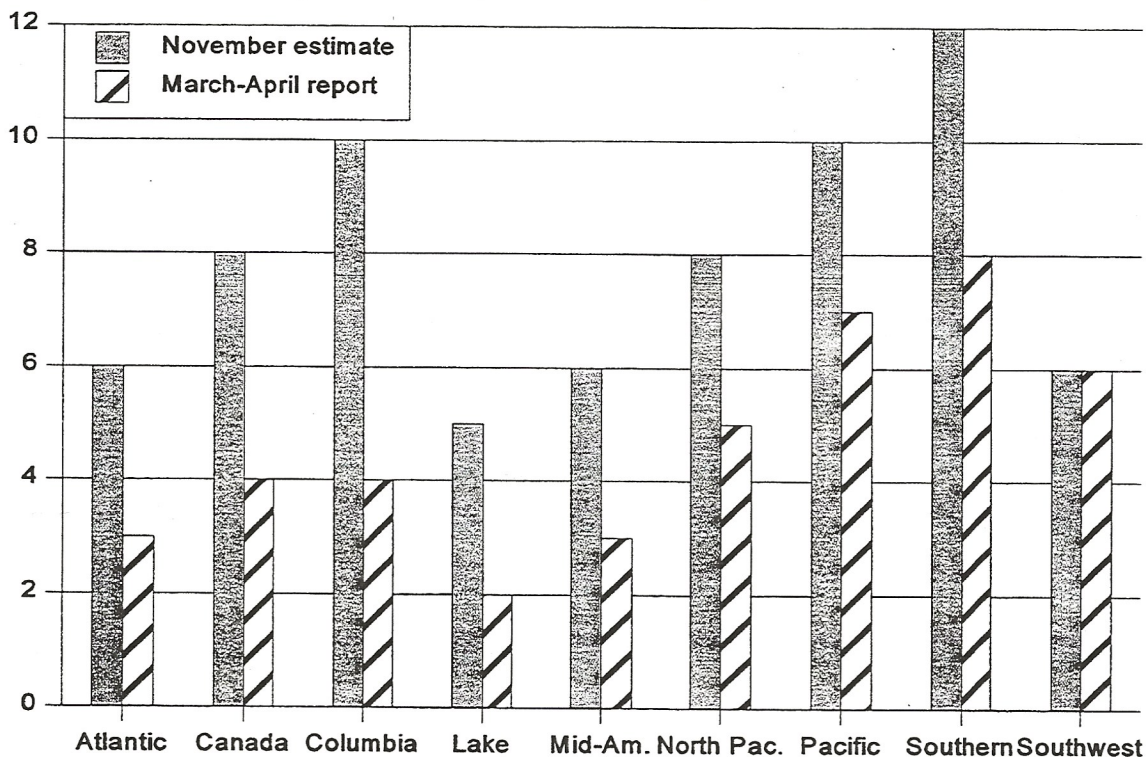
By February 1, 1997, a total of 9,772 people had been baptized or had made a Profession of Faith as a result of the Net '96 evangelism initiative. Early projections estimated that there would be a larger harvest.

In November, immediately following the last of the satellite-linked public meetings, a random sample of 100 participating pastors was asked, "What is your best guess of how many you will baptize from these meetings by the end of the year?" The average response was 8.66 per church, providing a total of 16,541 at the 1,910 participating churches.

In March and April the full sample of 500 participating pastors was asked, "How many baptisms and Professions of Faith did you have by February 1 [1997]?" The average response is 5.116 per church, providing a total of 9,772 at the 1,910 participating churches.

Several other key indicators did not change at all in the two surveys. The opening night attendance from the early survey was 170,000, and from these data it is 171,682. The average nightly attendance from the early survey was 100,000, and from these data it is 106,116. These data demonstrate that the difference in the baptism data is not due to sampling error.
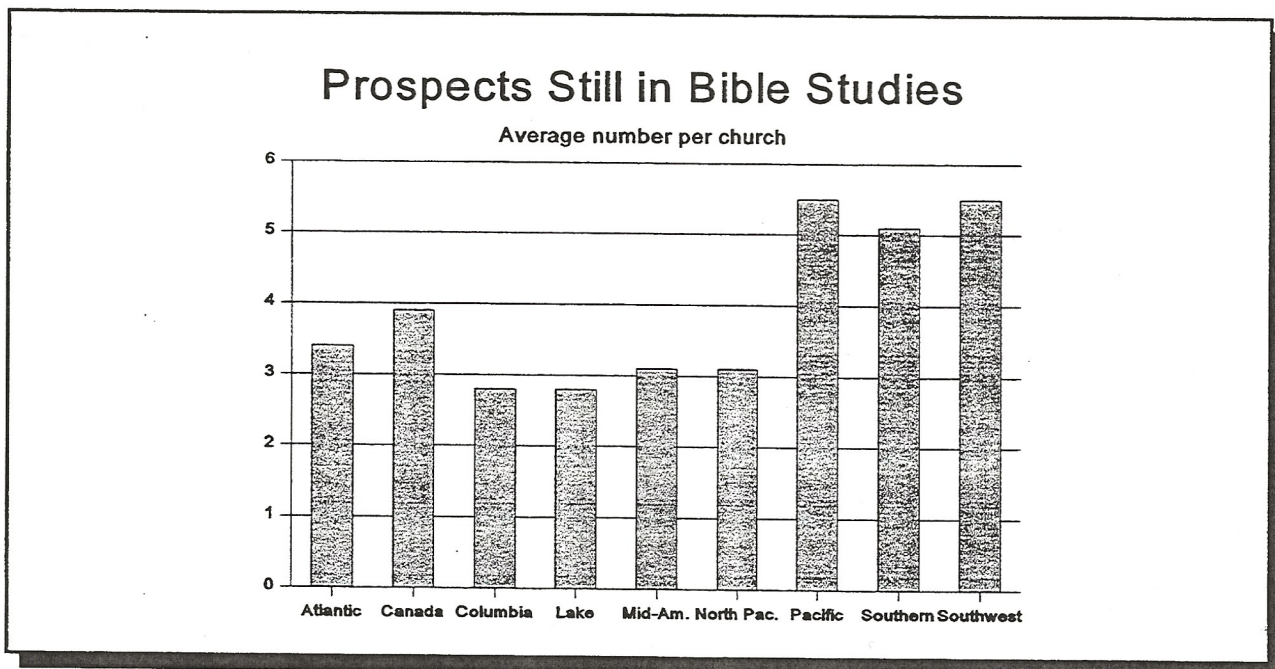
Why this disappointing result in the follow-up survey? One explanation would be that in the euphoria of the successful series of meetings, pastors in November were not able to think clearly about how many of the prospective members were likely to make decisions. But, the range of responses in the early survey was from 0 to 78 per site, and the range of responses in these data is from 0 to 320.

It is more likely that the answer has to do with lack of skill in getting decisions. NAD evangelism experts have long pointed this out as a weak area for many pastors. These data clearly highlight the problem. Perhaps the pastors interviewed in November did not over-estimate how many of the people they were working with were likely to become church members, but simply were not able to get a significant number of those individuals to actually make a decision to join the church.

Further evidence of this hypothesis is the number of individuals who attended the meetings and were still involved in Bible studies in the spring, but had not yet been baptized The responses on this item average 4 per pastor, or a total of 7,755 in the 1,910 participating churches. If this total is combined with the 9,772 baptisms/POFs, the total is 17,527. This is a number right on the mark of the early survey just as the opening night attendance and average attendance numbers are.

These data provide an important strategic lesson. In order to realize the full results of Net '98, a major investment must to be made in the improvement of the process of personal follow-up ministry implemented by pastors and congregations during and after the series of public meetings.

Prospects Still in Bible Studies
Average number per church

Baptisms from Children of Members

Average per church

Legend:
- All other baptisms and POFs
- Children baptized from church families

Chart showing average baptisms per church for: Atlantic, Canada, Columbia, Lake, Mid-Am., North Pac., Pacific, Southern, Southwest
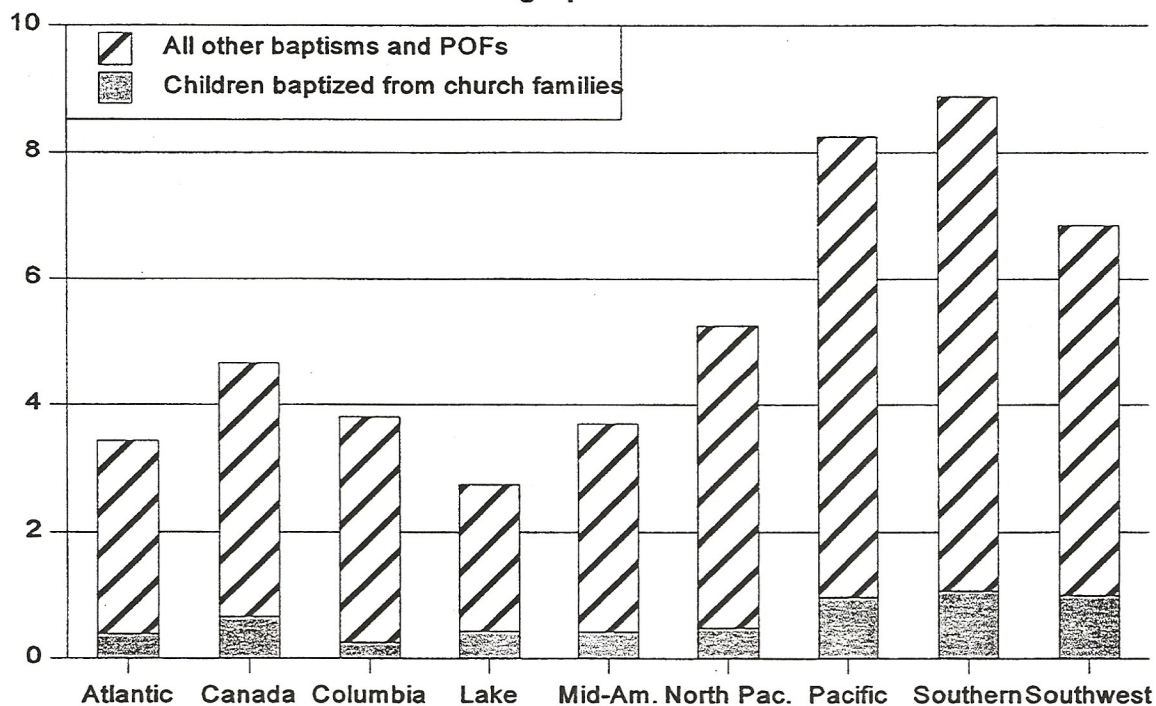
How many of the total baptisms and Professions of Faith resulting from the Net '96 Project are children from the families in the participating churches? The pastors interviewed were asked to differentiate between children in member families and other converts.

The total of Adventist children is 1,318 or less than one per church. In other words, less than one in seven baptisms is an Adventist child, and 4.43 per church are adult converts.

The Southwestern, Pacific and Southern unions, as well as Canada, have higher average numbers of children among the baptisms. The Atlantic and Columbia unions have lower average numbers of children. These data reflect the demographic realities in these regions.

Impact of Net '96 Promotion

Percent of responses each quarter

	When pastor first heard
	When church made decision

Chart showing percentages from 100% down to 0% on the y-axis, plotted across During 1995, 1st Quarter 1996, 2nd Quarter 1996, and 3rd Quarter 1996 on the x-axis.
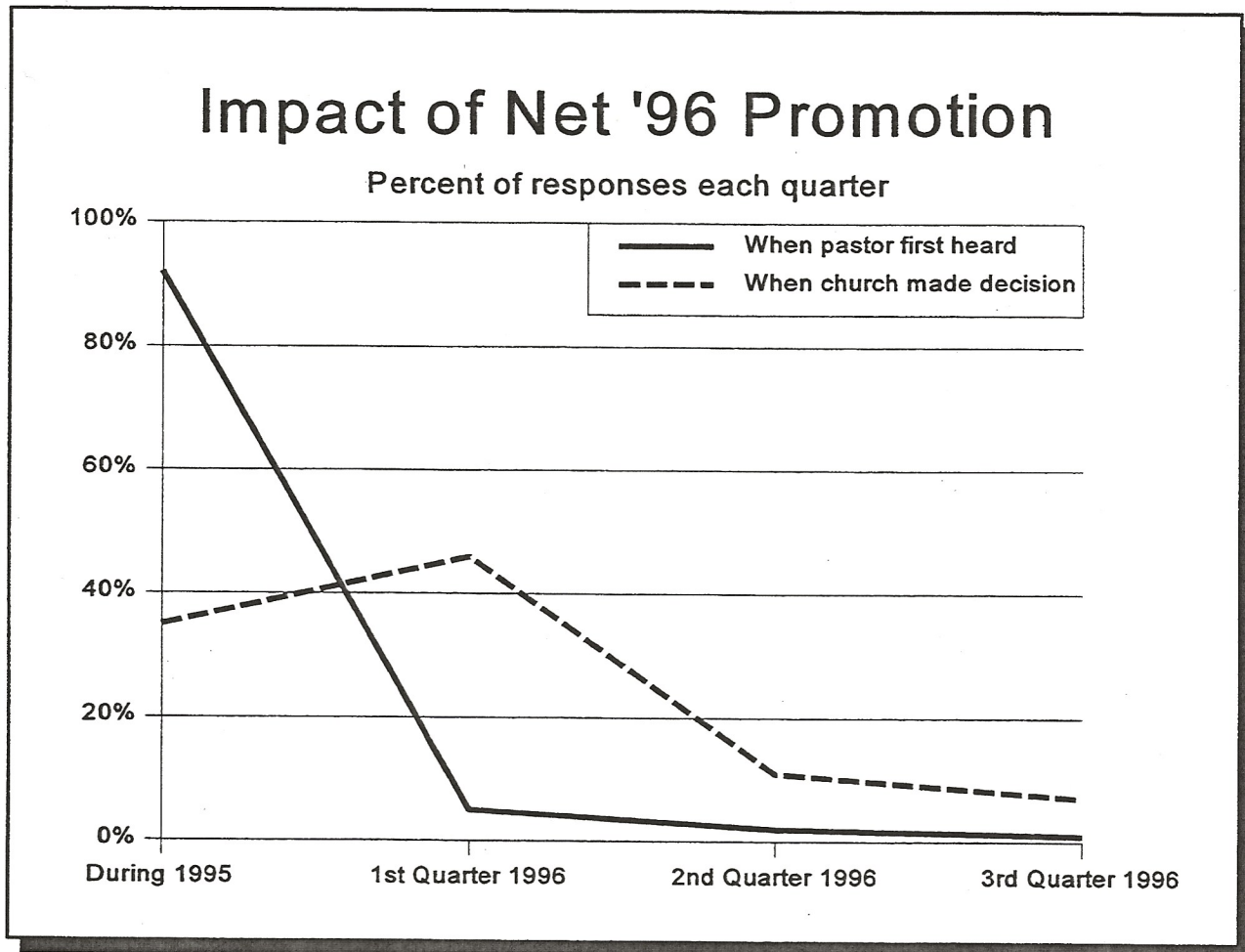
By the end of 1995 almost all (92%) of the pastors who actually participated in Net '96 had heard of the project. Pastors in Hispanic and African American congregations report that they were slower to get the word than those in multicultural and "white" churches.

The decision to actually hold public meetings as part of Net '96 was made by the end of 1995 in a third of the churches (35%). Four out of five (81%) had made their decision by the end of March 1997. A decision-making gap of about three months is consistent throughout the responses, as it was during Net '95.

Smaller congregations are more likely to have made their decision late. Churches that participated in Net '95 made their decision more quickly than did the others.

Penetration of Resource Materials

Percent of pastors who received ...

Legend:
- During Net '96
- During Net '95

X-axis categories: Pastor's Manual, Net News
Y-axis: 0% to 100%
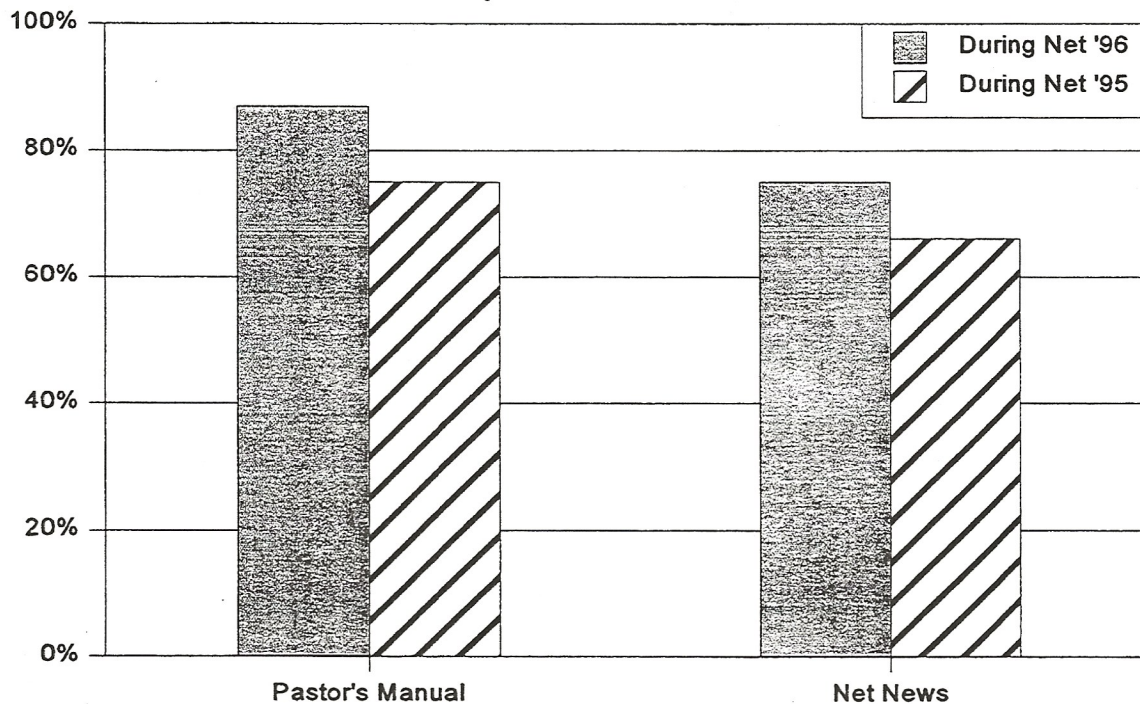
Seven out of eight pastors (87%) indicate that they received a copy of the Net '96 Pastor's Manual. Hispanic pastors and older pastors were less likely to have been given a copy. Pastors who participated in Net '95 are more likely to have obtained copies of the Net '96 materials.

Three out of four pastors (75%) report that they received *Net News* on a regular basis. Another 9% say that they received only one or two issues, while 16% did not get the newsletter at all. Pastors from large congregations are less likely to report seeing *Net News*.

Significant progress has been made in getting materials from NAD evangelism initiatives to the pastors. Net '96 materials were more widely distributed than were Net '95 materials.

Evaluation of Resource Materials

Left, Pastor's Manual; Right, Net News

▨	Grade A
▧	Grade B
☐	Grade C
▩	Grade D
■	Grade F
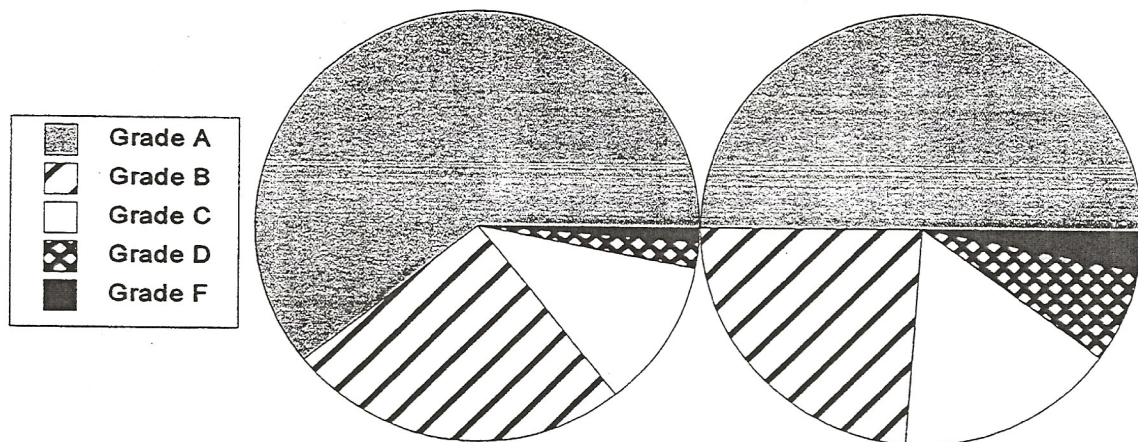
Two out of three participating pastors give an A "grade" to the Net '96 Pastor's Manual. Another 25% give it a B. Virtually no one assigns the manual with a D or F "grade."

Three out of four pastors (74%) rate the *Net News* periodical as "very helpful." Only one in ten say that *Net News* is "not helpful."

Both of the Net '96 resources received a positive evaluation, although clearly some pastors are less enthusiastic about *Net News*. Pastors who participated in Net '95 as well as Net '96 are more likely to give a response to both the manual and the newsletter.

Pastors assigned to large churches and those in ethnic minority congregations are more likely to evaluate the manual negatively. Hispanic pastors are more likely to give a negative response to *Net News*, likely because it is published only in English.

What Satellite Equipment was Used?

In Net '96	In Net '95	
70%	70%	Adventist Communication Network downlink package
17%	10%	Downlink package purchased somewhere else
2%	4%	Downlink package that was donated
1%	1%	Rented facilities with a downlink
6%	13%	Did not have a satellite downlink
5%	2%	Other arrangements

Nearly three quarters of the Net '96 downlink sites used the Adventist Communication Network (ACN) package supplied by Adventist Media Services. One in six purchased equipment from some other supplier. One in ten did not have a satellite dish and used videotape or some other means.

Small congregations, as well as Asian and Hispanic churches, are more likely to use alternative equipment or to find some way to participate in Net '96 without obtaining a satellite dish. Pastors under 32 years of age also report their churches are less likely to install the ACN downlink package.

Congregations that function in a language other than English would be less likely to see the value of purchasing a downlink due to the fact that almost all of the satellite events other than Net '96 are provided only in English. The small congregations often served by young pastors may be less able to come up with the $3,000 necessary to purchase a satellite dish and receiver.

A comparison of these data with the data resulting from the same question asked in the Net '95 follow-up survey reveals only one significant change. The percentage of churches purchasing satellite equipment from suppliers other than ACN nearly doubled. This trend creates significant functional problems.

Because alternative units are not automated, it is more difficult for ACN to serve these churches efficiently. The denomination is forced to incur additional expense to get satellite channel information to these non-automated sites.

The ACN "help desk" does not have technical information about the alternative units, nor do the personnel have the opportunity to develop expertise with the units. Consequently when individuals from churches that own these non-standard units call the 800 number, they must be told that they cannot be helped with technical problems. This creates frustration on the part of pastors and church members, and decreases the effectiveness of the system.

Use of Technical Support Hotline

Pastors who called the hotline

Pastors who did not
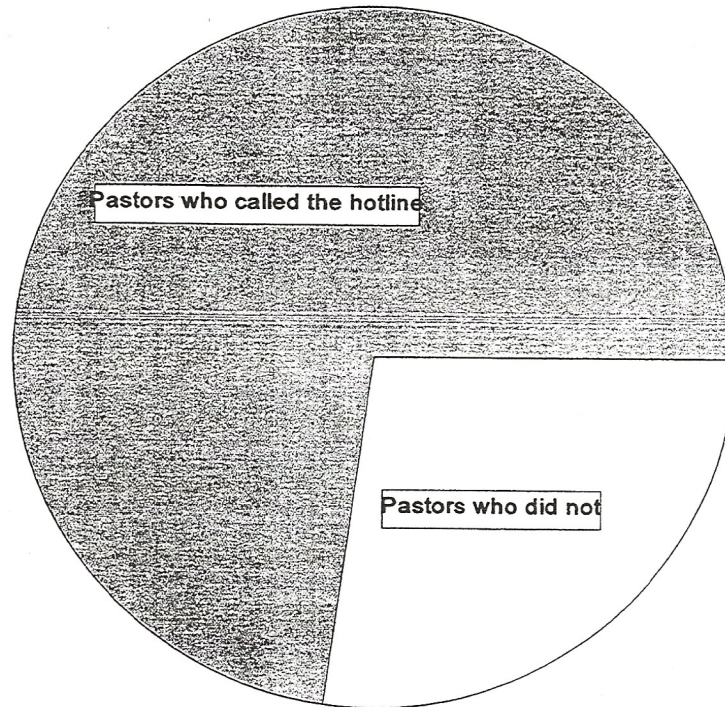
Three out of four participating pastors (73%) dialed the ACN "help desk" staffed by Doug Janssen and a team of volunteers to assist in solving technical problems. This has continued to be an essential element in satellite-linked events.

Pastors over 52 years of age are less likely to use the hotline. Churches that are new to the process and did not participate in Net '95 are also somewhat less likely to use this service.

Evaluation of Help Desk

Pie chart with segments labeled: Very helpful, Not helpful, Less helpful, Neutral attitude, Helpful
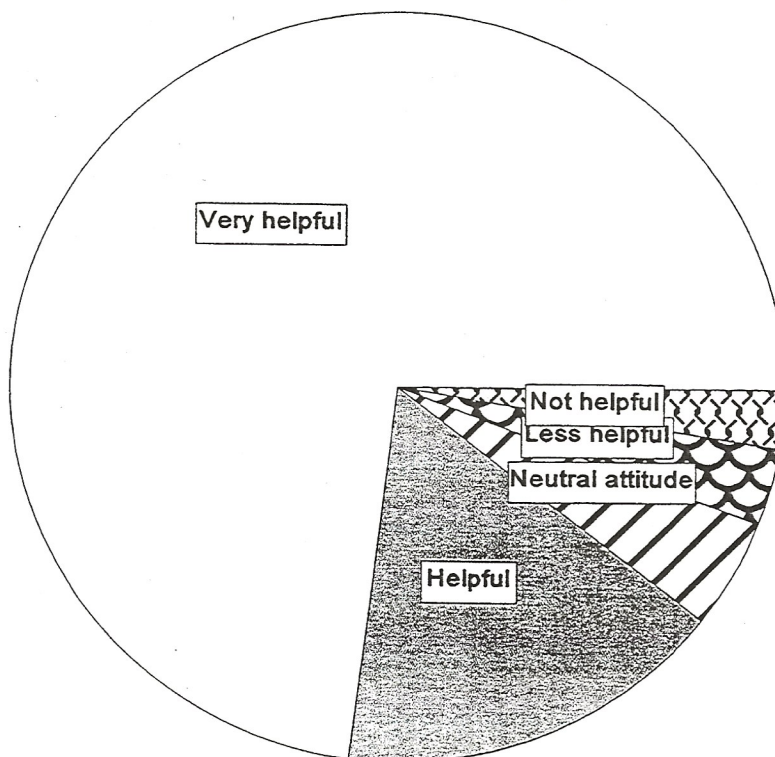
Again, as in Net '95, the telephone "help desk" receives high ratings from the pastors who made use of it. Three out of four give it the highest rating possible on a five-point scale.

Pastors from larger congregations are more likely to be positive in their evaluation of the ACN technical support hotline. Pastors under 32 years of age are somewhat less likely to say that the "help desk" was able to solve the technical problems they faced. Perhaps the new generation of pastors is more demanding of this kind of support service.

Evaluation of Handbill

Legend:
- Grade A
- Grade B
- Grade C
- Grade D
- Grade F

Categories (y-axis):
- Content & graphics - Net '96
- Content & graphics - Net '95
- Direct mail service - Net "96
- Direct mail service - Net '95

X-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100
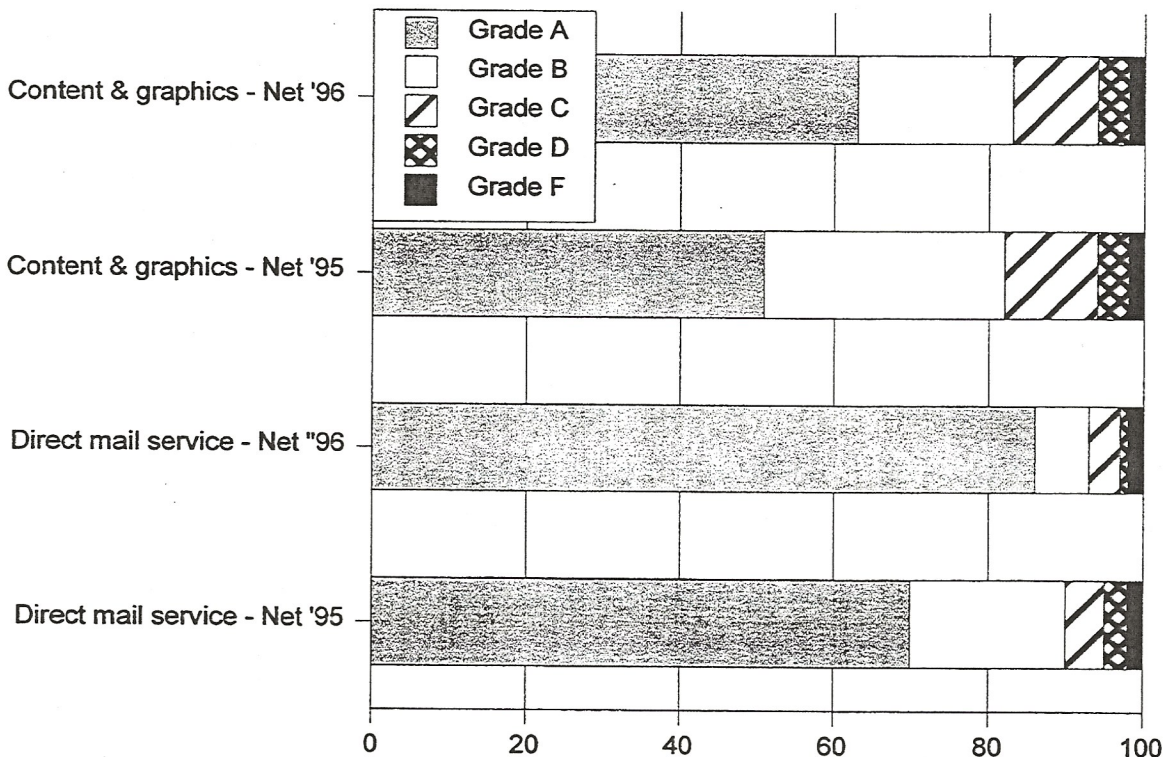
Seven out of eight participating churches (87%) ordered one of the official Net '96 "handbills" or direct-mail advertising provided by Seminars Unlimited. Asian, Hispanic and African American congregations, as well as churches with more than 300 members, were less likely to do so.

Asked to evaluate the handbill, two-thirds of the pastors who actually used it (63%) give it's contents and graphics an "A." Six out of seven (85%) give an "A" to the timeliness of the mailings. Pastors under 32 years of age and those with Hispanic congregations are less likely to give a positive evaluation.

A comparison of ratings from the Net '95 follow-up survey with these data reveals a significant improvement. Overall, participating pastors gave the handbills very positive ratings during Net '95, but these ratings went up in Net '96.

Evaluation of Resource Centers

Number of respondents who ordered from

Legend:
- Grade A
- Grade B
- Grade C
- Grade D
- Grade F

(Bar chart showing: Seminars Unlimited, HART Research Center, AdventSource)
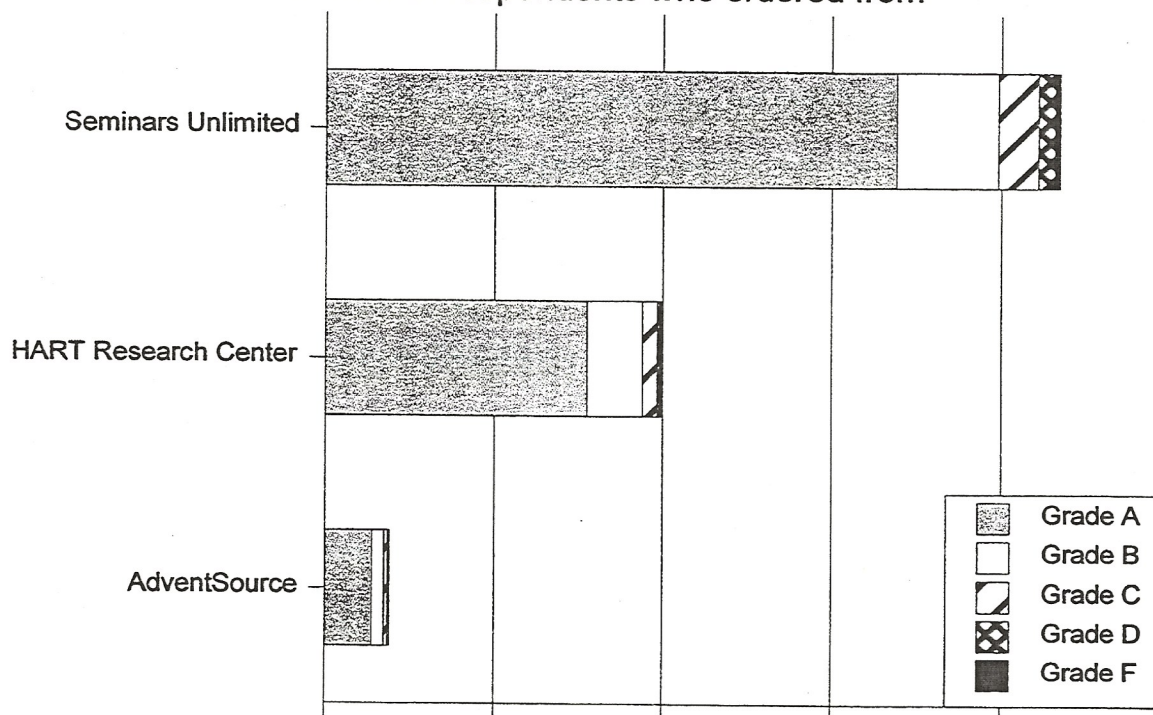
Almost all of the participating pastors (87%) ordered materials from Seminars Unlimited, the primary resource center for Net '96. Smaller numbers also ordered materials from HART Research Center and AdventSource, the NAD church leadership materials distribution center.

Three out of four of these pastors give an "A" to the services they received from each resource center. Only a handful report a negative impression. Middle-aged pastors and those serving Asian, Hispanic and African American congregations are somewhat less likely to give a positive evaluation.

Public Advertising for Meetings

Percent of local churches using ...

Chart legend: In Net '96, In Net '95

Categories (top to bottom): Direct Mail, Newspaper Ads, Radio Spots, Posters, TV Spots, Billboards, Bus Cards, Other

X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%
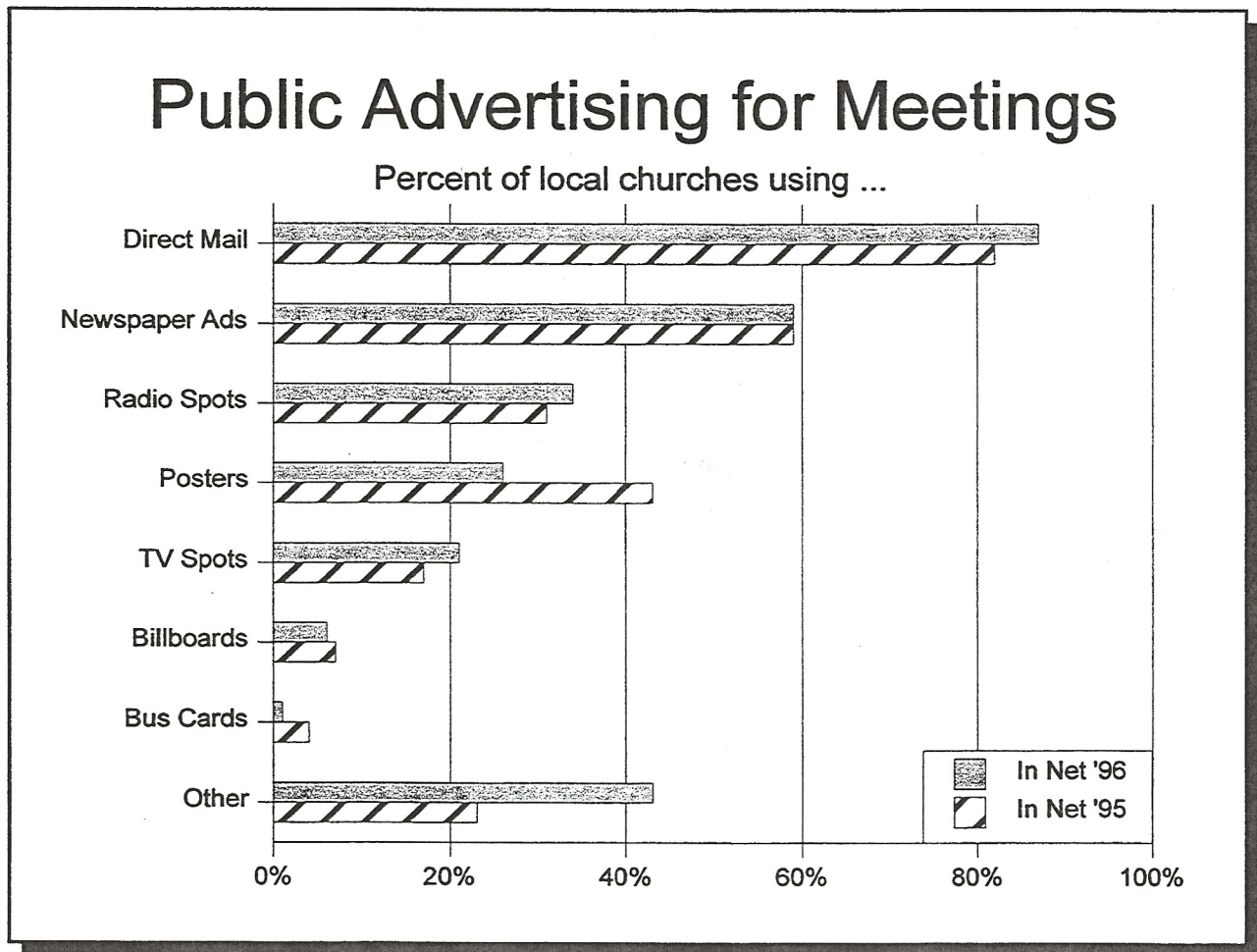
The majority of downlink sites participating in Net '96 used two or three methods of advertising for the "Beyond 2000" evangelistic meetings. Direct mail (87%) and display ads in newspapers (59%) are the two media most widely used. A third of the churches also used radio spots (34%), and a quarter made use of posters (26%).

Large churches with more than 300 members are more likely to make use of billboards. Congregations with more than 150 members are more likely to purchase spots on radio and television.

The most significant change in comparing the patterns in Net '96 with those in Net '95 is the tremendous increase in churches utilizing innovative advertising methods not in the standard list. The "other" percentage has nearly doubled. This clearly demonstrates a need for research to identify these new methods and gather information about their cost effectiveness.

Pre-Evangelism Activities

Percent of pastors who implemented ...

Bar chart comparing During Net '96 and During Net '95 across activities: Discover Bible School, Interest list, Visitation program, Cooking school, Prayer conference, Small groups, Prophecy seminar, Friendship Evangelism class, Witnessing seminar, Church Growth seminar, Other activities. X-axis: 0% to 70%.
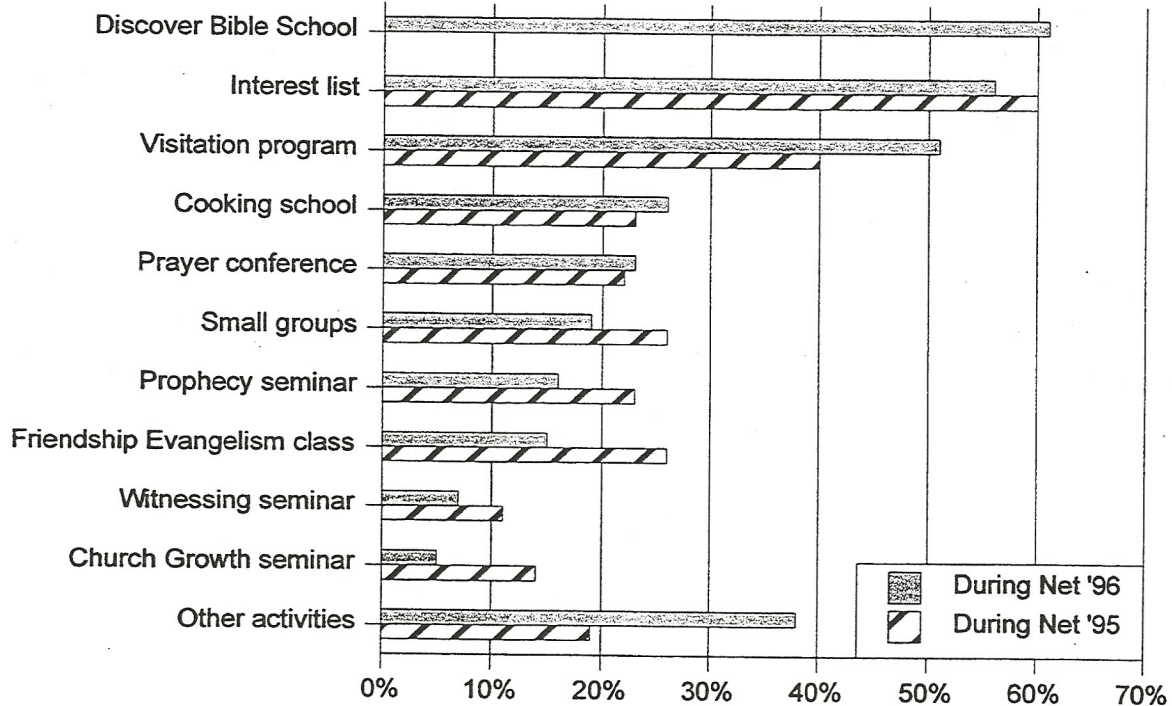
The Discover Bible School is a new method introduced for the first time during the Net '96 evangelism initiative. In collaboration with the Voice of Prophecy local churches could conduct their own Bible correspondence school. Nearly two-thirds of the participating churches (61%) conducted a Discover Bible School. Churches with more than 150 members were more likely to do so.

Half of the pastors set up an interest list (56%) and organized visits to the prospects on the list (51%). One in four (26%) sponsored a cooking school and almost as many (23%) participated in the satellite-linked prayer conference.

There appears to be a decline in the use of relational approaches to evangelism. Compared to Net '95, fewer churches fostered small group outreach and conducted classes in Friendship Evangelism or provided other kinds of training for personal evangelism. This change in methods may be related to the problem previously noted in getting more of the prospective members to actually make a decision for baptism.

Evaluation of Satellite Events

Percent of pastors rating each event ..

Legend:
- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neutral
- Of little help
- Not helpful

Categories (y-axis): Prophecy seminar, Cooking school, Prayer conference

X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%
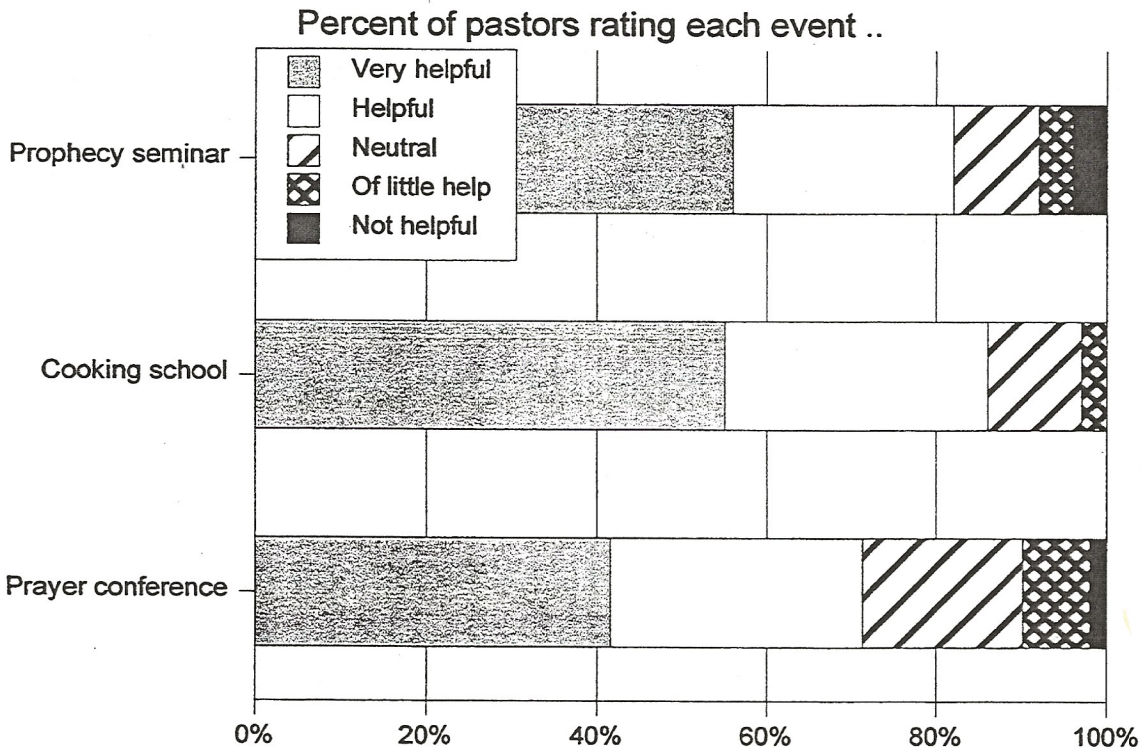
Only one in four of the downlink sites participated in the three pre-evangelism activities provided by satellite linkage. At the same time, the vast majority of the pastors of these churches give the events high marks and want to see them continue.

About one pastor in ten gave a negative evaluation to the prayer conference and the prophecy seminar. Almost none of them gave a negative evaluation to the cooking school, which is the most popular pre-evangelism event.

Attendance at Evangelistic Meetings

Left, opening night; Right, non-member

As expected

Better than expected

Less than expected

As expected

Better than expected

Less than expected
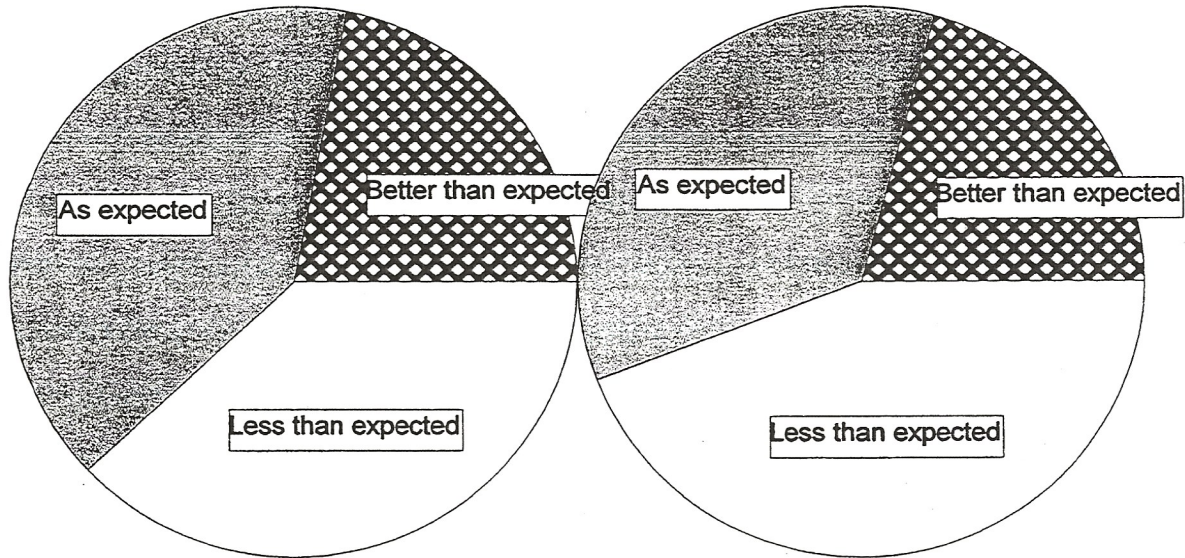
Two out of three participating pastors report that the total attendance on the opening night of "Beyond 2000" was what they expected or better than they expected. Only half had the same reaction to the number present who were not members of the Adventist Church.

Pastors from large congregations and ethnic minority churches are more likely to say that attendance was right at or greater than their level of expectation. The oldest pastors (those over 65) are somewhat more likely to have been disappointed.

Evaluation of Beyond 2000

Percent of pastors responding ...

Legend:
- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Poor
- Did not use

Categories (y-axis):
- Printed sermons
- Preaching
- Music
- Appeals
- Other features

X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%
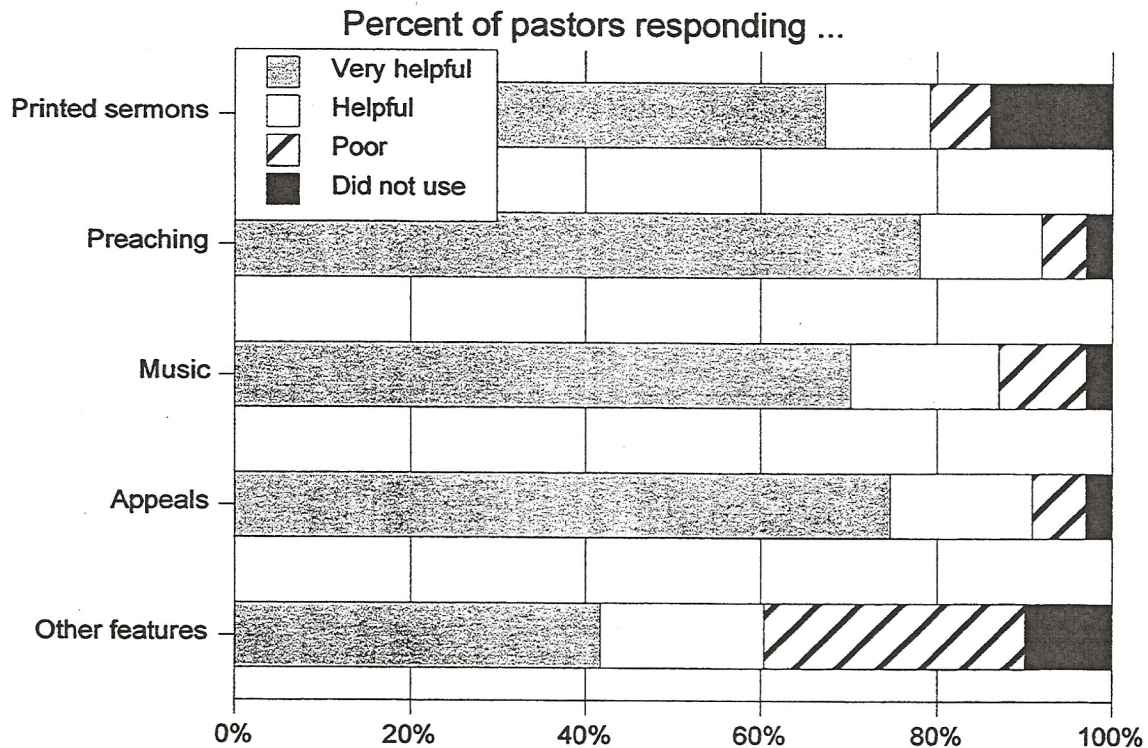
Nearly three out of four participating pastors give high ratings to every aspect of the "Beyond 2000" evangelistic meetings. The only exception is the preliminary features, which almost half of the respondents told our interviewers were "too long" and "unnecessary."

Pastors from large churches are most likely to report negative ratings of all aspects of the meetings. Pastors under 32 years of age are somewhat more likely to give a negative rating to the music.

In general, the evaluations of the evangelistic meetings uplinked during the Net '96 project were significantly more enthusiastic than those presented during Net '95. NAD had a large number of "satisfied customers" in the first initiative, and it expanded the level of satisfaction in the latest project!

Response to Appeals for Decision

Percent of pastors reporting ...

As expected

Better than expected

Less than expected
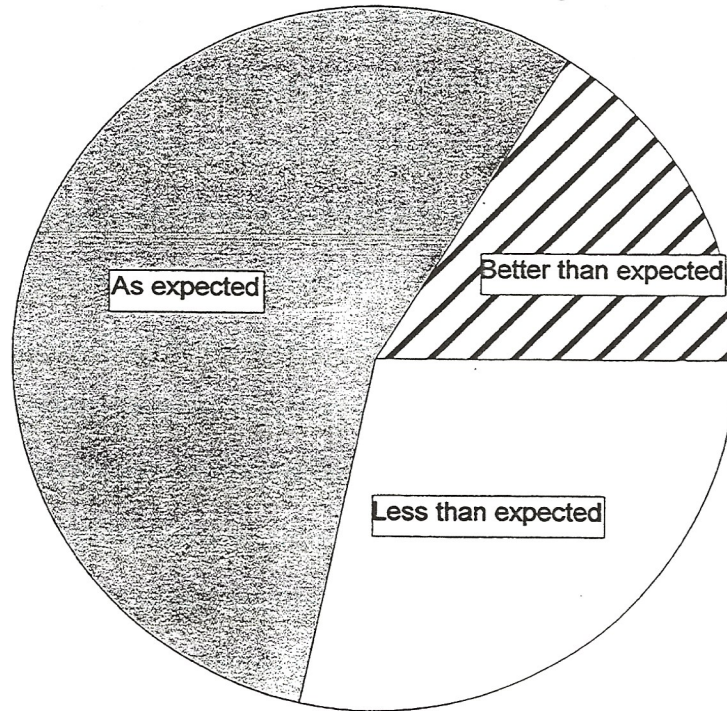
Three out of four pastors (72%) report that the response to Mark Finley's appeals among the people at their downlink site met or exceeded their expectations. Pastors of African American, Asian and Hispanic congregations are even more likely to say the response was better than they expected.

At the same time, the overall percentage of pastors who report that the response among their people was better than they expected is about half the portion that gave the same report in the Net '95 follow-up survey. This may be the result of widely-shared positive feelings about the first satellite evangelism initiative which has helped to create much higher expectations in the present and future.

Do Pre-Evangelism Events Help Produce Baptisms?

Cyril Miller, NAD vice president for evangelism and global mission, asked specifically that this study focus on the value of pre-evangelism events such as the cooking school up-linked about a month prior to the opening night of the "Beyond 2000" evangelistic crusade. This question was examined with several questions during the survey interviews.

The cooking school was the most popular of the three pre-evangelism events provided during Net '96. One in four churches (26%) participated, while 23% joined in the prayer conference and only 16% utilized the pre-crusade prophecy seminar.

The cooking school had more churches joining-in during Net '96 than participated in Net '95. Particular testimony to its value is the fact that churches who participated in Net '95 were more likely to sponsor the cooking school during Net '96.

Cooking School Attendance and Baptisms

Do the non-members who attend essentially non-religious pre-evangelism events later come to the crusade? And, do they make decisions for baptism?

A total of 3,388 non-members attended the cooking school in the churches that sponsored it. Of these people, a total of 649 have joined the church through baptism or Profession of Faith. That is one in five or 19.2% of the total group.

A total of 51,306 non-members attended the "Beyond 2000" evangelistic meetings, and 9,772 of these joined the church. That is 19.0% or slightly less than the rate among those who attended the cooking school and other pre-evangelism events.

It is clear that pre-evangelism events, including those focused on health or family-life needs instead of religious topics, actually enhance the overall impact of an evangelism strategy.

What About the Future?

Percent of pastors who recommend ...
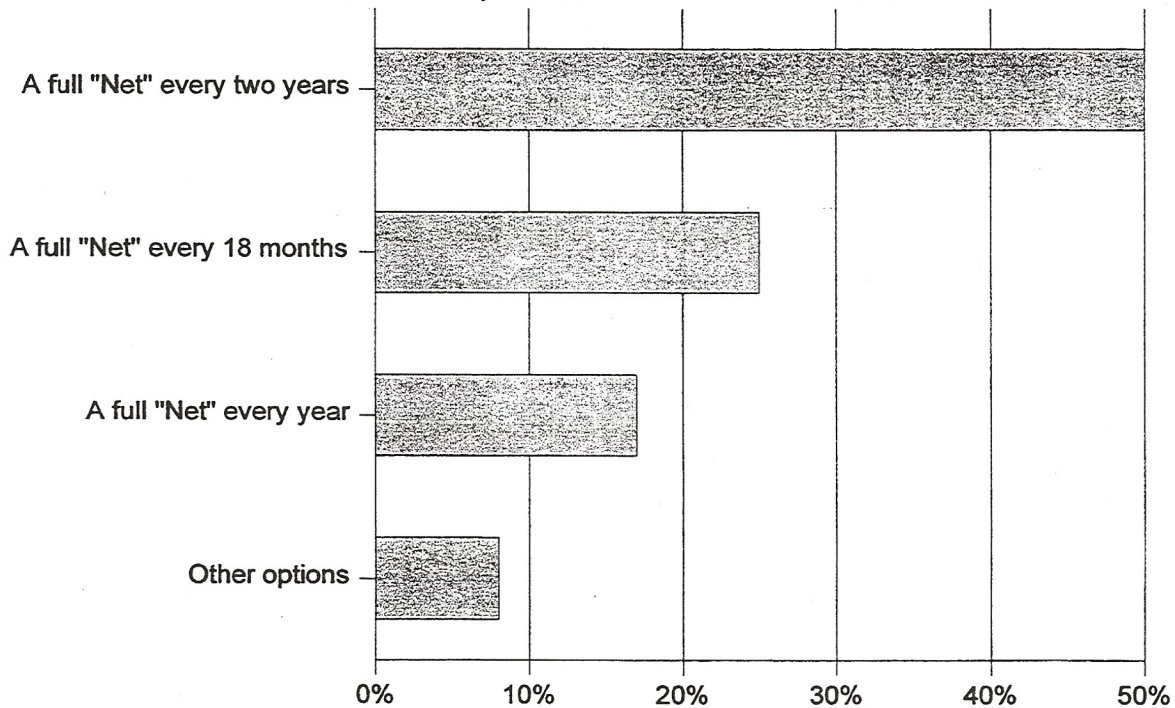
Most of the participating pastors do not favor an annual NAD evangelism initiative of the scope of Net '96. Considering the degree to which a few have urged this option, this response may be somewhat surprising.

Half of the pastors recommend a full "Net __" every two years, with a short, evangelistic "reaping" weekend event or a specialized seminar approach during the alternating years. In part this is an expression of interest

in some innovative approaches to public evangelism while retaining the strength of the proven campaign approach.

One in four pastors prefers the schedule that the NAD has followed in the first three projects – Net '95, Net '96 and Net '98; a full campaign approximately every 18 months. The irregular nature of the schedule may be unnerving to some who prefer a very orderly routine, but it also helps to make each event new and exciting.

At the close of each interview, respondents were asked, "What would you recommend to the planning committee to do differently in Net '98?" This question yields hundreds of suggestions and comments regarding the speaker, staff, music, materials, technology, and other aspects of the program.

Table 1
Suggestions regarding Net '98 Speaker

Want a different speaker, younger, with a different perspective	35
C. D. Brooks, Walter Pearson or other African-American speaker	7
Use a Hispanic or other ethnic speaker, not a translator	6
Need an experienced evangelist	3
Prefer Mark Finley as speaker again	2
Don't use Dwight Nelson	1

Clearly, the time has come to bring a new evangelist into the key role in future satellite evangelism. By the time this survey was conducted, the official announcement had already been made that Dwight Nelson is the evangelist for Net '98. Significantly, only one respondent out of 500 registered a negative reaction. Few denominational decisions and plans have such a low negative response!

A high number of the pastors from the relatively few multicultural and ethnic minority congregations involved would like to see an African-American, Hispanic or other minority evangelist for a future satellite evangelism event. Net '95 emerged from a proposal from the Anglo Evangelism Task Force at the NAD Think Tank on Evangelism, but the concept has now been widely accepted across all ethnic segments of the church.

Table 2
Suggestions regarding Staff for Net '98

Need more coordination and support staff to give input, handle details	6
Involve young adults in the planning & staff	2
Telephone staff to talk with the best interests in each church	1
Need a Canadian coordinator	1
Need more coordination with African-American leaders	1
Participants had too much make-up and nail polish on	1

As well as a new evangelist, several respondents also see a need for a new and expanded evangelistic team for Net '98. It is likely that planners have underestimated the amount of support needed for this new evangelistic "software." More coordinators are needed to answer questions and provide coaching for local leaders over the telephone, as well as try innovations such as "visiting" key interests by telephone.

Table 3
Suggestions regarding Music during Net '98

Too much music	20
More music	1
More contemporary music geared for younger audiences	6
Do not play contemporary music such as Wedgewood, Heritage Singers	6
Stay with conservative music	4
More variety in the music & musicians	3
Too much "original" music, not enough "standard" selections	2
Music was good	2
Music started out good then deteriorated to "older generation"	1
More music in non-English languages	4
Have a theme song	1
Have extra music at end	1

The suggestions regarding music clearly demonstrate that there is no consensus on this topic. No matter what choices are made, significant numbers of church members will be unhappy with the music.

The largest number of unsolicited responses focused on a widely-felt need to shorten and simplify each evening's program, as well as reduce the number of meetings in the series. (See Table 4.) More than half of the pastors want changes of this nature to be made in the Net '98 campaign.

Significant numbers also requested that Net '98 focus more on sharing a practical, Christ-centered gospel presentation designed for younger adults, unchurched people and the educated, professional segment of the population. More than 100 churches that participated in Net '95 did not participate in Net '96 and unless Net '98 has a non-traditional approach, it is likely that this dropout rate will continue. At the same time, there are respondents who want to stick closely to a more conventional approach.

A new design and different approach for the handbills used in direct mail advertising for Net '98 was suggested by a significant number of the pastors. (See Table 5.) Several also asked for handout materials to use during the meetings that are less costly and allow them to purchase a master and then photocopy the supply they need locally.

Table 4
Suggestions regarding Overall Program in Net '98

Shorten, eliminate many of the preliminaries (except Q&A session) 159

Shorten the sermon, hold program to about one hour 74

Fewer meetings per week; fewer weeks in series 49

Shift the focus from prophecy to relationship with Christ, direct gospel emphasis
for the unchurched; don't assume people go to church and know their Bible 24

Focus on family-life topics (parenting, drugs, violence, teens); relate our message
to the needs of the contemporary people 15

Stick to prophecy rather than gospel, "felt needs" 2

More interactive programing: Bible study, not just preaching; more live Q & A or "talk
show" as part of each meeting; all the time zones need to be able to call in live
questions to a panel 17

Design program to appeal to a younger crowd & involve younger people 12

Target meetings to reach professional, educated people 2

Don't target younger adults 2

Change meetings to Spring, not Fall; weather, elections, Ingathering conflict 10

Prefer meetings in the Fall 1

More health, preventive medicine presentations 6

Health presentations were poor; eliminate them 2

Advertise more; saturate the media with high end marketing; need more conference
participation, don't put responsibility on local church 4

Need to become more confrontational in our advertising & presentation 1

Absolute clarity & truth in the advertising 1

Too much pressure in the appeals--tone them down 4

More time for the appeals 1

Research sermon material better; pay more attention to details (there were several
discrepancies, errors); use newer ideas on Revelation 4

Have a contemporary, innovative flavor 4

Keep it geared to traditional values, music, etc. 1

Table 5
Suggestions regarding Materials in Net '98

Re-design handbills; use actual photos & modern graphics not "stock" or outdated photos; Net '96 handbills lacked media sophistication and were not representative of the actual meetings; eliminate the beasts--it gives a "cult" identity; use a less sensational approach; focus on the love of Christ 25
Publish another brochure with complete list of sermon titles & dates 2
Handbills need to clearly identify the Adventist Church 2

Lower prices, reduce the minimum order, and provide less expensive options (such as the "Quik Quiz" outlines used in Net '95) for handbills, lessons to reduce costs for smaller churches 10
Required materials list is too long and expensive for small churches 2
Don't use copyrighted material so churches can make local copies 2
Need greater sensitivity to cost 1
Invoice the churches later so churches order before they raise the funds 1
Make equipment easier to afford with subsidies for smaller churches 1
Videos should cost the same as those offered at the ABC 1

Make supplies available sooner and mail materials earlier 7

Better organization of materials; specify order (of materials) before meetings 4
Number material rather than by sermon titles 2
Keep simpler with less options 2
Need adhesive labels printed with topics for videos 1

Hart should provide better service; not be so money-oriented, offer less costly alternatives 4

Re-write Discovery Bible School lessons; they are too long and assume too much Bible knowledge on the part of the user 3

Print bilingual handbills, advertising & books; more cultural diversity 3

Seminars Unlimited should accept charge cards, be prepared for the volume and not "change the rules" regarding credit cards midway through the project 3

Communicate more about meeting and follow-up materials 3
Eliminate some mailings to pastors; condense them 2

Do away with attendance cards 1
Make response card small so church can copy it inexpensively 1
Make response card more specific; "I wish to join the SDA church" 1

Table 6
Suggestions regarding Satellite Technology in Net '98

Don't use 3ABN; it was uncooperative, unprofessional; if 3ABN wants to broadcast
Net '98 meetings, do it after the series so members do not stay home 5
Use 3ABN to broadcast the ACN events and save money 2

Up-link Net '98 from an auditorium, not a church; show more people attending 4
Berrien Springs doesn't have much of a non-member audience to draw from 2

Provide an international 800-type number for Europe, etc. 3

Communicate better regarding Sabbath services, elements in each event so that
local sites can tailor their use of up-link transmissions 2
Need "countdown" to the up-link transmission to better utilize waiting time 1
Need practical, precise list of buttons and materials necessary 1

Make a satellite workshop available; satellite instructions are too confusing 2
Test all of the media downlink equipment more thoroughly--not working properly 2
Church should not have to pay when there are downlink problems 1

ACN needs to realize they are customer service & leave "attitude" elsewhere 1
ACN needs live people answering hotline, not automated menu 1
ACN hotline service should be freely available to all, regardless of where their
equipment was purchased 1
ACN should launch 24-hour programming 1
Let each church choose whether or not they want automated programming 1
Sell equipment to every church by the year 2000 1
Provide each church with a list of all the churches participating 1

Relatively few of the suggestions in response to the open-ended question focused on the satellite technology used in the evangelism initiative. (See Table 6.) Many of the comments made portray a division of opinion about the role of the Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) in Net '98 and other, future evangelistic projects of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More than twice as many of the pastors interviewed want nothing to do with 3ABN in the future. Several mentioned the fact that 3ABN transmitted a fund raising appeal just prior to the opening of the first night's meeting during Net '96, while others mentioned other problems. The two pastors who suggested that 3ABN should be involved both were of the opinion that it would save the church money.

Specific suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the pastors who will be local partners during Net '98 focused on the need for clearer communication and more opportunities for coordination sessions between the pastors and the Net '98 staff. (See Table 7.) There is also an interest in starting the training events in preparation for Net '98 earlier than the schedule began during Net '96, and for more clearly-defined ways for the local pastor to be involved in the inter-active aspects of the uplinks such as the question and answer time, etc.

Table 7
Suggestions regarding Role of Pastors in Net '98

Pastors need better communication to know what to expect; what materials to have on hand and when to use them 8
Continue the pastors' conferences via satellite; they are very helpful; should be scheduled weekly during and prior to crusade 3
Some of what went on in the pastors' conference was not helpful 2

Begin the training events earlier 6
Need training for lay volunteers in visitation and small group ministries 5
Need training videos 5

Pastor's Manual needs to be better organized with graphics, index tabs, etc.; a planning calendar 6
Keep It simple; manual was too complicated; Seminars Unlimited order forms were confusing; too many steps and details 4

Better prepare and involve pastors in Q&A time and asking for decisions 6
Allow pastors time for Bible studies as was done in Net '95) 1
Be careful about referring to local participation elements on screen if its optional 1

Enlist the pastors and local elders in planning sessions for each presentation 1

Table 8
General Comments

Don't change anything 10
Wish to express deep appreciation to Mark Finley 3
Why did $2,000 of advertising result in only one interested person? 1
We had better results from Net '96 than two previous evangelistic series 1
This congregation does not want to participate again 1
Follow the advice given in Andy Nash's Review article 1

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