Office of Information and Research
Report 24

1997-98
Needs Assessment

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

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Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America provides an array of resource materials and services designed to support front-line, contact ministry in local congregations and communities. A yearly Needs Assessment was mandated by the 1993 Year-end Meeting of the North American Division (NAD) Committee to ensure that the felt needs of ministry leaders in the local church are utilized in determining which products and services to provide.

This study is designed to provide information for the Church Resources Consortium (CRC) and the departments, ministries, resource centers, publishers and service agencies that are members of the consortium. The information is intended to provide the basis for informed and intelligent decisions in the commissioning, development and marketing of resource materials and services.

Focus group research was conducted at five locations throughout North America during the summer of 1997. In each group 10 to 12 local church lay leaders and pastors were interviewed for about two hours. Each was asked to identify the five greatest needs in the local church for which resource materials or services should be provided by the denomination. This resulted in the identification of 19 specific areas of need which were reviewed by the CRC board in the fall of 1997.

The CRC board voted to request that NAD department directors be permitted to add needs to the list. The department directors were given several weeks to confer with advisory committees and consider the list of needs resulting from the focus group research. As a result, one additional item was added.

The total set of 20 needs, with a one or two-sentence description of each, were placed on a questionnaire which was circulated to all 58 of the local conferences in the NAD. The secretary of each local conference was asked to circulate the questionnaire at a meeting of the conference executive committee, collect the responses anonymously and return them to the NAD Office of Information and Research. (A copy of the letter and instrument are included in the appendix.)

Forty-six of the 58 conferences participated, with no more than two not responding in any union. A total of 486 questionnaires were returned and form the basis for the data presented in this report.

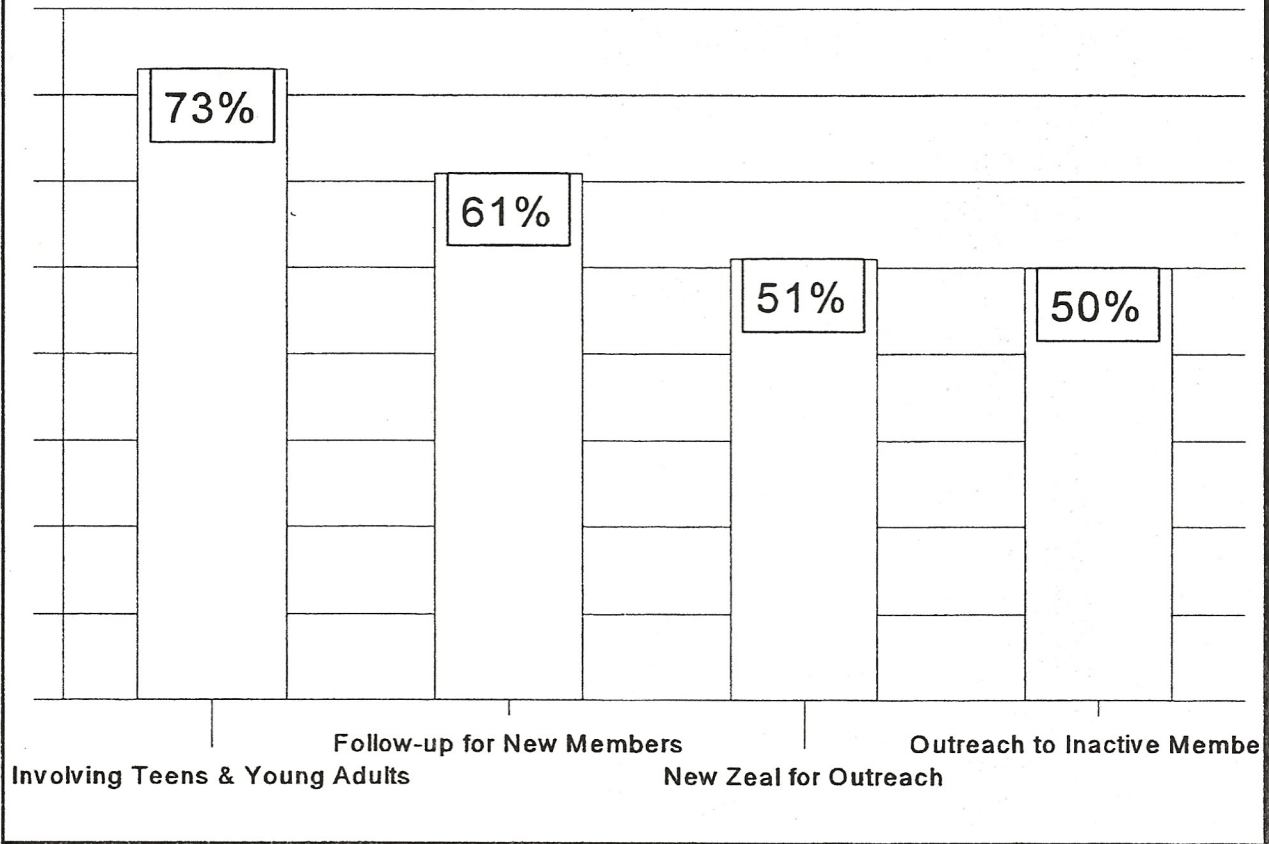In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error. That is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had completed a questionnaire. The allowance for sampling error that must be taken into consideration in this study is four percentage points (plus or minus) at the 95th percentile of reliability.

I want to express my appreciation to Dan Savino and his team for conducting the focus group research. I also want to thank Shirley Chilson for the care and time she invested in circulating the questionnaire to the local conferences and checking time and time again to make sure that the survey was conducted in as many conference committees as possible. A particular word of thanks is due those conference secretary's who conducted the survey by mail due to a committee meeting schedule that did not allow for timely response.

It is my hope that this report will assist the CRC and its member organizations to continue to build an effective, market-driven and mission-focused support system for local ministries. Every technique has been used to make sure that this is an authentic portrayal of the voices of local leaders and conference decision-makers, lay and clergy.

Monte Sahlin
April 1998

Priority Needs of Total Sample
Items with a Majority Response

Involving Teens & Young Adults	Follow-up for New Members	New Zeal for Outreach	Outreach to Inactive Members
73%	61%	51%	50%

Nearly three out of four respondents (73%) rank "involving teens and young adults" as the most pressing need in the local churches across North America. "We need to find ways to keep our young people interested. We need to explore what we can do to help youth recognize the relevance of the church and its mission in today's world."
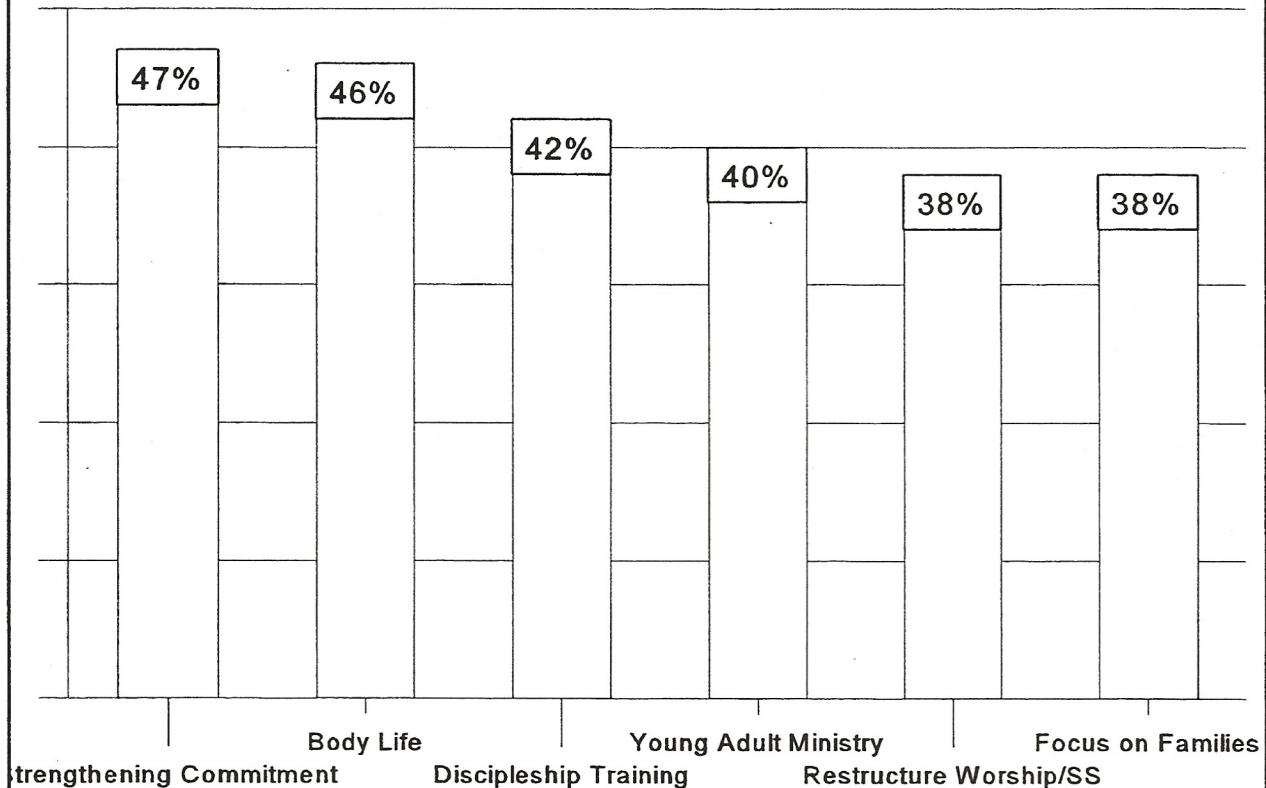
Three out of five local leaders (61%) rank a "follow-up program for new members" as the second most important need in NAD congregations. "We need a program that allows for the continued nurture and training of a person once he or she joins the church." This is not surprising in the wake of record accessions during the Net '95 and Net '96 initiatives.

A majority of respondents also rank as high priority developing "new zeal for outreach" among church members and "outreach to inactive and former members." The second item has consistently ranked high in every needs assessment conducted in the NAD, and continues to be one of the most important priorities of church members.

Priority Needs of Total Sample

Items of Second Rank

47%	46%	42%	40%	38%	38%

Strengthening Commitment | Body Life | Discipleship Training | Young Adult Ministry | Restructure Worship/SS | Focus on Families

Less than half, but about 40% of the respondents rank six items as important priorities. These may not be as important as the top four items, but represent the needs of large numbers of local situations.

Strengthen Commitment

Nearly half of the conference committee members (47%) see a need to "strengthen commitment to the church" across the board. "Whether we are talking about attendance, giving or volunteer leadership responsibilities, many church members are not participating," observed the focus groups. "We need to do a better job of sharing local church needs and member responsibilities."

Body Life

Almost an equal number of local leaders (46%) see a need to strengthen "body life" in the congregations in their field. "Church members need to interact with each other more. We need to be more genuine with each other, have more fellowship, and be of greater encouragement to one another."

Training in Discipleship

"Discipleship Training" is a real need in the view of two out of five respondents (42%). This is seen by the focus groups as a way of addressing the problems with church standards, Adventist lifestyle and involvement in the ministries of the church. "We need a mentoring program in the Christian life that is easily understood and intentional. Members need to invest time personally training other members in outreach and lifestyle." This priority is also consistent with the growing interest among North Americans in spirituality as opposed to organized religion.

Young Adult Ministry

Two out of five conference committee members (40%) see a need to develop a strong young adult ministry within the array of Adventist programs. "There needs to be more evangelism targeted to young adults," said the focus groups. "We need to address their concerns and, where possible, make changes that will help make the church relevant to their needs."

Restructure Sabbath Morning

Almost as many respondents (38%) see a need to "restructure the traditional worship and Sabbath School" in local churches. "Attention needs to be given to what we do on Sabbath morning. In many churches there has been little change in decades. This issue needs to be studied to see if optional approaches might help broaden the appeal of the local church to its community."

More Focus on Families

There is the same level of support (38%) among local conference committee members for "more focus on families." The group interviews revealed that "a lot of resource material currently exists to help families, but we need more help. Given the diversity of family types represented in today's society, we need to be broader in our approach to ministry to family-life needs." This may reflect that fact that many of the published family ministry resource materials seem to assume that church-related households are middle class, "traditional" families.

Items related to family life, young adults and the need to restructure congregational life in the local church have consistently come to the surface in each of the Needs Assessments conducted by the NAD in recent years. There is much evidence in letters to the editors of denominational publications, anecdotes told by pastors and lay leaders, and the kinds of questions that NAD staff get when they attend camp meetings, church ministry conventions, etc., that we are not yet adequately addressing these issues.

It is possible that factors other than the lack of resource materials are involved. Resistance on the part of more traditional members, who may have inflated influence on local church boards, could be part of the problem. Perhaps pastors and lay leaders lack the skills necessary to use the available resources effectively or to introduce change.

Research is needed for a closer look at why resources are not being used to meet oft-expressed needs. The barriers must be identified and dealt with or the development of resources will prove to be a frustrating and wasteful exercise.

Priority Needs of the Total Sample
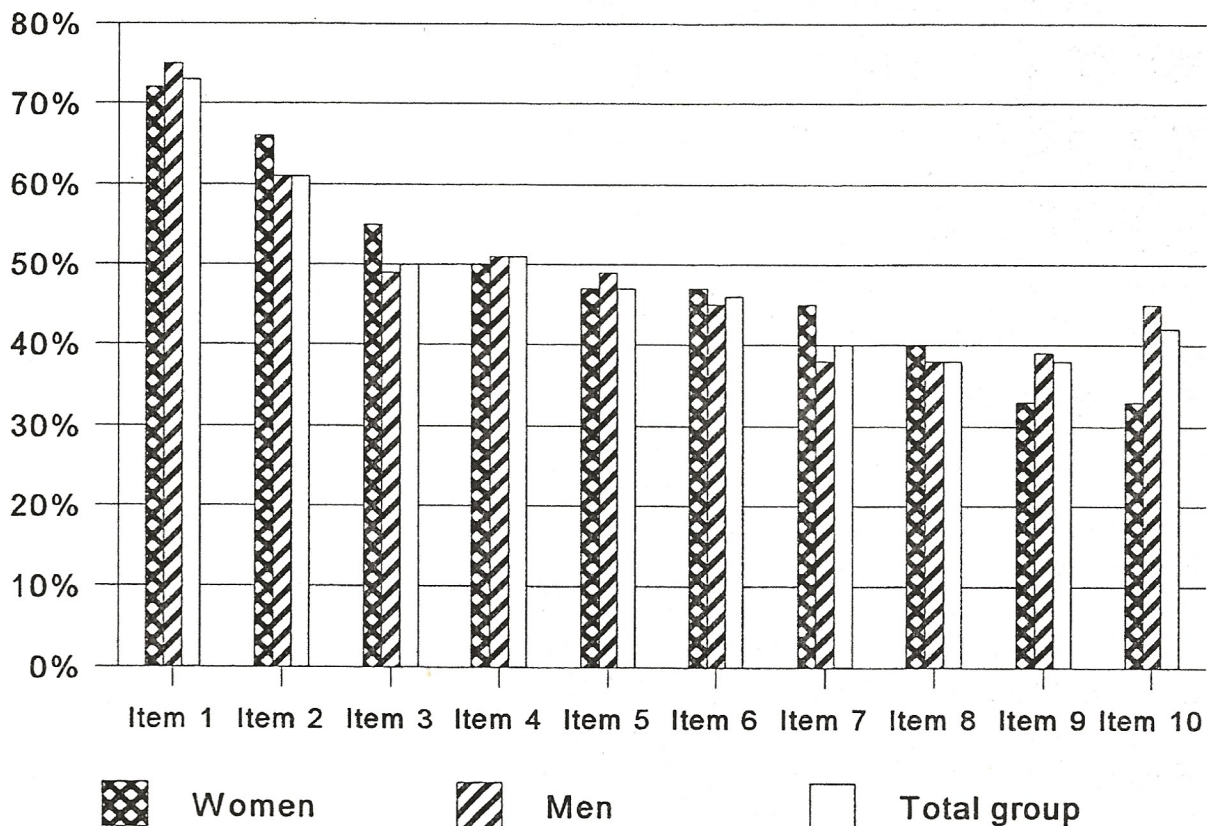## Lowest Ranked Items
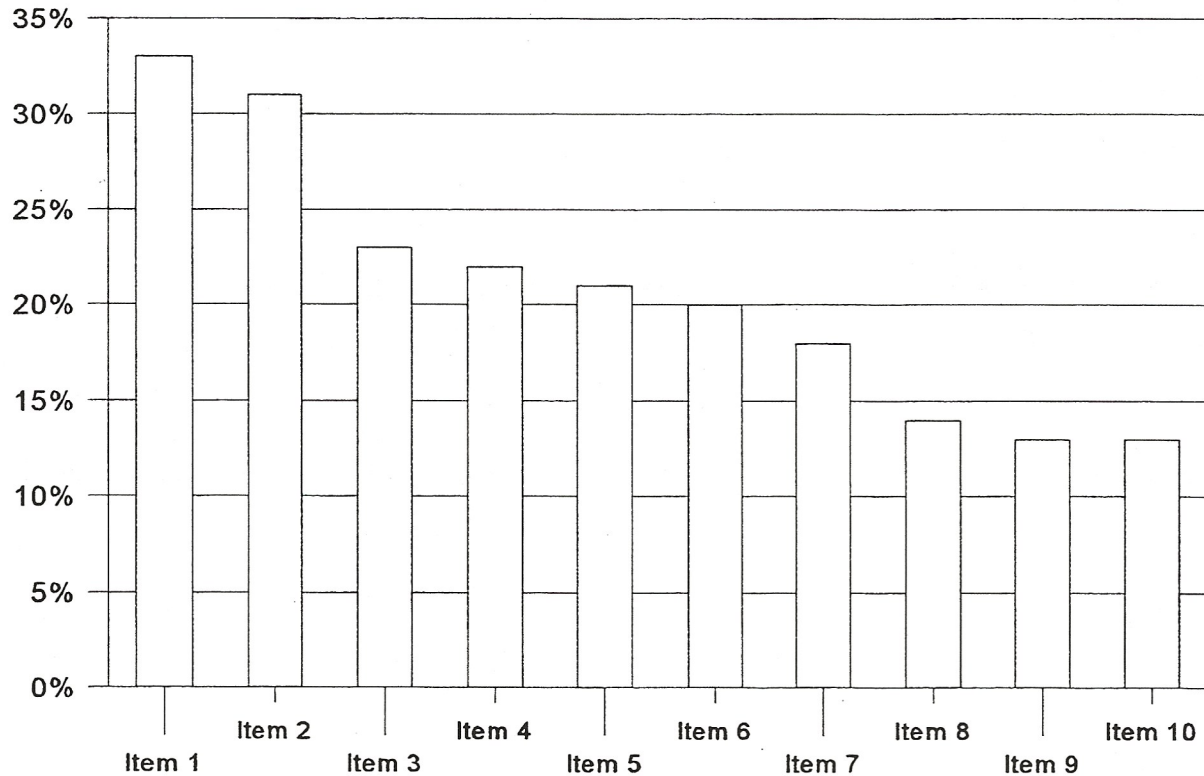
Ten of the 20 items included in the Needs Assessment questionnaire were rated as high priority needs by a third or fewer of the responding conference committee members. These needs rank as low priorities. In some cases they may be seen as specific sub-items of broader needs that rank as higher priorities. In some instances these are needs for which significant resources have been developed and published in response to previous Needs Assessments, and the fact that they now rank lower may be due to those new materials and services.

1. Marriage counseling (33%)
2. Attendance at prayer meeting or mid-week meeting (31%)
3. Church officer training (23%)
4. Support for members married to non-believing spouses (22%)
5. Hospitality ministry (21%)
6. Lack of reverence (20%)
7. Help for single parents (18%)
8. A men's ministry (14%)
9. Sabbath School teacher training (13%)
10. A crisis hotline for hurting members (13%)

Needs as Seen by Women

compared to men and the total sample

Bar chart showing percentages for Items 1–10 with three series: Women, Men, Total group. Y-axis ranges from 0% to 80%.

Legend: Women, Men, Total group

Do women serving on conference committees have a different set of priorities than the men? A total of 128 respondents (one in four) are women, and their top ten priority needs are compared in the graph above to the responses of the 340 men who make up the overwhelming majority of the committees and the total sample, which includes both men and women.

Three items get much stronger support from women than from men--a follow-up program for new members, outreach to former members, and young adult ministry. Two items rank lower with women—discipleship training and new zeal or outreach.

1. Involving teens & young adults (72%)
2. Follow-up for new members (66%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (55%)
4. New zeal for outreach (50%)
5. Strengthening commitment (47%)
6. Body life (47%)
7. Young adult ministry (45%)
8. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (40%)
9. More focus on families (33%)
10. Discipleship training (33%)

Needs as Seen by Generation X

Baby Bust generation compared to total sample

Legend: ▨ Generation X respondents   ☐ Total group
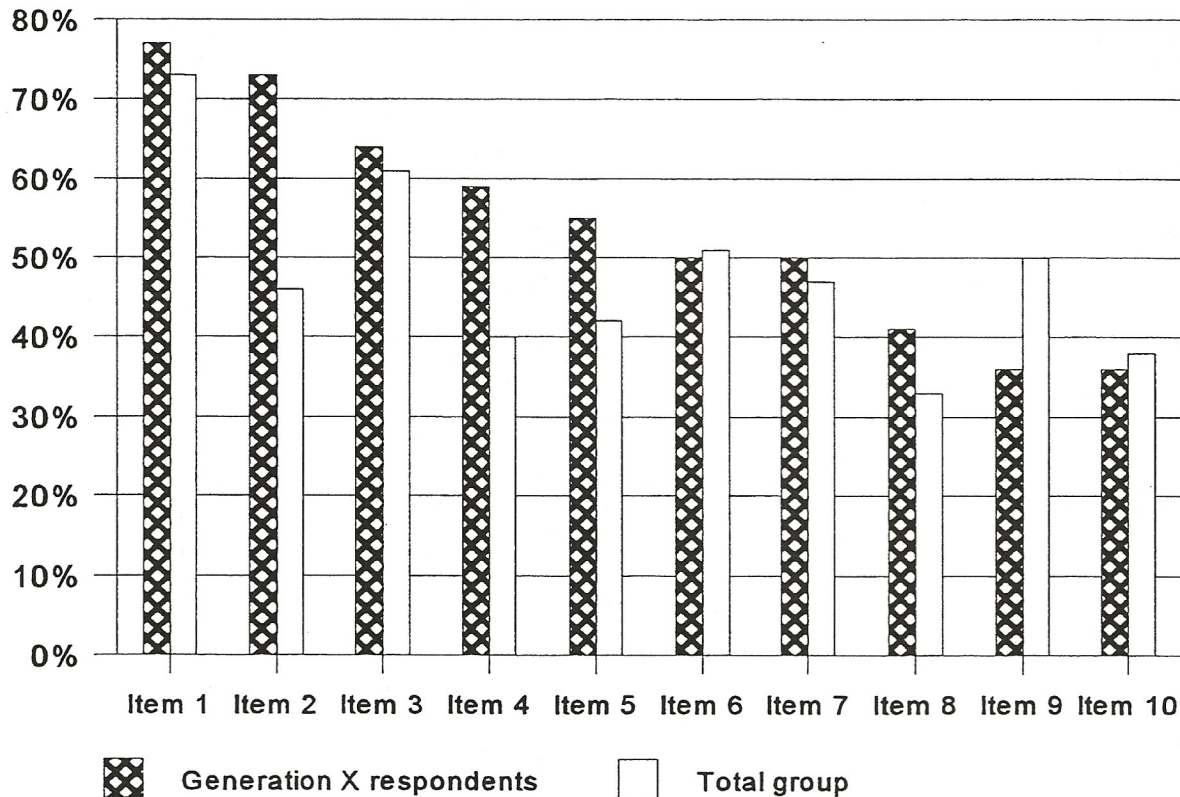
Only 5% of the respondents (22 individuals) were born since 1964 and are young adults in their 20s and early 30s, members of the Baby Bust generation or "Generation X." How do the priorities of this generation compare to the total sample?

Four needs rank higher priority to Generation X than in the total group—body life, young adult ministry, discipleship training, and marriage counseling. Five items rank lower for Generation X.

1. Involving teens & young adults (77%)
2. Body life (73%)
3. Follow-up for new members (64%)
4. Young adult ministry (59%)
5. Discipleship training (55%)
6. New zeal for outreach (50%)
7. Strengthening commitment (50%)
8. Marriage counseling (41%)
9. Outreach to inactive and former members (36%)
10. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (36%)

Needs as Seen by Baby Boomers

Baby Boom generation compared to total sample
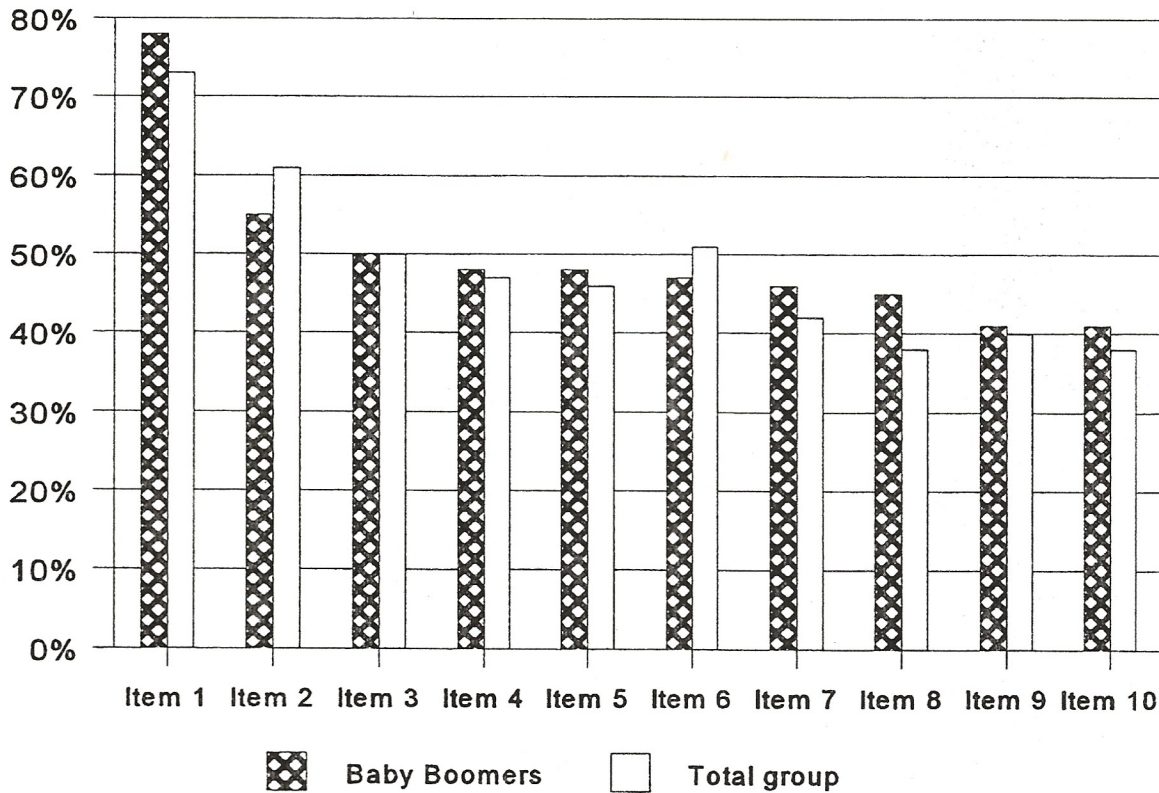
The majority of the members of the local conference committees (54%) are from the Baby Boom generation, born from 1946 through 1964 and now 34 to 52 years of age. Given the numeric majority, it is not surprising that the priorities of this generation are not much different from those of the total sample.

Only two items change significantly in ranking. New zeal for outreach drops from third place to sixth place, and focus on families moves up from 10th place to eighth place.

1. Involving teens & young adults (78%)
2. Follow-up for new members (55%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (50%)
4. Strengthening commitment (48%)
5. Body life (48%)
6. New zeal for outreach (47%)
7. Discipleship training (46%)
8. More focus on families (45%)
9. Young adult ministry (41%)
10. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (41%)

Needs as Seen by Silent generation

Silent generation compared to total sample
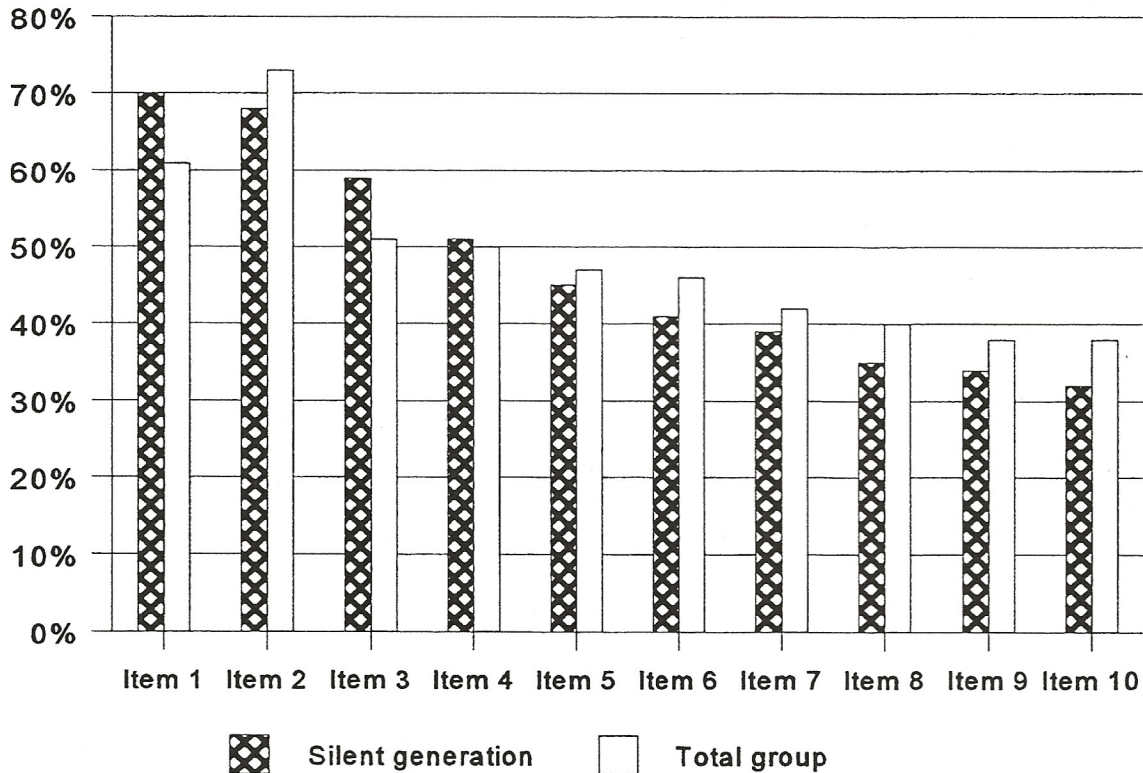
The second largest age group among the respondents, about a third of the total sample, is made up of individuals from the Silent generation, born from 1933 through 1945. They are now 53 to 65 years of age.

The priorities of this group differ from the priorities of the total sample in only one way. The rank of the top two items is reversed, and a "follow-up program for new members" is more important than "involving teens and young adults" in the church.

1. Follow-up for new members (70%)
2. Involving teens & young adults (68%)
3. New zeal for outreach (59%)
4. Outreach to inactive and former members (51%)
5. Strengthening commitment (45%)
6. Body life (41%)
7. Discipleship training (39%)
8. Young adult ministry (35%)
9. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (34%)
10. More focus on families (32%)

Needs as Seen by WW II generation

WW II generation compared to total sample
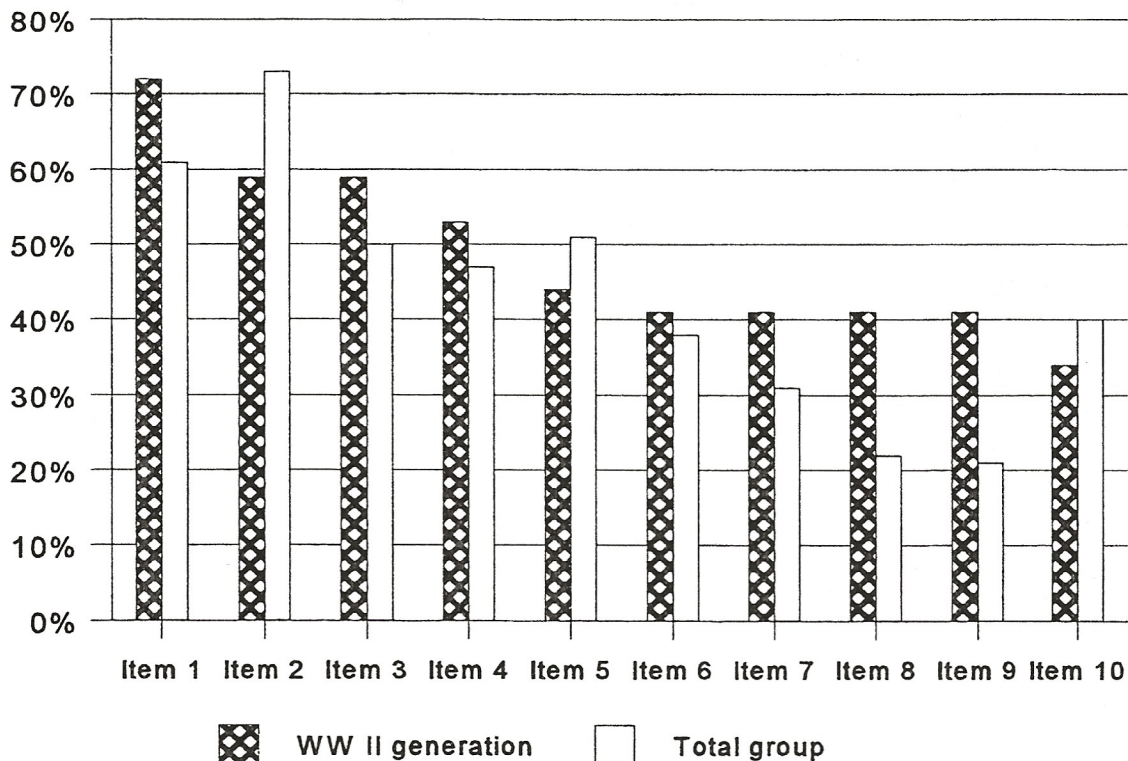
One in fourteen respondents (7%) are in the World War II generation, born before 1933 and now over 65 years of age. Their view of the priorities in the local church differs significantly from the total group of conference committee members.

Several items move up and down in rank. More significantly, three items that do not get into the top ten for the total group rank seventh, eighth and ninth for this generation—attendance at prayer meeting, help for members with non-believing spouses, and hospitality ministry.

1. Follow-up for new members (72%)
2. Involving teens & young adults (59%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (59%)
4. Strengthening commitment (53%)
5. New zeal for outreach (44%)
6. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (41%)
7. Attendance at prayer meeting and mid-week meeting (41%)
8. Support for members married to non-believing spouses (41%
9. Hospitality ministry (41%
10. Young adult ministry (34%)

Needs as Seen by Asians

Asian or Pacific Islander respondents compared to total sample
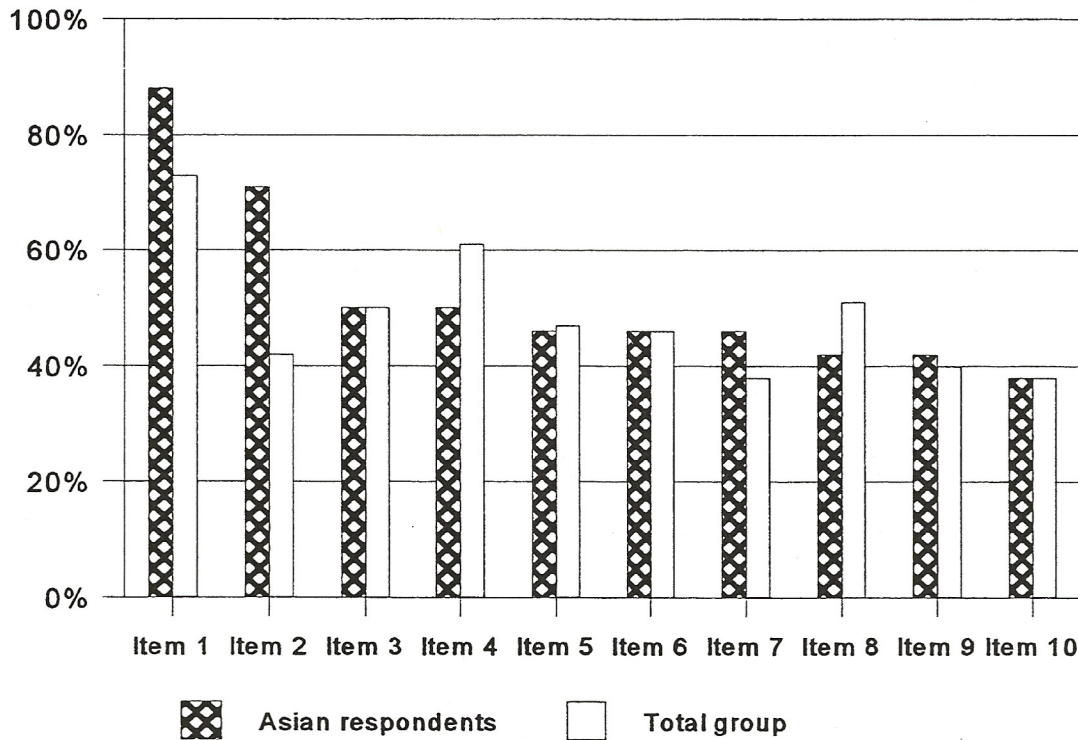
Asked to identify their ethnic background, a total of 24 respondents (5%) indicate that they are Asian or Pacific Islander. The priorities of this group is in some ways the same, and in some ways quite different from the total sample.

Three items move up in priority among Asian respondents—discipleship training, outreach to inactive and former members, and restructuring of Sabbath worship and Sabbath School. Three items move down in rank—follow-up for new members, new zeal for outreach, and young adult ministry.

1. Involving teens & young adults (88%)
2. Discipleship training (71%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (50%)
4. Follow-up for new members (50%)
5. Strengthening commitment (46%)
6. Body life (46%)
7. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (46%)
8. New zeal for outreach (42%)
9. Young adult ministry (42%)
10. More focus on families (38%)

Needs as Seen by Blacks

Black respondents compared to total sample
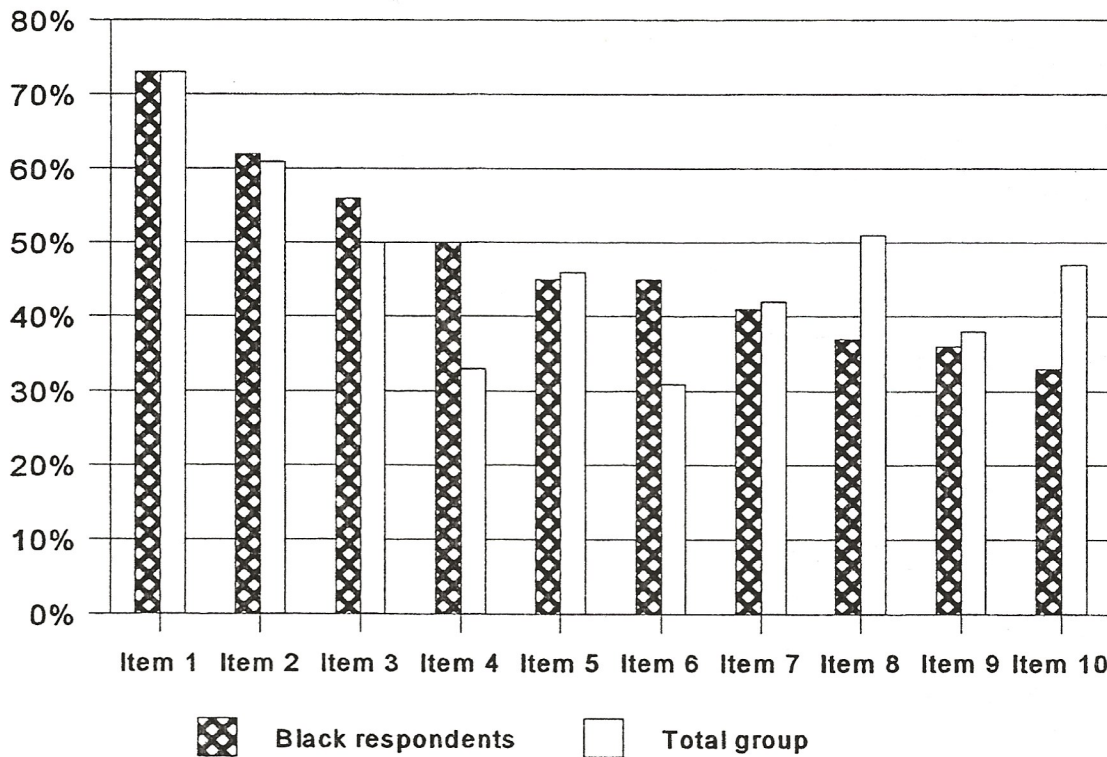
Asked to indicate their ethnic background, a total of 78 respondents (16%) selected "Black." This would include African Americans, and immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa.

Black respondents agree with the total sample on the top two priorities, but have quite different priorities on the remainder of the list. Two items which do not make it into the top ten for the total group rank fourth and sixth among black respondents—marriage counseling and attendance at prayer meeting.

1. Involving teens & young adults (73%)
2. Follow-up for new members (62%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (56%)
4. Marriage counseling (50%)
5. Body life (45%)
6. Attendance at prayer meeting and mid-week meeting (45%)
7. Discipleship training (41%)
8. New zeal for outreach (37%)
9. More focus on families (36%)
10. Strengthening commitment (33%)

Needs as Seen by Hispanics

Hispanic respondents compared to total sample
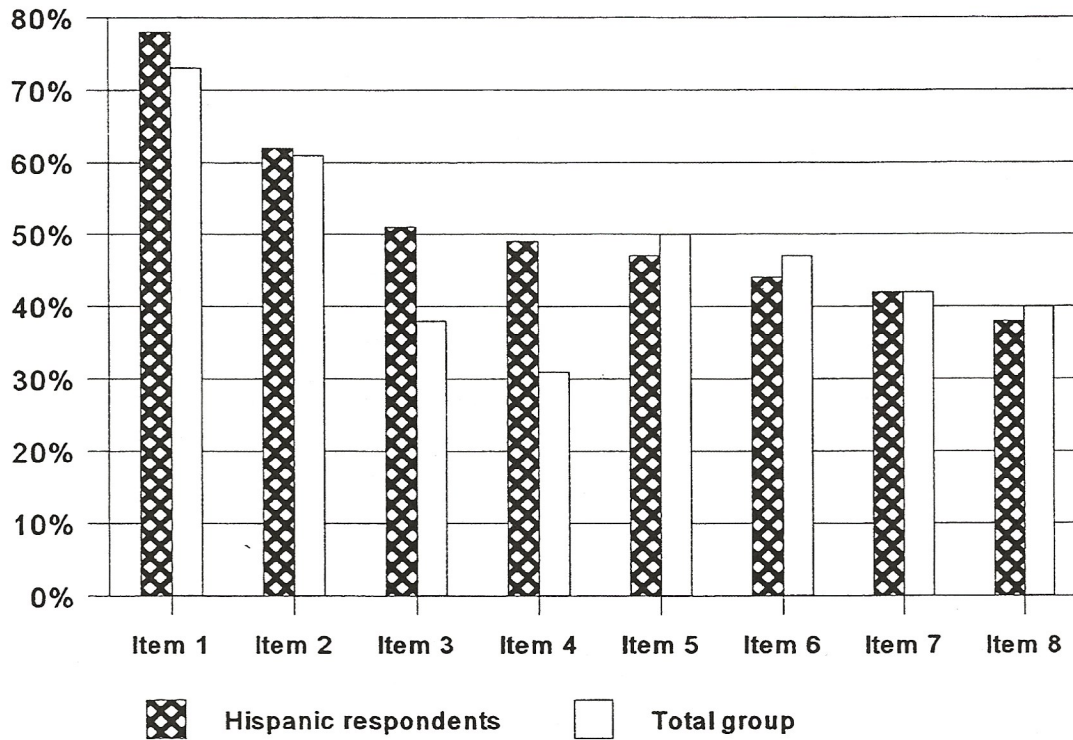
A total of 45 respondents (9%) identify themselves as being of Hispanic ethnic background. Their priorities are somewhat different than the priorities of the total sample.

The item that ranks 10 for the total sample—more focus on families—jumps to third place among Hispanic respondents. The item Hispanics rank in fourth place does not appear among the top 10 for the total sample—attendance at prayer meeting.

Only eight items are included in the list due to the fact that four items have the same percentage of support at the rank level of nine. To include a total of 12 items would extend the list to items which have the support of only a third of the Hispanic respondents.

1. Involving teens & young adults (78%)
2. Follow-up for new members (62%)
3. More focus on families (51%)
4. Attendance at prayer meeting and mid-week meeting (49%)
5. Outreach to inactive and former members (47%)
6. Strengthening commitment (44%)
7. Discipleship training (42%)
8. Young adult ministry (38%)

Needs as Seen by White Anglos

White, Anglo respondents compared to total sample

Legend: White, Anglo respondents / Total group
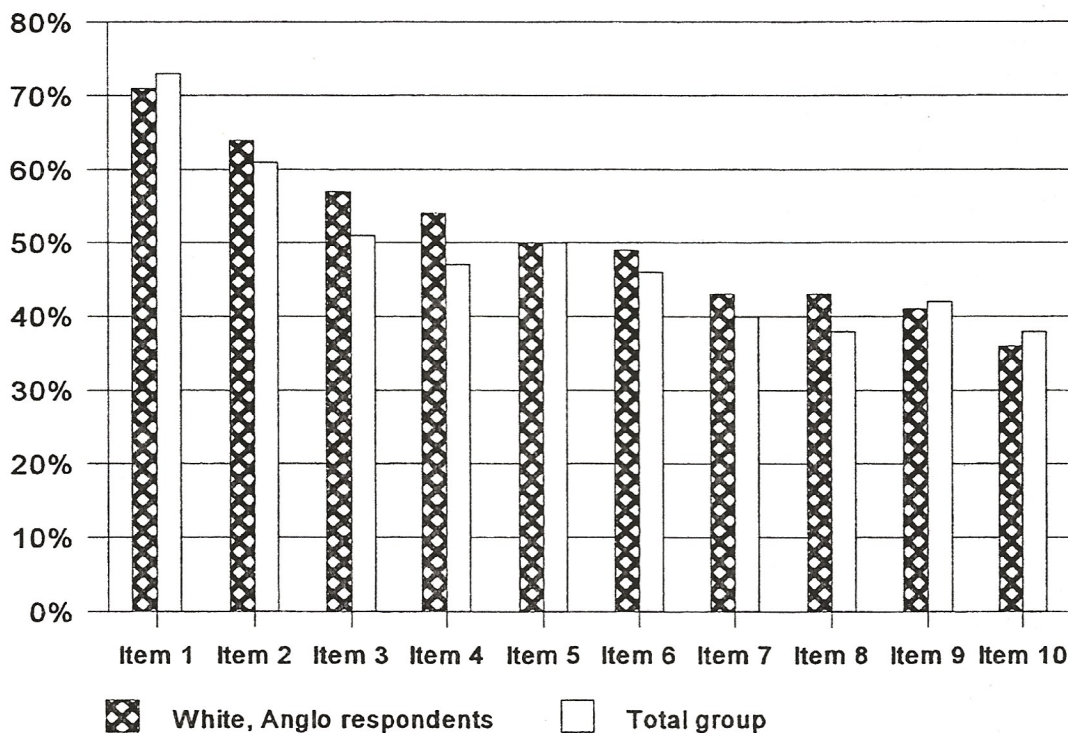
Asked to identify their ethnic background, a total of 308 respondents (63%) indicate that they are "White, Anglo." This is interpreted to mean that they are part of the ethnic majority in North America.

The priorities of this group are much like those of the total sample. Two items have lost some ranking—outreach to inactive and former members and discipleship training—although both are still included among the top ten priorities.

1. Involving teens & young adults (71%)
2. Follow-up for new members (64%)
3. New zeal for outreach (57%)
4. Strengthening commitment (54%)
5. Outreach to inactive and former members (50%)
6. Body life (49%)
7. Young adult ministry (43%)
8. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (43%)
9. Discipleship training (41%)
10. More focus on families (36%)

Needs as Seen by Other Ethnic Groups

Ethnic "other" respondents compared to total sample

Legend: ▨ Ethnic "other" respondents   ☐ Total group
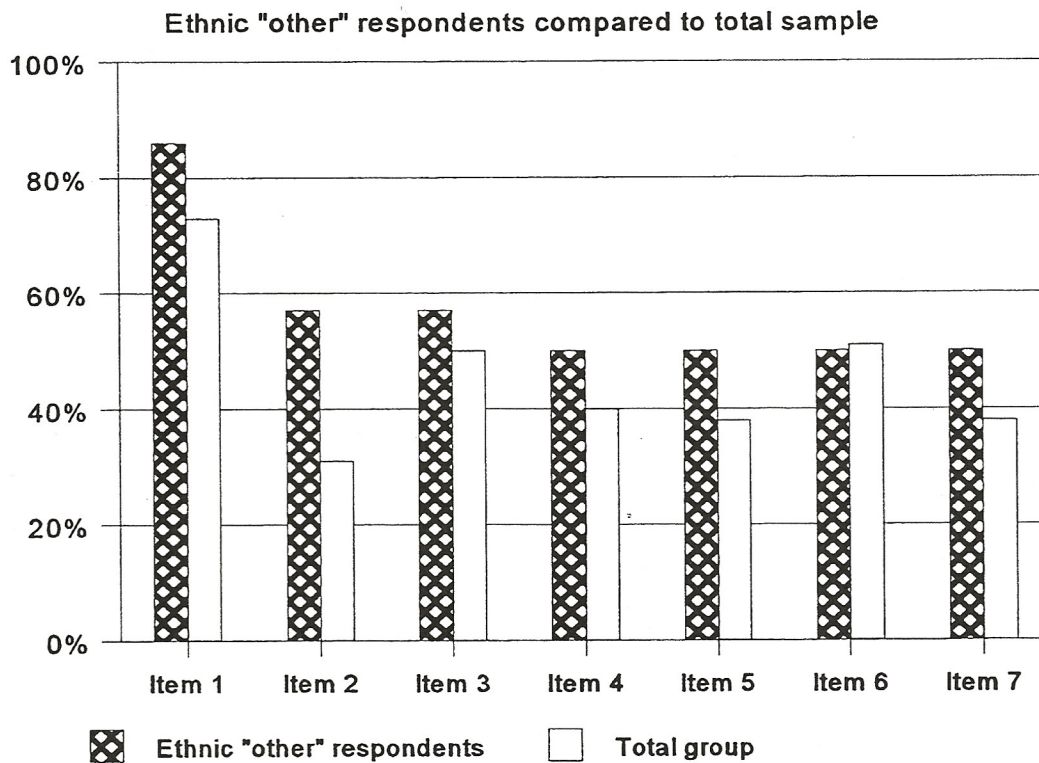
In response to a question about ethnic background, 14 respondents (3%) indicate that they have an identity other than the four major ethnic groups in the NAD. This would include Native Americans and First Peoples of Canada, as well as several other groups.

The priorities of these respondents are in a number of ways quite different from the total sample. Only seven items are included in the ranking due to the relatively small number of respondents in this sub-sample.

1. Involving teens & young adults (86%)
2. Attendance at prayer meeting and mid-week meeting (57%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (57%)
4. Young adult ministry (50%)
5. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (50%)
6. New zeal for outreach (50%)
7. More focus on families (50%)

Needs as Seen by Lay Leaders

compared to church employees and the total sample
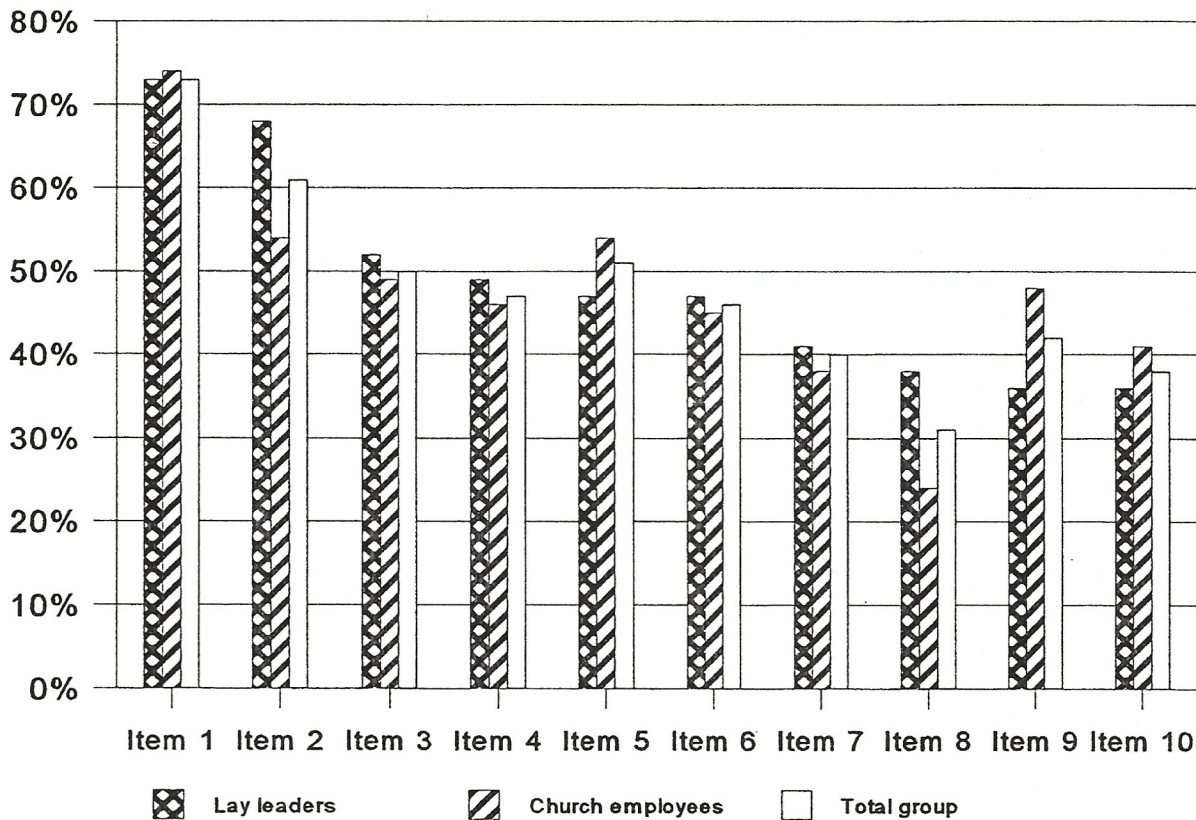
A little more than half of the respondents are not employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or its institutions. The priorities of this group are compared in the graphic above with the priorities of the denominational employees who serve on conference committees, including administrators, pastors and educators.

Lay leader assign higher priority to three items than do church employees—outreach to inactive and former members, strengthening commitment and body life. They assign lower priority to "new zeal for outreach" and "discipleship training."

1. Involving teens & young adults (73%)
2. Follow-up for new members (68%)
3. Outreach to inactive and former members (52%)
4. Strengthening commitment (49%)
5. New zeal for outreach (47%)
6. Body life (47%)
7. Young adult ministry (41%)
8. Attendance at prayer meeting and mid-week meeting (38%)
9. Discipleship training (36%)
10. Restructuring worship and Sabbath School (36%)

Table 1-A
All Items

		GENDER				GENERATIONS		
	TOTAL	Female	Male	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent	WW II
ANALYZED RESPONDENTS	486	128	340	22	264	155	32
	100%	26%	70%	5%	54%	32%	7%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Involving Teens/Yo Adults	356	92	254	17	207	105	19
	100%	26%	71%	5%	58%	29%	5%
	73%	72%	75%	77%	78%	68%	59%
Follow-up for New Members	297	84	207	14	146	109	23
	100%	28%	70%	5%	49%	37%	8%
	61%	66%	61%	64%	55%	70%	72%
New Zeal for Outreach	248	64	174	11	124	92	14
	100%	26%	70%	4%	50%	37%	6%
	51%	50%	51%	50%	47%	59%	44%
Reach Inactive/Former Mem	243	71	166	8	133	79	19
	100%	29%	68%	3%	55%	33%	8%
	50%	55%	49%	36%	50%	51%	59%
Strengthening Commitment	230	60	165	11	128	69	17
	100%	26%	72%	5%	56%	30%	7%
	47%	47%	49%	50%	48%	45%	53%
Body Life	223	60	154	16	127	63	11
	100%	27%	69%	7%	57%	28%	5%
	46%	47%	45%	73%	48%	41%	34%
Discipleship Training	204	42	154	12	121	60	6
	100%	21%	75%	6%	59%	29%	3%
	42%	33%	45%	55%	46%	39%	19%
Young Adult Ministry	192	57	129	13	108	55	11
	100%	30%	67%	7%	56%	29%	6%
	40%	45%	38%	59%	41%	35%	34%
Restructure Worship/SS	187	51	130	8	108	52	13
	100%	27%	70%	4%	58%	28%	7%
	38%	40%	38%	36%	41%	34%	41%
More Focus on Families	184	42	134	6	118	50	6
	100%	23%	73%	3%	64%	27%	3%
	38%	33%	39%	27%	45%	32%	19%
Marriage Counseling & Sup	162	38	120	9	95	49	8
	100%	23%	74%	6%	59%	30%	5%
	33%	30%	35%	41%	36%	32%	25%
Attendance at Prayer Mtg	152	40	106	5	83	47	13
	100%	26%	70%	3%	55%	31%	9%
	31%	31%	31%	23%	31%	30%	41%
Church Officer Training	112	20	88	5	56	41	7
	100%	18%	79%	4%	50%	37%	6%
	23%	16%	26%	23%	21%	26%	22%
Non-believing Spouses	107	31	70	3	61	27	13
	100%	29%	65%	3%	57%	25%	12%
	22%	24%	21%	14%	23%	17%	41%

Table 1-A, page 2

	TOTAL	GENDER		GENERATIONS			
		Female	Male	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent	WW II
Hospitality Ministry	104	28	74	2	47	42	13
	100%	27%	71%	2%	45%	40%	13%
	21%	22%	22%	9%	18%	27%	41%
Lack of Reverence	98	23	72	4	38	45	8
	100%	23%	73%	4%	39%	46%	8%
	20%	18%	21%	18%	14%	29%	25%
Help for Single Parents	87	26	58	1	49	30	7
	100%	30%	67%	1%	56%	34%	8%
	18%	20%	17%	5%	19%	19%	22%
Mens Ministry	66	25	38	1	37	16	8
	100%	38%	58%	2%	56%	24%	12%
	14%	20%	11%	5%	14%	10%	25%
SS Teacher Training	62	15	47	4	38	15	5
	100%	24%	76%	6%	61%	24%	8%
	13%	12%	14%	18%	14%	10%	16%
Crisis Hotline	62	19	41	2	34	21	4
	100%	31%	66%	3%	55%	34%	6%
	13%	15%	12%	9%	13%	14%	13%

Table 1-B
All Items

		CHURCH ROLE				ETHNICITY		
	TOTAL	Laity	Church Employee	Black	Asian/Pac Islander	Hispanic	White Anglo	Other
ANALYZED RESPONDENTS	486	245	226	78	24	45	308	14
	100%	50%	47%	16%	5%	9%	63%	3%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Involving Teens/Yo Adults	356	179	168	57	21	35	219	12
	100%	50%	47%	16%	6%	10%	62%	3%
	73%	73%	74%	73%	88%	78%	71%	86%
Follow-up for New Members	297	167	123	48	12	28	196	6
	100%	56%	41%	16%	4%	9%	66%	2%
	61%	68%	54%	62%	50%	62%	64%	43%
New Zeal for Outreach	248	116	123	29	10	16	176	7
	100%	47%	50%	12%	4%	6%	71%	3%
	51%	47%	54%	37%	42%	36%	57%	50%
Reach Inactive/Former Mem	243	128	111	44	12	21	154	8
	100%	53%	46%	18%	5%	9%	63%	3%
	50%	52%	49%	56%	50%	47%	50%	57%
Strengthening Commitment	230	119	105	26	11	20	166	1
	100%	52%	46%	11%	5%	9%	72%	-
	47%	49%	46%	33%	46%	44%	54%	7%
Body Life	223	115	102	35	11	13	151	5
	100%	52%	46%	16%	5%	6%	68%	2%
	46%	47%	45%	45%	46%	29%	49%	36%
Discipleship Training	204	89	109	32	17	19	127	4
	100%	44%	53%	16%	8%	9%	62%	2%
	42%	36%	48%	41%	71%	42%	41%	29%
Young Adult Ministry	192	101	85	20	10	17	132	7
	100%	53%	44%	10%	5%	9%	69%	4%
	40%	41%	38%	26%	42%	38%	43%	50%
Restructure Worship/SS	187	87	93	14	11	16	132	7
	100%	47%	50%	7%	6%	9%	71%	4%
	38%	36%	41%	18%	46%	36%	43%	50%
More Focus on Families	184	82	98	28	9	23	112	7
	100%	45%	53%	15%	5%	13%	61%	4%
	38%	33%	43%	36%	38%	51%	36%	50%
Marriage Counseling & Sup	162	73	88	39	6	16	93	6
	100%	45%	54%	24%	4%	10%	57%	4%
	33%	30%	39%	50%	25%	36%	30%	43%
Attendance at Prayer Mtg	152	94	54	35	6	22	74	8
	100%	62%	36%	23%	4%	14%	49%	5%
	31%	38%	24%	45%	25%	49%	24%	57%
Church Officer Training	112	49	59	15	6	10	75	2
	100%	44%	53%	13%	5%	9%	67%	2%
	23%	20%	26%	19%	25%	22%	24%	14%
Non-believing Spouses	107	60	43	21	5	15	58	4
	100%	56%	40%	20%	5%	14%	54%	4%
	22%	24%	19%	27%	21%	33%	19%	29%

Table 1-B, page 2

| | | CHURCH ROLE | | | | ETHNICITY | | |
	TOTAL	Laity	Church Employee	Black	Asian/Pac Islander	Hispanic	White Anglo	Other
Hospitality Ministry	104	58	45	20	5	7	70	1
	100%	56%	43%	19%	5%	7%	67%	1%
	21%	24%	20%	26%	21%	16%	23%	7%
Lack of Reverence	98	61	35	20	7	6	55	4
	100%	62%	36%	20%	7%	6%	56%	4%
	20%	25%	15%	26%	29%	13%	18%	29%
Help for Single Parents	87	37	48	16	4	7	55	3
	100%	43%	55%	18%	5%	8%	63%	3%
	18%	15%	21%	21%	17%	16%	18%	21%
Mens Ministry	66	34	29	11	3	3	44	1
	100%	52%	44%	17%	5%	5%	67%	2%
	14%	14%	13%	14%	13%	7%	14%	7%
SS Teacher Training	62	32	30	8	1	11	42	–
	100%	52%	48%	13%	2%	18%	68%	–
	13%	13%	13%	10%	4%	24%	14%	–
Crisis Hotline	62	37	24	17	6	7	24	6
	100%	60%	39%	27%	10%	11%	39%	10%
	13%	15%	11%	22%	25%	16%	8%	43%

Table 2
Comments and Suggestions

Transcribed from the questionnaires; hand-written notes from a number of the respondents. No cluster analysis has been completed. These are listed in no particular order.

How about Parenting Classes to help young families. How about help for financial planning, like seminars or videos by Ed Reid that churches could use.

Items I-20 focus on programs and activities. Presumably these activities will lead to a deeper spiritual relationship, but these activities should be kept in perspective so as not to become a proxy for spirituality. Nor should we get to the place where we fail to acknowledge and value non-traditional programs or activities that ad to spiritual strength.

We need more emphasis on contemporary gospel music. Not one NAD College/University embraces or fosters it!! We need to get our people truly studying the Word. The Sabbath School quarterlies format is not as effective as other options. We need on emphasis on small-group Bible studies.

We need to learn to effectively work with our college-age youth so they are both "fed" and "used" in our local churches.

Global Mission: Our local church has benefitted so much by having specific mission projects. Also, the youth and adults involved in mission trips have had their lives enriched and their relationship with God strengthened dramatically. Our NAD church needs these mission projects to help us look beyond ourselves.

I see a need in all of the above.

I am completely shocked and surprised that no mention whatsoever [was made] about the importance of the training and equipping of our members through the Biblical vehicle of spiritual gifts in this survey.

In addition to the crisis hotline, drug counseling specifically is a great need.

Small group training/workshop materials in Spanish.

I believe in small group ministry to build up the church and nurture it.

Unless the presence of the Holy Spirit can be observed and experienced in more of our churches, there is little hope for real growth in our churches.

We need to promote [positive] race relations. Maybe seminars periodically would help. We need to think seriously about coming together, individuals, churches, conferences. Lets talk more about true love for God and each other.

Very important to address these needs so that we all can experience a greater witnessing outreach of the Gospel.

NEEDS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH
1997 North American Division
Survey of Conference Executive Committee Members

Dear Executive Committee Member,

There are two sections to this questionnaire—items 1-20 and questions 21-24. Read carefully all 20 of the items in the first section (including those on the back side of this sheet), and then check off seven (7) that you think are the most important. Please place an X by your selections and make sure you have not chosen more than seven (7). It is important you also complete the second section. — NAD Office of Information and Research

____ 1. **Attendance at Prayer Meetings** — We need to update the traditional mid-week Prayer Meeting at the church, and have a strategic plan for getting members to attend.

____ 2. **Body Life** — Church members need to interact with each other more. We need to be more genuine with each other, have more fellowship, and be of greater encouragement to one another.

____ 3. **Crisis Hotline** — We need a toll-free Crisis Hotline for members to call when they feel the need for special prayer or someone who can be of encouragement during a tough situation.

____ 4. **Discipleship Training** — We need a mentoring program in the Christian life that is easily understood and intentional. Members need to invest some time personally training other members in outreach and lifestyle.

____ 5. **Follow-Up Program for New Members** — We need a program that allows for the continued nurture and training of a person once he or she joins the church.

____ 6. **Hospitality Ministry** — Greater emphasis needs to be placed on how we treat visitors. We need to give more direction to the greeters, as well as the Hospitality Committee.

____ 7. **Involving Teens and Young Adults** — We need to find ways to keep our young people interested. We need to strengthen the relationship between the youth and the adult membership. We need to explore what we can do to help youth recognize the relevance of the church and its mission in today's world.

____ 8. **Lack of Reverence** — There is too little respect given to the sanctity of worship space. We should put some time and effort into training the membership, young and old, to be more reverent in worship and in the church building.

____ 9. **Marriage Counseling and Support** — We need to have in place an organized strategy and program with steps that can be taken to help members whose marriages are falling apart.

____ 10. **Men's Ministry** — In recent years much has been done to foster Women's Ministries in the local church. Efforts should be made to build up the community of men in the congregation as well.

____ 11. **More Focus on Families** — A lot of resource material currently exists to help families, but we need more help. Given the diversity of family types represented in today's society we need to be broader in our approach to ministry to family-life needs.

____ 12. **New Zeal for Outreach** — We need to do more to encourage the missionary spirit in our members. New and creative approaches need to be developed to help members share their faith.

Please continue on the back side.

____ 13. Church Officer Training — In many places cut-backs at the conference office have resulted in less training available to local church leaders. Resources such as video seminars and self-help courses would help.

____ 14. Outreach to Inactive and Former Members — Materials and programs that target those who used to be Adventists need to be developed. It would also be good to have materials that help our members understand how they might reach out to members of their own families in a redemptive way.

____ 15. Restructuring the Traditional Worship and Sabbath School — Attention needs to be given to what we do on Sabbath morning. In many churches there has been little change in decades. This issue needs to be studied to see if optional approaches might help broaden the appeal of the local church to its community.

____ 16. Sabbath School Teacher Training — We need to help our teachers more. We need more workshops and training opportunities, and they must be affordable.

____ 17. Support for Single Parents — We need to be more intentional in helping single parents. Special programs and resources need to be developed for this group.

____ 18. Strengthening Commitment to the Church — Whether we are talking about attendance, giving or volunteer leadership responsibilities, many members are not participating. We need to do a better job of sharing local church needs and member responsibilities.

____ 19. Young Adult Ministry — There needs to be more evangelism targeted to young adults. We need to address their concerns and, where possible, make changes that will help make the church relevant to their needs.

____ 20. Support for Members Married to Non-believing Spouses — There appears to be a growing number of these men and women in the church who need practical help in knowing how to maintain their spiritual life without destroying their marriages.

SECTION TWO

21. What is your gender? (Please circle one number.)   1. Female   2. Male

22. What is your ethnic background? (Please circle one number.)
    1. Asian or Pacific Islander
    2. Black   4. White, Anglo
    3. Hispanic   5. Other

23. When were you born? (Please circle one number.)
    1. Born in 1965 or after   3. Born 1930-1945
    2. Born 1946-1964   4. Born in 1929 or before

24. Are you employed by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination?   1. Yes 2. No

Comments, suggestion?

January 22, 1998

Office of the President

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Conference Secretaries
Local Conference in the North American Division

Dear Colleague:

I need your help in an important part of the decisions that are made relative to how the denomination spends
its funding for resource materials, training, etc.

Enclosed is the questionnaire for this year's Church Resources Needs Assessment. It is to be completed by
the members of the local conference executive committees across the division.

Please administer this questionnaire at the next meeting of your conference committee. I have enclosed 20
copies; feel free to make more if you need.

I suggest that you pass out the questionnaire early in the meeting with a brief explanation, and then collect it
near the end of the meeting. I believe it is self-explanatory. Please do not send them home with the
committee members.

**I must have the bundle of completed questionnaires back from you by March 6 in order to prepare the
report in time for the union presidents.**

Thank you for your assistance in this important item. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach me
by Email at msahlin@compuserve.com or by phone.

Sincerely,

Monte

Monte Sahlin
Assistant to the President
for Research & Development

swc

Enclosures

PS: One question you may be asked: "How were these items selected to be on the questionnaire?" Focus
group research was recently conducted with local church board members and pastors across North America.
Individuals from both small and large churches were included, and the ethnic make-up of the groups was on
the same percentages as the division membership. These groups of local church leaders (the vast majority of
them lay leaders) developed the list on the questionnaire. Now we need the input of decision-makers on the
committees as to the priority to attach to these 20 suggestions.

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