

**Pastoral
Perceptions
Regarding
The Adventist
Communication
Network**

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The North American Division has asked the Church Resource Center to conduct a study measuring pastoral perceptions concerning the new Adventist Communication Network (ACN). Items to be addressed include:

1. Present Use of Satellite and Video Equipment
2. Perceived Quality and Use of Adventist produced videos.
3. Barriers that might prohibit a church from procuring a satellite system.
 - A. Financial Considerations
 - B. Other de-motivators
4. Preferred programming

In studying these issues, other data was gathered in areas such as:

1. Pastoral concerns
2. Desire of pastors to learn interactive techniques to use with video/satellite presentations.
3. Possible use of satellites for social events

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Purpose Of The Study

- Most churches, regardless of size, are currently equipped to share information and denominationally produced programming using a video format.
- Video products now produced by the church are currently being used in most churches.
- There is overall satisfaction with the quality of video products now being produced by the church.
- African American churches are least likely to have, or plan to purchase, a satellite system.
- Pastors desire personal assurance of the usefulness and benefits of proposed programming to the local church.
- Pastors believe there to be potential benefit to the denomination, and thus the denomination should assist the local church financially in the procurement of satellite systems. Personally, they desire promotional materials to help them “sell” the idea to their congregations.
- Of greatest benefit to the local church, as perceived by respondents, is the ability to bring training to their leaders.
- Overwhelmingly, pastors see benefit in being personally trained to use satellite system programming in an interactive way.

Executive Summary

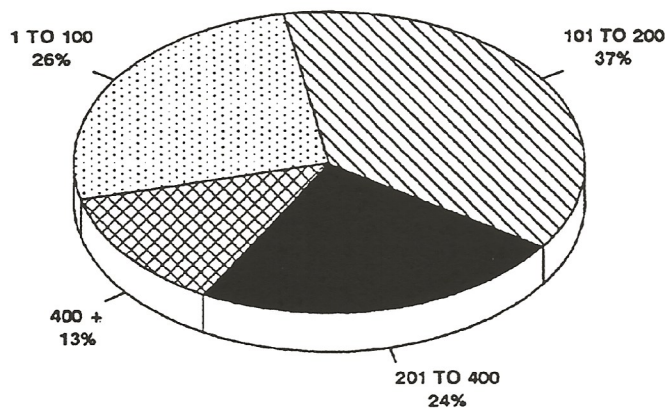
Four focus groups were conducted during the week of April 25 - 29, 1994. Participants were Adventist pastors presently serving churches in or around the following cities:

- Portland, OR
- Chicago, IL
- Charlotte, NC
- Dallas, TX

Participants were randomly recruited from pastoral lists provided by local conference administrative offices. Care was taken to insure that participant representation included all major ethnic groups.

A phone survey was conducted during the last two weeks of May to quantify Focus Group findings. Participants for this phase of the study were randomly selected from a total listing of Adventist pastors in North America provided by the NAD Distribution Center of Lincoln, Nebraska.

The total sample of this study includes thirty-eight pastors who participated in Focus Groups, and additionally two hundred pastors surveyed by phone. Phone survey respondents represent churches of the following size categories:



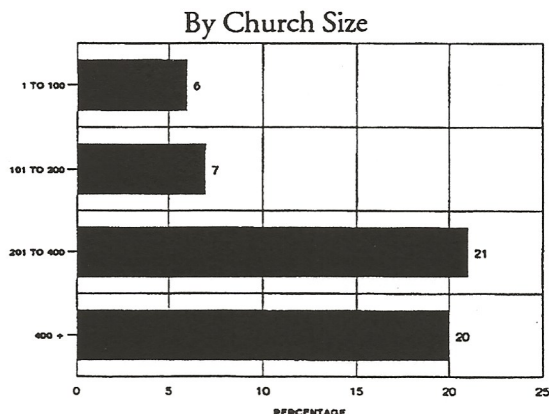
Book Membership

- Unless otherwise noted data represents only those pastors who participated in the telephone survey.
- Data was entered and analyzed using Survey Tab, a cross-tabulation and analysis program for microcomputers.

Methodology and Demographics

“Do you have, or are you in the process of purchasing, a satellite dish and receiver for your church?”

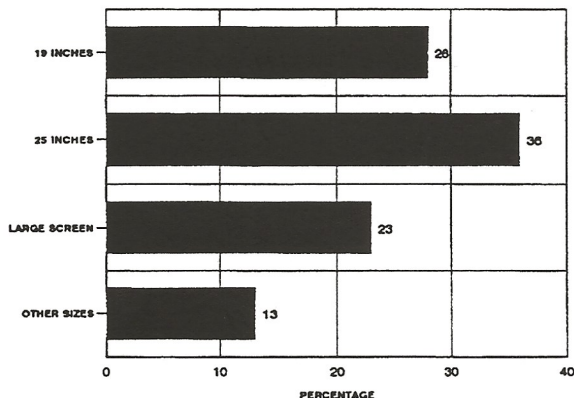
Twenty-four of the two hundred churches surveyed by phone (12%) have either already purchased a satellite system or are in the process of doing so. Pastors of larger churches were more likely to answer affirmatively than those churches with smaller memberships.



- None of the African American or Asian pastors report having satellite systems at their church.
- At least half the churches, regardless of ethnic group, had television monitors at their church site. When measuring the total sample, 9 of 10 pastors have at least one monitor available at their church.

	# of Churches in Study	# With Monitors	#With Satellite System
Afro-American	11	10	0
Asian	2	1	0
Caucasian	158	148	20
Hispanic	12	6	1
Other	17	15	2
	200	180 (90%)	23 (12%)

MONITOR SIZE



On the average larger size churches have larger monitors. Over half (52%) of the large screens are located in churches with more than 400 members

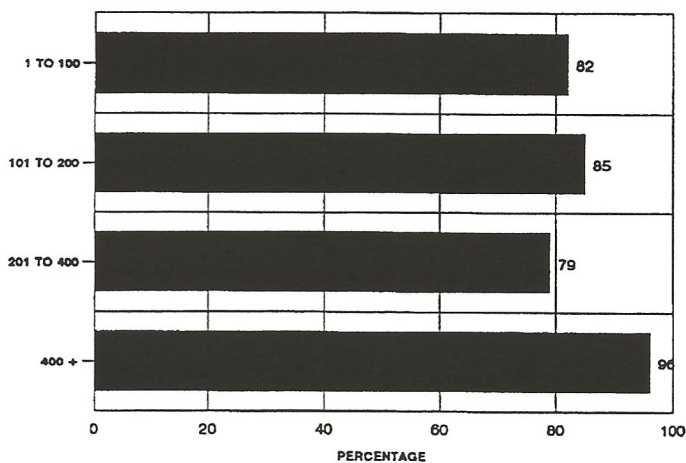
Satellite and Video Equipment On Hand

“Are you presently, or have you recently used any of the following videos at your church?”

This question was asked of these video products:

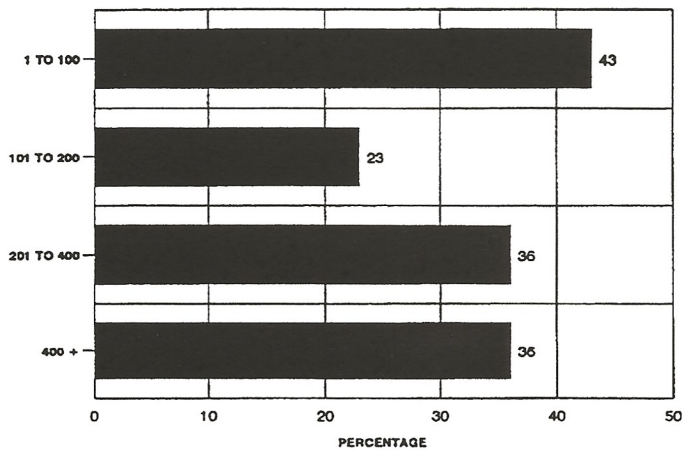
- On-Line Edition - from the Adventist Review
- ADRA Videos - Adventist Development and Relief Agency
- World Story - Mission Stories for Sabbath School
- Sabbath School or other training videos

ONLINE EDITION "YES" BY CHURCH SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE 84%

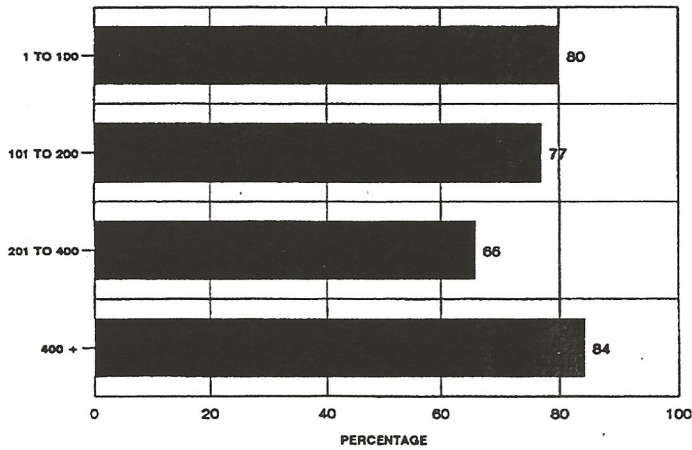
WORLD STORY "YES" BY CHURCH SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE 33%

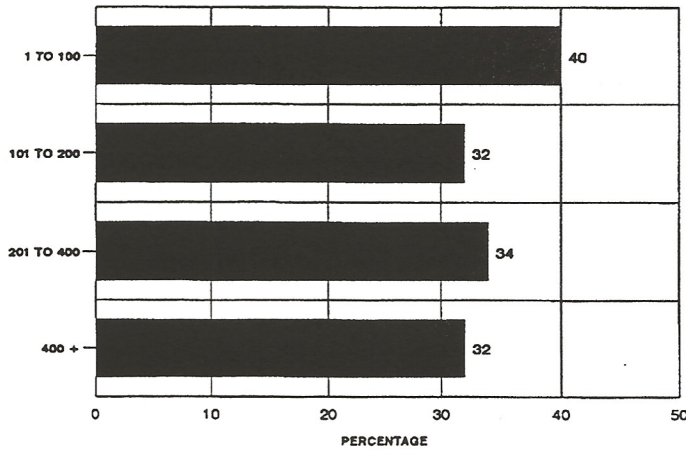
Use of Adventist Videos

ADRA "YES" RESPONSE BY CHURCH SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE 76%

TRAINING VIDEOS "YES" RESPONSE BY CHURCH SIZE



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SAMPLE 34%

Focus Group respondents were shown sample portions of each of the above 4 videos products. They were later asked to give a grade (ABCDF) value to the video as a whole in terms of quality. The grades given by the 38 pastors were:

- 14 A's
- 18 B's
- 6 C's

G.P.A. by specific focus groups:

- Portland 3.0
- Chicago 3.0
- Dallas 3.3
- Charlotte 3.6

Total Cumulative G.P.A. = 3.2

Of some interest is the fact that 1 in 4 Hispanic churches have recently used On-Line Edition, and one in 3 Hispanic churches report recent use of videos produced by ADRA.

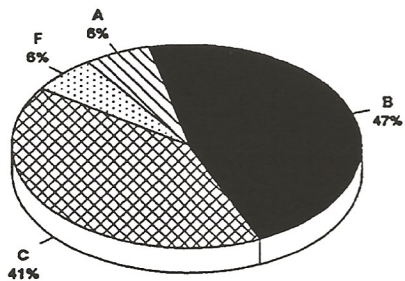
“World Story and On-Line, we have a video projector and so we use them once or twice a month and frankly I’m very disappointed to hear that they are discontinuing it because we benefited much from the material.”

—Portland Area Pastor

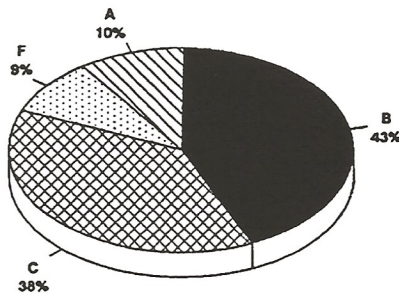
“Have you ever held an evangelistic or training event using video in a public forum?”

Nearly one in three respondents (30%) answered “yes” to the above question. Those who answered affirmatively were then asked to give a grade value (ABC or F) to the overall successfulness of the event/s. Pastors of larger sized churches believe their video events were more successful than did the pastors of smaller congregations.

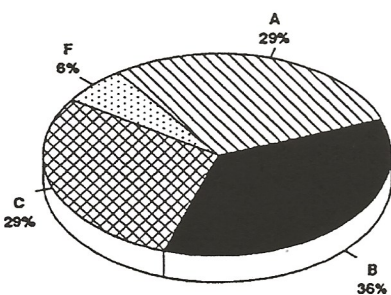
Grades Given By Percent
By Church Size



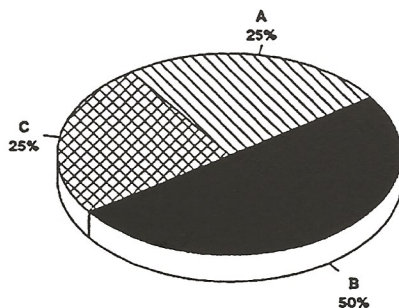
1 TO 100 MEMBERS
G.P.A. 2.5



101 TO 200 MEMBERS
G.P.A. 2.5



201 TO 400 MEMBERS
G.P.A. 2.9



401 +
G.P.A. 3.0

Total Sample G.P.A. 2.7

Public Forum Use of Video

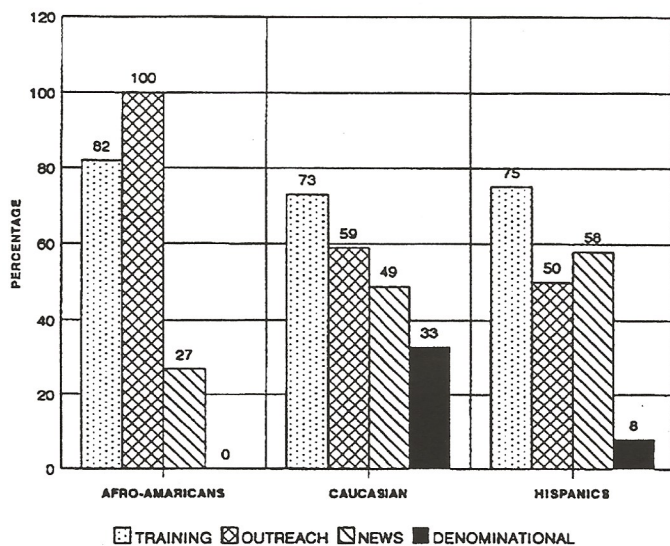
When Focus Group participants were asked questions regarding possible satellite programming, their responses generally fell into four categories.

- Adventist News - i.e. On-Line or World Story
- Training Events - i.e. VBS Workshops, S.S. Teacher Training
- Outreach Events - i.e. Net '95, Stress Seminars, etc.
- Denominational Events - i.e. G.C. Sessions, Annual Councils, etc.

Pastors surveyed by phone were asked to select two of the above options which in their opinion would be most likely to benefit their church. Here is the prioritized list with the percentages of pastors who selected each program type.

Training Events	74%
Outreach Events	59%
Adventist News	49%
Denominational Events	29%

Pastors of African American churches were significantly more likely to see value in outreach programming than were others. Pastors of Caucasian churches were significantly more interested in denominational event programming than were others.



Preferred Programming

"I'd like to see inside the workings of the General Conference. I'd like to see a C-SPAN type of presentation of the General Conference Committee. I'd like to see George Barna do an in-depth perspective on Seventh-day Adventists. I'd like to see the inner workings of the Loma Linda University Hospital. I'd like to see the proton cancer accelerator at work and see the real life people that are being touched by that technology. There is unlimited opportunity."

"I think the satellite gives us opportunity for immediate church news. We'd all be able to see late breaking news events almost immediately whereas with video and the On-Line Edition we're a month or two behind. I think people would want to watch what is happening now."

"I would like to see it provide some instantaneous types of information. Our church is undergoing a rather severe heartache and problem in Rwanda right now and if I could download something today to show it to my congregation Saturday it would have a tendency to tie the world church together. I would like to see us able to do something like that rather quickly. And I think the technology is there if we just would do it."

"I would totally replace the slides that we are using for Mission Spotlight. Junk the slides and go to specific video tied to the specific mission appeal. I'm using the ADRA videos but they are not tied to specific mission areas. So I'm frustrated."

"I think that it would be most helpful, instead of having Monte Sahlin or Al McClure presenting a seminar, if my colleagues were there telling me what they did in their church, and these are the problems that they came up with and this is how they solved it. That would be much more helpful than sitting down and listening to a seminar."

"I would say that the general conference president could quickly address the entire church in just a moment. This to me would be a powerful way for him to make appeals to the church, to unite the church, to set direction and goals for the church if he were able, on a Sabbath morning, to speak to the church all over North America."

Focus Group Comments

Programming

"I really like C-SPAN and I would like to see us have this at our church. I had the opportunity to attend the fall council meetings which are open for people to go and sit in them. I wish those could be brought through the down link . I think it would only serve a very small group of Seventh-day Adventists but I think that is an important group which is very concerned about their church and feels cut off."

"I like the direction that the Review is going with its On-Line Edition. I think it's terrific. I'd like to see more of that with the addition of the feedback possibility with teleconferencing."

"I would provide family programs featuring the Adventist lifestyle. I would use cartoons for the children to understand the Adventist message and how to grow up with honesty and integrity. And I would use preaching services. I would go from church to church taping from the conservative services as well as the (I don't know what they call them) left wing people in the church who want to beat on those drums and say Hallelujah and want to raise their hands. We have some Adventists like that."

"Just another means of bypassing me, of bypassing my conference office, of going direct to my members to get money. And I'm warning you now, I'll turn it off! If the programming isn't right, it's off. I will not let them watch it."

-Chicago Area Pastor

Suggested Programming Ideas

Focus Groups and telephone responses specifically mentioned, listed by subjects, events and specific people.

Subject Areas Mentioned

Alcohol
Prophecy Seminars
Personal Evangelism
Community Service
Religious Liberty
Parenting
Weight Control
History of Adventism
Financial Management
Interpersonal Relationships
Witnessing
Small Groups
Spiritual Gifts
Creative Worship
How to Preach Effectively
How to Find Resources

Lifestyle Evangelism
Where is the Money Going?
Theological Issues
Leadership Training
Spiritual Nurture
Sabbath School Training
Deep Bible Studies
Church Schools
Building Committee Help
Finance Committee Help
Stewardship
Cooking Classes
Breathe Free Seminars
Family Related
General Health
Nature

AIDS
Drugs
Homosexuality
Life of Ellen White
Pastoring Techniques
Creationism
Puppet Ministry
Success Stories
Doctrinal
Developing Mission Statement and Objectives
Discipleship
How to Reach the Professional
Divorce Recovery

Events Mentioned

Institute of Contemporary Issues Roundtable
Annual Councils
G.C. Sessions
Campmeetings
ASI Convention
Local Conference Presidents Once a Quarter
G.C. President Once a Quarter
Continuing Education for Pastors
Extension Classes from Andrews
Willow Creek Training

Pastors Roundtable
Host Some "Great Debates"
Union Committee Meetings
Immediate Mission Reports
Andrews Graduation
Intra College or Academy Sports
College Choir and Musicals
Weekly Denominational Newscast
Trainer Training
Interactive Program with Young Adults
Revelation Seminar Training

All Kinds of Spanish Programs
Programs for Churches that Don't Have a Pastor
Pastors' Wives Forum
Special Saturday Night Programs
C.D. Brooks Net '95 for African Americans
Youth Rallies
Live Week of Prayer with Elder Folkenberg
ADRA Newscast
Live Call-in Shows

Specific People Mentioned

"Barney"

Charles Bradford

C. D. Brooks

Larry Burkett

Ben Carson

Kenneth Cox

James Dobson

Dick Duerksen

Mark Finley

Bailey Gillespie

Tim Lewis

Max Lucado

Dan Matthews

Jack Morris

Dwight Nelson

Walter Pierson

John Shuller

Chuck Swindoll

Morris Venden

“What would convince your church to spend \$3,000 on a satellite system. . . ?”

“If we had the money” was by far the number one response. The second most mentioned answer was, “A better understanding of the benefits.”

The third highest frequency response was, “Help in selling the idea.” Pastors suggested brochures, promotional videos, on-site demonstrations, and personal appeals by the conference presidents.

Pastors of African American churches stress the need to have “color” evident in the programming and planning. Hispanic pastors are interested in Spanish language programming.

When asked “What would convince your church. . .” one pastor answered, “A direct gift from the Lord.”

One in three pastors indicated that financial subsidies from the conference would help. Nearly four in ten want to be convinced that the programs would be “practical and helpful.”

Motivators

“Beyond financial considerations, what barriers do you think your church might have to purchasing and using a satellite system . . . ?”

The number one response to the above question was, “Conservative older members would not approve.”

Other responses include, “The language barrier,” “It would look ugly on our premises,” and “We don’t have a place for it.”

A number indicated they cannot participate because they are renting churches or community zoning would not allow it.

Barriers

"If the cost is right and the ethnic representation was right; if the content of the program is perceived as being beneficial and truly helpful in a black church in downtown Chicago, and if there is some type of involvement by us at the grassroots level, both in its development and in its presentation; if those conditions were met, we'd be for it."

"When I sit down with my church board, other than the financial resistance, there's me. Because if I resist it, they will. So if it does not help me, or satisfy me, or bypasses me, I would say forget it."

"My church sends thousands and thousands of dollars in tithe up to the denomination. I believe that since this is going to benefit the organization I would say it would have to be highly subsidized. I would say \$1000."

"Is there going to be a clear program description so I don't have to spend a tremendous amount of time wading through this stuff trying to figure out what's good and what's bad? Accurate program guides would be my concern so there's a minimum of trying to sort through everything trying to decide what's helpful."

"If it's something we want we'll pay almost any price for it. Our board has already given some considerations to a satellite dish and we are in the process of checking out local codes to see whether or not they will even allow it on our property and then it will be a matter of aesthetics. We don't want the church's image ruined by a satellite inappropriately located."

"We need to see the benefits package and if it were persuasive, I think my board would get it."

"I am concerned that my church would not opt for this until they actually viewed it. In other words, I don't think there is anything that you can say about the benefits which will automatically convince them to spend \$3000. I think that if they all came to a place and saw it and knew they could gain the benefit, yes, they would get it."

"To comment on that, I think that it would be better to have that viewing at the local church instead of everyone going to Portland Academy to view it. People seeing it in their own local setting would be a stronger selling point."

Focus Group Responses

Motivators & Barriers

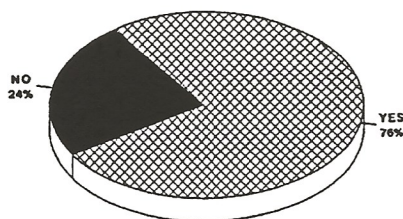
“Would you be interested in learning interactive techniques to use with a video or satellite presentation?”

Nearly nine of ten pastors (86%) answered “Yes” to the above question. All African American and Hispanic pastors answered affirmatively.

“We are looking forward to high tech. Even though I am not really into it, the congregation has forced me into it. Because we are a very young church I would like some information.”

—Chicago Area Pastor

“If you have or had a satellite system at your church, could you see it being used for special events? (i.e. youth group watching the Superbowl)”



“I would like to have a resource library connected to the ACN where I could call and get a tape sent to me within the week on the topic that we’re studying.”

—Portland Area Pastor

Misc.

"In other words, the top saying this is what you will do in the local church. It's amazing how many programs have come along that were the thing that was going to bring about the second coming and people are getting a little suspicious of that kind of thing. It's also amazing that such wonderful ideas have to be shoved down one's throat so hard. The fact that it is impersonal. I think that really we're living in a day and age of everything being done through the technical whatever and people are craving the personal touch, and I think that this is promoting a non-personal touch."

"When the video does come and it was airmailed to me express mail from Maryland for me to show in my church for religious liberty, for example, my reaction is, 'If they can afford to airmail this video to every church in North America, they don't need my offering.'"

"If the Adventist church produced videos or programs for the benefit of the local church it's good, but when the local church just becomes a resource to supply the needs of the church organization, it kind of sets a bad rash. One of the things I am really struggling and fighting with is trying to preserve our local church identity and to protect my church from outside preying sources."

"I would not like to be a satellite of some larger organization. I want a sense of local identity."

"I would be more open now. I think that this initiative is creating a new super layer in our denomination. Another set of experts who don't want to do the field work, but only want to stay in the office."

". . . and the ethnic needs of the church would have to be spoken to or addressed. The other side would come up as to how much brainwashing could come down through the tubes. That would be quite a problem."

"No one has ever communicated the need to me for (ACN). And so it seems to me that someone was sitting in a room and dreamed this up and said, 'This looks pretty cool, hey, let's make all the churches get satellites.'"

"I like being king of my little roost and I am a little bit concerned about being swallowed up and being taken advantage of. It's really important that while we develop a world church, people feel loved and can really contribute to the program as they know it at the local church. And so it's the sense that it's really only building the church up on the local level that I would feel really good about it."

Focus Group Responses

The Concerns of Some Pastors

- Promotional materials should be developed to assist the pastor in the sharing of benefits to the local church, of having a satellite system over which ACN programming could be accessed.
- A promotional piece directed solely to the pastor should be developed. The benefits to the local church should be simply, but not exhaustively, stated. Pastors are, in large part, already aware of most benefits. They may need, however, to be assured that this is not an attempt to siphon off funds or exert more control over the local congregation.
- The greatest potential benefit, as perceived by the respondents, is to facilitate training in the local church. Regular training events should be scheduled and promoted. "Roundtables" and special forums should be developed for sub groups such as pastors, pastors' wives, regional and ethnic workers.
- Professional Ministry Associations and Centers should be encouraged to provide programming in their specialized topical areas.
- Existing departments at the General Conference/Division level should be responsible to provide programming as a regular part of their work.
- African American and Hispanic churches would be most likely to participate in ACN if outreach events, targeted to their culture groups, were aired. Special programming for these culture groups must be provided if the church desires their participation.
- A protocol should be developed for union and local conferences to be able to "uplink" special programming.
- Conferences should be encouraged to make building loans, or give subsidies for the purpose of purchasing satellite equipment.
- ACN should establish a video library of all programming. Tapes should be available for purchase or rent to local churches and others. An updated library listing of all videos should be filed on Compuserve, cross-references by title, date, subject, and key words. Making video tape programming available to all churches will encourage existing churches, and those congregations now renting but soon to build, to purchase systems of their own.
- Program guides should be generated on at least a per quarter basis. In addition to the ACN Guide being carried in the Review, it should be available for access on Compuserve, over the PlusLine, and in a clear and simple hard copy format.
- The pastor's willingness to be trained in interactive techniques to use with video programming should be exploited. Training in this area should be held in every union as well as being made available in a video/workbook format.

Recommendations