

AHSRA Presentation Proposal – May 2019

Title: Findings From Surveys on Adventism, Politics and Social Issues

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Summary of the Presentation

The proposed presentation is relevant to both conference themes...understanding the church in its global context and presenting data that make a difference in the church and the community. In it we will summarize and consolidate the findings of several decades of research and historical analysis about the profile of Adventists in the United States on politics and social issues.

With respect to helping to elucidate the church in its global context, we will describe the political persona of Adventists in comparison to that of the general U.S. population. And we will note especially our positions on contemporary political issues. Among other things, we found that...

- A majority of U.S. Adventists identify themselves as politically conservative or moderate, while a significant minority identify themselves as liberals.
- There are notable differences between certain of the sub-groups of Adventists. Among other things, there are some substantial differences between Adventist college students and others.
- Some of the patterns are roughly the same as those in the general U.S. population.

With respect to the relationship between the data forming the basis of these findings and how they impact our church and community, we will offer several propositions about what they have meant and what they will mean in the future for the future of our church. In particular...

- Because the most important issues to Adventists are the economy, health care, and education, if new more politically active Adventist groups, such as Adventists for Social Justice and Adventist Revolution, engage the political system, it can be anticipated that they will focus on these issues.
- Since human rights and justice issues are among the top issues for Adventist college students, it can be anticipated that this social element will, among other things, focus on these issues, as is the case in the general population.
- As the so-called “moral issues,” related to abortion, birth control, and same-sex marriage, were not among the top issues for U.S. Adventists as legitimate issues for government intervention, it is anticipated that these will not be among the issues pressed forward by our community.

It is our hope and expectation that the presentation will stimulate much productive discussion in the coming meeting, as well as in our broader community in the months and years to come. In particular, the apparent divisions among us will continue to be problematic, whether globally or within the North American Division. The role of our church in political issues has itself been an abiding issue among us, with some of the first Adventists being among the most vocal

abolitionists and Adventists being among the most celebrated conscience objectors to warfare, while many have said it is not appropriate for Adventists to be in the forefront of political activism of whatever sort.

Abstract: The relationships between Adventism and the social political world has implications for the mission of the church and its involvement in the social issues of our time. Researches present an analysis of research conducted over several decades which explore the relationship of Adventism, politics and social issues.

References

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