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CIC 2019 Survey Report

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CHOSEN INTERNATIONAL CAMPOREE 2019

CAMPOREE SURVEY REPORT

Institute of Church Ministry

Submitted to

Center for Youth Evangelism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2019 Chosen International Pathfinder Camporee (CIC 2019) was held in Oshkosh, WI, from August 12–17, 2019. More than 55,000 Pathfinders from 105 countries came to play, share, learn, and worship together. These were record numbers, as compared to previous camporees. The camporee offered a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Pathfinders to connect to one another and strengthen their relationship with God.

The Institute of Christian Ministry (ICM) in collaboration with the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) conducted two surveys: the Exit Survey and the Pathfinder Survey. The Exit Survey, filled by 2,162 participants, collected participants' feedback on various aspects of the camporee. Overall, 81% of those who filled out the survey gave the highest score ("Excellent") to CIC 2019, 18% of them scored the camporee as "Average," and just 1% percent felt it was "Poor."

The Pathfinder Survey gathered information on key aspects of Pathfinders' spiritual journeys in order to help the Seventh-day Adventist Church develop programs and activities that better address their needs. Of the 1021 Pathfinders who filled out the survey, this analysis focuses on just the 464 Pathfinders from the USA and Canada who declared to be active members of a Pathfinder club at the time of the survey, are currently attending school, and are not yet in a college or graduate school.

The findings show that about 17.3% of girls and 13.6% of boys report that they are likely not to remain in the Seventh-day Adventist Church when they are on their own. The data also acknowledges factors that may help to keep youth in the Adventist faith (a confirmation of Dudley's eight predictors: (1) the mother attends church regularly, (2) the teenager attends Adventist school, (3) the father attends church regularly, (4) the teenager participates in family worship, (5) the teenager considers Adventist standards and rules reasonable, (6) the teenager is close to the local church pastor, (7) the teenager is close to Christian peers, and (8) the teenager has a mentor in the church.

The areas in the youths' spiritual life that correlate most strongly to their commitment to remain an active member when they are on their own include:

1. *Positive religion or spirituality* (Survey questions that correlate: "Religion is important in my life;" "I have a love experience with Jesus Christ;" "I look forward to meet Jesus when He comes again;" "God's truth is important in my life.")
2. *Attitude to religious things* (Survey questions that correlate: "I look forward to Sabbath School with joy," "I look forward to meet Jesus when He comes again," "God's truth is important to my life.")
3. *Participation/personal Devotion* (Survey topics that correlate: worship with the family, pray personally, read the Bible on your own, read Ellen White's books.)

This study recommends that church leaders seriously consider prioritizing the following in their strategies:

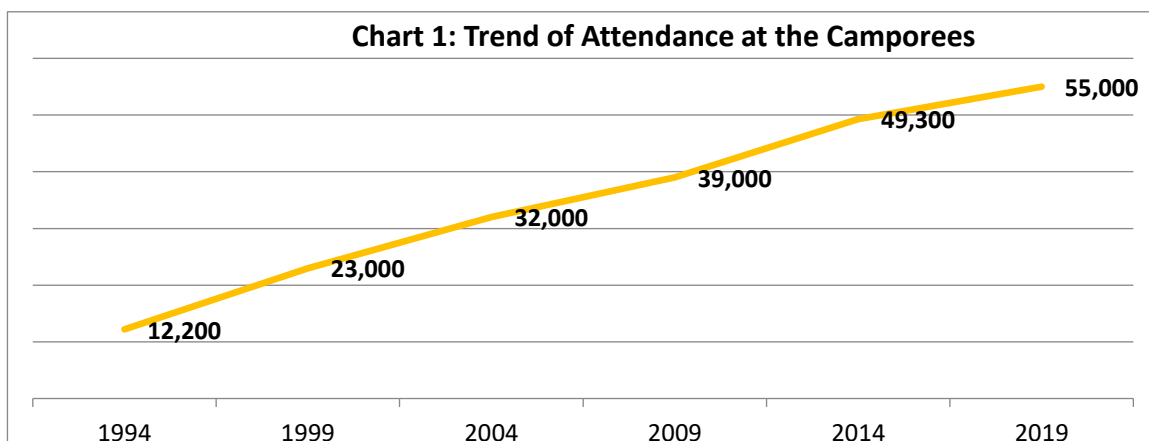
- Create of an environment of acceptance, offer spiritual help, and mentor young people at the local church level.
- Emphasize a love experience with Jesus, rather than on standards/rules.
- Make the Sabbath experience positive both at church and home.
- Encourage/enable parents to send their kids to Adventist schools, where the youth can interact with other Christian/Adventist peers.

CHOSEN INTERNATIONAL CAMPOREE SURVEY REPORTS

Youth represent the most valuable asset of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Adventist movement, foresaw that God’s mission on earth would reach out onto the ends of the earth through the work of dedicated young people. She wrote, “The church is languishing for the help of [young men and women] who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God’s people, and so increase the power of the church in the world (*Message to Young People* 1930:25). It goes without saying that God’s heart bleeds and the church suffers when one of these “little ones” goes astray and turns away from following the divine Master Guide. The leaders of our church have the immense task of shepherding God’s young flock, making sure that the Enemy has no opportunity to wreak havoc on their malleable, fragile lives.

Pathfinder Camporees are part of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s strategy to nurture teenagers, draw them closer to Jesus and to one another, and build/solidify their spiritual foundation. The goal of this is that when they grow up and are on their own (i.e., no longer under the direct influence/rules of their parents), they remain a part of the Adventist Church.

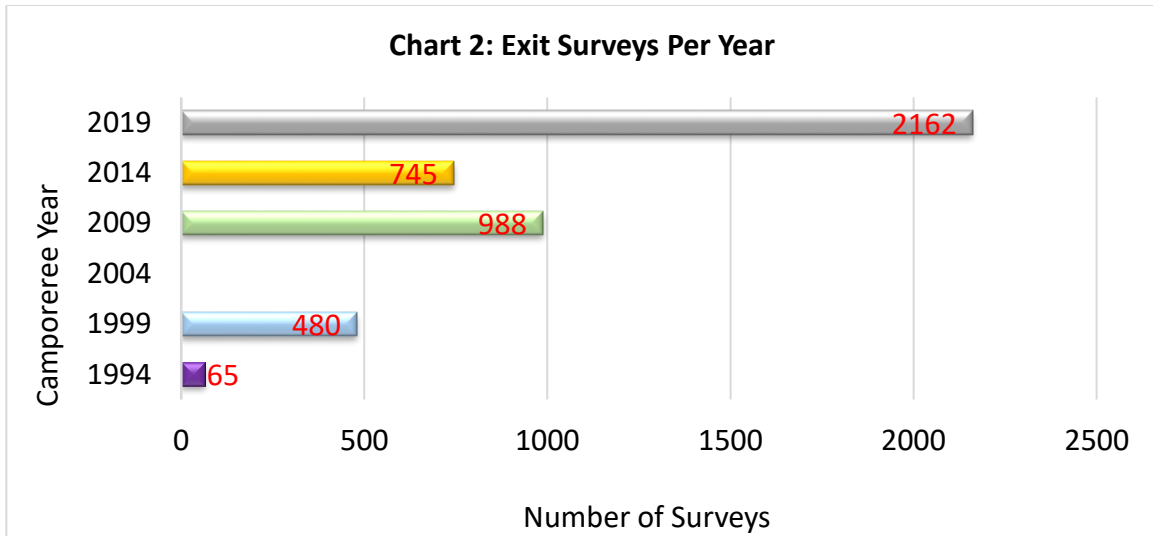
The Chosen International Camporee 2019 (CIC 2019) gathered more than 55,000 Pathfinders, in Oshkosh, WI, from August 12–17, 2019. This was a record number of attendees, as compared to previous camps (see Chart 1: Trend of Attendance at the Camporee). The main goal of this quinquennial event is to offer a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to Pathfinders to connect to one another and to strengthen their relationships with God.



This report summarizes two surveys conducted by the Institute of Church Ministry in collaboration with the Center for Youth Evangelism: the Exit Survey and the Pathfinder Survey. Participants in the surveys include Pathfinders, their parents or legal guardians, club directors, and other camporee participants.

1. THE EXIT SURVEY

The Exit Survey was conducted online through [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) from August 16–31, 2019. A record number of participants, 2,162, filled out the questionnaire (See Chart 2: Exit Survey Per Year). The goal of the survey was to collect participants’ feedback on various aspects of the camporee.



Overall, 81% of those who filled out the survey gave the highest score “Excellent” to CIC 2019, 18% of them scored the camp as “Average,” and just 1% percent felt it was “Poor.”

The comments from the exit survey are very positive. “Amazing,” “Incredible,” “Awesome,” “Excellent,” “Great,” “Inspiring” are a few of the adjectives used to describe CIC 2019. One participant, in exultation, writes:

“This is my first camporee and I was amazed! It was an awesome experience. I enjoyed the nightly program and being surrounded by so many different cultures who love the Lord. I was inspired to attend by my nephew who was a pathfinder and attended the Forever Faithful Camporee. He talked about this camporee for years and how awesome it was. He is now 18 and came back this year. I met so many people from different conferences and had several conversations with them about how they arrived and the setup of their camp site. Some fantastic testimonies and experiences!”

This participant goes on to recommend: “It would be awesome if you created a website/blog where conferences and churches can share their experiences, fundraisers, camp set up, lessons learned. This can help to others who want to attend, improve on logistics, and suggestions on raising money.”

Another participant reacts this way: “Absolutely amazing how 55,000 people were housed, fed, provided outstanding activities, and inspired! A big vote of appreciation to leadership and all the behind the scenes individuals who made this event such a great success!”

Other participants believe that, with such a big crowd, a larger space will be necessary in the future, or that the organizers may need to reduce admittance in the future. Some advocated for more showers and better coordination/communication when it comes to RV parking. In addition, quite a bit of feedback were related to earning honors; for example, “It would be nice if part of the honors description included information about whether it was a walk thru, first come first serve, day of sign up or at the beginning of the week sign up.”

The survey highlights the top five areas of improvement at the CIC 2019, as compared to FFIC 2014: the theme song, website support, the Sabbath Speaker, onsite information booths, overall facility. The top

five areas of concern include: YMCA, the overall daytime programming, food & beverage sales, giant screens, TLT volunteer programs.

2. THE PATHFINDER SURVEY

The Pathfinder Survey was conducted during the period from August 12–17, 2019. The goal of the survey was to gather information on key aspects of the spiritual journey of Pathfinders in order to help the Church develop programs and activities that better address their needs.

Methodology

A total of 1,021 Pathfinders took the survey, but the analysis focuses on the 464 Pathfinders from the USA and Canada who declared to be active members of a Pathfinder club at the time of the survey, are not yet a in college, a graduate school, or out of school. This year, the data analysis focuses on Dudley’s predictors of teenagers leaving/staying in the church when they are on their own.

Roger Dudley’s 2000 study “Why Teenagers are Leaving the Church” identified eight factors that can help predict which types of teenagers are more likely to remain in the church when they are on their own. These factors are (1) the mother attends church regularly, (2) the teenager attends Adventist school, (3) the father attends church regularly, (4) the teenager participates in family worship, (5) the teenager considers Adventist standards and rules reasonable, (6) the teenager is close to the local church pastor, (7) the teenager is close to Christian peers, and (8) the teenager has mentor in the church.

To test these eight predictors in relation to the CIC 2019 Survey data, researchers ran a frequency analysis to determine what “types” of teenagers “Strongly Agreed” with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”

Researchers also regrouped the variables into sub-categories and computed the mean for each category, then ran a regression analysis to determine which areas (subcategory of combined variables) in the teenagers’ life correlated more to the statement, “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”

Key Findings

- 1) About 17.3% of girls and 13.6% of boys are not sure they will remain an active Seventh-day Adventist when they are on their own.
- 2) The data confirms all eight of Dudley’s predictors. The percentage of young people who “Strongly Agreed” with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own” is higher among teenagers who fall into any of the eight categories. (See below for details).
- 3) The items with the strongest correlations with the commitment to remain an active Adventist are:
 - a. Positive religion or spirituality (.653)
 - b. Attitude to religious things (.470)
 - c. Participation/personal Devotion (.383)

Please note:

- *Positive religion or Spirituality* includes the following survey questions: “Religion is important in my life,” “I have a love experience with Jesus Christ,” “I look forward to meet Jesus when He comes again,” “God’s truth is important in my life.”
- *Attitude to religious things* includes the following survey questions: “I look forward to Sabbath School with joy,” “I look forward to meet Jesus when He comes again,” “God’s truth is important to my life.”

- *Participation/Personal Devotion* includes the following topics: worship with the family, pray personally, read the Bible on your own, read Ellen White's books.

Statistics on Dudley's predictors

Here are the demographic statistics (% of participants that "Strongly Agreed" with the statement: "I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own") for each of Dudley's eight key factors.

- 1) **Factor:** Mothers attend regularly
 - There is a higher percentage among those whose mothers attend church nearly every week (67%), as compared to those whose mother attends church once or twice a month or less (48%).
- 2) **Factor:** SDA school attendance
 - There is a higher percentage among those who attend Adventist schools (76%), as opposed to those who attend non-Adventist schools (58%).
- 3) **Factor:** Father attends church regularly
 - There is a higher percentage among those whose fathers attend church nearly every week (70%), compared to those whose fathers attend church once in a while or 1 or 2 times a month (57%), and to those whose fathers never attend church (52%).
- 4) **Factor:** Participate regularly in family worship
 - The percentage is higher among those who attend family worship almost every day and once or twice a week (73%), as opposed to those who attend once or twice a month (52%), once in a while (58%), or never (38%).
- 5) **Factor:** Consider Adventist standards and rules reasonable
 - The percentage is higher among those who strongly agree that the Adventist standards/rules are reasonable (82%), as compared to those who somewhat agree (68%) or disagree (48%).
- 6) **Factor:** Close to pastor
 - The percentage is higher among those are very close (76%), somewhat close (75%), or moderately close (63%) to Adventist peers, as compared to those who are not close or distant to their local church pastor (44%).
- 7) **Factor:** Christian peers
 - The percentage is higher among those who are very close (67%), somewhat close (73%), or moderately close (63%) to Christian peers, as compared to those who are not close or distant to Christian peers (30%).
 - The percentage is higher among those who are very close (72%), somewhat close (66%), or moderately close (66%) to Adventist peers, as compared to those who are not close or distant to Adventist peers (28%).
- 8) **Factor:** Mentor in the church
 - The percentage is higher among those who strongly agree that the church meets their spiritual need (85%), as compared to those who strongly or somewhat disagree (45%)

Other Factors

Parents married or divorced

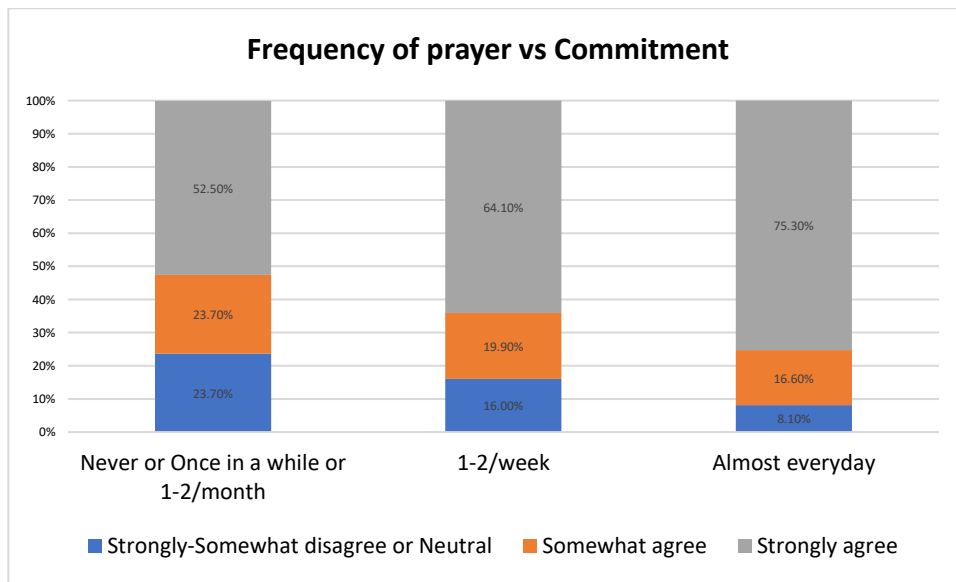
The percentage is higher among those whose biological parents are married and live together (68%), as opposed to those whose biological parents have another arrangement (54%).

The percentage is higher among those who live with their biological parents (69%), as compared to those who don't (53%).

Key Findings

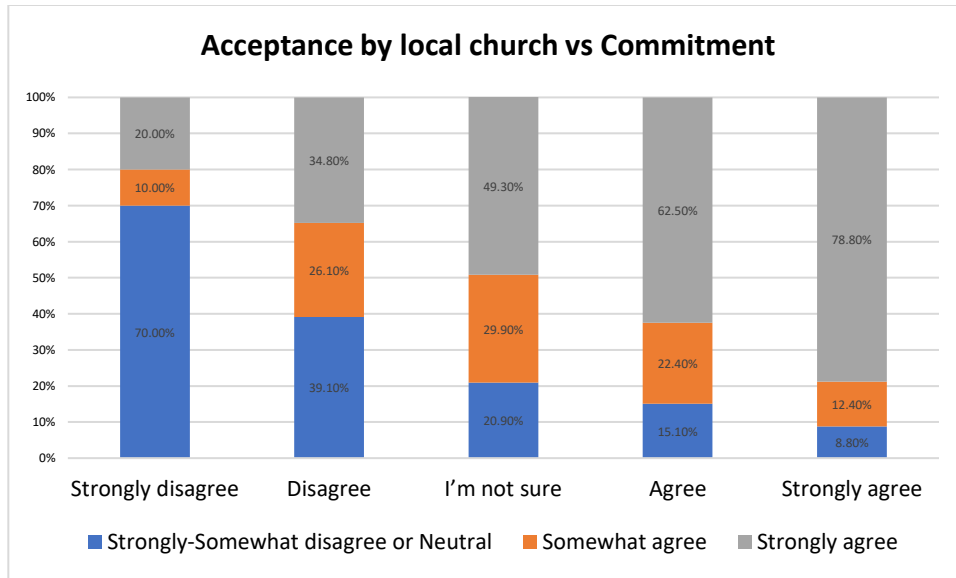
1. Prayer makes a difference in the young people's commitment to remain a Seventh-day Adventist

The desire or intention to remain in the Adventist faith, even when he/she is on his/her own, is stronger among those who pray more regularly.



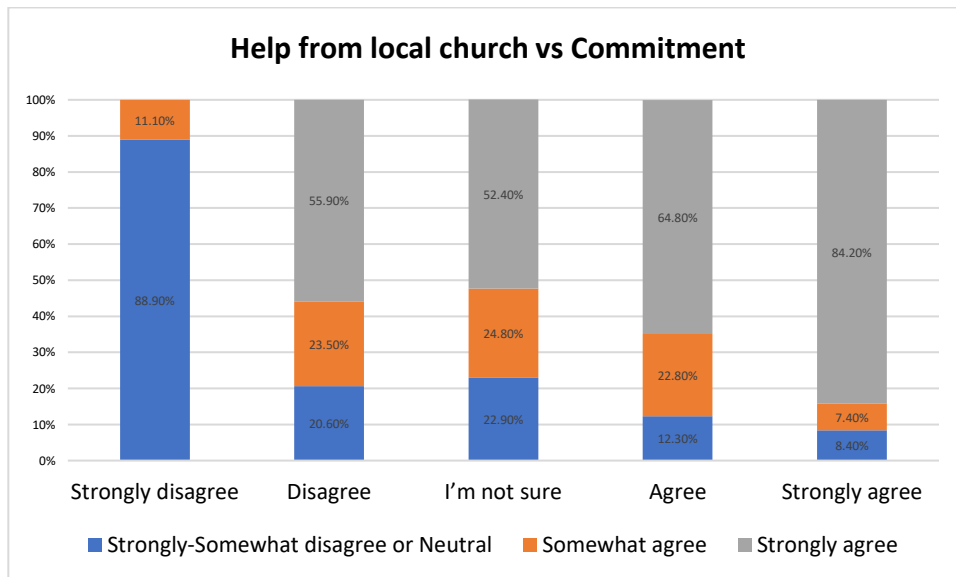
2. Acceptance in the local church makes a difference in the young people's commitment to remain a Seventh-day Adventist

The stronger the feeling of acceptance by the local church, the stronger the agreement with the statement "I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own."



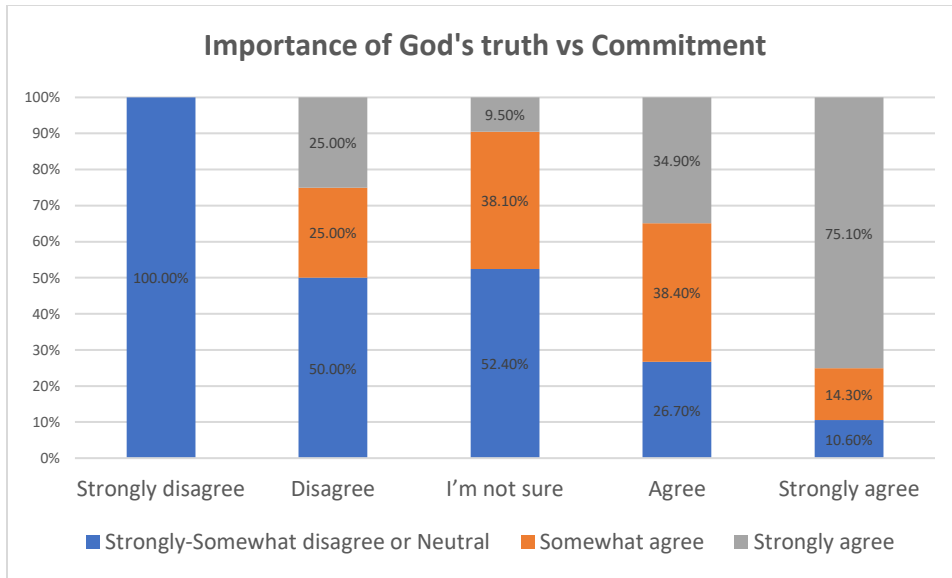
3. *The local church's help to grow spiritually makes a difference*

The stronger the agreement with the statement “My local church helps me grow spiritually,” the stronger the agreement with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



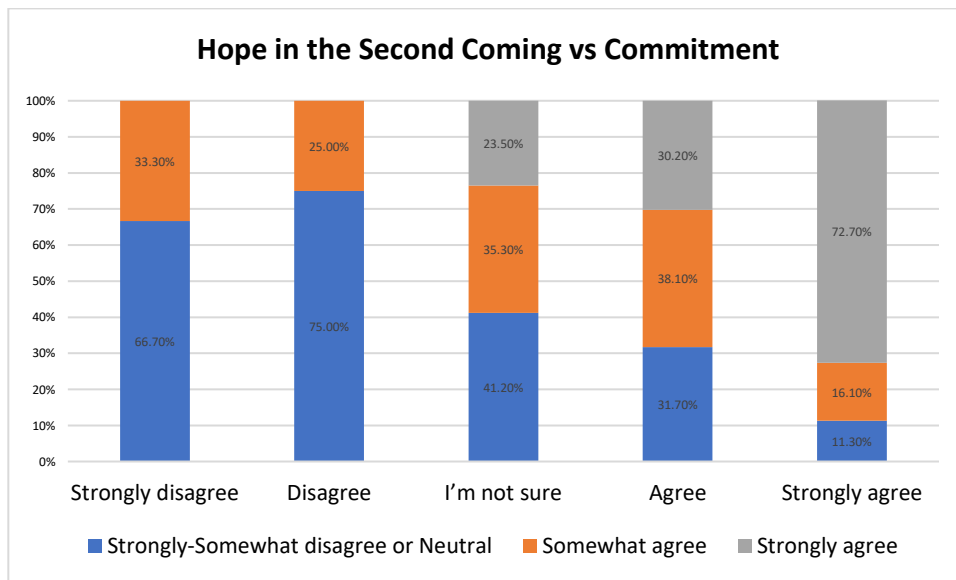
4. *God's truth is important to the life of those who commit to stay in the church*

The stronger the agreement to the statement “God’s truth is important to my life,” the strongest the agreement to the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



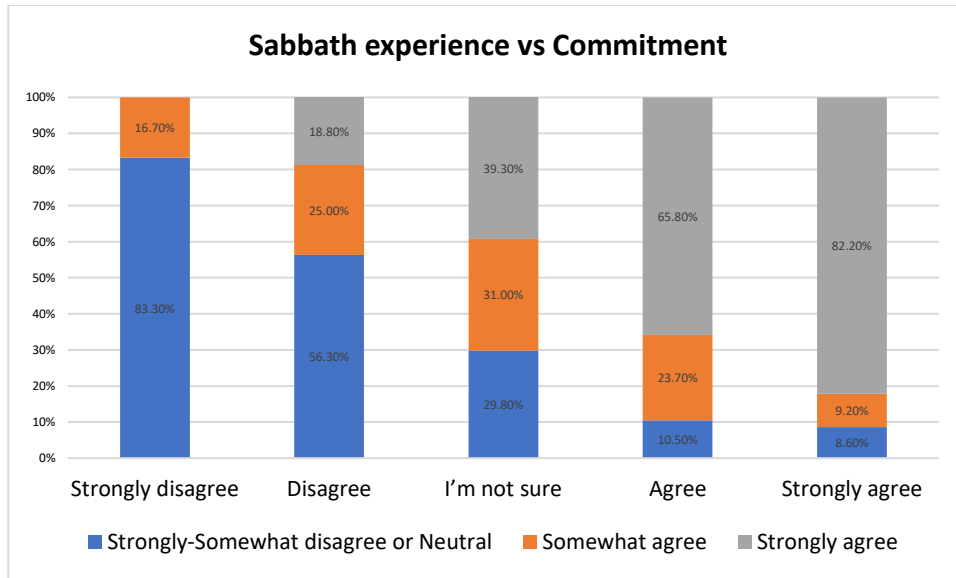
5. *Hope in the Second Coming is important for those who commit to stay in the church*

The stronger the agreement to the truth about the second coming, the stronger the agreement with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



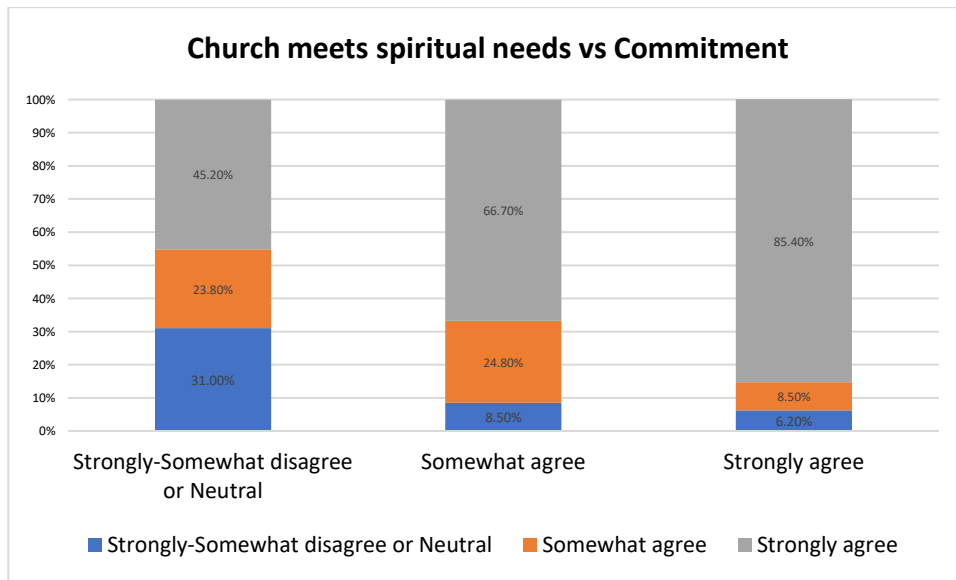
6. *Making the Sabbath a joyful experience makes a difference in the commitment to stay in the church*

The stronger the agreement to the statement “I look forward to the Sabbath with joy,” the stronger the agreement with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



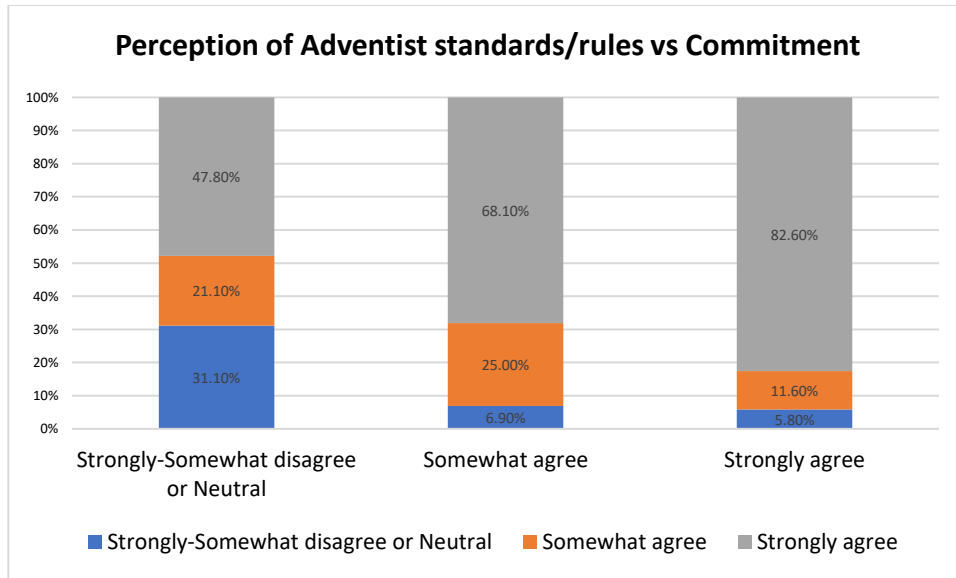
7. *When the church meets the spiritual need of youth (Sabbath school, literature, church services, etc.), they are more likely to commit to stay in the church*

The stronger the agreement “The church meets the spiritual need of youth (Sabbath school, literature, church services, etc.),” the stronger the agreement with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



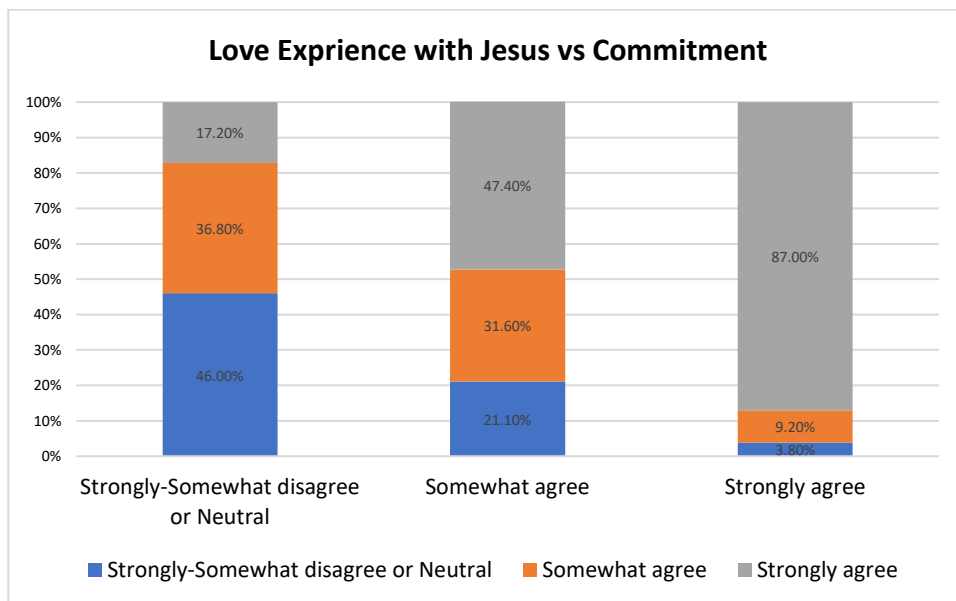
8. *The positive perception regarding the standards/rules of the church makes a difference in young people’s intention to stay in the church*

The stronger the agreement “Adventist standards/rules are quite reasonable,” the stronger the agreement with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



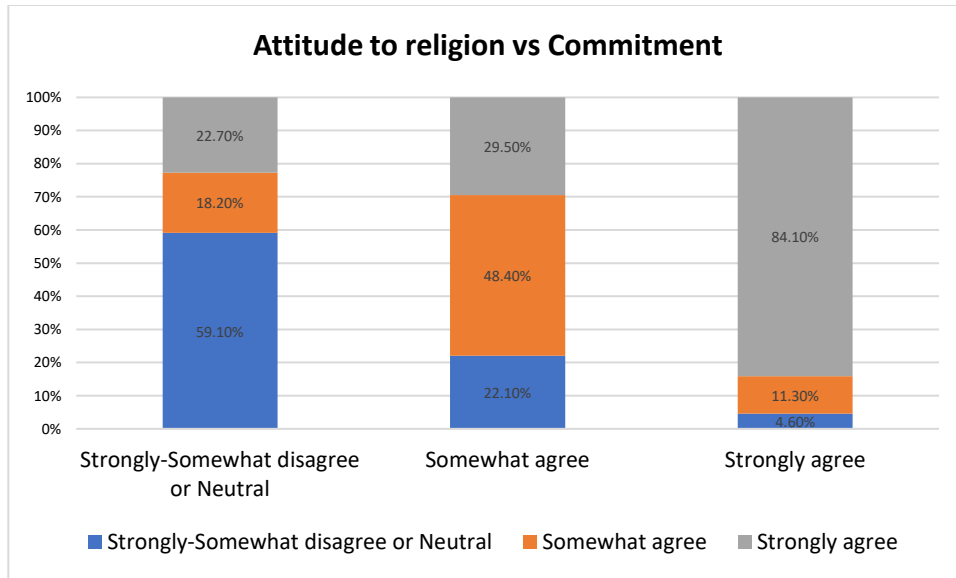
9. *Having a love experience with Jesus Christ is a key factor in the commitment to stay in the church*

Those who strongly agree with the statement “I have a love experience with Jesus Christ,” are also those who strongly agree with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



10. *The view on religion is a factor in the commitment to stay in the church*

Those who strongly agree with the statement “Religion is important in my life,” are also those who strongly agree with the statement “I intend to remain an active Adventist when I am on my own.”



CONCLUSION

Overall, the Exit Survey and the Pathfinder Survey showcase some positive trends. The Exit Survey for example exhibit the potential of programs such as the CIC 2019 to attract, mobilize and impact a large number of youths from various parts of the world. The study recommends that the Seventh-Adventist Church harness that potential by making such programs available in other parts of the world. In the process, the NAD could play a key role by documenting the best practices in camporee organization and implementation, and sharing them with other Divisions. In the meantime, it is recommended that NAD keep improving the program, paying attention to participant’s feedback and addressing the areas of concern mentioned in this report.

The Pathfinder Survey helps gauge the level of risks that cause youth membership dropout in the Seventh-day Adventist church and points to ways the church can mitigate those risks. By knowing the factors that correlate to youth retention in the church, the leaders are endowed with the responsibility to prevent the youth from dropping out of the church.

The study recommends church leaders to seriously consider prioritizing the following in their strategies:

- Create of an environment of acceptance, offering spiritual help and mentoring to young people at the local church.
- A stronger emphasis on a love experience with Jesus than on standards/rules
- Make the Sabbath experience a positive one at church and at home
- Encourage/enable parents to send their kids to Adventist schools where they can interact with Christian/Adventist peers.