A Contextual Analysis Of The Seventh-day Adventist Church In Norway, With Suggestions For Renewal And Growth

Kjell Aune

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ABSTRACT

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORWAY, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR RENEWAL AND GROWTH

by

Kjell Aune

Advisers: Bruce L. Bauer, Rudi Maier
Title: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORWAY, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR RENEWAL AND GROWTH

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Name and degree of faculty advisers: Bruce L. Bauer, D.Miss.; Rudi Maier, Ph.D.

Date completed: June 2005

Problem

Since 1979, when the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway peaked, the membership has declined. There are underlying, complex reasons. This project seeks the underlying causes for the decline, and suggests possible solutions.

Method

The study begins by establishing a theological basis for ministry. Norwegian society is then analyzed demographically followed by an analysis of the Adventist Church in Norway, that includes a historical and organizational analysis, a review of
the database material for the Adventist Church in Norway, and by four questionnaires designed for (1) Active members, (2) Pastors, (3) Former members, and (4) Young non-Adventists with an Adventist background. The process of strategic planning is then spelled out.

Results

Church growth is not just something technical, functional or numerical. It is a project of the heart. Outer growth starts with inner growth. Based on demographics of the Norwegian society, it can be concluded that there is a need for home-based, relational and felt-need activities. The church needs to be more sensitive towards the needs and ways of postmoderns and youth. More variety and tolerance is called for. Attention to the following groups will increase growth: Youth growing up in Adventist homes, guests visiting local churches, people with felt needs, immigrants, postmoderns, youth wanting a different format or emphasis, new members, and former members. Spiritual renewal, relevance of preaching, discipling, spiritual gifts, and wide involvement need more attention. The role of the pastor needs to change to encourage more training and equipping. Focus on spiritual renewal and awareness is needed. Adventist distinctives need to be presented in a less theoretical way, showing the benefits in everyday life. The Church needs to be better at analyzing, involving, planning, following up, and evaluating.

Conclusion

There is hope for turning the negative trend to positive growth in the Adventist Church in Norway. A new way of thinking, a changed emphasis, adjusted methods,
more variety and tolerance, and targeting groups with the greatest potential, can result in new growth. With more attention to the process of planning and evaluating, projects may succeed, and losses can be reduced.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORWAY, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR RENEWAL AND GROWTH

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

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John K. McVay

June 28, 2005
Date approved
DEDICATION

This project paper is dedicated to my best friend, team-worker, and wife, Marianne, who has always supported our common call, stood by my side, helped and supported me. Without her, I would not be able to live out my calling, and the completion of this doctoral project would not have been possible without her support, encouragement, and practical help.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose

Since 1979 when the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway peaked with 5,524 members, the membership has declined, especially since 1993. During the ten year period from 1993 to 2002 the membership went from 5,396 members to 4,811 members, which means an average net decrease of 58.5 members per year. If the decrease continued at the same rate there would statistically be no members left by 2084. I do not think God will let this happen, but I think it is naïve and wrong to suppress the facts and to pretend things are all right. I think God will help the Church, but I also think God wants us to be aware of what we need help for, and to do whatever we can to turn the tide with God’s help. God will help his Church, but we cannot expect him to do it against the will, awareness, and cooperation of the Church.

The situation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway is not primarily a problem of numbers. The real problems are the underlying reasons for the decrease. No one knows what the problem is, but there are a lot of theories circulating. The cause for the membership decrease is complex, but it is also important for the Church to seek for the causes and then do something about it.
In this project I will attempt to seek for the underlying causes for the negative church growth in Norway. I will do a situational analysis which will include both external and internal factors.

**Overview**

In *chapter 2* I will look at the underlying basis for ministry and church growth, because if the basis is not in place, the growth of the church will be affected.

In *chapter 3* I will do an external analysis in the form of a demographic study of the Norwegian society and the postmodern generation. This external analysis will give a better understanding of the people the church is dealing with. Adventist leaders want to understand why it is so hard to reach Norwegians, and need this knowledge in order to develop a strategy for increased growth.

McNamara emphasized the importance of taking external analysis very seriously by saying, “Many nonprofit leaders believe that the external analysis is not worth their time in the planning process because they assume that they already know what is going on around their nonprofit organization. Besides, they rationalize, they do not have sufficient resources to conduct the analysis even if they wanted to do so. During strategic planning, these organizations might build a beautiful ladder—but entirely on the wrong roof.”

In *chapter 4* I will do an internal analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway by looking at the history and demographics of the Church in order to

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understand what is happening, and what needs to be done. The last half of chapter 4 is the most significant part of this project, where I share four surveys I have done among active members, former members, pastors, and young non-Adventists with an Adventist background. The results of these surveys provide good information on reasons for decline and possible needs to be filled.

In *chapter 5* I will give suggestions that may contribute to the development of positive growth for the Adventist Church in Norway. My suggestions in chapter 5 will be based on the studies done in chapters 2, 3, and 4. Since my study deals with the total Norwegian situation and many levels of the church contribute to growth, I cannot suggest one, single strategy. What I can do, is to point out facts and principles that—when taken seriously by the single member, the local churches, the pastors, the leadership of the three conferences and of the Norwegian union—will contribute to necessary changes, and hopefully lead to positive church growth for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway.

To my knowledge no such systematic study of the Norwegian Adventist Church and the Norwegian Society, in the perspective of Adventist church growth, has ever been done, at least not in recent years. The surveys in chapter 4 are unique in the Adventist setting. It is my hope that this project will make a qualified contribution to the debate about why church membership in Norway is decreasing and will give well founded suggestions for the way forward.
Methods and Limitations

Source Material

The material on the personal, spiritual, and theological basis for ministry, and on church growth, that is shared in chapter 2, is—in addition to my own thinking—partly based on notes from lectures by Jon Dybdahl, and partly on available literature dealing with these issues.

The description of the Norwegian society is based on books, newspaper articles, and information from the web, dealing with sociology, demographics, and statistics. Many of the books have been found in university libraries in Norway. The governmental bureau ‘Statistics Norway’ provided large amount of official, demographic, statistical information that is readily available. Many surveys referred to are conducted by newspapers, and reported in newspaper articles with references given so that it is possible to get in contact with the authors.

Surveys

The surveys referred to and analyzed in chapter 4 involved a great amount of work. Counsels on how to formulate questions and help in interpreting the data by use of statistical computer software was given by Snorri Olafsson in Norway. Without his help, this project in its present form would not have been possible. My wife Marianne Søgaard Aune entered the collected data into the computer program.

Marita Kendel at the Norwegian Union provided me with statistical information on the membership of the Adventist Church in Norway. This information was based on data available from the membership records in the Norwegian Union.
Marita also provided me with many of the graphics showing the membership information.

The Church leadership at the conference and union levels in Norway also helped in making this project possible by allowing the surveys to be distributed, by sharing the addresses for the recipients of the questionnaires, and by sponsoring this project financially. Furthermore, many church pastors helped by collecting addresses of young non-Adventists with an Adventist background.

The success with the research questionnaires was possible because of the willingness of so many active members, former members, and non-Adventist young people, to take part in the questionnaires. Many even encouraged me in doing the project.

My thanks go to all those mentioned by name or referred to in the above groups, for contributing and making this project possible.

Definitions

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is usually referred to in this project paper as the ‘Adventist Church’, or simply as the ‘Church’ with a capital C. The terms ‘conferences’ and ‘union’ refer to organizational entities in the Adventist Church. Chapter 3 will explain this in greater detail.

Outline

For a project like the present one, it is wise and even necessary to use some kind of logic model both in planning, presenting, and evaluating the project. “A logic model is a systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the
relationship among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.”¹ A logic model “provides a roadmap of your program, highlighting how it is expected to work, what activities need to come before others, and how desired outcomes are achieved.”² A ‘logical framework’—also called a ‘log frame’—will be used to visualize this project. This is “a tool for planning and managing development projects. It looks like a table (or framework) and aims to present information about the key components of a project in a clear, concise, logical and systematic way.”³ The log frame is a pictorial, concise way of presentation that serves my purpose well, and is a useful tool both for the process of thinking and planning, and for presenting the actual project.

Use of Logical Framework

A logical framework “defines the tasks to be undertaken, the resources required, and the responsibilities of management.”⁴ In its most basic form, a logical framework has four columns and four rows.


Objectives

The first vertical column of the log frame presents the objectives, or the intervention logic. The logical direction when reading the objectives from such a log frame is to read from the bottom up, that is: the activities, then the results or outputs, then the project purpose and at last the overall goal.

Activities spell out “how the project’s goods and services will be delivered.”\(^1\) All the actual tasks required to produce the desired outputs will be found here. The activities lead to the next level of objectives: The results or outputs.

In the results or outputs column the “services to be delivered to the intended beneficiaries or target group”\(^2\) are described. This column describes the direct results of the project activities, or “the specifically deliverable results expected from the project to attain the purpose.”\(^3\)

The project purpose lists the core problem to be addressed, and is “defined in terms of the benefits to be received by the project beneficiaries or target group as a result of utilizing the services provided by the program.”\(^4\) The project purpose shows the immediate impact, effects, changes, or benefits that occur if the project outputs are achieved. The immediate project purpose should contribute to the overall goal.

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\(^1\)Ibid., 23.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)BOND, 4.

\(^4\)European Commission, 23.
In a log frame, the overall goal indicates why the project "is important to society, in terms of the longer-term benefits to beneficiaries and the wider benefits to other groups." The overall goal is the wider problem that the project will help to resolve, or the ultimate result that the project is contributing to on a long term basis. The overall goal will not be achieved by this project alone, but will require a follow up of other programs and projects.

**Indicators and Verifications**

Read horizontally across a logframe from right to left. First, clarify the assumptions. Based on these assumptions, go to the source or means of verification, and then again to the verifiable or measurable indicators, showing that the objectives are reached.

The assumptions refer to external factors which must be in place in order to ensure progress, complete the project, and reach the objectives.

The sources or means of verification mean "the information or data required to assess progress against indicators and their sources," in other words the methods and sources to quantify or assess indicators.

Verifiable indicators are also referred to as measurable indicators, and refer to

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1 Ibid.

2 BOND, 2.
quantitative and qualitative ways of measuring progress and whether project results, purpose, and goals have been achieved.¹

**Logical Framework of Project**

Table 1 shows a logical framework for the project entitled “A Contextual Analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway, with Suggestions for Renewal and Growth.”

**Activity Plan**

‘Activities’ refer to a separate ‘Activity Plan’. This activity plan is presented in table 2 in the form of a so called ‘Gantt Chart’. The activity plan for this project spans a four year period. Separate charts are presented for year 2003, 2004, and 2005-2006.

¹Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Logical Framework</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTERVENTION LOGIC</strong></td>
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</table>
| **OVERALL GOAL**            | Increasing the vitality and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway | • Net increase of membership  
• Fewer members leaving the church  
• More young people with church background joining the church  
• Increased attendance in church activities and meetings  
• Greater fulfillment and satisfaction among active members and pastors | • Official Church records and statistics  
• Interviews among the active members and pastors could be done regularly | • Pastors, churches/members and organizational units accept findings and develop strategic plans |
| **PROJECT PURPOSE**         | Contribute towards a greater understanding of the Norwegian Society and the Adventist Church, with implications for renewal and growth planning | • More churches and organizational units making sensible strategic plans  
• Churches making necessary changes as a consequence of new knowledge and better understanding  
• Pastors making necessary changes in their priorities and work program  
• Organizational units refocusing attention and priorities | • Plans developed by pastors, churches, and organizational units | • Executive committees, churches, and pastors will respond to suggestions  
• Articles written will be accepted  
• Invitation to meet with boards  
• Invitation to lecture at workers meeting(s) |
| **RESULTS/OUTPUTS**         | 1. Analysis of the Norwegian society and the SDA Church completed | • Collection of newspaper articles by June 2003  
• Collection of national records and statistics by June 2003  
• Collection of sociological and anthropological material and analyses by June 2003  
• Completed questionnaires by June 2005 | • National, daily Christian newspaper “Vårt Land” & other papers  
• Books from public library and libraries of the university and high schools in Bergen, Norway  
• National, official statistics published by "Statistics Norway" (Statistisk Sentralbyrå)  
• Statistical expertise and advice by Dr. Snorri Olafsson, Norway | • Norwegian Union granting money to cover survey expenses  
• Sufficient material available from newspapers, libraries, and other sources  
• Help from necessary expertise to plan questionnaire and to interpret the results |
|                             | 2. Strategy planning process suggested | • Guide in strategic work written, Fall 2004  
• A suggested strategic log frame made, Fall 2004  
• Implications of analysis on strategy summarized and clarified, Fall 2004 | • Literature on strategic planning  
• Dissertation chapters on Norwegian society and the Church | • Sufficient knowledge and guidance received through classwork and assigned reading in the D.Min. program  
• Clear, relevant and conclusive info. gathered  
• Editors accepting articles for print  
• Invitation to lecture at worker’s meetings  
• Invitation to meet executive boards |
|                             | 3. Insights gathered from research shared | • Knowledge and awareness of the status and needs of the society and the Church increased among pastors, members, leaders, and boards by end of 2006 | • Articles in local and international Church papers  
• Meeting with pastors in worker’s meetings | |
Table 1—Continued.

| ACTIVITIES | See separate Activity Plan | • Moral and financial support from the Norwegian Union and West Norway Conference  
• Sufficient response from the groups receiving questionnaires  
• Expertise helping to design and interpret questionnaires |
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Gather and analyze information on Norwegian society and Adventist Church</td>
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<td>2.1 Explain the process of making a strategy using a log frame concept</td>
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<td>2.2 Clarify basic considerations based on the analysis and surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Write articles in Norwegian and international Church papers based on dissertation research</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 Share findings with Norwegian leaders and pastors</td>
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Table 2. Activity Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time schedule, 2003</th>
<th>Personell</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Result 1 Analysis of the Norwegian Society Completed</td>
<td>Jan 03 Feb 03 Mar 03 Apr 03 May 03 Jun 03 Jul 03 Aug 03 Sep 03 Oct 03 Nov 03 Dec 03</td>
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<td>Activity 1.1 Gather and analyze information on Norwegian society and Adventist Church</td>
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<td>1.1.1 Collect relevant newspaper articles</td>
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<td>1.1.1.1 Sort and organize the newspaper clippings</td>
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<td>1.1.2 Find relevant sociological, anthropological, and religious literature in libraries in Bergen</td>
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<td>1.1.2.1 Organize collected material from libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.3 Get hold of official statistics published by &quot;Statistics Norway&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.3.1 Organize collected statistical material &amp; make tables &amp; graphs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.4 Make four questionnaires (active members, pastors, former members, &amp; young non-SDAs with SDA background)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.4.1 Formulate and design the questionnaires</td>
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<td>1.1.4.2 Collect addresses</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.4.3 Send out the questionnaires</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.4.4 Punch the returned forms</td>
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<td>1.1.4.5 Interpret the information with special computer programs</td>
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<td>1.1.4.6 Make tables and graphs</td>
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<td>1.1.5 Analyze and write...</td>
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<td>1.1.5.1 ... about context of Norw. society</td>
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<td>1.1.5.2 ... based on Church records</td>
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<td>1.1.5.3 ... about questionnaires</td>
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<td>Result 2: Strategy Planning Process</td>
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<td>Activity 2.1 Explain the process of making a strategy using a log frame concept</td>
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<td>Result 3: Insights Gathered from Research Shared</td>
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<td>Activity 3.1 Write articles based on dissertation research</td>
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<td>3.1.2 Article in international paper</td>
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<td>Activity 3.2 Share findings ...</td>
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<td>3.2.1 ... with Norwegian leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2.2 ... in workers meetings</td>
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Milestones:
1 = Source material from newspapers collected and organized
2 = Source material from libraries collected and organized
3 = Statistical material from Church records collected and organized

Key for Shareholders:
Auth = The author of this dissertation
Expe = Special Expertise
L = Lead role
S = Support role
Table 2—Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time schedule, 2004</th>
<th>Personell</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Result 2: Strategy Planning Process Suggested</td>
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<td>Result 3: Insights Gathered from Research Shared</td>
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<td>Activity 3.1</td>
<td>Write articles based on dissertation research</td>
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<td>Articles in Norwegian papers</td>
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Milestones:
4 = Questionnaire project completed
5 = Written analysis of Church and society completed
6 = Strategy planning process suggested in writing

Key for "Who is responsible?"
Auth = The author of this dissertation
Secr = Secretarial help
Expe = Special expertise
Unio = Norwegian Union
Past = Pastors
L = Lead role
S = Support role
Table 2—Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Time schedule, 2005-2006</th>
<th>Personell</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Result 1</strong></td>
<td>Analysis of the Norwegian Society Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 1.1</strong></td>
<td>Gather and analyze information on Norwegian society and Adventist Church</td>
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<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>Collect relevant newspaper articles</td>
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<td>1.1.1.1</td>
<td>Sort and organize the newspaper clippings</td>
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<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>Find relevant sociological, anthropological, and religious literature in libraries in Bergen</td>
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<td>1.1.2.1</td>
<td>Organize collected material from libraries</td>
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<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>Get hold of official statistics published by &quot;Statistics Norway&quot;</td>
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<td>1.1.3.1</td>
<td>Organize collected statistical material and make tables and graphs</td>
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<td>1.1.4</td>
<td>Complete four questionnaires (active members, pastors, former members, &amp; young non-SDAs with SDA background)</td>
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<td>Formulate and design the questionnaires</td>
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<td>Collect addresses</td>
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<td>Send out the questionnaires</td>
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</table>

**Milestones:**
- **7** = Articles written
- **8** = Findings shared

**Key for Shareholders**
- **Auth** = The author of this dissertation
- **Lead** = Leadership of NORUC / Conferences
- **Past** = Pastors
- **L** = Lead role
- **S** = Support role
CHAPTER 2

PERSONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR MINISTRY

Important Basic Issues

The status of the Church, and its growth or decline, are not just questions of methodology or external matters. Whether a church will grow or decline has to do with the spiritual condition and the worldview of its members, and especially of its leaders and pastors. The personality type, giftedness, and styles of the leaders, and how the leadership team function together, are important factors that can lead to growth or decline.

Our doing is based on our being. Religion, theology, and mission are more matters of the heart than matters of the head. Rather than starting with systems and methods we should start by focusing on spiritual formation. There is too often an emphasis on the mechanical and methodological sides of ministry at the cost of the core issue of spirituality.

If we are not very conscious about this, church growth will become a matter of functionalism. If church membership decreases or we want greater growth, we often look for new methods and better mechanics. Church growth has to do with inner, spiritual growth as well as numerical growth. I believe we should start by looking into our hearts. Like Reggie McNeal, I will argue "for a return to center, a return of interest
and investigation into God’s activity in his primary target—the human heart. We will never see a genuine spiritual renewal . . . until we get down to some serious heart business.”¹ I will not take it for granted in this paper that church members in general or church leaders in particular already understand and apply the principles of spiritual formation.

For these reasons I want to begin this paper by starting with the heart and by dealing with a variety of personal and spiritual matters, relating this to church growth. Before trying to understand the reasons for the decrease in membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway, and before setting out to suggest a strategy for growth, I believe that we have some heart searching to do.

Heart Shaping Arenas

Reggie McNeal suggests in his book *A Work of Heart* that basic “heart shaping occurs in six significant arenas”: culture, call, community, communion, conflict, and commonplace.²

*Culture* includes all the environmental influences that shape a person. Culture serves God’s purposes, as it shapes the heart. The opposite also is true, the development of one’s heart affects the culture around. Culture forms, confronts, and challenges. Our challenge is to know where we come from, where we stand, where we want to go, and to know how to take others with us.

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²Ibid., xii-xiii.
Call involves God, the individual, the relationship, and task components. A Christian needs an awareness of a call and a conviction to what one has been called. Without a sense of call Christian service will often become too tough. Understanding one’s own mix of spiritual gifts and abilities is also a helpful way of coming to a call clarification.

Community shapes us. Nobody develops in isolation. The family of origin, current family, friends, and the congregation all participate as change agents for a Christian.

Communion with God is a heart shaping arena easily neglected. A busy life and technology threaten to shut down this communion. Programs and methods threaten to overshadow the personal side.

Conflict is another shaping agent that no one can escape. Personal, interpersonal, demonic, and organizational conflicts are all heart shaping.

Commonplace, or the everyday situation, provide heart shaping and ministry opportunities. Not only the extraordinary, but also the ordinary and routine shape us. How we respond to everyday challenges reflects the role God plays in our lives.

An awareness of all six of these shaping arenas is essential, whether designing questionnaires to find out what has gone wrong in the life of a person deciding to leave the church, or when designing a strategy for inner and outer growth.

Spiritual Formation

A person’s spiritual formation goes through stages. These stages are described and named differently by various authors. I personally like to depict the spiritual life
as a journey with four stages: (1) The Chaotic stage, (2) The Structure stage, (3) The Questioning stage, and (4) The Maturity stage.

In a life without God there is chaos. Key words are lawlessness, rebellion, and no structure. Hopefully people will come to realize that remaining at this stage is rather unsatisfactory and does not work well, so they move to the structure stage, which could also be called the 'institutional stage'.

At this stage the person is seeking answers and assurance. People remaining at this stage for some time may tend to think that they have arrived at the full truth and have all the answers. Things are clear cut. This is the stage of the -isms (traditionalism, pharisaism, literalism, etc.). After some time, the person hopefully finds out that there is more to life and religion than just straightforward answers. They realize that no organization is perfect and no set of beliefs is complete and airtight. The world is messy and complex, and is changing. To a certain degree truth also needs to be progressive. Theology has to be constantly revisioned. People at this stage see that theory and practice do not always fit, and therefore they move into the questioning stage.

This is the stage of searching and seeking. Entering this step indicates growth, not backsliding. The person at the questioning stage—it could also be called the ‘agnostic’, the ‘cynical’, or the ‘skeptical’ stage—seeks acceptance and understanding. Things are not taken for granted anymore. The person seeks balanced answers.

If a person remains at the structure stage or the questioning stage, it could easily result in backsliding, because when a person discovers that the terrain does not fit the map—or when a person has more questions than answers—in the long run that
person will become so disillusioned, disappointed, frustrated, and tired, that he may choose to give it all up.

The final stage is the stage of full maturity, sometimes also called the ‘communal’ or the ‘mystical’ stage. This stage of mature faith is based on God rather than structure. One has realized and accepted that it is not possible to have all the answers. Flexibility, sensitivity, mercy, trust, joy, and integrity are keywords. One is motivated by love and thankfulness rather than mere duty.

The relevance of understanding these stages when it comes to mission and church growth should be obvious. A person may have decided to leave the church in frustration because he or she did not get past the structure stage or the questioning stage. To achieve church growth by keeping people—and especially our young people—in the church, the Church has to be very conscious about these stages of the spiritual journey. The challenge is to help people from stage two to stage four without loosing them at stage three.

Stages of spiritual maturity is closely linked to the question of ‘worldview’ or perception of reality, as certain worldviews may hinder further growth. Individual spiritual growth and maturity are prerequisites for church growth.

**Worldview and Perception of Reality**

Worldview is the basic, core, foundational concepts underlying all that we think and do. Charles H. Kraft defines worldview as “the culturally structured
assumptions, values, and commitments underlying a people’s perception of REALITY [sic].”

Our worldview is influenced by our experience, our personality, our will, and the sin factor. This calls for a certain amount of humbleness on our side. Mostly, our worldview is unconscious, but it is important just because it is so foundational and happens largely unconsciously in our lives.

The divine part plays a less significant role in the modern mind, and is detached from real life. Paul G. Hiebert clarifies, in a very useful way, how the western mind tends to have a two-tiered view of reality. Religion and the matters of this world are put in two different compartments. Questions about God and faith are to be answered in theistic terms. The secular world of senses and science are dealt with in naturalistic terms. The middle zone—where God is reaching into our world—hardly exists for secular westerners. That is why Hiebert calls it ‘The Excluded Middle’.

Figure 1 gives a visual presentation of the various basic worldviews, based on Paul G. Hiebert’s ideas. In an agnostic or atheistic worldview there is no place for the supernatural. It is the rational and natural that counts. If there is a reality beyond the one we perceive, we cannot know it. Historically speaking the medieval worldview came as a reaction to the atheistic worldview, as it rejects the rational and science. In

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2 Ibid., 21-22.

the *deist worldview*, there is a God, but he is up there and we are down here, and God is normally not interacting in the human sphere. The *magical worldview* believes in the ‘Coke-machine God’, believing that God works through formulas. The *biblical or Christian theistic worldview* does not distinguish between the personal and the impersonal or between theology and daily life. God is personally interested in humanity and is interacting. God makes a difference in this world.

Figure 1. Different worldviews. Illustration by author, ideas taken from Hiebert, *The Flaw of the Excluded Middle*.

Even though we do not want to completely separate the supernatural and the natural reality, and we maintain that God is active in our sphere, we must remember that our perception of God’s reality is “subjective, focused, limited, and partial. We always relate it to our own interests and usually embellish it with our imaginations.”

We must therefore be humble and willing to learn and adjust. We must not be too dogmatic, and we must remember that in any case the reality we see is dim and partial.

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1Ibid., 15.
We see through filters, so to speak. When something happens we filter that impression through the lenses of what we believe possible, what we experience, and what we analyze, thus creating our view of reality.\(^1\)

Our worldview is very essential both when it comes to our personal spiritual life and also our ministry or mission. A *dualistic worldview* does not allow for God’s intervention into the daily life of humanity. Sound, spiritual formation is impossible, and mission is meaningless if God does not intervene both in the personal and the impersonal sphere. When questioning the reasons why people join, leave, and decide not to join the church, it is important to ask about their worldview, because significant causes may be found there. Likewise it is important to base a strategy for church growth on a *biblical worldview*, that allows for God’s intervention in human affairs.

Having now discussed spiritual foundation, and its relevance to church growth, the next step is to move on to other basic issues that influence personal effectiveness and teamwork. These issues will affect the work of planning and witnessing, and in turn church growth. Personality type is such an issue.

**Personality Type**

Carl Jung discovered that human beings have four basic preferences that shape the way they relate to the world around them and the way they process the data they receive from that world. Jung’s ideas were developed further by people like Isabel Myers and Kathryn Briggs, who developed extensive personality type testing material.

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\(^1\)Ibid., 19.
The four basic pairs of preferences are: Extraversion (E)-Introversion (I); Sensing (S)-Intuition (N); Thinking (T)-Feeling (F); and Judging (J)-Perceiving (P). Within each pair, a person generally prefers one mode of behavior over the other.

The E-I refers to where people find their focus and their energy, whether in the outer world of persons, events, and things (E), or in the inner world of self and ideas (I). The S-N has to do with a person’s preferred means of receiving data for living, either through the physical senses (S) or through the inner urgings and intuition (N). The T-F suggests the means used for processing the data received, either a primary reliance upon the head (T) or the heart (F). Lastly, the J-P has to do with a person’s way of relating to the world and doing things, either a primary desire for order, control, and completion (J) or an open-ended and laid-back approach to life (P).

Isabel Myers and Kathryn Briggs have devised a questionnaire for identifying different kinds of personality, called ‘The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator’ (MBTI).

How does this matter of personality types relate to mission, spirituality, and church in general, and specifically to the topic of church growth? It is difficult to understand oneself and one’s role, and to understand those with or for whom one works and ministers, if one does not have an understanding of personality types. Understanding one’s own role, the people targeted, and working well as a team, all has

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1 As basis for the following ideas, and for further material concerning the temperament types, see Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, Personality Type and Religious Leadership (Washington, DC: Alban Institute, 1988), M. Robert Mulholland Jr., Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993) and David Keirsey, Please Understand Me II (Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company, 1998).
relevance to church growth and requires an understanding of personality types and the ability to adjust to, and to respect the various types.

Said in other words: successful spiritual formation, witnessing, and teamwork depends on an understanding of people, both oneself and others. Such an understanding will also require an understanding of spiritual gifts, personal service, and church organization. Spiritual gifts is therefore the next focus of this study.

Spiritual Gifts

A truly converted Christian will want to serve the Lord in the advancement of His kingdom. God answers this wish by equipping the Christian with the Holy Spirit.\(^1\) This equipping shows itself in the form of various spiritual gifts. "Spiritual gifts are abilities or powers given to a person by the Holy Spirit to be manifested in His service for the good of other people."\(^2\) It is important to notice that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts are always given for service—to equip the Christian to minister to people.\(^3\) The Spirit does not equip everybody in the same way, but everybody is to serve as a witness. Because we have different spiritual gifts, we witness in different ways. Even people with the same gift serve and witness in different ways, because of their personality differences.

\(^1\) 1 Cor 12:4, 7, 11. Unless otherwise indicated all Bible references in this paper are quoted from the Revised Standard Version (RSV).


\(^3\) Acts 1:8, 10:38; 1 Cor 12:1, 5; Eph 4:11, 12
Spiritual gifts inventories are tools for discovering spiritual gifts. A person “will respond from a subjective context of experience, understanding, and personality.”¹ About twenty spiritual gifts are listed in the Bible,² and they can be logically grouped into four clusters or categories: nurturing, outreaching, witnessing, and organizing. People usually have one primary gift and one or more secondary gifts. Giftedness should be linked with passion for service. It is also good to remember that no inventory is to be regarded as an exact science.

The spiritual gifts “are affected by our personality, so the gifts will therefore be expressed differently from person to person. The question about what gives and what drains a person of energy, plays a role when other gifts are expressed. The same is the case if you are a down to earth and sensible person, or an intuitive and visionary person. Certain gifts can be strengthened and others moderated depending on whether it is your heart or your head that has the final authority when you make your decisions.”³

The issue of spiritual gifts is an essential part of one’s Christian self. When looking at why people stay in or leave the church, the use or neglect of one’s spiritual gifts is bound to be a factor. Also, when working on a strategy for church growth, the


²1 Cor 12; Rom 12; Eph 4.

individual and corporate giftedness for service has to be taken into consideration.

The theme of personalities and giftedness has to be brought one step further: Renewal and church growth is the concern of this project. A change of direction for the Church is much dependent on its leaders. Bad individual leadership and bad leadership teamwork is destructive to church growth. When working on a strategic plan for church growth an understanding of leadership/interaction styles is essential to ensure the kind of leadership team needed in order to carry out such a plan.

A focus on leadership and interaction styles is therefore the next step in this study.

Leadership or Interaction Styles

While spiritual gifts impact the spiritual dimension of our relationships, the so-called leadership or interaction styles describes how we behave with one another.1 This has to do with behavior rather than personality or giftedness. Still, it is in our interaction with other people that our personality and our spiritual gifts are seen, known, cherished, or ignored.

Dick and Miller talk about four basic leadership or interaction styles: thinker, director, pleaser, and dreamer.2 Figure 2 gives an impression of these orientations.

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1Dick and Miller, 53-68.

2Ibid., 57-60. For a description of each style, and how to harmonize them with people, see appendix 1.
Dick and Miller comment that “Leadership/Interaction Styles (LIS) is a tool to help leaders identify their dominant styles and develop an appreciation of the dominant styles of others. Each of the four styles represents a combination of behaviors dealing with a person’s focus (either on the task or on people) and the person’s approach to ways of sharing information (either by asking or by telling).”¹

Self-understanding is essential in interacting well with others, but our self-perception may differ from the way other people perceive us. When we are put into situations that prevent us from using our dominant style, we will automatically optimize our leadership potential by using styles other than our dominant one, according to certain patterns.²

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¹Ibid., 57.

²For the so-called “Stress Paths” of the leadership or interaction styles, see appendix 1.
When leaders—including church pastors—seek to lead church members, it must be understood that people are inspired and people express their faith in different ways. Such differences must be taken into consideration as leaders attempt to move people forward, and as plans are laid for worship and witness. Spirituality types are therefore the next area of focus in this part of the project dealing with the basics for ministry.

**Spirituality Types**

The way our spiritual gifts are lived out is largely dependent on our spirituality type. Here we are talking about who and where we actually *are* in our spiritual relationship with God, and not what we *wish* we would be or believe we ought to be. The Holy Spirit has gifted us to minister in harmony with who we are and according to our deepest passions. Dick and Miller suggest six spirituality types: head, heart, pilgrim, mystic, servant, and crusader. A spiritual gift will be expressed differently by persons representing each of the different styles. Our style will be apparent when we encounter God through the various means of grace such as prayer, study of Scripture, the Lord’s supper, fasting, Christian fellowship, and acts of mercy. We tend to have a dominant type in the various areas mentioned, but different spirituality types may also be present. That is why Dick and Miller talk about our “spirituality web.”

When we *approach* God we tend to do that based on our intellect or our

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1 Ibid., 69-85. For listed descriptions of each type, see appendix 2.

2 Ibid.
feelings, or somewhere in between. When we experience God we tend to concentrate on the mystery side or the more concrete image side, or somewhere in between. Each individual Christian represents a combination of this vertical axis of approach and the horizontal axis of experience. We all experience all six spirituality types, and each type is to be appreciated, but “one type tends to dominate for each of us. The community of faith requires individuals of each type and of all types. As with spiritual gifts, identifying our dominant type helps us know ourselves and each other and appreciate and respect our differences.” Based on the dominant spirituality type of the individual members in a specific church, the church as a whole will appear to have a dominant corporate spirituality type.

We need to understand the spirituality types as we seek to find out why people choose to leave or stay in the church. It has to do with understanding why people feel at home or alienated in the church. Lastly, when the church wants to put effort into being a spiritual home for all people, and plan for church growth, an understanding of—and a sensitiveness and respect for—all the various spirituality types is essential.

Task Type Preference

While the spiritual gifts and the spirituality types deal with our relationship with God and with one another, and the leadership/interaction styles show how our behavior influences those relationships, the issue of “task type preference” deals with the way in which one does the work for which one is equipped. An understanding of

\[\text{Ibid., 73.}\]
these dynamics is essential for good teamwork, which in turn is essential for progress and church growth.

Dick and Miller talk about four task type preferences: project, work, process, and fellowship. Generally speaking project type people like to see a project through from start to finish. The work type likes to do the work without having to preplan and organize. The process type enjoys the planning, but prefers to leave the doing to others. To the fellowship type, the work done is secondary to the fellowship and the shared experience.

If people are placed in work situations that they do not enjoy, they get frustrated and may eventually burn out. An understanding of task type preferences is essential in putting together an effective team. Team skills should compliment each other and should encourage members to be mutually accountable. A strategy for church growth is dependent on a leadership team put together in a way that requires an understanding of these issues.

Biographical Background and Characteristics

Introduction

Some might ask why a section on personal ‘biographical background’ should be included in this project paper that deals with a national challenge? Even though this project is “a situational analysis of the Norwegian Seventh-day Adventist church in the context of the Norwegian society,” there is a reason why I personally have chosen

\[\text{Ibid., 87-91. For description of each task type, see appendix 3.}\]
this topic and why I have chosen to meet the challenge of this study exactly the way I have. It will be useful for the reader to know my background, and something about my personal life. Issues like one's historical background, personality, worldview, spiritual gifts, interaction style, spirituality type, and task type preference largely determine the choice, process, and follow up of a study like this one.

In the following sections I will base the description of myself on the issues introduced in the first part of this chapter.

Short Biographical Description

I am a third generation Seventh-day Adventist, born in 1955 and raised in Oslo—the capital city of Norway—where the biggest Adventist Church in the country is situated. I am the middle of three brothers. I grew up in a happy and stable home, where verbal and physical affection was shown. I did not experience any major crisis as I grew up. Both my parents and my brothers are Adventists to this day and it has been clear to me all along that I wanted to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

I attended public schools, until the ninth grade, an experience that at an early age gave me a close up experience of how it is to live as a Christian in a secular society. For high school I went to the Adventist boarding school in Norway. During my high school summers I canvassed selling Adventist books, and also worked in shops, factories, and hospitals. These various experiences gave me an opportunity of interacting with secular people and showed me what secular workplaces are like.

I married Marianne—a second-generation Adventist woman—in 1977. I went directly from high school to Newbold College to train for the ministry. Finishing at
Newbold College in 1978, I started in the ministry at the age of twenty-three. I have been in the ministry ever since. During 1983-1984 I stayed at Andrews University to finish my Master of Divinity degree. We have two adult daughters, one being a GenX (born 1979) and the other a millennial kid (born 1983).

Personal Profile

According to the MBTI, I have the personality type of an ESTJ, which means that I am Extravert, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging. Overall, as an ESTJ, I am practical, realistic, decisive, efficient, logical, systematical, and a "matter-of-fact" person. When organizing things and people, I have a clear set of logical standards, focus on getting efficient results, and I am eager to move to implementing decisions. When necessary I take care of routine details.

My primary spiritual gift is the gift of administration. That means I am gifted to organize "human and material resources . . . [and] . . . to plan and work with people to delegate responsibilities, track progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of procedures. Administrators attend to details, communicate effectively, and take as much pleasure in working behind the scenes as they do in standing in the spotlight." My personal gift cluster, is organizing.

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1 These concepts will be explained at the end of chapter 3.


3 Dick and Miller, 38.
When it comes to the way in which I behave with others, I would be classified as a director. This means that I am task-oriented, decisive, energetic, focused on results, time-conscious and risk-taking.¹

I am the servant type in all areas of my spiritual life. This means that I think people should be doers and not mere hearers. I am rather anti-institutional and do not like it if policies, rules, regulations, traditions, and buildings form hindrances on the way to the real goal. The church is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. I believe Christianity is about being like Jesus. Faith is defined by the Great Commandment of Love, and the Golden Rule of treating others as you like to be treated yourself.

In doing the work for which I am equipped, I am primarily project oriented. I like to see "programs, ministries or events through from start to finish—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of a project."²

Spiritual Formation and Worldview

Partly due to my judging personality, I remained for many years at the structure or institutional stage in my spiritual formation. Time, age, and dealing with people with a variety of backgrounds and problems brought me into the questioning stage as I saw that there were not straightforward answers to all questions in life and religion. I have realized that this is a complex, changing world, and that my theology

¹Ibid., 54.
²Ibid., 90.
has to be progressive and in touch with real life. I do not take things so much for
granted any more. Even though I am still questioning, which I believe is sound for a
Christian, I have reached a stage of greater maturity. Theory and real life fits better
together for me now than in earlier years. I have more balanced answers to things, and
I have realized that it is not possible to have all the answers. I am more flexible,
understanding, and sensitive, and I believe that I have greater integrity in my life as a
Christian today than just a few years ago.

As far as I can remember, I have always had quite a balanced ‘biblical’ or
‘Christian theistic’ worldview. The personal and impersonal theology and
reality are quite interwoven in my thinking and my daily living. I believe God is
personally interested in humanity and that he is constantly interacting in the human
sphere. I believe God makes a difference in this world—He has certainly made a
difference in my life. I believe there is a place for the supernatural in our world. I
believe there is no inconsistency between the divine and the scientific. I believe God
cares about mankind, both at the individual and the corporate levels. However, I do
not believe that God works through simple formulas.

**Theological Understanding of Church and Mission**

As this project is concerned about the church and its mission in general, and
church growth in particular, it needs to be clarified what is meant by these concepts.
The rest of this chapter will therefore be a clarification of the theological meaning of
concepts central to the present project. For this project paper to be meaningful it is
important that both the writer and the reader share a theological understanding of
concepts like church, mission, ministry, and church growth—all concepts that are extensively used throughout this paper.

Theology

The word theology does not appear in the Bible, but is made up of the two Greek words theos (God) and logos (word, teaching, study). So “therefore etymologically theology means ‘the teaching concerning, or the study of, God,’” to quote Stanley J. Grenz.¹ He goes on to say: “In the final analysis, theology is a human enterprise—helpful for the task of the church, to be sure, but a human construct nevertheless.”²

Simply said, therefore, theology is humans thinking about God. So while the Bible and the truth are God-given and unchanging, theology is human and changing. Theology is human interpretation—hopefully guided by God of course. Theology has to be changing to remain relevant and truthful. Our theology makes Bible truth relevant to our life and setting. Theology is a complex interplay between Scripture, culture, temperament, worldview, and God’s impact upon the human life. Theology should always be close to real life, in touch with the most basic issues.

Traditionally, theology has tended to be a very theoretical enterprise. “Today, the older ideal is losing ground to an emphasis on theology as directed towards a ‘practical’ purpose—that is, as related to the life and practice of the Christian


²Ibid., 84.
community.1 “Our theological reflection ought to make a difference in Christian living. . . . Our theology must overflow into ethics. Whenever theology stops short of this, it has failed to be obedient to its calling.”2

It is important to differ between what we may call formal theology and real theology. Formal theology is what we think we are supposed to believe, but which we may or may not live by. We could, therefore, also call this head-and-mouth theology. Real theology, on the other hand, is what we really believe, because it shows up in our lives. This is what we are willing to stake our lives on. We could also call it heart theology. Ideally our formal theology should be real theology.

There is such a thing as true theology, but only God knows what it is. As Christians our real theology should be equal to our formal theology, and as close to what we believe to be true theology as possible.

The attitude and process of theology is as important as the content. Theology rises out of mission—out of the need to explain to others what we believe. Mission is to be the driving force and the goal of theology. Theology should not be an exercise for its own sake.

Mission

Definition of Mission

The founder of the church growth movement, Donald A. McGavran, together

1Ibid., 74.
2Ibid., 84.
with Arthur F. Glasser, defines *mission* strictly as “carrying the gospel across cultural boundaries to those who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ, and encouraging them to accept Him as Lord and Savior and to become responsible members of His church, working, as the Holy Spirit leads, at both evangelism and justice, at making God’s will done on earth as it is done in heaven.”¹ The “cultural boundaries” do not necessarily refer to foreign countries. Even those in our own society who do not have a relationship to God represent another ‘culture’.

To get an understanding of the Biblical meaning of a true ‘missionary’, we have to look at the Greek word *apostolos* which simply means ‘one who is sent’. The word is derived from the verb *apostellein*, ‘to send’. Expanding on the meaning of this word, Gottfried Oosterwal says

> The Bible only uses the verb *apostellein* when *God is the Sender* . . .
> . . . The verb . . . always implies *a very close and intimate relationship between the Sender and the person sent* . . .
> . . . Whenever the Bible uses this term, it brings to the fore the Sender and the particular aim of His sending activity, which is to *unite the Sender with the persons who are the object of His mission* . . .
> . . . One final characteristic of the “apostle” in the Bible is that God never sends him to rule, but only to serve.²

Why did God send us? Oosterwal continues: “True to Himself, God became a missionary God. He does not want any man to perish. He wants to save and restore. So God sent His angels, His Spirit, His prophets, and even His own Son. . . . That’s what

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mission really is: To present our God, gracious and long-suffering, ever constant and true, forgiving iniquity and rebellion and sin (Exod 34:6, 7), to all men who don’t know Him or who are estranged from Him.”

To be a true missionary one has to be truly converted—be one with Christ. The will and interests of the one sent have to harmonize with the will and interests of the Sender.

Since mission is all about a personal God sending his followers to unsaved people, it is obvious that mission is personal. Programs, methods, and institutions may be of help, but are certainly not enough.

**Scriptural Basis for Mission**

Glasser and McGavran suggest that “a right understanding of mission focuses on the kingdom.” God’s kingship is eternal, universal, covenantal, and acts as an overarching theme through both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Creation sets the missionary scene of the Bible. Everything and everyone belongs to God, the Creator and Sustainer.

The kingdom of God as the focus of mission must not be thought of as something remote and impersonal. In its most immediate and basic sense, the kingdom is here and now, in the inner heart of the individual. Already, “the power of the

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1Ibid., 88.

2Glasser and McGavran, 31.

3Ps 24:1, 2.
kingdom is at work, for it breaks into the present from the future. Therefore, we can experience the kingdom in a partial sense prior to the great eschatological day."¹

So to fulfill our mission, our primary task is to attend to the heart—to the needs here and now. Mission is a heart business, and it is to be relevant now.

The story of the appointment of Stephen in Acts 6 makes it very clear what the early church regarded as the rightful focus of mission. They reasoned that they must not be so preoccupied with tasks and programs that they failed to devote themselves "to prayer and to the ministry of the word."² When this priority was cared for, the result was a tremendous growth in numbers.³ We can conclude from Scripture that the basis for successful mission and the advance of the church was a personal spiritual life. The secret of success in our ministry is a matter of the heart.

Ministry

As the heading above suggests, the main concern of this section of the paper is to understand ministry. In a general ideological or theological sense, I have used the word mission as a synonym for the word ministry. The Greek word usually translated ministry is diakonia, also meaning 'service'.⁴ The essential ministry of all Christians

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¹Grenz, 147.
is—according to the Bible—the “ministry of reconciliation.”¹ The apostle Paul talks about the Lord giving him the “ministry . . . to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”²

If we want to differentiate between the two words mission and ministry, we could say that mission is the basis of, or reason for ministry. An understanding of mission explains what the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ is all about. In practical terms we could say that our ministry is the present work situation in which we do mission. My ministry is my missionary arena. To get a meaningful understanding of ministry, then, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what mission as such is all about.

I have already stated in general terms that mission is about advancing God’s kingdom by sharing the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. Christ came to this earth to “save his people from their sins.”³ The word for ‘save’, sozo, also means ‘heal’ or ‘make whole’.⁴ Any ministry, then, is to be a healing ministry. In our ministry we are to bring healing on four levels: human to God, human to human, human to themselves, and human to nature. Said in another way, in our ministry we are to bring spiritual, relational, physical, emotional/psychological, and environmental healing to people.

¹2 Cor 5:17-20.
³Matt 1:21.
In our ministry we have to relate to culture. The ministering person has to understand the culture he or she is coming from, the culture of the audience, and the culture of the Bible on which the message is based. The cultures of the missionary, the audience, and the Bible need to be connected and interrelated. There has to be a flow of input and understanding in all directions. We are talking about giving and receiving, teaching, and learning. We are not talking about a one-way process.

Later in this paper we will seek to understand the culture of our audience. Such cultural sensitiveness and understanding reduces barriers and misunderstandings, and increases the relevance of the gospel.

As we carry the gospel across cultural boundaries of faith, generations, and ethnic groups, we have to be understanding and sensitive. We are sent by God on a healing mission. We are servants of God, serving our fellow men—both those in the church and those outside. We are in the business of love and grace. We have to be concerned about people rather than institutions. Our service is not just restricted to spiritual matters. We are called to help with the felt needs of the people with and for whom we work, whether they are non-Christian or Christian, non-Adventist or Adventist, pastor, or member.

Our ministry is not all about projects and methods. First and foremost it is about heart business. As we lead others into a relationship with God it is imperative that we have an intimate relationship to God ourselves.
Church

Purpose of the Church

The church is God’s idea. God’s chosen people is a main theme both in the Old and the New Testament. God the Savior, who invites us to His kingdom, is the center of the biblical message. God’s concern is to gather people to His kingdom. He initiated the church, intending it to be a company of gatherers. He himself will gather and shepherd His people,¹ and, in turn, he calls them to be gatherers of the lost and needy.² “Mission is not an optional activity for Christ’s disciples. If they are not gatherers, they are scatterers.”³

“In seeking a revisioned evangelical theology, we do well to orient our discussion of the Christian faith around the twin motifs of the reign of God [God’s kingdom] and the community of God [God’s church].”⁴ The church consists of gatherers, and at the same time the church consists of the gathered. The church goes and draws. The mission of the church would have no meaning and effect without the identity of the church. “Only as a holy nation, called out of darkness into the light of God’s presence, can the church discharge its mission.”⁵ What the church is and what it

¹Ezek 34:12.
⁴Grenz, 161.
⁵Ibid., 162.
does is inextricably bound together. Making the church “an alternative subculture in isolation, rather than equipping the saints to act as yeast, salt and light in the world”¹ is therefore to separate the church’s role as the home of the gathered from the role of acting as the gatherer, in a way which the Bible does not allow.

The “primary task of the church is to tell everyone everywhere of God’s provision for salvation and to enroll in the ark of salvation—the church of Jesus Christ—as many as believe.”² Those who join the church, in turn, join themselves in the task of inviting still others. “By virtue of their baptism, then, all members of the church participate alike, in essence, in the apostolic succession (authority), in the priesthood (ministry), in the worship, in the spiritual gifts, and in the mission of the church.”³

Adventist pioneer Ellen G. White comments on the purpose of the church by saying: “The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth.”⁴ And again, “The church is God’s


²Glasser and McGavran, 105.


appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”

There is no doubt about it, the church does not exist for its own comfort. The saving God is its focus. Carlos G. Martin in his book *Adventist Church Growth* point to a three-way purpose of the church: (1) an *outward* purpose of preaching the gospel, (2) an *inward* purpose of revealing God’s character, and (3) an *upward* purpose of glorifying God. In all three aspects the church is all about lifting God up. The church is not to be a gallery of people thinking that they are better than others. We can sum it all up with one word: *love*. As Grenz puts it: “The church is the community of love, called to reflect the nature of the triune God.” “God’s salvific purposes are directed toward bringing God’s highest creation—humankind—to reflect the eternal divine nature, that is, bringing us to be in actuality the image of God. And the image of God consists ultimately in love.”

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2Martin, 36.

3Mark 16:15, 16.


51 Cor 10:31.

6Grenz, 184.

7Ibid., 185.
Role of Church Members

A biblical theology of church is neither a theology of preservation nor a theology of separation, but rather a theology of proclamation or mission. An attitude of judgmental isolation, looking inwardly and trying to preserve the status quo, is not in harmony with the biblical idea of the church. Neither is an attitude of protective separation, building high walls around the church fellowship, through which only those enter who have cleaned up their lives and undergone "cultural indoctrination and initiation." ¹ The biblical model of missionary engagement recognizes the church as not only having a distinctive identity but also its "calling within a specific culture. . . . The complicating factor is that the human nature within the church remains vulnerable to sin. The church is compromised by the world to which it seeks to bring the saving message. Withdrawal from its mission obligations is no answer to this vulnerability."² Jesus did not pray that we be taken out of the world, but that we would be protected from evil.³

In his last will that Jesus left us, often called the 'Great Commission', four verbs are used: 'go', 'make disciples', 'baptize', and 'teach'. In the original Greek


²Ibid.

³John 17:15.
three of these verbs are helping verbs, and only one is imperative, the verb to 'make disciples'. "This, then, is the goal of the Great Commission."\(^1\)

Disciples are born-again people who, with their spiritual gifts, are committed to actively serving the Lord. "The word ‘disciple’ is related to the word ‘discipline’. Disciples are those who willingly obey a master. Until newly baptized members are incorporated into active service they are not full disciples of Christ."\(^2\)

The Bible clearly states that all believers are ministers and priests.\(^3\) The word ‘layman’ comes from the Greek word laos which simply means ‘people’,\(^4\) and includes everybody in the Christian community—including the professional pastors. Today people often define ‘laymen’ in terms of what one is not (not professional, not skilled, not educated, not employed). This unbiblical understanding of the laity—contrasting the laity and the clergy—is inherited from the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages.\(^5\)

The role given to those working in ministry positions is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry."\(^6\) Every church, then, "should be a training school for Christian

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\(^2\)Martin, 38.

\(^3\)Exod 19:5, 6; 1 Pet 2:9; Eph 4:11, 12; Rev 1:6.

\(^4\)As for example, in “chosen ones” in 1 Pet 2:9.


\(^6\)Eph 4:11, 12.
workers."¹ Ministers and leaders—like me—are to assist God’s people “in carrying out the mission of the church, not vice versa, as is often the case.”²

“The loss or the obscuration of the Biblical concept of the laity has always resulted in a lack of mission activities. . . . On the other hand, a rediscovery of the Biblical role of the laity has always caused a new and far-reaching expansion of the church. A clear example is the early Christian church.”³ Another example is the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its pioneer days. The Adventist church truly started as a missionary-minded lay-movement. The Adventist pioneer Ellen G. White wrote: “The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour.”⁴ “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”⁵ And furthermore, “A distinct work is assigned to every Christian.”⁶


²Oosterwal, 65.

³Ibid., 106-107.


Spiritual Gifts in the Church

Closely related to the purpose and mission of the church is the biblical concept of spiritual gifts. This topic was mentioned earlier in the paper. As quoted before, Avery T. Willis Jr. defines spiritual gifts by saying that “spiritual gifts are abilities or powers given to a person by the Holy Spirit to be manifested in His service for the good of other people.”¹ We see, therefore, that the spiritual gifts are God the Sender’s way of equipping those whom he sends, enabling them to advance and build His kingdom. The individual Christian carries a missionary responsibility, but he or she is not left alone. As God promises in the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples . . . and lo, I am with you always.”²

Special Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not just another church, but that it has a unique mission. I believe God raised up this movement in this last time of earth’s history with a special message for this special time. The Adventist Church should be in the frontline of proclaiming the coming of Jesus and the kingdom of God. The expression ‘present truth’, taken from 1 Pet 1:12, has been used much by

¹Willis, 120, 121.
²Matt 28:19, 20.
Adventists—especially in the pioneer days—referring to “truth that is peculiarly appropriate in the present historical situation.”

What is it, then, that is so special about the Adventist message, that people of today should be in special need of it? I agree with Dan Day when he says: “I’m persuaded that the genius of Adventism’s distinct message lies not in any particular doctrine, such as the Sabbath—as important as that is to Adventism—but in our unique perception of the gospel itself, relative to the great controversy between Christ and Satan.” So, the really special thing about the Adventist message is its holistic worldview connecting so many of the loose ends and showing how God is intervening in human history. Many would like to think of Seventh-day Adventism as more of a distinct movement than just another denomination.

The unique faith of the Seventh-day Adventist church should give Adventist mission momentum. We must not allow doctrinal discussions to become issues in themselves. Whenever that happens, it is a sign of a church losing its urgency of mission. Mission is what ‘present truth’ is all about.

Church Growth

Since the main theme of this project is church growth, it is proper to have a separate section on this concept, when talking about church and mission.

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3 Ibid., 73.
Church growth is a phrase that was initiated by Donald McGavran to refer to "all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership."\(^1\) In the church growth discipline one seeks to "understand, through biblical, sociological, historical, and behavioral study, why churches grow or decline."\(^2\)

At various occasions Jesus talked about reaping the harvest.\(^3\) "The New Testament is full of passages that indicate the steady purpose of the Triune God to make the gospel known throughout the entire world and to institute a new kind of life based on complete obedience to Him, a complete surrender of self to Christ, and a mighty multiplication of Christian congregations."\(^4\)

Church growth is a complex matter. Many factors are at work, such as: local church factors, local community factors, inter-church factors, inter-community factors, demonic opposition, and the extraordinary activity of God.\(^5\)

The concept of church growth includes both numerical and qualitative growth,


\(^{3}\)John 4:35, 36; Matt 9:37, 38.


as it is impossible, really, to separate the two. Quality "must not be set against quantity, for God has sent his Church into the world to make disciples. He longs for more Christians as well as better Christians. Numbers are not simply numbers; they stand for people."\textsuperscript{1} God is clearly interested in numbers, as he is not wishing that even one person should perish.\textsuperscript{2} That God is also interested in quality is shown for example by the fact that when God speaks through John in describing the seven churches in Revelation 2–3, God is commenting on the quality of each church. As Waldo Werning puts it, "Numerical expansion is not encouraged at the expense of genuine spiritual growth."\textsuperscript{3}

As the church growth movement is usually criticized for the emphasis on numeric growth rather than emphasis on qualitative growth, it may be fitting to remind ourselves of some Bible texts actually focusing on quantity. The good shepherd counted his sheep,\textsuperscript{4} the church must grow like a mustard seed,\textsuperscript{5} and Jesus refers to grain bearing much fruit.\textsuperscript{6} Through the book of Acts, there are frequent references to

\textsuperscript{1}Gibbs, 21.
\textsuperscript{2}Matt 18:14; 2 Pet 3:9.
\textsuperscript{4}Luke 15:4-7.
\textsuperscript{5}Matt 13:31, 32.
\textsuperscript{6}John 12:24.
the added numbers.¹ Even the book of Revelation focuses on the number of saved ones.²

Some basic principles of church growth have gathered rather general agreement within the church growth movement.³ The first one is the need to focus on numerical church growth. As mentioned before, quantity and quality cannot be separated, but a main focus on mere quality may be pacifying to a church. “McGavran would say that any church that is not seeing converts added to its membership should be concerned to find out why this is not happening.”⁴

There are various forms of numerical growth, like biological growth, evangelism growth, restoration growth (of lapsed Christians), discipleship growth (more and more believers maturing), and extension growth (planting new churches). None of these types of growth will happen to a satisfactory degree without the church being very conscious about it, planning for it, and working hard for it.

A second well recognized principle is to concentrate on responsive groups. At any time or place there will be groups that are more or less responsive to the gospel. “McGavran suggested that the Church should overtly attempt to identify responsive groups and should then concentrate its evangelism on them.”⁵

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³Peter Cotterell, Mission and Meaninglessness. The Good News in a World of Suffering and Disorder (London, UK: SPCK, 1990), 154-159.
⁴Ibid., 154.
⁵Ibid., 156.
Third, there is the recognition of the corporate element. "Traditional evangelism in Western society has uncritically accepted the individualism of our society, to the neglect of its group dimension. Conversion has been perceived primarily (if not exclusively) as an individual response to proclamation." I think this is not so much of a problem in Adventist evangelism, where becoming a part of the church community traditionally is stressed in evangelism. In the postmodern Western society it will be increasingly important not to isolate the individual from the community. This will be clear when in the next chapter I explain the characteristics of postmodernity.

Fourth, unnecessary cultural barriers must be removed. Within church life there are many elements of culture and tradition that may prove to be a hindrance to growth, and which have nothing or little to do with inspired truth. Obvious areas where this principle may be relevant are, for example: church music, order of worship, time of worship, church buildings, structure of church life, and dress codes.

A last generally accepted principle to be mentioned is the use of secular disciplines. Demographic studies, sociological surveys, statistical investigations, historical studies, contemporary communication theory, and the like are not only useful, but indispensable if church growth principles are taken seriously.

In addition to these principles I will again emphasize that spiritual renewal has to precede and accompany efforts of church growth. Outward growth has to grow out

\[1\text{Ibid.}\]
of inward growth. Church growth has to be primarily a heart business, as do theology and mission.

Furthermore, I will emphasize that true growth has to be preceded by correct theology. A sound theology of church and mission—with emphasis on elements like the priesthood of all believers, and spiritual gifts—is imperative.

I think it is also important to stress the point that church growth cannot be forced. This principle forms the basic thesis of the ‘Natural Church Development’ concept developed by Christian Schwarz. He reminds us that “God has provided everything we’ll ever need for church growth, yet we do not always make proper use of it. This is the real problem. Instead of using God’s means, we try to do things in our own strength—with much pulling and pushing.”¹ And again, “While it is clear that growth cannot be ‘made’ or forced, it is important to keep the environmental resistance to a minimum in order to create the best possible conditions for growth.”²

The last basic truth I will emphasize when it comes to church growth is that the focus should not be on the human side. “Church growth itself should never become the motivation for our activities. Not church development, but worship of God is the goal. Church development is done for the sake of worship.”³ God has revealed himself and his will through the Bible, and through Jesus Christ, and is inviting every human being


²Ibid., 10.

³Ibid., 106.
to become an inhabitant of his kingdom. This great God deserves our attention and our worship. This is what makes our cause unique. Our focus is not primarily on methods, but on him. Our success depends on him rather than on common human principles.

"We hold that the growth of the church is not dependent primarily on methods which will operate in any organization and on any theory of eternal truth. Rather, church growth depends on conviction that the biblical revelation has been given by God and that, in the absolute matters concerning man and God, God has revealed himself and his perfect will authoritatively. Christians . . . may confidently go forward, knowing that they are basing their actions on unchanging truth."¹

These are all basic, underlying principles in the area of church growth. When studying actual church growth, we will notice a series of principles that when experienced seem to always result in church growth.

Closing Remarks

In this chapter we have looked at some basic issues, and have suggested that church and mission are primarily a personal heart business. These personal issues form a necessary background for the parts of this project paper dealing with questionnaires and strategies. It is not enough to be concerned about just the symptoms of the problems. One must deal with the real, basic issues causing the problems.

I have also openly shared some of my own biographical background and characteristics, to help the reader understand why I have set out to work with the topic

of Adventist church growth in Norway. This also gives the reader an understanding of the angle from which I will go about this study and what personal strengths and weaknesses I bring with me to this study. The Adventist faith and church means a lot to me, and is a part of my life-long identity. As a pastor, evangelist, and church leader I am genuinely concerned about the decrease in membership in Norway, and I feel a responsibility to do my part in finding out what the reasons are for the decrease and to suggest possible solutions.

Lastly, I have shared my theological and personal understanding of church and ministry. In doing this, I have first tried to clarify what theology is; mainly concluding that theology is our human thinking about God and related issues. Theology has to be in touch with real life and to have mission as its driving force and goal.

I have shown that mission is about being sent by God to the unsaved world, with the goal of leading people to a saving relationship with Christ and into the community of believers. The focus of mission is to be the kingdom of God. Mission has to be personal and in touch with real life situations.

Our ministry may be defined as the present work situation in which we do our mission. My present ministry as a church leader provides me with the resources and influence needed to look into the state, the needs, and the possible solutions in our mission enterprise as a church in Norway.

As mission is about gathering, church is to be seen as the company of the gatherers. The whole purpose of the church is to strengthen the mission, making the most effective use of the resources in the work of winning and caring for souls. The focus of the church is to be the individual rather than the organization. Every single
believer has a role to play, according to his or her spiritual gifts. The Seventh-day Adventist church has a special mission in this special time.

The concept of *church growth* includes bringing these various elements together, since growth is about bringing people into a saving relationship with Jesus and into responsible church membership. The idea of church growth is biblical and is concerned with both quality and quantity. In the area of church growth we are concerned about finding the most effective use of resources and methods, and even more important, letting the Holy Spirit make the most effective use of each of us.

One essential conclusion of this chapter is that theology, mission, ministry, church, and church growth are—when it really comes down to it—*matters of the individual heart*, have more to do with spirituality than with methodology, and have more to do with the Holy Spirit than with human efforts.

Another conclusion is that the whole matter of church and mission—involving theology, mission, and church growth principles—is *a very comprehensive matter*. All the mentioned elements are interrelated, interdependent, and make a harmonious whole. I believe that Peter Cotterell is totally right when he says in his book *Mission and Meaninglessness*, that “we are urgently in need of a comprehensive biblical theology which integrates missiology, and in particular church growth, into a whole.”¹ The basis is the whole Bible—which means both testaments—and the whole canon rather than just a selection of texts. Theory and practice go together, the spiritual and technical both play a part, both the spiritual and the material are recognized, the

¹Cotterell, 167.
supernatural and the natural are interwoven, and divinity and humanity combine efforts.

What Christian Schwarz is saying about church growth could be said in general about the related issues of mission, ministry, and church as well: “Monistic [technocratic] thinking in church growth leads easily to technocratic approaches (‘Follow this program, and your church will grow’). Dualistic [spiritualistic] thinking, on the other hand, often produces an anti-institutional spiritualism (‘Institutions are spiritually irrelevant’). Both are far removed from the reality God the Creator has placed in humanity; both impede biblical thinking; both hinder living faith—and both frustrate efforts to seek church growth and development as well.”¹

In an attempt to sum up some of the key theological points that should form the basis of our ministry, I suggest the following: God is active and personal, and revealed through Jesus Christ. Relationship is foundational to God. Relationships are destroyed by sin, the plan of salvation is all about healing broken and marred relationships. A biblical ministry, then, is a healing ministry—and the goal is to lead people to know the healing God personally. All experience must be judged by Scripture, as this is the core source of truth. True religion is holistic, combining head, heart, and body. Therefore, theology has to be related to mission, and be connected with real life. The church must center on God, spirituality, and people, rather than the institutional and mechanical aspects. This focus on people needs to be on both the personal and the

¹Schwarz, 86-87.
communal levels. As members of the church—the body of Christ—we are essentially a part of a missionary body, where we all have a part to play as ministers.
CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF NORWEGIAN SOCIETY

In an attempt to understand the reasons for the present status of the Church, and to know how to plan for the future, a situational analysis will be conducted in this paper. The present chapter will be concerned with analyzing Norwegian society. Even though this could be called an external analysis, it should be remembered that the Church is part of the greater society, and recruits its members from it. The analysis in this chapter will help explain the present status of the Church, and offer directions for the future.

Geography and Population

Geographical Characteristics

It is necessary to get a picture of the geography and population of Norway in order to understand the Norwegian “soul.” So much of the Norwegian mentality and mindset is related to the special character of the country.

The poet Georg Johannesen once said: “Norway is a country for the specially interested ones.”¹ At least it is a special country in many ways. It is situated at the outskirts of the habitable part of the world. In the north it borders on the Arctic Ocean. Some of the

northernmost cities in the world are in Norway, the land of the midnight sun. Tromsø has the most northern university of the world.

Norwegians cannot pride themselves with the fine manners of the French, the power of the English, or the technology of the German, but on the other hand Norway is a beautiful country with lots of unsurpassed nature and a tough people.

Norway covers an area of 385,155 square kilometers.¹ The coastal line without fjords and islands is 2,650 kilometers, and with fjords and islands is 83,281 kilometers. At the broadest (east-west) Norway is 430 kilometers and at the most narrow point 6 kilometers. The length of the country (north-south) is 1,752 km. That means that if Norway is turned around an axis at the southern point, it will reach about to Rome, Italy. Twenty-two percent of the country is covered by productive forest, and only 3-4 percent of the country is cultivated. Sixty percent of the mainland area is less than 600 meters above sea level, while 20 percent is over 900 meters above sea level.

Population

The population of Norway on 1 January 2002 was 4,524,066, which means 15 inhabitants per square kilometer.² This means that Norway is one of the least densely populated countries of Europe. For comparison, the united Germany is just a little bigger than Norway in size, but has a population that is about eighteen times larger. Sri Lanka is only about one fifth the size of Norway, but has four times as many inhabitants. The capital

¹Numbers in this paragraph taken from official statistics of Norway: Statistisk årbok (Oslo, Norway: Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2002), 19-23.
²Ibid., 24, 66-72, 484.
of Norway, Oslo, has 773,498 inhabitants. About half the Norwegian population lives in a fairly limited area around Oslo. Three out of four Norwegians live in cities. That makes the rest of the country even more scarcely populated than it seems to be from the statistics. Many people move away from the rural areas because of limited possibilities of education and work.

This country of about 4.5 million people has more than sixty airports and 150 newspapers.\(^1\) It is obviously very costly to build infrastructure in a country like Norway. It is costly to administer such a country, and it is costly to live there.

**Climate and Seasons**

The Norwegian climate is generally cool, with long winters and short summers. The yearly average temperature of the country as a whole is 3.9 degrees Celsius. For comparison, Colombo in Sri Lanka has an average temperature of about 30 degrees Celsius.\(^2\) Thanks to the Gulf stream, the climate is milder along the coast than inland. The Gulf stream actually gives most of the country a warmer climate than is the case in other countries at the same latitude. Still, it is cold in Norway, regardless of what country we compare it with.

The climate does something to the people. It creates a lot of restrictions as to what can be done. In southern countries, much of daily life is conducted outdoors in fellowship with others. For natural reasons, this is only possible in Norway a few weeks or months

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\(^1\)Eriksen, 29.

\(^2\)Ibid., 8-9.
every year. Due to the climate, Norwegians are very preoccupied with their home, and spend a lot of time and money centered on the home. A cold climate may also tend to create a cold, introverted, and reserved people, a characteristic we will come back to later in this chapter.

Norway is a country with very distinct seasons of the year. Life in Norway changes very much, depending on the season. In the summer, the days are long and if the weather is good, there can be a very southern atmosphere among people. People spend a lot of their time outdoors and in nature. The fall is a serious time. After a summer full of life and with a lot of spare time and outdoor life, the fall means job or school, hard work, more clothes, and more indoor life. For many, winter is a hard time. Nature is dead and frozen and days are short. In the northern parts the sun never rises above the horizon in the winter. Even in the south it is dark when you go to work and dark when you get home. Mental depressions are more common in the winter than during the rest of the year. Houses need a lot of heating and the body needs a lot of clothes. The spring is the time of hope and optimism. Nature wakes up and people spend a lot of time in their gardens. The spring has many bank holidays. Easter vacation is almost a Norwegian national ritual. Many people move to the mountains to enjoy the sun and go skiing. From the end of the winter until well into the fall, people are not prepared to join public, indoor activities, or to bind themselves to anything else than their private plans.
Socio-Political Description of Norway
From Poverty to Wealth

For hundreds of years, Norway was just a poor and rather underdeveloped corner of Europe. Norway has lived under the Danes, and then under the Swedes. During that time the country was poor, without major cities, universities, magnificent buildings, great composers, philosophers, poets, or new technological developments. Not until 1905 did the country became an independent nation, but during the Second World War the Germans occupied the country. So Norway has not been independent very long, and that may partly explain the strong Norwegian patriotism.

The story of Norway in the twentieth century is a story about rapid economic growth, the development of the welfare state, a big and profitable shipping industry, and—from the seventies—exceptional oil riches. Since Norway today is a successful, well organized and prosperous country, it is important to remember two things:

First, it has not always been like that. For only a little over one hundred years ago Norway was one of the poorest and least modern countries in Europe. . . .

Second, Norway would never be able to become a modern country all on its own. . . . The contact with foreign people has . . . been very important in creating the modern Norway.¹

There has been an impressive development in Norway throughout the 1900s. Today, the country appears as one of the richest and best organized countries in the world. Especially after the last World War, there has been remarkable industrial development. So much was destroyed during the war that houses, infrastructure, and industry had to be rebuilt. A lot of money was needed for that rebuilding, so import restrictions and rationing was used to get the national industry up and going. The results came quite fast. The need

¹Ibid., 21.
for a better qualified working force led to an improvement of the education system of the
country, which again led to greater equality between the sexes.

When Norway became independent at the beginning of the last century, a good
majority of the people chose monarchy. Even though the monarch’s power is strictly
limited to a neutral, non-political role, the royal family is a strong national rallying point
and has great symbolic value. The king is a ‘people’s king’.

That Norway has become such a rich country is largely due to a good portion of
luck. In the 1960s Norway started—with the help of foreign experts—to drill for oil in the
North Sea. Rich oil fields were found from 1969 and onwards. Since then, Norway has
become one of the biggest oil producers and one of the richest countries in the world. The
oil and gas resources gave Norway a new position in Europe and the whole world. Oil has
also made Norway a technologically advanced nation, has given work to many people, and
has contributed to a higher living standard for all Norwegians.

The average, annual salary in Norway was 245,900 Norwegian kroners in 1997.¹ In
1998, the percentages of total consumption expenditure spent on food was 12.3 percent,
while 20.5 percent was spent on rent, fuel, and power, and 25.6 percent on transportation.²
In the last ten years collective private spending has increased by 39 percent. A doubling of
today’s spending is expected before 2030. “Norwegians are among the people in the world

¹Social Trends 2000 (Oslo-Kongsvinger, Norway: Statistisk sentralbyrå—Statistics
Norway, 2001), 232-233. 1 June 2005 the exchange rate to US $ was 0.154255.

²Ibid., 234-235.
who spend the most, and who increase their spending most.”¹ Some spend too much. A recession came in 1986, from which many have not yet recovered.

In 1999 the national Christian newspaper Vårt Land reported: “Even though the material living standard in Norway has increased significantly in the last few years, we are not happier than before. One reason is because the expectations about prosperity have increased at an even faster speed.”² The same newspaper reported a month later that in a survey 60 percent of the Norwegian adults answered ‘yes’ to the question if they missed anything in life. And to the question about what they thought could make life better, almost 50 percent of the people missing something in life, mentioned the need for a “better economy.”³

Political Situation and Role of the State

Norway has quite a successful multi-party political system making it possible to follow political principles more than personalities. Even minority groups do win seats in the parliament (storting).

The thirty-five years from 1930 to 1965 were the prime time for the Labor party (Arbeiderparti). Since then there has been a series of governmental changes between the Labor party and the political right wing. The latter have often been coalitions of parties at

the center and at the right side of the political scale. Usually, the governments in Norway are minority governments. The shifts between left wing and right wing governments have not changed the politics of the country in any dramatic way since the social-democratic foundation of the country is supported by all major parties.

During the parliament elections in 2001, fifteen political parties competed. The Labor party (Arbeiderpartiet) received 24.3 percent\(^1\) of the votes, a dramatic decrease from 1997, when they received 35 percent. The Conservative party (Høyre) garnered 21.2 percent of the votes, the Christian party (Kristelig Folkeparti) 12.4 percent of the votes and the Center party (Senterpartiet) 5.6 percent of the votes. These last three parties received 39.4 percent of the votes, and were able to form a coalition and set up a government, with the prime minister being from the Christian party (Kristelig Folkeparti). One major party on the left, Sosialistisk Venstreparti has 12.5 percent. Another major party on the right, Fremskrittspartiet has 14.6 percent.

The most dramatic change in the political picture since the election in 2001 is that the ultra-conservative party (Fremskrittspartiet) has increased from 14.6 percent in 2001 to 21.8 percent according to a telephone-poll done in June 2003.\(^2\) This increase has been mostly at the expense of the parties in government.

Recent political issues include:\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Data taken from official statistics of Norway: Statistisk årbok, 32.

\(^2\)The newspaper Dagbladets “Party-barometer” done by MMI (the Market and Media Institute) and published in Dagbladet, 21 June 2003, 12.

\(^3\)Selection of issues taken from Eriksen, 104-116.
1. The district politics. This is an attempted to decentralize political power and institutions.

2. Dialect issue. The question is what position the more provincial dialect, the so-called Nynorsk, should have over against the main dialect, Bokmål.

3. Environmental issues. As Norwegians are preoccupied with nature, this is an important issue to many. Internationally, Norway has also been in the environmental forefront.

4. Equality. The agenda is to secure equal rights between women and men.

5. The European Union. Twice (1972 and 1994) Norway has had popular votes about membership in the European Union (EU). Both times a slim majority of the population said ‘no’. At the moment, those favoring the EU seem to be increasing, and membership in the EU in the future is quite likely.

6. International issues. Little Norway has been quite engaged in international questions, for example, in questions of peace, developmental aid, and the environment.

7. Immigration. Today, about 300,000 foreign born people with a foreign background live in Norway, which constitutes 6.6 percent of the Norwegian population. Thirty-eight percent of these have Norwegian citizenship.

Jostein Ryssevik comments: “Decades of economic advancement and growing public budgets has created steadily growing expectations to the services offered by the state. The sum of the expectations and wishes on the political agenda have therefore

\[1\text{Statistisk årbok, 103.}\]
become much greater than the state is able to satisfy.\textsuperscript{1} Besides this crisis of expectation, Norwegian democracy is experiencing a crisis of confidence. The confidence in the politicians and the political system has decreased during the last decades, but when compared on an international scale, confidence in the Norwegian political system is still high.\textsuperscript{2}

The Norwegian welfare state has become the biggest employer in the country. This is costly, and the strong position of public institutions and systems also has other questionable effects. The functions of the family are decreasing while public responsibility is increasing at the cost of personal responsibility and initiative leading to a misuse of public benefits. Another challenge in Norway is unemployment, which normally has been between 3 and 4 percent of the total work force.\textsuperscript{3}

In spite of these critical areas, it should be added that most Norwegians are very satisfied with the Norwegian system. People appreciate the great social security they have, their free hospitalization, free public education, and other social benefits. People are happy about living in a country with political stability, civil, political and social rights, an extensive system of welfare benefits, and few conflicts.

Social Differences

Under the heading "Norway Still Best to Live In," the biggest Norwegian

\textsuperscript{1}Jostein Ryssevik, \textit{Is samfunnet 3} (Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget AS, 1997), 315.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 317.

\textsuperscript{3}Statistisk \textit{årbok}, 220.
newspaper, *Verdens Gang (VG)*, recently reported that for the third time, Norway was on top of the list of countries with the best "human development."¹ This concept refers to factors like income, resources, basic needs, education, freedom, and dignity.

In a similar report from 2001, it was reported that the percentage of 'poor' people was 7.5, and that there had been a clear increase in the differences between rich and poor people in Norway over the last ten years. The article stated that, "While the richest 20 percent of the Norwegian population earn or spend almost 36 percent of the resources, the poorest 20 percent have to manage with only 10 percent of the resources of the country."² This must not be taken to mean that there are dramatic class differences in Norway. "Norway has never had any big upper class. There have never been such great class-contrasts as we have seen in many other countries. Therefore there are few monumental buildings in Norway compared to other countries. The farmers have always been independent in Norway. In other countries they were often forced to work on a big farm for a rich landlord. Norwegians have been used to being *lords of their own homes.*"³

Even though there is a certain social difference among Norwegians, the visual


differences are in many ways less marked than ever. Things like political allegiance and clothing do not say much about where a person comes from, like it used to. "Social belonging . . . has less significance for what Norwegians mean and do."\(^1\)

Education and Work

The percentage of the population having college or university training was 7.3 percent in 1970. By 1990 this had increased to 15.2 percent, and by 2000 to 21.9 percent.\(^2\) This means a tripling since 1970.

Almost 2.3 million Norwegians are employed, or about half of the total population. Among them 763,000 are working in the public sector, which is about one-third of all working people. The principal industries in Norway are public and private services (37.6 percent), trade (17.5 percent), business (12 percent), oil, gas, mining and other industries (14.9 percent).\(^3\)

Population and Family Life: Demographics

A demographic look at the 4.5 million citizens of Norway shows that it is quite evenly divided between men and women. In rounded figures, 40 percent of the population

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\(^2\)Statistisk Årbok, 168.

\(^3\)Yearly average numbers from 2001, based on *Statistisk årbok*, 214-215.
is under 30 years of age, 29 percent is between 30 and 49, 20 percent is between 50 and 69, and 11 percent is over 70 years of age.¹

 Thirty-seven percent of Norwegian households are singles, which means that about 16 percent of the Norwegian population is living alone. Twenty-eight percent of the households consist of two persons.² The tendency is that Norwegian households are getting smaller.³

 "While the number of cohabiting couples at the end of the 1970s was reckoned to be 50,000, this number is now five times as high, about 250,000. For comparison, there are 850,000 married couples, so the number of cohabitants is still less than one fourth of all couples living together."⁴ An increasing number of people choose to cohabit rather than get married. Cohabitation proves to be less stable than marriage.⁵ The percentage of cohabitants among all couples (in a survey of women 20-44 years of age) was 38.8 percent in 1999. Almost half of all children are born out of wedlock.⁶

¹Statistisk årbok, 81-82, 111.
²Numbers from 2001, based on Statistisk årbok, 82.
³Ole-Magnus Olafsrud, Der du er: En ressursbok for evangelie-formidling i en tid for tro (Oslo, Norway: Navigatorene, 1995), 39.
⁶Social Trends 2000, 208-209.
People are getting married later than before. The average age of those getting married for the first time is about 30 years.¹

In 1993 the parliament passed a law about ‘registered partnership’. The law gives two homosexual persons the right to register their relationship. Then they get the same rights and obligations as a married couple, with the exception of adoption and artificial insemination.

“Each Norwegian woman gives birth to an average of 1.9 children.”² In Norway it has become practically and culturally possible to combine family and career, and women want both. It follows that “Norwegian children in general have less contact with their parents than is the case in many other countries.”³ Of course 1.9 children per couple is not enough to maintain the population, so Norway will need immigrants for a long time in order for the society to function.

Almost 50 percent of the marriages will statistically end in divorce.⁴ The percentage of remarriages among the divorced is high. “In 1995 the average couple had been married a little less than 14 years when they got divorced. There are also fewer childless divorces, relatively speaking, than in the fifties and sixties. A great many get divorced after 4-8 years of marriage, and this has increased throughout the [twentieth] century.”⁵ Sociologists

¹Statistisk årbok, 107.
³Eriksen, 39.
⁴Statistisk årbok, 110.
⁵Frønes, 48.
maintain that increased individualization and better economy are factors partially explaining the increase in divorces.¹ "One-third of children will experience their parents divorce while they are children."²

"Norwegians usually distinguish sharply between the public and the private. . . . In Norway we close the doors behind us most of the year. . . . The home is a private and relatively closed territory."³

Morality

A survey about religion from 1998 shows that 72.4 percent of the people do not think it is wrong at all to have heterosexual sex before marriage.⁴ Only 54.6 percent will say categorically that it is always wrong to have sex with another person other than your spouse. As much as 37.3 percent say that it is not wrong at all to have sex with a person of the same sex, and an additional 12.1 percent think it is wrong only sometimes. As much as 72.6 percent think it is all right to cohabit without any plans to get married, while 79.7 percent think it is a good idea to cohabit before marriage.

Another survey from 1997 shows that 42 percent of all men and 34 percent of all women have had sexual relationships outside of a steady relationship.⁵

³Eriksen, 34.
⁵The survey is "Folkehelsas seksualundersøkelse" quoted in Dagbladet, 1 December 2000, 15.
A survey of 10,000 young people between the ages of 14 and 18 reveals that “the intercourse-debut for girls is 16.7 years in 2002, compared to 17.7 years in 1992. Almost half of the girls by the age of 16 have had intercourse. Two out of three 18-year old girls have had their sexual debut. The intercourse-debut for boys was at the age of 18 in 2002, compared to 18.5 years in 1992.”¹ What all this tells us is that young people today have a liberal sexual morality. Apparently, the old ideas of right and wrong, standards and norms, are not held very highly any more.

While people are quite liberal when it comes to moral questions like abortion, homosexuality, cohabitation, and divorce, they are quite conservative when it comes to community-morality, like tax evasion.² Three out of four Norwegians think tax evasion is wrong, and 94.7 percent think it is wrong to receive public benefits illegally.³

Leisure Time and Social Life

Leisure time is highly appreciated by Norwegians. The population between 16 and 74 years of age had an average of 6 hours and 23 minutes leisure time per day in 2000, which is an increase of 21 minutes since 1980. The definition of leisure time is the time left after subtracting the time spent on paid work, education, and sleep. The most time—2 hours per day—is spent on electronic media, an increase of 32 minutes since 1980. One hour 45 minutes is spent socializing, which is a decrease of 14 minutes per day since 1980. Next


²Pål Repstad, Religiøst liv i det moderne Norge (Kristiansand, Norway: Høyskoleforlaget AS, 2000), 107.

³Lund, 47, 71.
comes reading (35 minutes), travel in connection with leisure time activities (34 minutes),
sports and outdoors recreation (31 minutes), entertainment (14 minutes), and relaxing (12
minutes). Thirty-two minutes are spent on various other things, among them religion (just 1
minute). We especially notice a tendency that more time is spent with media and less time
socializing. There have not been any dramatic changes, though.

On average, Norwegians use 63 percent of their time for activities in or close to
their home. The following is said about Norwegians: “According to a survey carried out by
Statistics Norway (Barstad 1999), more leisure time is regarded as the most important
contribution to a better life, and is valued more highly than more money and better health.
Other surveys (Kitterød 1999) show that a direct link between increased leisure time and a
better life does not necessarily exist. While there has been an increase in average leisure
time, a higher proportion of the population report having a tighter schedule and being more
busy.”

“There are considerable variations in the access to . . . media when comparing
different age groups.” Almost everybody, regardless of age, has a TV. VCRs are much
more common among youth (almost 90 percent), than among the elderly (37 percent of men
and 20 percent of women). Almost 80 percent of all children and young people have a PC

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2Ivar Lodemel and Jardar E. Flaa, *Sosial puls: Myter og fakta om leveår i Norge* (n.p.,

3*Social Trends 2000*, 173.

4Ibid., 175.
at home, but only 15 percent of the elderly. The conclusion is that there is a remarkable generation gap in access to electronic media.

While Swedish TV was the sole competitor to the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation until the early 1980s, today the situation is different. Ninety percent of the population has access to TV2, the leading commercial Norwegian TV channel, and more than 60 percent have access to satellite TV.

The media use has not increased in proportion to the increased availability of media. Children spend more time in front of the TV than before, but less time on watching videos. Young people also watch TV more than before, but not more than their adults, and less than their grandparents. However, young people have not increased their video viewing, but they spend more time on this than the adults.

Statistics from 1991-1998 show that the total media use actually has decreased among all age groups. "A considerable shorter time is spent on cultural activities compared with time spent on media use. Still, Norwegians on average attend 21 cultural activities annually, visits to cinemas and sports events included. . . . In recent years, there has been an increase in cultural activity, both in terms of options and attendance. . . . There is a tendency for people to spend more time outside their home; to go out more."

1Ibid.
2Ibid., 175-76.
3Ibid., 177-78.
4Ibid., 179.
In relation to going out, a few words should be said about the peculiar Norwegian drinking-patterns. The Norwegian alcohol habits are different than in most other European countries. "If an Englishman drinks half a liter of beer daily, a Norwegian may drink seven half-liters on Saturday night and stay away from alcohol all the rest of the week. This way of drinking, the weekend drinking, is typical of Norway (and Sweden). When you drink, you more or less get drunk."¹

Norway is "high up on the list of people who gamble most. . . . Twenty thousand people [Norwegians] may suffer from gambling addiction."² That means that close to half a percent of the population are not just gambling—like so many Norwegians seem to do—but gambling has become a serious problem for them. "Among young people between 12 and 18 years of age, 23 percent play on gambling machines weekly."³

Norwegians are nature-loving people, and enjoy walking and hiking. During a typical year, 70 percent have been on a walk or hike in the forest, and 52 percent in the mountains. The average Norwegian goes for a walk or hike twenty-five times in the forest and 6 times in the mountains during a year. Those who actively participate in such activities go to the forest 36 times and to the mountains 12 times.⁴

The interest in sports is great in Norway with soccer most popular in the summer and skiing in the winter. Surveys show that 90 percent of the Norwegian population is

¹Eriksen, 71.
⁴Ibid., 183.
interested in skiing and soccer.\textsuperscript{1} Much nationalism and patriotism is vented in the worship of sport heroes.

In the early sixties, the charter companies started offering cheap vacation trips to the Mediterranean. This has become very popular among Norwegians hungering for sun. Such a vacation is a welcomed break from the cold and strenuous everyday life. Norwegians do not travel to the south primarily to visit foreign cultures, but simply to relax, have fun and have time off. And some would add: to get cheap alcohol.

Depending on what surveys we trust, 73-83 percent of Norwegians are members of some kind of voluntary organization, and each individual is a member of an average of 1.7-1.9 organizations.\textsuperscript{2} For example, these can be political parties, environmental organizations, hobby-clubs, Christian churches, choirs, sport-clubs, and so on. There is a lot of volunteer work being done in Norway. "Fifty four percent of the population did such work in 1998. An average of more than nine hours per month was spent on such activities. We find 80 percent of the volunteer work being done within organizations, and half of the population has done work for voluntary organizations. These numbers are high also compared to surveys from other countries. In a multi-national survey done in 1995 an average of 27 percent of those asked in eleven European countries say that they have done volunteer work within the last year."\textsuperscript{3}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}Eriksen, 86. }

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2}Dag Wollebæk, Per Selle, and Håkon Lorentzen, \textit{Frivillig innsats: Sosial integrasjon, demokrati og økonomi} (Bergen, Norway: Fagbokforlaget, 2000), 52. }

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 39-40. }
About 11 percent of the volunteer workers do voluntary work within religious organizations, according to surveys done both in 1986 and 1998. Eighteen percent of the time spent voluntarily in the religious organizations, was spent on activities outside, 35 percent on activities inside, and 33 percent on a mixture.¹ In general—when looking at all volunteer work—more time is used on administrative work and committee work in Norway than in other European countries. At the same time less time is spent on caring for others in Norway than in other countries.²

What makes all these volunteer workers continue their activities? First and foremost is the fellowship they experience in these organizations, but also the desire to do something for causes they believe in, and the desire to be stimulated by learning new things and feeling good about themselves.³

Young people today often have the reputation of being self-centered and lazy. Under the heading “What Happened to the Ego-Generation?” the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten reported in July 2003 that “at the Oslo Red Cross young people are almost queuing up to do volunteer work without pay, apparently out of pure idealism.” Lisbeth Dahl, the person responsible for the volunteer work in the Oslo Red Cross, is reported to have said, “I believe young people see what happens around them and they want to contribute to make changes. Many of them say that they are having such a good life themselves that they want to help others.” She reacts to the young people being labeled

¹Ibid., 45, 47.
²Ibid., 48.
³Ibid., 241.
egoists, and says: “My experience is that they really do care. I take my hat off to the youth.”¹ This may mean that Norwegian people are leaving behind the self-centeredness that has characterized them in recent years.

Health, Life, and Death

The health situation of the Norwegian people seems to be quite stable.² Life expectancy is still slowly increasing, and in 1999 reached 75.5 years for males (73.3 in 1989) and 81.3 years for women (79.9 in 1989).³

Since the tragic record year 1988, when 708 Norwegians committed suicide, the trend has been downward. In 1999, there were 583 suicides, which is 18 percent lower than in 1988. For comparison, the number dying from suicide is 45 percent higher than the number dying from traffic-accidents. Most likely, the numbers of suicides are even higher than in the public records, as many suicides are recorded as accidents.

Males between 20 and 29 years of age is the group with the highest numbers of suicides (17 percent of the total number in 1999). Among young people between 15 and 19 years of age there was a remarkable increase in suicides from 1998 to 1999, especially among girls.⁴ "Young people between 12 and 20 years of age have tried to commit suicide


²Lødemel, 34.

³Social Trends 2000, 208-209.

⁴The numbers in this paragraph has been based on statistical information from: Statistisk årbok 2002, 126-127.
at the rate of 8.3 percent.\textsuperscript{1} There are about five times as many suicides among young people today, when compared to the 1970s.\textsuperscript{2} More young people commit suicide in Norway than in most other countries with which it can be compared. The highest increase in suicide rates is found in rural areas. Researchers believe that the high alcohol intake among young people, the impulsiveness of youth, and the lengthened pre-adult period are important causes. Half of all suicides happen after alcohol-intake, with the most common factor when young people commit suicide being psychiatric disease. Young people are tormented more by anxiety and depression than before.

**Description of Religious Life in Norway**

**Religious Re-Awakening**

In a feature article in the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*, the well known Norwegian writer and publisher Andreas Skartveit writes under the heading "An unexpected return to God?:" "After having been hiding, chased away by reason and materialism in the modern century, religion is unexpectedly on its way back in the Western societies—to people who thought and proclaimed that God was dead. Also in the Nordic countries, Christianity is making itself felt more and more."\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Olafsrud, 43.

\textsuperscript{2}This information, and the facts mentioned in the rest of this paragraph, are all based on a newspaper article from "Dagbladet": Anja Hegg, "Hvorfor tar de unge sitt liv?,” *Dagbladet*, 13 November 2002, 26.

\textsuperscript{3}Andreas Skartveit, “Eit uventa come-back for Gud?,” *Aftenposten*, 14 February 1999, 11.
The Norwegian historian of ideas, Otto Krogseth, argues for what he calls a “dialectical secularization theory”:

Even though secularization is taking place on the material and institutional levels of society, his argument is that the same development also may call forth a reconsecration both on the individual and cultural level. He relates this counter-cultural reaction to an increasing crisis of meaning and identity in the life of the postmodern human being. With the loss of stable structures and overarching traditions, the subject is threatened by inner dissolution. In a situation like that, religion can acquire a compensating function when it comes to finding and reconstructing a deeper existential meaning and identity.¹

In his book, Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium, Andrew M. Greeley says that “one is . . . forced to conclude from a closer look at a country like Norway, where religion might first appear to be quiescent, that God is still alive and well. . . . Norway may be a more religious country than many Norwegians realize.”²

According to public media, there is a clear trend in Norway showing an increased interest in religion. However, it should be noted that ‘interest’ does not necessarily mean personal involvement, and ‘religion’ means more than Christianity.

“The interest in religion is growing rapidly. Never have so many studied the science of religion. Never have so many books been published about religion. The interest for religious studies is very much on the increase. At the university in Oslo the number of


students studying the history of religion is five times as high as it was twenty years ago. In Bergen the increase is even higher.\(^{1}\)

The popular weekly newsstand magazines also show an increased interest in religion. Arild Romarheim, one of the best-known experts and researchers on religion in Norway, looked at three of the Norwegian weekly magazines with the greatest circulation, and studied the issue between 1967 and 1997. Romarheim’s observations are interesting, because these kinds of magazines are good indicators of what people think and want.

Romarheim says of his findings:

Not since the inter-war period have there been more ‘Christian’ articles and reporting in Norwegian weekly magazines. At the same time, Christianity is spoken of in far more positive terms than before.

It has become trendy to be religious, maybe it is even trendy to be Christian. . . .

. . . The weekly magazines follow the market, and apparently Christian articles are selling now. . . .

. . . The weekly magazines show that people are religious. In itself that is not very surprising, but now it has become acceptable to be religious. . . .

. . . It is typical for the ‘Christian’ articles in the weekly magazines, to present a Christianity that “works.” Faith must do something with life.\(^{2}\)

Other Scandinavian researchers confirm this same trend. Lars Linder, in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, has looked at the archives of a couple of Swedish newspapers. He found that “articles mentioning ‘God’, ‘Jesus’, ‘the church’, and ‘the

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\(^1\)Arne Guttormsen, “Rekordhøy interesse for religion,” *Vårt Land*, 31 August 2000, 16.

Bible’, have increased in number during recent years. Forty percent more than ten years ago.”¹

Religious Affiliation

Like a few other countries in the world, Norway has a State church, namely the Church of Norway (Lutheran evangelical). Only about 7 percent of the population are not members of any religious community. Of the rest, 86.5 percent are members of the State church, 5.5 percent are members of other Christian churches, while 1 percent are members of non-Christian religious communities (mostly Islam).²

“Nineteen out of 20 Norwegians are members of a Christian community—18 of them are members of the Church of Norway.”³

Church Activity

Only 1 to 2 percent of the population goes to church on an average Sunday.⁴ Fourteen percent have been to church at least four times in the last year.⁵

On occasions like christenings, confirmations, weddings, funerals, and Christmas, quite a few go to church—even non-believers. Reasons for attendance may be that this is

⁴Repstad, “Hvem er kristenfolket?,” 11.
⁵Geir Ove Fonn, “Religiøsitet taper i verdikampen,” Vårt Land, 5 April 2001, 4-5, and Hellevik, 204.
seen as an important part of the cultural tradition, and that people like the solemnity and atmosphere.

Religious Faith

The university in Ålborg, Denmark, recently did an international survey showing that almost everybody else is more religious than Norwegians. Forty-three percent of the Norwegians believe in God.¹ For comparison, the percentages for some other selected countries are: 92 percent in Portugal, 84 percent in the USA, 58 percent in Australia, 53 percent in England and in Denmark, 48 percent in Holland, 45 percent in Russia and in France, 44 percent in Germany, and 32 percent in Sweden.² “Figures of 99 percent or above are attained in South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and the Philippines.”³

In 1999 the Swiss Gallup-Institute did a big survey, asking 50,000 people in sixty countries about their relationship to God.⁴ In this survey, 52 percent of the Norwegians said that God did not play any role in their life. The percentage was higher only in Hong Kong


²Kaspersen, “Få tror på Gud,” 17.


(64 percent), Czech Republic (64 percent), and in Sweden (55 percent). The 52 percent for Norway is in great contrast to the average for the whole survey: 13 percent.

When people are asked if they believe in God as taught by Christianity, 28 percent of the Norwegians say they do. For comparison, the figure is 20 percent in Denmark, and 18 percent in Sweden.¹

Because Norway has a State church where the vast majority of the population are members—but most of them without really living as Christians—the expression personlig kristen (personal Christian) is commonly used in Norway as a label for those who really do have a personal faith and live as Christians. Only 20 percent of Norwegians are prepared to call themselves ‘personal Christians’, and this number has been quite stable for many years.² To the question if they regard themselves as Christians on the basis of their own understanding of what it means to be a Christian, as many as 55 percent said yes.³

A large religious survey was carried out in 1991, and then again in 1998. The 1998 survey reveals that 8.9 percent (1991: 9.4) describe themselves as “very” or “strongly” religious, and a further 29 percent (1991: 24.7) as “a little” religious.⁴ However, by ‘religion’ Norwegians do not only think of Christianity. Only 9.5 percent think that truth is to be found in only one religion, while 51.8 percent think there is truth in various religions.

¹Ibid.

²Geir Ove Fonn, “Religiøsitet taper i verdikampen,” 4-5, and Hellevik, 204.

³Repstad, Religiøst liv, 33.

⁴Lund, 55, 75.
In 1994 a selection of the Norwegian people were asked: “What view of life would you say comes closest to your own?” Two out of three answered the Christian view of life, one out of five answered the humanistic view of life, and only 1 percent indicated religions other than Christianity.¹

In 1999 a bit over half of the Norwegian population answered yes to the question, ‘Do you believe in Jesus as the son of God?’ and four out of ten said they believed that Jesus actually rose from the dead.² Almost one quarter (22.2 %) agree fully with the statement, ‘Jesus is my Savior, who died for my sins,’ which is a decrease from 28.1 percent in 1991. Almost one third (30.5 %) are at least partly unsure whether Jesus ever lived (1991: 25.9). Only 4.4 percent would say that life has no meaning (1991: 3.3), but only 10.7 percent would say that life has meaning because God exists (1991: 13.9). Fully 64.6 percent indicate that it is up to ourselves to give meaning to our lives (1991: 67.8).³

Religious Practice

When it comes to religious practice, it should be noted that 21.1 percent pray every week or more often, while 37.1 percent never pray. Only 5.5 percent of the population take part in Christian or other religious activity every week or almost every week.⁴

¹ Repstad, Religiøst liv, 32-33.
² Ibid., 33.
³ Lund, 73, 75.
⁴ Ibid., 75.
In a survey among Norwegian Christians, 86 percent say that they pray every day, and 52 percent say that they study the Bible every day.¹

Not more than 9 percent of the Norwegian population goes to church at least 10 times a year (baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals not included). A further 9 percent go 3-9 times, 15 percent go once or twice a year, and 67 percent never go. Women go more often than men, and older people more often than young people.² Among Christians, 63 percent attend church at least once a week.³ For comparison, at least twice as many people attended church around 1920 as compared to church attendance in Norway today.⁴

In a large survey between 2000 and 2001, Statistics Norway looked at how Norwegians use their time. Looking at the population between 16 and 74 years of age, 2 percent of the population spend an average of one minute per day practicing religion. But if we look at only the portion of the population who actually practice religion, each spends an average of one hour eight minutes per day. The tendency for the period 1980-2000 is that the percentage of the population practicing religion is stable, but the time spent has decreased.⁵


²Statistisk årbok, 239.

³Nygaard, 33.

⁴Repstad, Religiøst liv, 106.

⁵Vaage, 168.
Belief in Christian Doctrines

Concerning belief in the various Christian doctrines, 43.5 percent are more or less sure that there is life after death. Furthermore, 31.6 percent are more or less sure that there is a heaven, 14.9 percent are more or less sure that there is such a thing as hell, and 29.5 percent believe in miracles. The population is about equally divided between the belief that the Bible is “inspired by God” or “God’s actual words” (40.4 percent), and the belief that it is just “an old book with fables, legends, stories, and moral teachings written by men” (44.1 percent). Only 4 percent would say that the Bible does not concern them, though.1

Regional Differences

Looking at Norway regionally, it is the southern and western part of Norway that is most religious, at least when it comes to organized Christian life. Religious faith is as common in the north as it is in the south and the west, but the north has the lowest participation in religious meetings in the whole country. There is little difference between rural and urban areas, except that the big cities seem to be a little more secularized. In and around Oslo, organized religious life has the fewest followers.2

Notice some examples of regional differences: In the southern part of the country, 35.1 percent say they believe in a personal God, while in east Norway (around the capital), the percentage is 18.9. In the south, 23.5 percent believe in hell, while only 8.4 percent do

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1Lund, 51.

2Repstad, Religioes liv, 54-55.
in the east. Only 17.4 percent of the members of the State church in the south often attend church, while only 3.6 percent of them do that in the east.¹

Church of Norway

On the web-page of the Church of Norway, we read under the heading, ‘The Church of Norway in Numbers, 1950-2000’: “Almost 100 percent of the Norwegian population was baptized, confirmed, and married in the Church of Norway from the Reformation until about 20 years ago. The stability lasted until about 1970 with more than 96 percent who were baptized. . . . In the 1970s and 1980s the signals from most sociologists were very clear: The tendency of fewer people taking part in the rituals of the church would continue. This prognosis proved to be wrong.”²

On 1 January 2001 there were 3,913,962 members of the Church of Norway. That was about 86 percent of the Norwegian population at that time.³ Since the beginning of the 1990s, an increasing number of people have joined the Church of Norway. The tendency is also that fewer and fewer people leave the Church of Norway. Among those who do leave, about one-fourth join another Christian church.⁴


³Ibid.

Since 1998, the yearly attendance at services and meetings in the Church of Norway has decreased 5.7 percent.¹

Having mentioned how people relate to the Church of Norway, a few words should also be said about how the Church of Norway relates to the people. In his book about the Norwegian state religion, Bernt T. Oftestad interestingly comments:

As the Church of Norway has a democratic identity, that means on the one hand that the teaching profile reflects, and is supposed to reflect the attitudes and thinking of the majority of people, even when it is in clear conflict with traditional Christianity and what is common in the church. On the other hand it means that the right to individual and personal interpretation of Christian faith, morals, teachings and sacramental life must be respected. . . .

. . . [The] doctrines and life-norms [of the Church of Norway] will in principle continually have to be adjusted to the religious and moral ideas of the majority of the people.²

Organized Religion
Outside the Church of Norway

Independent churches—like Methodists, Baptists, the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church, etc.—have generally stagnated in numbers since the war. The Pentecostal church and some other charismatic movements have experienced a certain increase. The total picture shows all in all a certain decrease in organized religious activity in Norway since the war.³

After the Church of Norway, the two largest Christian blocks of churches are the


³Repstad, Religiøst liv, 106.
Pentecostal churches (44,005 members) and the Roman Catholic Church (42,546 members).¹ For comparison, there are 4,785 Seventh-day Adventists.² The biggest religious community in Norway, aside from the Church of Norway, is the Islamic community with 62,753 members.³

Only 10-12 percent of the Norwegian population can be regarded as interested in institutionalized religion, while 10-15 percent are clearly non-believers. More than 70 percent tend towards non-institutionalized religion. Their religion is privatized. These are the people who would say, for example, ‘yes to Jesus’, ‘no to church’. They are “positive to the cause and the contents, but resistant to the framework and the forms.”⁴

Confidence in Religious Organizations

The big, so-called ISSP⁵ survey of 1998 reveals that 31.5 percent has little or no confidence in church or religious organizations.⁶ A little less than half of the population in Norway feel that the church is good to them, and a little under one third find the church condemning.⁷ People’s confidence in the Church of Norway is far lower than their

¹Statistisk årbok, 240.
²According to the records of the Norwegian Union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 31 March 2003.
³Statistisk årbok, 240.
⁴Olafsrud, 55.
⁵ISSP = International Social Survey Programme. It started in 1985, and every year since international surveys have been conducted. Today thirty-one countries are members of ISSP.
⁶Lund, 48.
confidence in, for example, the banks and in traditional Norwegian newspapers. On a list of 21 institutions, organizations and operations, the church is number 17 on the confidence scale. Fifty one percent say that they have great or fairly great confidence in the Church of Norway.¹

About four in five Norwegians think it is possible to be a good Christian without going to church.²

Norwegian Youth and Religion

The dominant religion among Norwegian youth is still Christianity. Actually, as many as 69 percent say that they regard themselves as belonging to the Christian religion. At the same time only 16 percent of Norwegian youth, or only one-fifth of those who confess to being Christian, “know that there is a God.”³ Only 3 percent of those confessing to belong to the Christian religion say that religion is “very important” to them, and they really try to live according to the Bible. As many as 85 percent say that religion is of little or no importance to them. Eleven percent of the youth confessing Christianity go to religious meetings at least once a month. For comparison, the corresponding percentage among Muslim youth living in Norway is 42.⁴

¹Jan Arild Holbek, “Folk har mer tiltro til bankene enn til kirken,” Vårt Land, 16 September 1999, 7.

²Lund, 57.

³Tormod Øia, Generasjonskloften som ble borte (Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 1998), 139-140.

⁴Ibid., 142-143.
The Organization NOVA\textsuperscript{1} did extensive research in 1992 and again in 2002 among eleven to twelve thousand Norwegian teenagers, asking how teens related to Christianity. Table 3 shows the five alternatives in the survey, and the percentages. We see from this survey that the Christian core is quite stable among young people. The percentage of youth believing in God, without that belief having much impact on their lives, has decreased almost 10 percent since 1992. The group of agnostics and atheists is over 50 percent among young people, and has increased almost 10 percent since 1992.

Table 3. The Survey \textit{Ung i dag} (Young Today)

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
  \hline
  Alternatives: & 1992 & 2002 \\
  \hline
  1 “I am a personal Christian” & 14.6\% & 12\% \\
  \hline
  2 “I believe that there is a God, but religion does not mean a lot to me in daily life.” & 36.6\% & 28.8\% \\
  \hline
  3 Uncertain (Agnostic) & 23.6\% & 26.8\% \\
  \hline
  4 I do not believe that there is a God (Atheist) & 23.3\% & 28.6\% \\
  \hline
  5 “I belong to another religion” & 1.8\% & 3.7\% \\
  \hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Source: Table by author, based on information received from Tormod Øia, NOVA in telephone interview, 2 June 20003.

The same NOVA research also revealed that membership in Christian organizations has remained quite stable (from 6.8 percent in 1992 to 5.4 percent in 2002), while membership in other organizations (sport, music, etc.) has decreased notably (from 81 percent in 1992 to 58.3 percent in 2002).

\textsuperscript{1}NOVA = \textit{Norsk institutt for forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring} (Norwegian institute for research about maturation, welfare and aging). Tormod Øia of NOVA, telephone interview by author, 2 June 2003, Oslo Norway.
Kåre Skuland, from the charismatic school and student movement *Ny Generasjon* (New Generation), reported in his research that the situation in the bigger cities, like the capital Oslo, is ‘alarming’: “According to research only 2 percent of the 30,000 teenagers in the capital, are ‘confessing and active Christians’. This means that in Oslo there are about 80 young, confessing and active Christians at each age step. We are therefore not only talking about being the only Christian in class, many are the only Christian in the school. Besides, almost all of 550 Christian teenagers attend Christian schools, Kåre Skuland said.”¹

Even though Norway is a predominantly Christian country, knowledge about religion is not very high. “Close to every fourth secondary school student does not know that the cross is a Christian symbol. . . . Two out of three . . . know that Paul belongs to Christianity. . . . Less than one-third . . . know that the Sermon on the Mount is a part of Christianity.”²

At the same time, youth leaders report an increased spiritual longing among teenagers. After the Pentecostal summer camp in 2001 called *Ten 22:22*, the leaders reported to the media that the follow-up meetings which emphasized prayer and equipping the participants, were the most popular parts of the program among young people. “The teenagers are much more aware of their spiritual needs now compared to ten years ago,” the

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leaders reported. And furthermore, “The young people have an enormous spiritual longing.”

Closing Remarks
Concerning Religion in Norway

Secularization is usually thought of as a process where religious ideas are becoming less and less meaningful to people, and the religious institutions are playing a less and less important role. There is also another side-effect of the secularization process. “For a while we believed that secularization would lead to a lessoning of Christian influence. That absolutely did not happen. Instead we have gotten a society more religious than ever. But the religion is many-sided, and is the carrier of a complex mixture of old and new elements. We are talking about a pluralistic society where almost anything is possible. The Christian monoculture is long gone. It is time for faith! But it is also time for superstition! And mixed faith!”

There are a lot of indications showing that a gradual liberalization of lifestyle norms among active Norwegian Christians is taking place. Conservative ideas of what is sin are loosing ground. Examples include the use of alcohol, cohabiting, homosexual practice, etc., that are entering Christian circles. Younger Christians are usually even more liberal than older Christians.

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2Olafsrud, 51.
3Repstad, Religiøst liv, 64.
In the recent past, and even more so in the present, Christianity has been displaced to the ‘private sector’. Religion has not disappeared, but its area of influence is shrinking. The church has increasingly withdrawn from the public arena. Religion has become something very private, dealing with the life of the hereafter. The Christian life is largely restricted to church—a life lived at a distance from the world of realities: Work, education, family life, friendship, and so on.\(^1\) Secularization may be explained as the process of religion loosing its social importance.

**Distinctive Norwegian Values and Manners**

As part of the *Norsk Monitor* project, MMI\(^2\) has interviewed thousands of Norwegians over a number of years, to get a picture of Norwegian values and mentality. Looking at the developmental tendencies since the eighties, the study found that “two traits are remarkable—materially we are increasingly better off, but we do not become more content.”\(^3\) The level of happiness has decreased since the 1980s. Only one-fifth of the Norwegians say they are ‘very happy’.\(^4\)

Norway has been called “the different country.”\(^5\) What makes Norway different or special in the mind of the Norwegians themselves? “In a survey in 1992 people were asked

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\(^1\) Olafsrud, 52-53.

\(^2\) MMI = Markeds og Media Intstituttet (Marketing and Media Institute)

\(^3\) Hellevik, Preface.


to define ‘our national cultural heritage’. The answers were quite similar. Common experiences with nature, history, the flag, the royal family, sports, and the seventeenth of May were indicated by the majority to be typical for Norwegian culture.¹

Researchers have asked foreigners living in Norway if there is a typical Norwegian set of manners. “An Indian said that ‘the average Norwegian is honest, hard-working, systematic, reliable, fond of nature, patriotic, a warm defender of freedom, a friend of the poor and oppressed, but also cold and one who keeps one’s feelings to oneself. Objectivity goes before feelings. Furthermore, Norwegians are lacking in humor and are incredibly naïve in their belief in the excellence of everything Norwegian.”²

The book Vår tid (Our Time) by Halldan Farstad and Ivar Frønes lists the following typical Norwegian traits:

• *Basic Values and Norms:*
  - Strong faith in freedom, equality, and democracy
  - Need of joint consultation and participation by the people
  - Anti-authoritarian attitudes
  - Helpful and compassionate towards suffering people
  - Honesty and moderation, sense of duty, and hard work are central virtues

• *The Norwegian Manners:*
  - Not very spontaneous, calm and sturdy, quiet and reserved, maybe a little locked up
  - Skeptical towards strangers and authorities
  - Sober lifestyle characterized by moderation
  - An obvious close and spontaneous love for nature: skiing, hiking in the woods and mountains, hunting and fishing
  - Every family has its own cabin, which is used a lot


²Berntsen, Bøhmer, and Jenssen, 162.
• *Faith and Traditions:*
  - Moderately religious, skeptical of everything that cannot be explained logically, but also some small, strongly sectarian groups with religious submission

• *Economy:*
  - Careful with private economy, sparse (stingy?)

Joan Felicia Henriksen’s observations concerning politics may be true of many other aspects of Norwegian life and mentality as well:

  Independence is a key to the Norwegian personality. They need personal space, they insist on standing alone. . .
  At the same time Norwegians are idealists, truly believing they are their brother’s keeper.
  These two factors have influenced every facet of Norwegian political history, built Norway’s excellent reputation internationally, and created endless conflict on the local and national level. . .
  . . . They don’t want any nation, or group of nations, telling them what to do.
  Historically the ancient Vikings have a reputation for being proudly, fiercely independent.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen in his previously cited book *Et langt kaldt land, nesten uten mennesker* lists some very interesting characteristics that he thinks are common among Norwegians.

**Bad Conscience**

A bad conscience is a Christian value especially common in Protestant countries like Norway. In other countries, like the Middle East, honor and shame are the equivalent

1Halfdan Farstad and Ivar Frones, *Vår tid* (Bekkestua, Norway: NKI Forlaget, 1995), 63-64.


3The title meaning in English: *A Long, Cold Country, Almost Without People.* The list and comments are based on chapter 4. See Eriksen, 51-60.
value. Even though a bad conscience traditionally has had to do with people’s relationship to God, today it is more a matter of an inner feeling.

Moderation and Simplicity

Moderation and simplicity is also rooted in Protestantism. Practical examples of this value are: Norwegians commonly eat the old bread before starting on the new loaf, because food is not to be thrown away. Sweets are just for the weekend. Norwegian cabins may be simple, even without electricity and running water, because one is supposed to live a primitive life when out in nature. Norwegian design is simple. Typical Norwegian food is very simple, for example, a Norwegian packed lunch may consist of a few slices of bread with white or brown cheese. All this is gradually changing as globalization influences the Norwegian habits and values, but these are examples of Norwegian moderation and simplicity.

Punctuality

It is not very Norwegian to waste time. If you do, you get a bad conscience. There is a distinct line between work and leisure. Lunch break is short, work ends about 4 p.m. and then people go home to their families. Time is scarce in Norway; people are commonly short of time. Time is properly planned. This may be due to the early sunsets in winter, or the long, cold winter season when people stay indoors most of the time.

Equality

To Norwegians equality is important in politics and in culture. Everybody is to have the same rights, and to be respected for their opinions, preferences, and lifestyles. At the
same time, the focus on equality means that nobody is to attract attention to himself or herself. From a novel by Aksel Sandemose, we have the well-known Jante law\(^1\) saying: “Do not think that you are better than we are.” The Jante law is still alive and well in Norway. Of course there are also positive aspects to this: A person is supposed to be modest and moderate, not boasting of one’s own achievements. In many Norwegian dialects the word for ‘alike’ (lik) means the same as ‘good’.

Independence

Norwegians are supposed to manage on their own, expect the right to be on their own, and usually choose to be on their own, while in many other countries being alone is regarded as a punishment. This may be so because this long spread out land is inhabited with relatively few people. Travel is often challenging and expensive, and weather conditions cause people to lock themselves up in their own homes.

Norwegian Politeness

A Norwegian is often reluctant to accept gifts and services from other people, and if they do, they naturally want to pay it back. It is a matter of not owing anybody, and feeling independent. This Norwegian mentality sometimes offends foreigners. Norwegian politeness is very correct and formal, not exuberant, enthusiastic, or generous. Of course, Norwegians may be warm people, it may just take some time to elicit this warmth. As one joke goes: “It is OK to be spontaneous, as long as you can think about it first.”

\(^1\)Jante was a little town in Sandemose’s novel *En flyktning krysser sitt spor*, published in 1933. The law is named after the town.
Objectivity and Usefulness

Norwegians like to go straight to the point. They want to do what they are supposed to do, as fast as possible, and get done with it. What is done is supposed to be useful. This attitude is even reflected in many different aspects of life. For example, Norwegian cities are built for being useful and practical, with little regard for what is beautiful.

Versatility

Nothing is supposed to be too much or too little. It is regarded as a virtue to be versatile. Norwegians should not be too one-sided. Hobbies are good. A many-sided life is considered a rich and good life in Norway.

Freedom

Freedom is a strong Norwegian value, and means the right to do whatever one wants, as long as it is not illegal or hurts anybody else. This also has to do with independence, the right to make it on one’s own, not bother too much about others, and minding one’s own business. Norwegians have left much of the social responsibility to the State. The Norwegian society makes personal freedom possible, and the State takes care of those who do not manage so well on their own.

Every seventeenth of May, 94 percent of Norwegians celebrate the freedom of the nation.¹ This is without doubt the greatest holiday in Norway.

¹Eriksen, 76.
The strong Norwegian sense of freedom also means that most Norwegians are rather liberal when it comes to private moral questions like abortion, homosexuality, cohabitation, divorce, and so on.¹

Worshipping Nature

The hardest thing to understand for many foreigners is the special Norwegian relationship to nature. When the Norwegian nation was built, the national identity and pride could not be built on any proud military history, cultural history, or monumental buildings. What Norway had was untouched nature: dramatic waterfalls, majestic mountains, enormous mountain plateaus, and picturesque fjords. To a Norwegian, it is regarded as morally good to be fond of nature.

Social Trends

In the external analysis of the situation that the Norwegian Adventist Church faces, this chapter has so far been concerned with the special characteristics of Norway as a country and society, and Norwegians as a people. There is also a need to understand the time, culture, and various generations in Norway in order to have a clear picture of the external situation that the Norwegian Church faces. Such an understanding will also be a useful background for the internal analysis that will be done in the next chapter.

Cultural Shifts

Older Adventists often look to former times as a model. They have memories of church growth, of the message being preached loud and clear, and of life-principles and

¹Repstad, Religiøst liv, 107.
standards being clear and rigid. Older people seem to forget, or at least not understand, that we have moved on in history, and things are definitely not as they were in earlier times when it comes to habits, values, standards, interests, priorities, and mind-sets.

David W. Henderson puts it very clearly when he says:

When we weren’t looking, the world changed, and we weren’t ready for it. Christians may be nostalgic for ‘the good old days’ when society endorsed Christian values and believed churches were important. But we will wait in vain for the culture to turn back its thinking so we can speak to it again as we did in a more ‘Christian’ period.

Like Paul in the ancient world, Christians today must understand and adjust to the mindset of our neighbors. We must be willing to adapt to other people’s way of thinking in order to win them to the Savior. That is risky and painful business.¹

Henderson goes on to say that “the address of the world around us has changed. . . . The world has moved, but it neglected to send a change of address card. We keep delivering the same words to the old address, but no one is home.”²

The same author gives this vivid overview of the history of worldviews:

Over its long history, Western civilization has been shaped by three major ways of making sense of reality. The first, typically referred to as the premodern worldview, was the God-centered, biblically based perspective that primarily shaped our culture beginning in the fourth century. In this view God is the defining reality out of which our understanding of self, others, and the universe grows.

Then began the first shift of worldviews, a lurching transition starting with the Renaissance and culminating during the Enlightenment. Humanity and the physical world began to loom ever larger, moving more and more into the center of the picture, while God—initially relegated to the fringes—eventually was looped out of the scene altogether. When the dust settled, we found ourselves looking through new glasses, standing within what came to be known as the modern worldview. A naturalistic worldview that had no place for the supernatural, the modern view was dominated by self, which occupied center stage, and reason, which emerged as the new authority.

Then began the second shift, beginning with the expressiveness of romanticism and culminating in the anything-goes permissiveness of the sixties. This time the modern world was being bumped aside for a new one, the postmodern world. Postmodernism


²Ibid., 16.
ushered in a world that hums with the supernatural but is absent of God, is filled with opportunity but lacks any inherent meaning, replaces responsibility to others with an ethic of self-fulfillment, and rejects reason in favor of intuition and feelings as its final authority.

Like a hippo diving into a bathtub, the arrival of this new worldview had a way of rearranging everything. Nothing remains untouched.¹

James W. Sire describes this historic shift in these worlds: "There has been a movement from (1) a 'premodern' concern for a just society based on revelation from a just God to (2) a 'modern' attempt to use universal reason as the guide to justice to (3) a 'postmodern' despair of any universal standard for justice. Society then moves from medieval hierarchy to Enlightenment democracy to postmodern anarchy. . . . The 'premodern' Christian had too high a view of human depravity, and the 'postmodern' mind has too dim a view of any universal truth."²

Before we look closer at the modern and the postmodern worldviews, we must be aware of the danger of being too rigid and dogmatic about this. Andrew M. Greeley, in his book Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium, makes the point that when these kinds of labels "are taken as dynamics which actually exist in the outside world, they are an excuse for not thinking, indeed a substitute for thought. One who uses such words as if they were actual realities with an existence of their own may sound profound but actually reveals himself to be shallow and superficial, someone who, for the sake of a convenient labels [sic], loses all sense of the complex realities of social life."³

¹Henderson, 188-189 (italics mine).
²James W. Sire, The Universe Next Door (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 175.
³Greeley, x.
Greeley may be a little too categorical and negative about this, but at least we can agree that we must not simplify reality too much. We must remember that society is complex, everybody is not alike, and even in our time there are people living who represent both the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern worldviews.

For example, it often sounds like people talking about postmodernism think that at a certain date in history, the mindset of absolutely all people switched to be postmodern. Worldview transitions are gradual, and everybody is not open to these transitions, at least not fully. Even though we live in a so-called postmodern society today, many, if not a majority, of people are still modern in their worldview. At least this is the case among older people who still make up quite a big and important portion of society.

Modernism

Stanley J. Grenz calls the Renaissance the “grandmother of modernity” and the Enlightenment, also called the Age of Reason, its “true mother.”¹ The prime time of the Age of Reason was about 1650-1800, and during this time the modern era was inaugurated. The Age of Reason broke with the medieval mentality. People were given an enhanced status, and human capabilities received an elevated estimation. God’s place on the central stage was replaced by humanity. Revelation was replaced by reason. In late modernity God was discarded.

The irony is that “Christians have themselves been among the most enthusiastic proponents of modernity and modernization since the seventeenth century.”¹ The Christians proposed scientific methods, not always remembering that “such methods entail more than simply the extension of ‘common sense’.” The Christians also assumed that “unaided ‘common sense’, or natural reason, is capable of discerning spiritual truth.”² The Bible is not very optimistic about natural human abilities.

“The Protestant ethic . . . appears to lie behind the modern notion of the right to privacy, and behind the emergence of the basic liberal commitment to rationalizing such public concerns as health care and public education, as well as behind the rationalization of modern science and the industrial economy.”³

While in the premodern era the task of human reason was to seek to understand the truth given through revelation, in the modern era human reason determines what constitutes revelation. People “should no longer blindly accept the ‘superstitions’ proclaimed by external authorities such as the Bible or the church.”⁴ Human moral capabilities were appraised. Keywords describing modernity are human reason, self, individualism, control, doubt, secularly, and anxiety.

Modern people are basically atheistic and deistic in their worldview. Modernists

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²Ibid.

³Ibid., 227.

⁴Grenz, 62.
have a mechanistic understanding of the world, and they look to “the scientists for the answers to life and for guidance along the pathway toward the betterment of the human situation.”\(^1\) Objective, scientifically verifiable, technically useful, and presumably incontrovertible facts are held high in the modern society. Values that cannot be tested scientifically, however, do not have a high status.

**Postmodernism**

The term postmodernity first appeared sometime in the 1930s, and as a cultural phenomenon it gained momentum three or four decades later. The death of the postmodern thinker Michael Foucault in 1984, is often used to mark the coming of the age of postmodernism.\(^2\)

Postmodernism versus modernism

“In the final analysis, postmodernism is not ‘post’ anything; it is the last move of the modern.”\(^3\) The postmodern is seen by many as really being a part of the modern. The “essence of modernism has not been left behind. Both modernism and postmodernism rest on two key notions: (1) that the cosmos is all there is—no God of any kind exists—and (2) the autonomy of human reason.”\(^4\) “The ideals of the modern project are still very firmly embedded in the central institutional realities of contemporary society,” Craig M. Gay

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\(^1\)Ibid., 50.

\(^2\)Grenz, 15-16, 123.

\(^3\)Sire, 173.

\(^4\)Ibid., 189.
writes. He consistently describes our time as modern rather than postmodern, because he resists the suggestion that "we have entered into an entirely new cultural situation in which none of the old 'modern' rules and habits of mind need to be taken seriously anymore." He regards any such suggestion as "mistaken and misleading."¹ "Indeed, I would contend that 'postmodernity' represents only a kind of extension of modernity, a kind of 'hyper-modernity'. As British sociologist Anthony Giddens suggested recently: 'Rather than entering a period of post-modernity, we are moving into one in which the consequences of modernity are becoming more radicalized and universalized than before.'"²

In any case, we have moved into a new phase of modern thinking. In the following I will refer to postmodernism, with the understanding that rather than being a new era disconnected from the modern era, it is a continuation or new phase of modernism. I still find it useful to talk about postmodernism, and to be well aware of how it differs from traditional modernism. Gay would talk about 'contemporary Westerners' instead of 'postmoderns', but I think that is just a matter of words. We are talking about the same kind of reality, and I will choose here to use the word 'postmodern', as do most of the commentators.

Andreas Skartveit wrote in 1999, in a previously quoted feature article called, "An Unexpected Comeback for God":

The insight, outlook and order that we thought knowledge, reason and enlightenment had promised us, we have not found. We experience the world as being unknown, cold and incomprehensible, even more than before. All the knowledge has just increased our ignorance, and created new questions. . . . What we do not know, has

¹Gay, 17.
²Ibid., 18.
never been greater than now. And now we know that we do not know. In earlier times we did not know that for sure.

And this creates strange and unexpected conditions, because man is a being that wants to understand, and that wants a connection and meaning with the world around. To live in a meaningless world is cold and hard. And this is where the religions had their wonderful offers. They offered wholeness and coherence. The world had a beginning and an end, what happened on the way had a meaning, even death. . . .

. . . And then it is that they creep forward, the old creatures, the religions, after having lived a hard and dispelled life under modernity in hundreds of years. Also this time the tidings of its death seem to be exaggerated. . . .

. . . In any case there are things indicating that we witness something that resembles an unexpected comeback, in the middle of modernity. Any aggressive resistance cannot be seen. Reason seems to be enfeebled and have a problem with its self—esteem, like the one has who has not kept his promises. Reason showed us new horizons, but both reason and we forgot that the horizon is what we never reach.1

The modern era may be labeled ‘the industrial age’. “The postmodern era, in contrast, focuses on the production of information. We are witnessing a transition from an industrial society to an information society, the symbol of which is the computer.”2 The information age has brought the world together as never before and made it a global village.

“The advent of postmodernity has fostered simultaneously both a global consciousness and the erosion of national consciousness. Nationalism has diminished in the wake of a movement toward ‘retribalization’, toward increased loyalty to a more local context. . . . People are increasingly following the new dictum: ‘Think globally, act locally’.”3

“In the postmodern world, people are no longer convinced that knowledge is inherently good. . . . Postmodernism replaces the optimism of the last century with a

2Grenz, 17.
3Ibid., 18.
gnawing pessimism. Gone is the belief that every day, in every way, we are getting better and better.\textsuperscript{1}

Characteristics of postmodernism

Based on various authorities on postmodernism, the following characteristics can be listed:\textsuperscript{2}

**Spirituality without Christianity.** Postmoderns are much more open to spiritual matters and values than moderns, but they do not feel a need to be loyal to the Christian heritage. Postmoderns are prepared to look anywhere for meaning, and they have a “mix and match” mentality, creating their own personal truth. Openness to the mysteries and an inner urge may even lead some to the occult. Postmoderns feel comfortable mixing elements from belief systems that previously were considered incompatible. For example Hindu and Buddhist concepts of reincarnation may be combined with Christian doctrines. The almighty God may be denied, but a person may find what is ‘god’ for them. “There is no meaning or purpose inherent in life. . . . It is up to you somehow to make life meaningful. . . . Categories of right and wrong, rational or irrational, legal or illegal, are irrelevant.”\textsuperscript{3}

The same culture that celebrated the ‘death of God’ and the triumph of an entirely “secular theology” only a generation ago seems prepared to believe virtually anything anyone has to say about the “gods”, transcendence, and spirituality today. The recent

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{2}See the following sources: Grenz; Sire; Henderson; Brunstad, 19-20; Olafrud, 53-54; Peter Brierley, *12 Things About Society that Impacts the Church* (London, England: Christian Research, 2001), 3.

\textsuperscript{3}Henderson, 161.
return to the sacred appears to stem, at least in part, from a loss of secular nerve. Having liberated ourselves from a divinely inspired and therefore inherently meaningful universe, we find that we are now plagued by an acute sense of insecurity and homelessness. We are terrified by the freedom we have grasped, even if we are not willing to let go of it.¹

**Individual truth without absolutes.** Truth is subjective and personal and is what each person interprets to be true. Postmoderns are pragmatic, flexible, and antidogmatic. Humans should give up the search for absolute truth and be content with individual interpretation. Logic and sense should yield to the subjective experience. Experience, emotions, and intuition are more valid paths to knowledge and truth than is the human intellect. Postmoderns are put off by ‘one-size-fits-all’ ideas. The leading postmodern thinker, Michel Foucault, advance otherness rather than sameness in his writings.

If something is true for one, it does not need to be true for another, according to postmodern thinking. The truth for one may not be the truth for another, and noone should force their truth on others. Sire characterizes the postmodern attitude this way, “No story is truer than anyone else’s story. Does the story work? That is, does it satisfy the teller? Does it get you what you want—say, a sense of belonging, a peace with yourself, a hope for the future, a way to order your life? It’s all one can ask.”² Postmoderns behave like they are in a cafeteria; they taste, pick, throw away, and put together, making their own menu. Religion has become “a matter of personal preference and choice, something to be adopted and/or

¹Gay, 239-240.
²Sire, 180.
discarded privately as each one of us sees fit.”¹ Each person becomes his own high priest and theologian.

“The age-old questions of truth and error, of orthodoxy and heresy, and even those of salvation and perdition, appear to be simply uninteresting from the contemporary point of view.”² “There are no longer any common standards to which people can appeal in their efforts to measure, judge, or value ideas, opinions, or lifestyle choices. Gone as well are old allegiances to a common source of authority.”³

Consumers without loyalty. The postmodern culture is a consumer culture, and that has to do with much more than spending money. The consumer mentality has crept into virtually every aspect of life. It influences the way we live, relate, worship, and everything. We do not only shop for things, we shop for doctors, a new look, new marriage partners or co-habitees, and religious truth. There is no loyalty to a certain brand, store, religion or whatever. One mixes and matches as one wishes. One may pick and choose until one finds a combination that suits one best. One may well blend Christianity with New Age or Eastern Meditation. One hunts for bargains as one wants to give as little as one can to get as much as possible. So when it comes to Christianity, people are more interested in the benefits than the costs. Postmoderns do comparison-shopping, also, at the religious market. They ask, for example, Why should I choose Christianity rather than other religions? There is no patience

¹Gay, 22.
²Ibid, 301.
³Grenz, 19.
for the one-size-fits-all approach. The question is, Does it fit me? If it doesn’t fit or doesn’t work, or if one gets tired of it, one takes it back, as if there was a return policy.¹

**Entertainment without depth.** The source of the postmodern perspective and information is largely television, radio, and other media. These sources keep us passive and distracted. They distract us from deeper considerations, make us expect entertainment, and foster an artificial view of life.

**Acceptance without agreement.** The postmodern is pluralistic and multicultural. Since there is no exclusive truth and no superior culture, all need to be embraced. Tolerance and acceptance are important virtues. We are all equally right, and it is arrogant and judgmental to say otherwise.

**Interpretation without knowledge.** At the heart of postmodernism is the denial of a unified world, and one single worldview representing truth. Postmodernism is not really a worldview. It is the denial of any coherent worldview. The world is chaotic; nothing is predictable. There are a multiplicity of worlds and views; all depending on how each person interprets things. The world is subjective rather than objective. Any story but one’s own is oppressive. Nothing is clear or certain. Everything is interpretation.

**Single issues without the big picture.** Each person is to focus on what matters to him or her, without being concerned about how this fits in with everything else. History is without meaning. Tradition is no longer above individuals; individuals are over traditions. Whereas “traditional man tended to reject innovation by saying ‘It has never been thus,’” the contemporary Westerner is more likely to ask ‘Does it work?’ and try the new way without

¹Henderson, 54-55.
further ado. The psychic gap between these two postures is vast.”¹ Each person should
make choices on the basis of personal experiences and convictions, and not on the
basis of people who have gone through experiences before. There is no so-called
“metanarrative” (overarching story), as all stories are equally valid.

**Words without meaning.** Words do not represent absolute meanings or truths. It is
up to the individual to give meaning to words. If two people interpret the same words to
mean different things, that is all right, and they may both be right. Language does not tell
us anything about what is out there. Language is simply a matter of power. When you read
something, you can never really know what the writer meant. The reader determines the
meaning. “All language is a human construct. We can’t determine the ‘truthfulness’ of the
language, only the usefulness.”²

**The present without a future.** Our experience right now is what counts the most.
Postmoderns are not too concerned about the uncertain future. There is no inherent meaning
or purpose in life. Life is pointless and absurd. Reality is not only meaningless, it is
unknowable.

**Behavior without consequences.** Everybody can do what he or she likes or enjoys.
One cannot be responsible for what happens to another. The moral consideration for each
person is to follow what feels good, what looks good, and what benefits oneself. An idea is
good for a person if it makes a practical difference in the person’s life. “Ethics, like

¹Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New

²Sire, 179.
knowledge is a linguistic construct. Social good is whatever society takes it to be.”¹ Truth and morality for one person is what he finds valuable, significant, useful, and practical.

**Relationships without ownership.** Postmoderns are interested in relationships, but do not want to be owned or dominated! Community, the social dimension of existence, is important. Belonging to certain organizations representing a given set of opinions or truths is not attractive to a postmodern person wanting to be independent and unique. For example, church going is a choice rather than a lifestyle. It is all right, for example, to join a church, but one should do it because one chooses to, not because one has to. One joins because one enjoys the relationship and common experience with others. Postmoderns determine more and more what is right by consensus. Truth is relative to personal experience and to the community in which we participate. Truth is whatever a person and the community around decide to agree on. What people think of a person is more important than the truth about what that person is like. A person may want to do what everybody else thinks and does, but only because the person wants to.

**Holism without unification.** The dualism of the modern era (mind-matter, soul-body) is gradually being replaced by a postmodern holism. People today are increasingly interested in the human person as a unified whole. All dimensions of personal life are integrated. At the same time, life is sectorized and fragmentized so that it resembles a patchwork where it is hard to see how all the pieces fit together.

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¹Sire, 182
Environment without a Creator. Postmoderns are concerned about the global situation and the environment, however they do not necessarily recognize the hand of God in creation.

Organizational thinking without hierarchical structures. Flat structures and networks replace hierarchical structures in order to strengthen participation, cooperation, and commitment. Authoritarian people at the top cannot expect the people at the grass roots level to carry out their ideas and reach their goals. The experts are seen to be the ones closest to real life. Networks and groups are formed among people sharing common visions, values, and goals. Relationships are stronger glue than rules and instructions. The task of the leaders is to pass on vision, to equip, to support, and to encourage the rest. Room must be given for multiple creativity, based on personal gifts, vision, and faith. There must be less control and enough room for experimentation.

A lot of these descriptions of postmoderns are rather negative. Therefore I would like to add that there are some things about postmodernism that are good. The critique of the old science is good. The common, modernistic idea that everything has to be proved has been overdone. Furthermore, the postmodern is open to examine things that are different, and they are open to experimentation. It is also positive that they are open to religious experience. The holistic emphasis also provides us with some positive challenges.

To summarize, we may list the key characteristics of the postmodernists this way:

1. Spiritual, but not necessarily Christian
2. Comfortable talking about spirituality and values
3. Open to the supernatural and mystic
4. Truth is what you find valuable, significant, useful and practical
5. Truth is subjective rather than universal, and it is relativistic and noninstitutional
6. A universal, supracultural, timeless truth is rejected. There are many truths
7. There is no common standard or authority
8. There is no metanarrative, or overarching story
9. Little allegiance to a common source of authority
10. Open to emotion and intuition
11. Otherness valued more than sameness
13. Under the power of the media
14. Ethic of self-fulfillment: I do it because it feels good, because it brings about good results, and because others think it is good
15. Ask ‘Does it work’? rather than ‘Is it true’?
16. Nothing is clear or certain
17. Life is pointless and absurd
18. History has no meaning
19. Experience is more important than doctrines and dogmas
20. Systematic and logical thinking is not so important
21. Importance of community
22. Focus on the group rather than individualism
23. Want to be partakers rather than spectators
24. What people think of you is more important than what you are really like
25. Interested in relationships, but not domination
26. Tolerance and acceptance are important virtues
27. Not concerned to prove themselves ‘right’ and others ‘wrong’
28. Holistic outlook. All dimensions of personal life integrated
29. Concerned about the global human situation and the environment
30. Not willing to commit long-term
31. Suspicious of institutions, bureaucracies and hierarchies
32. Words have no absolute meaning.

‘The Four Norways’

Earlier it was pointed out that there is a danger of being too rigid and dogmatic about putting a certain stamp on society, for example by calling the whole society postmodern. Even though we live in a time with clear postmodern traits, our society as a whole—and even individuals—displays modern as well premodern traits.
The Norwegian Marketing and Media Institute (MMI) has a more differentiated way of looking at the Norwegian society that is used in the Norsk Monitor reports.¹ The so-called ‘four Norways’ are presented in figure 3.

The crucial cultural dividing line in Norway today is between a modern and a traditional orientation of values. “The modern culture is characterized by openness to change, by plurality, and by a liking for what is new. In a traditional orientation there is a longing for stability and safeness, and that things shall remain like they have always been. It is important not to stand out, and to follow old-established customs.”²³

People can represent the same position on this axis from the traditional to the modern, but still be very different when it comes to other values. The dividing line that best expresses this variation goes between a materialistic and an idealistic orientation. “At the materialistic side one emphasizes the outward, both meaning material conditions and what the surroundings mean. One is occupied with material things and financial growth, and puts personal needs before the needs of others. At the idealistic side one listens to one’s inner voice, and emphasized spiritual values and creative activity. One is occupied with nearness, care, environment and health.”³

¹See Hellevik.
²Hellevik, 25.
³Ibid.
Using this set-up, *Norsk Monitor* remarks that, of course, the four groups are not sharply divided. The dimensions represent gliding transitions. To make the picture of the various cultural ideologies even clearer, *Norsk Monitor* also refers to a fifth group, the part of the population that is close to the cultural center, having elements of all four types. The people in the center do not stand out in any particular direction. Adding the fifth group, the picture looks like figure 4.
In the next paragraphs the characteristics of the four basic orientations in the *Norsk Monitor* model will be explained. People on the border lines and people in the center group will share a mixture of the characteristics.

"The traditional idealistic culture is characterized by religiousness and respect for traditional morality, laws, and rules. A calm and regular life is preferred, and one is occupied with thinking ahead, living a sensible and economical life, and thinking about health. Abstinence is a virtue, while pleasure, consumption and preoccupation with materialism is regarded as a vice. The rural and the Norwegian is appreciated."\(^1\) The *Norsk Monitor* suggests that the *traditional idealistic culture* could also be called the ‘preindustrial culture’.

\(^{1}\)Ibid., 27.
In "the traditional materialistic culture . . . material security and financial growth are given preference over personal development and environmental protection. It is important not to be different from others, and to comply with the wishes of the superior. Feelings should be controlled and it is best to keep a certain distance from other people. The old and the well tried are safest, also when it comes to sex roles. Technological news is regarded with skepticism."1 The Norsk Monitor suggests that the traditional materialistic culture could also be called the 'industrial culture.'

"The modern idealistic culture [is] characterized by tolerance, veneration of individual distinctiveness, and skepticism towards authorities. A central goal is self-realization, and developing and using ones abilities. Sexual equality is important; the same is the case with environmental protection. One is focused on closeness and friendship, and is willing to give preference to others at the cost of one’s own needs."2 The Norsk Monitor suggests that the modern idealistic culture could also be called the 'postindustrial culture'.

With the modern materialistic culture, "the pleasures of the moment are in focus. Through consumption and getting material things one can reach satisfaction and impress the surroundings. How the goals are reached does not matter so much. Respect for traditional morality, laws, and rules is lower than with any other group. One is willing to take chances to get what one wants. Technological news is greeted with enthusiasm, the pleasures of city life means more than experiencing nature. The time perspective is short;

1Ibid..
2Ibid.
things are dealt with as they come, and one does not worry about the future."\textsuperscript{1} The \textit{Norsk Monitor} suggests that the modern materialistic culture could also be called the 'post productive culture'.

This system of dividing the population into five segments is based on repeated, extensive surveys done by the \textit{Norsk Monitor} among the Norwegian population. On the basis of how people express their values, priorities, concerns, and needs, the \textit{Norsk Monitor} is able to give a picture of the make up of the Norwegian population. "From 1985 to 1987 the center of gravity for the population as a whole clearly moved in the modern-idealistic direction. After 1987, however, the development has taken a turn in total disagreement with the postmaterialism-theory. . . . The Norwegian population has step by step moved in a materialistic direction. . . . The younger people are clearly more modern and a little more materialistic oriented than are the older people."\textsuperscript{2}

This tendency, throughout the 1990s, of moving towards a materialistic direction is noteworthy. "It is especially the group of modern materialists who have grown in number, while fewer and fewer are belonging to the traditional idealistic corner."\textsuperscript{3} Other developmental tendencies are a focus away from self-realization and spiritual life, more egoism, less interest in healthful living, and more hedonism and consumption.\textsuperscript{4} It is

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 183.
\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 184-185.
interesting that fewer people regard themselves as very happy among the materialists compared to the idealists.¹

The *Norsk Monitor* surveys provide a lot of additional useful, detailed information about the Norwegian cultural landscape. The composition of the Norwegian population is described in detail. Norwegians' attitudes, interests and viewpoints with regard to religion, relationships, career, consumerism, media, literature, et cetera, have been mapped out, and can be accessed.

Globalization

Globalization is another cultural trend of importance. Norway is a part of, and very much influenced by, the rest of the world. To understand what is going on in Norwegian society it is necessary to understand the dynamic of globalization.

“Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.”² Today, worldwide relations are intensified. Distant localities are linked. Events and people living far away shape local happenings and attitudes. Of course, this is both for better and for worse. “Religious systems are obliged to relativize themselves to global postmodernizing trends. This relativization can involve an embracement of the postmodernizing pattern, an abstract and humanistic ecumenism, but it can also take the form of a rejective search for original

¹Ibid., 190.

traditions.” In other words: The religious response to globalizing and postmodernizing pressures often prove to be ecumenism or fundamentalism.

Parallel to the process of globalization—or what Benjamin R. Barber calls ‘Mc World’—there is a tendency towards retribalization, also called Jihad, or holy war. Malcolm Waters comments that “Barber thinks that McWorld can win out over Jihad: ‘My guess is that globalization will eventually vanquish retribalization.’”

Secularization

Another cultural or social dynamic that is taking place in affluent societies like Norway is secularization, which also impacts why it seems harder to obtain church growth than it used to.

We often hear and read that we live in a secular society. Secularization can be defined as: “A process where religious ideas become less and less meaningful for people and where religious institutions are marginalized.” Secularization “describes a process in which religious ideas, values, and institutions lose their public status and influence and eventually their plausibility in modern societies.”

Michael Pearson states that secularization “is that process by which a traditionally

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1Waters, 188.
2Benjamin R. Barber, quoted in Waters, 222.
3Olafsrud, 51.
4Gay, 19.
religious society comes increasingly under the influence of rationality and modernity, so that religion is relegated from the public realm to private life, and becomes increasingly marginalized and denuded of power and influence.\textsuperscript{1}

**Secularizing Factors**

During the past five centuries, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the rise of nationalism, the development of science, the Enlightenment thinkers, and rapid urbanization have all been secularizing factors.\textsuperscript{2} Today new factors play an important role in the secularization of Norwegian society.

Modern political life appears very worldly, and still people tend to believe in its potential. Man's aspirations are focused on political action and organizations. The political system and solutions give hope and attend to our basic needs.

Science and technology have also made it easier for people to live their lives without giving God much thought. God has become practically irrelevant. The one-sided quest for certainty and accuracy has not left much room for God. Mankind has developed a technical logic and a pragmatic and skeptical cognition. The question has become 'how' rather than 'why' or 'what'.

The market economy is also a carrier of "secularity and practical atheism in


contemporary society and culture. After all, it is the near-global market that provides the institutional context within which science, technology, and even political life operate today.”

Today's culture is a culture of self-consciousness and self-help. People tend to take a therapeutic approach even to existential questions like ultimate meaning and purpose. So even though there is widespread religious interest today, what we see is often a therapeutic use of religion rather than true religious faith. “The Christian religion . . . draws the believer out of him or herself and into the obedience of faith, thus opening up the possibility of self-transcendence. The therapeutic disposition, on the other hand, tends to leave the individual more or less in control of his or her own self-development.”

People live as though God does not exist, or at least as if his existence did not practically matter. . . . When we lose sight of God, we also lose sight of ourselves.”

The society today is very specialized and consumer-focused. Religion today mirrors this culture. People make their choices—also their religious choices—picking from a smorgasbord of choices.

The Effects of Secularization

So we see that “there are many aspects of modern society and culture which render secularity and practical atheism plausible. . . . Secularity is quite literally built into the

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1 Gay, 132.

2 Ibid., 186.

3 Ibid., 2.
central institutions of modern society and culture both theoretically and practically, and . . . this is why modernity has proven to be so corrosive of Christian faith and why it is so resistant to substantive theological criticism.”

For some time people thought the secularization process would result in a de-Christianizing of society. That has not happened. Today’s society is more religious than ever, but as mentioned before the religious landscape has become very diverse. Almost anything is accepted, and traditionally non-related and even non-compatible religious elements are mixed together to create a product according to personal preference.

Even though many people today believe in God, “far fewer live in a way that shows they take God seriously. They are self-reliant and independent. For them God is not a factor, they are secular. Biblical faith and secularism stand sharply at odds with each other, while nominal faith—the bare-minimum faith that makes no real demands and causes no noticeable impact on the believer—is quite at home in a secular culture.”

In the Christianity of today God tends to be reduced to a half-God. For many He is not a personal God. People put themselves in God’s place as an object of worship and center of attention. The Bible is written off as a source of absolute truth and wisdom. People of real biblical faith are not taken seriously. “So here is our challenge in a secular age, to bring biblical truth to a world in which men and women are giants, God is dwarfed, the Bible is trivialized, and believers are suspect. No small task.”

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1Ibid., 238.
2Henderson, 123.
3Ibid., 134.
"Two related empirical developments are now challenging secularization theory: first, there are signs that in many societies the decline in religious beliefs is stabilizing or even reversing . . . and second, a wave of fundamentalist transformation is revitalizing the old universal religions."¹ This is also in the case in Norway—a highly secular, postmodern society—where it is not correct to conclude that time has run out for Christianity. In his book Religion in Europe at the End of the Second Millennium, Andrew M. Greeley has a whole chapter dealing with Norway as an example of a secular Western European society. He concludes: "One is . . . forced to conclude from a closer look at a country like Norway, where religion might first appear to be quiescent, that God is still alive and well (and living in Oslo and Bergen) and that hope in life after death is still strong. Norway may be a more religious country than many Norwegians realize. Minimally, such analytic exercises should persuade one that, whatever the merits of the 'secularization' theory, it leaves many phenomena unexplained as well as much variance unaccounted for."²

Generational Differences

Earlier in the research attention was called to the fact that Norwegian society does not consist of a homogenous mass. There are contemporary people living in the same society who represent a variety of mind-sets and cultures. Besides the various cultural shifts studied earlier, a study of generational differences is also necessary in order to understand contemporary society and people.

¹Waters, 188.
²Greeley, 194.
When looking at the various generational characteristics it should be understood that the time or age references may differ from nation to nation. The following provides a general overview of the generational categories and applies them to Norwegian society.¹

The Various Generations

The *senior* generation refers to those born in 1926 and earlier. They are today² close to 80 and above in age, and constitute about 5 percent of the Norwegian population.

The so-called *builders* were born between 1927 and 1945, and are today aged 60-78. This generation constitutes about 15 percent of the Norwegian population. They are called builders because they rebuilt the world after the second world war. They re-established the economy and the social systems that are used today. The builders were the parents of the boomers. Other names for the builder generation are the ‘boosters’ or the ‘maturity generation’.

The *boomers* were born between 1946 and 1964, and are 41-59 years of age today. This generation constitutes about 25 percent of the Norwegian population. The boomers have seen the misery of the 1970s, the boom of the 1980s, and the recession of the 1990s. This is the generation that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been preoccupied in trying to reach, until recently.

¹The following descriptions are largely based on Peter Brierley, *Steps to the Future* (London, England: Christian Research and Scripture Union, 2000), 35-39. The percentages are based on numbers from *Statistisk årbok*, 81.

²'Today' in this section means 2005.
The *busters* were born between 1965 and 1983, so they are 22-40 years old today. This generation constitutes about 25 percent of the Norwegian population. They are also called the ‘generation Xers’ or the ‘friends’, though this is a generation that hates to be labeled. This generation is characterized as the best educated, most traveled and longest-living generation ever. Generation Xers are quite different from “their parents and grandparents—whom they blame for the present social, economical, spiritual, and environmental mess.”¹

Generation X grew up with AIDS, MTV, and environmental catastrophes. They are the first electronic generation, and the first to be raised almost completely by TV and shaped by music. They are anti-materialistic and put relationships before work. They have an appetite for junk food, junk films, junk ideas, and junk culture. They reject institutions and hierarchies. They need Christianity more than anyone, but have little desire for it. They are the first ‘latch-key’ generation, many of them coming from two-job families. Fewer than half of them lived with their two biological parents throughout their childhood. They affirm diversity and can live with ambiguity. This is the first generation to grow up denying the existence of absolute truth while tolerating the views of others.

The *mosaics* were born between 1984 and 2003, so are the people below the age of 21. About 25 percent of the Norwegian population falls into this group. This generation has also been called ‘generation Y’, being the children of generation X. Other names are the ‘beepers’ (they grow up in the IT age), or the ‘millennium generation’. While the builders and boomers largely were trained to think in linear, logical ways, the mosaics think

¹Roennfeldt, 59.
‘mosaicly’. They get a bit of the picture here and another bit there. Trend thinking is less frequent, and the historic picture is like a jigsaw rather than like a continuous story. The mosaics have less contact with their grandparents than any generation before them.

The so-called *kaleidoscope* generation are the ones just born and yet to be born, so we do not know much about how they are likely to be characterized as they grow up. This generation is likely to be called ‘generation Z’.

**Challenges and Future Perspectives**

In a church setting it is easy to criticize others for lack of interest or initiative, or for their different perspective on things. A greater understanding of generational differences could lead to more respect, better teamwork, and wiser planning. This, in turn, is relevant to the question of church renewal and growth.

It is not very mysterious why there are such great differences between the various generations. The society we grow up in will naturally form us

Those who grew up with the depression and unemployment of the thirties or the horrors of Second World War, have been marked by these experiences of their youth all through their adult life, and have become occupied with securing themselves material and physical satisfaction. The after-war generations, with a youth marked by prosperity and peace, are inclined to take the satisfaction of basic needs for granted, and are rather more occupied with post-material values. They emphasize more creative activity and personal development, human fellowship, the right to be consulted, life quality and environmental protection.¹

The various generations have quite different perspectives, attitudes, approaches, and degrees of commitment to work issues, political issues, and of course also religious issues.

¹Hellevik, 82.
Peter Brierley visualizes the variety of perspectives on mission issues as shown in table 4, in his book *Steps to the Future*.

Table 4. Perspectives on Mission Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Builders</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Busters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call</td>
<td>Mystical</td>
<td>Best job fit</td>
<td>&quot;Best&quot; mission: often the most caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of commitment</td>
<td>Particular people or country with particular mission organization</td>
<td>Ministry in which and wherever gifts are best used</td>
<td>Particular project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of commitment</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Short term and review</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to mission agency</td>
<td>High loyalty</td>
<td>Low loyalty</td>
<td>Low loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Authoritarian, respect status</td>
<td>Participatory, consensus, respect competence</td>
<td>Participatory team, respect genuineness and openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach to conflict</td>
<td>Indirect or denial</td>
<td>Clarify and work towards reconciliation</td>
<td>Direct, open and honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to support and pastoral care</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Expect opportunity for both, willing to try and see</td>
<td>Perceive both as essential to well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role issues</td>
<td>Generalists, prepared to do anything, make do</td>
<td>Specialists, pursue excellence, agents of change</td>
<td>Function best in teams, each with focused ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wives's roles</td>
<td>Supporting husband</td>
<td>Contribution in own right</td>
<td>Prefer husband—wife team, egalitarian marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devotional life</td>
<td>No Bible, no breakfast</td>
<td>Whenever it can be fitted in</td>
<td>Find discipline hard but long for spiritual things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to local community</td>
<td>Paternalistic</td>
<td>Fraternalistic</td>
<td>Work well under church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Peter Brierly, *Steps to the Future* (London: CRSU, 2000), 38.

"Mosaics have not been involved yet in sufficient depth for a further column of boxes for them. . . . But some could be filled in, like ‘Call—Can you give me a job?’ ‘Focus of commitment—what I like doing’. Many of the boxes will, as yet, still be the same as for ‘busters’."²

Peter Brierley also provides these examples of generational differences:

¹Brierley, *Steps*, 38.

²Ibid, 39.
The younger generations are spiritual, maybe more than the older generations can imagine. The younger generations have questions and want answers, but not the easy, ready answers that the older people often hand down. The younger people are seeking, but not always in the same places as the older people, and they often do not understand even the language used when the old answers are explained.

Generation Xers are closed to old, out-modeled evangelistic methods, but they are very open to the story of Jesus. Kevin Ford states that “the Bible speaks directly to the pain of Generation X, and its message is targeted on Xer yearnings and needs—the need for hope, the need for meaning, the need for community, the need for empowerment and a sense of direction in life.”

“We live in a time where the palpable, the set and obligations do not have much appeal. We want to catch without being caught. We want passion without being passionate. We want control without being controlled. For if we should take Christianity seriously, in real life, we ourselves would have to answer for something that was both visible, concrete

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and binding. We would have to submit to a tradition and a power that was greater than ourselves. But we do not want to do that.1

The commandments of the younger generations are:

1. Enjoy yourself
2. Fulfill your potential
3. Live in the present
4. Work hard to achieve concrete results; earn money—you can count it
5. Be there for your friends; be loyal to your group
6. Retain control
7. Be cool
8. Always have a way out, a way of escape
9. Be mobile; be on the move; keep your options open
10. Maintain your image
11. Mistrust authority; follow fashion
12. Keep searching, because we know deep down that the verb 'to be' is just as important as the verb 'to have' and the verb 'to do'2

It is hard to predict anything about the future. After all, we do not have data on the future generations. The younger generations are characterized by their willingness to change, and by their rejection of old authorities, and established truths. They do not have the settled conviction of the former generations, that their own values are absolute and correct beyond discussion. Young people are not the most stable, and they may well change their way of looking at things.

We simply cannot know for sure whether the young people in the coming years are going to resemble the young people of today. They may be more extreme, or they may take a step backwards in the direction of the values and viewpoints of the older people.

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Closing Remarks

Many Adventists do not have friends outside the Church. Knowledge about secular society, about other Christians, and the ability to understand others and adjust to their ways, is often weak among Adventist members and workers. Sometimes being traditional and rigid is confused with being conservative. All this makes it difficult for the Church to adjust, change, and move forward.

It is hoped that the external analysis provided in this chapter will be of help in describing and defining the external environment in Norway, because to do strategic planning it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the environment, and the recipient audience.

The external analysis has revealed that even though Norwegians have every reason to be happy and content, there are many unhappy, needy, seeking people in Norway. As the level of happiness has decreased, interest in religion has increased. It is becoming very acceptable to be religious, even Christian. However, religion is privatized, and people have little confidence in organized religion.

The external environment poses many challenges to the church, but they also provide some opportunities. The study has shown that postmodern people are open to spirituality, otherness, and fellowship, are holistic and want to be partakers rather than mere spectators. The younger generations are very spiritual, and especially open to the story of Jesus. There are good reasons to be positive about the possibilities and the future of the Church.
The Church and its members do not live in a vacuum, but are part of this age and present society. This external analysis could be used to give an understanding of the issues, challenges, potentials, difficulties, and possibilities facing the Church.

The next chapter will focus on an internal analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway, which together with the external analysis should give the necessary background needed to develop strategies for the Norwegian Adventist Church.
CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NORWAY

Major Events and Developments in the Seventh-day
Adventist Church in Norway since 1990

Loss of Institutions

The membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway was at its peak in the early 1980s (5,524 members at its highest). Throughout Adventist history in Norway there has been a large number of Church owned institutions, compared to its membership. Besides schools, there have been quite a number of health institutions. Church members have never been able to pride themselves in a high membership, rapid growth, popularity, or any kind of fame. What has given the Church the highest public status is probably its school system or the health institutions.

In the early 1980s the Adventist institutions in Norway appeared to be strong and blooming. 2 The 5,500 member Church owned ten church schools,

1Church’ in this paper will mean the ‘Seventh-day Adventist Church’ in Norway.

one high school, a publishing house, a correspondence school, and four rehabilitation centers. Throughout the 1980s three new old people's homes were started in addition to the one the Church owned before. Around the same time nine local radio stations were started. The West Nordic Union (Norway and Denmark) ran a very well-known physical therapy school and rehabilitation center (Skodsborg) outside Copenhagen. Nutana, the Union owned health food company, expanded its activity in Norway and built a new facility close to the town of Drammen.

From the beginning of the 1980s the Church had to give financial aid to the rehabilitation center in Oslo (Kurbadet), to the old people's home in northern Norway (Riarhaugen), and to Skodsborg. The new health food facility had been built on loaned money, but the income was too low to care for the expenses. The mother company in Denmark took over the responsibility and thereby enlarged its own financial problems. The Church leadership tried to start a financial rescue operation. The funds of the Church were drained and the rehabilitation center at Skodsborg was given as a security. When the loans could not be repaid, both the Norwegian and the Danish Nutana, and Skodsborg were lost to the Church in 1992.

At about the same time, governmental health policies changed in Norway, resulting in the Church facing new challenges in running their health institutions. The Church had to stop operations of the rehabilitation center in Oslo and the old people's home in northern Norway. The buildings of the old people's home were sold at a loss. In losing all these institutions, the Church lost a lot of invested money, and was left with a huge amount of future pension obligations to former employees at these
institutions. Furthermore, around 1990 the three Norwegian conferences\(^1\) entered a period of poor economy.

Effects of the Crisis, Reorganization, and Relocation

At an extraordinary constituency session in February 1992, Norway and Denmark were split into two different unions.\(^2\) The previous leadership was forced to take responsibility for what had happened and new leaders were elected. The Adventist Church lost a lot of invested money when it lost several institutions and was left with a huge debt, very sizable future pension obligations, and the need to rebuild its operating funds. A big national appeal for money was launched, properties were sold, the financial operations were tightened, and help was received from the General Conference. By the end of 1995 all debts were paid, but still many hard years of sizable pension obligations lay ahead.

The crisis left its mark. Many Adventists felt that much of their identity was gone when the institutions were lost. The institutions had been an expression of how God had been leading his people. Now it was gone. People were left with disappointment, frustration, and a lot of questions.

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\(^1\) A ‘conference’ is an organizational entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as explained on page 145.

\(^2\) A ‘union’ is an organizational entity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as explained on page 145.
As the union between Denmark and Norway broke up and the Norwegian Union\(^1\) was formed (1992), a process was started to reorganize the Church in Norway. This process was completed in 1996, even though discussion continues as to how exactly the Church should be organized. The status today is that the Union takes care of all departmental work and the finances. The three conferences take care of the local churches, the pastors, and evangelistic work. This means that besides the local pastors each conference only has a president.

Parallel to this structural reorganization a process of relocalization took place. The discussion of what entities should be located together and where this location should be caused a lot of discussion and disagreement throughout the 1990s. Finally, in 1999 the Union office, the publishing house (Norsk Bokforlag), and the correspondence school (Norsk Bibelinstitutt) were located together in a building at Vik, not far from the high school (Tyrifjord Videregående Skole) and Oslo. However, not until the last half of 2003, has the Church been able to take over the major part of the building that was so needed for its operations.

Further Notable Events, Changes and Trends

Parallel to all this, the Church worked out and introduced a new wage system and pension plan for its employees, with the implementation beginning in 2000. This process may have resulted in uncertainty, disappointment, and an altered life situation.

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\(^1\)Union' (with capital U) in this paper means the 'Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Norwegian Union'. The organization is explained on page 145.
for some pastors and their families. These changes, on the top of all the other changes and challenges, have added to the factors impacting the Church.

In order to get over the financial crisis, and to finance the new pension system, the Church sold one old people’s home, two rehabilitation centers and reorganized the only remaining one. Some other properties were also sold, giving the Church much needed money, but also causing very mixed feelings among the people who had been employed in these institutions, and in the local churches connected to these institutions. Furthermore, some Adventists felt that the sale by the Church had downgraded the important health-work that was supposed to be the “right arm” of the Church.

The role of Adventist pastors in Norway has also changed. Until the 1960s the main task of the pastors was to do public evangelism. Because it became increasingly difficult to gather an audience, and because church members wanted their pastors to care for them and administer the local church, the Norwegian pastor has become less of an evangelists and more of a pastor. Since the end of the 1990s there has been an increasing awareness of this shift being a problem, with some focus on the need to get back to the biblical model for pastors.

Since the last half of the 1990s there has been an increasing awareness of the need to turn back the tide and find new ways to grow. There has been a lot of talk about strategic planning and long-term planning. Attempts have been made to work out such plans at the Union, the conferences, and in many local churches. It is clear however, that there is an uncertainty as to how such plans are to be developed, and what they should contain. As the membership has been steadily decreasing since about 1980, most
would agree that this decline indicates that the Church has problems, but there is less agreement as to exactly what the problems are.

The last few years there has been a focus on gift-based service, so called 'Natural Church Growth', church planting, and prayer. All this has brought both new life and also some frustrations and disagreements to the Church.¹

Organization and the Pastoral Situation

The 'Norwegian Model' of Organization

As mentioned earlier, since 1996 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway has been organized into three conferences, which are united in the Norwegian Union. All departmental work is taken care of by the Norwegian Union. The main tasks of the conference president together with the conference board are spiritual leadership, leading out in evangelistic work, maintaining close relationships with local churches and members, and caring for the pastors.

The conference presidents are at the same time vice-presidents of the Union, and members of the administration committees at the Union (ADMIN and ADCOM). Hiring of church pastors is coordinated by the Union, and distributed between the conferences, but each conference executive committee decides the exact placement of their pastors. The conference executive committee meetings mainly deal with evangelistic matters. Business matters and personnel problems are dealt with at the Union level, but with the conference presidents being a part of those processes. In this

¹The theory was not always easy to practice. Besides, some Adventists maintain that we should not go outside the Adventist Church for ideas and help.
‘Norwegian Model’ it is possible for the conference president and board to focus on the work of winning new members and caring for the existing ones.

There are 4,785 members and seventy churches in the Norwegian Union.¹ The East Norway Conference has 2,986 members and forty churches, the West Norway Conference has 1,221 members and fourteen churches, and the North Norway Conference has 578 members and sixteen churches (see figure 5).

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¹These numbers are from 31 March 2003. Unless stated otherwise, numbers and graphs in the rest of this chapter are based on information from the Union database. Unless otherwise stated, the numbers are from 1 January 2003.
The reason for having three conferences with such a low membership is mainly for geographical reasons. To ensure a certain closeness to the scattered churches and pastors it is felt necessary to have an entity between the Union and the individual churches and pastors. However—due to the low membership in each conference—the conference administration has been reduced to just one person: the president.

Pastoral Situation and Size of Churches

Among the administration and the departmental leaders in the Union there are 8 ordained pastors. In the East Norway conference there are 17.5 full time pastors, which means 171 members per pastor on average. In the West Norway Conference 7.5 full time pastors serve 163 members per pastor on average. In the North Norway Conference 6.5 full time pastors are ministering 89 members per pastor on average. Altogether this means 31.5 pastors in the Norwegian Union are responsible to 152 members per pastor on average. These figures are shown in table 5.

On average, the Norwegian church pastor cares for about three churches when all registered churches are counted. In reality the average is 2-2.5 churches per pastor.¹

More than half of the churches in Norway have fewer than fifty members, as shown in table 6, with eighteen churches having twenty members or less. In the

¹In some cases a church may have a small number of passive members in the records, who do not attend meetings or take part in any kind of church life. Such non-functioning churches are not counted here.
western and northern conferences, many churches are quite scattered and isolated.

Some pastors have to drive for hours between the churches in their district, often under tough travel conditions.

Table 5. Membership and Number of Pastors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity:</th>
<th>Membership March 31, 2003</th>
<th>Number of pastors (2003-4):</th>
<th>Average number of members per pastor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Norway Conference</td>
<td>2,986</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Norway Conference</td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norway Conference</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian Union office</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and Union together</td>
<td>4,785</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003.

Table 6. Sizes of Churches in Norwegian Union (So Called ‘Conference Churches’ Not Included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church membership</th>
<th>Number of churches:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-50 members</td>
<td>38 churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100 members</td>
<td>13 churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-150 members</td>
<td>8 churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-200 members</td>
<td>6 churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300 members</td>
<td>0 churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400 members</td>
<td>2 churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500 members</td>
<td>1 church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003.
Church Growth Patterns
A Short Historic Overview

The first Seventh-day Adventist congregation was established in Norway in 1879, with thirty-four members.¹ In the early 1900s there was a period of growth. Between 1901 and 1921 the membership almost doubled, from 652 to 1,826 members.² The growth rate declined the next twenty years, but still the membership almost doubled (3,506 in 1941). World War II caused many people to become receptive to the message of the Adventist Church. During the ten years from 1941 to 1951, the membership of the Church increased almost 32 percent, to 4,620 members. Towards the end of the 1960s the membership of the Church plateaued at about 5,300 members. Slow growth continued until it peaked at 5,524 members in 1979, after which the membership began a slow decline. By the start of 2003 the membership had decreased to 4,812 members. Year by year statistics for the period 1975-2002 are shown in figure 6.

A Marked Change

A marked decline in membership has taken place since 1993 (see figure 6). To find the reasons for this, one needs to know the reality behind the numbers. This will be the study on the following pages.

¹See Torkelsen, B:1-19.

²Numbers given here and in the following are for the whole Norwegian Union, unless other is indicated.
Table 7 shows the average number of people who were baptized and added, who died, who left the church, and who transferred their membership per year during the periods of 1983-92 and 1993-2002 (for comparison).

Table 7. Annual Membership Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period:</th>
<th>Baptized / added</th>
<th>Transferred in:</th>
<th>Transferred out:</th>
<th>Dead:</th>
<th>Left / disfellow-shipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-1992</td>
<td>124.5</td>
<td>176.1</td>
<td>178.0</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-2002</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>131.5</td>
<td>125.8</td>
<td>100.7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Table based on numbers from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003.*
From table 7 we see that fewer people have been dying or leaving the Church per year during the ten-year period of 1993-2002, than was the case during the decade of 1983-1992. The cause of the accelerated decrease in membership since 1993 cannot be found in the transfer of members in and out of the Union either. The main cause for a net membership decrease since 1993 is found in the fact that fewer people are baptized and added to the Church now than before 1993.

In figure 7 the number of people baptized and added from 1975 to 2002 is shown graphically. A year by year detailed table with numbers of all gain and loss of members for the period 1975 to 2002 is found in appendix 4.

Figure 7. Baptism or confessions of faith (1975-2002). Graph by Marita Kendel, based on information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003.
Why was the number of new members added in 1991 so much higher, and why did the number decrease drastically after that? Why was there also a marked increase of baptisms in 2002? Some possible factors can explain these trends, but it cannot be proven scientifically that there is a direct correlation between certain factors and the numbers in figure 7.

In the very beginning of the 1990s Revelation Seminars were launched and used quite extensively as an evangelistic tool in Norway. Most likely, the baptismal increase in 1991 had something to do with this increased evangelistic activity. In 2002, a special nationwide evangelistic project (Prosjekt 2002) was launched by the Union, with evangelistic activities in many places around the country. The increase in baptisms in 2002 is likely the result of Prosjekt 2002.

After the loss of the institutions in the early 1990s, and the following challenging financial situation, one could detect a certain disappointed and depressed spirit among many members and pastors. This institutional and financial crisis, together with the process of reorganization and relocation in the 1990s, may also have caused a certain distrust towards the church organization and its leaders. A climate of crisis, change, unrest, and failure may have taken hold of the church. For many years during the 1990s the focus of the church was to just get through the crisis and rebuild the economy. There was less evangelistic focus during this time.

It could also be mentioned that in the beginning of the 1990s the Norwegian government allowed greater competition on the Norwegian TV-market, with the result that people have a far greater number of TV program choices that places more demand
on their time and attention. This has effected both church members and the audience that the Church wants to reach.

In the beginning of the 1990s one of the Adventist offshoot-movements led by former pastor John Berglund increased its activity and started a newsletter called Mens Vi Venter (While We Wait). This may have distracted some of the members and contributed to frustration and disappointment with the established Church and its leaders.

On the basis of numbers given in appendix 4, it should be noted that during the ten-year period of 1993-2002, 48 percent more members died (1,007) than were added (680). Furthermore it should be noted that 46 percent of the members added (680) either left the church or were disfellowshipped (315). Altogether, the number of people (1,322) who died or left the church was almost double the number that was added (680) during the period of 1993-2002. With this reality in mind it is obvious that the membership of the Church has been steadily decreasing.

**Membership Demographics**

**Distribution of Age and Sex**

A closer look at the 4,812 members of the Norwegian Union (as of 1 January 2003) shows that 61 percent of the membership are women, and 39 percent are men. Table 8 shows comparative age distribution in the Church versus the Norwegian society. Figure 8 shows the distribution of age and sex within the total membership.
Table 8. Comparative Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>% by age group in church</th>
<th>% by age group in society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 years</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49 years</td>
<td>31 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-69 years</td>
<td>34 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70 years</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Table based information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003, and *Statistisk Arbok* (Statistic Yearbook), 2002.

Figure 8. Church membership composition (1 January 2003). Graph by Marita Kendel, based on information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway.

The average age of all members in the Norwegian Union is 54.8 years. Even though one-fourth of the members are over seventy years of age, the main bulk of members are still at a very resourceful age. What is remarkable about this statistic is
that there are so few young people among the members. With only 10 percent of the membership under the age of thirty gives reason for alarm.

Young People Within the Church

In the Union records, children and young people are recorded as children of members even though they are not baptized. It is therefore possible to track how many of the potential group of young people with an Adventist background decide to become members, and how many leave the Church. Figure 9 shows the proportions of young people between the age of eighteen and twenty-two who are baptized, and who are not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Not baptized</th>
<th>Baptized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 years old</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years old</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years old</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years old</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 years old</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. Adventist youth profile—age 18-22 (1 January 2003). Graph by Marita Kendel, based on information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway.

The statistics in figure 9 show that only one-third (33 percent) of the young people with an Adventist background decide to become Adventists themselves before
they are twenty-two years old. No potential members are so close to the Church as are the children of members, yet two-thirds of them will not become members of the Church.

**Age at Baptism**

Looking at the period 1990-2002, it becomes clear that even though only a small percentage of the Adventist young people are baptized, still almost half of all those baptized (47 percent)\(^1\) are under twenty years of age and come mainly from Adventist homes. Furthermore, most of those baptized are between fifteen and nineteen years of age. Of 983 people baptized between 1990 and 2002, only 120 (12 percent) were under fifteen years of age. As many as 343 (35 percent) were between fifteen and nineteen, 108 (11 percent) were between twenty and twenty-four, sixty-four (7 percent) were between twenty-five and twenty-nine, and fifty-seven (6 percent) were between the age of thirty and thirty-four. Figure 10 shows additional numbers, with five-year spans.

Even though the Church has failed to baptize its young people, it recruits its new members mainly from among young people between the age of fourteen and eighteen. They are the most responsive to baptism.

From the age of 40 and up, there is no particular age group that seems more responsive than others.

\(^1\)All percentages are rounded to closest whole number.
Leaving the Church

Between 1993 and 2002, 46 percent of the number added to the Church during that ten-year period either left or were disfellowshipped (see appendix 1). An analysis of this group shows that fewer members leave if they have been members for more than thirty years. Thirty percent of those who leave have been members less than ten years, and a further 32 percent have been members between ten and nineteen years. Figure 11 shows in greater detail the length of membership at the time of leaving the church. Leaving could result from asking to be dropped from the Church records, or it could result from being disfellowshipped, which is rare.
Figure 11. Duration of membership when leaving the Church (total numbers). Graph by Marita Kendel, based on data from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003.

Figure 11 also seems to indicate that most new members go through the first few years in hope of a satisfactory experience of being a member. Then, if the experience of being a church member does not match the expectations, or the member changes his or her lifestyle or convictions, quite a high percentage leave within the next ten years or so. Reasons for leaving the Church will be explored later in this chapter.

**Questionnaires**

**Introduction**

That the membership of the Adventist Church in Norway is declining, that a high number of people are leaving the Church, and that many of the young people growing up in the Church decide not to join the Church themselves, are facts. What has not been so certain, is why this is so. In 2004 I prepared and distributed four
questionnaires to find out more about the attitudes and lives of active members and pastors, and why so many decide to leave or not join the Church.

One questionnaire was given to a random selected group of active members.¹ A second questionnaire was made with full-time Church pastors in mind.² A third

¹ As this questionnaire was specially designed for active members, the following was done to make a representative selection. First, the conference president of each conference (knowing the membership well) went through the membership list and marked a wide selection of active members. That shortened the list from a total of 4,752 members (as of 31 December 2003) to 1,709 members. Then by random selection 600 active members were chosen. The random selection was done in the following way: The database was put into the statistical package called StatView 5.01 for Mac. I gave each person a running number. I created a random number with RandomNormal and then sorted the random variable. Then I had a column of unique integers in random order. I picked the first 600 persons. To make sure the randomization was correct I analyzed conference and sex distribution with all included, and compared it with the 600 selection. The distribution of the selection matched the distribution of the total number to an amazing degree (either being the same, or in some cases, varying 1-2 percent). A questionnaire was sent out to the randomly selected 600 members. Thirteen were returned because of wrong addresses. Of the 587 who received questionnaires, 313 returned the completed form, which means a response rate of 53.3 percent.

² In 2004 there were only twenty-four full-time church pastors in this group (the rest are part-time or working in offices). A questionnaire was sent to the twenty-four pastors. The response was at first low, and it was discovered that this had to do with the fact that they were asked to indicate the conference they worked in, age group, etc. Since the group is so small, quite a few were afraid that their identity would be exposed in spite of the fact that the questionnaire was anonymous. A new form was sent out where most of the introductory questions were left out. They were only asked to indicate the length of their service by ticking one of five possible options. A few more forms were returned. The Union president sent out a letter, urging all the pastors to fill out the questionnaire and return the forms. This hardly increased the response, and it ended up with fourteen completed forms returned, meaning a response rate of 58.3 percent. The percentage as such is not so bad, but in light of the fact that the total group is so small, ideally it should have been higher.
questionnaire was prepared for former members. The last questionnaire was especially for young people with an Adventist background, who have not joined the Church themselves.

Questionnaire Sent to Active Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Respondents

Appendix 5 shows the questionnaire as well as the results from the 600 active members. Fifty-nine percent of men and 41 percent of women responded, which reflects the overall church membership distribution quite accurately. The actual distribution of members between the three conferences are also quite accurately

1 The list of recipients was made up by finding all the people in the Union records who left the Church since 1986. The people over seventy years of age were left out as there was a possibility of them having passed away. This resulted in a list of 308 former members who received a questionnaire. Since many in this group left the Church some years ago, it could be expected that quite a few of the addresses we had from the old Church records were outdated. Ninety-five forms were returned because of wrong addresses. Of the 213 who actually received questionnaires, eighty returned the completed forms, which means a response rate of 37.5 percent, which is quite good in view of the fact that these are people who have left the Church.

2 Children of Adventist parents are registered in the official Church records until the age of eighteen. If they are not baptized by the age of eighteen, they are dropped from the records at the end of that year. With help I gathered addresses of young people who had been in the church records as children, and who have so far not been baptized. I also gathered some other addresses of young people (from SDA homes) that I obtained from other sources. I ended up with 278 names of young people, mainly between the age of eighteen and twenty-four (born between 1980 and 1985). With the help of local pastors and parents I was able to get their current addresses. Of the 278 questionnaires sent out, only sixteen were returned because of wrong addresses. Of the 262 forms received, seventy were returned, which means a response rate of 26.7 percent. In view of the fact that this group was young people with mixed feelings about the church, I consider this as being quite an acceptable response rate.

3 The percentages from here and the rest of the chapter are rounded to whole figures. In the appendixes are found figures with one decimal.
reflected among the members who completed and returned the questionnaires. The great majority of the respondents were married (74 percent) and the age distribution of the respondents is reflective of the age distribution of the total Church membership. The average age for baptism for all active members, is twenty years. Forty-two percent of the respondents were baptized between fourteen and sixteen years of age. The average length of membership among the responding active members is thirty-one years.

**Membership**

By far the most common reason for joining the Church is that they grew up in an Adventist home. However, this reason often plays a role in combination with other reasons, like friends or work-colleagues being Adventists, evangelistic meetings or seminars, or Adventist literature (see table 9). The only reason for joining the Adventist Church that seems to play a major role in itself, is growing up in an Adventist home. All other reasons are important when coming in combination with other reasons. We can conclude from this that it is important that potential new members be reached through a variety of methods. For example non-personal methods like meetings, seminars, courses, and literature should be combined with more personal approaches. Another important conclusion is that by far the greatest potential of new members is from among

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1 The response rates according to conferences are as follows: Sixty-one percent came from the East Norway Conference, 23 percent from the West Norway Conference, and 16 percent from the North Norway Conference.

2 Respondents' length of membership: 1-10 years: 13 percent; 11-20 years: 18 percent; 21-30 years: 19 percent; 31-40 years: 21 percent; 41-50 years: 16 percent; and 51-80 years: 14 percent.
our children growing up in the Church. Even though so many of our young people decide not to join the Church, an Adventist upbringing is still the number one reason for joining.

Table 9. Reasons for Joining the Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS FOR JOINING THE CHURCH</th>
<th>PLAYED A ROLE in becoming an Adventist (could choose more than one alternative)</th>
<th>Given as SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT reason:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I grew up in an Adventist home</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or work-colleagues were Adventists</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelistic meetings or seminars</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was so well received in the Adventist Church</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken Voice of Prophecy courses</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was a part of a small group</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I studied the Bible with a Church member or a pastor</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist literature</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by 313 active members, spring 2004.

It usually takes those who did not grow up as Adventists less than two years from their first contact with Adventists until they become members.¹

By far the most important factor in convincing members to be baptized has

¹Time from first contact until becoming a member: Less than 1 year: 16 percent; 1 year: 24 percent; 2 years: 18 percent; 3-10 years: a distribution of 2-7 percent each year.
been that “the Adventist message could be proven to be right from the Bible.” Seventy-five percent gave this as the single most important reason of all, and 84 percent gave it as a reason that played a role, often in combination with other reasons. The second most common reason for deciding to be baptized was “I had been going to the Adventist church for so long that I felt it was natural to become a member.” Thirty-seven percent gave this as one reason that played a role. Eighteen percent said that it was the single most important reason. “Feeling at home in the Church” was given as a reason that played a significant role (28 percent) in combination with other reasons, but few give this as the most important reason. Only a few (9 percent) said that the reason “the Adventists seemed to live a better life than others” played a part in their decision to get baptized. Since Adventists claim to have a better life quality than most other people, that was significant.

Fifteen percent of our active members have been close to leaving the church, with 6 percent considering it now. The majority (60 percent) of those who have considered leaving the church did so after having been members for more than ten years, which I think is quite remarkable. This corresponds quite well to the information gathered from the questionnaire among those who have actually left the church, as we will see later.

Relationship to the Local Church and the Organization

To the question “Are you convinced that the teachings of the Adventist Church are biblical?” 83 percent of the active members answered “yes.” Eleven percent felt that the life principles of the Adventist Church are too rigid and legalistic. A further 30
percent felt they are “partly” too legalistic. Seventy-six percent of the active members said they pay tithe, but from the tithe statistics it appears that many of them do not return a full, faithful tithe. Fifteen percent of the active members offer their moral or financial support to work done by independent ministries.

Concerning Sabbath preaching, 61 percent were of the opinion that the themes normally are sufficiently relevant, 53 percent felt that they are sufficiently practical and down to earth, and 65 percent said that the contents of the sermons have sufficient theological depth.

Active members were asked about the importance of the various aspects of church life, and were given four options to select answers from; “1” being the “most important” to “6” being the “least important”. Figure 12 shows the results.

From figure 12, we learn that almost all active members agreed that winning people for Christ is the main purpose of the Church. To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members was also seen as very important by a majority, but 40 percent of the active members would not give this purpose the very highest grade of importance. What is most remarkable is that only one in four active members said that it is “most important” for the Church to be a training center or discipling school.
On a scale from "1" (most important) to "6" (least important), the mean value\(^1\) is 1.3 concerning "to win people for Christ." Concerning "to satisfy the spiritual needs of the members", the mean value is 1.6\(^2\). The other parts of Church life were rated as being of medium importance.\(^3\)

\(^1\)By 'mean value' is meant the arithmetic mean, commonly called the average. The sum of all the scores divided by the number of scores, gives the mean value. In this case, the lower the mean value, the greater the importance, as 1 is most important and 6 least important.

\(^2\)The mean values are 1.52 for women and 1.73 for men, which means almost a significant difference (between women and men), as the P-value is 0.0644. A P-value of 1 would indicate no difference. A P-value under 0.05 is considered as a significant difference.

\(^3\)Concerning the importance of the church being a "training school," the mean value is 2.5. Least important is the purpose "to satisfy the social needs of the members," with a mean value of 2.7.
Only about one in three was well acquainted with the long-term strategy of their local church. Fewer than one in five was well acquainted with the long-term strategy of their conference or the Union. This is quite remarkable, in view of the fact that only active members were asked this question. It is not easy to succeed with a strategy when the people who should be the key players in carrying out the strategy are not even acquainted with it.

The results of the survey revealed that 87 percent of the active members felt included and at home in their local church. Furthermore, 79 percent were involved in tasks, and 81 percent were of the opinion that their tasks were in accordance with their spiritual gifts. Among the active members 28 percent wished they were more involved in their church with tasks that they felt equipped for. About one in three active members was part of a small group. Some 80 percent of the active members said that they have confidence in their local pastor, in the conference leadership, and in the Union leadership.

The degree of comfort when it comes to Sabbath school, divine worship, and small groups was quite high among active members (respectively 82, 90, and 79 percent). When it comes to prayer groups it was somewhat lower (69 percent), but still quite high.

During the last five years, more than half of the active members had not experienced any serious conflicts in Church. On average the active women in the church have experienced 0.7 serious conflict, and the active men 0.9.
Opinions About Pastors

“Personal spiritual renewal” and “evangelistic activity” were regarded as the most important areas of the pastor’s work, with more than 50 percent of the active members saying about each of these areas that it is “most important.” “Visiting non-members” and “training church members” were next in importance with some 30 percent saying each of these areas is “most important.” On a scale from 1 to 6—with 1, “most important” and 6, “least important”—table 10 shows the mean-values of all the responses given by the active members. The role and work of the pastor is important when it comes to the state and the growth of the Church. It is crucial to find out how the members think the pastors ought to spend their time. We will later compare this with how the pastors themselves prioritize.

Table 10. Active Members’ Perception of Pastoral Priorities (Mean Values)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS OF THE PASTOR’S WORK</th>
<th>MEAN-VALUES (The lower, the more important. 1=Most important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting members</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting non-members</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelistic activity</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon preparation and professional updating</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training church members</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal spiritual renewal¹</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church administration</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by 313 active members, spring 2004. ¹Notice that the women think “personal spiritual renewal” is significantly more important than the men. The P-value is 0.0144.
In table 10 it was revealed how active members rate the importance of various areas of pastoral work. Table 11 shows what active members believed was the single most important area of the pastor’s work.

More than half of the members felt that a pastor should stay in one and the same church for 4-6 years. One in six felt the pastor should stay for 7-9 years, and as many as one in four wanted the pastor to stay for as long as possible.

Table 11. Active Members’ Perception of Pastoral Priorities (Most Important Area of Work)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS OF THE PASTOR’S WORK</th>
<th>Percentage of active membership indicating each area of work as being the most important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelistic activity</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of church members</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting non-members</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting members</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon preparation and professional updating</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church administration</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by 313 active members, spring 2004.

Spiritual Life

The questionnaire given to active members contained the question, “How would you describe your own view of God?” Six options were given, designed to indicate the worldview of the respondents: *atheistic, agnostic, deist, medieval, magical,* and *biblical*
or Christian theist (as described in chapter two of this paper).  

An overwhelming 88 percent seemed to have a biblical, that is a Christian theist worldview. Eight percent had a medieval worldview and 3 percent a deist worldview. The other groups were insignificant.

To the question “How often do you pray?” 84 percent said “daily” and 11 percent “weekly.” Forty-one percent read the Bible daily, and another 41 percent read it weekly. This means that one in five active members pray only monthly or even more rarely. As many as 87 percent of the active members felt the need of personal spiritual renewal. Only 62 percent were conscious of what spiritual gifts they have. Among the active members 71 percent had non-Adventist friends or acquaintances that they witnessed to. For those who are least active in prayer, Bible study, and witness, time seems to be the main reason (24 percent). Another significant reason is that many members simply do not know how to pray, read the Word or witness (14 percent). One in twenty among the active members even said that they think other things are more important.

Only about half of the active members felt that their non-Adventist family and their work-colleagues were interested in what they represent as Adventists. Almost 70 percent said that their friends seemed interested.

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1The options were: I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the center (atheistic), God has no place in my life, if he exists at all (agnostic), God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will he get involved (deist), God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance (medieval), God is acting on human initiative, and does what we ask him to do (magical), and God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives (biblical or Christian theistic).
Among the active members, 81 percent attended Sabbath school, and 85 percent attended divine service weekly. Mid-week meetings were attended by only 28 percent. When members do not attend, the main reasons given were tiredness (68 percent), leisure activities (54 percent), or not beneficial (49 percent). Other common reasons are work (41 percent) and dissatisfaction with the Sabbath format (40 percent).

Questionnaire Sent to Pastors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

About the Respondents

Appendix 6 shows that the questionnaire was sent to all the full-time church pastors in Norway. There is also an edition of the form with all the results entered.

Since only full-time church pastors were selected to take part in this questionnaire, the total number of respondents is rather low, and this should be kept in mind when the results are studied. Half of the group of pastors who answered the questionnaire have worked between five and nine years. No pastor with over thirty years of service responded.

The Work of the Pastors

As many as 93 percent of the church pastors have had some form of public campaign during their time of service. Three out of four church pastors have a public campaign in some form or another almost every year.

According to the response from the pastors, an average of seven non-Adventists are visited monthly. If the one pastor who did the most visiting is not counted, the rest of the pastors visit an average of six people per month. An average of eleven Adventist
members are visited every month. If the two pastors who did the most visiting are not counted, the rest of the pastors make an average of 7.5 visits per month.

These numbers given by the pastors in response to the questionnaire appear somewhat high. As president of the West Norway Conference I did a study of church pastor visitation from January 1997 to December 2003, based on the pastors’ monthly written reports. As seen in appendix 9, the data covers 567 months of work by twelve full-time and four half-time pastors during the seven year period. According to the data, the average number of visits per full-time church pastor were 4.36 non-Adventists and 7.64 Adventists per month. These numbers reflect the reports from all the pastors in the conference. If the two or three pastors who visited the most were not counted, the average for the rest would fall drastically. Realistically, it seems the average full-time pastor in Norway is not visiting more than about twelve people monthly.

The same report, based on the pastor’s written monthly report in the West Norway Conference, shows that each full-time pastor baptized on average 1.9 new members yearly, ranging from 0 to 5.6.

Going back to the questionnaire, it is seen that most pastors work more than a normal working week. Only 14 percent work under forty hours, 43 percent work between forty and fifty hours, and 36 percent between fifty and sixty hours. Seven percent work more than sixty hours. When asked what percentage of their working time they spend in the office, only 14 percent said that they spend less than 25 percent. Fifty percent spend 25-50 percent of their working time in the office, and 36 percent between 50 and 75 percent.
In the questionnaire, the pastors were asked how they ideally think they should prioritize the various areas of their work versus how they actually prioritized these areas. The pastoral work was divided into seven areas, and they were to give each area a value of importance from 1, most important to 6, least important.¹

Table 12. Pastoral Ideal Perception of Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of work</th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Visiting members</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Visiting non-members</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Evangelistic campaigns</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sermon preparation and studies</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Training of church members</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Church administration</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by fourteen pastors, spring 2004.

Table 13. Actual Pastoral Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of work</th>
<th>1 (most important)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 (least important)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Visiting members</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Visiting non-members</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Evangelistic campaigns</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sermon preparation and studies</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Training of church members</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Church administration</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by fourteen pastors, spring 2004.

¹Tables 12 and 13 show the results of the questionnaire.
When asked which one of the seven areas of the pastor’s work they thought was the most important one, 62 percent answered “personal spiritual renewal,” and a further 23 percent “training church members.” Fifteen percent answered “visiting non-members.” No pastor listed any other area as “the most important one.”

Comparing the ideal with the actual practice, it is noticed that the pastors spend more time on church administration and visitation of members than they think they ideally should. Furthermore, they spend considerably less time visiting non-members and on sermon preparation than they think they should. But the most dramatic difference between the ideal and the actual practice was revealed when it comes to “training of church members” and “personal spiritual renewal.” Ideally, 50 percent of the pastors evaluated the training of members as being of the highest degree of importance. In actual practice none said they actually give this area the highest priority. Ideally as many as 86 percent of the pastors thought “personal spiritual renewal” is of the highest degree of importance, while only 21 percent actually gave it the highest priority.

Table 14 shows the priorities of the pastors in mean-values on a scale from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important).

Overall, the pastors seemed quite satisfied with the Adventist Church as an employer. Almost none were clearly dissatisfied with any area. There were quite a few with “mixed feelings,” but 64 percent were clearly “satisfied” with the leadership, 36 percent were “satisfied” with their treatment of them as workers, and 79 percent were “satisfied” with the salaries and policies.
Table 14. Pastors’ Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF WORK</th>
<th>IDEAL Mean</th>
<th>PRACTICE Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting members</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting non-members</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelistic campaigns</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon preparation and professional updating</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of church members</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church administration</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by fourteen pastors, Spring 2004.

Only one of the pastors in the questionnaire were considering dropping out of ministry. As many as nine of the fourteen pastors had thought about quitting at some time or other. Among those who had considered quitting, the main reason listed (70 percent) was that there are aspects of a pastor’s work that they were not comfortable with. Half of this group pointed to reasons such as, “I am uncertain if I am fit for this work,” “I feel I am ‘drying up,’” and “the work is affecting my family negatively.” Twenty percent indicated the pressure on a pastor. Few pastors pointed to any other reasons to consider quitting.

Church Life

The pastors responding in the questionnaire were asked to indicate the importance of four areas of church life. Table 15 shows how the pastors evaluated the importance of the four areas in mean-values on a scale from one (most important) to six (least important).

This same question was asked to the active members, as referred to in an earlier section of the paper. Comparing the two questionnaires we notice that there is a very
good correspondence between the opinions of the pastors and the active members concerning what is important in the church. The most notable difference is that the pastors put somewhat greater emphasis on the church being a training school for the members than the members themselves did.

Table 15. Priorities in the Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF WORK (in order of importance)</th>
<th>MEAN-VALUE(^1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 To win people for Christ</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 To be a training centre for the members (a discipling school)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 To satisfy the social needs of the members</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on data from questionnaire completed by fourteen pastors, Spring 2004.

The fourteen church pastors included in the questionnaire were responsible for a total of twenty-six local churches. About three out of four of these churches had small group ministries and four out of ten had mid-week meetings. While only 31 percent of the churches conducted spiritual gifts testing, the pastors said that in 65 percent of the churches spiritual gifts are taken into consideration when the church has elections. Only 35 percent of the churches have a long-term mission strategy, and the same percentage have an interest-file. In 81 percent of the churches there are usually non-Adventists coming to church on Sabbath.

\(^1\)The lower the mean-value, the more important. Most important is 1, and 6, least important. Standard deviation varies from 0.8 to 1.1. (Standard deviation indicates the spreading of the values. A smaller number means less spread. To be of any use, the standard deviation numbers should be lower than the mean-values, as is the case here.)
Of the twenty-six churches, 35 percent had a passive membership of less than 25 percent, while 46 percent of the churches had a passive membership of 26-50 percent, and an additional 19 percent of the churches had a passive membership of more than 50 percent.

**Spiritual Life of the Pastors**

All the pastors have a biblical, that is Christian Theist worldview, compared to 88 percent of the active members.

To the question "How often do you pray?" 93 percent said "daily" and 7 percent "weekly." Fifty-seven percent read the Bible daily, and another 36 percent read it weekly. As could be expected, this means that the average pastor prays and studies the Bible a little more than the average active member, but the differences are not significant. As many as 92 percent of the pastors felt the need of personal spiritual renewal. The percentage was 87 percent among the members, so it is noticed that both the pastors and the active membership feel quite strongly a need for spiritual renewal. It is quite surprising that only 71 percent of the pastors were conscious of what spiritual gifts they have, which is not much higher than among the active membership (62 percent). Earlier we saw that 71 percent of the members have non-Adventist friends or acquaintances that they witness to. The percentage among pastors was 93 percent.

For those pastors with less prayer, Bible study, and witness in their lives, time is the main reason (21 percent), just as was the case with the active members. More remarkable is the fact that 14 percent of the pastors said that the reason that they pray or
study so little is because they "do not know how to do it," which is the same percentage as among active members.

Questionnaire Sent to Former Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

About the Respondents

In appendix 7 is found the questionnaire sent to former members including an edition of the form with all the results reported. Of the seventy respondents 55 percent were men and 45 percent were women. Respondents were from the whole country, but with a different distribution than the active membership.\(^1\) It is interesting to compare the marital status of the former members and the active members. This is done in figure 13.

![Figure 13. Marital status: Former members versus active members. Graph based on data from questionnaires completed by eighty former members and 313 active members, spring 2004.](image)

\(^1\)From the East Norway Conference area: 56%, from the West Norway Conference rea: 35%, and from the North Norway Conference area: 9%.
There is a much higher percentage of divorced or cohabiting people among the former members than among the active members. There are also fewer married and single people. The great majority of the former members are between thirty and sixty-nine years of age, with the greater part between forty and fifty-nine.

Figure 14 shows that the age at baptism of former members and active members corresponds quite well. Age at baptism does not seem to be a notable reason why people leave the Church, except for a slightly increased risk that those being baptized at the age of fifteen will leave the Church. Figure 14 shows that during the teenage years most are baptized. This potential should possibly be utilized in a better way.

![Figure 14. Age at baptism: Former members versus active members. Graph based on data from questionnaires completed by eighty former members and 313 active members, spring 2004.](image)

\(^1\)Notice that the table shows percentages per year between the age of 10 and 20, but per 5 years between the age of 21 and 40, and per 10 years above the age of 41.
The next step is to find the connection between the time of membership and risk of leaving the church. As shown by figure 15, the longer the membership, the lower the risk of leaving the church. About 20 percent of the members leaving the Church leave during their first five years of membership, another 15 percent during the next five years, and still another 19 percent during the next five years. This means than more than half of those leaving the Church leave during the first fifteen years of being members. However, the risk of leaving is continually there until a member has been in the Church for about forty-five years.

Figure 15. Duration of membership when leaving the church (percentages). Graph based on data from questionnaire completed by eighty former members, spring 2004.
Relationship to Adventism and the Religious

The respondents were given twelve reasons to chose from, and asked which one(s) played a role in their deciding to leave the church. They were asked to indicate what reasons played a role in combination with other reasons, and also which single reason played the most important role. Figure 16 reveals the answers.

According to the questionnaire, the most common reason for leaving the Adventist Church was disagreement with Adventist teachings. Fifty-one percent pointed to this as a reason in combination with other reasons, and 36 percent pointed to it as the single most important reason.

Figure 16. Reasons for leaving the Church. Graph based on data from questionnaire completed by eighty former members, spring 2004.
Another reason that scores significantly high both as an important reason in combination with others (38 percent), and as the single most important reason (13 percent), is the opinion that the life-principles of the church are too rigid and legalistic.

It should also be noted that as many as every fourth former member said that they have been disappointed by the pastors or leadership. However, as a single most important reason, this was not a major factor (5 percent). Notice that 24 percent said that they felt they were baptized too young, but we have seen earlier that there is not a notably higher percentage of former members that were baptized at a very young age, compared to the active members. “Too young” should most likely be understood as being spiritually immature, since 14 percent say specifically that they were not mature when baptized. It is notable that 41 percent of the former members point to at least one reason of a relational character, when stating why they left the church. Furthermore, it is notable that among these relationally disappointed people, there were significantly more women than men (almost double). This could be because relationships are not as important to men as they are to women, or it could be because the Church does not care enough about the relational needs of women.

The reasons given as the single most important ones for leaving the church largely reflect the same order of importance as the reasons given as important in

1Reasons of a relational character referred to here are: “The pastor or leadership of the Adventist Church disappointed me” (25%), “I didn’t feel at home in the church” (20%), “I experienced too many conflicts in the church” (13%), “Some individuals disappointed me” (11%), and “I didn’t get sufficient opportunities to get involved in the Church” (5%).

2Fifty-one percent of the women and 29 percent of the men mention at least one reason of a relational character as background for leaving the Church.
combination with other reasons. The only two reasons that seem to play a major role in isolation, are disagreement with the teachings, and the opinion that the life-principles of the church are too rigid and legalistic.

Although 51 percent of the former Adventist members pointed to “disagreement with teachings” as being one of the reasons for leaving the Church, almost three out of four of those who left still believed that the teachings of the Adventist Church for the most part are biblical. Of the 26 percent that disagreed, the disagreement seemed to be quite evenly spread out between the understanding of salvation, end time, state of the dead, and the Sabbath. Fewer people disagreed with the Adventist understanding of baptism.

Seventy-eight percent of the former members said categorically that they do not think they will ever become members again. None said categorically “yes,” but 17 percent were open to the possibility by answering “maybe.”

Of the former Adventists 82 percent said they still believe in God. A majority (68 percent) have a biblical or Christian theistic worldview, compared with 88 percent among active members. Findings show 7 percent are atheists, 12 percent agnostic, 3 percent deists, and 9 percent have a medieval worldview. Only 2 percent seems to have a magical worldview. Compared to the active members, the main difference in the area of worldview, are that there are some more Atheists and Agnostics among the former members, and fewer with a biblical worldview. However, the differences are not dramatic.
Sixty-five percent of the former members regarded themselves as personally still Christian, but only 25 percent were members of another denomination today.¹

Questionnaire sent to Young People
With an Adventist Background Who are
Not Members of the Church

About the Respondents

In appendix 8 is found the questionnaire sent to young people with an Adventist background who have not become members of the Church. There is also an additional form with all the results reported. Fifty-four percent of the respondents were men and 46 percent were women. Respondents are from the whole country, with a geographical distribution almost identical to that of the active membership.

Eighty percent of the respondents in this group were between nineteen and twenty-two years old. There were few married people in this group with 21 percent cohabiting, compared to less than 1 percent among active members.

Relationship to Adventism and the Religious

Figure 17 shows the responses of the young people when they were asked: “What is the reason why you decided not to be baptized and become a member of the Adventist church yourself?”

The most common reason for not joining the Adventist Church was because young people believe the life-principles of the Church are too rigid and legalistic.

¹Of those who say that they are members of another denomination today, 47 percent are members of the Lutheran State Church.
Forty-four percent gave this as a reason in combination with other reasons, and 11 percent gave it as the single most important reason. Thirty-seven percent said that one of many reasons was that they did not feel at home in the church, but none pointed to this as the single most important reason. Other prominent reasons among many were, disappointment by individuals (27%), not comfortable with the format of the meetings (27%), coincidence (23%), and disagreement with teachings (23%). There were quite a few other reasons given as well, but all of them were given by less than 20% of the respondents.

Figure 17. Reasons for not joining the Church. Graph based on data from questionnaire completed by seventy young people with backgrounds from the Adventist Church, but who are not members themselves, spring 2004.
Given as “the most important” reason for not joining the Church, is that “the church is too rigid and legalistic” (11%), and “disagreement with Adventist teachings” (9%).

It should be noted that 16 percent of the non-baptized young people with an Adventist background think they are going to get “baptized and become an Adventist some day, just not yet.” Seventeen percent said they attend church, but they are just in no hurry to get baptized. Only 6 percent of young people with an Adventist background who are not Adventists themselves, would rather become a member of another denomination.

Later in the questionnaire we notice the remarkable fact that 84 percent of the young people with a background from the Adventist Church still believe that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly biblical. To the question “Do you think it is possible that you will ever turn back to the Adventist Church again?” 22 percent answered “yes,” and 48 percent answered “maybe.” Only one in four said clearly “no” to ever coming back. Seventy-seven percent of those who are open to the possibility of coming back said that it will be their decision rather than it depending on others.

As many as 91 percent of the non-Adventist young people with an Adventist background said that they believe in God. Four out of six had a biblical or Christian theistic worldview, and about one in four had a deistic worldview. Eight percent were agnostics; only 2 percent were atheists. No one seemed to have a medieval or a magical worldview.
As many as 69 percent regarded themselves as “personal Christians,” but only 6 percent were members of any other church or denomination.

**Closing Remarks**

As we have seen from the internal, situational analysis in this chapter, the present status of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway has been influenced by its recent history. Financial challenges, loss of institutions, reorganization, relocation, policy revisions, and a major refocusing has taken a lot of attention and caused some frustrations and disagreements since the early 1990s.

Most churches are small, the pastors are caring for more than one church, and distances are often great. Pastors often hover over those who are already Adventists rather than spending time as trainers.

There has been a considerable drop in membership since 1993, mainly due to fewer baptisms. The reason for the low number of baptisms is complex and hard to pinpoint. Besides the fact that not enough people are baptized and added to even make up for the number dying, almost half the number added leave the church by choice or are disfellowshipped.

The percentage of members under thirty years of age is only one-fourth the percentage of the general Norwegian citizens while the percentage of old people ia much higher than in the general population. The greatest potential for new members lies in young people with an Adventist background, but the greater part of them do not get baptized.
The back door of the Church is wide open, and about half of the members leaving the church have been members less than fifteen years.

The most common reason for joining the Church is growing up in it. The most common reason for leaving it is disagreement with the teachings, and the idea that the life-principles of the church are too rigid and legalistic.

Only one-fourth of the active members see the training school aspect of the Church as being most important. Church members rarely are acquainted with the long-term strategies of their local church, conference or Union.

Around 90 percent of both church members and pastors feel a great need for spiritual renewal, but for some reason most of them are not actively seeking it.

Most former Adventists still believe that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly biblical, and even more have kept their faith in God. Many still say they are Christians but most have not joined another denomination.

Almost half of the young people with an Adventist background who are not members of the Church, report the main reason for not joining the Church is that the life-principles of the Church are too rigid and legalistic. Many also report that they do not feel at home in the Church. Still most of these young people believe that the teachings of the Adventist Church for the most part are biblical. Most of these young people have kept their faith in God, and quite a few say there is a possibility for them to come back to the Church.

On the basis of all these findings, it should be clear that there are many positive things within the Church and its members that provide potential for renewal and growth, and there are many negative factors that can be worked on and corrected.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Summary

This research project has provided insights into some principles and findings that, when taken seriously and used in planning and working, are bound to make a difference. Much is not new. Some people might say that they have known this all along. However, there is now qualified support for their former assumptions. At the same time, some theories may have been exposed as being just myths, or even wrong.

Hopefully, the contribution of this project will clarify the present state, will suggest possible reasons for the situation, will draw together a group of factors, will clear away some myths, will replace some guesses and theories with qualified and proven facts, will inspire the Church to take church growth seriously, and will provide hope that with new knowledge, effort, and strategies, it is possible to turn the present negative tendency to positive growth in the Adventist Church in Norway.

Growth in the Adventist Church involves each member, all local congregations, the pastors, the institutions, the leadership, and the conferences and Union. Because this involves both activity and planning on so many different levels, and since I can only indirectly influence what happens in the Adventist Church in Norway, it does not make sense for me to suggest a detailed strategy for growth that
others will have to implement. A strategy should be developed and tailor-made by the people involved at the various organizational levels, because their expertise and ownership to the strategy is essential.

This chapter will put together a set of facts and principles that can be used as a basis when strategies are made at the various levels and will offer advice concerning the strategy process itself.

The following research summaries and conclusion will be left with the churches, pastors, leaders, institutions and organizations in Norway to assist in their long-term strategic planning. This chapter will also offer some information, guidance, and suggestions concerning strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Personal, Spiritual, and Theological Basis for Ministry

When one focuses on growth and success, it is easy to be so concerned about the end results, that the necessary basis is neglected or taken for granted. Church growth projects must not be restricted just to being something functional, technical, or numerical. Church growth is a project of the heart. Outer growth is based on inner growth. A good, healthy spiritual basis should be the concern of any project the church designs to ensure growth.

The members need help in their spiritual development to move from the structure stage to the maturity stage, without losing them at the questioning stage. Church leaders need to help them towards a biblical and holistic Christian theistic worldview. A membership that is spiritually immature, with an unbiblical worldview, will tend to be inwardly focused, occupied with self, which will in turn hinder growth.
The theology lived and proclaimed by the Church needs to be less formal, more real, and more heart-based. There needs to be a shift from cold, theoretical theories, to felt needs, love, and grace. There should be more focus on what the church is, and not only what it does.

When working with spiritual formation, witnessing and team-building, an understanding of personality types, spiritual gifts, leadership/interaction types, spirituality types, and task types is needed. It is not easy with such a small membership and so few pastors as the Church has in Norway to build teams according to the various types, trying to compose and compliment the team according to a thought-through plan, but as far as possible it should be attempted. Teams lacking necessary qualifications and expertise, and co-workers not functioning well together too often hinder the effectiveness of the work. Internal team and leadership problems can ruin even a good strategic plan, and hinder growth.

The church should be a training school, and a place for equipping believers for ministry. Ministers should be trainers, coaches, and coordinators rather than only pastoring and hovering over churches.¹

At the end of the 1990s, the Norwegian Church focused on Russell Burrill’s book Revolution in the Church—Unleashing the Awesome Power of Lay Ministry. There was widespread agreement among leaders, pastors, and members that the secret to success involved going back to the New Testament model of the ministers being

trainers, coaches, and coordinators, rather than sole priests or pastors. The book was printed in Norwegian\textsuperscript{1} and given to all members for free. Pastors and leaders had seminars in the churches on this theme. We do not hear or speak much about this issue anymore, even though most would still agree that this is the way to go. This is an example of good things disintegrating because of lack of a strategic process, coordination, and evaluation, or at least because of lack of knowledge about such strategic issues.

Analysis of Norwegian Society

When trying to reach people with the gospel message, we have to reach out to them on their terms, and according to their own sense of needs. Norwegians are materialistic and home-bound. Still many are not happy. They do not realize that the Church has that for which they are longing. The answers to their needs cannot be shown by means of theory and arguments, but through interpersonal dealings and example. Since it is not easy to get Norwegians to leave their homes, some of the Church's activities should be home-based. Examples could include friendship evangelism, house fellowships, correspondence school work, and a television ministry. Since Norwegians spend the greatest portion of their leisure time on electronic media, that too is an avenue that the Church should develop further.

\textsuperscript{1} Russell Burrill, \textit{Revolusjon i menigheten—Å frigjøre lektjenestens utrolige kraft} (Oslo, Norway: Norsk Bokforlag AS, 1999).
In view of the fact that Norwegians are idealistic and health minded, and that so many people commit suicide, the Church should be even more active in offering felt need seminars of various kinds to meet people where they are.

In various ways (for example marital status), the typical Norwegian outside the Church is different from the typical Norwegian Adventist. If this is not taken into consideration when plans are made, the Church will be more and more isolated and marginalized.

The twenty-first century is a time of faith, but also of superstition and mixed faith. These changes pose a challenge for the Church. The people that the Church wants to reach with its message represent a dramatically different thinking and culture, and this difference has to be taken into account when preparing to preach and teach, or when activities and strategies are being planned.

The fact that so many Norwegians are passive, non-attending Christians, seems to indicate that they are disappointed by what they have experienced with organized religion. The challenge facing the Norwegian Adventist Church is to attract those who are frustrated members of other churches, including the State Church.

The Norwegian mentality is, among other things, to be partakers, anti-authoritarian, individualistic, independent, idealistic, honest, and hardworking. Norwegians are not very spontaneous, a little locked up, reserved, skeptical and careful, but idealistic. Norwegians like to go straight to the point. They want to do what is needed now, and get done with it. Many of these characteristics are in reality positive opportunities for the Adventist Church.
The fact that there seems to be a religious re-awakening in Norway—especially among the youth—should urge and encourage the Church to rekindle and develop its evangelistic activity. The Church should also be encouraged by the tendency of Norwegians to be moving away from the egoistic trend of recent years.

The Church should be more willing to let new people, even non-Adventists, become active participants in the churches, in light of the fact that Norwegians are idealistic and like to be partakers, as do postmoderns in general.

The Adventist Church in Norway should further explore the possibilities of ministry for the increasing number of immigrants, and develop special expertise in that area.

The world has changed, and is changing, and we need to be ready for it. Adventists need to understand, and to a certain degree adjust to the mindset of the people they want to reach. If the methods and presentation of the message are not adjusted with time, many people will not hear an understandable presentation of the gospel.

Many churches will need to be more sensitive to the ways and needs of the postmodern, younger generations. Without compromising the message, the Church must be prepared to adjust methods and emphasis, and to present the Adventist message as the holistic, relevant, and practical message it truly is.

The challenge of postmodernism should not altogether scare the Church. Some postmodern characteristics even provide extra opportunities and advantages, like the postmodern openness to spiritual things, critique of old science, holistic thinking, openness to otherness, group thinking, part-taking, et cetera. Other characteristics pose
a big challenge, and will have to be taken into consideration when developing a strategy. Examples of this are lack of interest in absolute truth, overarching stories, common standards, commitment, institutions, et cetera.

It should be remembered that today’s society is not just postmodern. Modernistic approaches still have their audience. Fear of the challenge of reaching postmodern people should not keep the Church from also working for the people who are still thinking and acting in the traditional modern way.

When the Church develops its strategy, it will need to be clear on who it wants to reach. Different generations require different approaches because they have different perspectives, attitudes, approaches, and degrees of commitment. The so-called Generation Xers are especially closed to old, out-modeled evangelistic methods, but they are very open to the story of Jesus.

Analysis of Seventh-day Adventist Church

The loss of Adventist institutions in the late 1980s and early 1990s, left many Norwegian Adventists with a feeling of disappointment and distrust in Church leadership. Much of their identity disappeared with the institutions. A certain frustration and apathy could be sensed. In addition, years of financial strain in the 1990s left its mark. The focus of the Church since the late 1980s has been largely on problem solving, reorganization, financial challenges, buildings, and policies. The challenge now is to win back the confidence and trust of the members, and to continue changing the focus of the Norwegian Adventist Church from inward to outward and from the past to the future.
Since the 1980s, the role of the pastors has largely changed from being evangelists witnessing to non-members, to hovering over churches and focusing on those who are already members. This trend need to be reversed, and the pastors should first and foremost be training the members and be active in evangelistic work, besides attending to the necessary pastoral duties of caring for the flock. Administrative work should be largely left to the lay leadership. It should be a matter of great concern that only one in four members is of the opinion that it is most important that the Church is a training center or discipling school. Half of the pastors thinks this is most important, but none of them gives it the highest importance in reality. The Church leadership needs to give this area high attention.

The last few years there has been an attempt to focus on church planting, *Natural Church Development*, strategic planning and other ways and means of ensuring church growth. This has not resulted in remarkable change. This is not to say, however, that these ideas are not good or will not lead to growth. It probably mean that they have not been given the deserved attention or followed up as they should be.

Based on membership demographics it is clear that the Church needs to work on ways to reach more people under thirty years of age, especially men. The greatest potential lies with young people with an Adventist background, as two-thirds of them never become Adventists (at least not before they are twenty-two years old). Young people seem to be especially receptive before they turn twenty years of age. In particular, much more should be done to consolidate faith and appeal for decisions among early teens.
Conclusions

Active Members

Friendship evangelism, evangelistic meetings, seminars, and Adventist literature are proven as major factors in leading people into the Church, and should continue to be used. It is documented that variety is important when avenues and methods are planned. Most people have a multitude of reasons for joining, leaving, or not joining the church.

Most of the present Adventists were baptized because they believed Adventist doctrines could be proven from the Bible. This will always have to be important to Adventists, but the danger of focusing on theory at the expense of practical life-benefits is that many members, or young people not yet baptized, will reject the Church because of its theoretic, legalistic and rigid ways. A legalistic church trying to reach a largely postmodern community will face the challenge of different interests and mindsets. For postmoderns universal truth is not found as attractive as a better life or a close fellowship. The Church has to be conscious about showing that Adventism is unique because of the benefits it gives to life quality.

It can hardly be expected that the mainly non-postmodern Adventist membership will be able or willing to target and appeal to the postmodern multitudes. Therefore the Church should give room for those few members who have the necessary interest, ability and insight, so that they can work more freely within the framework of the church, seeking ways and formats to reach the postmodern mind. This can be done without compromising the Adventist message, but new approaches
and other emphases are needed. Methods, preferences, likings and interests should not be confused with eternal truth.

During the first ten years of membership, the members of the Church should be given special attention, so everything possible is done to prevent them from leaving the Church.

Adventist pastors in Norway need to work on their Sabbath sermons to ensure that they are sufficiently relevant, practical, and deep. As it is today, every second member feel this is not the case. The result is spiritual malnutrition or in the worst case, members stop going to church or leave the Church altogether.

The leadership of the local churches, the conferences, the union, and the institutions need to be trained in strategic planning, including the work of following up and evaluating. Furthermore, strategic plans need to be explained and shared. The members need to feel ownership of the plans. As it is today, only a minority of the members are acquainted with the long-term strategies of the union, the conference, or even their own local church. The success of the strategic plans are dependent on the members being involved, so it is a must that they actually know the plans.

Two-thirds of the membership wish they could be more involved in using their spiritual gifts in the Church, indicating the need of increased focus on the matter of spiritual gifts with the pastors concentrating more on helping the members towards awareness and service.
Pastors and Their Churches

The role and work of the pastor needs revision. The average Norwegian pastor does little visitation of members or non-members. Much of the pastor’s working time is spent in an office. The pastors spend much less time training church members and on personal spiritual renewal than they themselves think they ideally should. The Church leadership therefore needs to help the pastors reorganize their time and priorities.

The pastors need help to prioritize and spend their time differently. A shift of focus will also require a change in the expectations and demands that the members have towards the pastors. The pastors should use more time in training and coaching the church members, in evangelistic visitation, and in renewing their own spiritual life. The pastors themselves agree about these needs, but do not seem to be able to live out their own ideals.

The shocking fact that every second church has a passive membership of 26-50 percent, and one in five churches has a passive membership of more than 50 percent, calls for greater attention on preventing members becoming passive, and rekindling the commitment among the passive ones. The back door of the church is wide open, and closing it has to be taken seriously. This will require specially designed strategies.

Both among the general church membership and among the pastors, as many as nine out of ten are longing for personal spiritual renewal. The leadership has to make plans for inspiring and facilitating spiritual renewal in the church and among the pastors in particular. This can become a focus in the church magazines, camp
meetings, workers meetings, and preaching. Such a focus would also rekindle spirituality among passive members and youth.

While quite a few non-Adventists seem to visit Adventist churches on Sabbath, not many of them end up being baptized. The pastors should become more conscious of this group of potential members. When guests visit a church more than once, it indicates that they are more likely to decide to join the Church, but again an intentional strategy is needed.

Former Members

Clearly the most common reason for leaving the Adventist Church is disagreement with Adventist teachings. Another important reason is the opinion that the life-principles of the Church are too rigid and legalistic. The solution to this is not for the Church to change its teachings, but to shift emphasis, ensuring that the practical life-benefits of Adventism are clearly presented and lived. Greater tolerance, and an ability to see life principles in their larger perspectives, is also called for.

Poor relational factors are commonly given as reasons for people leaving the Church. To close the back door the Church should concentrate on being a fair, supportive, caring, inclusive, and peaceful place. The Church may traditionally have been too concerned about the hard facts (doctrinal and functional matters), as compared to soft values (like happy marriages, good relationships, a healthy church atmosphere, et cetera). The Church needs to appear more tolerant and loving in matters of personal preference and likes.
Comparing the marital status of active and former members it becomes clear that to prevent falling away from the Church, a work should be done to strengthen the marriages in the Church, and to help singles feel at home.

It is worth noting that almost three out of four former Adventists still believe that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly biblical, while at the same time listing doctrinal disagreement as a main reason for leaving the Church. This seems to indicate that part of the problem is that there is little tolerance for variation among the church members. It may also reveal a problem of one-sidedness, wrong emphasis, and lack of making the doctrines practical and relevant. Again this calls for a more tolerant, balanced, and relevant Church.

Seventeen percent of the former members are open to the possibility of returning to the Church. This number may not seem high, but with a yearly number of some thirty people leaving the Church, it would mean a potential of five returning every year.

Eighty-two percent of the former Adventists still believe in God, and 65 percent regard themselves as still being Christians. At the same time only 25 percent are members of other denominations. This shows that there is a great potential of winning lost members back, if the Church can do something about the reasons for leaving.

Especially during the first years of their membership, the Church should follow up its members better, to prevent loosing so many of them.
Young People With Adventist Background
Who Are Not Members Themselves

The Church needs to give greater attention to its children and young people. So many of them are lost to the Church, and an alarmingly low percentage of present membership is under thirty years of age (10%).

The most common reason given for not joining the Church, is that young people feel that the life-principles of the Church are too rigid and legalistic. As mentioned before this calls for a more tolerant and balanced church, and the ability to distinguish between absolute truth on one side, and personal preferences and tradition on the other side. In cases where it is mainly a matter of taste, personal preferences and tradition, the Church need to be less condemning and more tolerant.

The Church has failed to make many of the young people feel at home in Church. Furthermore, the traditional meeting format does not satisfy many of the young people. Again, this calls for a variety of styles and a stronger and more caring social life.

Young people often do not feel comfortable in the Church. The Church should become much more conscious about creating an atmosphere and worship formats and activities that can attract young people. So far we have not succeeded in doing this. Until we do, we are unlikely to retain more of our youth who constitute one of the greatest potential areas for growth in the Church. Keeping our youth calls for a variety of styles and a stronger and more caring social life in the Church.

Ninety-one percent of young people with an Adventist background, who are not members of the Church themselves, believe in God. Sixty-nine percent regard
themselves as ‘personal Christians’. A remarkable 84 percent of these young people still believe that the teachings of the Adventist Church for the most part are biblical. Very few (6%) are members of any other denomination. Only one in four says a clear “no” to ever thinking of coming back to the Adventist Church, indicating that with the right plans there is a great potential of winning back many of those youth.

The call is for a youth-centered, loving, tolerant, equipping, and outwardly directed church, with an emphasis on the experiential and practical in addition to the theoretical.

**Strategic Work**

**Strategic Analysis of the Situation**

When working on a strategy, the situation should be analyzed or audited in various ways. Questions like ‘How are we doing?’, ‘What kind of church are we?’ and ‘Where are we going?’ need to be answered.¹

If one would do a *life cycle audit*, one would find that the Adventist Church in Norway is at the stage of decline. Revitalization and revival is necessary for the Church not to die.

A *spirituality audit* reveals that many members and even pastors have stagnated or stopped in their spiritual development, and that they are longing for renewal. Problems of spiritual immaturity, a lack of understanding of what real theology is all about, and wrong worldviews are found in the Church.

¹The following material on auditing is based on Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 62-76.
An energy audit would show that there is a low energy level among members, that naturally contributes to decline. This probably has to do with a busy, demanding life, and a feeling of resignation and apathy because even great effort seems to result in little positive church growth. Not much can be done by the greater society, but each leader, pastor, and member can look at their priorities, and make sure that they use the energy they have on the most needed things.

A type audit makes it clear that the Church is not appealing to all personality types and spirituality types. The height of the ceiling in the Church is not high enough, so to speak. The questionnaires in this project reveal that lack of adaptability and tolerance is a major problem with the Church. Large groups of people feel that the Church does not appeal to them.

A leadership audit would show that on one side the Church should be more conscious when electing leaders and building teams (having leadership types and task types in mind). At the same time it has to be admitted that doing so is not easy, as the church is small and the leadership candidates few.

A strategy audit would reveal that very few churches have developed strategies. The conference and union strategies are poorly worked through, and the majority of the membership remains unaware of the long-term strategies of their churches and upper organizations. Strategy work in itself needs to be given greater attention, and the membership needs to be informed and involved, to feel as participants and co-owners of the plans.

An audit of finances and facilities would tell that the hard period of the 1990s is over, that finances and facilities are not major hindrances anymore. Today's
question is how these resources are used. Based on the internal analysis of this paper, it is recommended that more money be used for young people and media work.

A *time audit* would lead to the conclusion that it is urgent to find solutions if the church is to survive the next few generations. The longer time that passes with the Church membership decreasing, the more perplexed and apathetic the people will become. It is also a matter of urgency because if the membership goes under a certain level, the point is reached where the number of pastors and the level of activity cannot be maintained financially (because of lack of income).

When a local church or organization is preparing a strategy, these kinds of internal audits have to be done in depth. Furthermore, a *performance audit* should be done, assessing the strength, weaknesses, and limitations. A *direction audit* will assess the church’s vision and mission. A *congregational audit* done in a church will answer the question ‘Who are we?’ by using demographics and psychographics. In relation to this, a *culture audit* will reveal the common way of doing things. What kind of obstacles are faced will be clarified through an *obstacle audit*. It could be people or organizational matters. An *emotion audit* evaluates the emotional level, whether it is high or low, upbeat or downbeat, encouraging or discouraging.

Also external audits need to be done, like *community audits, threat audits,* and *opportunity audits*.

Values

After having done an analysis or audit of the situation, answering ‘How are we doing?’ the question ‘Why do we do what we do?’ should be asked. This has to do
with core values. One has to be clear on what one stands for and on what principles one will operate. The values determine the distinctives, dictate the personal involvement, communicate what is important, embrace or deny good change, influence behavior, inspire people to action, enhance credible leadership, contribute to success, and influence the mission and vision.

Malphurs defines “core values as the constant, passionate, biblical beliefs that drive the ministry.” People act on their values, not their vision, mission, or purpose. … Most often people do not know their church’s purpose. But they are driven by their values. The vision helps people see where they are going, but their values motivate them to begin moving in that direction.” Values should be constant, passionate, biblical, core beliefs, and they should drive the ministry.

While values are also unconscious and personal, the issue here are the organizational and shared values. Examples of unifying church values are, information, evangelism, justice, experience, loyalty, or character. Whichever value drives the church will determine what kind of church it will be.

There seems to be little clarity in Norwegian Adventist churches as to what their core values are, resulting in confusion as to what direction they should go. Some have the idea that the Church should be everything for everyone, with the result that it ends up being little or nothing for anyone. There is a need for deep rethinking in

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1The section on core values is based on Malphurs, 78-97.

2Ibid., 83.

3Ibid., 86.
Norwegian churches. One cannot expect to reach any goal if one does not even know where one wants to go or why one is doing what is being done.

Mission Versus Vision

After having clarified what one is doing (analysis or audit) and why one does what one does (values), one needs to find out what the church is supposed to be doing (mission), and what kind of church one would like to be (vision).

There is often confusion as to the difference between mission and vision. It is important that one does not make strategic work so complicated that people get lost in terms and definitions. The most important thing is that the people know where they are, where they are going, and how they want to get there. The end result is more important than the technicalities of the process.

Mission

Malphurs defines “mission as a broad, brief, biblical statement of what the ministry is supposed to be doing.”1 Mission is not the same as purpose. Purpose answers the question why we are here, while mission answers the question what we are supposed to be doing. Of course one should also ask oneself ‘Are we doing it?’, and if not, ‘Why not?’

The mission statement is overarching and summarizes all that is done as a church or organization. At the same time, it should not be so broad that it loses its clarity. A common mistake is that mission statements are too long and complicated.

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1Ibid., 105.
Mission statements should be brief and simple enough to be on everyone’s tongue. The mission statement is a ‘what statement’, not a ‘how statement’.

Mission is important because it dictates the direction, formulates the function, focuses on the future, guides decision making, inspires unity, shapes the strategy, enhances effectiveness, ensures an enduring organization, and facilitates evaluation.¹

Vision

After having clarified what the church is supposed to be doing (mission) and after having found out what is going on (scanned the environment), one needs to clarify what kind of church one would like to be (vision). What would the church look like if one could have it one’s own way?

Often values, purpose, dreams, goals, objectives, and mission are confused with vision. While it is not the same, core values and purpose may be contained in a vision statement, and will affect it. While a mission statement is brief, a vision statement goes into detail. It should be very clear and precise, otherwise it will accomplish nothing. Mission is informing, knowing, head-based, broad, general, and scientific. Vision is inspiring, seeing, heart-based, narrow-focused, and artistic.

A vision is to be clear and challenging, providing a picture or snapshot of the future, and it should describe a reality that both can be and must be. A clear vision is

¹Ibid., 100-103.
important because it encourages unity, creates energy, provides purpose, fosters risk taking, enhances leadership, promotes excellence, and sustains ministry.¹

Strategy Defined

So far the church has found out how it is doing (analysis or audit), why it is doing what it does (values), what it is supposed to be doing (mission), and what it wants to be like (vision). All this is not of much good if it does not find out how it will get to where it want to be. This work is what is called strategic work.

Malphurs defines “strategy as the process that determines how your ministry will accomplish its mission.”² While the mission answers *what* questions, and vision answers *where* questions, the strategy answers *how* questions.

The *analysis* evaluates the strategy, the *values* dictate the contents of the strategy, the *mission* directs the strategy itself, and the *vision* energizes the strategy.

The actual strategy is important because it is the vehicle that will accomplish the mission and vision, it facilitates understanding, provides a sense of momentum, properly invests God’s resources, and displays what God is blessing.³

The Norwegian Union has worked on strategic planning for quite a few years. This work has taken a lot of time by the leaders and the executive committee. Most of those involved in the process have had little or no training in strategic planning. Too

¹Ibid., 134-137.
²Ibid., 156.
³Ibid., 153-155.
often the Union plans have been about what should be done on the Conference or the local church level, rather than what should be done on the actual Union level. The plans have not always united the Church in moving forward in a certain direction.

The new programs that are continuously being introduced by upper organizational levels in the Church, besides the regular changes in leadership every few years, have created some cynicism in the Church. Carter McNamara says about nonprofit organizations, “Organizations tend to herald in new programs, focus a great deal of effort on implementing those new programs, but then bring in another new program again without ever mentioning if the older program was ever successful. Members of the organization begin to feel as if they are on a treadmill, running harder and harder, but never really getting anywhere.”

Here McNamara is pointing at a real problem for our Church internationally. At least this has been a problem in Norway. The problem can be lessened or even solved by introducing new programs in such a way that those who the program is introduced to will adopt it as their own, and take ownership and responsibility for it. Furthermore, the Church has to be better at follow-up and evaluation. The period of time between elections at the conference level and local church level should be increased, so that less time is used by newly elected people at getting started with new ideas, and more time can be used at actual implementation and follow up.

Some of the problems with the strategic planning in the Adventist Church in Norway have been caused by lack of knowledge concerning strategic planning, a lack

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1McNamara, Strategic Planning and Facilitation, 122.
of general ownership of the plans, and a lack of resources. Furthermore, there may be other problems standing in the way and distracting from the strategic plan, and there may be a lack of follow-up and evaluation.

Carter McNamara writes in his *Field Guide to Nonprofit Strategic Planning and Facilitation*, "Strategic planning experts suggest that a plan is strategic if it: 1. Involves strong input and support from leaders in the organization. 2. Was produced from careful consideration of the effects of potential changes in the external and internal environments of the organization. 3. Is based on the future of the organization. 4. Will have significant influence on the governance, leadership and operations of the organization. 5. Will involve extensive use of the organization's resources during implementation of the plan."\(^1\)

McNamara goes on to say that,

An organization might not need their current plans to be strategic in nature. For example, if an organization is facing several, major issues that are internal to the workings of the organization, then it is prudent to develop plans to address those internal issues before developing and implementing a plan that is more strategic in nature. While this point might seem obvious to you, it is amazing how many nonprofit organizations set out to develop plans that are strategic in nature, yet, at the same time, the organizations have a number of internal issues that would prevent any strategic plans from ever being implemented in the first place.\(^2\)

This is exactly what has happened in certain cases in Norway with too much concern about the 'how questions' without knowing the 'why' and 'what questions'. McNamara suggests that, "Planners might skip attention to the mission, vision and/or

\(^1\)Ibid., 5.

\(^2\)Ibid.
values statements for now, and instead attend to conducting the situational analysis now.¹ Providing such a situational analysis is a main purpose of this project paper, and it is hoped that this can give a better basis for the Church in Norway to proceed in the process of strategic planning.

Experts talk about different strategic planning approaches. When the Church in Norway has tried to plan strategically, it has normally been according to what is sometimes called goals-based strategic planning.² This is probably the most common form of strategic planning, and is seen as the ideal method when future goals can be identified, when clear mission, vision and values statements are established, when few critical issues are facing the organization, when environments are stable or predictable, and when decisions are made top-down. I am afraid that all this has not been the case in Norway, so the goals-based strategic planning has largely failed.

A so-called issues-based strategic planning method would probably have been more suitable for the Norwegian situation. It is often seen to be the most suitable method whenever an organization is facing several critical issues, has limited resources, expect major changes, and when the planners struggle to identify clear goals for the future. This may be closer to the situation in Norway. "Issues-based planning might start with a situational analysis, and then move on to issues and the strategies to address those issues. Mission, vision, and values might be developed or

¹Ibid., 52.
²Ibid., 27-28.
updated afterwards. Goals might be established, but usually after addressing the issues and strategies to address the issues.”¹

Strategies On All Levels

As mentioned before, increased church growth in Norway will require that all the strategic steps discussed in this chapter be taken by individual pastors, local churches, institutions, conferences, and the union. Both individuals, churches, and the various organizational levels should have their own strategies that hopefully work together as a harmonious whole. Even within a single church, the departments or activities (worship, choir, evangelism, youth, etc.) need to have a strategy to make sure that they actually work towards, and accomplish their particular ministry mission.

Specifics of Strategy²

A strategy begins with a target group. The question is: ‘Who are we trying to reach?’ The target group has to be identified, information on the target group has to be gathered, a profile person should be constructed, and the kind of church necessary to reach the target group should be determined.

Having identified the target group, ask how the group will be reached. ‘What is the process that we will go through?’ “The recipe for the working strategy consists of four ingredients: mission statement, strategic goals, action steps, and a visual.”³ The

¹Ibid., 29.
²Malphurs, 159-173.
³Ibid., 161.
mission statement helps with the direction, function, and planning. Look back to the mission statement to discover the strategic goals, as goals are to naturally flow from mission. The action steps represent the steps taken to realize each goal. The visual (a picture) is designed to help people remember.

One also has to ask, ‘Who will be involved in reaching our target group?’ A team ministry will function best. One has to look for the right kind of people and know how one wants to structure and train them.

Finally one has to look at the facilities and finances, asking if the facilities are suitable for reaching the target group, and if there is the necessary financial resources to reach them.

Implementing the Strategy

“The temptation is to spend all your time on vision, mission, or strategy and none on implementation. At some point you have got to move.”1 The question is, ‘Where do we begin, when, and with whom?’

All too often plans are laid, but not followed up. Plans not followed up are demoralizing and discouraging, and the Adventist Church in Norway does not need that.

Lessons from the Teleios Process

From 1998 to 2004 I was the president of the West Norway Conference. A plan was launched for renewal and growth called the Teleios process. I visited with all

1Ibid., 175.
the churches in the conference during the period 2003 to 2004. I met with the church boards and the whole church body more than once in each place.

The basic idea of the *Teleios* process was that outer growth comes from inner growth, and that the spiritual health of a church cannot be taken for granted. In presenting this plan, the underlying purpose, mission, and vision of the conference was explained. There were six areas of focus in the *Teleios* concept: (1) Diagnosing the church and finding the right medicine (by, for example, using the tool “Natural Church Development” designed by Christian A. Swartz), (2) Spiritual life—revival and renewal (spiritual gifts come in as an element here), (3) Church structures and dynamics (strategic planning, etc.), (4) Evangelism (not only activities, but preparatory work like training, demographics, etc.), (5) Holistic small groups, and lastly (6) Expansion (Church planting). The individual churches joining this conference-wide process for renewal and growth could join at a time when they were ready for it. They could each work on these focus areas in the order and speed they wanted, and they could work parallel on more than one area.

The *Teleios* process was to be based on the principles of spirituality, volunteerism, positivism, patience, tolerance, and respect. A central idea was that the process should be based on the terms of the individual local church, rather than being dictated from the conference. The specific activities and goals, the order of focusing on the six areas, and the time frames, were all to be decided by the local church. So, even though the churches in the conference were together in the *Teleios* process, it was on different terms, and according to the local needs, resources, and plans. What was common to all was the direction in which all planned to move in the following years.
The conference was to contribute advice and competence, training and seminars, material, finances, and personnel. Thus, it was a cooperation between the conference and local church, with obligations on both sides. The idea was to try to create a conference-wide dynamic—a kind of a movement—that would give a certain progressive atmosphere in the conference. All together in something—all with a common goal. Still it was designed so that it was on local terms. All had the focus areas and direction in common. The hope was that the local strategies would clarify specific needs and dates, so that the conference would know how to plan for finances, resources, and personnel in time, both for the short and long term. The church was encouraged to have detailed plans for the first year, and more general plans for the next few years.

After sharing the ideas and elements of the Teleios process with each church and board, the local churches were invited to join in the process. After being invited, most of the churches decided to join, set up a special Teleios committee (sometimes the existing church board or mission board), and the next step would be for the conference to work with the individual churches on their local mission and vision statements and their strategy. At that point in the process I was called to Egypt, and I had to leave everything in the hands of my successor.

Even though I was not able to see the process through, I learned something from the couple of years I worked with this project:

(1) Churches often need a push and some ideas from the leaders and the higher organizations. (2) Leaders and upper organizations should inspire and facilitate rather than dictate. (3) It is important that when a local church takes part in a project, that it
makes its plans on its own terms. (4) The people and committees involved in a project all need to have ownership of the project. In retrospect, I see that I should have involved the conference committee even more in the actual design and details of the plan. (5) In Norway it seems that any conference or union-wide plan is hard to sell to the churches and pastors, even though it is designed to be based on local terms and time schedules. That is also why this Doctor of Ministry project does not conclude with a detailed strategy. The specifics have to come from the individual churches and organizations. The contribution of this research paper has been to provide some inspiration and useful background material.

Any idea coming from an upper organization is hard to sell to the individual churches and pastors in Norway. One reason for this is the typical Norwegian independent mind. 'No one should come and tell me what to do. I know best, or at least as well as you. Do not put pressure on me, and do not have specific expectations on me'. The challenge, therefore, is to inspire and facilitate the pastors and local churches to come up with their own plans.

Steps of Implementation

Malphurs spells out some steps in the implementation process:¹

First of all, the specific goals needed for effective implementation of the strategy need to be formulated. Is the goal a new church plant, a revitalization project, identifying obstacles, or the implementation of specific changes?

¹Ibid., 176-185.
Second, the specific priorities are to be determined. What exactly does one want to concentrate on, and in what order?

Third, specific actions should be articulated. These are actions that will ensure that goals are realized.

Fourth, deadlines have to be set. They can be both broad and specific. The first year should be specified in detail, the long-term activities in broader terms.

The fifth step is to assign responsible persons, so that the priorities may be accomplished. People may need help to discover how God has gifted them for ministry, and then they need to be placed in positions that fit their design. The factors discussed in chapter 2 should be taken into consideration (spiritual gifts, temperaments, leadership or interaction styles, task type preferences, etc.).

Sixth, the implementation plan has to be communicated. People need to be informed in order to make a commitment.

Finally, regular implementation reviews should be conducted. ‘Is the strategy on track? How are we doing? What problems are we facing? How can they be solved?’ When reviewing the situation, one will find that some contingencies happen along the way. They can be for the good or for bad. Contingencies should actually be prepared for in the strategy stage, rather than waiting for a major crisis to occur. As part of a contingency plan a planning team should be selected, potential contingencies should be identified, steps for each of them should be determined, and the contingency plan should be communicated. Any Christian organization should be operated with integrity, and when crises arise, should look for potential opportunities in the crisis.
Evaluation

As mentioned, an evaluation process is necessary. Critique should even be invited. While informal criticism is destructive, formal criticism is beneficial and necessary.

McNamara comments that “program evaluation is systematically collecting information about a program or some aspect of a program in order to make necessary decisions about the program.”¹ The key words are “systematically,” and “to make necessary decisions.” Evaluation has to be ongoing. It is not to be regarded as a necessary evil at the end of a process. It is a crucial part of the actual strategic process. Whenever it is revealed that revisions, corrections, and additions should be made, action should be taken. No one should feel hurt or discouraged because changes are made in the plans. Changes actually mean that the strategic system is working and that the plan is leading to something.

According to Malphurs, evaluation is important because it accomplishes alignment, prioritizes accomplishment, encourages assessment, coaxes affirmation, emboldens correction, and elicits improvement.²

Both insiders and outsiders should be allowed to come with input in the evaluation process. A successful evaluation process has a qualified person in charge,

²Ibid., 202-205.
good appraisal forms, a system where every team member is evaluated, and clarity in
who will review the evaluations.

Some evaluations need to be done on a weekly basis (like attendance), while
others can happen monthly, twice a year, or yearly. The important thing is that
evaluation is part of the system, and is done regularly.

Logical Framework

In chapter 1 a logical framework with an activity plan was used to visualize
and clarify this doctoral church growth project. Besides outlining the present project, a
logical framework should be seen as an example of how such planning can be done in
different projects and on various levels. A church project involves so many aspects,
partakers, activities, and lasts such a long time, that some form of logic model is
indispensable (see chapter 1 for an explanation of how the elements of a logical
framework are built and interrelated).

Every local church, institution, conference, and the Union are urged to make a
logical framework to visualize their strategies. It is necessary for the planning process,
for communicating, and managing the process, but also as a tool for evaluation.

Appreciative Inquiry

One of today's most popular new approaches to positive change is what is
often called *appreciative inquiry*. This could become a powerful tool for change in the
Adventist Church in Norway since it incorporates some features that have already
been pointed out in this research as being crucial to change. The following are the central ideas in appreciative inquiry.¹

Organizing and change best happen when change is based on a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation. The focus of attention should be on the most positive potential—the organization at its best. A basis of positive enthusiasm should be established. When change is needed because things are not going too well, it is so easy to focus on the negative. One should seek to focus instead on the positive, the possibilities, and the possible solutions.

In the beginning phase of a change process, the entire organization needs to become aware of and committed to the initiative. Kick-off meetings may be especially good, but letters, videos, small group gatherings etc. may also be used. At this stage, the participants need to be included in conversation and invited to participate. A mistake that has been repeated in Norway is that too few have been involved in the processes of change. Most parts of the organization—where the actual changes need to be made—often have no sense of ownership for the suggested changes.

For a process of change to succeed, relationships need to be built, even among diverse and antagonistic groups. The focus should be on relationships rather than roles, on team-building instead of individual rights. Team dynamics often do not even exist at the church level or at the higher level of church organization.

The people and departments taking part in the process of change should be encouraged to create initiatives and contribute in their own areas of interest and expertise. Strategies for change often come from the top down. A better way would be for initiatives and contributors to come from the various parts of an organization from the beginning and all the way throughout the process. This is a huge challenge for the Adventist organization since it traditionally has operated in a top-down manner.

Positive change comes about as images and visions of a more desired future are enacted in the present. The difference has to be lived. In a country like Norway, where most churches experience no positive growth, it is particularly important to focus and act on the desired future. It is so easy to settle for the status quo of stagnation and decline. So a declared goal should be to act on the desired future.

People must be free to choose the nature and extent of their contribution in a process of change. People must be treated as volunteers. People should be free to volunteer on the basis of their interests and passions—for then the capacities to learn, contribute, and succeed are greatly enhanced. When leaders travel to the churches and meet the members, or when they meet with the pastors at a workers’ meetings, they must be careful not to be pushy or attempt to motivate people by giving them a guilt trip. It is much better if people decide to take part and become involved based on their own personal interests and passions.

An advisory team should be created and trained to lead the organization through the change process. A group of eight to twelve people should be drawn from a variety of functions, levels, and disciplines in order to ensure depth and breadth of thinking. Traditionally the union or conference board has acted as an advisory team
for processes of change in the church. Not all board members are qualified or motivated to play this role. A handpicked advisory team (with broad, varied representation) would be better in leading the process of change.

A central Appreciative Inquiry principle is to go through a process of interviews, one-on-one, group interviews, and cross-organizational interviews. The main goal of the interviews should be to bring out the best in people and in the organization, and to uncover the details of the positive core. Letting people speak and be heard will ignite curiosity and a positive attitude. This method has not been tried to any large degree in the Adventist Church. It is more usual when interviews are done to focus on needs and mistakes.

Furthermore, large groups of people should be engaged in conversations about the kind of organization that will enable the realization of the values and dreams. People should be allowed to ask and answer the whats, whos and hows. Leadership vision or shared vision is not enough; everybody needs to be invited to dream and to realize their dreams. If too few people are doing the dreaming, the dreams will be too small and the success limited. There should be a continual process of loud talking and dreaming together. The whats, whos and hows should be on the agenda in every board meeting, various gatherings, and whenever the people of God meet regularly.

Throughout a process of change, there should be plenty of opportunities to reflect on what has changed since the process began. High points, recognition, and honor need to be shared. Even in this part of the process the main focus should be on the positive. In too many plans for renewal and growth in the church little if any time or focus has been planned for reflection or evaluation. If there is reflection it often
focuses on what went wrong. A more continual system of reflection and evaluation, with special emphasis on the positive high points, is recommended.

The Kind of Leaders Needed

God wants workers of character and integrity. "The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."¹ God needs leaders who lead by setting an example rather than by pushing people to do things they ought to be involved in doing themselves.

The church needs leaders! Genuine and holistic people who live honestly with God and with people. Leaders who want more than just to make decisions. The kind that keeps the flock together and leads towards the fulfillment of the vision; and people who proclaim the full width of the biblical message. Men and women who dare to both correct and confront when situations demand so. We need people who can use their total, God-given gifts to make sure that the ‘Holy ones’ are equipped, and contribute towards God’s people growing in maturity and serving with joy! Leaders, rise!²

Bruce Bugbee asks some heart-searching questions in his book What You Do Best in the Body of Christ—Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, Personal Style, and God-Given Passion:

What they [the believers] need and are coming to expect from you as a leader is different than what it has been in the past.

---


²Stang, 239-240. (Quotation translated from Norwegian.)
... in the next twenty years many leaders ... are going to be sidelined because they did not notice the wind shifting, or because they failed to make the personal and leadership adjustments necessary to remain competent to lead the church in the twenty-first century. ...

... the speed of the leader determines the speed of the team. ... It must start with you. Have you done a careful, personal assessment of your own passion, spiritual gifts, and style? Is your ministry reflecting your servant profile? Do you need to make some adjustments in your ministry responsibilities? What is Jesus saying to you?¹

Jesus is continually calling us to do an honest self-assessments, and to dare to make the necessary adjustments in our personal lives, in our roles as leaders, and in the activities at the various organizational levels.

Final Remarks

As I am now working abroad, I will not be present or in a position to immediately follow up this doctoral project with the Adventist Church in Norway. Hopefully, the background material and the survey material provided, and the advice given with regard to strategic planning, will be of use even in my absence. It is in humility and hope that I have shared my research, conclusions, and suggestions. If it is received with openness and used in future planning, I will be very thankful and happy as I have a deep burden for the work of the Adventist Church in Norway.

| Characteristics of the Leadership/Interaction Styles |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Thinker**     | **Director**    |
| Laid-back       | Task-oriented   |
| Deliberate      | Decisive        |
| Logical         | Energetic       |
| Values facts, figures, data | Focused on results |
| Quiet           | Time-conscious  |
| Likes to examine multiple options/angles | Risk-taking |
| Enjoys argument/debate | Has considerable self-confidence |
| Cautious        | Acts quickly    |
| Needs time for decisions/judgments | Highly organized |
| Exacting        | Hates to waste time |
| Focused on end results | Expects concurrence |
| Hides feelings  | Values reason   |
| Highly organized| Gets down to business quickly |
| Withholds opinions | Agenda/calendar-bound |
| Task oriented   | Wants fast answers/response |
| Slow to decide  | Uses clear, concise language |
| Sticks to schedules/outlines/plans | Logical, linear thinker |
| Good at planning| Highly opinionated |

| **Pleaser**     | **Dreamer**     |
| People-oriented | Outgoing        |
| Diplomatic      | Creative        |
| Very flexible   | Loves a good time |
| Loves to help   | Focused on big picture |
| Holds agenda secondary to relationships | People-oriented |
| Sensitive       | Seeks lots of eye contact |
| Dislikes conflict/confrontation | Talkative |
| Hard-working    | Expressive/Dramatic |
| Reliable        | Competitive      |
| Wants everyone to be happy | Very sociable |
| Makes/keeps peace | Persuasive |
| Honest          | Uses lots of gestures while speaking |
| Listens well    | Opinionated      |
| Acts as problem solver | Doesn’t always keep promises |
| Wants to be liked | Uses visual images |
| Slow-paced      | Annoyed by logic |
| Likes to chit-chat | Doesn’t know what calendar/clock is for |
| Loyal           | Spontaneous      |
| Not constrained by clock/calendar | Enthusiastic |

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# Harmonizing the Leadership/Interaction Styles

## Harmonizing With Thinkers
- Talk in facts and data
- Be on time
- Set a slow to moderate pace
- Allow time for questions
- Use a systematic approach (agenda)
- Use logic and reason
- Ask for their thoughts/opinions
- Consider options/alternatives
- Adopt a more formal manner
- Keep your voice quiet, even
- Don’t lean forward
- Use few gestures
- Don’t push for quick responses
- Offer periods of silence
- Work with clear goals, objectives
- Follow up in writing

## Harmonizing With Directors
- Be on time
- Have facts at hand
- Stay focused on task
- Avoid chit-chat
- Use clear, concise statements
- Only make promises you will keep
- Use logic
- Provide limited number of options, with pros/cons for each
- Put things in writing
- Be clear about objectives
- Talk facts, not feelings
- Maintain eye contact
- Depart quickly and graciously
- Don’t ask too many questions
- Don’t “kiss up”
- Don’t ignore their opinions

## Harmonizing With Pleasers
- Stay calm, relaxed
- Focus on people
- Speak personally, informally
- Respect speakers
- Make sure everyone is heard
- Encourage expressions of doubt or concern
- Don’t be argumentative/defensive
- Minimize time pressure
- Invite consensus
- Offer praise/reassurance
- Initiate contact; don’t wait to hear from them
- Follow up
- Be genuine and honest
- Ask what needs to be done
- Make sure everyone is clear on goals and assignments

## Harmonizing With Dreamers
- Speak with passion
- Don’t be too task oriented
- Maintain high energy level
- Be prepared to “waste” time; have some fun
- Talk in terms of “what if...?”
- Look at “big picture”
- Be flexible
- Be patient
- Tap into competitive spirit
- Talk visions, hopes, dreams
- Use feeling language
- Examine possibilities
- Brainstorm
- Don’t get baited into arguments
- Don’t expect minutes/agendas
- Keep moving gently back on track

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Spirituality Web Lists (Individual)

Head Spirituality
• Study of Scripture is central
• Worship and education define church
• God can be known
• Faith is rational
• The Christian life has practical benefits

Heart Spirituality
• Focus is on relationship with Jesus
• Faith sharing is essential
• There is a strong commitment to prayer for others
• Experience rather than study is preferred for knowing God
• There is a praise orientation

Pilgrim Spirituality
• A person seeks meaning
• A person looks for answers
• There is openness to a wide variety of faith traditions
• A person accepts what makes sense
• Faith formation is a process—a journey

Mystic Spirituality
• Focus is on the mystery of God
• Prayer and meditation are central
• Retreat/renewal is important
• God is listened for
• Personal spiritual development is goal

Servant Spirituality
• People should be doers, not hearers
• Outlook is anti-institutional
• God is unknowable
• Christianity means being like Jesus
• Golden Rule and Greatest Commandment define faith
• Prayer is secondary

Crusader Spirituality
• Person feels single-minded devotion to call
• All time, energy, and resources are committed to success
• Spiritual discipline provides focus
• Christian community is found with like-minded crusaders
APPENDIX 3

Task Types Descriptions
(Examples of each type appear in italics.)

A. Project
People who prefer the Project type of task like to see programs, ministries, or events through from start to finish—planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of a project.

Five young adults are asked to create an alternative worship experience for college students. They are to develop the style of worship and the format, set the time and location, recruit musicians, liturgists, and speakers, and create the promotional resources within a six-month time frame.

B. Work
People who prefer the Work type of task like to do hands-on work, without having to bother with the preplanning and organizing. This group wants to be active on the front line.

Men and women volunteer to attend a work camp to build wheelchair-accessible ramps for low-income dwellings. The planning and preparation for the project is done by the Ministry Area on Missions, but the work is done by a one-time team.

C. Process
People who prefer a Process task type enjoy doing the brain-work around the committee table with pen, paper, and planning. This group hands work tasks off to those who prefer them.

Members of a congregation gather to brainstorm ideas for a new church ministry. Members discuss community needs, existing church resources, people’s interests and passions, and hopes and dreams for the future. The group prioritizes their ideas and refers their proposal to the church council.

D. Fellowship
The people who prefer the Fellowship task type perform tasks together with a sense of community and common purpose. The work done is secondary to the sense of connection and shared experience.

A group of parents of young children develop a play group that they then open to the general public. The group meets socially in the homes of one another to do their planning and preparation. They stay together in the work because they enjoy each other as friends.
APPLENDIX 4

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

TOTAL FOR NORWAY 1975 - 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership 01 jan</th>
<th>Baptized/added</th>
<th>Transferred in</th>
<th>Transferred out</th>
<th>Left or disfellowshed</th>
<th>Membership Dec 31</th>
<th>Increase/decrease</th>
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</thead>
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<td>-92</td>
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<td>5114</td>
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<td>150</td>
<td>-134</td>
<td>-105</td>
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</table>

Source: Table by Marita Kendel, based on information from the Norwegian Union Conference database, Vik, Norway, 2003.
Questions for Members of the Adventist Church

Put a cross in the relevant boxes, or fill in on the lines:

SEX: □ Female □ Male
PART OF COUNTRY: □ East Norway Conference □ West Norway Conference □ North Norway Conference
MARITAL STATUS (today): □ Married □ Divorced □ Widow(er) □ Cohabiting □ Single
AGE:
Under 20 □ 20-29 □ 30-39 □ 40-49 □ 50-59 □ 60-69 □ 70-79 □ 80 + □
Age when you were baptized: ........................................ years.
Number of years you have been a member of the Adventist Church: ........................................ years.

ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

What played a role in your becoming an Adventist?
(You can answer with more than one alternative)
1 □ I grew up in an Adventist home
2 □ Friends or colleagues were Adventists
3 □ Evangelistic meetings or seminars
4 □ I was so well received in the Adventist Church
5 □ I have taken Voice of Prophecy course(s)
6 □ I was a part of a small group
7 □ I studied the Bible with a church member or a pastor
8 □ Adventist literature
9 □ Other: ............................................................................................................................................ ............

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one? Reason no.: ..................
If you did not grow up in an Adventist home, how long did it take from your first contact with the Adventists until you became a member?  

No. of years:  

The following convinced me or was decisive when I decided to get baptized:  
1. □ The Adventist message could be proven to be right from the Bible  
2. □ The Adventists seemed to live a better life than others  
3. □ I was so well received that I felt at home in the church  
4. □ I had been going to the Adventist church for so long that I felt it was natural to become a member  

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one?  Reason no.:  

Have you ever been close to leaving the Adventist church?  

Yes □  No □  

If "Yes", how long had you been a member at that time?  Under 5 yrs □  5-10 yrs □  More than 10 yrs □  

Are you thinking about leaving the Adventist church now?  

Yes □  No □  

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE ORGANIZATION  

Are you convinced today that the teachings of the Adventist Church are biblical?  Yes □  No □  Partly □  

Do you feel that the life-principles of the Adventist Church are too rigid and legalistic?  Yes □  No □  Partly □  

Do you pay tithe?  Yes □  No □  Partly □  

Are you supporting morally and/or financially work done by anyone working independently of the Adventist Church because you feel that they are more faithful to the Adventist cause?  Yes □  No □  Partly □  

Concerning the Sabbath preaching normally:  

Are the themes sufficiently relevant?  Yes □  Do not know □  No □  

Is the message sufficiently practical and down to earth?  Yes □  Do not know □  No □  

Do the contents have sufficient theological depth?  Yes □  Do not know □  No □
### How important is the following in the church:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the social needs of the members</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a training center for the members (a discipling school)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To win people for Christ</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Are you acquainted with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The long-term strategy of your local church?</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long-term strategy of your conference?</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long-term strategy of the union?</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Are you a part of a small group in your church?
- Yes
- No

### Do you feel included and at home in your church?
- Yes
- No

### Are you involved with tasks in your local church?
- Yes
- No

### Are your church tasks in accordance with your spiritual gifts?
- Yes
- No

### Do you wish that you were more involved in your church with tasks that you feel equipped for?
- Yes
- No

### Do you have confidence in your local pastor?
- Yes
- No

### Do you have confidence in the conference leadership?
- Yes
- No

### Do you have confidence in the union leadership?
- Yes
- No

### Do you agree with those who mean that we should not have conferences in Norway, so that Norway becomes a union of churches rather than a union of conferences like today?
- Yes
- No

### Do you feel comfortable with the format when the church has:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath school</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine worship</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small groups</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer groups</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How many serious conflicts have you experienced in the church the last 5 years?
- No: ...............
YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT THE PASTORS AND THEIR SERVICE

How do you think that the pastors should prioritize the following areas of their work?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1=Most important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6=Least important</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1 Visiting the members</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Visiting non-members</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Evangelistic activity</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Sermon preparation and studies</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Training of church members</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Personal spiritual renewal</td>
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<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Church administration</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
<td>[□]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one?  

Reason no.: ................................

For how long do you feel that a pastor should stay in one and the same church?  

1-3 yrs 4-6 yrs 7-9 yrs As long as possible

YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL LIFE

How will you describe your own view of God? (Chose one of the following alternatives)

☐ I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the center
☐ God has no place in my life, if he exists at all
☐ God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved
☐ God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance
☐ God is acting on human initiative, and does what we ask him to do
☐ God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives

How often do you pray?  

☐ Daily  ☐ Weekly  ☐ Monthly  ☐ Rarely

How often do you read the Bible for your own spiritual up building?  

☐ Daily  ☐ Weekly  ☐ Monthly  ☐ Rarely
Do you feel the need of personal spiritual renewal? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
Are you conscious of what spiritual gifts you have? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
Do you have non-SDA friends or acquaintances that you witness to? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know

If there is little prayer, Bible study, and witness in your life, what is the reason?
☑ I do not bother about it
☑ I think other things are more important
☑ I do not have time
☑ I do not know how to do it
☑ I leave those kinds of things to the pastor

Do you experience that people are interested in what you represent as an Adventist?
Are you conscious of what spiritual gifts you have? □ Yes □ No
Non-SDA family □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
Friends □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
Colleagues □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know

How often do you attend:
Sabbath school □ Weekly □ Monthly □ Rarely
Divine service □ Weekly □ Monthly □ Rarely
Mid-week meetings □ Weekly □ Monthly □ Rarely

When you do not attend Sabbath school, divine service or mid-week meetings, what is the reason for that?
☑ Lack of benefit □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ Not satisfied with the format □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ Tiredness □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ Do not feel welcome □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ Want to keep a certain distance □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ Others come who I do not want to meet □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ I have to work □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
☑ Leisure activities □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know

Thank you for taking the time to answer!
## Active Members of the Adventist Church

### RESPONSE DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of questionnaires sent out</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of questionnaires received</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of completed forms returned</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response percentage</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF COUNTRY:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Norway</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Norway</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Norway</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS (today):</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow(er)</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age when you got baptized:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years you have been a member of the Adventist Church:</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10 years</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70 years</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80 years</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What played a role in your becoming an Adventist? (You can answer with more than one alternative) %

1. 63.9 I grew up in an Adventist home
2. 36.1 Friends or colleagues were Adventists
3. 31.9 Evangelistic meetings or seminars
4. 22.7 I was so well received in the Adventist Church
5. 18.8 I have taken Voice of Prophecy course(s)
6. 8.6 I was a part of a small group
7. 16.6 I studied the Bible with a church member or a pastor
8. 28.1 Adventist literature

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one? Reason no. %

1. 46.6
2. 8.4
3. 10.5
4. 4.6
5. 0.8
6. 1.3
7. 4.6
8. 3.4
9. 19.7

If you did not grow up in an Adventist home, how long did it take from your first contact with the Adventists until you became a member? No. of years: %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of years</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of years</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5 - 3.2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 - 6.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 - 8.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 - 11.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5 - 14.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.2 - 17.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.0 - 19.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.8 - 22.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.5 - 25.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.2 - 28.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following convinced me or was decisive when I decided to get baptized: %

1. 83.7 The Adventist message could be proven to be right from the Bible
2. 9.3 The Adventists seemed to live a better life than others
3. 27.5 I was so well received that I felt at home in the church
4. 37.4 I had been going to the Adventist church for so long that I felt it was natural to become a member
Which one of the reasons above was the most important one? Reason no.: %
1. 75.2
2. 1.7
3. 5.0
4. 18.2

Have you ever been close to leaving the Adventist church? Yes No
14.9% 85.1%

If "Yes", how long had you been a member at that time? Under 5 years 5-10 years More than 10 years
22.7% 18.2% 59.1%

Are you thinking about leaving the Adventist church now? Yes No
5.5% 94.5%

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE ORGANIZATION

Are you convinced today that the teachings of the Adventist Church are Biblical? Yes No Partly
83.2% 1.6% 15.2%
Do you feel that the life-principles of the Adventist Church are too rigid and legalistic? 10.7% 59.2% 30.1%
Do you pay tithe? 76.4% 12.6% 11.0%
Are you supporting morally and/or financially work done by anyone working independently of the Adventist Church because you feel that they are more faithful to the Adventist cause? 14.6% 75.5% 9.9%

Concerning the Sabbath preaching normally:

Are the themes sufficiently relevant? Yes Do not know No
61.1% 18.2% 20.7%
Is the message sufficiently practical and down to earth? 53.2% 18.0% 28.9%
Do the contents have sufficient theological depth? 64.9% 17.9% 17.2%

How important is the following in the church? 1=Most important Least important=6

To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members 60.4% 26.8% 9.1% 1.7% 0.3% 1.7%
To satisfy the social needs of the members 15.1% 29.6% 32.0% 16.2% 5.3% 1.8%
To be a training center for the members (a discipling school) 25.0% 35.0% 20.0% 11.1% 4.6% 4.3%
To win people for Christ 82.7% 9.2% 3.9% 1.6% 0.7% 2.0%
Mean-values (on the scale from 1 to 6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women:</th>
<th>Men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the social needs of the members</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a training center for the members (a discipling school)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To win people for Christ</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you acquainted with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Partly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The long-term strategy of your local church?</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long-term strategy of your conference?</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The long-term strategy of the union?</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you a part of a small group in your church? | 37.0% | 63.0% |
Do you feel included and at home in your church? | 86.8% | 13.2% |
Are you involved with tasks in your local church? | 79.1% | 20.9% |
Are your church tasks in accordance with your spiritual gifts? | 81.4% | 18.6% |
Do you wish that you were more involved in your church with tasks that you feel equipped for? | 28.1% | 71.9% |
Do you have confidence in your local pastor? | 84.5% | 15.5% |
Do you have confidence in the conference leadership? | 84.5% | 15.5% |
Do you have confidence in the union leadership? | 82.8% | 17.2% |
Do you agree with those who mean that we should not have conferences in Norway, so that Norway becomes a union of churches rather than a union of conferences like today? | 43.4% | 56.6% |

Do you feel comfortable with the format when the church has:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath school</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine worship</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small groups</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer groups</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many serious conflicts have you experienced in the church the last 5 years?

No.: %
0. 56.3
1. 26.1
2. 10.5
3. 3.8
4. 0.8
5. 1.3
6. 0
7. 0
8. 0.4
9. 0.8

Mean-values:
Women: 0.7
Men: 0.9

YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT THE PASTORS AND THEIR SERVICE

How do you think that the pastors should prioritize the following areas of their work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1=Most important</th>
<th>Least important=6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Visiting the members</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Visiting non-members</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Evangelistic activity</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Sermon preparation and studies</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Training of church members</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Church administration</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean-values (on the scale from 1 to 6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Women:</th>
<th>Men:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Visiting the members</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Visiting non-members</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Evangelistic activity</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Sermon preparation and studies</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Training of church members</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Church administration</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one?

Reason no.: %
1. 11.2
2. 13.3
3. 32.1
4. 3.3
5. 17.1
6. 22.9
7. ?
YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL LIFE

How will you describe your own view of God? (Chose one of the following alternatives)

- 0 I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the center
- 0.3 God has no place in my life, if he exists at all
- 2.9 God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved
- 7.5 God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance
- 1.0 God is acting on human initiative. and does what we ask him to do
- 88.3 God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives

How often do you pray?
- Daily 84.4%
- Weekly 11.4%
- Monthly 1.3%
- Rarely 2.9%

How often do you read the Bible for your own spiritual up building?
- Daily 40.8%
- Weekly 40.5%
- Monthly 6.0%
- Rarely 12.7%

Do you feel the need of personal spiritual renewal?
- Yes 86.8%
- No 4.6%
- Don't know 8.6%

Are you conscious of what spiritual gifts you have?
- Yes 62.0%
- No 15.8%
- Don't know 22.2%

Do you have non-SDA friends or acquaintances that you witness to?
- Yes 71.3%
- No 15.0%
- Don't know 13.6%

If there is little prayer, Bible study, and witness in your life. what is the reason?
- 1.9 I do not bother about it
- 5.4 I think other things are more important
- 24.3 I do not have time
- 14.4 I do not know how to do it
- 1.0 I leave those kinds of things to the pastor
Do you experience that people are interested in what you represent as an Adventist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-SDA family</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you attend:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath school</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine service</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-week meetings</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>59.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you do not attend Sabbath school, divine service, or mid-week meetings. what is the reason for that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of benefit</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied with the format</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiredness</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not feel welcome</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to keep a certain distance</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others come who I do not want to meet</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to work</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure activities</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Questions for Pastors in the Adventist Church

Put a cross in the relevant boxes, or fill in on the lines:

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A PASTOR (no of years):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 5</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>Over 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ABOUT YOUR WORK**

- Have you ever had a public campaign (public meetings, seminars etc.)
  - Yes □ No □

- Do you have a public campaign in one form or another almost every season?
  - □ □

- How many visits to non-SDAs do you average every month? No.: ..............

- How many visits to SDAs do you average every month? No.: ..............

- How many hours do you work per week on the average?
  - Under 40 hrs □ 40-50 hrs □ 50-60 hrs □ Over 60 hrs □

- How big of a percentage of your working time do you spend in the office (about)?
  - Under 25% □ 25-50% □ 50-75% □ Over 75% □

**How do you think that a pastor ideally should prioritize the following areas of his work?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visiting members</th>
<th>Visiting non-members</th>
<th>Evangelistic campaigns</th>
<th>Sermon preparation and studies</th>
<th>Training of church members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=Most important  6=Least important
6  Personal spiritual renewal □ □ □ □ □ □
7  Church administration □ □ □ □ □ □

Which one of the areas above is the most important one?

In reality how do you prioritize these areas of your work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Visiting members</th>
<th>Visiting non-members</th>
<th>Evangelistic campaigns</th>
<th>Sermon preparation and studies</th>
<th>Training of church members</th>
<th>Personal spiritual renewal</th>
<th>Church administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you feel about the Adventist Church as an employer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Mixed feelings</th>
<th>Not satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The leadership</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The treatment of the workers</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and policies</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you ever consider quitting as a pastor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If "Yes" or "Sometimes", what are the reasons? (You can answer with more than one alternative)

[ ] I do not have a feeling of being called
[ ] I am uncertain if I am fit for this work
[ ] I do not get enough encouragement or positive feedback from the members
[ ] I feel I am "drying up". It is hard to be inspiring, new and fresh all the time
[ ] There are sides of a pastor's work that I am not comfortable with
[ ] There are too many things to do, the pressure is too great
[ ] I disagree with parts of the teachings or practice of Adventism
[ ] The work is affecting my family negatively
[ ] I am frustrated by the leadership of the Adventist church
[ ] Wages and/or policies are too bad
[ ] Other: .................................................................
### ABOUT THE CHURCHES THAT YOU WORK IN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are the following in the church:</th>
<th>1=Most important</th>
<th>Least important=6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the social needs of the members</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a training center for the members (a discipling school)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To win people to Christ</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About the state of the churches you are pastoring now:</th>
<th>Church 1</th>
<th>Church 2</th>
<th>Church 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have small groups?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have mid-week meetings?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do your churches practice spiritual gifts testing?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the spiritual gifts of the members taken sufficiently into consideration when the church has election?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have a long-term mission strategy?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do non-Adventists usually come to church on Sabbath?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have an interest-file?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximately how many in your church(es) are passive?</th>
<th>0-25%</th>
<th>26-50%</th>
<th>Over 50%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church 1</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church 2</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church 3</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| How many serious conflict situations have you experienced in the churches you have pastored during the last 5 years? | No.:  | ................. |
## ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

How will you describe your own view of God? (Choose one of the following alternatives)

- □ God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved
- □ God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance
- □ God is acting on human initiative, and does what we ask Him to do
- □ God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you pray?</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you read the Bible for your own spiritual up building?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel the need of personal spiritual renewal?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you conscious of what spiritual gifts you have?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have non-SDA friends or acquaintances that you witness to?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there is little prayer, Bible study, and witness in your life, what is the reason?

- □ I do not bother about it
- □ I think other things are more important
- □ I do not have time
- □ I do not know how to do it

Thank you for taking the time to answer!
Pastors in the Adventist Church

RESPONSE DATA

| Number of questionnaires sent out: | 24 |
| Number of questionnaires received | 24 |
| Number of completed forms returned: | 14 |
| Response percentage:              | 58.3% |

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A PASTOR (no. of years):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 5</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>Over 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABOUT YOUR WORK

Have you ever had a public campaign (public meetings, seminars etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have a public campaign in one form or another almost every season?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many visits to non-SDAs do you average every month?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>In average 7 visits/month.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the one visiting most is not counted, the rest makes an average of 6 visits/month.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many visits to SDAs do you average every month?

| No.                  | In average 11 visits/month. |
|----------------------| If the two visiting most are not counted, the rest makes an average of 7.5 visits/month. |

How many hours do you work per week on the average?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 40 hrs</th>
<th>40-50 hrs</th>
<th>50-60 hrs</th>
<th>50-60 hrs</th>
<th>Over 60 hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How big of a percentage of your working time do you spend in the office (about)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 25-50 hrs</th>
<th>50-75 hrs</th>
<th>Over 75%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you think that a pastor ideally should prioritize the following areas of his work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1=Most important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6=Least important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting members</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting non-members</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Visiting members</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Visiting non-members</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Evangelistic campaigns</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sermon preparation and professional updating</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Training of church members</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Personal spiritual renewal</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Church administration</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you feel about the Adventist Church as an employer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Mixed feelings</th>
<th>Not satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The leadership</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The treatment of the workers</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and policies</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you ever consider quitting as a pastor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 of 14 pastors)</td>
<td>(9 of 14 pastors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If "Yes" or "Sometimes", what are the reasons? (You can answer with more than one alternative)
Percentage of 10 pastors
10% I do not have a feeling of being called
50% I am uncertain if I am fit for this work
0% I do not get enough encouragements or positive feedback from the members
50% I feel I am "drying up". It is hard to be inspiring, new and fresh all the time
70% There are sides of a pastor's work that I am not comfortable with
20% There are too many things to do. The pressure is too great
0% I disagree with parts of the teachings or practice of Adventism
50% The work is affecting my family negatively
0% I am frustrated by the leadership of the Adventist church
0% Wages and/or policies are too bad
30% Other:
10% My spiritual gifts
10% Sudden moves
10% Conflicts continually

ABOUT THE CHURCHES THAT YOU WORK IN

How important are the following in the church: :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=Most important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the spiritual needs of the members</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To satisfy the social needs of the members</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a training center for the members (a discipling school)</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To win people to Christ</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About the state of the churches you are pastoring now:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have small groups?</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have mid-week meetings?</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do your churches practice spiritual gifts testing?</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the spiritual gifts of the members taken sufficiently into consideration when the church has election?</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have a long-term mission strategy?</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do non-Adventists usually come to church on Sabbath?</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the church have an interest-file?</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approximately how many in your church(es) are passive?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-25% part</th>
<th>26-50% part</th>
<th>Over 50% part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of a total of 26 churches:</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many serious conflict situations have you experienced in the churches you have pastored during the last 5 years? (Totally 8 out of 14 pastors have answered this part)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.:</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

How will you describe your own view of God? (Chose one of the following alternatives)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>God is acting on human initiative. and does what we ask him to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you pray?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you read the Bible for your own spiritual up building?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you feel the need of personal spiritual renewal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you conscious of what spiritual gifts you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>21.4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have non-SDA friends or acquaintances that you witness to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>7.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there is little prayer. Bible study, and witness in your life, what is the reason?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>I do not bother about it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>I think other things are more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>I do not have time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>I do not know how to do it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Questions to Former Members of the Adventist Church

Put a cross in the relevant boxes, or fill in on the lines:

**SEX:**  □ Female  □ Male

**PART OF COUNTRY:**  □ East Norway Conference  □ West Norway Conference  □ North Norway Conference

**MARITAL STATUS (today):**  □ Married  □ Divorced  □ Widow(er)  □ Cohabiting  □ Single

**AGE:**
- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80 +

Age when you got baptized:  
Number of years you were a member of the Adventist Church:

---

### YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO ADVENTISM

What was the reason why you chose to leave the Adventist church?
(You can answer with more than one alternative)

1  □  There were important parts of the Adventist teachings that I did not agree with
2  □  I wanted to join another denomination
3  □  In retrospect I can see that I got baptized too fast or too young
4  □  My decision to get baptized was not mature.  
   so I didn't really ever identify with the church
5  □  I didn't feel comfortable with the format (at the divine services etc.)
6  □  I didn't feel at home in the church. I felt left out
7  □  I didn't get sufficient opportunities to get involved in the church
8  □  Some individuals disappointed me
9  □  The pastors or leadership of the Adventist church disappointed me
10 □  I experienced too many conflicts in the church
11 □ I felt I had to start working on Sabbath
12 □ I experienced the life-principles of the church as too rigid and legalistic

13 □ Other: .......................................................................................................................................................

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one?  Reason no.:  ........................................

Do you believe today that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly Biblical?  Yes  No

If you do not believe that the Adventist understanding of the Bible is correct any longer, what is it that you do not agree with of the following:

□ The understanding of the Sabbath
□ The understanding of the state of the dead
□ The understanding of baptism
□ The understanding of the end times and the second coming of Jesus
□ The understanding of salvation

□ Other: .......................................................................................................................................................

Do you think it is possible that you will ever become a member of the Adventist church again?  Yes  Maybe  No

If "Yes" or "Maybe", what is necessary for it to happen?

□ Somebody from the church must take the initiative to get in contact with me
□ Somebody from the church who has disappointed me must come and ask for forgiveness
□ I must just make a decision to do it. It is all up to me

□ Other: .......................................................................................................................................................

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE RELIGIOUS TODAY

Do you believe in God today?  Yes  No

How will you describe your own view of God? (Choose one of the following alternatives)

□ I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the centre
□ God has no place in my life, if he exists at all
God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved.

God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance.

God is acting on human initiative, and does what we ask him to do.

God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives.

Do you regard yourself as being a "personal Christian"?

Yes  No

Are you a member of any church or denomination today?

If "Yes", which one?

Thank you for taking the time to answer!
### Former Members of the Adventist Church

#### RESPONSE DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of questionnaires sent out:</th>
<th>308</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of questionnaires received:</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of completed forms returned:</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response percentage:</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SEX:
- 55.1% Female
- 44.9% Male

#### PART OF COUNTRY:
- 56.4% East Norway
- 34.6% West Norway
- 9.0% North Norway

#### SIVILIAN STATUS (today):
- 62.0% Married
- 24.1% Divorced
- 1.3% Widow(er)
- 10.1% Cohabiting
- 2.5% Single

#### AGE:
- Under 20: 0%
- 20-29: 4%
- 30-39: 20%
- 40-49: 28%
- 50-59: 29%
- 60-69: 20%
- 70-79: 0%
- 80+: 0%

#### Age when you got baptized:
- 10 years: 1.3%
- 11 years: 0%
- 12 years: 0%
- 13 years: 7.9%
- 14 years: 7.9%
- 15 years: 21.1%
- 16 years: 11.8%
- 17 years: 7.9%
- 18 years: 2.6%
- 19 years: 0%
- 20 years: 5.3%

#### Number of years you were a member of the Adventist Church:
- 1-5 years: 20.3%
- 6-10 years: 14.9%
- 11-15 years: 18.9%
- 16-20 years: 12.2%
- 21-25 years: 8.1%
YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO ADVENTISM

What was the reason why you chose to leave the Adventist church?
(You can answer with more than one alternative)

%  
1  51.2  There were important parts of the Adventist teachings that I did not agree with
2  10.0  I wanted to join another denomination
3  23.8  In retrospect I can see that I got baptized too fast or too young
4  13.8  My decision to get baptized was not mature, so I didn't really ever identify with
          the church
5  10.0  I didn't feel comfortable with the format (at the divine services etc.)
6  20.0  I didn't feel at home in the church. I felt left out
7  5.0   I didn't get sufficient opportunities to get involved in the church
8  11.2  Some individuals disappointed me
9  25.0  The pastors or leadership of the Adventist church disappointed me
10  12.5  I experienced too many conflicts in the church
11  2.5   I felt I had to start working on Sabbath
12  37.5  I experienced the life-principles of the church as too rigid and legalistic
13  Other: .................................................................

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one?  Reason no.:

1: 35.7%
2: 1.8%
3: 1.8%
4: 5.4%
5: 0%
6: 3.6%
7: 0%
8: 1.8%
9: 5.4%
10: 3.6%
11: 0%
12: 12.5%
13: 28.6%

Do you believe today that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly biblical?  
Yes  73.8%  No  26.2%
If you do not believe that the Adventist understanding of the Bible is correct any longer, what is it that you do not agree with of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>16.2 The understanding of the Sabbath</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>The understanding of the state of the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>The understanding of baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>The understanding of the end times and the Second coming of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>The understanding of salvation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think it is possible that you will ever become a member of the Adventist church again? (Not answered: 5.2%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If "Yes" or "Maybe", what is necessary for it to happen? (This part was not filled out)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Somebody from the church must take the initiative to get in contact with me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somebody from the church who has disappointed me must come and ask for forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I must just make a decision to do it. It is all up to me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE RELIGIOUS TODAY**

Do you believe in God today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How will you describe your own view of God? (Chose one of the following alternatives)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>God has no place in my life, if he exists at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>God is sovereign. and the human and the scientific is of little importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>God is acting on human initiative. and does what we ask him to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you regard yourself as being a "personal Christian"?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you a member of any church or denomination today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If "Yes", which one? 47.4% of those who say that they are members of another denomination today, are members of the Lutheran State Church.
Questions to People with Adventist Background
Who Are Not Members Themselves

Put a cross in the relevant boxes, or fill in on the lines:

**SEX:**
- □ Female
- □ Male

**PART OF COUNTRY:**
- □ East Norway Conference
- □ West Norway Conference
- □ North Norway Conference

**AGE:**
- Under 18
- 19-20
- 21-22
- 23-24
- 25-26
- 27-28
- 29-30
- Over 30

**MARITAL STATUS (today):**
- □ Married
- □ Divorced
- □ Widow(er)
- □ Cohabiting
- □ Single

---

**YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO ADVENTISM**

What is the reason why you decided not to be baptized and become a member of the Adventist church yourself?

(You can answer with more than one alternative):
1. □ There were important parts of the Adventist teachings that I did not agree with
2. □ If I should be a Christian I would rather become member of another denomination
3. □ The church that I grew up in has not left good memories
4. □ I want to distance myself from the Adventism I experienced in my home when I grew up
5. □ I experienced too many conflict situations in the church
6. □ Individuals disappointed me by their way of life
7. □ Adventist pastors/leadership disappointed me
8. □ I didn’t feel at home in the church. I felt left out
9. □ I didn’t feel comfortable with the format (at the divine services etc.)
10. □ I didn’t get sufficient opportunities to get involved in the church
I experienced the life-principles of the church as too rigid and legalistic

I wanted to demonstrate that it was not a given that I would become a member even though I had grown up in the church

When my parents stopped going to church, I lost contact with the church too

When my friends in church got baptized I did not feel ready for it myself, and since it just hasn't happened

When I grew up in church there were no friends my age

I started dating a non-Adventist who drew me away from the church

Other non-SDA friends drew me away from the church

I felt I had to start working on Sabbath

There is no special reason – this is just the way it became

I attend church, but I am in no hurry to get baptized

I think I am going to get baptized and become an Adventist some day, just not yet

Other: ..................................................................................................................................................................

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one?  Reason no.: ........................

Do you believe today that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly biblical?  Yes  No

Do you think it is possible that you will ever turn back to the Adventist church again?  Yes  Maybe  No

If “Yes” or “Maybe”, what is necessary for it to happen?

Somebody from the church must take the initiative to get in contact with me

Somebody from the church who has disappointed me must come and ask for forgiveness

I must just make a decision to do it. It is all up to me

Other: ...........................................................................................................................................................

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE RELIGIOUS TODAY

Do you believe in God today?  Yes  No
How will you describe your own view of God? (Choose one of the following alternatives)

☐ I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the centre

☐ God has no place in my life, if he exists at all

☐ God has created everything, but mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved

☐ God is sovereign, and the human and the scientific is of little importance

☐ God is acting on human initiative, and does what we ask him to do

☐ God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives

Do you regard yourself as being a "personal Christian"?

Yes  No

Are you a member of any church or denomination today?

If "Yes", which one? .................................................................

Thank you for taking the time to answer!
Young People with Adventist Background
Who Are Not Members Themselves

RESPONSE DATA

Number of questionnaires sent out: 278
Number of questionnaires received 262
Number of completed forms returned: 70
Response percentage: 26.7%

SEX:
45.6% Female
54.4% Male

PART OF COUNTRY:
60.6% East Norway Conference
24.2% West Norway Conference
15.2% North Norway Conference

AGE:
4.3% 44.3% 35.7% 12.9% 2.9% 0% 0% 0%

MARITAL STATUS (today):
3.0% Married 0% Divorced 0% Widow(er) 20.9% Cohabiting 76.1% Single

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO ADVENTISM

What is the reason why you decided not to be baptized and become a member of the Adventist church yourself? (You can answer with more than one alternative)

%  
1 22.9 There were important parts of the Adventist teachings that I did not agree with  
2 5.7 If I should be a Christian I would rather become member of another denomination  
3 14.3 The church that I grew up in has not left good memories  
4 10.0 I want to distance myself from the Adventism I experienced in my home when I grew up  
5 14.5 I experienced too many conflict situations in the church  
6 28.6 Individuals disappointed me by their way of life  
7 17.1 Adventist pastors/leadership disappointed me  
8 37.1 I didn’t feel at home in the church. I felt left out  
9 27.1 I didn’t feel comfortable with the format (at the divine services etc.)
I didn't get sufficient opportunities to get involved in the church
I experienced the life-principles of the church as too rigid and legalistic
I wanted to demonstrate that it was not a given that I would become a member even though I had grown up in the church
When my parents stopped going to church. I lost contact with the church too
When my friends in church got baptized I did not feel ready for it myself, and since it just hasn't happened
When I grew up in church there were no friends my age
I started dating a non-Adventist who drew me away from the church
Other non-SDA friends drew me away from the church
I felt I had to start working on Sabbath
There is no special reason – this is just the way it became
I attend church. but I am in no hurry to get baptized
I think I am going to get baptized and become an Adventist some day. just not yet
Other reasons

Which one of the reasons above was the most important one? Reason no.:

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you believe today that the teachings of the Adventist Church are mostly biblical? Yes 84.1% No 15.9%

Do you think it is possible that you will ever turn back to the Adventist church again? (Not answered: 5.8%) Yes 21.7% Maybe 47.8% No 24.6%

If "Yes" or "Maybe". what is necessary for it to happen? % (of those who answered "yes" or "maybe")
4.2 Somebody from the church must take the initiative to get in contact with me
2.1 Somebody from the church who has disappointed me must come and ask for forgiveness
77.1 I must just make a decision to do it. It is all up to me
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe in God today?</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you describe your own view of God? (Choose one of the following alternatives)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 I deny the existence of God. Man and science are in the centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 God has no place in my life. If he exists at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.3 God has created everything. But mostly he has left everything to itself. Only in special cases will He get involved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 God is sovereign. And the human and the scientific is of little importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 God is acting on human initiative. And does what we ask him to do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.7 God is personally interested in each individual and gets involved in our daily lives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you regard yourself as being a &quot;personal Christian&quot;?</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a member of any church or denomination today?</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pastors in the West Norway Conference. Visitation etc. Jan. 97-Dec. 03

**Source:** Table by author, based on the pastors' monthly reports 1997-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastors (each: 12-84 months of work)</th>
<th>Average visits SDA per month:</th>
<th>Average visits non-SDA per month:</th>
<th>Average visits totally per month:</th>
<th>New members per month:</th>
<th>Total new members:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 1 (25 months 100%)</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 2 (17 months 100%)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 3 (41 months 100%)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 4 (31 months 100%)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 5 (84 months 100%)</td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>22.56</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 6 (41 months 100%)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 7 (44 months 100%)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 8 (17 months 100%)</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 9 (77 months 100%)</td>
<td>16.63</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>24.55</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 10 (28 months 100%)</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 11 (43 months 100%)</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 12 (22 months 100%)</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>16.49</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 13 (29 months 50%)</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 14 (12 months 50%)</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 15 (44 months 50%)</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>10.13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor 16 (12 months 50%)</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total average per pastor** (16): | 6.69 | 3.81 | 10.5 | 0.15 | 5.25 |
| Total average per 100% pastor (14): | 7.64 | 4.36 | 12   | 0.16 | 6    |

The average is based on a total of 567 months of work done by 12 full-time and 4 half-time pastors.

* independently of work-percentage
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2004- President, Adventist Church, Egypt Field

1998-2004 President, Adventist Church, West Norway Conference

Tønsberg, Horten and Kragere churches

Bergen church

1984-1989 Conference evangelist, Adventist Church, East Norway Conference.
Mo i Rana, Mosjøen, Drammen, Hokksund, Kongsberg

1978-1983 Pastor/evangelist, Adventist Church, East Norway Conference
Lillehammer (internship), Larvik, Porsgrunn, Kragerø, Sandefjord Churches

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