

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Perceptions of Mission held by Teachers in Seventh-day Adventist Schools



Brief description of the research project

The aim of this project is to survey employees of Seventh-day Adventist institutions in the 13 world divisions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) to determine their perceptions of their relationship and the institution's relationship to the mission of the Adventist Church. The institutions of interest are in the education sector (primary, secondary and tertiary levels), healthcare, publishing, welfare and development, and food industries.

What is the research question that the survey is investigating?

The research question has been formulated in this way: "How do the employees of Seventh-day Adventist owned, affiliated or sponsored organizations perceive their relationship and the institution's relationship to the [wider] mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?"

What types of questions are in the survey?

There are between 105 and 109 questions in the survey (depending on which "branch" you answer). The questions will ask you about what you think a church sponsored organization should be doing. It also asks what you think about the mission of Churches such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the importance of the mission of other church-sponsored organizations. There are two sets of further questions, some of which are related to religious beliefs and practices. Participants will be randomly assigned to the different sets of questions with the following exception: those employees who are not Seventh-day Adventists will be directed to a set of questions appropriate to their backgrounds. This will be done seamlessly in the SurveyMonkey Version, where the question which asks the participant's religious background then sends them to a suitable branch. For the paper survey, the two "Branches" will be alternated as they are distributed, so that those who wish to choose a different branch, will have a survey available to them. A Seventh-day Adventist will find suitable questions in any "branch." As a courtesy to those who are not Seventh-day Adventists, suitable questions have been selected for them in Branch 2 (see table below).

Frequently Asked Questions

| Those who say they are a ... | Will be directed to this branch | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Branch 1 Qs 1-50, 84-88 | Branch 2a Qs 1-28, 51-88 | Branch 2b Qs 1-28, 61-88 | Branch 2c Qs 1-28, 70-88 |
| Seventh-day Adventist | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Christian, but not SDA | | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Followers of non-Christian religion | | | Yes | Yes |
| No religion, or agnostics or atheists | | | | Yes |

The questions come from a variety of **sources**, such as:

- The mission statements of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (from the General Conference and selected Divisions, Unions and Conferences) and church institutions (schools, universities, hospitals, publishing houses, aged care homes, media centers, publishing houses);
- Extensive interviews with administrators and employees of selected Adventist Organizations in several countries;
- Questions used and tested by the researchers in other surveys, as well as some questions from the Global [Seventh-day Adventist] Church Members' Survey;
- The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life / U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (a survey conducted in the US and internationally covering all belief systems, and including over 30,000 interviews);
- Some questions were used from the following: The Quest Scale (Alberto Voci, Giulia L. Bosetti, Chiara A. Veneziani, "Measuring Religion as End, Means, and Quest: The Religious Life and Orientation Scale," *TPM-Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology* 24 [2017]: 83-98); the Religious Fundamentalism Scale (Bob Altemeyer and Bruce Hunsberger, "A Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale: The Short and Sweet of It," *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 14 (2004) 47-54); and the Intrinsic / Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (Panagiota Darvyri, Michael Galanakis, Adamantios G. Avgoustidis, Niki Pateraki, Spyros Vasdekis, Christina Darviri, "The Revised Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale in a Sample of Attica's Inhabitants," *Psychology* (2014): 1557-1567).
- A few questions are based on items found in some of the scales found in the publication by Peter C. Hill and Ralph W. Hood, Jr., eds., *Measures of Religiosity* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education, 1999).
- The research publications of the Barna group have also given the basic ideas for a few questions;
- Two questions were adapted from the survey instrument of Randall L. Haffner, "Identification of Seventh-day Adventist Health Core Convictions: Alignment with Current Healthcare Practice," PhD Dissertation, Andrews University 2006.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can we guarantee confidentiality?

No individual will ever be identified in any report. In any case, it will not be possible to identify almost all participants from the answers that are provided. The few exceptions are some individuals in unique leadership positions. They perhaps could be identified if the research team really tried (*they will not try*). It is almost certain that you will never be identified by one of the researchers (who won't breach confidentiality in any case). After all, the research team is interested in overall patterns of responses, not individual responses. Of course, we cannot find overall patterns unless individuals participate, so your response is important.

We can guarantee confidentiality because:

- Your survey will be one of several thousand that will be in an anonymous data file. We will only look at the overall pattern of results, not at the answers provided by any one individual.
- Data entry will be done by you as you work through the Survey on the internet, or (if you fill in a paper survey) by somebody highly unlikely to know you who will do so by either manually entering data into SurveyMonkey or into a scanner for a computer-based reader.
- To maintain confidentiality, we will report only the responses of subgroups that are large enough to prevent anybody from being identified.

Who will be invited to participate?

The research team has been asked to survey employees (e.g. teachers, nurses, factory workers, administrators) of organizations owned by, affiliated with, or sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in all 13 Divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These organizations include primary and secondary schools, hospitals and clinics, publishing houses, media centers, food factories, welfare and development agencies, as well as other organizations.

What will be done with the Results of the Surveys?

Preliminary and final reports will be shared with the Future Plans Working Group of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists according to a pre-defined timeline, and the officers and directors of education in the Divisions in which the organizations are located. Papers will be presented at conferences both in the academic and church arenas, and articles will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals for publication.

You can view our first publications from the research that has taken place in the North American Division and the South Pacific Division. These are available on Amazon.com:

- Robert K. McIver and Sherene J. Hattingh, eds. 2019, *Educating for Service and Mission: Teachers in Seventh-day Adventist Schools in North America and Their Perceptions of Mission* (Cooranbong, NSW; Silver Spring MD: Avondale Academic Press/General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics and Research) [<https://www.amazon.com/dp/0648470431>]; and
- Robert K. McIver, Sherene Hattingh and Peter W. Kilgour, eds. *Education as Preparation for Eternity: Teachers in Seventh-day Adventist Schools in Australia and the Solomon Islands and Their Perceptions of Mission*. Silver Spring, MD / Cooranbong, NSW: Office of Archives Statistics and Research / Avondale Academic Press, 2020. [www.amazon.com.au/dp/0648470458]

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the researchers?

Lead Investigator:

- Robert K. McIver, BSc, BA(Theol), BD(Hons), MA, PhD; Professor, Avondale Seminary, Avondale University; Director of the Avondale Scripture Spirituality and Society Research Center. Wk ph +61 2 4980 2233.

Team members:

- Peter Kilgour, BA, DipEd, GDipEdAdmin, MEd, MathsEdD. Dean of Research & Associate Professor in the School of Education, Avondale University.
- Wendy Jackson, BHB, MBChB, Dip Paeds, FRACP, MDiv, PhD. Head of school, Avondale Seminary, Avondale University.
- Sherene (Sherry) Hattingh, DipEd, DSE, PostDip(ESL), MEd, EdD. Lecturer, School of Education. Avondale University.
- Steven Currow, BA(Theol), MA, DMin, Interim Principal Lecturer in Pastoral Studies, Director of Field Education, Newbold College.

Who has requested the research and why?

The research was commissioned at the request of the Future Plans Working Group (FPWG), a committee which includes on its membership the General Conference President, Secretary, Treasurer, all the GC Vice Presidents, Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Ella Simmons, and others.
Secretary: David Trim

The FPWG wished to have evidence on which to base their strategic planning.

The research is conducted under the management of David Trim, director of the GC Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

Can I do the survey in another language?

The survey is available in several languages, including Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, Romanian, Bahasa Indonesia, and Korean. You may choose any of these languages in the SurveyMonkey version of the survey, by selecting them from a drop-down menu on the top right of the screen.

What do I do if I have a complaint?

If you have a complaint or concern about this research project or the way it is conducted, contact the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee, Avondale University, PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265, Australia, or phone +61 2 4980 2121 or fax +61 2 4980 2117 or email: researchoffice@avondale.edu.au. Or alternatively, contact one of the following researchers: Professor Robert McIver: email: rob.mciver@avondale.edu.au; ph. +61 2 4980 2233; fax.: +61 2 4980 2118; or Dr Sherry Hattingh: email: sherry.hattingh@avondale.edu.au; ph. +61 2 4980 2193. Any of the researchers may be contacted by mail at Avondale University, PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265, Australia.

Frequently Asked Questions

The research team would like to give their thanks to:

- All those who participate in the survey.
- The General Conference office of Archives and Statistics.
- The Avondale Scripture, Spirituality and Society Research Center for funding to underwrite this research.
- Avondale University and Newbold College for allowing the team members to participate in this research as part of their regular employment.

We would be very pleased if you could help up with this important research.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete the survey,

Rob, Peter, Sherry, Wendy, and Steve.

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