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FUTURE OF ADVENTISM, EDUCATION, SOCIAL ISSUES, AND SPIRITUALITY

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***WHAT DOES RECENT RESEARCH SAY ABOUT LEVEL OF
EDUCATION OF ADVENTIST CHURCH LEADERS?***

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INTRODUCTION OF STUDY

- This presentation is a part of a larger study—the Church Leadership (Administrator) Survey commissioned for strategic planning by the General Conference (GC) and supervised by the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR).
- There were three surveys of this kind conducted worldwide:
 - ✓ In 2013-14 (n=560)
 - ✓ In 2017-18 (n=440)
 - ✓ In 2022-23 (n=3,756)
- The findings of the first two surveys are available on the Adventist Research website (www.adventistresearch.info) on the page Research projects commissioned by the General Conference under Reports button.
- This presentation is based on the findings from the first two surveys.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a global Church with 13 divisions and four attached fields. The growing number of unions and conferences makes the need for competent leadership obvious.
- Leadership is essential for the success of any organization, and it is even more crucial for the Church that fulfills the Great Commission bringing the message about Jesus and His Second Coming to the world.
- The purpose of this presentation is to investigate the level of education of Adventist administrators, areas of their specialization, and the type of universities from which they received their education.

OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the level of education of church administrators in the Adventist Church?
- How many of them have post-graduate degrees?
- In what institutions did they complete their education?
- In what institutions did they receive the specialization in Religion, Church Ministry, or Theology?

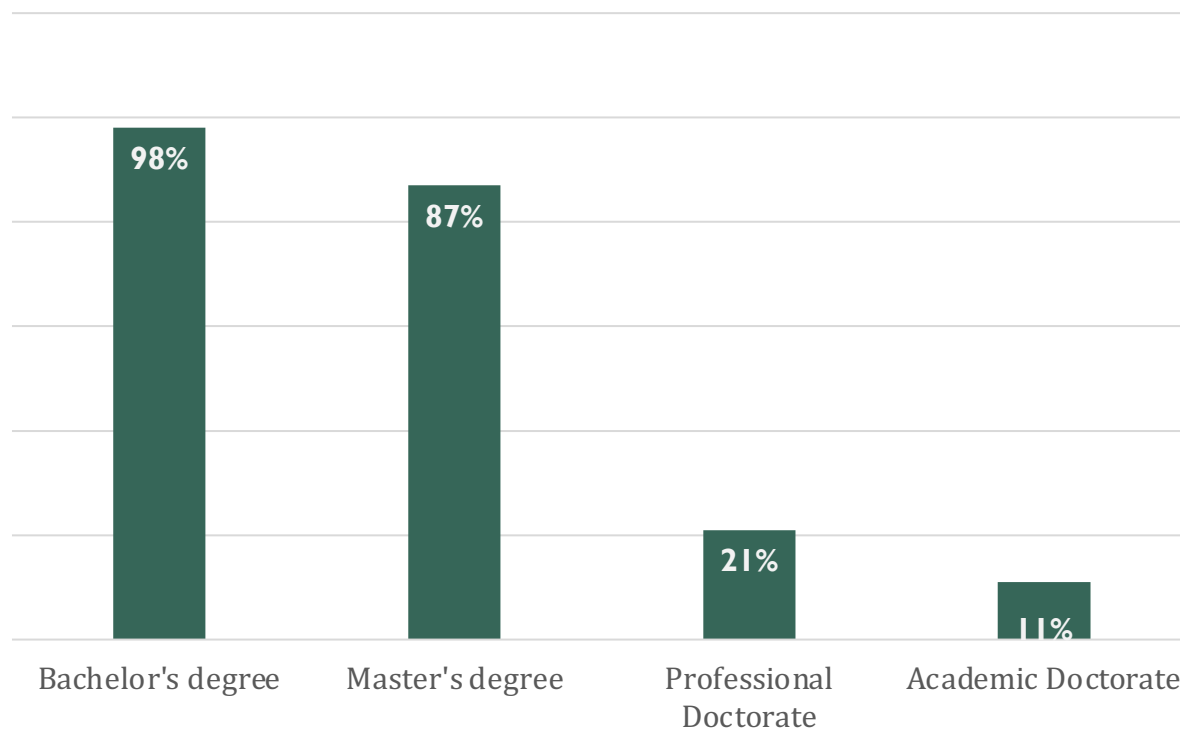
RESEARCH METHOD OVERVIEW

- This survey was developed by ASTR in 2013 at the request of the Future Plans Working Group (FPWG) and revised in 2017. Both versions were approved by FPWG.
- In 2013, it was a paper survey; in 2017, it was a paper and online survey using SurveyMonkey.
- It was a **purposive sampling**. Target audience included church officers, associate officers, departmental directors, or associate departmental directors at division and union levels.
- The survey was implemented at the end and after Annual Councils and division Year-End Meetings in 2013 and 2017. In some areas, data was collected the following year or at Spring Meetings (respectively, in 2014 and 2018).
- ASTR sent the survey/its link to the division Secretariats. The paper surveys were sent back to ASTR by mail or with the GC representatives.

KEY FINDINGS

Level of Education of Adventist Church Leaders

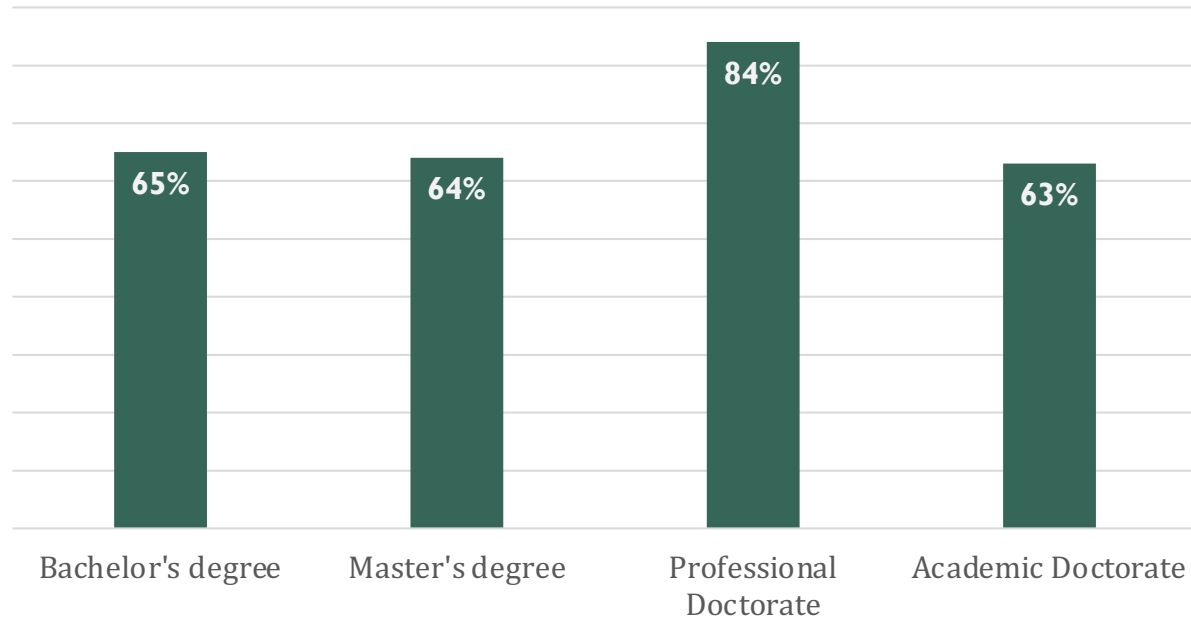
The 2013-14 Church Leadership Survey



KEY FINDING I (2013-14)

- Adventist church leadership is well educated
- 87% have Master's degrees
- About a third have Professional or Academic Doctorates

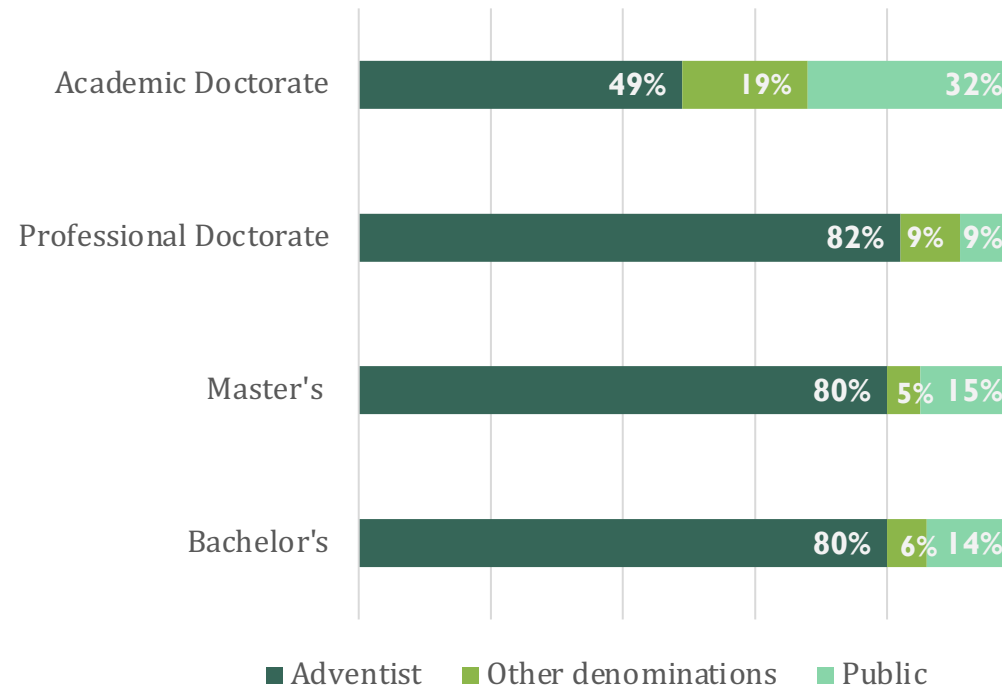
The 2013-14 Church Leadership Survey: Religion, Church Ministry, or Theology Degrees



KEY FINDING 2 (2013-14)

- A majority of church leaders have degrees in Religion, Church Ministry or Theology at each level
- The highest number of them studied these areas for the Professional Doctoral Degree

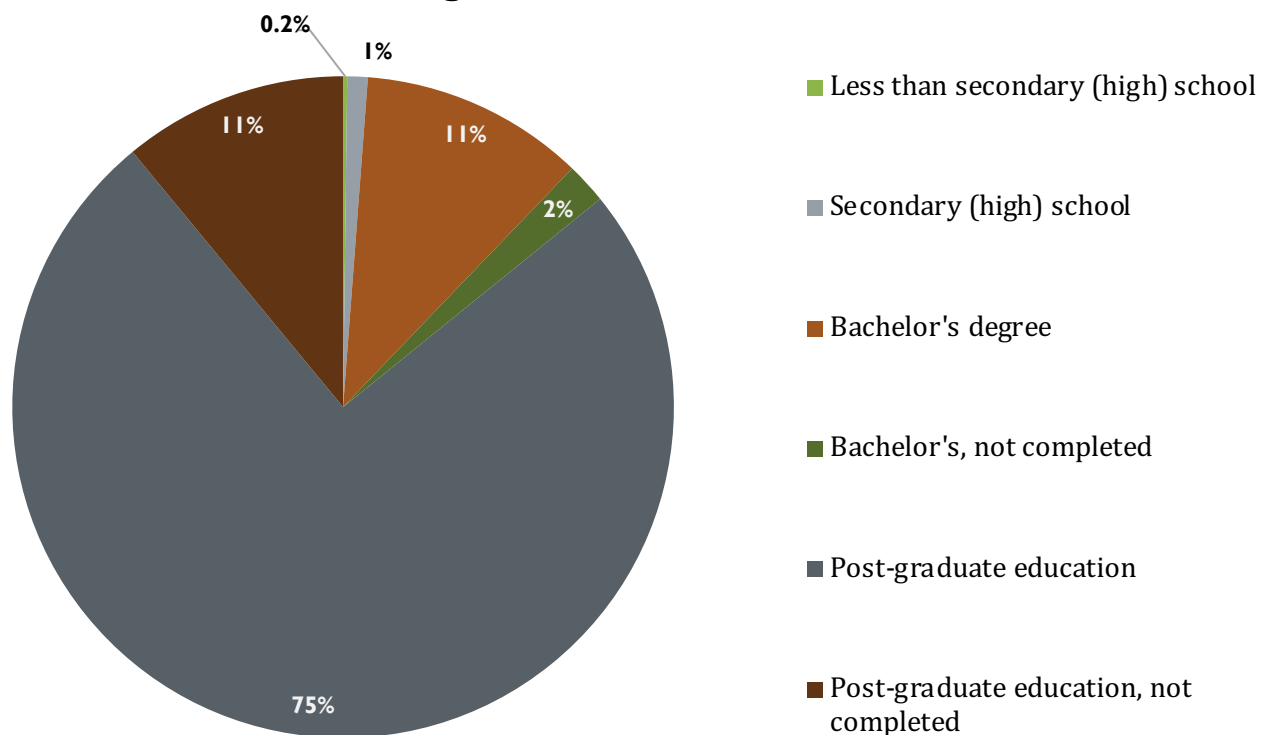
The 2013-14 Church Leadership Survey



KEY FINDING 3 (2013-14)

- A majority of church leaders had received their education for Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and Professional Doctorate in Adventist institutions
- Less than half received Academic doctoral degrees in Adventist institutions
- More church leaders studied in public institutions for Academic Doctorate (32%) than for other degrees

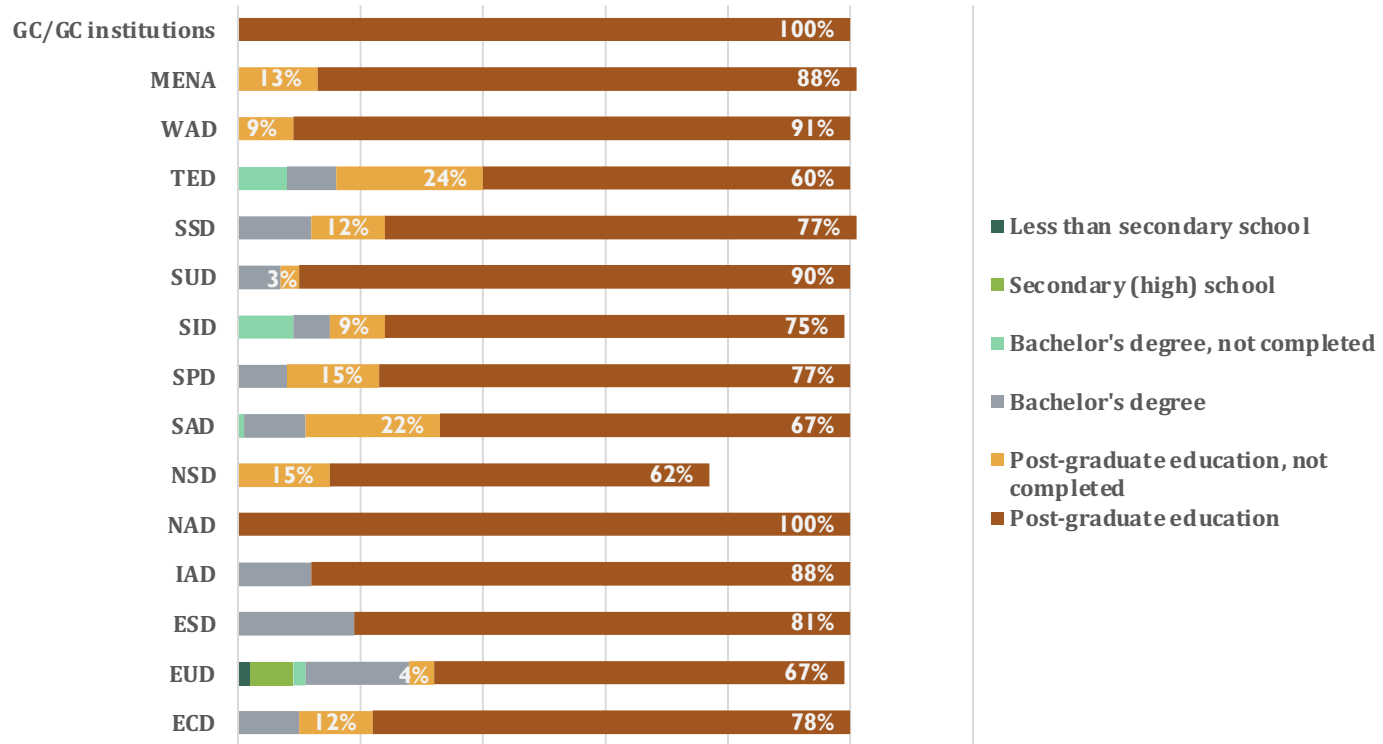
The 2017-18 Church Leadership Survey: Highest Level of Education



KEY FINDING 4 (2017-18)

- Adventist Church leadership is well educated.
- 75% have post-graduate degrees.
- 86% have post-graduated education completed or not completed.

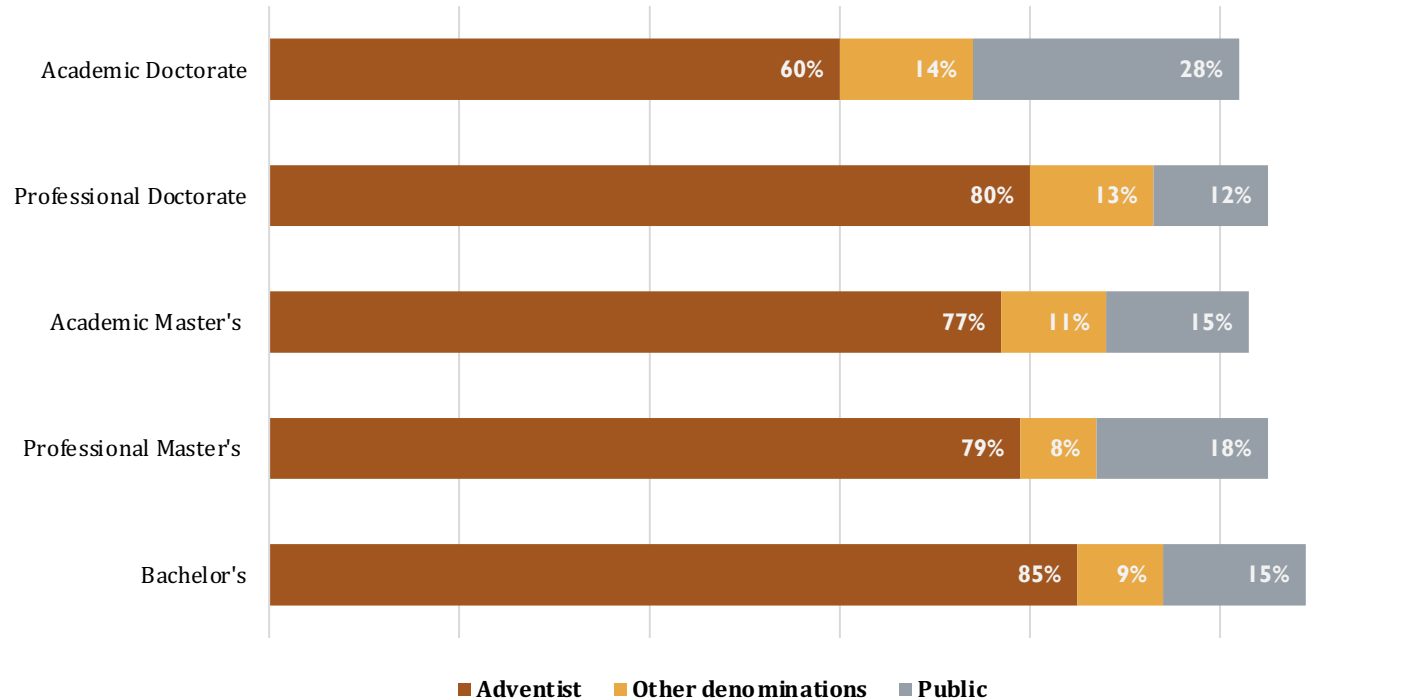
The 2017-18 Church Leadership Survey: Highest Level of Education of Church Leaders by Division



KEY FINDING 5 (2017-18)

- The level of education of church leaders varies by division.
- A majority of church leadership in divisions have post-graduate completed or not-completed education (from 60% and up).

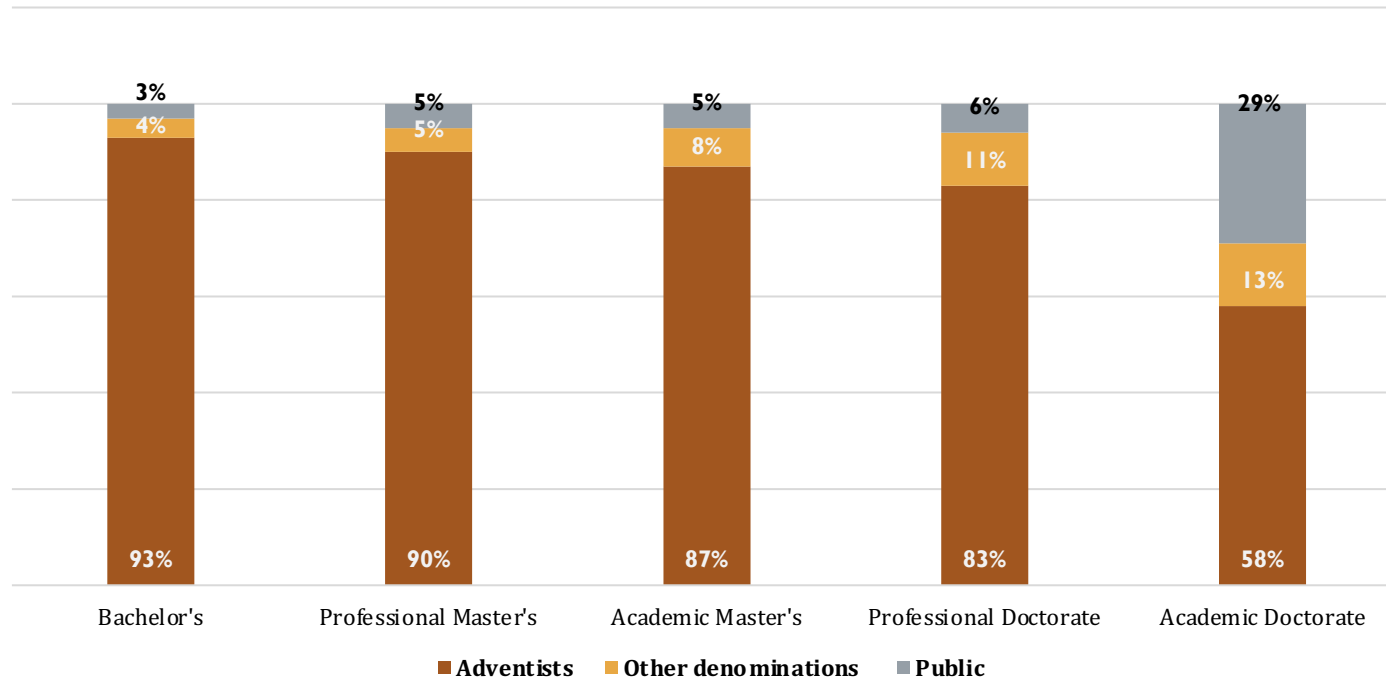
The 2017-18 Church Leadership Survey: Education Received in Different Types of Institutions



KEY FINDING 6 (2017-18)

- A majority of church leaders had received their education in Adventist institutions.
- The highest percentage of those who received their education in Adventist institutions was at Bachelor's level, followed by Professional Doctorate.
- More church leaders studied in public institutions for Academic Doctorate than for other degrees.

The 2017-18 Church Leadership Survey: Education in the Areas of Religion, Church Ministry, and Theology



KEY FINDING 7 (2017-18)

- A majority of church leaders received their education in areas of Religion, Church Ministry, and Theology in Adventist institutions.
- The least number was for Academic Doctorate—only 58%. More church leaders received their Academic Doctorates in public institutions than any other degrees.
- The gap is impressive, especially compared with a Bachelor's degree—only 7% took classes in these areas outside Adventist institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

- The findings of both the 2013-14 and 2017-18 surveys show that, worldwide, Adventist Church leaders are highly educated. A strong majority had surpassed the undergraduate level. And in 2017-18 survey, 75% said they had completed post-graduate education.
- In each division, overall, administrators with post-graduate diplomas composed 60% or more of church leadership. It is evidence of highly educated leadership in our worldwide Church.
- Both surveys show that a majority had received their education in Adventist institutions except the findings from the 2013-14 survey for Academic Doctorate (about half).
- In 2017-18 survey, more administrators studied for Academic Doctorates outside Adventist universities (40%) than for other degrees.
- In contrast, only 25% of church leaders received their Professional Doctorate from non-Adventist universities.

- Interestingly, it was similar picture with their education in the areas of Religion, Church Ministry, and Theology. A majority of church leaders received such education in Adventist institutions.
- However, the least number was for Academic Doctorate—only 58% of those with doctoral degrees studied these areas in Adventist universities, while 42% studies outside.
- Thus, both surveys show that more administrators studied for Academic Doctorates outside Adventist universities than for other degrees. It is true for any area, including Religion, Church Ministry, and Theology.
- Why did so many church leaders complete their Academic Doctorate in Religion, Church Ministry, or Theology in public institutions or the institutions of other denominations?
- Does this influence their work in any sense?
- Further studies are needed to find any explanations.
- Possibly, a comparative analysis with the data from the 2022-2023 Church Leadership Survey will shed more light.

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