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United Methodist Communications:  
**2007 Media Impact and  
Awareness Research for the  
"Open hearts" Campaign**

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Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

Research conducted and report by:

**The Barna Group, Ltd.**

Ventura, California

Research commissioned by:

**United Methodist Communications (UMCom)**

Nashville, Tennessee

Release date: February 2008

**igniting**  
MINISTRY



a ministry of  
**United Methodist**  
communications

# United Methodist Communications: 2007 Media Impact & Awareness Research for the “Open hearts” Advertising

## Introduction to the Barna Tracking Research

*Introduction prepared by Emily Reece, United Methodist Communications*

Each year, United Methodist Communications contracts with The Barna Group to conduct independent research about the effectiveness of the denomination’s “Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.” advertising. The research measures several aspects of the advertising’s impact in reaching the “seeker” audience and achieving the following goals:

- To increase awareness and recognition of The United Methodist Church’s basic beliefs among adult “seekers”
- To foster among non-members (unchurched) a positive feeling and willingness to visit a United Methodist church

Because the advertising reaches a broad audience that also includes many church members, as an important side benefit, the messages also seek to renew a sense of commitment in United Methodists.

United Methodist Communications has tracked the effectiveness of the advertising since 2001, through test markets in each U.S. jurisdiction of the church. Using test markets has allowed the agency to assess potential differences across regions in awareness of the ads, receptiveness to the messages, and attendance differences in the churches. Five markets of comparable size (roughly the same number of cable TV households in each area) demonstrated positive results from 2001-04, as reported in Barna’s annual tracking studies for Igniting Ministry.

The original test markets (Baltimore, Maryland; Indianapolis, Indiana; Portland, Oregon; Raleigh, North Carolina; San Antonio, Texas) and tracking congregations (representative churches from throughout the United States) showed increases in awareness, “willingness to visit” and attendance averages in each successive year, summarized as follows:

Year	Awareness	Willingness to Visit	First-Time Attendance	Total Attendance
2001	14%	35% (9% “very willing”)	108% up from 2000*	22% up from 2000*
2002	15%	46% (9% “very willing”)	3% up from 2000**	7% up from 2000**
2003	18%	47% (10% “very willing”)	14% up from 2000**	6% up from 2000**
2004	19%	49% (12% “very willing”)	19% up from 2000**	9% up from 2000**

\*results reflect attendance spike the Sunday after September 11, 2001 (Sunday, Sept. 16, 2001)

\*\*Barna compared 2002-04 attendance to 2000 to negate effects of Sept. 11, 2001, on 2001 attendance

Influenced by these results, General Conference 2004 renewed Igniting Ministry with additional funding. Because the test market results from the first four years indicated that the advertising

influenced people’s opinions of The United Methodist Church and correlated with attendance increases in tracking congregations, United Methodist Communications wanted to assess whether similar results would materialize in other areas of the country.

To assess the impact of the advertising and other ministries of the agency in different areas of the country, as well as in markets of varying size (two smaller, two mid-sized, and two larger markets), United Methodist Communications selected new test markets and test conferences for the ministry’s second quadrennium. The 2005-08 test areas are:

Springfield, Missouri	Missouri Annual Conference	Smaller market
Tallahassee/Gainesville, FL	Florida Annual Conference	Smaller market
Roanoke, Virginia	Virginia Annual Conference	Mid-sized market
Des Moines, Iowa	Iowa Annual Conference	Mid-sized market
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Western Pennsylvania Conference	Larger market
Sacramento, California	California-Nevada Conference	Larger market

United Methodist Communications partners with these conferences to create a collaborative model for working with conferences and congregations to influence their welcoming and worship attendance. As the agency and its conference partners implement strategies to affect awareness and attendance through 2008, the annual Barna tracking study will assess the results.

The attached report reflects the awareness and attendance results measured by Barna in August, September, and October of 2007. Although some congregations from the original test markets have continued to report attendance information to Barna, the markets from which “seeker” interviews have been collected all differ from the first four years of research. The average results (summarized in the grid below) echo the positive trends observed from 2001-04. With new benchmarks established in 2005, the 2006 and 2007 results compare, not as extensions of the previous quadrennium’s research, but as measures of the new “test conference” strategy.

Year	Awareness	Willingness to Visit	First-Time Attendance	Total Attendance
2005	27%	51% (13% “very willing”)	9% up from 2004	3% up from 2004
2006	30%	47% (11% “very willing”)	11% up from 2004	2% up from 2004
2007	30%	54% (13% “very willing”)	3% up from 2004	2% down from 2004

The attached report reinforces previous evidence that the “Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.” campaign has a positive impact on seekers’ advertising awareness and the willingness of people to visit United Methodist churches. Advertising awareness held steadily in the past two years in the new test markets. Willingness to visit a United Methodist congregation among the target audience hit the highest level (54%) in the history of the ministry, especially among those exposed to the United Methodist advertising. Consistent with denominational trends reported through the General Council on Finance and Administration, total attendance has dropped in the tracking congregations; however, first-time attendance continued a slight growth trend.

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# Introduction

## **1. The Goals of this Project**

The research described in this report reflects the third year of a new round of media impact research. The project was conducted by Barna Research (a division of The Barna Group, Ltd.) on behalf of the United Methodist Communications. The research was designed to measure the effectiveness of the Igniting Ministry campaign.

The goals of Igniting Ministry are three-fold:

- To increase awareness and recognition of The United Methodist Church's basic beliefs
- To foster among non-members (unchurched) a positive feeling and willingness to visit a United Methodist church
- To renew a sense of commitment in United Methodists

## **2. Research Description**

The research consisted of two parts:

**Phase 1.** Telephone interviews with 1,202 “seekers,” designed to gain insight into their perceptions of the Igniting Ministry communications; their impressions of The United Methodist Church (hereafter, UMC); and their willingness to visit a UMC congregation in the future. This phase of the research study was conducted in September and October of 2007.

**Phase 2.** The second phase of the project included the responses of 214 UMC tracking churches. These churches measured and reported first-time and total attendance during weekend worship services for 12 weeks (August, September, and October 2007). These churches also provided attendance numbers for 2006 and 2005 as a baseline.

Additionally, the pastors of tracking churches were asked to complete a six-question survey regarding their perceptions of the Igniting Ministry campaign. The responses help measure the final objective: *renewing a sense of commitment among United Methodists.*

## **3. Research Methodology**

For this research, the UMC “seeker” audience was defined as someone (1) who is currently ages 21 to 60, (2) who does not currently attend a United Methodist church, and (3) who meets the following qualifications of being a seeker:

- a. An unchurched or marginally churched person who feels like something is missing or who is searching for something spiritually **and** who is open to the idea that a church might be a reasonable option to answer those needs.

- b. A church attender who feels emotional discomfort or who is searching for something spiritually **and** who indicates his or her spiritual needs are not being met at his or her current church.

The research used a random sample of adults in six markets (Sacramento, Pittsburgh, Roanoke, Des Moines, Springfield, and Tallahassee/Gainesville). The sample of 1,202 seekers means the research results for the total sample are accurate to within plus or minus three percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. The research was conducted from September 13, 2007, through October 10, 2007.

The second phase relied upon a representative recruitment of United Methodist churches to serve as “tracking” churches. In all, 214 participated by returning information about their church’s first-time and total attendance. Several of these churches were recruited from the same six markets as the consumer research. However, many of the tracking churches were selected from other areas, with a mix of metro and urban churches as well as representation from small, medium, and large congregations. Some responding churches were recruited who participated in the Igniting Ministry campaign (hereafter labeled *test churches*) and some responding churches did not directly participate in the campaign (called *control churches*).

#### **4. Seeker Definition**

In addition to the elements listed above, the seeker target audience was defined based upon the following elements:

1. ***Having a “hole in the soul”*** – Each participant had to express some sense of discomfort with his or her current life status:
  - a. something feels missing from their life
  - b. searching for meaning or purpose
  - c. having emotional pain or frustration that they would like to resolve
  - d. seeking or striving for something better spiritually in life
2. ***Being dissatisfied with their church*** – Among churched respondents, people could qualify for the UMC target audience by saying they are not satisfied with or committed to their current congregation, or they would be willing to explore other church options.
3. ***Willing to try a church*** – Among unchurched adults (as well as infrequent church attenders), respondents could be qualified as part of the UMC target by indicating they were open to trying a church.
4. ***Self-identification as a seeker*** – People could also identify as part of the seeker target by saying either that they “are searching for something different in life, there is some meaning not currently answered by their church experience” or that they “are not necessarily actively seeking, but there are needs not being met by their current church experience.”

## **Overview of the Report**

Following the *Introduction* is the *Data Analysis* – a narrative description of the research results. *Conclusions*, on page 32, summarize key findings of the report.

UMCom has tracked the effectiveness of the IM campaign since 2001. In 2005, UMCom chose new markets in which to collect data. Thus comparisons to the 2005 and 2006 data were provided wherever appropriate to do so. Data collected in the first quadrennium (2001-2004) are not addressed in this report.

# Research Findings

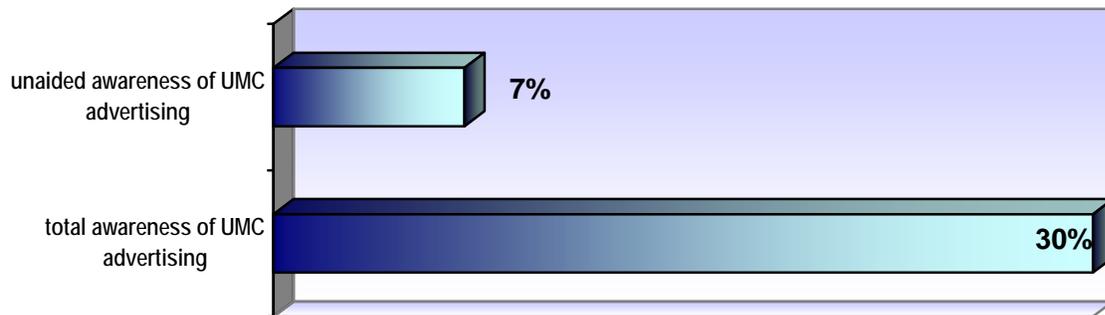
## 1. United Methodist Church Advertising Recall

### **Total Awareness**

Overall, total awareness (all respondents who stated they were aware of UMC advertising) of the campaign stands at 30%. Overall, 7% of respondents were able to recall specifically UMC advertising without prompting from interviewers (i.e., unaided recall). Awareness in 2007 is identical in 2006 and statistically on par with awareness in 2005 (compared to 27% in 2005).

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### Key Indicators of Advertising Awareness, 2007



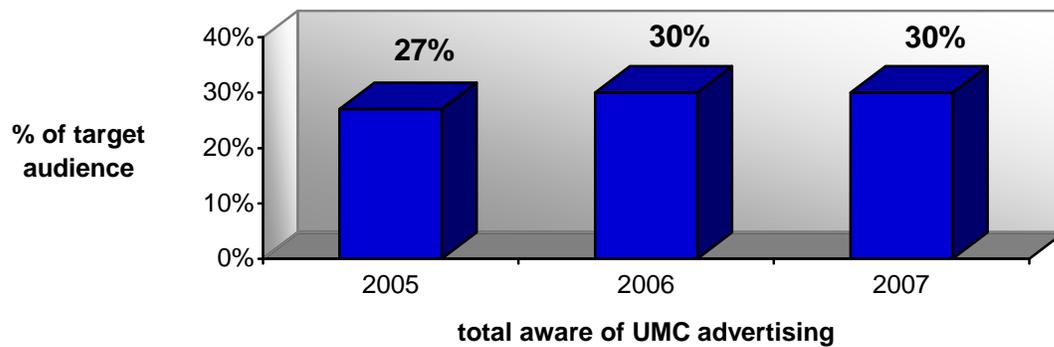
## Comparisons Over Time

Although the penetration of UMC advertising has remained unchanged from 2006, overall exposure has risen from 21% in 2002 (though the first quad was measured in different markets than in the second quad – 2005-2008).

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### Penetration of UMC Advertising, by Year

*% of the target audience that recalls advertising from UMC*



## **Media Penetration**

**Television is the primary medium carrying church advertisements** (see Table 2 below).

Among those aware of UMC advertising, three out of every five seekers (62%) recalled television advertising. The other primary media carrying the UMC advertising were local newspapers (14%), outdoor signage (8%), local radio stations (7%), local church advertising (4%), and direct mail (4%).

There has been no significant change in the primary medium carrying the United Methodist message from 2006 – i.e., television advertising has been, and continues to be, the main conduit for denominational brand communication.

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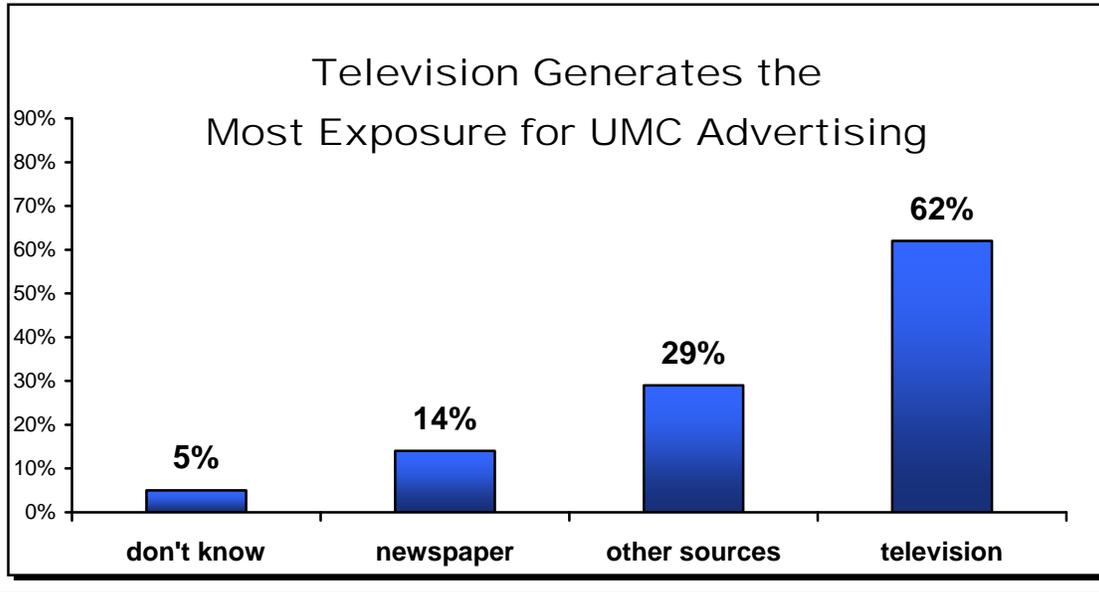
**Table 2: Where People Recall Seeing Church Advertisements**

% of those exposed to the advertising of each denomination

Television (cable and local programming).....	62%
Newspaper – local paper .....	14
Outdoor – billboard, bus shelter, etc. ....	8
Radio.....	7
Local church.....	4
Mail .....	4
Friends/ Acquaintances / Family .....	2
Door hanger .....	1
Internet.....	1
Flier / Pamphlet.....	1
Magazine .....	1
Door to door / Came to my door.....	*
Movie theater advertising .....	0
Other .....	2
Don't know/can't remember .....	5

*sample size 359*

\* indicates less than one percent



**Table 3: Where People Recall Seeing UMC Advertising**

comparison of 2005, 2006 and 2007 data - % of those exposed to the UMC advertising

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Television (cable and local programming).....	63%	60%	62%
Newspaper – local paper .....	12%	11%	14%
Radio .....	8%	8%	7%
Outdoor – billboard, bus shelter, etc. ....	5%	9%	8%
Mail .....	3%	3%	4%
Local church.....	2%	7%	4%
Door hanger .....	1%	1%	1%
Other .....	5%	5%	7%
Don't know/can't remember .....	4%	5%	5%
<i>sample size</i>	327	362	359

**Advertising Recall by Market**

The UMC advertising generated the most recall among residents of Tallahassee / Gainesville (39%), Springfield (35%) and Roanoke (34%). On the other hand, Des Moines (26%) and Sacramento (20%) experienced the lowest ad recall of the six markets assessed. Pittsburgh (27%) was essentially “average.”

Unaided awareness of the UMC ad flight registered the highest recall in Springfield (12%) and lowest in Sacramento (2%).

**Table 4: Advertising Recall, by Market**

% of the seeker target, n=1202

	Total	SAC	PITT	ROA	DM	SPR	TAL
• total awareness of UMC advertising .....	30%	20%	27%	34%	26%	35%	<b>39%</b>
• unaided awareness of UMC advertising .....	7%	2%	9%	7%	9%	<b>12%</b>	5%

Key: SAC= Sacramento; PITT= Pittsburgh; ROA= Roanoke; DM= Des Moines; SPR= Springfield (MO); TAL=Tallahassee/Gainesville

## Advertising Recall by Demographic Segment

Table 5 examines awareness of UMC advertising across a variety of demographic segments. None of these patterns is statistically significant. The takeaway from this demographic analysis is that the advertising reaches a broad spectrum of people across population segments.

**Table 5: Advertising Recall, by Population Segment**

% of those exposed to the UMC advertising

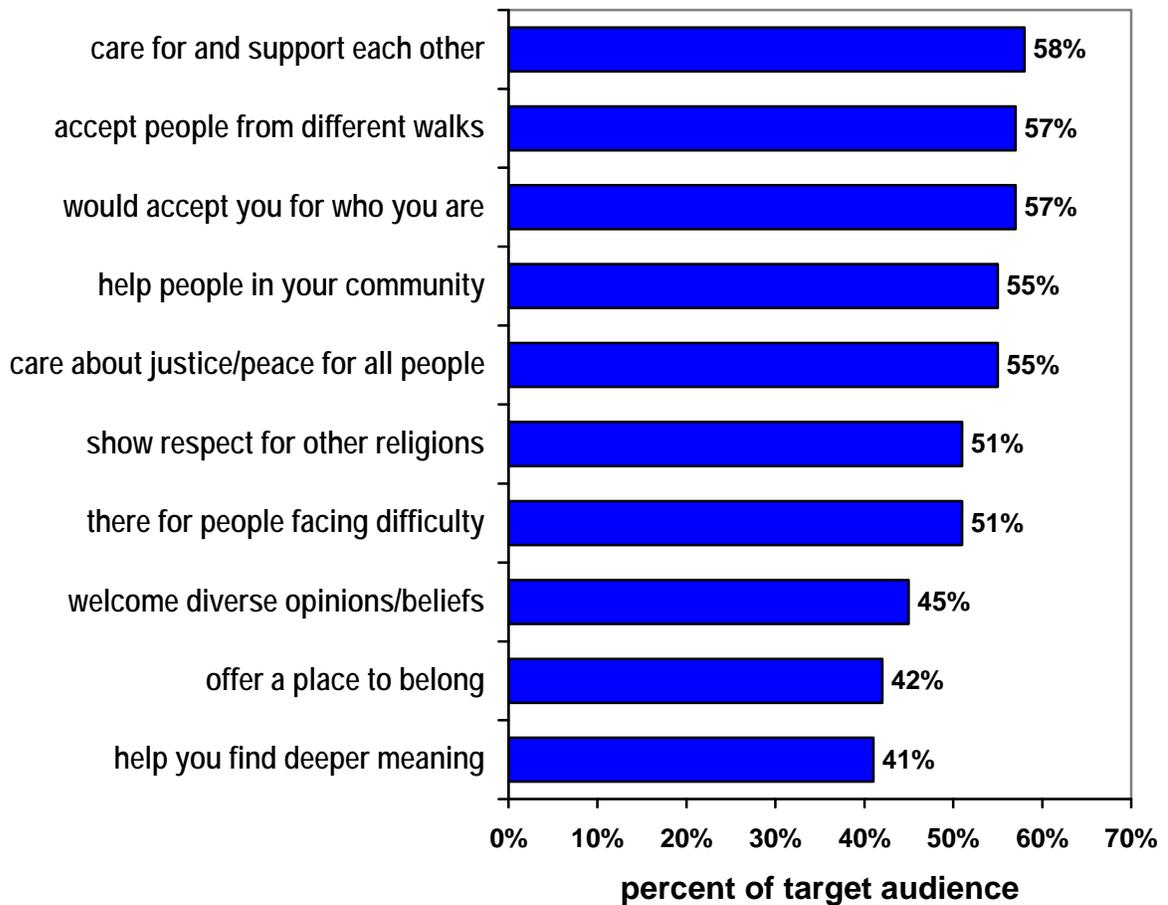
	<u>2007</u>
<i>Total</i> .....	<b>30%</b>
<i>Gender</i>	
• male .....	28%
• female .....	31%
<i>Education</i>	
• high school or less.....	28%
• some college .....	32%
• college graduate.....	32%
<i>Age</i>	
• 20s .....	28%
• 30s .....	28%
• 40s .....	32%
• 50s .....	31%
<i>Generation</i>	
• Busters .....	27%
• Boomers .....	32%
<i>Ethnicity</i>	
• Caucasian .....	31%
• African-American.....	32%
• Hispanic .....	21%
<i>Have children under 18?</i>	
• yes.....	30%
• have two or more kids .....	30%
• no .....	30%
<i>Marital status</i>	
• married .....	32%
• never married .....	27%
• divorced.....	30%

## 2. Assessing the Effectiveness of the Advertising Messages

### Perceptions of The United Methodist Church

The study assessed ten different statements about The United Methodist Church in order to better understand how the United Methodist denomination is positioned in the minds of the target audience. These statements reflect the intended communications within the advertising messages developed for the campaign. **The advertising continues to work in communicating key UMC characteristics. Note that the advertising is working in part because it combats a typical challenge that all denominations face: changing people’s indistinct impressions to more substantive and favorable opinions.**

### Perceptions of United Methodists



**Table 6: Perceptions of Target Audience Over Time**

% who agree strongly or somewhat

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
• care for and support each other .....	43%	46%	52%	58%	54%	58%
• would accept you for who you are.....	45%	49%	53%	56%	52%	57%
• accept people from all walks of life.....	43%	47%	52%	57%	53%	57%
• help people in your community.....	43%	42%	47%	56%	51%	55%
• care about justice / peace for all people.....	NA	NA	NA	56%	51%	55%
• show respect for other religions .....	40%	40%	48%	51%	47%	51%
• there for people facing personal difficulty.....	38%	40%	45%	52%	46%	51%
• welcome diverse opinions and beliefs.....	33%	35%	43%	47%	44%	45%
• offer a place to belong.....	29%	32%	32%	43%	40%	42%
• help you find deeper meaning and purpose in life.....	26%	29%	34%	42%	37%	41%

NA = question not asked prior to 2005

### **Nature of the Perceptions**

There were five perceptions clustered at the top – feeling that United Methodists “care for and support each other” (58%); that they “accept people from all walks of life” (57%); that they “would accept you for who you are” (57%); that they would “help people in your community” (55%); and that they “care about justice and peace for all people” (55%).

On the middle tier were such perceptions as “show respect for other religions” (51%); being “there for people facing personal difficulty” (51%); and “welcome people with diverse opinions and beliefs” (45%).

Slightly less common perceptions were United Methodists can “offer you a place you feel you could belong” (42%) and “help you find deeper meaning and purpose in life” (41%).

### **Ad Exposure and UMC Perceptions**

Survey research is only correlative in nature, and correlations do not imply causation. With that limitation in mind, the data show that those exposed to UMC advertising hold more favorable views of the UMC than is true of those who do not recall such advertising. **The implication is that the Igniting Ministry campaign may have helped many of those who know little about or who are neutral regarding the UMC by educating them about distinctives.**

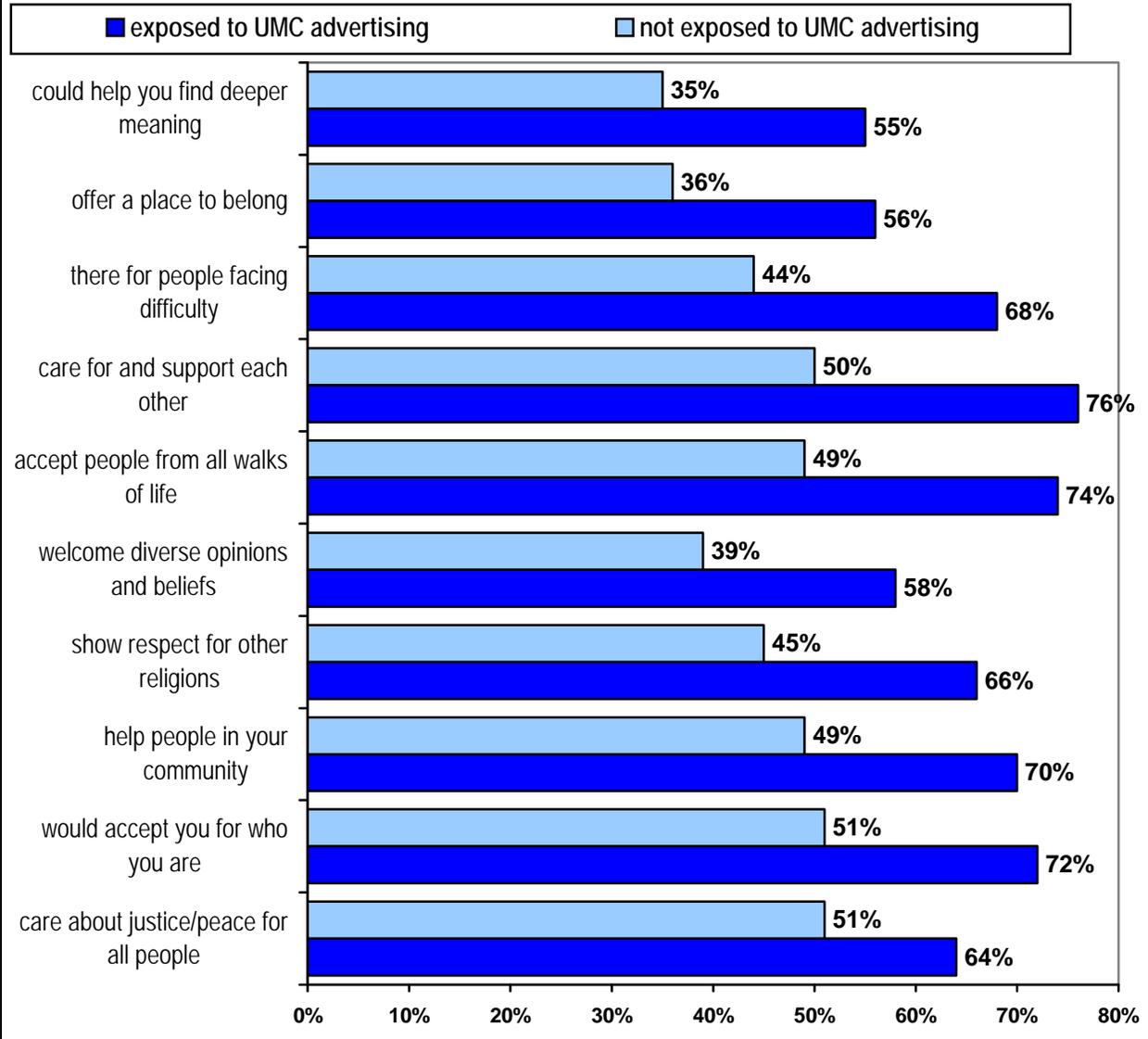
As shown and described on the next few pages, those exposed to the UMC advertising were far more likely than those not exposed to be able to associate many of United Methodist's core attributes. **Igniting Ministry campaign appears to be educating its audience about the core attributes of the UMC.**

For instance, compared to those who had not seen or heard UMC advertising, those respondents who saw the advertising were:

- 57% more likely to say that United Methodists *could help you find deeper meaning and purpose in life* (55% among the exposed versus 35% among the unexposed)
- 55% more likely to say that United Methodists *offer a place where you could belong* (56% versus 36%)
- 55% more likely to say that United Methodists *are there for people facing personal difficulty* (68% among the exposed versus 44% among the unexposed)
- 52% more likely to say that United Methodists *care for and support each other* (76% versus 50%)
- 51% more likely to say that United Methodists *accept people from all walks of life* (74% versus 49%)
- 49% more likely to say that United Methodists *welcome people with diverse opinions and beliefs* (58% versus 39%)
- 47% more likely to say that United Methodists *show respect for other religions* (66% versus 45%)
- 43% more likely to say that United Methodists *help people in your community* (70% versus 49%)
- 41% more likely to say that United Methodists *would accept you for who you are* (72% of those exposed to the advertising felt this way compared to 51% of those not exposed)
- 25% more likely to say that United Methodists *care about justice and peace for all people* (64% versus 51%)

## Exposure to Advertising Influences Seekers' Perceptions of United Methodists

(listed in order of size of gap between those exposed and not exposed)



**Table 7: Exposure to Advertising Influences Seekers Perceptions of UMC**

% exposed to UMC advertising	exposed to UMC advertising			not exposed to UMC advertising		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
	• would accept you for who you are.....	71%	71%	72%	51%	45%
• help you find deeper meaning / purpose in life.....	52%	50%	55%	38%	32%	35%
• offer a place to belong.....	55%	52%	56%	39%	34%	36%
• accept people from all walks of life.....	72%	70%	74%	51%	46%	49%
• there for people facing personal difficulty.....	68%	60%	68%	46%	40%	44%
• welcome diverse opinions and beliefs.....	60%	57%	58%	42%	38%	39%
• help people in your community.....	70%	64%	70%	51%	45%	49%
• care for and support each other.....	75%	67%	76%	52%	48%	50%
• show respect for other religions.....	62%	58%	66%	47%	42%	45%
• care about justice / peace for all people.....	68%	62%	64%	52%	46%	51%

One of the intriguing revelations of this year’s projects is that the 2007 advertising campaign generated the best “gaps” between those exposed and those not exposed to the advertising of the quad. **Those exposed to the advertising in 2007 were, on average, 48% more likely to embrace the 10 attributes. That compares to 47% last year, and 38% in 2005.** Even in the final year of the last quad, 2004, the exposure gap was 44%.

Year	Exposure Gap*
2004	44%
2005	37%
2006	47%
2007	48%

\* The average difference between those exposed to the advertising and those not exposed, when it came to how much they felt the 10 attributes described the UMC. The higher the “gap” the bigger the difference between those exposed and those not exposed.

**Believability**

**The 2007 campaign registered strong scores for believability, though it was down slightly from previous levels.** In all four out of five (80%) of those exposed to the advertising claimed that the advertising was believable. This is slightly below the 84% of those exposed in 2006. In total, 35% of adults said the UMC advertising was “very believable.” Only one in ten (10%) felt the ads were not believable, while the same number (10%) said they were “neither believable nor unbelievable.”

**Table 8: The Believability of the UMC Message**

% of those exposed to the UMC advertising (without don't know)

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
• very believable .....	41%	36%	35%
• <b>very or somewhat believable*</b> .....	<b>85%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>80%</b>
• neither believable nor unbelievable .....	6%	8%	10%
• very unbelievable .....	6%	3%	4%
• very or somewhat unbelievable* .....	9%	9%	10%
• <i>sample size</i> .....	<i>301</i>	<i>314</i>	<i>336</i>

Percent of those who had seen/heard UMC advertising \* aggregate percentages

**Importance**

**Overall, 46% of respondents described the message as very or somewhat important to them, including 14% who described the advertising as “very” important.** One out of every three adults exposed to the advertising (34%) said the ads were not important, while one out of every five (20%) were neutral. The 46% figure in 2007 study represents a three-percentage point decrease from 2006 (49%), which is within the allowable range of sampling error. However, the 2007 figure represents a decline in the perceived importance of the advertising compared to 2005 (53%).

**Table 9: The Importance of the UMC Message**

% of those exposed to the UMC advertising (without don't know)

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
• very important .....	17%	15%	14%
• <b>very or somewhat important*</b> .....	<b>53%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>46%</b>
• neither important nor unimportant .....	15%	20%	20%
• not at all important.....	16%	14%	14%
• not too or not at all important* .....	32%	31%	34%
• <i>sample size</i> .....	<i>316</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>347</i>

Percent of those who had seen/heard UMC advertising. \* aggregate percentages

## **Segmentation Analysis -- Demographics**

Table 10 explores various demographic variables and how those factors correlated with perceptions of UMC advertising. The research revealed the following insights:

- **Importance:** People who gave the UMC advertising above-average marks for importance were African-Americans, lower-income households, adults in their thirties, and adults who attended college but did not receive a degree, unmarrieds, including those who have never been married. Population groups who were less likely than average to say the advertising was important included college graduates, adults earning \$50K to \$75K in pre-tax income, adults in their twenties, married adults, and parents of multiple children living in the household.
- **Believability:** The advertising was rated as believable by a firm majority of all the demographic segments we explored. Those who were more likely than average to describe the advertising as believable were adults \$75K in pre-tax income. Population groups who were less likely than average to say the advertising was believable include males and those earning between \$50K and \$75K.

**Table 10: Importance and Believability, by Demographic Segment**

2007 data - % of those exposed to the UMC advertising

	very/somewhat <u>important*</u>	very/somewhat <u>believable*</u>
• Total.....	46%	80%
<b>Gender</b>		
• male .....	45	74
• female .....	46	83
<b>Education</b>		
• high school or less.....	50	81
• some college .....	54	84
• college graduate.....	33	77
<b>Household pre-tax income</b>		
• \$24K or less .....	56	84
• \$25K to \$49K .....	55	83
• \$50K to \$74K .....	32	75
• \$75K+.....	42	85
<b>Age</b>		
• 20s .....	38	79
• 30s .....	53	79
• 40s .....	45	76
• 50s .....	43	84
<b>Generation</b>		
• Busters (ages 22 to 40).....	47	77
• Boomers (ages 41 to 59).....	44	81
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
• Caucasian .....	43	81
• African-American.....	64	79
<b>Have children under 18?</b>		
• yes.....	46	79
• no .....	45	82
• have two or more kids .....	39	76
<b>Marital status</b>		
• married .....	40	79
• all unmarried .....	55	82
• never married .....	59	83
• divorced.....	49	83

\*aggregate percentages = reflects those who said advertising was very/somewhat important / believable.

## **Segmentation Analysis – Psychographics**

Table 11 explores various “psychographic” and lifestyle variables and how those factors correlated with perceptions of UMC advertising.

- ***Importance:*** The UMC advertising generated above-average importance ratings among seekers who want a better church or different faith experience; unchurched adults who felt that a church could help them find fulfillment in life; among those who were looking for a church to participate in; and those who say they attend church “sometimes.” Also, those who say they are searching for meaning and purpose in their life and those who say something feels missing from their lives were also more likely than average to describe the advertising themes as important. **These psychographic characteristics are aligned with the campaign’s target audience, continuing to demonstrate that the campaign “speaks” effectively to its target audience – unchurched adults who are open to attending a church.**

Adults who were affiliated with a Catholic church are the least likely group to describe the advertising as important.

- ***Believability:*** Above-average ratings of believability were found among: seekers who are affiliated with a Baptist church and those who are “looking to find a church where they can participate.” Those who were least likely to find the message believable include those who say they never attend church and churched adults who say they are not very committed to their current church.

**Table 11: Importance and Believability, by Psychographic Segment**

2007 data - % of those exposed to the UMC advertising

	very or somewhat <u>important*</u>	very or somewhat <u>believable**</u>
• Total.....	46%	80%
<i>General psychographics</i>		
• something feels missing from [your] life .....	53	83
• searching for meaning and purpose .....	51	83
• seeking or striving for something better in life .....	46	82
• have emotional pain or frustration in [your] life.....	46	80
<i>Psychographics of churched adults</i>		
• want a better church or different faith experience .....	61	76
• not very committed to [your] current church .....	48	74
• willing to try a new church sometime.....	48	84
<i>Psychographics of unchurched adults</i>		
• feel a church can help you find personal fulfillment....	59	83
• looking for a church where [you] can participate .....	55	87
• might consider attending a church more someday.....	49	80
<i>Church attendance</i>		
• never .....	43	74
• rarely .....	47	78
• sometimes .....	51	81
• frequently .....	44	83
<i>Denominational affiliation (if any)</i>		
• Baptist .....	50	89
• Catholic .....	29	78

\*aggregate percentages = reflects those who said advertising was very/somewhat important

\*\*aggregate percentages = reflects those who said advertising was very/somewhat believable

**Awareness of the UMC “Brand Promise”**

***Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors (aided recall)***

**Among those exposed to UMC advertising, a majority (59%) recalls the tagline, “Open Hearts. Open minds. Open doors.”** That includes 24% who were extremely certain they recall that phrase, 20% who were pretty certain, and 15% who thought they had heard the phrase, but were not certain of it. The percent of respondents who recall the tagline remained relatively unchanged in 2007 (58% in 2006). However, the percent of respondents who were extremely certain of hearing the “brand promise” has decreased from 31% in 2006 to 24% in 2007. The percent of adults who recall seeing the tagline but who were pretty certain rose from 15% to 20%, and those less certain of the tagline also increased 4% from 2006.

**Table 12: Awareness of the Igniting Ministry Tagline**

% of those exposed to the UMC advertising

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
• yes, extremely certain .....	22%	31%	24%
• yes, extremely or pretty certain* .....	42%	47%	44%
• yes, less certain (somewhat certain/not too certain) .....	14%	11%	15%
• don't recall phrase .....	39%	38%	37%
• don't know .....	4%	4%	5%
• <i>sample size</i> .....	327	362	359

Percent of those who had seen/heard UMC advertising. \* aggregate percentages

### 3. Impressions of The United Methodist Church

#### Overall Impressions

**In total, 42% of all respondents said their impression of The United Methodist Church was very or somewhat favorable.** This represents a five-percentage point increase over 2006 (at 37%). Nearly half – 49% – were either neutral or not sure. Only 9% of respondents said that their impression was unfavorable.

**Table 13: Impressions of The United Methodist Church**

% of the seeker target	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
• very favorable.....	11%	12%	13%
• <b>total favorable*</b> .....	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>42%</b>
• neither favorable or unfavorable.....	36%	32%	35%
• not sure .....	15%	20%	14%
• unfavorable .....	10%	11%	9%

\* aggregate percentages

#### Ad Exposure and UMC Positioning

Those who had seen the UMC advertising were much more likely than the unexposed to hold a favorable view of The United Methodist Church (60% to 34%, respectively) – an impressive 26-percentage-point gap. Overall, a majority of the non-exposed group possessed non-substantive views of the UMC (57%), compared to just three out of ten (30%) exposed to the advertising. **The correlation strongly suggests that the advertising effectively shifts people’s attitudes about The United Methodist Church – in particular, the advertising influences people who have limited awareness of the denomination to feel more favorable.**

**Table 14: Views of The United Methodist Church, by Advertising Exposure**

% of those exposed (n=359) and those not exposed (n=843)	<i>exposed to UMC advertising?</i>	
	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
	• very favorable.....	23%
• <b>total favorable*</b> .....	<b>60%</b>	<b>34%</b>
• neither favorable or unfavorable.....	21%	41%
• not sure .....	10%	16%
• unfavorable (somewhat or very unfavorable) .....	9%	9%

\* aggregate percentages

**Overall Impressions of the UMC by Market**

Of the six markets surveyed, Pittsburgh had the largest favorability rating (50%) followed by Tallahassee/Gainesville (46%) and Roanoke (46%). Des Moines (41%) was on par with the average.

Seekers in Springfield (36%) and Sacramento (32%) exhibited the lowest favorability scores of the six markets. Springfield and Sacramento also generated the highest neutral/not sure positioning (57% and 60% respectively).

The Tallahassee/Gainesville market generated the highest unfavorable rating (14%) of the six markets. There were no statistically significant differences when it came to unfavorable positioning among the other five markets. The percentages ranged from 6% unfavorable among Des Moines respondents to 10% among Roanoke residents – all within the range of sampling error compared to the norm. This emphasizes that the challenge in Springfield and Sacramento, much like other markets, relates to non-substantive perceptions, more so than negative opinions of the “UMC brand.”

**Table 15: Overall Impressions of the UMC by Market**

Arrows refer to statistically significant differences by market.

	Total	SAC	PITT	ROA	DM	SPR	TAL
• very favorable.....	13%	9%	13%	15%	11%	11%	16%
• total favorable (very and somewhat)* .....	42%	32%	50%	46%	41%	36%	46%
• total neutral/not sure* .....	50%	60%	44%	44%	53%	57%	41%
• total unfavorable (very and somewhat)* .....	9%	8%	7%	10%	6%	8%	14%

\* aggregate percentages

Key: SAC= Sacramento; PITT= Pittsburgh; ROA= Roanoke; DM= Des Moines; SPR= Springfield (MO);

TAL=Tallahassee/Gainesville

## 4. Willingness to Visit a United Methodist Church

### Willingness to Visit a UMC

**More than half (54%) of the 2007 target audience said they would be either very or somewhat willing to visit a local United Methodist congregation.** This represents a seven-percentage point increase (from 47% in 2006). Overall, 13% of respondents said they would be very willing to visit. Just one out of every four seekers (25%) said they were unwilling to visit a United Methodist church.

**Table 16: Willingness to Visit a UMC**

% of the seeker target

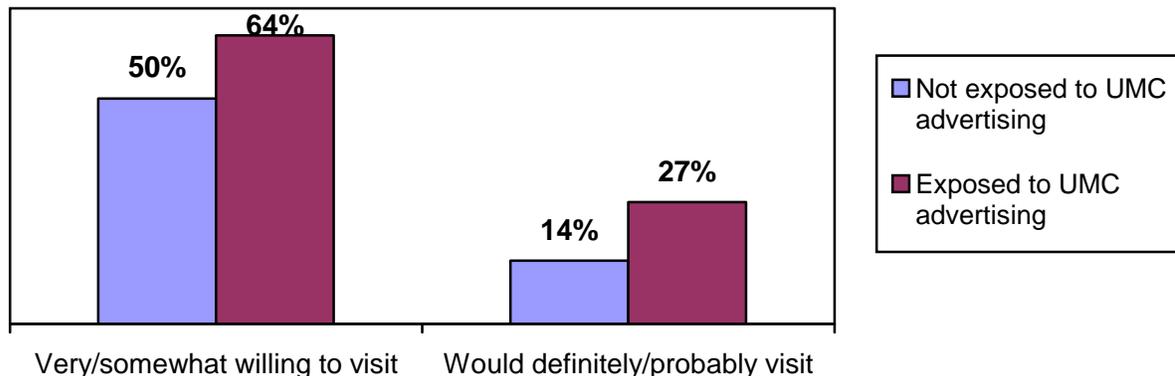
	2005	2006	2007
• very willing .....	13%	11%	13%
• total willing (very and somewhat)* .....	51%	47%	54%
• neither willing nor unwilling .....	18%	16%	17%
• not at all willing.....	20%	22%	17%
• total unwilling (very and somewhat)* .....	28%	29%	25%
• not sure .....	3%	8%	4%

sample size ..... 1202.....1227 ..... 1202

\* aggregate percentages

### Ad Exposure and its Correlation to Willingness to Visit

The data show that being exposed to the UMC ad campaign translates into a greater willingness and likelihood to visit. In fact, among the exposed group, 64% said they would be very or somewhat willing to visit a United Methodist church, compared to 50% of the non-exposed group. Using a different measure of inclination, 27% of exposed said they would definitely or probably visit a United Methodist congregation, compared to just half as many (14%) of non-exposed adults. **Thus, the advertising seems to be influencing people's receptiveness to visiting a United Methodist congregation in the future.**



**Willingness to Visit, by Market**

The top two markets in terms of willingness to visit were Tallahassee/Gainesville (63% expressed willingness) and Roanoke (59%). Pittsburgh (54%), Des Moines (53%) and Springfield (51%) were on par with the overall average (54%). Willingness to visit in Sacramento (45%) scored below average.

**Table 17: Willingness to Visit, by Market**

% of the seeker target							
	Total	SAC	PITT	ROA	DM	SPR	TAL
• very willing .....	13%.....	8% .....	11%.....	18%.....	11% .....	14% .....	16%
• total willing (very and somewhat)* .....	54%.....	45% .....	54%.....	59%.....	53% .....	51% .....	63%

\* aggregate percentages

Key: SAC= Sacramento; PITT= Pittsburgh; ROA= Roanoke; DM= Des Moines; SPR= Springfield (MO);

TAL=Tallahassee/Gainesville

**Predicted Likelihood to Visit, by Market**

The study included an additional indicator to provide an enhanced analysis of future behavior. Respondents were asked how likely they are to visit a United Methodist church in the next three months. Just 5% of respondents claimed to be definitely likely to do so; overall, 18% of respondents said they would either definitely or probably do so. Tallahassee/Gainesville residents were the most likely to visit in the next three months (27%). Roanoke residents (22%) also expressed an above average interest in visiting. Pittsburgh (13%) and Sacramento (14%) emerged as the market with the lowest percentage of likely visitors.

**Table 18: Likely to Visit in Next Three Months, by Market**

% of the seeker target							
	Total	SAC	PITT	ROA	DM	SPR	TAL
• definitely visit.....	5%.....	4% .....	7%.....	6%.....	5% .....	4% .....	5%
• total likely (definitely and probably)* .....	18%.....	14% .....	13%.....	22%.....	15% .....	17% .....	27%

\* aggregate percentages

Key: SAC= Sacramento; PITT= Pittsburgh; ROA= Roanoke; DM= Des Moines; SPR= Springfield (MO);

TAL=Tallahassee/Gainesville

## 5. Phase Two – Church Attendance Impact

### **Church Attendance Data**

In total, 214 churches participated in the Igniting Ministry tracking research by keeping records of *first-time* and *total* worship attendance. For trending purposes, this information was measured alongside similar reporting for 2005 and 2006.

Compared to 2004 (baseline year for this quadrennium’s tracking), the UMC tracking churches showed a 2% decrease in total attendance during the tracking period and an increase of 3% in first-time attendance. October demonstrated a **16% increase in first-time attendance** from 2006, while total attendance in October was off by 1% from a year ago.

The comparisons from 2005 to 2007 show that the average among all reporting churches are better in terms of first-time attendance in October (+15%), but September (-4%) and August (-3%) were slightly below the performance of two years ago.

Keep in mind several realities. First, we do not know what the attendance would have been had no advertising taken place. Second, bear in mind the protracted “sell cycle” related to denominational advertising: the decision to attend a church is complex, so a person’s follow-through on visiting a church is generally thought to be longer than advertising for other types of products or services.

**Table 19: Tracking Church Attendance, Percent Change**

Average percentage change in the number of first-time visitors per church, by year and month

	<u>2006-2007</u>	<u>2005-2007</u>	<u>2004-2007</u>
August	-12%	-3%	-3%
September	-2%	-4%	6%
October	16%	15%	6%

Average percentage change in the total weekend attendance per church, by year and month

	<u>2006-2007</u>	<u>2005-2007</u>	<u>2004-2007</u>
August	-2%	-2%	-3%
September	-2%	-2%	0%
October	-1%	-1%	-4%

## 6. How Pastors Feel About the Igniting Ministry Campaign

### **Pastors' Reactions**

Pastors participating in the tracking research were asked to evaluate six questions regarding the Igniting Ministry campaign. Among the most commonly embraced was “at the conclusion of the four-year Igniting Ministry campaign, you would recommend that The United Methodist Church allocate funds to continue the initiative.” Overall 61% agreed with that statement, including 31% who agreed strongly. Another 20% of pastors disagreed with this notion and 18% were not sure what to conclude.

Another very common sentiment was the 66% of pastors who firmly embraced the statement, “the members of their congregation actively and regularly invite unchurched people to attend events or services at their church.”

Another perception of pastors is that “as a result of the Igniting Ministry campaign, their congregation has experienced a renewed sense of commitment to welcoming new people into their congregation.” Overall, while just 12% agreed strongly, half of pastors (50%) agreed strongly or somewhat.

In all, just one out of three pastors (35%) stated their church “directly participated” in the Igniting Ministry campaign.

Other perceptions about the Igniting Ministry campaign were as follows: 36% of pastors agreed that their congregants are more committed to the UMC as a result of the campaign. Also, just three out of ten of pastors (30%) believed that their congregants are more committed to their church as a result of the Igniting Ministry effort.

**Table 20: What UMC Pastors Say About the Igniting Ministry Campaign**

2007 data -- % of pastors and UMC church representatives, n=153

	strongly <u>agree</u>	agree <u>somewhat</u>	not <u>sure</u>	disagree*
• recommend UMC allocate funds to IM .....	31%	30%	18%	20%
• congregants active in inviting unchurched .....	16%	50%	14%	20%
• congregants have become more welcoming .....	12%	38%	32%	18%
• your church directly participated.....	9%	26%	17%	49%
• congregants more committed to your church .....	4%	26%	46%	24%
• congregants more committed to UMC .....	3%	33%	42%	22%

\* aggregate percentage – disagree strongly and somewhat combined

**Comparisons to Previous Years**

Table 21 depicts differences from 2006 to 2007, by examining the percent of pastors who say they agree strongly with each statement (the so-called top-box response is generally considered to be the most clear-cut indicator of what people think). Due to the sampling error ratio (+/- eight percentage points), the research showed no significant changes from 2006 to 2007.

**Table 21: What UMC Pastors Say About the Igniting Ministry Campaign**  
2005-2007 comparison

<i>pastors who agree strongly</i>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
• recommend UMC allocate funds to IM .....	34%	34%	31%
• congregants active in inviting unchurched .....	19%	20%	16%
• congregants have become more welcoming .....	17%	12%	12%
• your church directly participated.....	13%	10%	9%
• congregants more committed to your church .....	4%	5%	4%
• congregants more committed to UMC .....	5%	3%	3%
	n=149	154	153

# Conclusions

The research provides the following conclusions about Igniting Ministry:

- Awareness of the campaign is excellent – 30%, meaning that three out of ten seekers were reached through the advertising in 2007. Although this is the first year in which the awareness ratings have not grown, it still represents the best advertising rating of the seven year campaign and is “tied” with last year’s rating. It is very difficult to break through in a cluttered media and religious marketplace and yet the Igniting Ministry campaign seems to be doing just that. Furthermore, the **2007 campaign was one of the best ever in terms of communicating the core attributes of the UMC brand.**
- Television remains the driving medium behind the campaign, as it has in each of the previous years of tracking research. **Television is essentially a non-negotiable for effectively reaching spiritual seekers.** Other forms of media are not unimportant, because they help to propel the campaign forward by maximizing the number of impressions. However, television continues to drive the heart of penetration.
- The messages being communicated continue to be believable and important to the audience – although there is some softening on this element of the campaign compared to previous years. **These messages also appear to be effectively shifting people’s attitudes about The United Methodist Church.**
- **More than half of the target audience (54%) expresses willingness to attend a United Methodist church,** with 13% being very willing. Willingness to attend has risen by seven percentage points this year.
- The research continues to demonstrate that **those who are exposed to the UMC advertising (64%) are significantly more likely than the non-exposed (50%) to be willing to attend a United Methodist Church.**
- Average attendance reported by tracking congregations reflects current denominational trends, with a slight decline in total attendance (-2%) and slight increase in first-time attendance (+2%). October saw the highest increase in first-time attendance (up 15% from 2005; up 16% from 2006).
- The feedback from within the denomination, through pastors, indicates **continued support for the campaign and its effect on welcoming skills and commitment among current members of The United Methodist Church.** Perhaps the most compelling piece of information from pastors is their widespread support of the campaign (61% support its continuance; 20% oppose it; and 18% were indifferent).

# Estimating the Accuracy of Survey Data

Do you remember reading the results of a survey and noticing the fine print that says that the results are accurate within plus or minus three percentage points (or some similar number)? That figure refers to the "range of sampling error." The range of sampling error indicates the accuracy of the results and is dependent upon two factors: 1) the sample size and 2) the degree to which the result you are examining is close to 50 percent or the extremes, 0 percent and 100 percent.

You can estimate the accuracy of your survey results using the table below. First, find the column heading that is closest to your sample size. Next, find the row whose label is closest to the response percentages observed for a particular question from your survey. The intersection of the row and column displays the number of percentage points that need to be added to, and subtracted from, the observed result to obtain the range of error. There is a 95 percent chance that the true percentage of the group being sampled is in that range.

Result	Sample Size											
	100	200	300	400	500	600	800	1000	1200	1500	2000	2500
05% or 95%	4.4	3.1	2.5	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	.96	.87
10% or 90%	6.0	4.3	3.5	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.1	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.2
15% or 85%	7.1	5.1	4.1	3.6	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.4
20% or 80%	8.0	5.7	4.6	4.0	3.6	3.3	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.6
25% or 75%	8.7	6.1	5.0	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.0	2.8	2.5	2.3	1.9	1.7
30% or 70%	9.2	6.5	5.3	4.6	4.1	3.8	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.0	1.8
35% or 65%	9.5	6.8	5.5	4.8	4.3	3.9	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.1	1.9
40% or 60%	9.8	7.0	5.7	4.9	4.4	4.0	3.4	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.2	2.0
45% or 55%	9.9	7.0	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.0
50%	10.0	7.1	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.0

Note that the above statistics only relate to the sampling accuracy of survey results. When comparing the results of two subgroups (e.g., men versus women), a different procedure is followed and usually requires a greater sample size. Further, there is a range of other errors that may influence survey results (e.g. biased question wording, inaccurate data tabulation) -- errors whose influence cannot be statistically estimated.