

**COMMISSION ON MINISTRIES, SERVICES AND STRUCTURES**  
**“THE FLOW OF MINISTRIES”**  
**Vernon B Parmenter, Associate Secretary, General Conference**

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**HISTORY**

Ever since departments were established in the Seventh-day Adventist Church there has been a struggle to know how these departments, once established, should best be structured. It was not until recently that they became known as ministries and services. Initially, the departments began as independent organizations and were often referred to as institutions. There was the Tract and Missionary society, the Sabbath School Association, the Religious Liberty work, the Medical work, and later the Publishing work. At the beginning of the twentieth century the General Conference grappled with the situation and determined that the current structure could not continue because it was causing friction, criticism and competition resulting in very little coordination. Finally, it was determined that something should be done to correct the situation. It was agreed that unity and the coordination of mission was more important than anything else and that these departments should no longer operate in isolation.

Addressing this situation, Ellen G White said, “Let every department of our work, every institution connected with our cause, be conducted on considerate, generous lines. Let every branch of the work, while maintaining its own distinctive character, seek to protect, strengthen, and build up every other branch. Men of varied abilities and characteristics are employed for carrying forward the various branches of the work. This has always been the Lord’s plan. Each worker must give his own branch special effort; but it is the privilege of each to study and labor for the health and welfare of the whole body of which he is a member. Not consolidation, not rivalry or criticism, but cooperation, is God’s plan for His institutions.” 7T, pp. 174

In another place, Ellen White stated, “The management of the regular lines must be entirely changed, newly organized.” April 1, 1901, MR 1028, pp. 2, 3. It was at this time that the departments were dissolved as separate units or institutions. A. G. Daniels said, “After we had been operating for a while, we understood from the light given (through Mrs. White), that we must simplify our organization, so as to have as little machinery as possible. Instead of having so many men at work running the machinery, we were to keep them in the field.” April 5, 1901. GCB, pp. 89-91. While stating that the machinery needed to be as little as possible, Daniels also indicated that if no person was assigned to take care of an important facet of the work that aspect of the work would disappear and die. On another occasion he stated, “I suppose they will select the best person they can find in the denomination, to look after that line of work (Sabbath School), the details of which must naturally be looked after to keep the work all astir. So with any other line of work that needs special attention.” 1901 GCB, p. 188.

Once the departments were dissolved as separate units they were then brought under the administration of the General Conference Committee where they received equal treatment and were coordinated in a way that brought respect and made them more effective. A. G. Daniels went on to say, “The ultimate point to be gained is that every department of the cause shall receive the fairest and most efficient administration possible. Another important feature of the plan of reorganization has been to organize Union Conferences and local mission boards in all parts of the field....The plan of organization is precisely the same from the local church up to the General Conference. In every case it provides that the work of God shall be placed in the hands of those to whom it belongs. It distributes responsibilities so that the details of the work in all parts of the world are to be dealt with by men on the ground where these details are to be worked out.....

In addition to the efforts to organize the work more completely in all parts of the field, with the view of placing the management of the work more fully in the hands of all the people, we have endeavored to simplify the machinery as much as possible. What seemed to be unnecessary wheels have been removed....

Many can testify that the blessing of God has attended the efforts that have been made to distribute responsibilities, and thus transfer the care, perplexity, and management that once centered in Battle Creek to all parts of the world, where they belong.” March 30, 1903, 1903 GCB, p. 18

Note the following points that were repeated again and again in the accounts of the day:

- Reorganization should result in simplicity-with as little machinery as possible
- There is a need for more men in the field rather than in leadership roles
- There is a need for someone to foster the work-to keep things astir-not to emasculate the system totally
- It is important to distribute responsibilities-decentralization
- Contextualization is best achieved by workers in the field

There is no doubt that we can relate to all the major points of that time. It would seem that most of the issues confronting the church in the early 1900’s have returned with stronger emphasis today.

Most of the material that emanates from the early days spells out the need for decentralization and for placing the burden on those in the field, with more “men on the ground.” This did not mean however, that there was no role for the General Conference to play. A. G. Daniels stated at another time, “It falls to the lot of the General Conference to provide lessons, to originate plans and methods for developing all the interests of the Sabbath-School work. But I do not think the General Conference nor the departmental committee should have much to do with the details of the Sabbath-School. They should study the broad lines of Sabbath-School interests, and leave the details to be carried out by the brethren in different parts of the field.” May 28, 1901. RG 11, Bk. 23, pp. 173-177, 179-181.

## **FURTHER COUNSEL FROM ELLEN G WHITE**

### **Decentralized authority and contextualization-**

“There are general matters about which it will be necessary to consult the business men in Battle Creek, but a few men in that place should not be depended on to pass resolutions with reference to local affairs in countries of which they know nothing. They are not on the ground, and they cannot take in the situation. The Lord is willing to lead His ministers and missionaries in distant countries. He is willing to guide them in the superintendence of their work...Distant conferences should not be compelled to depend upon Battle Creek to manage for them....

.....It is not in the order of God that men, supposed to be men of mind and judgment, should lay aside the privilege of acting for themselves, to depend on the decisions of the councils at Battle Creek. If the Lord has located His sanctuary at Battle Creek and in no other place, it is right and sensible to refer all questions to that place. But we know that He presides over every portion of His moral vineyard. To every man according to his ability, He has given work, and this work is to be done.

....The men at Battle Creek are no more inspired to give unerring advice than are the men in other places, to whom the Lord has entrusted the work in their locality...

Finite man must not be depended on to decide what shall be done and shall not be done in distant fields. All should remember that if the Lord has a special work in any vicinity, all heaven is interested in that work....

It is not right that minds should be directed to look to Battle Creek for advice upon everything. In every place there are special interests which must be managed according to the circumstances which present themselves...” EGW, L88P-96, “Extracts on Foreign Fields,” Special Testimonies, 1899, pp. 8-12. ++

### **Departments in harmony but with individuality-**

“Each (department/institution) is to stand in harmony one with the other, yet preserve their individuality of action, responsible to God and Him alone.” EGW, Ltr. 35a, 1895. Special Testimonies Regarding Publishing Work, pp. 23-5. ++

### **Departments to be united-**

“It has been presented to me that every department of the work is to be united in one great whole. The work of God is to prepare a people to stand before the Son of Man at His coming, and this work should be a unit. The work that is to fit a people to stand firm in the last great day must not be a divided work.” EGW, Sanitarium Chapel Talk, Nov. 13, 1900, pp. 1,2,3. Special Testimonies, 1900. ++

### **Need for organization-**

“But let it ever be remembered that the work must move solidly and in complete harmony with God's plan of organization. Churches are to be organized...” 1SM113

“But although these difficulties exist, will it abolish them to put an end to organization? I am sure that the Lord has wrought in the organization that has been perfected, and the fact that there are discouraging features in the work should not be thought a sufficient reason for disorganization. Much light was given to us in reference to the organization of

churches, and yet we had a hard battle to fight in perfecting organization; but the victory was gained at last, and now shall the church be disorganized because of indifference, formality, and pride? Shall we go back to disorder because unconsecrated members of the church have placed upon the work the mold of man, and sought to fashion the church to meet a popular standard?" FE254.2

"The infinite is not, and never will be, bound about by human organizations or human plans." FE441

"Ministers should love order and should discipline themselves, and then they can successfully discipline the church of God and teach them to work harmoniously like a well-drilled company of soldiers. If discipline and order are necessary for successful action on the battlefield, the same are as much more needful in the warfare in which we are engaged as the object to be gained is of greater value and more elevated in character than those for which opposing forces contend upon the field of battle. In the conflict in which we are engaged, eternal interests are at stake.

Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire the co-operation of the heavenly messengers must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God can co-operate with them. But never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder. All these evils are the result of Satan's efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy courage, and prevent successful action." 1T 649

### **Need for reorganization-**

"God has not put any kingly power in our ranks to control this or that branch of the work. The work has been greatly restricted by the efforts to control it in every line....There must be a renovation, a reorganization; a power and strength must be brought into the committees that are necessary." EGW, April 1, 1901, MR 1028, p. 26.++

### **TODAY**

In recent years the question continues to be asked, "Are the departments still relevant for this new age and if not, is there a better way of meeting the Church's needs?" Numerous surveys have been conducted, serious studies have been undertaken, and endless hours of discussion have engaged us for a long time.

The Church at large has reviewed these issues for a number of years. In the last twenty years we have seen the introduction of the Church Ministries Department. Prior to 1990 there was another study that recommended the elimination of numerous General

Conference departmental budgets following the General Conference Session of that same year. During the years 1997-1999 further study was given to the subject, which again included input from the world divisions. And there was the study by the Commission in 2004 which made several recommendations for the elimination of several departments at General Conference level.

## **OPTIONS**

When we talk about restructuring there are probably as many options as there are those who would like to render an opinion:

1. There is the current structure which is sometimes referred to as the jug and mug method, where our constituents are used to having programs passed down from above (“above” may refer to the General Conference, division, union or conference)
2. There was the Church Ministries Model, which was an excellent attempt to overcome compartmentalization, achieve coordination and provide unity of action. It had great potential in theory and I am not sure why it failed and whether there was an evaluation conducted to determine its weaknesses and strengths. Perhaps a modified Church Ministries model could have merit.
3. There was the recent proposal made by the Commission of 2004 but it was essentially a recommendation to eliminate departmental budgets at the General Conference level and was perceived by many as a mere cost-cutting approach. Some were convinced that it threatened our unity and offered nothing to expand the mission of the Church and may have even weakened it. See Appendix A.
4. There was also the alternative model submitted to the Commission in 2004 which maintained limited representation of all departments at the General Conference and was seen by some to address the issue of unity not seen in the proposal that was submitted to the General Conference Executive Committee. See Appendix B.
5. There are models from other denominations we could study but because of their congregational nature and our unique world-wide structure very little might be learned.
6. We could generate numerous other models if we opened the door to our church members and employees to express themselves.

The Church has grown dramatically in numbers; is culturally diverse; has a membership that is more educated than ever before; has technology that was not available just a few years ago; is engaged in mission in an ever secular world; is challenged by the 10/40 window where millions of people have never heard the gospel and is pressured with giving its membership more ownership than ever before.

There are voices within the church which continue to cry out for change to meet an ever changing world. If leadership doesn't respond to these cries the Church may have to contend with additional issues.

## OTHER DENOMINATIONS

In an extensive search of the web I discovered that a large number of protestant denominations are looking at similar issues and have opted to restructure. While the majority of these organizations are primarily structured on the congregational model it seems that they are confronted with many of the issues that we face. The membership of these organizations is calling for minimalist staffing, a release of finances to the local church for ministry, up to date resources to reach an ever changing community and a focus on strategic plans to reach the unreached. The Presbyterian Church states, “We envision a connectional structure that is centered on serving and equipping the local congregation for contextually relevant ministry and mission. Cutting edge ministry requires ongoing training for both sustained spiritual maturity and adept cultural exegesis. For this reason, education, consulting, planning and resourcing will be priorities.”

The Brethren church, in its struggle to solve these problems, states, “To undermine the denomination’s effectiveness through duplication of administrative energies and competition for resources is to fail to live out God’s call for our denomination.

We envision a cohesive, streamlined structure which:

- promotes cooperation and unity within the church;
- empowers ministries at all levels (local, district, area and national);
- facilitates collaboration and shared ministry;
- reduces anxiety and the resulting competition for available resources;
- models good stewardship of human and fiscal resources; and
- “builds up the body” and strengthens our collective witness to our constituents and the world around us.

Ideally, structural transformation emerges naturally when organizations have determined the following:

- a shared vision which points to a destination/goal/outcome;
- an examination of the “terrain” which must be traversed; and
- a determination of what “vehicle” is required to cross that terrain.

Structure is that vehicle. Choosing transportation without a clear destination and roadmap is unhealthy and untenable. Reorganization for re-organization’s sake is counter to the work of the Spirit. A new vision for ministry is required in the new world that is emerging.

We envision a simplified, Christ-called and Spirit-led structure. We therefore recommend that a study be made of at least the following factors:

- assessment of the overall health and effectiveness of all ministries;
- identification of any ineffective, redundant or overlapping programs;
- envisioning structures that are inter-affective and representative of the diverse needs of our denomination;
- development of minimalist structure consisting of only that which serves our identified ministries; and
- utilization of Brethren rather than outside consultants. Informed by our heritage and guided by our faith, Brethren better understand how Brethren best function.”

It would be well for us as an Adventist Church to also assess the overall health and effectiveness of all ministries and to identify any ineffective, redundant and overlapping programs. Perhaps these measures alone could streamline our current system to the point of total satisfaction for all concerned parties.

The Southern Baptists state, “One of the great needs for local churches and pastors today is the restructuring of church polity and authority to the degree that their ministries are consciously governed by Scripture, not some outside program (whether denominationally inspired or not). We must realize that all denominational servants are just that--servants of the churches. All denominational institutions and agencies exist to serve local churches.... But, where our practice (church life) does not live up to our theory (polity) the fault lies primarily with the local church, not the denomination. A church must not abdicate its calling regardless of internal or external pressures.”

The common themes for other denominations are much the same as for us. Leadership’s focus should be on the local church; minimalist structure and staffing; unity and empowerment for mission; stewardship of human and fiscal resources; and building up the body of Christ.

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POSSIBLE REASONS FOR CHANGE?**

Change is needed because:

- Local church officers and pastors are bombarded with programs from the conference, union, division and General Conference. In a recent General Conference committee it was discovered that the General Conference is promoting at least 19 programs at this present time. Add to this the programs initiated by the division, the union and conferences/missions. It is impossible for our pastors and lay leaders to take on board all of the excellent programs that are urged upon them. It would seem that we need a simpler structure so that we do fewer programs but make sure that the ones we do, we do well and that we evaluate those programs.
- There are so many things that we have done traditionally that are no longer making an impact. An evaluation needs to be initiated to determine whether some of these traditions are meeting the need. I resonate with the “Brethren” when they say that we need:
  - an assessment of the overall health and effectiveness of all ministries
  - to identify any ineffective, redundant or overlapping programs
  - an envisioning of the structures that are inter-affective and representative of the diverse needs of our denomination;
  - to develop a minimalist structure consisting of only that which serves our identified ministries

- to utilize Brethren rather than outside consultants. Informed by our heritage and guided by our faith, Brethren better understand how Brethren best function.
- Our current structure does not respond very well to initiatives sponsored by the local church. There is still the mentality in many parts of the world that all good things must come from above (and not necessarily from heaven either). If a pastor and members respond to all of the programs handed down from above there is no room for their own initiatives. And it could be that the plans handed down from above are not relevant for some communities.
- The current structure of departments continues to be compartmentalized. Most departments continue to focus, with tunnel vision, to develop and promote their particular philosophies and materials without referencing what other departments are doing. It reflects somewhat a hierarchical structure and does not lend itself to unity or the idea of networking, which so many seek today.
- The Church is growing rapidly. There is now a demand, more than ever before, to provide diversified and contextualized resources for ministry. And in places where there is little or no growth there is need for specialized ministries to reach the unreached. These resources are probably best produced in the locations where they are most needed.
- There are diminishing financial and human resources in local churches. As churches struggle to meet their financial commitments or live with a lack of local church pastors they look for alternatives to find the resources they need. There is the temptation to withhold funds that rightfully should be passed on to other bodies. (Probably one of the reasons why the Tithe Commission has been appointed.) Many of them perceive a top heavy structure that could be trimmed to provide the financial and human resources they desperately seek. If the Church does not respond to this need soon, church members will vote with their dollars.
- The present departmental model is inadequate for many levels of the Church. It is not flexible enough. While the Church has developed an ideal model of ministries and services to support the mission of the Church, it is not reflected and cannot, for various reasons, be reflected at all levels of the Church. It is not reflected at all levels due to a lack of funds and personnel. Departmental directors are frustrated because many programs are lost or become redundant in various parts of the world.

## **THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH-ANOTHER OPTION**

May I suggest an option for us to consider? It could be perceived to be somewhat radical and simple but would need less machinery than our current mode of operation and would provide more workers for the field. What ever we do we must not jeopardize the unity of our world-wide organization and weaken the mission program we currently enjoy.

Hopefully, any restructuring undertaken will strengthen our unity and make our outreach more dynamic. While the majority of our constituencies will support cost-cutting measures, I believe they will also embrace change that encourages unity and makes mission more powerful and effective. May I venture that the issue of saving money should not be as critical to us as the issue of unity and mission.

Clearly we are not alone in our struggle to meet the needs of today. And the common theme for all of us, other denominations included, seems to be that we all have a commitment to the local church to ensure that it is equipped to do ministry in the most effective manner. Traditionally the departments have been assigned the responsibility of providing resources and training to church members, identifying their spiritual gifts and providing opportunities for them to use their gifts.

We need to emphasize again and again that it is the local church which should be the center of our focus. All of our departments at all levels should have this clear understanding and should be servants to both church members and pastoral teams. If this is the case the laity and church pastors are probably the best persons to advise us as to whether they are being effectively provided for. Most of our previous surveys have been weighted in response from church employees-departmental directors and administrators. The problem with this is that, “turkeys never vote for Thanksgiving,” as was noted by a famous General Conference Executive Committee member.

In the past it seems that many of our attempts at reorganization have been band-aid solutions. We have decided for some reason, probably without adequate study, that the General Conference is top heavy, or that the divisions are closer to the people, or that we could use the budgets for some other purpose like the 10/40 window or that the departments are not effective. It could be that the departments are not effective because we have not placed the best persons in positions of leadership. The divisions are closer to the people but are they close enough and do they have sufficient personnel to pick up what needs to be done if departments are eliminated at General Conference level. While some or all of these perceptions may be true, I wonder if we have considered how much more clearly we might understand the needs if we were to listen to our church pastors and members.

## **SURVEYS**

It is absolutely necessary that we conduct surveys to find out what our constituencies are saying. And we need up to date data if we want to be credible. We need to take the whole church with us in this endeavor. If we take the time to consult our members they will be more ready to accept change. We also need to share the information we collect with the membership. This could be done through various means-the internet, publications and the Hope channel, e.g. with panel discussions and debates. If we keep everyone informed along the way we will not have a major debate when it comes to making the final decisions at the Session in Atlanta in 2010.

If we truly believe that our structures are set up to serve the local churches these same churches should play a major role in informing us of their needs. It might be advisable for us to conduct two surveys-or at least have two parts to the survey-one for the church community and one for church employees.

The results may astound us, particularly when we compare the outcomes of the two surveys. And when the results are in we need to be big enough and brave enough to accept the results and to take whatever steps are necessary to make changes.

It is almost impossible for church employees to judge objectively because, whether we are willing to admit it or not, the issue of job-protection always lies beneath the surface. Job-protection takes place largely because of the status Adventist culture has assigned to departmental leadership. And even though we tell the workers that they will still be employed, for many it is still a loss of status. We need to build a new culture that elevates the local church pastor in the eyes of our church members so that these positions are sought after more than departmental and administrative positions.

I believe the surveys will confirm for us that we need a much simpler structure with less machinery, as was indicated in the early days of our Church history. Most other denominations have a much simpler structure than we do. We need a structure that encourages the Church at all levels to be united, to be engaged in contextualized mission, to listen to each other and to speak with one voice. There are too many departmental voices clamoring for attention. And we need more men in the field.

Perhaps restructuring needs to begin with the local churches, not the General Conference. We need to discover what it is that the local churches need more than anything else to make them effective evangelistic units. Once we have made this discovery we will have a foundation upon which we can build support structures that will enable the local churches to rise to the level that is most desired. Any structure we build for the future needs to have the capacity to respond to the needs and requests of the local church as well as to undertake world-wide strategies of mission.

We need to ask, "Have the departments been successful in fulfilling the role of responding to the needs of the local church or have they had their own agenda? Do the churches even know about the majority of programs being promoted by the departments?" Before a new structure is developed we need to answer these questions. If we discover that they have not been successful then we need to make some changes and the survey/s should point us in the right direction showing us what kinds of changes need to be made. If, on the other hand, we discover that they have been successful, we need to recognize this and maintain the elements of success that are currently enjoyed.

Recognizing that the core values of the church currently are unity and mission we need to develop a structure that will achieve and support these goals. I am convinced also that if we develop a new structure that we need to select new nomenclature as an appealing identity that will signal to everyone that not only is this a total paradigm shift from

departments/ministries but a new way of life for the church that brings revival and a true spirit of mission.

### **Possible Clusters/Teams**

And once we determine what it is that the local churches need, to be more effective in ministry, it may be helpful to simplify the system by assembling the tasks together in related clusters. Some of the possible categories could be:

- Worship (Making worship more meaningful and joyful-leading to revival)– Sabbath School, Youth, Ministerial, Church Manual, Responsibilities of church officers, Stewardship, Children’s Ministries
- Mission (Preparation and involvement in outreach) – Personal Ministries, Women’s Ministries, Youth, Communication, Health Ministries, Children’s Ministries, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Publishing, Discipleship
- Nurture (Keeping faith alive–strengthening the church family ties) - Women’s Ministries, Youth, Health Ministries, Stewardship, Family Ministries, Children’s Ministries, Education
- Fellowship (Providing opportunity for personal contact socially and spiritually - building unity) – Youth, Sabbath School, Divine Service, Children’s Ministries, Social activities
- Specialized services such as the Education and Youth Departments (making Christian education available)– Schools, Colleges, Universities
- Administration (Leadership training)– Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses, Departmental Leadership, Church Manual, Minister’s Manual, Elder’s Manual, Ministerial Association, Trust Services

### **OR ALTERNATIVELY:**

- **Evangelism and Witness:** We are called to invite all people to faith, repentance, and the abundant life of God in Jesus Christ, to encourage congregations in joyfully sharing the gospel, and through the power of the Holy Spirit to grow in membership and discipleship.
- **Justice and Compassion:** We are called to address wrongs in every aspect of life and the whole of creation, intentionally working with and on behalf of poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people as did Jesus Christ even at risk to our corporate and personal lives.
- **Spirituality and Discipleship:** We are called to deeper discipleship through Scripture, worship, prayer, study, stewardship and service, and to rely on the Holy Spirit to mold our lives more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

- **Leadership and Vocation:** We are called to lead by Jesus Christ's example, to identify spiritual gifts, and to equip and support Christians of all ages for faithful and effective servant leadership in all parts of the body of Christ.
- **Church government:** We are called to address opportunities and concerns which clarify the role and responsibilities of connectedness and communication in the life of the church.

The surveys should clearly tell us what elements are critical to the local church. The combination of these elements in clusters/teams probably will not match the clear cut boundaries of the current departments. It may not be easy to slot the departments into a particular group because they would overlap in the above categories. We need to simplify the structure for the local church and consequently for other levels of the church as well.

I believe that we should choose no more than eight clusters/teams, preferably six, identify them clearly, describe their functions and establish representatives at the levels where needed—from the local church through to the General Conference. However, each level should be given a complimentary function, not one that is duplicated. (I would reiterate that these clusters/teams should not be called “departments.” The most popular term today is “ministry” but it might be, with further evaluation, that a more suitable nomenclature can be found.) And it could mean that some levels may have no representatives at all or a minimal number.

We need a new structure that will respond to the world we live in with its-

1. New technology-need for less employees
2. Easy methods of communication-need for less travel, easy sharing of ideas and networking
3. Educated membership-passing the management role to trusted members
4. Need for fewer employees at each level
5. Membership needing to be heard-having a larger role in leadership decisions
6. Need of leadership and a structure that will provide answers to issues not currently faced because of the method of election

### **Functions of Each Level**

The following ideas are merely suggestions for the role each level of organization could fulfill. They are suggestions only and will need to be modified to adapt to whatever structure the whole church may ultimately adopt, e.g. should conferences, unions or divisions be eliminated.

It needs to be emphasized that the structure at each level needs to be open to programs and recommendations being initiated at any level, especially the local church and that a network is established on the internet for ready communication.

1. **Local Church**-each of the clusters/teams at local church level may be staffed by more than one person and if staffed with a group of people a leader would need to be appointed. Small churches may only have one person to care for a particular “ministry” while larger churches may have a group appointed for this purpose.

The teams will vary from church to church and will be adapted to suit the demographics of the membership and the needs of the local community. It would not be necessary to define exactly how each group would function but it would be important to determine clearly the area of responsibility for each group, allowing opportunity for initiative and Spirit-led activity. And as God blesses each ministry it would share the blessings with sister churches and the next level of the organization.

**Example:** In a significantly large church it would be possible to appoint five people to staff the Worship Ministry function. One of the five would be appointed the leader and the other four persons would specialize—planning the divine service, Sabbath School, music, youth, children, etc. but always in a coordinated manner.

2. **Conference/Mission-**group leaders at this level would be responsible for training, responding to requests of local churches, assessing the priority of successful programs that need resources produced for them to function efficiently. Once resources are produced conference/mission group leaders would be responsible for making them culturally viable. Staffing at this level might be more numerous than at other levels. It is conceivable that all of the leaders at this level could form one cluster/team, particularly in a small conference but in larger conferences there could be several clusters/teams depending on the demand.

**Example:** It is envisaged that there might be more leaders at this level than at any other. The Worship Ministry group would have a leader with three or four assistants who would specialize in a particular field such as music, youth and children's worship, who would become involved in training and sharing resources with the local church.

3. **Unions-**group leaders at this level, listening carefully to conference/mission leaders would produce resources and train conference/mission leaders to use the resources. Leaders would be responsible for training their counterparts only. It would be expected that less group leaders would be needed at this level. In fact it could be that only one cluster/team is needed at this level. More specifically, union leaders would:
  - a. Prepare contextualized resources for the territories of their own union with copies to the Divisions/World Headquarters Coordinator for cataloguing.
  - b. Communicate with counterparts in all unions, responding to service requests for significant and large events within the home union.
  - c. Train counterparts.
  - d. Participate in division and regional advisories as approved.
  - e. Provide and enable visioning for the union in association with conference offices.
  - f. Provide certification where needed.

**Example:** Perhaps there might be two people (depending on the size of the union and the demand from the conferences/missions for resources) assigned to each “ministry” group who again might specialize, but not necessarily.

4. **Divisions-** group leaders at this level would be minimal in number (in fact one individual could care for more than one cluster/team) and would be responsible for training their union counterparts in leadership strategies. They would be responsible for monitoring the group ministries concept to ensure that the channels of communication are open in both directions. They would participate in promoting the global vision of the church. It is conceivable that divisions may not need group leaders at all, depending on what final structure the whole church adopts. If it is considered necessary to have ministry representatives at this level, there should be no more than one cluster/team.
  
5. **General Conference** - group leaders at this level would be minimal in number and would primarily have a coordinating role. It would not normally be their role to produce resources. They would organize worldwide advisories and enable visioning with division/union leaders. They would also provide certification where needed. Specialized services may be assigned for global responsibilities such as producing the Sabbath-School pamphlets and accreditation of colleges/universities. It is quite feasible that only one cluster/team would be adequate at this level but the size of the world church may demand more than this. However, there should not be as many clusters/teams as at conference or union level. More specifically the General Conference leaders would:
  - a. Serve as coordinators between union/division offices.
  - b. Prepare and catalogue resources produced by union/division offices and other entities.
  - c. Foster networking between union/division offices.
  - d. Primarily train union/division office counterparts.
  - e. Provide and enable visioning for the world field, in association with union/division offices, and foster cross cultural discussions on core issues.
  - f. Provide certification where needed.
  - g. Respond to union/division requests to participate in significant and large events.
  - h. Focus on underdeveloped areas such as the 10/40 window and large urban areas.
  - i. Organize world wide and regional advisories as approved.

The roles at each level will need to be adjusted to suit the final structure of the church. Nevertheless it is important that each level be given a distinctive role to play so that there is no duplication of effort, with the possibility that one level is eliminated. In the interests of targeting unentered areas, worldwide mission projects and unity, certain functions should be maintained at the World Headquarters. With no more than eight “ministries” at any one level the structure should operate with less machinery and personnel.

I fully admit that there are some gaps in this proposal. Some of these gaps can only be filled when further information is available. While this is just one of many models there are some essential elements that I believe are worthy of further consideration. They are:

1. Reorganization should result in simplicity-with as little machinery as possible
2. There is a need for more men/women in the field rather than in leadership roles
3. There is a need for someone to foster the work-to keep things astir-not to emasculate the system totally
4. The importance of distributing responsibilities-decentralization
5. Contextualization is best achieved by workers in the field
6. The General Conference has a role to play for the world field particularly to ensure unity and coordination of mission
7. There is a need for organization and reorganization
8. Departments must work in coordination with each other to achieve unity but this does not necessarily mean that they are to sacrifice their individuality
9. Our local churches should be the center of our focus and should be the major source of information to plan for the future
10. It is important to be responsive to the needs of the local church rather than leadership imposing ideas upon them-not the jug and mug method-ideas should largely be initiated at local church level
11. Clusters of functions may simplify the procedure at all levels-less departments-less personnel
12. Church members are demanding a greater role in the decision making processes
13. No duplication of effort at any level-the need to eliminate departments at some levels

I am convinced that this time around we need to include our membership more fully than ever before to determine how we should move ahead. Not only will this confirm for us what is important to our local churches but it will ensure that they are on board when we make the final proposals. Once we have completed the surveys we might find that our assumptions of need are quite different to theirs. And if we respond to the needs accordingly we will have achieved what needs to be done. Therefore I present this option merely as an opening statement and if there is anything good in what I have proposed we will have made a start.

## APPENDIX A

### GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTRIES AND SERVICES REVIEW COMMISSION REPORT Silver Spring, Maryland April 7, 2005

The 2004 General Conference Annual Council Executive Committee voted to establish a General Conference Ministries and Services Review Commission. This Commission consisted of a broad representation of individuals from around the world who seriously and carefully examined the ministries and services provided by the General Conference to determine the best and most effective way to serve the needs of a rapidly expanding global Church.

#### RATIONALE

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today is a global faith community of more than 20 million people in over 200 countries. It is fast-growing in a fast-changing world, which necessitates an ongoing preparation to meet new challenges and calls for monitored and intentional change in order to keep it mission-focused, efficient, and wise in using available financial and personnel resources.

In times of great and rapid change, it is important to keep in mind the identity and mission of the church. Through the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen White said:

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.” (Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9)

The decision-makers in the church are here reminded of the church’s identity and primary goal. The Church is appointed by God for the salvation of men and organized for service with the mission to carry the gospel to the world.

Reflecting upon how the Lord has led us in the past, we see that, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1863, it was organized for effective mission. Careful study of the re-organization of the church in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has resulted in the clear understanding that:

“Ellen White’s primary concern was for an organization that was functional in accomplishing the mission of the denomination. Functional efficiency was the important element to her, rather than any particular structure. From her perspective, structure was not an end in itself. Rather, it was a means to accomplishing Adventism’s worldwide mission. As a basic principle undergirding her counsel on reorganization is that, organizational structures need to be changed and/or modified whenever conditions deem such change to be advisable.” (G. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White*, 1996, 9. 70)

The primary purpose of our organization, therefore, is God’s mission. And the efficiency of our organization needs to be evaluated in terms of how well it fulfills this mission as God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men.

It is therefore important for the world church to seriously ask--Are we accomplishing our mission? Are we efficient? Is our organization effective? Or are there better ways to do it?

The task given by the Annual Council, 2004, to the General Conference Ministries and Services Review Commission is essentially to “review all the ministries and services of the General Conference to determine the most effective means of assisting the world church to fulfil her mission”.

The context in which this report should be read is **the mission of the church** and **the rapid changes** occurring both in the church itself and in the world we seek to reach. The purpose of the report is to strengthen the work of the Church by maximising the financial resources, by facilitating contextualized services to the local church, and stimulating networking.

It is important to make some comments on the significant and rapid **changes** that affect the very core of local church life and witness.

**First, global church growth** today creates needs for educating the many new members in a diversified and contextualized way. On the other hand, where there is **lack of growth** there is also a need for making the life of the church and its form of mission more contextualized in order to reach the unreached. In both situations, the need is now felt in the world church for services and ministries that are initiated and developed in close relationship to the life, nurture and witness of the local church. This is more efficient, less costly, simpler, and provides a product that is adapted to the needs of people.

**Second**, another factor of change felt in many local churches is a **new kind of thinking** in some parts of the world, associated with what is termed as “postmodern thought”. Growing numbers of church members today prefer working in a mode that is considered to be more effective. They are moving away from departmentalism, not only because of a desire for efficiency, but because they don’t believe in formal institutions but networks. They don’t believe in hierarchical authority but relationships. They don’t believe in compartmentalisation but wholeness. Therefore, there is a need for the local church and other levels of organisation to organise more flexible and all-round services and ministries that meet local needs.

**Third**, the **strategic use of financial and human resources** in the world church is becoming a growing concern for the fulfilment of the church’s mission. Resources need to be moved from areas where the church is strong, to the 10/40 window, where church members are 0.001% of the population. The church’s services and ministries in these vast areas do not match the structure of ministries and services at the General Conference. There is an enormous need for well-educated, contextualizing front-line mission workers. The church needs resources to cater for these specialised needs.

**Fourth**, while the quality of work provided by General Conference ministries and services is excellent, other levels of the Church cannot afford comparable staffing levels. Thus, the imbalance of the current organization of General Conference ministries and services with other levels of the Church has the effect that many programs and resources do not reach **the local church** or have any impact upon it. Several factors contribute to this:

(1) Despite comparatively strong General Conference ministries and service structures at General Conference level, the products delivered have little impact on the local church, which is the primary focus in the context of church growth. At the same time, the local church has an enormous need for nurture and equipping for ministry, which must be satisfied in new ways. It is believed that this challenge may be met by

strengthening the ministries and services at levels closer to the local church, allowing them to be more focused on contextualized resource production for local church needs, and developing strong networking relationships within regional and world church structure.

(2) The growth of the church means a growth in the number of local churches. The standard pattern, both in the Western World and the Majority World, is that local churches as well as conferences and some unions cannot afford a fully developed ministries and services structure, filling each of the functions of 16 departments. Limited finances are a serious reality. Many divisions, therefore, can no longer afford departmental representation for every ministry and service and must seek new and more flexible and efficient ways of doing the work of training and resourcing the churches.

(3) There is duplication of General Conference ministries and services work, in some respects, at division levels, which is unnecessary. Instead, since new communication technology facilitates global contacts and expeditious sharing of material, there is value in fostering a culture of networking and sharing between divisions.

(4) Thanks to a good education system in our church, we recognise that there is now more expertise in divisions than before who are able to care for the needs of training and resourcing the unions. The challenge is not a lack of people but a lack of finances to staff church offices sufficiently in some places.

**Fifth, unity** is a divine value for the church. The world church, therefore, has made unity one of its current strategic values. The unity of our church is under threat today and we must act wisely in order to protect it. One form of threat to unity is our rapid global growth. If we are not able to adapt our structures to this situation and the changes briefly outlined above, this will in itself constitute a threat to unity. We need to bear in mind that unity in the church consists of many elements. (1) It is a spiritual gift that comes from God, being based on the experience of salvation and the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. (2) It involves sharing the same faith, and therefore it is an important duty of local pastors and elders to teach congregations the biblical teachings of our church. The Adult Bible Study Guide is another way in which the church seeks to safeguard theological unity. (3) In terms of structures and methods, there are certainly many important unifying elements, particularly the way we are organized as a church, but we must also accept that there is and will always be significant diversity and delegation of responsibility. We are convinced that the proposal made here is not a threat to unity, but safeguards unity by allowing for a more efficient and contextualized form of services and ministries which is more flexible and adaptable to the needs of regions, conferences and local churches.

These are, then, some of the factors that make up the context for this report. The Church is affected by significant and rapid **changes** that affect the very core of local church life and witness. Thus, the proposal brought here is in no way about the performance of the General Conference ministries and services directors, but about efficiency and organisation. It is about moving the church's resources closer to where the actual services and ministries are implemented in the life and witness of the church.

## **PROCESS**

The Church at large has reviewed similar issues for a number of years. In the last

twenty years we have seen the introduction of Church Ministries. Prior to 1990 there was a further study that recommended the elimination of numerous budgets following the General Conference Session of 1990. During the years 1997-1999 further study was given to the subject which again included input from the World divisions.

The Commission met as a body on three occasions, October 14, 2004, January 10-11, 2005, and April, 6-7, 2005. In its first meeting, on October 14, the Commission initiated a process to develop an instrument for conducting a survey as part of its method of operation. It also asked for a review of, and copies of past surveys and studies that were relevant. After studying these reports on January 10-11, the Commission decided that the information provided by these past studies and surveys were adequate for the current review. It therefore decided to proceed with the task as outlined in the terms of reference. The material used at this meeting was discussed at length. We have listed these documents here, marking with an asterisk those that were sent out in advance for private reading:

1. \*The General Conference—Functional Relationships Between the World Headquarters and its Divisions With Particular Reference to ‘Departments’—Jan Paulsen, March 1998
2. \*Reflections on Democracy—Jan Paulsen, September 1993
3. \*A Modest Proposal for Structural Change in the Adventist Church—George R Knight
4. \*General Conference Mission Statement
5. \*General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2003 Actual Expenses Budget
6. \*General Conference Ministries and Services Minutes of October 14, 2004
7. General Conference Administration, Departments, Service Units—Report of the Structural Consultation Committee on the opinion survey of June 1999
8. Divisions who Responded to the Survey of World Services of the General Conference Departments/Services—Kloosterhuis File
9. Services to the World Church—March 11, 1997
10. General Conference Leadership Council—Purpose, Outcomes, and Action Plans For Selected Cost Centers—Report to 1998 Annual Council
11. Draft Survey prepared by the Commission Sub Committee appointed October 14, 2004

The Commission met in Orlando on January 10 and 11, 2005 and developed an interim report which was distributed and discussed with the General Conference Ministries and Services Directors. The Commission Sub Committee listened to verbal responses from ministries and services personnel in a special General Conference Leadership Council (GCLC) meeting on January 25, 2005, where the Interim Commission Report was presented. Opportunity was given the next day, January 26, 2005, for ministries and services directors to meet with the Sub Committee on an individual basis to share their concerns. They further gave attention to written submissions by General Conference ministries and services directors and provided an opportunity for selected personnel to speak on behalf of currently elected personnel before the full Commission on April 6, 2005.

Division presidents serving on the Commission also discussed the report with their particular divisions and union administrators and ministries and services directors. Each division submitted a written response for the Commission to consider.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

The following terms of reference were assigned to the Commission by the 2004 Annual Council. A list of the members of the Commission is included in Appendix A.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Review all the ministries and services of the General Conference in consultation with the Strategic Planning Office and world divisions to determine the most effective means of assisting the World church to fulfill her mission.

1. Power to act.

2. Conduct surveys, gather information, and collect data as necessary, regarding the Church's ministries and services.

2. Power to act.

3. Report on findings with accompanying recommendations to the 2005 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee.

3. Recommend to the General Conference Executive Committee through General Conference Administrative Committee.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

After study of the documents and careful discussion, the Commission developed the following principles to serve as a guide for determining the location of ministries and services:

1. Those services which essentially address the life, nurture, and witness of the local congregation, be delegated to the division offices.
2. Those resources and services which are essentially trans-divisional and relate broadly similarly to the world-wide church, be provided at World Headquarters.
3. Those services which are vital to the World Headquarters' world functions and unity, be provided at World Headquarters.
4. Those services which essentially support the infra structure of large groups of church employees (pastors, teachers, healthcare workers) which are involved with credentialing, licensing and accreditation, be provided and cared for from the World Headquarters.
5. Ministries and services, delegated to the divisions, be coordinated by the World Headquarters and that networking be fostered between division offices.
6. Those services which are legally incorporated and governed by their own boards should not be included in this study.

The following organizations are understood to be legally incorporated and governed by their own boards in accordance with "Guiding Principle" 4. and were considered by the Commission to be outside of this study:

Adventist Development and Relief Agency  
 Adventist Risk Management  
 Adventist World Radio  
 Ellen G White Estate  
 Home Study International

The Commission endorses and appreciates the value to the World Church of all the ministries and services currently offered at all levels. It is not the intention that any ministry or service be eliminated. Rather, the Commission seeks to strengthen all ministries and services by locating leadership at the most effective and efficient level. It should be acknowledged that most divisions have reached a maturity that enables them to take on leadership roles not previously assigned to them. It is appropriate therefore that additional responsibilities be delegated to divisions of the General Conference.

It should never be lost sight of that the thirteen divisions of the World are in fact divisions of the General Conference who are assigned to carry out the work of the Church under the leadership of the General Conference and that they perform the work of the General Conference in their respective geographical regions. The Commission understands clearly that its role is to determine what structures will enhance the efficiency of a rapidly growing church in these regions and in doing so may achieve some savings but alternatively may in fact incur some extra costs.

## **MINISTRIES AND SERVICES ROLE**

### **WORLD HEADQUARTERS:**

The Commission recommends that the role of all ministries and services, which are to be retained at the World Headquarters, be refocused as follows:

1. Serve as coordinators between division offices.
2. Prepare and catalogue resources produced by division offices and other entities.
3. Foster networking between division offices.
4. Primarily train division office counterparts—all other training delegated to division offices.
5. Provide and enable visioning for the world field, in association with division offices, and foster cross cultural discussions on core issues.
6. Provide certification where needed.
7. Respond to division requests to participate in significant and large events.
8. Focus on underdeveloped areas such as the 10/40 window and large urban areas.
9. Organize world wide and regional advisories as approved.

### **DIVISIONS:**

The Commission recommends that the role of all ministries and services of all divisions be refocused as follows;

1. Prepare contextualized resources for the territories of their own division with copies to the World Headquarters Coordinator for cataloguing.
2. Communicate with counterparts in all divisions, responding to service requests for significant and large events.
3. Train counterparts.
4. Participate in worldwide and regional advisories as approved.
5. Provide and enable visioning for the division in association with Union offices.
6. Provide certification where needed.

**Based on the “Guiding Principles,” the Commission recommends that the Church’s ministries and Services be placed as follows:**

#### **A. Ministries and services to be retained at the world headquarters:**

1. Adventist Review
2. Adventist Television Network
3. AMICUS
4. Biblical Research Institute
5. Communication
6. Education
7. General Conference Auditing Service
8. Geo-Science Research Institute
9. Global Mission
10. Health Ministries
11. Human Resources
12. Information Systems Services

13. Ministerial Association
14. Office of General Counsel
15. Office of Mission Awareness
16. Public Affairs and Religious Liberty
17. Sabbath School Bible Study Guides—including the curriculum and preparation of adult, youth and children’s divisions Bible study guides. Currently achieved by two separate cost centers, it is proposed that they work together in one cost center.
18. Trust Services

The following ministries and services are to be studied with the purpose of securing further efficiencies of operation:

1. Communication
2. Health Ministries
3. Adventist Review
4. General Conference Auditing Service

On the other hand it is recommended that Adventist Television Network (ATN) be studied with the intention of expanding its operation to ensure that its programs are relevant, professional and appealing to its intended audiences. It is also recommended that the Education Department be considered with the view to determining staffing levels and appropriate delegation of responsibilities.

**B. Ministries and services to be shared by the World Headquarters and Division offices:**

Ministerial Association—The development of evangelism resources and sermons, training of elders and pastors, conducting of field schools of evangelism, and the production of church growth resources, be delegated to division offices, thereby reducing the elected staff at World Headquarters by two individuals. The reduction of support staff will be the responsibility of General Conference administration. Ministry Magazine is to be retained at the World Headquarters.

**C. Ministries and services to be delegated to division offices**

1. Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries
2. Children’s Ministries
3. Family Ministries
4. International Health Food Association
5. Publishing
6. Sabbath School/Personal Ministries—Excluding the curriculum and preparation of Bible Study Guides for Youth and Children’s divisions.
7. Stewardship
8. Women’s Ministries
9. Youth

## **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **Vice President Assignment**—that the General Conference President assign a Vice President/s at World Headquarters to be responsible for coordination, advocacy and the identification of network resources for ministries and services which are to be located at the division office level as well as other levels.
2. **Female Vice President**—that the General Conference elect at least one Vice President, preferably a woman, to assist in the administrative functions of the World Church.
3. **Ministries/Services Retained at World Headquarters**--that the General Conference Administration review the role and function, job description and level of staffing for each ministry and service, including support staff, that will be located at the World Headquarters with a view to determining what elements may be retained at World Headquarters and which ones might be delegated to the division offices.
4. **Ministry Magazine**—to refer the Ministry magazine to the Ministerial Association for further study to ensure it's global relevance noting concerns for inclusion of wider editorial submissions and contextualization of materials.
5. **Biblical Research Institute**—that General Conference administration establish a process that will allow for input from the divisions when associate directors of the Biblical Research Institute are appointed.
6. **Advisories**—that World Headquarters administration give study to the need for more regular advisories and determine which ministries and services may need to convene on a more frequent basis than once per quinquennium.
7. **Evaluation**—that an instrument be developed, based on outcomes assessment, to evaluate all ministries and services of the General Conference both mid term and at the conclusion of the term.

The Commission affirms the value of all the ministries and services studied. No ministry or service is being eliminated. Rather, the Commission seeks to locate leadership at the most effective and efficient level. It used guiding principles and criteria to determine the most effective ways to serve the needs of a rapidly growing global Church in order to release resources for target evangelism and ministry such as in the 10/40 Window. The proposed organizational structure is designed to be responsive to worldwide needs while still maintaining unity of purpose and vision.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTRIES AND SERVICES REVIEW COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT**

The 2004 General Conference Annual Council Executive Committee voted to establish a General Conference Ministries and Services Review Commission. This Commission consisted of a broad representation of individuals from around the world who seriously and carefully examined the ministries and services provided by the General Conference to determine the best and most effective way to serve the needs of a rapidly expanding global Church.

#### **RATIONALE**

The worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church currently has a membership of 13 million and represents a faith community of more than 20 million. With a fast-growing membership in over 200 countries, the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to focus on increasing growth and nurturing its members, while maintaining its worldwide unity.

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church now spans approximately 150 years. From its small beginning in the mid 1800's, it is now a global organization with congregations, administrative offices, schools, hospitals, publishing houses, and other institutions in all parts of the world. The first major organizational restructuring occurred in 1901 when the church membership was 75,767 meeting in 1,892 churches and returned a total tithes of \$510,259. The leading ministries of the denomination at that time such as Education, Medical Missionary, Sabbath School, Religious Liberty, and Publishing became departments of the Church to train members, to provide resources, and to nurture the members for ministry.

Today the Seventh-day Adventist world organization consists of 13 world divisions, 101 unions, and 521 conferences and missions around the world. Questions repeatedly arise—Do the ministries and services performed by the General Conference in 2004 adequately meet the needs of the world field in the best way possible? Is the Church being efficient and cost effective? Might there be alternative ways of accomplishing the ministries and services which would better serve the needs of a rapidly growing and changing world Church?

Prior to 1901 the Church was centrally organized. Through the inspired counsel of Ellen G White, coupled with growing needs, organizational decentralization was implemented with the establishment of world divisions and unions. Membership needs are best served when administrative units are located closer to congregational life. What was adequate for the membership of 600,000 may not be adequate when the membership reaches 20 million. Services provided from the world headquarters 75 years ago may not represent the best way to accomplish ministry today and in the immediate future. It is clear however, that whatever structures the Church adopts in the future that the World

Headquarters will need to continue to have oversight of mission strategies and be fully informed of what is happening in each of its thirteen divisions, by playing some kind of coordinating role.

The Commission met as a body in Orlando, Florida, January 10-11, 2005, from 8 am to 5 pm each day, with 37 of the 39 members in attendance. Documents sent in advance for study by the Commission are noted with an asterisk. The first half day was spent in discussion of the following documents studied by the Commission:

12. \*The General Conference—Functional Relationships Between the World Headquarters and its Divisions With Particular Reference to ‘Departments’—Jan Paulsen, March 1998
13. \*Reflections on Democracy—Jan Paulsen, September 1993
14. \*A Modest Proposal for Structural Change in the Adventist Church—George R Knight
15. \*General Conference Mission Statement
16. \*General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2003 Actual Expenses Budget
17. \*General Conference Ministries and Services Minutes of October 14, 2004
18. General Conference Administration, Departments, Service Units—Report of the Structural Consultation Committee on the opinion survey of June 1999
19. Divisions who Responded to the Survey of World Services of the General Conference Departments/Services—Kloosterhuis File
20. Services to the World Church—March 11, 1997
21. General Conference Leadership Council—Purpose, Outcomes, and Action Plans For Selected Cost Centers—Report to 1998 Annual Council
22. Draft Survey prepared by the Commission Sub Committee appointed October 14, 2004

The Commission, in its first meeting on October 14, 2004, initiated a process to develop a survey instrument to conduct a survey as a part of its method of operation. It also asked for a review, and copies of past surveys and studies that were relevant. After studying these reports the Commission decided that the information provided by these past studies and surveys were adequate for the current study. It therefore decided to proceed with the task as outlined in the terms of reference.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE:**

The following terms of reference were assigned to the Commission by the 2004 Annual Council. A list of the members of the Commission is included in Appendix A.

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

4. Review all the ministries and services of the General Conference in consultation with the Strategic Planning Office and world divisions to determine the most effective means of assisting the World church to fulfill her mission.

5. Conduct surveys, gather information, and collect data as necessary, regarding the Church's ministries and services.

6. Report on findings with accompanying recommendations to the 2005 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee.

1. Power to act.

2. Power to act.

3. Recommend to the General Conference Executive Committee through General Conference Administrative Committee.

The Commission's assignment was to review the work of the General Conference ministries and services and the Annual Council decision was that ministries and services personnel should not serve on the Commission as they would be perceived to be in a position of conflict of interest. It is difficult to be objective when one is the subject under consideration. This position, however, did not shut out input from ministries and services personnel. When the survey instrument was under consideration ministries and services directors' input was appropriately sought. The study of past surveys revealed that there was a majority of ministries and services personnel in the list of respondents, particularly in the 1999 survey, in which the largest group of respondents were department directors and associates. Of the 112 responses received, 35 out of a possible 39 were officers and 77 out of a possible 127 were directors or associates of departments.

The Commission Sub Committee listened to verbal responses from ministries and services personnel in a special General Conference Leadership Council (GCLC) meeting where the Interim Commission Report was presented, gave attention to written responses and provided opportunity for selected personnel to speak on behalf of currently elected personnel before the full Commission.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

After study of the documents and careful discussion, the Commission developed the following principles to serve as a guide for determining the location of ministries and services:

7. Those services which essentially address the life, nurture, and witness of the local congregation be delegated to the division offices.
8. Those resources and services which are essentially trans-divisional and relate broadly similarly to the world-wide church be provided at World Headquarters.
9. Those services which are vital to the World Headquarters' world functions and unity be provided at World Headquarters.
10. Those services which essentially support the infra structure of large groups of church employees (pastors, teachers, healthcare workers) which are involved with credentialing, licensing and accreditation, be provided and cared for from the World Headquarters.
11. Those ministries and services which serve an advocacy role for large sections of church membership not relatively reflected in leadership roles, be provided at World Headquarters.
12. Ministries and services, delegated to the divisions, be coordinated by the World Headquarters and that networking be fostered between division offices.
13. Those services which are legally incorporated and governed by their own boards should not be included in this study.

The following organizations are understood to be legally incorporated and governed by their own boards in accordance with "Guiding Principle" 4. and were considered by the Commission to be outside of this study:

Adventist Development and Relief Agency  
Adventist Risk Management  
Adventist World Radio  
Ellen G White Estate  
Home Study International  
Christian Record Services International, Inc

The Commission endorses and appreciates the value to the World Church of all the ministries and services currently offered at all levels. It is not the intention that any ministry or service be eliminated. Rather, the Commission seeks to strengthen all ministries and services by locating leadership at the most effective and efficient level. It should be acknowledged that most divisions have reached a maturity that enables them to

take on leadership roles not previously assigned to them. It is appropriate therefore that additional responsibilities be delegated to divisions of the General Conference.

## **MINISTRIES AND SERVICES ROLE**

### **WORLD HEADQUARTERS:**

The Commission recommends that the role of all ministries and services of the World Headquarters be refocused as follows:

10. Serve as coordinators between division offices.
11. Prepare and catalogue resources produced by division offices and other entities.
12. Foster networking between division offices.
13. Primarily train division office counterparts—all other training delegated to division offices.
14. Provide and enable visioning in association with division offices.
15. Provide certification where needed.
16. Respond to division requests to attend significant and large events.
17. Focus on underdeveloped areas such as the 10/40 window and large urban areas.
18. Organize world wide and regional advisories as approved.

### **DIVISIONS:**

The Commission recommends that the role of all ministries and services of all divisions be refocused as follows:

7. Prepare contextualized resources for the territories of their own division with copies to the World Headquarters Coordinator for cataloguing.
8. Communicate with counterparts in all divisions, responding to service requests for significant and large events.
9. Primarily train Union counterparts.
10. Participate in worldwide and regional advisories as approved.
11. Provide and enable visioning in association with Union offices.
12. Provide certification where needed.

**Based on the “Guiding Principles,” the Commission recommends that the Church’s ministries and Services be placed as follows:**

#### **A. Ministries and services to be retained at the world headquarters:**

19. Adventist Review
20. Adventist Television Network
21. AMICUS
22. Biblical Research Institute
23. Communication
24. Education
25. General Conference Auditing Service
26. Geo-Science Research Institute
27. Global Mission

28. Human Resources
29. Information Systems Services
30. Office of General Counsel
31. Office of Mission Awareness
32. Public Affairs and Religious Liberty
33. Sabbath School Bible Study Guides—including the curriculum and preparation of adult, youth and children’s divisions Bible study guides. Currently achieved by two separate cost centers, it is proposed that they work together in one cost center.
34. Trust Services
35. Youth
36. Adventist Health Ministries
37. Women’s Ministries

The following ministries and services are to be studied with the purpose of securing further efficiencies of operation:

5. Communication
6. Adventist Health Ministries
7. Women’s Ministries
8. Adventist Review

On the other hand it is agreed that Adventist Television Network should be studied with the purpose of expanding it’s role.

**B. Ministries and services to be shared by the World Headquarters and Division offices:**

1. ~~Health Ministries—Personnel should be appointed at the World Headquarters to care for Health Care Institutions but that Health & Temperance Education be delegated to the divisions offices.~~
2. Ministerial Association– ~~Further study should be given to the function of the Association to determine what functions can be delegated to the divisions with a view to reducing the level of staffing at World Headquarters.~~ The development of evangelism resources and sermons, training of elders and pastors, conducting of field schools of evangelism, and the production of church growth resources, be delegated to division offices, thereby reducing the elected staff at World Headquarters by two individuals. The reduction of support staff will be the responsibility of General Conference administration. Ministry Magazine is to be retained at the World Headquarters.

**C. Ministries and services to be delegated to division offices (See Appendix B for implementation in divisions):**

10. Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries
11. Children’s Ministries
12. Family Ministries

13. International Health Food Association
14. Publishing
15. Sabbath School/Personal Ministries—Excluding the curriculum and preparation of Bible Study Guides for Youth and Children’s divisions.
16. Stewardship
- ~~17. Women’s Ministries~~

It is important to note one of the findings of the June, 1999 report, which reads as follows:

“4. There are five instances in which officer opinion is quite evenly divided over retaining the service at the General Conference versus shifting it to the division. These instances are: Family Ministries, Health Ministries, Women’s Ministries, General Conference Video Production and Training Center, and the International Health Food Association....”

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. ~~Vice President Appointment Coordination Role~~ -that General Conference administration Presidential give study to ~~the appointment of a Vice President whose sole purpose would be to provide~~ providing at World Headquarters the coordination, advocacy and ~~the~~ identification of network resources role for ministries and services which are to be located at the division office level as well as other levels.
- ~~2. —Ministries/Services Retained at World Headquarters—that the Sub Committee review the role and function, job description and level of staffing for each ministry and service that will be located at the World Headquarters with a view to determining what elements may be retained at World Headquarters and which ones might be delegated to the division offices. The Sub Committee, in consultation with General Conference administration, should prepare their recommendations for the April 6, 7 meeting of the Ministries and Services Review Commission, which should include staffing levels for elected personnel, whether in fact they should be increased or decreased. It is understood that General Conference administration will address the issue of support staff that will be required.~~
3. Governance Study—that General Conference administration initiate a detailed study of the organization and governance structure of the Church with a view to facilitating the mission, rapid growth and emerging opportunities of the Church in the future, providing the resources that will be necessary.
4. Ministry Magazine—to refer the Ministry magazine to the Ministerial Association for further study to ensure it’s global relevance noting concerns for inclusion of wider editorial submissions and contextualization of materials.

5. Biblical Research Institute—that General Conference administration establish a process that will allow for input from the divisions when associate directors of the Biblical Research Institute are appointed.
6. Advisories—that World Headquarters administration give study to the need for more regular advisories and determine which ministries and services may need to convene on a more frequent basis than once per quinquennium.
7. Evaluation—that an instrument be developed to evaluate all ministries and services of the General Conference both mid term and at the conclusion of the term.
8. Standing Committee—that the General Conference appoint a Ministries and Services Review Commission as a standing committee of the General Conference.

It should never be lost sight of that the thirteen divisions of the World are in fact divisions of the General Conference who are assigned to carry out the work of the Church under the leadership of the General Conference and that they perform the work of the General Conference in their respective geographical regions. The Commission understands clearly that its role is to determine what structures will enhance the efficiency of a rapidly growing church in these regions and in doing so may achieve some savings but alternatively may in fact incur some extra costs. While this may be a by-product of the recommendations made it is also clear to the Commission members that it is not their role to determine nor assume how any savings might be spent, nor where additional funding might be resourced from.

The Commission affirms the value of all the ministries and services studied. No ministry and service has been eliminated. Rather, the Commission sought to locate leadership at the most effective and efficient level. It is committed to the value of maintaining and strengthening the ministries and services of the Church. It used guiding principles and criteria to determine the most effective ways to serve the need of the rapidly growing global Church in order to release resources for target evangelism and ministry such as in the 10/40 Window. The proposed organizational structure is designed to be responsive to worldwide needs while still maintaining unity of purpose and vision. The Commission is committed to the value of unity, whether doctrinal or organizational.

The “guiding principles” clearly state that those ministries or services which are vital to the unity of the church, will be retained at the World Headquarters. The Commission also recommends that provision be made for adequate coordination, especially for those ministries which are to be located at division offices. Unity, therefore, is a critical issue in the consideration of locating the leadership of departments.