

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

THREE STRATEGIC ISSUES

A WORLD SURVEY

A Report Prepared for the
Strategic Planning Commission
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

OBJECTIVES OF THE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

A WORLD SURVEY

The General Conference has developed a five-year strategic plan for 2001-2005. The Strategic Plan Committee, formed to monitor this plan, has set out a number of goals under three main headings: (1) Quality of Personal and Church Life, (2) Unity in the World Church, and (3) Growth of the Church. Each of these three areas is supported by a number of behavioral objectives.

In order to determine if these objectives are being met, it is necessary to collect pertinent data. To accomplish this task the planners commissioned a research team at Andrews University to collect, analyze, and evaluate the data that would determine the extent to which the goals and objectives are being reached. This team is centered in the Institute of Church Ministry, a component of the Seventh-day Theological Seminary, with consultants from the university Behavioral Sciences

Department and the Institute of World Missions. To avoid awkwardness, this report will employ the term ICM each time the research team is mentioned.

The Survey Instrument

To collect the necessary information it was necessary to construct a questionnaire. This was accomplished by first examining the goals and objectives as follows:

1. Wholeness as a quality of church life demonstrated by:
 - a. Members whose lives demonstrate joy of salvation and anticipation of the next world
 - b. Weekly group Bible study for all ages with appropriate curriculum
 - c. Weekly corporate worship
 - d. Personal, family, and group prayer life
 - e. Training for discipleship, witnessing, and involvement in local church activity
 - f. Awareness of and participation in the world-wide work of the church
 - g. Nurturing members of all ages according to their diverse talents and needs
 - h. Adventists who are seen as model citizens in their communities and whose mental, physical, and spiritual life values are coupled with compassion
2. Unity as a quality of life demonstrated by:
 - a. Cohesiveness of doctrine: world church approval of Bible-based, Christ-centered, fundamental beliefs
 - b. Togetherness of believers: creation and preservation of community which embraces culture and ethnic diversity
 - c. Cohesiveness of organization: distinct local and global identity arising from the world church system of structure and organization
3. Growth as a consequence of rootedness in Christ demonstrated by:
 - a. Members with rich spiritual experience and commitment to active witness
 - b. Increasing accession and retention rates in local churches
 - c. A positive impact of the Adventist presence within a community
 - d. The number of churches established in unentered areas
 - e. Transmission of Adventist legacy and mission to succeeding generations

The next task was to construct questions that would measure these objectives. The research team at ICM met with chair Mike Ryan of the Strategy Committee for a day. Going over the objectives one by one, they wrote sample questions. These questions then went through a number of drafts with each team member, Ryan, and even Jan Paulsen, President of the General Conference, making suggestions. The final form of the survey contains 97 questions, organized under the three main

goals with a few extra demographic questions. The final draft was approved by the General Conference and translated into French, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. Each of the five language versions was professionally printed in color-coded copies. A copy of the survey is given on pages 17 to 20.

The Research Design

It was decided that the data would be collected through the union conferences/missions throughout the world field. It would be necessary to have a liaison person in each union who would receive, distribute, collect, and return the surveys to ICM. This task was assigned to the secretary of each union and placed under the general supervision of Matthew Bediako, Secretary of the General Conference. In October of 2001, Elder Bediako wrote to each union secretary giving a general description of the assignment and informing that official that instructions in how to proceed would be coming from ICM. A copy of the letter can be found on page 21. He also informed all division secretaries so that they would be familiar with the proceedings.

ICM assigned the huge task of communicating with the union secretaries to graduate Ph.D. assistant, Petr Cincala. The first step was to send a letter to each secretary. Whenever possible, ICM has communicated by e-mail. The secretaries were asked to send a list of all the ministers currently pastoring churches in their unions. A copy of the letter from November 2001 can be found on page 22. All but three of the unions eventually sent in lists of names—some after repeated contacts.

From these lists ICM randomly selected 3333 names in a manner that would make the number chosen for each union follow the same proportion as the number of names submitted by each union was to the total of all names submitted. For each pastor a packet was prepared. It contained three copies of the questionnaire in the language requested and a letter of instructions and endorsement by Elder Bedialo. The letter was sent on General Conference stationery. A copy is given on page 23.

ICM then prepared boxes for each of the liaison secretaries of the world union conferences/missions. The boxes each contained a letter of instructions and the packets for each pastor in that field. The boxes were shipped in February and March of 2002 by airmail using the United States Postal Service. The union secretary was requested to distribute the packets to the pastors whose names were written on the envelopes, either by mail or through another contact such as a local conference/mission leader. A copy of this letter is given on page 24.

The pastor, upon receiving the packet found the letter of endorsement and the three questionnaires in the envelope. The pastor was asked to fill out one of the surveys personally and give the other two, one each, to the most prominent male leader and the most prominent female leader in the congregation. Where a pastor had more than one congregation, he/she was asked to select the largest one for distributing the two surveys to the lay leaders but to generalize his/her personal answers to all of the congregations in the district. The pastor was instructed to collect the surveys

from the two lay members and return all three questionnaires to the contact person from whom they had been received. The contact person returned these to the union conference/mission executive secretary who was responsible for shipping all surveys back to the Institute of Church Ministry for processing and analyses.

Processing Returns

A total of 9999 surveys were mailed (including both pastors and lay leaders). Many e-mail reminders were sent, both by ICM and the Office of Strategic Planning at the General Conference (a sample letter may be found on page 25). Numerous individual problems have been dealt with, including surveys not arriving to the designated place. By October 1, 2002, 3646 usable questionnaires had been received—a rate of about 36 percent. The returned questionnaires were coded for union conference/mission and entered into a Microsoft Excel computer data file.

Appropriate analyses of the file were performed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Most of the questions called for percentages to be given. For these, means (average scores) have been calculated. A smaller group of questions asked the respondent to choose an option out of four or five possibilities or to tell how many times in a year certain events had been held. For these frequencies in both raw numbers and in percentages have been supplied. The tables on pages 26 to 30 list either frequencies or means for all questions in the order that they appear in the survey form

However, the purpose of this study is to determine how well the questions relate to a specific objective. To accomplish this, ICM matched each of the objectives of the Strategic Issues Plan with question items which seem to measure that objective. This output is given on pages 11 to 16. For comparison purposes, this report will also list the grand means of the questions for each objective and underneath these the means of the items comprising that objective in descending order. Means of percentages can vary from 0 to 100 percent. Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of the members in their congregations who do certain activities or who would agree with certain statements.

Note that these are subjective perceptions rather than actual measurements of individual members which would be impossible in some of these areas. Nevertheless, the data is valuable, especially when coming from across the world field, in comparing the strengths of the respective objectives. Thus, the relative accomplishment of each strategic objective can be quickly seen. Some questions are used to measure more than one objective.

For ease of reading and interpretation, pages 5 to 10 list the means for each objective by descending order within the area to which they belong. Here, all percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent. The items which were selected for each objective are also included, but to avoid cluttering the page with numbers, the means for the individual items are not listed there. The interested reader can find all these in the tables on pages 11 to 16. In all cases the

questionnaire items have been abbreviated to fit into the space on the tables. The full wording of the questions (which are identified by question number in the tables) can be found by consulting the copy of the actual questionnaire located on pages 17 to 20.

Unfortunately, there is a problem with questions 68 to 76 in the data. The directions for that section are: “How many times a year are the following items included in your church schedule?” This seems clear, but because the respondent had been answering all the previous questions by inserting a percentage, some continued to write in percentages on these questions also. While it is evident that this is the case, it was not possible to determine exactly how many of each type were given. Therefore, ICM has not used this section to measure the objectives as shown in the attached analysis. However, ICM has created a mean which combines both percentages and real numbers. These means are useful only to estimate the relative strength of questions 68 to 76 with each other and not with other questions in the survey.

Measuring the Quality of Personal and Church Life

Members whose lives demonstrate and illustrate the joy of salvation, restoration, and anticipation of the world to come

Mean = 72%

Items = Assurance of salvation; Happy marriages; Apply Christian values to all areas of life; Salvation through Jesus alone

Weekly corporate worship

Mean = 57%

Items = Sabbath worship attendance; Other Adventist religious meetings

Also 37% incorporate diversity of worship services for different groups most of the time or almost always

Weekly group Bible study for all ages

Mean = 51%

Items = Attend Sabbath school regularly; Participate in weekly group Bible study

Model Citizens in the community whose mental, physical, and spiritual life values are coupled with compassion and service

Mean = 46%

Items = Social life outside the church; Happy marriages; Abstain from alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; Practice vegetarianism; Exercise on a regular basis; Hold political office

Development of personal, family, and group prayer life

Mean = 45%

Items = Daily personal devotions; Family worship; Read Bible regularly; Read Ellen White at least monthly; Attended family seminars in last two years; Attended health seminars in last two years

Nurturing members of all ages according to their diverse talents and needs

Mean = 37%

Items = Serve the church according to their spiritual gifts; Help with church meetings or social events aimed at young adults; Help with church meetings or social events aimed at unmarried people

Regular training for discipleship, witnessing, and involvement in local church activity

Mean = 37%

Items = Have taken witnessing training course in last two years; Actively witness to non-members; Help with meetings or social events aimed at young adults; Hold an office or service position in the church; Give a faithful tithe; Support local congregation with offerings; Helped with Community Services Center; Worked in centers to feed the hungry;

Helped with health seminars; Helped with family-type seminars; Invited a non-member to church; Helped with evangelistic meetings or Bible seminars; Gave Bible studies

Awareness of and participation in the world wide work of the church

Mean = 34%

Items = Contribute to various mission projects; Participation in mission programs outside of own union; Agree that Adventist church has a special message to proclaim God's last message to the world

Members of the world church seem to be doing the best in their subjective experience of Christian life and the joy of salvation. They also are near the median position in corporate Sabbath worship. But then the percentages begin to trail off. They report only about a third are involved in spiritual gifts, nurturing other members, active witnessing, or participating in the world-wide work of the church.

Unity in the World Church

Cohesiveness in doctrine

Mean = 91%

Items = Seventh-day Sabbath; Six-day creation several thousand years ago; Nearness of literal Second Advent; Death as a sleep; Authority of Ellen White's writings; Sanctuary and judgment in 1844; Salvation through Christ alone

Cohesiveness of organization

Mean = 75%

Items = Tithe to local conference—offerings as able; Fair financial structure to support world-wide work; World church organization inspired by God; Flexibility in church standards by world divisions

Togetherness of believers in all-inclusive community

Mean = 45%

Items = Weekly group Bible study; Exercise of spiritual gifts; Faithful tithing; Support congregation with regular offerings; Read Adventist Review, Read union or division paper

Also, the percentages that report that the practice occurs in their congregation most of the time or almost always

62% Making people from minority groups feel welcome

55 % Sermons that emphasize love for all peoples, even “enemies”

54% Including people of different backgrounds in congregational leadership

There is strong support for fundamental Adventist doctrines. About three-fourths also affirm the structure, polity, and financial policies of the church. But only about half seem to be active in building all-inclusive community.

Growth as a Consequence of Rootedness in Christ

Increasing accession and retention rates in local churches

Mean = 63%

Items = Reasons why people might want to join your local church (Location, Friendly church, Quality of meetings, Programs for youth, Programs for unmarried and young adults, Adventist doctrines, Presenting assurance of salvation in Christ)

8% Attendance decreased by 10% or more

7% Attendance decreased by 5% to 9%

27% Attendance stable (-5% to +5%)

28% Attendance increased by 5% to 9%

29% Attendance increased by 10% or more

Transmission of the church’s legacy and mission to succeeding generations

Mean = 42%

Items = Help with meetings and social events for young adults; Worked with teens in the church, Worked with young adults in the church, Percentage of youth 18 years or under who: Attend church weekly, Attend Sabbath school regularly, Attend other religious meetings regularly, Participate in outreach, Hold church office or service position, Are enrolled in Adventist schools, Are members of Pathfinders or other youth group, Attended a church-sponsored youth camp, Are happy with Adventist church, Raise questions about Adventist teachings, Will probably stay in church as adults

33% operate a church school

Members who have a rich spiritual experience and a commitment to active witness

Mean = 36%

Items = Have daily personal devotions; Have assurance of salvation; Helped with Community Services Center; Worked in centers to feed the hungry; Helped with health seminars; Helped with family type seminars; Invited a non-member to church; Helped with evangelistic meetings or Bible seminars; Gave Bible studies; Work with teens in the church; Work with young adults

A positive impact of the Seventh-day Adventist presence in the community

Mean = 30%

Items = Helped with Community Services Center; Worked in centers to feed the hungry; Helped with health seminars; Helped with family type seminars; Invited a non-member to church; Helped with evangelistic meetings or Bible seminars; Gave Bible studies

The number of churches established in unentered areas

This figure could not be ascertained by survey research. However, the General Conference Office of Global Mission reports that in 2001 2,099 new churches and 2,702 new companies were established in previously unentered areas.

Churches are apparently growing in membership and attendance—57% report increases in attendance in the previous two years. About 42% have programs to help retain the youth and young adults in the church. But only about a third are active in witnessing and are making a positive impact in the community.

Conclusions

In its strategic planning process for the present quinquennium, the General Conference has focused on three major areas, subdivided into sixteen specific objectives. The purpose of this research project is to determine the extent to which the world church is presently meeting these objectives. Thus the results reveal to what degree church leaders need to focus on the various areas and

specific objectives. These data also supply a baseline that can be compared with future studies to ascertain the degree of improvement or lack of it for each goal.

There is room for improvement on nearly all of the objectives. The strongest area is in unity of doctrine where over 90% of those reporting are firmly committed to Adventist teachings that are Bible-based and Christ-centered. However, it should be noted that while 81% accept the authority of Ellen White's writings, about half see a need for reinterpretation of them for today's world, and about a third believe that there may be more than one interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine.

Two other areas scored comparatively high where approximately three-fourths of the findings showed agreement with the church's organizational structure and that our members live joyful lives with assurance of salvation. This still presents the challenge that about a fourth of our members do not agree with church structure, or that they do not experience the joy of salvation.

Over 60% were positive about factors that would lead non-members to want to join their congregations. Winning converts is obviously one of the key objectives in the Strategic Plan. Here the focus was on attendance because actual membership statistics can be obtained more accurately through official records rather than through surveys. It is encouraging to note that 57% of the congregations increased their attendance by at least 5% in the last two years. But 16% decreased by at least 5% in the same time period, and another 27% remained stable.

A major concern must be that only 57% attend weekly corporate worship on a regular basis, and only about half take part in any group Bible study, including Sabbath school.

Less than half are currently involved in the other objectives. In the 40% range are objectives such as being model citizens in the community, having personal and family worship, forming an all-inclusive community to support the local congregation, and transmission of the church's legacy and mission to succeeding generations—an ominous sign for the future of Adventism.

Even further down in the 30% range are items such as nurturing members of all ages according to their diverse talents and needs; training for discipleship, witnessing, and involvement in local church activity; participation in the world-wide work of the church; having a commitment to participation in active witnessing and outreach activities in the community; and making a positive impact of the Seventh-day Adventist presence in the community by participating in social services, evangelistic activities, or felt-needs seminars.

How is the church doing comparatively in the three major areas addressed by the Strategic Plan? If the means of each item under each of the areas are averaged, relative success can be determined.

First of all is the area of Unity in the World Church (mean = 71.5%).

Next in order is Growth as a Consequence of Rootedness in Christ (mean = 45.9%)

In last place is Quality of Life–Personal and Church (mean = 45.1%)

What overall themes seem to be the most cause for concern? Different people might find diverse areas that particularly impact on their fields of labor. ICM notes three areas that especially beg for attention:

1. Individual Bible study and prayer where the somewhat lower average contrasts with the high rating for salvation and assurance.

2. Training for witnessing and discipleship where only a minority of members are active.

3. Making an impact of Adventism on the community where only slightly over a fourth of members are engaged.

Church leaders at all levels who give careful study to this report will find abundant challenges and ample directions for work in accomplishing the goals of the Strategic Plan for 2000 to 2005.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Strategic Issue #1: Quality of Life–Personal and Church

1. Members whose lives demonstrate and illustrate the joy of salvation, restoration, and anticipation of the world to come

MeanFA1.1total 11,23,28,4471.60 Q44Salvation only in Christ94.65 Q11Assurance of salvation69.19 Q23Happy marriage62.57 Q28Apply Christian values57.82

2. Weekly group Bible study for all ages with appropriate curriculum

MeanFA1.2total 4,650.93 Q4Sabbath school66.91 Q6Group Bible study32.71

3. Weekly corporate worship

MeanFA1.3total 3,557.47 Q3Sabbath worship75.93 Q5Other meetings37.28
Q80Diversity worshipFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidnever494 13.5 14.4
14.4 occasionally1062 29.1 31.0 45.4 about half the time627 17.2 18.3 63.6 most of the time679
18.6 19.8 83.4 almost always568 15.6 16.6 100.0 Total3430 94.1 100.0 MissingSystem216 5.9
Total3646 100.0

4. Development of personal, family, and group prayer life

MeanFA1.4total 1,2,7,8,14,1545.32 Q7Read Bible weekly59.36 Q1Daily devotions55.12 Q2Family

worship46.32 Q8Read Ellen White41.09 Q15Attend health seminar34.77 Q14Attend family seminar33.47

5. Regular training for discipleship, witnessing, and involvement in local church activity

MeanFA1.5total 9,10,16,18,19,20,48,49,50,51,52,53,5437.13 Q19Faithful tithing60.71 Q20Local offerings57.65 Q18Hold office/position43.89 Q10Active witnessing40.95 Q53Help evangelism38.67 Q52Invited non-member38.08 Q16Help with meetings36.03 Q9Witness training30.00 Q48Community service30.33 Q54Gave bible studies28.39 Q50Help health seminars24.01 Q51Help family seminars23.68 Q49Feed the hungry20.81

6. Awareness of and participation in the worldwide work of the church

MeanFA1.6total 21,22,3834.33 Q38Adventist special mission90.43 Q21Support missions43.50 Q22Participate mission projects20.72

7. Nurturing members of all ages according to their diverse talents and needs

MeanFA1.7total 13,16,1737.73 Q13Gift-oriented service47.88 Q16Help with meetings36.03 Q17Help singles ministry25.57

8. Seventh-day Adventists who are and are perceived to be model citizens in the community and whose mental, physical, and spiritual life values are coupled with compassion and service

MeanFA1.8total 12,23,25,26,27,2946.40 Q25Abstinence80.53 Q23Happy marriage62.57 Q12Socialize non-members49.99 Q26Vegetarianism34.52 Q27Exercise regularly32.74 Q29Hold political office6.67

Strategic Issue #2: Unity in the World-wide Church

1. Cohesiveness in doctrine

MeanFA2.1total 30,31,32,33,34,4491.04 Q30Sabbath96.21 Q44Salvation only in Christ94.65 Q33Death a sleep93.32 Q32Second advent93.14 Q31Creation in 6 days92.83 Q36Sanctuary and 184485.79 Q34EGW authority81.07

2. Togetherness of believers

MeanFA2.2total 6,13,19,20,45,4644.93 Q19Faithful tithing60.71 Q20Local offerings57.65 Q13Gift-oriented service47.88 Q46Read union papers33.36 Q45Adventist review33.17 Q6Group Bible study32.71

Q77Sermons on love for allFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidnever37 1.0 1.0 1.1 occasionally779 21.4 21.6 22.7 about half the time790 21.7 21.9 46.0 most of the time1054 28.9 29.3 75.6 almost always940 25.8 26.1 100.0 Total3600 98.7 100.0 MissingSystem46 1.3 Total3646 100.0

Q78Minority welcomeFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidnever110 3.0 3.1 3.5 occasionally671 18.4 18.9 22.4 about half the time508 13.9 14.3 37.5 most of the time944 25.9 26.6 64.3 almost always1313 36.0 37.0 100.0 Total3546 97.3 100.0 MissingSystem100 2.7 Total3646 100.0

Q79Diversity leadershipFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidnever290 8.0 8.4 8.8 occasionally685 18.8 19.8 27.8 about half the time504 13.8 14.6 42.4 most of the time766 21.0 22.2 64.9 almost always1211 33.2 35.0 100.0 Total3457 94.8 100.0 MissingSystem189 5.2

Total3646 100.0

3. Cohesiveness of organization

MeanFA2.3total 39,40,41,4375.45 Q41Inspired organization86.54 Q39Should tithe/offerings80.84
Q40Fair financial system79.45 Q43Flexibility of standards49.54

Strategic Issue #3: Growth as a Consequence of Rootedness in Christ

1. Members who have a rich spiritual experience and commitment to active witness

MeanFA3.1total 48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55,5635.55 Q11Assurance of salvation69.19 Q1Daily
devotions55.12 Q53Help evangelism38.67 Q52Invited non-member38.08 Q48Community
service30.33 Q54Gave bible studies28.39 Q55Work with youth26.79 Q56Work with young
adults25.21 Q50Help health seminars24.01 Q51Help family seminars23.68 Q49Feed the
hungry20.81

2. Increasing accession and retention rates in local churches

MeanFA3.2total 81,82,83,84,85,86,8763.19 Q87Join assurance of salvation80.92 Q86Join
doctrines72.31 Q83Join meeting quality70.48 Q82Join atmosphere65.18 Q81Join location55.96
Q84Join youth programs54.77 Q85Join young adults39.89

Q93Church growthFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValid10% decrease283 7.8 8.3
8.3 5-9% decrease251 6.9 7.3 15.6 about the same936 25.7 27.3 42.9 5-9% increase954 26.2 27.9
70.8 10% increase999 27.4 29.2 100.0 Total3423 93.9 100.0 MissingSystem223 6.1 Total3646
100.0

3. A positive impact of the Seventh-day Adventist presence within a community

MeanFA3.3total 48,49,50,51,52,53,5429.65 Q53Help evangelism38.67 Q52Invited non-
member38.08 Q48Community service30.33 Q54Gave bible studies28.39 Q50Help health
seminars24.01 Q51Help family seminars23.68 Q49Feed the hungry20.81

4. The number of churches established in unentered areas

2,099 new churches and 2,702 new companies world-wide
601 new churches minus 122 churches closed equals 479 established in the 10/40 window

5. The transmission of the Church's legacy and mission to succeeding generations

MeanFA3.5total 16,55,56,57,58,59,60,61,62,63,64,65,66,6741.77 Q57Youth at worship67.28
Q65Youth happy Adventists65.87 Q58Youth Sabbat school63.02 Q67Youth retention60.99
Q64Youth church camps42.41 Q63Pathfinders38.22 Q16Help with meetings36.03 Q59Youth
meetings35.86 Q60Youth outreach33.82 Q61Youth positions28.63 Q66Youth questions28.28
Q62Youth SDA schools27.90 Q55Work with youth26.79 Q56Work with young adults25.21
Q97Church schoolFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidyes1200 32.9 34.3 34.3

GENERAL CONFERENCE STRATEGIC PLAN

EVALUATION OF THREE MAJOR OUTCOMES

A number of the following questions will ask for percentages. For example, the first question asks you to estimate the number of members in your congregation who “have daily personal devotions.” Following that is a space for a percentage number. If you believe that half of your members have daily personal devotions, place “50” in the answer space. If you think that three-fourths have daily personal devotion, place a “75” in the answer space. A zero (0) would indicate that no one does that activity or has that belief; a “100” would indicate that everyone does that activity or has that belief. If the activity or material is not available in your area, place NA.

QUALITY OF PERSONAL AND CHURCH LIFE

Approximately what percentage of the members of your congregation would you estimate do the following activities? Please put a number between 0 and 100, or an “NA” if “NOT AVAILABLE” as described above. In some of the items below it may be necessary to check with another leader, such as the treasurer or personal ministries leader.

1. Have daily personal devotions

2. Have family worship in their home

3. Attend Sabbath worship services nearly every week

4. Attend Sabbath school nearly every week

5. Attend other Adventist religious meetings (e.g., prayer meeting)
nearly every week

6. Participate in some type of weekly group Bible study (church or homes)

7. Read the Bible at least a few times a week

8. Read the writings of Ellen G. White at least monthly

9. Have taken some type of witnessing training course in the last two years

10. Actively witness their faith to non-members (talk to, give out literature, etc) .

11. Have assurance of salvation

-
12. Have extensive social life outside the church
-
13. Are serving in the church according to their special spiritual gifts
-
14. Attended a family seminar (marriage, parenting, etc.) in the last two years
-
15. Attended a health seminar (e.g., stress, nutrition) in the last two years
-
16. Help with church meetings (e.g., Master Guide, Sabbath school classes)
or social events aimed at young adults (20+ years)
-
17. Help with church meetings or social events aimed at unmarried people
-
18. Hold an office or some other service position in the church
-
19. Give a faithful tithe
-
20. Support the local congregational program with regular offerings
-
21. Contribute to various mission projects
-
22. Have participated in church mission programs outside of your own
union (e.g., can range from evangelism to construction)
-
23. Have happy marriages (of those who are married)
-
24. Have been divorced while an Adventist member within the last two years
-
25. Abstain from alcohol, drugs and tobacco
-
26. Practice vegetarianism
-
27. Exercise on a regular basis (at least 3-4 times a week)
-
28. Successfully apply Christian values and ethics to other areas of their lives
-
29. Hold political offices
-

UNITY IN THE WORLD CHURCH

Approximately what percentage of the members of your congregation would agree to the following

statements?

30. The seventh-day Sabbath is the true day of worship

31. The creation took place in six literal days several thousand years ago

32. The literal Second Advent of Christ will be in the near future

33. The dead are in a state of unconsciousness until the resurrection

34. The writings of Ellen White are an authority for the Adventist Church today

35. Ellen White's writings need to be reinterpreted for today's world

36. There is a sanctuary in heaven where the pre-Advent judgment began in 1844

37. There may be more than one interpretation to the sanctuary doctrine

38. The Adventist Church has a special mission to proclaim
God's last message to the world

39. Members have a responsibility to give 10% tithe to the local conference
and additional offerings as able

40. The Adventist church financial structure is a fair and proper

way to support the world work of the church

41. The Adventist world church organization was inspired by God

42. Church unity means uniformity in doctrinal belief

43. Different world divisions should be allowed to have different church
standards in order to meet differing needs

44. Salvation is by Jesus Christ alone

What percentage of your church members would you estimate:

45. Either get the Adventist Review or can read someone else's copy?

46. Read the division or union conference/mission official papers?

47. Read literature from critics of the Church (e.g., Our Firm Foundation)?

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Within the last two years, what percentage of your congregation participated in the following?

48. Helped with the Community Services Center

49. Worked in centers to feed the hungry

50. Helped with health seminars (e.g., nutrition, weight-control, smoking or drug cessation)

51. Helped with family-type seminars (e.g., marriage, parenting)

52. Invited a non-member to church

53. Helped with evangelistic meetings or Bible seminars

54. Gave Bible studies

55. Worked with the youth (teens) of the church

56. Worked with young adults (20 - 30 years of age) or unmarried members

What percentage of your youth who are 18 years or younger would you estimate:

57. Attend Sabbath worship services nearly every week

58. Attend Sabbath school nearly every week

59. Attend other religious meetings (e.g., prayer meeting) nearly every week

60. Participate in outreach activities

61. Hold a church office or other service position

62. Are enrolled in Adventist schools

63. Are members of Pathfinders or a similar church-sponsored youth group

64. Ever attended a church-sponsored youth camp

65. Seem happy or content with the Adventist church

66. Have serious questions about one or more of Adventist doctrines

67. Will probably stay in the Adventist church as adults

How many times a year are the following items included in your church schedule?

68. Stories, sermons, or other reports that promote world missions

69. Sermons that give information about other areas of the world

70. Family type seminars (marriage, parenting)

71. Health seminars (e.g., nutrition, stress, weight control, smoking)

72. Spiritual gifts seminars

73. Programs or features on radio or television

74. Placing positive articles or news items in the local press

75. Meetings (spiritual or social) aimed at the young adult (20+ years) members

76. Meetings (spiritual or social) aimed at the unmarried members

How regular are the following practiced in your congregation? Please place a number between 1 and 5 as follows:

1 = never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = about half the time, 4 = most of the time, 5 = almost always

77. Sermons that emphasize love for all peoples, including "enemies"

78. Make people from minority groups feel welcome in our church

79. Include people of different backgrounds (racial, social, cultural, gender, etc.)
in your congregational leadership

80. Have a diversity of worship services to appeal to different groups

On a scale of "0-100" (zero= no reason; 100 = every possible reason) rate the following reasons people might want to join your local church:

81. Location of the church

82. Social atmosphere (the church is friendly and has numerous social programs)

83. Quality of the religious meetings

84. Programs for youth

85. Programs for unmarried members and young adults

86. The doctrines of the Adventist church

87. The clear presentation of the assurance of salvation in Christ

In your role as a pastor or church leader what percentage of your church-related time is spent in the following activities?

88. Preparing for or giving sermons, presentations, or other talks

89. Working with church social activities

90. Working with church outreach activities

91. Counseling others on spiritual, family, or personal matters

92. Working with the youth of the church

93. Check the one below which best describes your church in the past two years:

_____ Church attendance decreased by 10% or more

_____ Church attendance decreased by 5 % to 9%

_____ Church attendance about the same (less than 5% up or down)

_____ Church attendance increased by 5% to 9%

_____ Church attendance increased by 10% or more

94. What is your title (check one):

Pastor _____ Lay member _____

95. What is your gender (check one):

Male _____ Female _____

96. How many members does your church have?

(Check one)

_____ 1. Fewer than 100

_____ 2. 100 to 250

_____ 3. 251 to 600

_____ 4. Over 600

97. Does your church have a church school associated with it?

Yes _____ No _____

October 2001

Dear (name of union conference/mission secretary):

As you know, the General Conference has voted a five-year strategic plan encompassing (1) Quality of Personal Church Life, (2) Unity in the World Church, and (3) Growth of the Church. In order to assess the progress of this plan, some type of measurement is needed. The General Conference has commissioned the Institute of Church Ministry at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University to conduct a world-wide survey and report the results at the General Conference Executive Meeting of 2002. The research will be repeated in 2004 to measure any progress that has been made.

The plan is to select a number of pastors from each of the 91 union conference/missions in the world field proportional to the number of pastors in the world field. Each selected pastor will receive a packet containing a questionnaire for him/herself and two questionnaires to be filled out by selected lay members. We are requesting the union secretaries to act as liaison persons between the pastors and the Institute of Church Ministry.

Your job will be to compile an alphabetical list of all the pastors (not administrators) in your union and to send that list to the Institute of Church Ministry. The Institute will select random numbers from your list and identify which pastors will be invited to participate. Then the Institute will prepare the packets and send them to you. You will need to arrange for their distribution to the pastors, no doubt using officials from the conferences/missions in which the pastors serve. The distributors will collect the completed surveys and return them to you so that you can ship them back to the Institute of Church Ministry for processing. All information will be held completely confidential and never identified with a particular pastor or church.

While the packets will not be mailed until next March or April, we need to get your list of pastors as soon as possible so the packets can be prepared. You will hear directly from the Institute of Church Ministry detailing the collection process. We all pray that the Strategic Plan and the research supporting it will hasten the finishing of the work and the coming of Jesus.

Yours in the blessed hope,

Matthew Bediako

The Institute of Church Ministry
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Dear [name of union conference/mission secretary]

You recently received a letter from Elder Bediako, Secretary of the General Conference, informing you of the plans to collect data for evaluating the five-year strategic plan voted at Annual Council. The General Conference has employed the Institute of Church Ministry to collect and analyze this data and authorized us to deal directly with you.

As noted in Elder Bediako's letter, we will be surveying a representative sample of pastors from your field and two of each of their leading lay members. Elder Bediako has requested you to serve as a liaison person between these pastors and the Institute of Church Ministry.

Your first task is to compile a list of all the pastors serving in your union and send it to us so that we can randomly select the names of the pastors to be surveyed. Hopefully, such a list already exists or can be easily created from local conference/mission lists. Please keep several things in mind:

1. The list should include only those who are currently pastoring a church or churches. Please eliminate the names of any administrators, departmental directors, teachers, or other non-pastoring individuals.
2. Please separate the names by local conference/mission and identify the field for each of these groups.
3. The survey will be available in English, French, Korean, Russian, and Spanish. Please indicate the preferred language for those chosen from each local conference/ mission. Please include a statement like this: We request that the questionnaires for _____ Conference/Mission be in the _____ language.
4. If possible send us the list by E-mail. Our researcher assigned to collect these lists is Petr Cincala. His E-mail address is _____ You can correspond with him there if you have any questions. If you do not have access to E-mail, you may send a hard copy by airmail to The Institute of Church Ministry, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104, USA.

There will be other tasks to do in getting the surveys to the chosen pastors, but we will give you more details on that after we get your list. Thank you for participating in this important project to help our church carry forth its mission.

Sincerely in His service,

Roger L. Dudley, Director

February/March 2002

Dear Pastor:

You have received this packet with three envelopes from the executive secretary of your union conference/mission by whatever agents the secretary has chosen to deliver it to you. You are one of over 3000 pastors from the entire world field who has been chosen randomly to be part of this study.

The General Conference has adopted a Strategic Plan for this five-year period between General Conference sessions. It consists of three main areas: (1) Quality of Personal and Church Life, (2) Unity in the World Church, and (3) Growth of the Church. Under each of these areas, a number of specific objectives have been listed.

Because the General Conference would like to get a picture of where the church stands on these objectives, they have commissioned the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University to collect information from a world-wide sample of pastors and lay members. That includes you.

Your job is quite simple. Each envelope contains a brief survey. Fill out one survey yourself, give one to the most prominent male lay member in your congregation, and give the other to the most prominent female lay member. Ask them to fill out the surveys, seal them back in the envelopes and return them to you. Put all three envelopes, including yours, in the larger envelope in which they came and return this envelope to the person who gave it to you. Where you have more than one congregation, select the largest one of them for choosing the two lay members but generalize your personal answers to all the congregations in your district. It is very important to get back all three surveys. Thanks for helping finish the work.

Yours in the blessed hope,

Matthew Bediako

February-March 2002

Executive Secretary of World Union Conferences/Missions

Dear Secretary:

As you will remember, under the direction of Elder Bediako and Elder Ryan the General Conference is collecting data from the world field to assess the status of the five-year Strategic Plan voted at the autumn executive council. The General Conference has hired the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University to collect and process these data.

The first step was to ask you for a list of all the pastors in your union conference/mission. This you have sent to us a little while back. THANK YOU! We randomly drew names from that list and determined the pastors and churches to represent your field. Now we are sending you the surveys to distribute.

Please, distribute the tan 7x10 envelopes to the pastors whose names are on the front. You can use any method of distribution that works best in your field. For example, mail them, have the local conference/mission where each pastor works distribute them, give them out at workers' meetings, or any other efficient method that you choose. Included in each tan envelope is a letter with instructions for pastors and three white envelopes containing surveys. (For your information we enclose a copy of the instructions for the pastors and a survey to you as well.) Once the questionnaires are completed, collect them through the same channels by which they were distributed. Then ship them back to the Institute of Ministry at the above address.

It is crucial to this study that you persuade all the pastors to participate. Thank you again.

Sincerely in His service,

Roger L. Dudley

January 8, 2002

Union Conference/Mission Secretaries

Dear Fellow Worker:

Back in December you received a letter from Elder Bediako telling you that union secretaries have been asked by the General Conference to serve as the liaison persons for collecting data to evaluate the Strategic Plan voted for this quinquennium. He also informed you that the General Conference had employed the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University to collect and analyze the information. Then we sent you an e-mail message giving more specific details as to what we need right away.

This first step involved your giving us a list of all the pastors (not institutional workers) in your union. From these we will randomly select the names of the pastors in your union who will be surveyed. You were asked to send the list by e-mail to our research assistant Petr Cincala at

Sorry to say, we have not yet heard back from you. We realize that the Christmas holidays may have delayed things a bit. But we are on a very tight schedule. We must choose the pastors, prepare and ship the materials, collect all the surveys, analyze the data, and write the report by early September in preparation for presenting it at the Annual Conference of the Executive Committee.

So please respond right away. If you do not have our first collection letter with more complete details, reply and tell us, and we will immediately send you another copy. Thanks so much.

Yours for the finishing of the work,
Roger L. Dudley, Director
The Institute of Church Ministry

GCSP: Expected Outcomes

By questionnaire item

Descriptive Statistics

MeanQ1Daily devotions55.12 Q2Family worship46.32 Q3Sabbath worship75.93 Q4Sabbath school66.91 Q5Other meetings37.28 Q6Group Bible study32.71 Q7Read Bible weekly59.36 Q8Read Ellen White41.09 Q9Witness training30.00 Q10Active witnessing40.95 Q11Assurance of salvation69.19 Q12Socialize non-members49.99 Q13Gift-oriented service47.88 Q14Attend family seminar33.47 Q15Attend health seminar34.77 Q16Help with meetings36.03 Q17Help singles ministry25.57 Q18Hold office/position43.89 Q19Faithful tithing60.71 Q20Local offerings57.65 Q21Support missions43.50 Q22Participate mission projects20.72 Q23Happy marriage62.57 Q24Divorced5.47 Q25Abstinence80.53 Q26Vegetarianism34.52 Q27Exercise regularly32.74 Q28Apply Christian values57.82 Q29Hold political office6.67 Q30Sabbath96.21 Q31Creation in 6 days92.83 Q32Second advent93.14 Q33Death a sleep93.32 Q34EGW authority81.07 Q35EGW reinterpretation49.74 Q36Sanctuary and 184485.79 Q37More interpretations35.12 Q38Adventist special mission90.43 Q39Should tithe/offerings80.84 Q40Fair financial system79.45 Q41Inspired organization86.54 Q42Unity vs. uniformity79.75 Q43Flexibility of standards49.54 Q44Salvation only

in Christ94.65 Q45Adventist review33.17 Q46Read union papers33.36 Q47Read critics13.36
 Q48Community service30.33 Q49Feed the hungry20.81 Q50Help health seminars24.01 Q51Help
 family seminars23.68 Q52Invited non-member38.08 Q53Help evangelism38.67 Q54Gave bible
 studies28.39 Q55Work with youth26.79 Q56Work with young adults25.21 Q57Youth at worship67.28
 Q58Youth Sabbath school63.02 Q59Youth meetings35.86 Q60Youth outreach33.82 Q61Youth
 positions28.63 Q62Youth SDA schools27.90 Q63Pathfinders38.22 Q64Youth church camps42.41
 Q65Youth happy Adventists65.87 Q66Youth questions28.28 Q67Youth retention60.99 Q81Join
 location55.96 Q82Join atmosphere65.18 Q83Join meeting quality70.48 Q84Join youth
 programs54.77 Q85Join young adults39.89 Q86Join doctrines72.31 Q87Join assurance of
 salvation80.92 Q88Preparing for sermons44.25 Q89Work social activities36.57 Q90Work church
 outreach41.27 Q91Counseling38.71 Q92Work with youth34.95
 Q77Sermons on love for allFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidnever37 1.0 1.0
 1.0 occasionally779 21.4 21.6 22.7 about half the time790 21.7 21.9 44.6 most of the time1054
 28.9 29.3 73.9 almost always940 25.8 26.1 100.0 Total3600 98.7 100.0 MissingSystem46 1.3
 Total3646 100.0
 Q78Minority welcomeFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidnever110 3.0 3.1 3.1
 occasionally671 18.4 18.9 22.0 about half the time508 13.9 14.3 36.4 most of the time944 25.9
 26.6 63.0 almost always1313 36.0 37.0 100.0 Total3546 97.3 100.0 MissingSystem100 2.7
 Total3646 100.0 Q79Diversity leadershipFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative
 PercentValidnever290 8.0 8.4 8.4 occasionally685 18.8 19.8 28.2 about half the time504 13.8 14.6
 42.8 most of the time766 21.0 22.2 65.0 almost always1211 33.2 35.0 100.0 Total3457 94.8 100.0
 MissingSystem189 5.2 Total3646 100.0 Q80Diversity worshipFrequencyPercentValid
 PercentCumulative PercentValidnever494 13.5 14.4 14.4 occasionally1062 29.1 31.0 45.4 about
 half the time627 17.2 18.3 63.6 most of the time679 18.6 19.8 83.4 almost always568 15.6 16.6
 100.0 Total3430 94.1 100.0 MissingSystem216 5.9 Total3646 100.0
 Q93Church growthFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValid10% decrease283 7.8 8.3
 8.3 5-9% decrease251 6.9 7.3 15.6 about the same936 25.7 27.3 42.9 5-9% increase954 26.2 27.9
 70.8 10% increase999 27.4 29.2 100.0 Total3423 93.9 100.0 MissingSystem223 6.1 Total3646
 100.0

Q94TitleFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidPastor1278 35.1 36.3 36.3 Lay
 member2245 61.6 63.7 100.0 Total3523 96.6 100.0 MissingSystem123 3.4 Total3646 100.0
 Q95GenderFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidMale2223 61.0 62.3 62.3
 Female1343 36.8 37.7 100.0 Total3566 97.8 100.0 MissingSystem80 2.2 Total3646 100.0
 Q96Church sizeFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidFewer than 1001349 37
 38.6 38.6 100 to 2501094 30 31.3 69.9 251 to 600638 17.5 18.3 88.2 Over 600413 11.3 11.8
 100.0 Total3494 95.8 100.0 MissingSystem152 4.2 Total3646 100.0 Q97Church
 schoolFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidyes1200 32.9 34.3 34.3 no2301 63.1
 65.7 100.0 Total3501 96.0 100.0 MissingSystem145 4.0 Total3646 100.0
 LANGUAGEFrequencyPercentValid PercentCumulative PercentValidEnglish2004 55.0 55.0 55.0
 Spanish599 16.4 16.4 71.5 French546 15.0 15.0 86.5 Russian249 6.8 6.8 93.3 Korean244 6.7 6.7
 100.0 Total3642 99.9 100.0 MissingSystem4 0.1 Total3646 100.0

SUMMARY OF MEANS OF 15 MAIN OBJECTIVES

MeanFA1.1Joyful Christian life71.60 FA1.2Weekly group Bible study50.93 FA1.3Weekly corporate
 worship57.47 FA1.4Personal, family, group prayer life45.32 FA1.5Training for local church
 ministry37.13 FA1.6Participation in world-wide mission34.33 FA1.7Nurturing members of all
 ages37.73 FA1.8Model citizens in the community46.40 FA2.1Cohesiveness in doctrines91.04
 FA2.2Believers in all-inclusive community44.93 FA2.3Cohesiveness in organization75.45
 FA3.1Commitment to active witness35.55 FA3.2Accession and retention in the church63.19

FA3.3Impact of Adventists in society29.65 FA3.5Transmission of values to youth41.77 Quality45.11
Growth45.90 Unity71.47
MeanQ68Promote world missions40.80 Q69Mission sermons25.34 Q70Family seminars17.98
Q71Health seminars17.92 Q72Spiritual gifts seminars16.56 Q73Radio/TV outreach14.69 Q74Items
in local press8.86 Q75Meetings for young adults22.96 Q76Meetings for singles15.96