

A WORLD SURVEY ON THE STATE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The General Conference developed a five-year strategic plan for 2001-2005. The Strategic Planning Committee, formed to monitor this plan, 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 was supported by a number of behavioral objectives.

In order to determine if these objectives were being met, the Strategic Planning Committee set out to collect pertinent data. 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 was centered in the Institute of Church Ministry (ICM), a component of the Seventh-day Theological Seminary, with consultants from the university Behavioral Sciences Department and the Institute of World Missions. The project was successfully completed and a full report was presented to the Annual Council of the General Conference on October 7, 2002.

In early 2006, the Strategic Planning Committee decided to replicate the original study, with some additional items, in order to determine what progress had been made, and to lay mission plans for the quinquennium of 2010-2015. Once again the Institute of Church Ministry was employed to help design the questionnaire, prepare and print the necessary materials, mail and collect the surveys, enter the data into a computer file, analyze the results, and write a definitive report.

The Survey Instrument

To collect the desired information it was necessary to modify the original questionnaire. That task, performed in 2001, was accomplished by first examining the goals and objectives under the three major expected outcomes 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 Strategic Planning 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 contained 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.

For the current replication, most of the questions under the three main expected outcomes were retained along with questions on congregational practices and youth activity. Objective “d. the number of churches established in unentered areas” was dropped because that information could not be gathered from the present survey and needed to be obtained from a different source. In addition sections on effective methods of winning converts, reasons for church drop outs, and relationships with supervising organizations were added. Also, a separate supplement just for pastors was prepared. It consisted of 39 questions dealing with personal and professional life as well as relationships with the larger church organization. The questionnaires were translated into French, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish, as well as the English version. Copies of the English questionnaires are included in the appendices.

The Research Design

It was decided to utilize the same research design as was followed in the 2001 project. 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 January of 2007, 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 in an appendix. He also informed all division secretaries so that they would be familiar with the proceedings.

ICM then sent a letter of instructions 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 as well as the preferred language for their unions. A copy of this letter and copies of follow-up letters are included in the appendices. After repeated contacts, lists of pastors were received from 94 union conferences/missions.

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 Bediako. The letter was sent on General Conference stationery. A copy is included in the appendices

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 July of 2007. 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 included in the appendices.

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 marked PASTOR personally and to also complete the Supplement included with that survey. The pastor was requested to give the other two surveys, 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). Of course, it is impossible to determine how many were actually delivered to the pastor and by the pastor to the lay leaders. The chain involved the union secretary, probably at least one conference/mission official, the pastor, and the lay leaders. Numerous breakdowns in the links were probable.

Many e-mail reminders were sent, both by ICM and the Office of Strategic Planning at the General Conference (sample letters are included in this report). Numerous individual

problems were dealt with, including surveys not arriving to the designated place. By the cutoff of data collection on February 18, 2008, 56 of the 94 union conferences/missions had returned at least some surveys - a rather disappointing result. Non-responding unions had received multiple pleas not only from ICM and the General Conference Secretariat but also from Dr. Jan Paulson, the president. A total of 2972 usable questionnaires had been received by February 18. Since the data were analyzed an additional 73 surveys were received, making a total of 3045, but the information from the late arrivals is not included in this report.

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. This is also the procedure for the Pastors Supplement. The tables in the appendices list either frequencies or means for all questions in the order that they appear in the survey form

The Three Major Outcomes

However, the major 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. The full listing is given in a table in the appendices. 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 9 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 table in the appendices. 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 in the appendices.

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 = 73% 2002 = 72%

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

Weekly corporate worship

Mean = 59% 2002 = 57%

Items = Sabbath worship attendance; Other Adventist religious meetings
Also 38% incorporate diversity of worship services for different groups most of the time or almost always

Weekly group Bible study for all ages

Mean = 51% 2002 = 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 = 52% 2002 = 46%

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

Development of personal, family, and group prayer life

Mean = 44% 2002 = 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 = 40% 2002 = 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 = 40% 2002 = 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 = 59% 2002 = 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

In seven out of these eight objectives, the percentages are very close to those of 2001-2002, even though different churches and different individuals were sampled. Five of these seven show slight improvement. 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, group Bible study, and model citizenship. But few than half are involved in personal or family worship, nurturing members, or various forms of witnessing. The most dramatic change is in "awareness of and participation in the world-wide work of the church" where the percentage involved rose from 34% to 59%, a very impressive gain.

Unity in the World Church

Cohesiveness in doctrine

Mean = 91% 2002 = 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 = 82% 2002 = 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 = 52% 2002 = 45%

Items = Weekly group Bible study; Exercise of spiritual gifts; Faithful tithing; Support congregation with regular offerings;

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

66% Making people from minority groups feel welcome	2002 = 62%
60% Include people of different backgrounds in congregational leadership	2002 = 54%
66% Sermons that emphasize love for all peoples, even "enemies"	2002 = 55%

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. Still, in the later two categories, improvements of 7% are seen compared to the 2002 report.

Growth as a Consequence of Rootedness in Christ

Increasing accession and retention rates in local churches

Mean = 67% 2002 = 63%

Items = Reasons why people join your local church: Adventist home, friend or relative, public evangelism, Bible studies, literature, pastoral visits, television/radio, correspondence courses, internet, social events

12% Attendance decreased by 10% or more	2002 = 8%
8% Attendance decreased by 5% to 9%	2002 = 7%
28% Attendance stable (-5% to +5%)	2002 = 27%
25% Attendance increased by 5% to 9%	2002 = 28%
26% Attendance increased by 10% or more	2002 = 29%

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

Mean = 40% 2002 = 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 2002 = 33%

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

Mean = 38% 2002 = 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 = 32%

2002 = 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

On increasing accession and retention rates, there was a small increase of 4%. However, the items measuring this variable in the present study were different from those employed in 2002. About half of the churches (51%) increased their membership by at least 5%, but 59% reported this progress in 2002. About the same percentages were stable on both studies, but the percentages declining at least by 5% went up by 15% in 2008. For the other three objectives the percentages for the two years were within 2% of each other. This still leaves only 38% actively involved in various witnessing endeavors and 32% involved in serving the community in some way.

Comments on the Three Major Outcomes

In its strategic planning process for the future the General Conference has focused on three major areas, subdivided into fifteen specific objectives. The major 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 can be compared to those from the 2001-2002 project to determine if improvement has been made. They also supply a baseline that can be compared with future studies to ascertain the degree of improvement or lack of it for each goal.

The results are very similar to those reported in 2002, some six years ago. There is still room for improvement on nearly all of the objectives. The strongest area is in unity of doctrine where over 90% of those reporting were firmly committed to Adventist teachings that are Bible-based and Christ-centered. However, it should be noted that while 83% accepted the authority of Ellen White's writings, nearly half saw a need for reinterpretation of them for today's world, and about a third believed that there may be more than one interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine.

In addition to strong support for Adventist doctrines, the respondents gave high marks to church organization. Over 90% agreed that the formation of the Adventist church was inspired by God and that the Adventist church has a special mission to proclaim God's last message to the world. Over 80% agreed that members have a responsibility to return 10% tithe through the local church to the conference and to give additional offerings - an encouraging figure in view of the congregationalism that has troubled some areas of the church. Also, 80% agreed that the Adventist church financial structure is a fair and proper way to support the world work of the church. It is interesting that 82% agreed that church unity means uniformity in doctrinal belief. Perhaps a definition of uniformity will be important to interpreting this result.

Another comparatively high area indicated that 70% of the members live joyful lives with

assurance of salvation. This is about the same as in 2002 and presents the challenge that about 30% do not experience the joy of salvation - certainly a disturbing finding.

As pointed out above, one negative finding is that a smaller percentages of the churches gained membership than in the previous report, and a larger percentage declined. Only about half of the churches grew in membership by at least 5% during the previous two years.

A concern must be that only slightly over three-fourths attend weekly corporate worship on a regular basis, and only about two-thirds take part in any group Bible study, including Sabbath school.

Another of the fifteen objectives being met by fewer than half of the members is “development of personal, family, and group prayer life” (44%). Even the better-ranking items that are included in this objective are lower than desirable: Daily personal devotions (55%), Regular Bible reading (56%), and Family worship (46%). Of those who are married, only 65% have a happy and satisfying marriage, and only 65% pay a faithful tithe in spite of the fact that 84% believe that they have a responsibility to do so.

Of crucial importance to the church is the retention and training of its young people. The objective, “transmission of the church’s legacy and mission to succeeding generations,” had a mean of only 40%. Of youth eighteen years and younger, two-thirds attend church regularly, and only about a third attend any other religious meetings or participate in outreach activities. About 63% seem content with the Adventist church, and 60% will probably remain in the church as adults. These low percentages are an ominous sign for the future of Adventism.

Outreach participation as revealed in the objective, “regular training for discipleship, witnessing, and involvement in local church activity,” is only 40%. Items included are “actively witnessing to non-members” (41%), “inviting a non-member to church” (39%), “ministering to the youth” (28%), “ministering to young adults” (27%), “helping with community services” (38%), and “giving Bible studies” (30%).

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 = 73.2%).

Next in order is Quality of Life - Personal and Church (mean = 48.5%)

In last place is Growth as a Consequence of Rootedness in Christ (mean = 47.0%)

In 2002, the means were 71.5%, 45.1%, and 45.9%, respectively. So there has been slight improvement with the second and third switching places but both very close. After six years the church is still doing better at Unity than at Personal Life or Growth.

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 four 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 fewer than 40% of the members are engaged.
4. Retention and involvement of the youth of the church. That area had a mean of only 40%, and estimates, as well as other research, indicate that the church is in danger of losing 40% to 50% of its young people as they become adults.

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 the future mission of the church.

Supporting Materials

This report will now turn to new sections of the questionnaire as well as the Supplement to the World Survey for Pastors. Following that, much supporting material will be found in the Appendices, such as:

- A detailed report on the 15 objectives with means for each included item
- A list of means and/or frequencies for each question in the survey
- A comparison of means in 2008 with those of similar questions in 2002
- Frequencies broken down by language, union conferences/missions, divisions, and continents
- A comparison of languages and continents for 2002 and 2008
- A list of union conferences/missions that returned surveys
- Samples of the letters used in the data-collecting process
- The World Survey questionnaire and the Supplement for Pastors questionnaire

Methods of Winning Converts

A section on the 2006 to 2008 questionnaire that was not included in 2002 dealt with the most effective method of winning converts. The instructions stated: "In your experience how effective is each of the following methods in winning converts into your congregation? 1 = not

effective, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = quite effective, 4 = greatly effective”

The instructions were followed by a list of ten items in which the respondent could choose one of the four options. Descriptive statistics for the set are included in this report and give full frequencies, percentages, and valid percentages for each item. However, to better visualize the contribution of each method, this section combines the percentages of those choosing options three and four (quite effective and greatly effective). Then these are arranged in descending order. The valid percentage column is employed to eliminate the 2% to 6% who did not answer a particular question. Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole percentage.

<u>Method of Evangelism</u>	<u>Percentage Quite or Greatly Effective</u>
Bible studies in the home	83%
Brought up in an Adventist home	79%
Visits by a pastor	73%
Adventist friend or relative	70%
Social events	59%
Public evangelism series of meetings	52%
Read books or other literature	44%
Television or radio programs	43%
Bible correspondence courses	40%
Material on the internet	29%

It is obvious that pastors and members believe that personal contact is the most important and effective means of winning converts to their congregations. The four leading methods all involve personal interaction. While public evangelism meetings are important, only about half of the respondents see them as quite or greatly effective. A home visit by the pastor leads by more than 20 percentage points. Growing up in an Adventist home and having Adventist friends and relatives also emphasizes the importance of personal interaction in the prospective convert making a decision to join the church.

The four methods with the lowest ratings are all impersonal. Of course, personal follow-up to these methods will enhance their effectiveness, but by themselves they are less productive. The internet is a rather new tool for evangelism and may prove more effective as more materials become more widely available.

Reasons for Dropouts

This is also a new section of the questionnaire, not included in the 2002 version. The instructions stated: “In your experience how strong is each of the following reasons in the decisions of members to drop out of the church? 1 = no reason at all to 5 = a very strong reason” The instructions were followed by a list of ten items in which the respondent could choose a number between 1 and 5. Descriptive statistics for the set are included in this report and give full frequencies, percentages, and valid percentages for each item. However, to better visualize the

impact of each reason this section combines the percentages of those choosing options four and five (strong reason and very strong reason). Then these are arranged in descending order. The valid percentage column is employed to eliminate the 2% to 4% who did not answer a particular question. Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole percentage.

<u>Reasons for Dropping out</u>	<u>Percentage Strong or Very Strong Reason</u>
Mistreated by members	59%
Lack of fellowship	57%
Unfriendly church	55%
Social pressure from friends or relatives	42%
Church's teaching and practice don't match	36%
Worship services don't meet spiritual needs	34%
Lack of confidence in leadership	33%
Standards too strict	27%
Don't believe some of the teachings	25%
Standards too loose	17%

The ordering of this list brings out some very revealing facts. The main reasons members leave the church have to do with personal relationships even, as noted above, the main influences in winning converts are relational. The top three reason for dropping out are all in the same area. People who do not find warm and friendship, who do not find a family atmosphere, and who believe they have been mistreated are likely to leave for friendlier country.

Note too that not believing in the teachings of the church is rated as a strong or very strong reason for leaving by only 25% of the respondents - second from the bottom in rating the reasons. Dropouts are more likely to be put off by hypocrisy (reason 5) or not finding spiritual food (reason 6) than doctrinal reasons. Just as personal interaction is most important in winning converts (see section above), so poor personal interaction is most important in driving them away.

This project does not survey those who have actually dropped out of the church. The survey was completed by pastors and leading lay members who are an integral part of the church body. But from their inside perspective these leaders have seen members depart over the years. Given their broad view and insight, they have noticed what it is that discourages and inclines members to give up. Certainly these things should be top priority in training our churches. Keeping the members from leaving is just as important for growth as winning new converts.

Communication with "Higher" Organizations

Establishing lines of communication between those who minister on the front lines and those who hold administrative offices is crucial in a worldwide church with such great diversity. Thus the third new section of the questionnaire was included to probe this area.

The instructions were: "As a pastor or lay leader, how do you see your relationship with

the conference, union, division, or world church? 1 = no communication, 2 = communication some of the time, 3 = regular communication.”

Following these instructions was a list of eight areas where the respondent could choose one of the three options. Descriptive statistics for the set are included in this report and give full frequencies, percentages, and valid percentages for each item. However, to better visualize the overall picture of communications this section reports the percentages of those choosing option 3 (regular communication). These percentages are arranged in descending order. The valid percentage column is employed to eliminate the 3% to 5% who did not answer a particular question (The internet question had a high 15% that did not answer, perhaps indicating its unavailability in some areas of the world.). Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole percentage.

<u>Areas of Communication</u>	<u>Percentage Regular Communication</u>
Access to Adventist journals and papers	57%
Information on decisions of local conference	46%
Conference leaders care about you personally	35%
Conference leaders listen to you	35%
Receive Adventist radio/TV broadcasts	34%
Information on decisions of union/division/GC	29%
Receive information on the Church by internet	25%
Have input into decisions of higher organizations	22%

This presents a disturbing picture. The only area in which over half (and that only 57%) of the pastors and lay leaders felt they were in regular communication was through access to Adventist journals and papers. While such access is essential, it does not involve any personal communication. Fewer than half even discover what is happening in their local conference or mission. What is especially shocking is that only slightly more than a third believe that their conference leaders listen to them and their ideas or care about them personally. Most tragic is that only 22% feel that they have any input into the decisions of higher organizations. The church is dependent upon pastors and lay leaders in fulfilling its mission. Yet, apparently these vital workers do not feel a connection with the overall body.

Supplement to World Survey for Pastors

An addition to the World Survey that was not included in the 2002 project is the Supplement for Pastors. As reported on page 2, it consisted of 39 questions dealing with personal and professional life as well as relationships with the larger church organization. As reported on page 3, the pastor, upon receiving the packet from the union secretary, found a letter of endorsement and three questionnaires in the envelope. The pastor was asked to fill out one of the surveys marked PASTOR personally and to also complete the Supplement included with that survey.

Of the 2972 World Surveys included in this report, 1055 were completed by pastors; the remainder by lay leaders. However, the maximum number completing a Supplement was 1003 pastors. Following this page a frequency table for each of the 37 questions is inserted. The first column shows the options from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The second column is the number who selected each option. “System” indicates the number that did not answer the question. In this case the number is always large since the lay leaders were not given the survey. The percent column shows the percentage that chose each option based on the 2972 total responses. But since lay leaders did not have the survey, and since not all pastors answered every question, the valid percent column shows the percentage of those who actually answered that particular question. The discussion, therefore, will use the valid percent column, and the cumulative percent column is based on valid percentage.

The first 30 of the 37 questions deal with pastor attitudes. Three types of questions are included. In 18 of the responses, an “agree” answer indicates positive morale or belief. Another 8 questions are framed so that an “agree” answer indicates negative morale or belief. The remaining 4 questions in this set are neither positive or negative, but ask for the pastor=s opinion on certain issues.

The last seven questions are quite different. They ask to what extent pastors are receiving certain services from administrative bodies. Each of these four types of questions will be dealt with separately in the discussion that follows.

In addition to the table of frequencies that follow this page, a table with the means for these 37 questions is included in the appendices. Also a copy of the Supplemental questionnaire is included with the copy of the World Survey questionnaire.

Positive Attitudes and Beliefs

To give a sharper focus to the preceding table, the valid percentages of those either “somewhat” or “strongly agreeing” have been added. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage. The list below arranges them in descending order so the reader can quickly see the relative strengths of the positive items. While the full wording of each item appears in the table above and in the copy of the questionnaire, for this list the wording of the items has been abbreviated.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Belief in inspiration of Ellen White	98%
Doctrines are Biblically sound	96%
Enjoy being a pastor	96%
Satisfactory marital/family relationships	94%
Fulfillment in role of pastor	94%
Local church officers support my ministry	92%
Tithe policy in harmony with God=s will	91%
Satisfying personal devotional life	90%
Can prioritize time to accomplish duties	87%
Conference leaders supportive of work	86%
Use professional time effectively	86%
Confidence in Adventist education system	79%
Adventist church structure adequate	79%
Received good ministerial training in Adventist colleges	79%
Have adequate, comprehensive personal library	78%
Sufficient study time for sermon preparation	76%
Believe denominational leaders want to hear my opinions	62%
Use internet for professional development and research	54%

If these 1000 pastors are typical, they present a very positive picture of satisfaction and morale. The first eight items find agreement with 90% or higher of the responding pastors. Another three items gather agreement in the 80% range, and all but two items elicit agreement with over three-fourths. Nothing falls under half, and the lowest may reflect lack of access to the internet. Some concern may be found in that only 62% believe that denominational leaders value the opinions of the pastors. That could be an area for improvement. Generally though, the pastors seem to be doing well on this list.

Negative Attitudes and Beliefs

Eight of the questions were framed so that agreeing with them would indicate some problem, or disappointment, or lower morale. Here pastors ask for help. As in the list above, the valid percentages of those either “somewhat” or “strongly agreeing” have been added. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage. The list below arranges them in descending order so the reader can quickly see the relative strengths of the negative items. While the full wording of each item appears in the table above and in the copy of the questionnaire, for this list the wording of the items has been abbreviated.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Need help to upgrade professional ministerial skills	86%
Need help in training local church leaders	78%
Caught between demand of conference and congregation	56%
Not paid enough to live comfortably	51%
Most of the time feel lonely and isolated in ministry	37%
Pastors not appreciated in the Adventist church	35%
Little direct interaction with local conference leaders	33%
Sometimes would like to leave pastoral ministry	25%

The two items with the highest percentages do not necessarily reflect low morale. They are cries for help. Given this strong response, leaders might well consider how to upgrade in-service education for pastors. However, around half find themselves in conflict over their responsibilities and struggling to make ends meet. The three items in the 30% range definitely concern morale. It is serious to find around a third of Adventist pastors feeling isolated, unappreciated, and without a pipeline to conference leadership. These items need to be high on the study list. As to the last item, it cannot be discerned how often “sometimes” is, but having a fourth of the pastors with such feelings must be a matter of concern.

Pastoral Opinion on Certain Questions

The other four questions in this set of thirty cannot be classified as necessarily positive or negative (although there might be feelings one way or the other tied to them) but as the opinion of the pastors. Again, the valid percentages of those either “somewhat” or “strongly agreeing” have been added. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage. The list below arranges them in descending order so the strength of various opinions can be more easily seen.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Congregations free to try new ideas without conference approval	37%
Congregation should be able to keep back some tithe for local ministry	33%
Ministers should be free to earn additional income beyond the salary	25%
Pastors should be able to teach things that may differ to some extent from standard Adventist understandings	12%

In general, agreement with these items is relatively low. They reflect the concept of being able to exercise personal judgment rather than having all decisions made at “higher” levels and handed down to them. Probably the most threatening to administrators is that a third would like to use some of the tithe for local ministry. This has cropped up here and there over the past few years, but it may be instructive to note that a third of the pastors support the idea. The fourth who would like to be able to earn additional income beyond their salaries is the other side of the coin for the half who complain that pastors are not being paid a living wage. The last item is somewhat ambiguous in that it is not certain what areas are being considered and to what extent the pastors might diverge. While only 12% agree with the concept, that could still be a major problem depending on the direction and the extent of the deviation.

As is true with the three major outcomes of the Strategic Planning Committee, the most effective methods of winning converts, the reasons members drop out of the church, and the communication with “higher” organizations, many valuable insights for promoting the mission of the church can be found in a study of the Supplement for Pastors. This whole document provides information that will aid in evaluating the programs and direction of the church and in laying plans for the future.