THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE SEVENTH – DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE DISILLUSIONMENT AND ALIENATION OF ITS MEMBERS – A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

by

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature: _____ Date: 13.03.07

Calvin Plaatjes

ABSTRACT

This dissertation addresses the functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa and the disillusionment and alienation of its members. Its aim is to uncover what the key factors are in the administrative functioning that has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administration of the church. It gives particular attention to five aspects of administration: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition, and organizational structures.

The objectives of the study are multifaceted. It wants to sensitize and make the Conference and Union administrations aware of the issues that separate them from the rank and file in the church, and how that the present challenges can be solved on a broad consultative basis. Furthermore, the study wants to make recommendations as to how broader representation can be established. Importantly, the study wishes to help the SDA Church administration to maintain a healthy balance between the church as institution and the church as organism.

The study is basically exploratory as it seeks to explore the social phenomenon between the administrative functioning and the grassroots of the church for the reason of gaining insight as well as to explain the reason for its existence. It is also hermeneutical in nature as it seeks to establish a proper understanding of the interrelatedness between the administrative functioning and the laity in the church. Empirical enquiry is an important aspect of the study as it employs structured interviews with church boards and survey questionnaires to pastors in order to establish quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study.

The study made use of a practical-theological methodology. The methodology is a hermeneutical sensitive and correlational dialogue that brings different theological parameters into dialogue with the realities of practice of ministry and the world.

Chapter one introduces the study. It outlines the various dimensions of the study. Chapters two and three are historical. It deals with the present reality and the identity of the church using literary sources. Chapter five deals with the empirical research and gives a description of the views of ministers and the church boards concerning the five aspects of administration of the church, which has been researched. Chapters four and six deals with the theoretical-theological aspects of the study. Chapter four deals with the tension that exists between the church as institution and the church as organism. Chapter six is a theological evaluation that seeks the will of God or His guidance in terms of the problem which the church faces.

Chapter six describes the way forward by making recommendations and gives some strategies that can be used to realize the goals of the study and the church.

OPSOMMING

Die verhandeling ondersoek die denominasionele etos en die administratiewe strukture van die Sewendedag-Adventistekerk in Suid-Afrika. Die studie toon aan dat daar ontnugtering en vervreemding by die gewone lede van die kerk ten opsigte van die administratiewe strukture bestaan. Dit gee aandag aan vyf aspekte van administrasie: administratiewe gesag, leierskap, mag, oorgang en organisatoriese strukture.

Die doelstellings van die studie is veelvoudig. Dit is poog om die Konferensies en die Unie-administrasies sensitief te maak van die strydpunte wat hulle verwyder van die gewone mense in die kerk. Dit stel voor dat die huidige uitdagings opgelos kan word deur middel van 'n breë konsultatiewe proses. Verder maak die studie aanbevelings oor hoe wyer verteenwoordiging in administratiewe strukture bereik kan word. Die studie wil die SDA-kerk administrasie van hulp wees om 'n gesonde balans te handhaaf tussen die kerk as organisasie en die kerk as organisme.

Die studie is verkennend en hermeneuties van aard. Dit wou vasstel wat die mening van die werkers (predikante) en kerkrade is oor die administratiewe strukture en leierskap in die kerk. Ten einde dit vas te stel is 'n omvattende empiriese ondersoek gedoen deur gestruktureerde onderhoude met kerkrade oor die hele land te voer en deur vraelyste aan 'n verteenwoordigende steekproef predikante te stuur.

Die navorsing het gebruik gemaak van 'n prakties-teologiese metodologie. Dié metodologie is 'n hermeneuties sensitiewe en korrelatiewe dialoog wat verskillende teologiese parameters in dialoog met die realiteite van die bedieningspraktyk en wêreld bring.

Hoofstuk een is inleidend en gee 'n oorsig oor die navorsingsontwerp. Hoofstukke twee en drie is histories. Dit behandel die huidige realiteit en die identiteit van die kerk deur gebruik te maak van literêre bronne. Hoofstuk vyf handel oor die empiriese ondersoek en gee 'n beskrywing van die menings van predikante en kerkrade oor die vyf aspekte van die administrasie van die kerk wat ondersoek is. Hoofstukke vier en ses handel oor die teoreties- teologiese aspekte van die studie. Vier bespreek die spanning wat altyd bestaan tussen die kerk as organisasie en die kerk as organisme. Ses is 'n teologiese evaluering wat soek na die wil of leiding van God in terme van die probleem waarmee die kerk worstel.

Die laaste hoofstuk maak voorstelle oor die pad vorentoe en stel strategieë voor wat gebruik kan word om doelstellings te bereik.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my study leader Jurgens Hendriks,

for his inspiring leadership, for being human, and for being an Incarnational Servant Leader and mentor in a variety of ways

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A sincere word of appreciation and thanks to my wife Millicent. Her support, encouragement and understanding never failed. Our children Clinton and Candice, Elton and Mandy and Lee-Anne deserve special mention for their encouragement and support and for patiently waiting for me to complete my studies.

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I purposefully dedicate this work to my mentor and study leader professor H J Hendriks whose guidance and help was of incalculable and inestimable value. I am indebted to him for his encouragement and understanding, but most of all for being a servant leader. His guidance has always been most inspiring, yet he allowed me the freedom to develop my own thinking and to do so in a critical way.

Last but not least, I will always be eternally grateful to God who has been gracious and faithful to me. All that I am and ever hope to be I owe to His grace.

REVISIONING THE DENOMINATIONAL ETHOS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

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TERMINOLOGY

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

Administrative Structures refers to the structures that are above the level of the local church i.e. the Conference and Union levels of Administration in South Africa.

COLPORTEURS

A term used with reference to persons who are employed to sell books published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The term was later changed to Literature Evangelists.

COLOURED, WHITE AND BLACK

Refers to those South Africans classified as such in terms of the race Classification law, introduced by the Nationalist Party in 1950.

CONFERENCE

A self supporting, autonomous administration unit designed to oversee Seventh-day Adventists Churches under its jurisdiction, within a specific geographical area.

ETHOS

Ethos in this study refers to the characteristic way in which the administration structures engages the local churches under their jurisdiction.

FIELD

An administration unit designed to oversee the administration of Seventh-day Adventists Churches under its jurisdiction, but is financially dependant and is, therefore, under the supervision of a Union Conference.

REVISIONING

Revisioning implies existence of an earlier reality or vision that has served its purpose and now should be reconfigured because of new demands and expectations. (Hodgson 1988:21).

TITHE

Refers to the giving of 10% of earnings to the church for the remuneration of pastors.

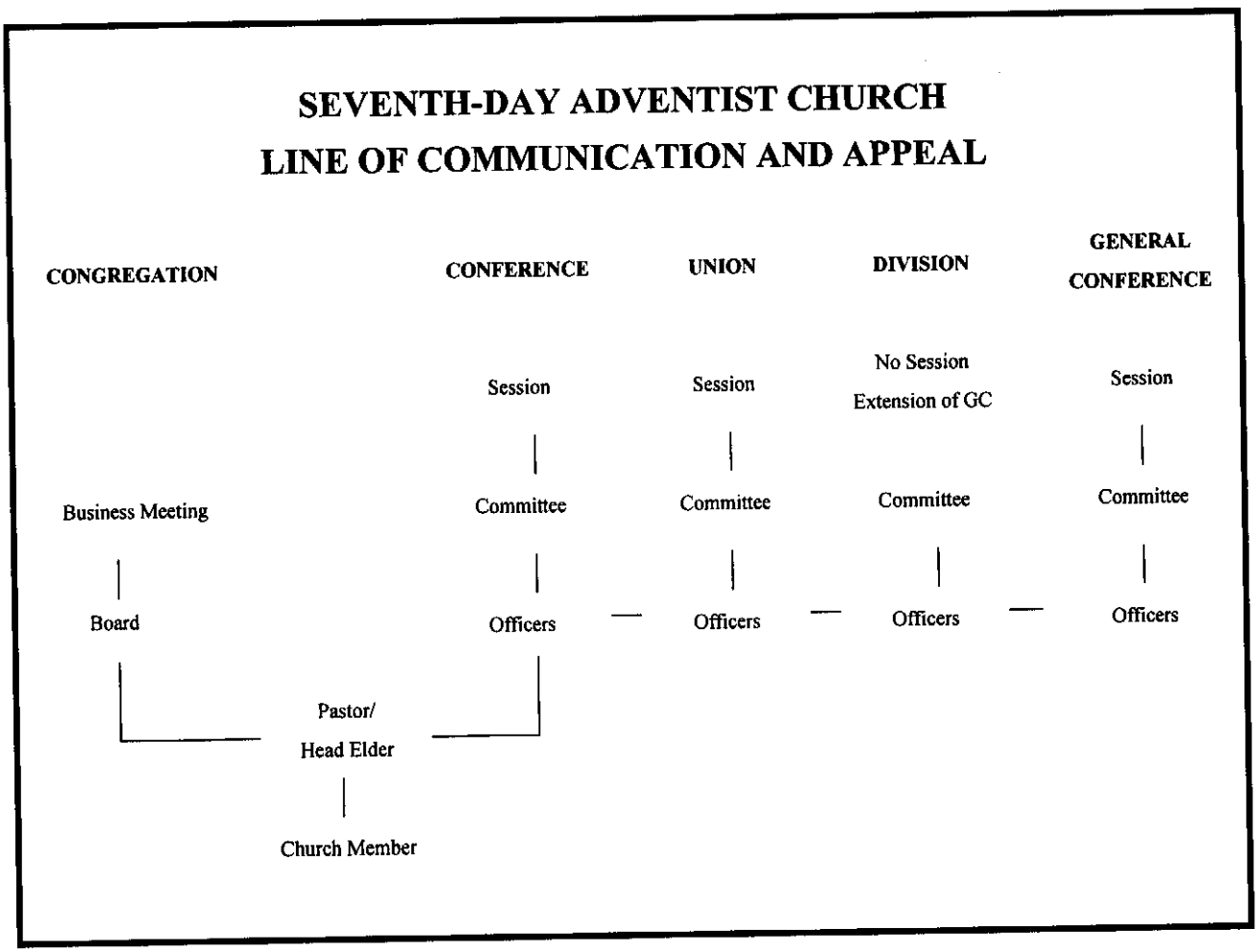
UNION

The Union forms the basic constituent unit of the Seventh-day Adventist world Church (Beach and Beach 1985:57). It is the second administrative level above the local church, and oversees conferences within its geographical area.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADRA	an acronym for Adventist Disaster Relief Agency
CC	Cape Conference
C.O.P.	Combined offerings plan.
GC	General Conference
KNFC	Kwazulu Natal Free State Conference
SAUC	Southern African Union Conference
SEDCOM	an acronym for Seventh-day Adventist Community of Africa (incorporated) not for gain. It is the legal body for registering and holding of church properties.
SEDMED	an acronym for the Seventh-day Adventist Medical Aid Scheme.
SHC	Southern Hope Conference
TC	Transvaal Conference
TOC	Trans-Orange Conference
SID	Southern Africa – Indian Ocean Division
Union	a shortened form of Union Conference (e.g. Southern African Union Conference)
VOP	Voice of Prophecy. (a Bible Correspondence School operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.)

LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND APPEAL



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa started out as a lay-movement and developed into a hierarchical structured organization, an institution with two levels of administration structures above the local congregation, namely, the Conference and Union Conference. This structural arrangement in keeping with its hierarchical nature, over the years developed a "top-down" ethos. In the early years, this kind of ethos was acceptable. To a large extent people accepted it as God's plan for the church.

However, change has caused people to redefine themselves in their changing situations. They no longer look at the "top town" ethos in the administration of the church as acceptable. The world in which people live is changing. In today's world, information and knowledge have become driving forces of change. The "information age" is the force behind new technologies. There is also global economic integration that drives change in our world. The advent of the computer provided networks and e-mail. Information began to flow sideways, very different from the traditional hierarchical pyramid style, wherein information flows up and down.

These changes also influenced and redefined the environment in which the church has to function. People are becoming aware of a wide variety of choices for their spiritual journey. It has therefore, become apparent, that people in a competitive environment see themselves as participating in the life of the church on their own terms and not terms which are prescribe by the church (Lee 2001:5).

Lee (2001:7) aptly states with reference to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is particularly applicable to the SDA Church in South Africa that the church must:

> [B]e more faithful to its calling, the church must be representative, responsible, mission-driven, grace-centred, and as participatory as possible. The "corporate body language" of the church says a lot to the world and itself about its beliefs. This includes structural issues. Form, after all, follows function. Leadership and laity must work together for the best possible organization. Such a vision is what it means to be true people of God.

This statement of Lee has a direct bearing on administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. This is especially so, since the administration of the church is hierarchically structured, with the administration at the top and members of the church at the bottom of the pyramid-styled administrative structures.

1.2 The Research problem

The problem addressed in this research concerns how the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa engages the rank and file in the church – the pastors and laity. In particular, it concerns the Conference and Union administrations. The environment between the two administrations and the rank and file in the church has become increasingly strained over the years.

The under current of disillusionment, dissatisfaction and alienation are clearly observed at ministerial meetings and other gatherings of the church.

Pieterse (1983:58) points out that 'Alvin W Gouldner shows that when the leaders become alienated from the lower levels of an organization bureaucracy rears its head: this is how the leaders try to control the lower ranks of management policy.'

It is important that the administrators of church organizations be sensitive to the needs of people whom they serve more than policies governing the organization. Furthermore, that their leadership style (ethos) and the way in which they structure the organization, that it does not impede the mission of the church and the aspirations of those called out to be the body of Christ. They must lead the church to its full realization of its calling.

Lee (2001) president of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in the United States, published an article in the Adventist Review – the official publication of the SDA world church. The article entitled, *Church Structure in 2025: organizational changes the Adventist church will be forced to make over the next 10-25 years. Lee (2001:2)* argues that structure either aids or hinders mission. The denomination needs an organization capable of meeting challenges and opportunities never before imagined. Lee (2001:2) further states 'among others, church historian 'George Knight has repeatedly called for structural change. He points out that the structure put in place a hundred years ago has become increasingly rigid and bureaucratic.'

Lee (2001:2) is convinced that policies and procedures, church structure and its infrastructures may have been effective in times past under different circumstances, may not necessarily be adequate today or for the future. Therefore, leadership must anticipate and be ready to manage change if the church is to remain viable and effective in mission.

Knight (1995a:24) uses Moberg's five stages life cycle of a church and says that Moberg's analysis, 'sheds a great deal of light on the development and current status of Adventism, even though his model does not provide a perfect correlation.' The five stages are as follows:

Stage 1: Incipient organization

Stage 2: Formal organization

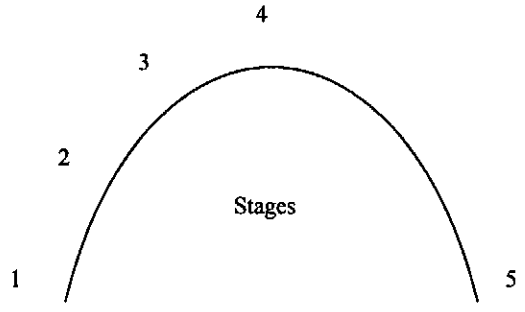
Stage 3: Maximum efficiency

Stage 4: Institutionalism

Stage 5: Disintegration

The following diagram depicts its flow thus:

Figure 1



Knight (1995a:28-29) says that:

> Moberg presents stage 4 as a great danger. During this stage formalism drains the group's vitality. Its leadership comes to be 'dominated by an established bureaucracy more concerned with perpetuating its own interest than with maintaining the distinctives that helped bring the group into existence.' Administrations tend to centre in committees and boards that often become self-perpetuating. The church becomes a "bureaucracy", with mechanisms of group's structure largely having become ends in themselves.

Knight (1995a:29) points out that in stage 4 Moberg claims that 'Membership becomes remote from leadership and increasingly passive.' In stage 5 – "disintegration", Moberg says:

> [T]he institutional machine's lack of responsiveness to the personal and social needs of members causes loss of their confidence . . . . Many of those who remain in fellowship with the parent body often ignore it in practice or conform to its teachings only half-heartedly. Meanwhile the denomination continues – supported by a leadership with vested interest and by a membership with emotional attachments.

Knight (1995a:24) sees Moberg's stage five as shedding light 'on the development and current status of Adventism.' However, on the current status of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, it not only sheds light on it, but in many ways mirrors what is currently happening.

The results of the structured interviews conducted with church boards as shown in illustration 1-10, concerning conferences and illustration 11-20, concerning the union, shows that stage 5 of Moberg's five stage life cycle of a church has progressed far in the SDA Church in South Africa.

Attention is particularly drawn to illustrations 3 and 4 dealing with the wishes and feelings of members over against the organization and its function taking first preference. Then also illustrations 5 and 6 showing that people consider themselves powerless at grass-roots level of the church. Illustrations 9 and 10 shows that people sees themselves passively carrying out what is passed down to them from the top.

Tidball (1984:136) asserts, that for a church to succeed it needs 'to be alert constantly of the peril of mixed motives, the threat of unwieldy bureaucracy, the lessening of standards and the fossilization of principles.' Beyond this, the church needs new leaders to engender reform and renewal.

The problem now needs to be stated more succinctly and raises a particular question as to:

What are the key factors in the administrative set up of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa that has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file in the church, from the administrative structures of the church?

There is a corporate administrative culture that pervades the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout the world is also experienced in South Africa.

1.3 Motivation for this study

This self-initiated study has been motivated firstly, by the need for understanding why the Seventh-day Adventist Church at grassroots level displays a large amount of negativity toward administrative structures of the denomination.

The motivation comes as a direct result of observing the common phenomenon of disillusionment experienced by clergy and laity alike. This researcher's observations were made at Conference Ministerial Workers Meetings held at lease once per annum. Further, observations were made at Union Ministerial Meetings. At Union Ministerial Meetings ministers from all conferences meet together for discussion of various aspects of the work in the country. Ministers at these meetings, take the opportunity of comparing administrations and expressing dissatisfaction. Members alike, at camp meetings and other gatherings express dissatisfaction at the "office." The "office" is a local term for the administration.

The researcher has been in the employ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for thirty years. He has worked in various capacities, as pastor, teacher and administrator. He has served for fourteen of the thirty years as administrator in the capacity of Secretary Treasurer in two conferences and as Treasurer in one conference. During these years he has served on Conference Executive Committees and as an invitee on the Union Executive Committee. As such he has experience and observed the disillusionment as a pastor and administrator.

The final motivation for this study was the need to research the nature of the disillusionment and how widespread it is, and to make recommendations as to how it could be remedied.

1.4 Research design

1.4.1 Guiding hypothesis

When a certain phenomenon is observed, there is speculation about what the possible causes may be. Various suggestions may be made to explain the possible causes. Hendriks (2004:223) says:

> When we observe a certain phenomenon, we speculate about its possible causes, various explanations may be expected. Scientific research subjects such suggestions (in scientific language called hypothesis) to controlled testing to prove them true or false. Usually, a proven and accepted hypothesis is called a theory. A theory thus explains certain phenomenon, and is a systematic explanation that relates to a particular aspect of life.

Bless (1995:37) states:

> Essentially, problems are questions about relations among variables and hypotheses are tentative, concrete and testable answer to such problems. In other words, an hypothesis, which is a suggested answer to a problem, has to be tested empirically before it can be accepted and incorporated into a theory. . . the role of hypothesis is not only to suggest explanations for certain facts or problems but also to guide the investigation.

Mouton (1996:121) says:

> When we first formulate a statement without knowing whether we have any empirical warrant to accept it as reasonably valid or even true, we call this a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a statement that makes a provisional or conjectural knowledge claim about the world. A 'good' hypothesis is empirically testable, which means that we must be able to specify clearly what data would provide support or rejection of it.

Newman (1997:108) defines a hypothesis along the same lines, when he says:

> A hypothesis is a proposition to be tested or a tentative statement of a relationship between two variables. Hypotheses are guesses about how the social world works; they are stated in a value-neutral form.

According to Kerlinger (1979:35):

> Hypotheses are powerful tools for the advancement of knowledge, because although formulated by man, they can be tested and shown to be correct or incorrect apart from man's values and beliefs.

Mouton (1996:121,122) classifies hypothesis into two main groups: Existential and relational hypothesis.

- **Existential hypothesis**

'An existential hypothesis is a provisional statement about a certain state of affairs, that is, it makes a claim that something is the case.' An example of an existential hypothesis is as follows: 'More than sixty percent of all South African doctors are opposed to rural community service'. This statement makes the claim that there is a certain entity – that is a group of individuals with a certain property – an attitude toward rural community service, and places a value to the property – a certain percentage.

Existential hypothesis is more commonly used in exploratory research. Its main purpose is to establish what the matter is (Mouton 1996:122).

- **Relational hypothesis**

A relational hypothesis assumes as basis for reasoning, the existence of a specific kind of relationship between two or more variables. 'It has become customary to distinguish further between *correlation* (or descriptive) hypotheses and *causal* (or explanatory) hypotheses, depending on the kind of relationship that is being postulated' (Mouton 1996:122) [Mouton's italics].

An example of relational hypotheses is as follows 'a student's university performance is directly related to his/her parent's income and educational level' (Mouton 1996:93).

1.4.1.1 Study hypothesis

The type of hypothesis used in this study, is an existential hypothesis. It conjectures that, there is a problem between the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa and the "grassroots" of the church. Its purpose is to explore, gain insight and determine the nature and extent of the problem, by means of empirical inquiry. The data to support or reject the hypothesis will be extracted by means of questionnaires and structured interviews.

Thus the hypothesis that under-girds this study is as follows:

The way in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered, with particular reference to: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures, has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church.

The primary argument of the hypothesis will be elaborated and its tested results shown in chapter 5 of this study.

1.4.2 Study objectives

The objectives of this study are multifaceted:

1. At the outset it was lay-people who initially got the church off the ground. However, the development of the early administrative structures set the stage for hierarchical governance of the church, which after a while has caused distancing people from the administrations of the church. Firstly, it is the objective of this study to make both the Conference and Union administrations aware of the dissatisfaction that exists amongst the rank and file in the church. Furthermore, that most of the present challenges facing the church can to a large extent be solved if the administrations take the laity into consideration, by soliciting their opinions and input on a broad consultative basis.

2. Presently, the SDA Church operates a representative form of church government. This is explained in chapter 3. However, the representation is mainly operative when it comes to elections on every level of the church. However, representation should be seen on a much broader basis as what is currently seen. A further objective of this study is to put forward suggestions as to how this broader representation can be established and operated grassroots upwards.

3. Chapter 4 discusses the polarity between the church as institution or organism. The third objective is to help the SDA Church in South Africa maintain a healthy balance between the church as institution and the church as organism.

4. It is a further objective of this study to establish qualitatively and quantitatively the extent of the stated problem. The research results of chapter 5 serves to accomplish this.

5. It is also intended to serve as a catalyst for change and to revision the administrative ethos, particularly with reference to the five aspects of administration:

   Leadership – Worldly leadership thrives on control and exploitation of people using authority and power to "Lord it over" people. Biblical leadership is one of servant-hood to serve people.

   Organizational structures –The reality of the nature of the church must be reflected in its structure. Structure must be temporary and flexible, taking into account changing circumstances.

   Administrative authority – The exercise of authority must be done in harmony with Jesus teaching and with gentleness, understanding and with due discernment.

   Power - Power of human authority must constantly be reliant on God's power and the obligation to share power.

   Transition – Transition presents both challenges and opportunities involving letting go of the status quo, the old ways of doing to new ways of doing that undergirds and is in harmony with the ministry and mission of the church. These five aspects are discussed in chapter six which deals with its theological evaluation.

6. Lastly, to provide practical suggestions of how the administrations can effectively revision its ethos and effect changes for the good of the church, its ministry and mission.

1.4.3 Research methodology

The following remarks are applicable to the methodology that undergirds this research:

1. This study is exploratory – it sets out to explore a social phenomenon, gain insight and explain the reason for its existence.

2. It is hermeneutical in nature – it seeks to establish a proper understanding of the interrelatedness of the administrative structures and the rank and file in the church.

3. An important aspect of this study is the empirical inquiry as set out in chapter 5. The methods employed were; questionnaires sent out to pastors, and structured interviews held with various church boards.

A very important source of knowledge for this study would be the contextual experience of men and women in their encounter with God and one another. Louw (1999:62) says 'the person within a social context is an important source for knowledge' Louw (1999:134) further states 'a person is a source of knowledge within the network of relations.' Gerkin (1984:40) speaks of a person as 'a living human document.'

In this study, people and how they experience the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa will be the main source of the empirical inquiry.

There are many different ways of gathering information directly from people if it cannot be obtained by observation (Bless 1995:106). Bless (1995:106) says 'these various methods have their advantages and disadvantages.'

1.4.3.1 Interviews

Bless (1995:106) sees interviews as the first direct way of gathering information. It 'involves *direct* personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions.' Greeff (2002:292) quotes Kvale who defines qualitative interviews as 'attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences [and] to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.'

Bless (1995:107-108) distinguishes between three types of interviews – a non-scheduled interview, a non-schedules structured interview and a scheduled structured interview. Bless (1995:107) describes each type of interview as follows:

1. **Non-scheduled interview**

   Consists of asking respondents to comment on widely defined issues. Those interviewed are free to expand on the topic as they see fit to focus on particular aspects, to relate their own experiences, and so on. The interviewer will only intervene to ask for clarification or further explanation, but not to give directives or to confront the interviewee with probing questions. Usually no time limit is fixed for completing an interview.

2. **Non-scheduled structured interview**

   It is structured in the sense that a list of issues which have to be investigated is made prior to the interview. The list will contain some precise questions and their alternative or sub-questions, depending on the answer to the main questions. But it is a non-scheduled interview in the sense that the interviewer is free to formulate other questions as judged appropriately for the given situation. Respondents are . . . free to choose their own definitions, to describe a situation or to express their particular views and answers to problems. Here again, the influence of the interviewer can be considerable. It is therefore important that one refrains from influencing the respondents by the way one asks questions.

3. **Scheduled structured interviews**

   The most structured way of getting information directly from the respondents is by means of a *scheduled structured interview.* This method is based on an established questionnaire – a set of questions with fixed wording and sequence of presentation, as well as more or less precise indications of how to answer each question. A questionnaire must be presented to each respondent in exactly the same way to minimize the role of influence of the interviewer and to enable a more objective comparison of the results.

Since this study has a specific focus, the method used to extract information from respondents was by structured interviews. The main purpose of structured interviews is as stated by Bless (1995:111):

> Is mainly to determine the frequency of certain answers and to find relationships between answers to different questions. This is done by comparing the responses of large numbers of participants . . . the recording of the answers are usually straight forward.

The disadvantages of structured interviews are that it is time consuming and expensive. The interviewer has to spend many hours in interviews and has to travel extensively. These constraints often result in a small sample use for the study. The presence of an interviewer can be seen as a handicap, especially when questions involve confidential and private issues and social factors, such as sex etc. (Bless 1995:111).

In this study structured interviews were used, to interview church boards of the various churches in conferences. These churches were randomly selected by each president of the various conferences.

The actual interview consisted of four sections. The first section consisted of general information about the church, thereby, establishing some identity of the church. The second section consisted of statements focused on five areas of conference administration – administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structure.

The respondents were given five options to choose from as to how they experience the administration in these five areas. The five options were: - strongly disagree = (SD), disagree = (D), undecided = (U), agree = (A) strongly agree = (SA). When making their choice the appropriate lettering would be circled. (see appendix A)

1.4.3.2 Mailed questionnaires

The second method used in this study to extract information is that of mailed questionnaires.

De Vos (2002:172) says *The New dictionary of Social work* (1995:5) defines a questionnaire as 'a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondent in respect of a research project.' The questions can be open (e.g. "Do you have any comments on this matter?") or closed, with an option to respond either "yes" or "no" (e.g. "Have you used the university's library before?") 'Alternatively, the questionnaire can contain statements on which respondents are requested to react. The basic objective of such a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinion about a phenomenon from people who are informed on the particular issue'.

Mailed questionnaires have advantages and disadvantages.

- **Advantages**

The most important advantage is that a large population can be covered in a short space of time and is cost effective (Bless 1995:111, De Vos 2002:172).

Respondents enjoy freedom when completing the questionnaire and anonymity is assured. Biases of an interviewer are avoided and also hasty responses, because there is no waiting interviewer (Bless 1995:112).

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➢ **Disadvantages**

Mailed questionnaires have certain disadvantages. It has a very low response rate especially where questionnaires are long and unclear or open questions (De Vos 2002:173). Bless (1995:112) says 'the response rate of questionnaires tends to be very low. Very often out of the total number of questionnaires sent out, only 20 to 40 percent are returned.' There are several factors that are contributory to the low response rate. Some respondents may not have received it, due to change of address, and name change in the case of married women. It could be that the respondent lacked interest, or misplaced it and other reasons such as a person's dislike for completing questionnaires. Some people are suspicious of research (Bless 1995:112).

This study made use of mail questionnaires in order to survey the pastors in each conference of the South African Union of Seventh-day Adventist in South Africa. Unlike the structured interviews, questionnaires are self-administered they were to be completed by the respondents themselves.

Questionnaires were sent to every practicing pastor in the various conferences, and were requested to return it once it has been completed. Instructions of how to complete the questionnaire were included on the questionnaire. Self-addressed envelopes with postage prepaid were included with the questionnaire for the return of the completed questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of statements which focused on how pastors experience the administrative structures of their various conferences and union administrations.

The actual questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part consisted of extracting general information about the pastor, establishing to some degree the identity of the respondent. Part two consisted of the actual questionnaire focusing on conference level of administration. It targeted five areas of administration i.e.:- administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structure. The questionnaire comprised of two columns of statements on a scale of 1-7. The respondent had to indicate his or her agreement either toward the statements in the left hand column or the statement in the right hand column. (see appendix B)

Mouton (1996:133) says: 'the aim of research is often to study a representative number of events or people with a view of generalizing the results of the study to a defined population or universe.' The concept of population is linked to other concepts such as a sampling frame and sample.

1.4.4 Basic concepts

1.4.4.1 Population

Population is 'sometimes referred to as a "target population"- is a set of elements that the research focuses upon and to which the results obtained by testing the sample should be generalized' (Bless 1995:87). According to Roscoe as quoted by Mouton (1996:134) 'A 'population' is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in

studying.' 'Another implication of the way in which 'population' is defined, is that it refers to a set of elements of various kinds' (Mouton 1996:134).

Examples of 'population' according to Mouton (1996:134) may include:

1. Individual human beings – adults, children, members of a sports team.
2. Organizations – financial institutions, all government departments.
3. Institutions – tertiary institutions – universities, technikons.

The 'population' with which this research concerns itself is all the churches and all pastors in each conference, within the South African Union of Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. The conferences within the SAUC are: The Southern Hope Conference; the Cape Conference; the KwaZulu Natal Free-State Conference; the Transvaal Conference and the Trans-Orange Conference.

The Southern Hope Conference is basically comprised of black and coloured members, with black and coloured churches. Its administration is predominantly black. The Cape conference is comprised of mixed membership, with a majority of all white churches. These churches do not preclude other races from attending. The administration in this conference is an all white administration. The KwaZulu Natal Free-State Conference is a multi-racial conference – consisting of white, coloured, black and Indian churches. The administration in KFC is multi-racial, mainly white and black. The Transvaal Conference is multi-racial consisting of black, white, coloured and Indian churches. The black membership is minimal and so are the Indians. The greater majority of the conference is white, with coloureds following. The administration is multi-racial mainly white and coloured.

The scope of the target population is spread throughout South Africa and it involves all population groups in the country. The target population comprises all the Seventh-day Adventist Churches in all the conferences in the SAUC. The second element of the target population is pastors who care for these churches.

The following table gives the statistics of the target population – pastors and church boards from which to extract information.

Table 1

POPULATION TABLE OF
PASTORS AND CHURCHES

CONFERENCE	NUMBER OF PASTORS	NUMBER OF CHURCHES
Southern Hope Conference Headquarters: Walmer Port Elizabeth	37	212
Cape Conference Headquarters: Somerset West Cape Town	14	40
KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference Headquarters: Pinetown Durban	27	87
Transvaal Conference Headquarters: Garden View Gauteng	33	72
Trans-Orange Conference Headquarters: Orange Grove Gauteng	35	169
TOTAL	146	580

As can be seen from the above figures, it would be practically impossible to conduct structures interviews in five hundred and eighty churches. Furthermore, it would be impractical to interview whole churches, and try to obtain consensus from large groups of people.

In order to overcome this problem, a representative sample will be needed from which to generalize. In order to facilitate this, a *sampling frame* was constructed from which a sample was to be extracted.

1.4.4.2 Sampling frame

The target population is to be made operational through the construction of what is called a *sampling frame* (Mouton 1996:135) [Mouton's italics].

Mouton (1996:135) refers to a *sampling frame* as 'the set of all cases from which the sample will be actually selected. . . it is the *operational definition of the population* that provides the basis for sampling' [Mouton's italics].

➢ **Sampling frame in this study**

The *sampling frame* in this research is structured from the population of five hundred and eighty churches – of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. Because it would be impractical to interview 580 churches and also difficult to gain consensus from large groups of people. It would, therefore, be necessary to sample a smaller group of people out of the population. In this case it would be church boards, which would be representative of the population of churches. As stated by Mouton (1996:136) 'The key concept in sampling is *representativeness.*' The sample, from which the generalizations could be made, must be a true representation of the population from which it was drawn [Mouton's italics].

The sampling frame of this study is as follows:

Table 2

SAMPLING FRAME/REPRESENTATIVE FRAME

CONFERENCE	POPULATION OF CHURCHES	SMALLER GROUP OF CHURCH BOARDS	10 % OF CHURCH BOARD
Southern Hope Conference	212	212	21
Cape Conference	40	40	4
Kwazulu Natal Free State Conf.	87	87	9
Transvaal Conference	72	72	7
Trans-Orange Conference	169	169	17
TOTAL	580	580	58

From the figures in the above table, it is clear that it would be impractical to conduct structured interviews in 580 churches that are spread throughout South Africa. It would be time consuming and costly. Therefore, not only must the area in which these churches are concentrated be specified but also a sample of the people to be interviewed.

The areas to be concentrated on were Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and its immediate surrounding areas. Churches in the various conferences in these areas had their church boards interviewed. This was done by random sampling.

- **Random sampling**

Sampling is a practical way of gathering data when the population is large and widespread, making it impossible for all of its elements to be studied.

Random sampling is based on a random process. Mouton (1996:138) points out that, 'Statisticians define *random sampling* as a procedure in which every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected' [Mouton's italics].

Newman (1997:208) as well says: 'In a true random process, each element has an equal probability of being selected. . . . Random samples are most likely to yield a sample that truly represents the population.'

In this study a representative sample of 10% of church boards have been interviewed. From the sampling frame of 580 church boards, 58 church boards were randomly selected. These were drawn from a hat by each Conference President. All the names of churches were placed in a hat and the president of each conference drew out 10% that would be interviewed. Therefore each conference contributed 10% of its church boards to the sample that were interviewed.

Table 3

SAMPLE OF CHURCH BOARDS CHOSEN TO BE INTERVIEWED

They are as follows:

CONFERENCE	CHURCH BOARDS	SAMPLE OF CHURCH BOARDS
Southern Hope Conference	212	21
Cape Conference	40	4
Kwazulu Natal Free State Conf	87	9
Transvaal Conference	72	7
Trans-Orange Conference	169	17
TOTAL	580	58

The numbers of pastors in the research population amount to 146. This is a small group that can easily be reached, by mailed questionnaires. It could be done in a short space of time and is cost effective.

1.4.5 Pilot study

The concept of a "pilot study" is to pre-test the measuring instruments. According to Singleton (1988:290) as quoted by Strydom (2002:211) it consists of 'trying it out on a small number of persons having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents.' Strydom (2002:11) further points out that *New Dictionary of social work* (1995:45) defines a pilot study as the 'process whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested.' Strydom (2002:211) with reference to Monette (1998:9) says that a pilot study can be seen 'as a small-scale trial run of all the aspects planned for use in the main inquiry.' Quoting Mitchell and Jolley (2001:13-4), Strydom (2002:211) says that the pilot study 'helps the researcher to fine-tune the study for the main inquiry.' Furthermore, Strydom (2002:211) adds that Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) defines a pilot study with their more encompassing definition as, 'A small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling instruments and analyses are adequate and appropriate.'

The value of the pilot study lies in its purpose 'to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation' (Strydom 2002:215). Hoineville (1978:51) as quoted by Strydom (2002:216) says that a pilot study is valuable for 'refining the wording, ordering, layout, filtering . . . and in helping to prune the questionnaire to a manageable length.'

1.4.6 Pilot study for this research

Before proceeding with the main investigation, that is, sending out the questionnaires to pastors and conducting structured interviews with church boards, a pilot study was first done in order to fine-tune the instruments if necessary.

Firstly, questionnaires were first mailed to ten pastors, two in each conference. Four structured interviews were conducted with various church boards (different population groups) before the main investigation was conducted.

The pilot study acts as an initial step with the purpose of doing revisions and adjustments to the instruments before the actual investigation was done.

1.4.7 Operationalization

This self-initiated study is set out in six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study. It introduces the study by presenting the research problem, and the motivation for the study. Secondly, the research design is presented with all its related facets. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of Practical Theological perspective and Practical Theological methodology.

Chapter 2 deals with the development of the early administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. It also presents challenges facing the Church.

Chapter 3 looks at the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its representative form of church government. It shows the role and function of the administrative structures. It covers all levels of church administration, that is: the local church, the Conference and Union levels of administration. The Division and General Conference level of administration are also mentioned.

In chapter 4 a long standing theological debate is discussed. It concerns the relationship between the church as organism and the church as institution. The methodology followed in this chapter was that of literary reviews, reviews of articles pertaining to the subject under discussion and also other available documents and previous research on the subject.

Chapter 5 contains the results of the structured interviews conducted with church boards and questionnaires sent to pastors, as to how they experience the administrative structures of the SDA church in South Africa. This chapter reports on the findings and its analysis. It is empirically supported by the results of the questionnaires sent to pastors and structured interviews conducted with church boards.

Chapter 6 gives attention to applying the theological evaluations to the practice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church administrations, with particular attention to leadership, organizational structures, administrative authority, power and transition.

Chapter 7 concerns itself with recommendations for revisioning the denominational ethos. The recommendations are made with particular emphasis on: leadership, organizational structures, administrative authority, power and transition.

1.4.8 Practical theological perspective

This study is done from a practical-theological approach. Dingemans (1996:84) says, "To begin with, "practical" theology is not the opposite of "theoretical" theology, but it stands for a theoretical or theological approach to practice.

In keeping with the focus of this study, Fowler (1999:84) states:

> Practical theological method claims as its starting place some context or contexts of *praxis*. That is to say, it arises in reflection out of the context of ongoing practices in which communities of faith engage. It arises out of practices and returns to practices. Its goal is not the formulation of abstract understandings or principles. Rather, it aims at the modification toward greater faithfulness and adequacy of the practices with which it begins.

Fowler (1999:85) further states that, 'Practical theological approaches are *contextual, local and stay close to experience*' [Fowler's italics].

Fowler (1999:85) says:

> In contrast to the aspirations of some philosophical or systematic theologies, practical theology does not aim at timeless universal or comprehensive interpretations. . . In its ongoing monitoring of challenges and issues the church faces, it responds to crises events or emergent issues by initiating theological discussion and inquiry.

Since this study is done from a practical-theological approach, it is hermeneutically[1] concerned. The study sets out to establish how people interpret, how they make sense of the actions of the administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. In its broader context the main focus concentrates on the experiences of people in a network of relationships, their actions and how they existentially understand and interpret what is happening in their environment and the meaning thereof.

This study is also empirical by nature. The actual experiences of churches and pastors in their relationship with the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have to be established by empirical data.[2] Neuman (1997:7) says, 'Data is the empirical evidence[3] or information that one gathers carefully according to rules or procedures.'

It must be stated, that while this study is done from a practical theological perspective, it is also dependent on systematic theology.

1.4.9 Practical theology methodology

This research is a process of practical theological discernment to find a way out of the disillusionment and alienation between the administration and the rank and file in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa.

The methodology of Practical Theology that is applied to this study is one that is illustrated and described by Hendriks (2004: 22-34) in *Studying Congregations in Africa.*

The discussion that follows seeks to explain the approach thus:

1. Theology is about the Triune God

It has to do with 'the missional praxis of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier' (Hendriks 2004:24). Hendriks (2004:24) states that the essence of theology 'is to know God, to discern his will and guidance for the way we should live and witness. It is faith seeking understanding' (Anselm).

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[1] Hermeneutics is the study of the methodological principles of interpretation – the science of text interpretation (Babbie and Mouton 2001:31). 'Dilthey increasingly used the term "hermeneutics" to further clarify the nature of understanding in human inquiry. In the same way that we understand the meaning of text through interpretation . . . we should aim in a similar fashion, to interpret the ideas, purposes, and other mental states expressed in the world of human action' (Babbie and Mouton 2001:31).

[2] The data can be quantitative (i.e. expressed as numbers) or qualitative (i.e. expressed as words, pictures, objects) (Newman 1997:7).

[3] '*Empirical* evidence refers to observations that people experience through the senses – tough, sight, hearing, smell, and taste' (Newman 1997:7).

Hendriks (2004: 24-25) argues 'that mission is an extension or amplification of God's very being' therefore 'both our anthropology and ecclesiology should have a profound missional basis'. Faith communities, therefore, are communities 'participating in God's ongoing mission, his ongoing praxis, his ongoing involvement with this world' (Hendriks 2004:25).

2. Theology is about the faith community

The basic presupposition of Hendriks (2004:26) here 'is that a person's personal identity, as well as the identity of the church, is derived from God's very being.' Hendriks (2004:26) makes a pertinent observation when he says:

> While emphasizing the local church's importance and the role of the laity, the significant role of denominational and ecumenical church structures and leadership should not be negated; however their role, function and style must change.

Hendriks (2004:26) elaborates on a very significant paradigm shift, one that is often overlooked or ignored so that the status quo can be maintained:

> Our society is a society in which traditional modes of authority no longer has the influence that they had previously, when authority could be exercised from the top downwards. This has a direct influence on the way we do theology. The laity should not be seen as consumers or passive receivers of religious instruction by pastors and theologians. In our society, believers must be producers of theology, because situations in which they must make ethical choices constantly confront them.

Hendriks (2004:27) correctly states: 'To revise the role and practise of the church in a new contextual setting requires the discernment of God's will and to receive his guidance'.

The subsequent section amplifies the contextual situation. It shows that currently that the church, once more is facing "a rough passage" (Hendriks 2004:27).

3. Theology is about a specific time and place

Theology is locally contextual. According to Hendriks (2004:27) the manna experience in the wilderness was a meal for just one day. He (2004:27) contends 'In much the same way, theology has a contextual nature. In every new situation, our faith seeks to comprehend what the living God requires from us'.

Hendriks (2004:27) is convinced that if Christianity is serious about engaging believers, then Christianity must seriously take the content that shape their lives and the communities in which they are rooted. Hendriks (2004:27) draws attention to the fact that 'Global realities... also influence the local situation.' There is interconnectedness on all levels of life, political, social and economic.

4. Theology is about interpretation

Hendriks (2004:28) points out the importance of developing what he calls an 'inductive[4] methodology – a methodology "from the bottom up." While the previous section wants theology to give attention to global influence on a wider scale, this current section as stated by Hendriks (2004:28) 'seeks to describe ways of remaining in touch with local realities, which is the field of Practical Theology.' Hendriks (2004:27) refer to Fowler who calls Practical Theology a "problem – posing theology." So then in order 'To formulate this problem, one must describe it correctly.' This is where research begins needing 'valid and reliable ways of inquiry.'

5. Theology is about Scripture and tradition

The question that faith communities grapple with 'should be answered by means of a process of discernment in which scripture plays a normative role.' However, 'to interpret normative sources, several actions and role-players are involved – this is where history, memory, story or tradition is at stake' (Hendriks 2004:29).

Hendriks (2004:29) contends that there must be an empowering of faith communities so that they may 'discern God's will for their own contextual situation.' Hendriks further calls for traditional wisdom to be taken into account and also 'the wider ecumenical community... in the process of discernment.'

6. Theology is about discernment

Hendriks (2004:30) describes discernment as a process:

> In which the faith community depends on the Holy Spirit's initiative to lead the community to discover God's will in order to participate in God's missional praxis. Faith and trust in God is the ultimate ground of discernment

A very important perspective which Hendriks (2004:32) elaborates on is that:

> Discernment can take place only **if penultimate or secondary concerns are not placed before God's praxis**. (1 Thes. 2:1-12). Good examples of such concerns are: church law and regulations, national ideologies, as well as personal ambitions with regard to status, power, financial gain and physical issues... you can also test your focus by **examining the ultimate human purpose that is to praise, worship and glorify God** in... personal life, communities and institutions. [Hendriks's emphasis]

7. Theology is about the kingdom

The kingdom of God featured prominently in the ministry of Jesus. In teaching his disciples to pray, part of the prayer included the kingdom of God "Thy kingdom come" (Hendriks 2004:32). Hendriks (2004:32) says 'the prayer, "Let thy Kingdom come," calls for a missional praxis in faith communities... In Jesus Christ, the *basileia* become flesh and blood' [Hendriks's italics].

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[4] Inductive: an inductive approach moves from observation towards synthesisising what was observed and into a model or a theory. It observes and puts together, as such working from the ground or bottom upwards (Hendriks 2004:36).

Faith communities that embody the coming of Christ into the world, 'reflects something of the God who reaches out to the sick and blind and to those caught up in the fatal grip of the HIV virus' Hendriks (2004:33). It involves 'vision, mission, hope and eschatology.' The church has to live out the coming of the kingdom, revealing Christ the core of the kingdom.

8. Theology is about transformative action

Faith communities are not only called to be faithful in its discernment and in its participation in God's missional praxis, but to be transformative in action. (Hendriks 2004:33) insist that something must be done about the 'reality and problems that confront the faith community as well as society... Therefore, after doing research and interviews in the present or contextual reality, a dialogue with or debate about reality of the past and its normative contents ensues.'

It is all aimed at participating vocationally in God's 'ongoing praxis towards an anticipated future eschatological reality.' It must lead 'to a new formulation of truth and values' (Hendriks 2004:33). Amid different situations and changing circumstances, the community of faith is to discover new ways of perceiving themselves and the world around them, new ways of thinking and behaving, to become faithful and effective in their mission to which they were originally called.

The following remarks serve to illustrate the approach by way of the cross (Hendriks 2004:23-24).

- The foot of the cross: the first two points covers the foot of the cross. It deals with identity, the identity of the Christian and the church.

  We are formed in the image and likeness of the Trinity (Gen 1:26-28). If we want to inquire about ourselves and the church (Christ body), then we have to ask questions about God and God images. God is a missional God and we his missional people. Theology is about God, who he is, if we are to understand who we are and what to do.

  Our identity is not determined by what we do, but by God. What we do is about obedience and showing God gratitude to God.

  Theology is then in essence to discern God's will being obedient to it, and his mission for our lives.

- The left point of the cross: represent the present, 'the world to which God sent his son (Jn. 3:16). In this world we find faith communities.' Points three and four are covered here. It deals with the global and local contexts (wider and particular contexts).

- The right point of the cross: represents the Word. The fifth point is covered here, dealing with the past, the bible (systematic theology) and the faith tradition.

- The top of the cross: The seventh point is covered here. It represents our destiny, the future kingdom of God, 'the eschatological reality that is already present in and through Jesus Christ in whom our hope is focussed.'
- The movement from the bottom to the top of the cross: It takes into consideration point eight (the Alpha and Omega). It describes the recommendations, strategies, plans and programs that will realize the ultimate goals.

The cross metaphor outlining the methodology is a way of depicting a correlational hermeneutically sensitive dialogue that is basically a discernment process which leads to a set of recommendations that may be used as a strategy to deal with the problem outlined in the study.

In Chapters two, three and five the history, the present reality and the identity of the church is described using literary sources and making use of an empirical investigation to get a clear description of the views of people in the church, which, as such verify the results of the literature study.

In Chapters four and six the theological principles are outlined. These principles are then used in a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue to contrast the present situation and identity of the church with what the researcher believes the true identity and goal of the church should be. As such it is a discernment process that leads to the last chapter which describes a way forward by making recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND PRESENT CHALLENGES FACING THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

The first Seventh-day Adventist to set foot on South African soil was William Hunt. He was an American diamond speculator. Hunt came to Kimberley in the early part of 1870 (Swanepoel 1972:1). According to Swanepoel (1972:2) 'It was not until 1885 that a sequence of events took place which made Seventh-day Adventism take root in South Africa.' Once again it was the environment of the Kimberley Diamond Fields that played a big role. This time it was Pieter Wessels and George van Druten, two Dutch residents in the area. Both men were devout Christians of the Dutch Reformed Church. Swanepoel (1972:2) observes that Wessels and van Druten became 'aware of the possibility that Saturday was the Sabbath referred to in the Bible.' They met up with Hunt and got to know about the organized Sabbath keeping church in America. Hunt provided them with literature on the subject, which they studied and later shared with their families and friends (Swanepoel 1972:6). In this way Adventism started to spread throughout the country.

Swanepoel (1972:107) states: 'Even though Adventism originated among the Dutch people in South Africa, and originally had a rural setting, it rather quickly became an urban – based church when the organizational details of the American church were introduced.'

This chapter mainly focuses on the early development of the administrative structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. Firstly, it briefly traces the organization of the first congregations in South Africa. Secondly, it deals with the creation of the first formal organization of Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa. Thirdly, it deals with the organization of the first conference – the South African Conference of Seventh-day Adventist and its officer structure. Fourthly, it looks at more congregations being organized and fifthly, it deals with further administration structures that eventually resulted in the organization of the South African Union Conference, the second level of administration above the local congregation. The organization of the African Division is also presented. Lastly, the challenges faced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa are also presented.

2.2 Methodology

The aspect of the methodology that is applied in this chapter refers to the past. It gives the history of the development of the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. It also deals with the present as the chapter deals with what is happening presently with reference to the challenges facing the church. The results of the empirical research in chapter five are also covered by this aspect of the methodology.

This background of the administrative structures of the church is given in order to help the reader understand the story of the development of the church's structures and its identity.

The identity is to describe the administrative personality prevalent in the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. In giving the development of the churches administrative structure, an analysis of its identity can be established by the reader. It can also be established by its hierarchical structures why the management of change and transition is not easily mooted. Hence, the maintenance of the status quo.

The identity also helps to see the corporate culture on each hierarchical level of the church, each level of leaders supporting the other at the expense of those at grassroots level.

Furthermore, the researcher believes that the initial history of the administrative structures of the SDA Church is necessary to grasp the motivation for the study as well as the research problem.

2.3 The start of organization

The first step towards organizational establishment was the organization of a congregation in the Kimberley district. According to Swanepoel (1972:12) the first congregation met 'in a school-room on the farm, "Benauwdheidsfontein."' Swanepoel (1972:12) states 'By September 27, 1887 he (Boyd) reported having organized a congregation of 26 members, a Tract and Missionary Society of 25 members, and three Sabbath Schools.'

The establishment of the first congregation gave impetus to further establishment of congregations. Attempts to establish a congregation in the Cape Peninsula did not easily get off the ground. Tent evangelistic meetings were not well received. People found it difficult to get off from work to attend church on Saturdays (Swanepoel 1972:16). However, with persistent effort, 'on March 2, 1889, the second Seventh-day Adventist congregation in South Africa was organized in Cape Town, with a charter membership of 16' (Swanepoel 1972:17). Swanepoel (1972:17) points out that on April 1, they moved into their newly acquired property: "Somerset House", Roeland Street, Cape Town.

2.3.1 First formal organization

At the end of April 1889, Seventh-day Adventist workers and laymen held a meeting in Cape Town. This meeting according to Swanepoel (1972:17) marked 'the first formal organization of Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa was created.' At this gathering Swanepoel (1972:17) states:

> The South African Branch of the International Tract and Missionary Society was formed, to conduct the literature sales, and care for the Business activities of the church. A Sabbath School Association was organized, to foster regular Bible study by the membership of the church. To organize the work of the religious literature salesmen, a General Canvassing Agent was appointed.

Two more General Meetings of Seventh-day Adventist in South Africa were held. The first was held in the new Beaconfield Church from the 9-18 of May, 1890. The second was held in Cape Town, December 12-31, 1890 (Swanepoel 1972:19, 23).

2.3.2 The first local conference

The largest gathering of Seventh-day Adventist Church workers and laymen took place in December 1892 in Cape Town. Swanepoel (1972:26) notes:

> The most significant development at this meeting was that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa emerged from its mission status, to that of being a financially self-supporting Conference. The new organization was known as the South African Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and although its organizational pattern followed that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States, it's dispensed with certain more complex features because of its small membership and rather limited resources.

It must be noted that at this stage of development and organization of a Conference, there were only two congregations that were organized previous to the establishment of the Conference. These congregations were at Benauwdsheidsfontein Kimberley with 26 members and the other congregation was in Cape Town with 16 members, a total of 42 members. So in other words, the first Conference in South Africa consisted of two congregations with a total membership in the conference of 42 members. One can understand why the more complex features of the American church were discarded, the Conference having limited resources. This was simply because the membership base was too small to support any complex features of the American Church.

The new conference officer group was kept to the bare minimum. There were only three officers: the president, secretary and treasurer, with an executive committee of only five members which included the president (Swanepoel 1972: 27). This is unlike the situation today. Some Conferences' Executive Committees consist of 15-20 members.

Swanepoel (1972:41) states that 'the territory of the Conference was the entire country as far as the northern boundaries of the Cape Colony, the Transvaal and Zululand.' Swanepoel (1972:41) makes an important statement which show the start of paternalism and the seeds of hierarchicalism, 'Those in the employ of the church in this whole area were responsible to the Executive Committee for **direction** and **guidance**, and were required to send quarterly reports of their activities to the Conference office'. Presently, reports are sent to the office on a monthly basis [emphasis mine].

Another thought provoking observation made by Swanepoel (1972:42) concerns the appointment of officers and other appointees at the Third Session of the South African Conference held in 1894. He observes:

'A glimpse at the functioning of this organizational structure in practice can be gained from the list of appointments made at the Third Session of the South African Conference.'

Unlike the Session of 1892, at which time the administration was kept simple and limited to three offices and an Executive Committee of five members. However, at the Third Session 1895 three years later, several additions were made. Firstly, the officer group was expanded to include a Vice-President and the Executive Committee was increased by two members and an auditor was appointed (Swanepoel 1972:42). Two secretaries were appointed: a Secretary for the Tract Society and one for the Sabbath School. Swanepoel (1972:42) states: Further, appointments were made to a Committee for Publications; Boards of Management for the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association; and Claremont Union College; as well as personnel for the Orphanage, the College and Primary Schools at Claremont and Beaconsfield.

These many appointments have the making of that which is stated in Parkinson's Law as quoted by Knight (1995b:2) 'that administrators in a bureaucratic structure breed more administrators.' It is based on two

forces, firstly, 'An official wants to multiply sub-ordinates' and secondly 'Officials make work for each other' (Parkinson 1957:4).

Swanepoel (1972:42) observes:

> The centralized system provided for the prosecution of the church's work in a co-ordinated way. It also resulted in the participation of many people in a programme that needed to run smoothly if it were to accomplish its aims satisfactorily. It incorporated the risk of failure, or injury to the organization, if any person or group were to work at cross-purposes to the rest. The tight-knit organization thus provided at once a basis for the strength, and a potential weakness.

This potential weakness becomes evident in the structures of the church then and now as will be seen in Chapter 3. An observation made by Swanepoel (1972:43) points to this when he says:

> Judging from their activities, the church leaders in South Africa desired to create a model Seventh-day Adventist community in this country, and provide it, in **one decade**, with every ramification of the organization which it possessed in America, where development had been in progress for **more than three decades** [emphasis mine].

2.3.3 More congregations

Several more congregations were established since the Third Session of the church. A congregation was established in early 1897 at Mowbray, and at Claremont, bringing the total number of congregations in the Cape Peninsula to three. Congregations were also formed at Rokeby near Grahamstown. In 1895 one was established in King Williams Town and 1898 in Port Elizabeth. In 1902 a congregation was established in East London and Johannesburg. The first Dutch speaking congregation was established in 1905 (Swanepoel 1972:51, 59, 61, 64, 105).

Swanepoel (1972:107) observes, 'Even though Seventh-day Adventism originated among the Dutch people in South Africa, and originally had a rural setting, it rather quickly became an urban-based church when the organizational details of the American church were introduced.' As more and more churches were organized across the country, the need for expanded organization became necessary.

2.4 New organizations

To provide for an ever expanding work and the increasing activities of the church, the development of new organizational structures became necessary. Swanepoel (1972:111) points out:

> During the years 1901 to 1903 a series of new organizational developments took place which took into account the territorial expansion of the church's activities. This wider organization also helped to eliminate some of the friction between individuals which occurs readily in a small, closely-knit organization such the church had at the time.

2.4.1 Natal-Transvaal Mission Society

Swanepoel (1972:111) records the start of organization of the church in Natal, though, it was rather tentative. However, in October of 1901, the Natal-Transvaal Mission Society was established in Pietermaritzburg and a publishing company in Durban.

According to Swanepoel (1972:111) some of the decisions taken at the South African Conference Session in September 1901 'led to a more elaborate church organization in Southern Africa.' Among others it was

'decided to create an Advisory Committee to co-ordinate the work of the South African Conference territory' (Swanepoel 1972:113).

2.4.2 A second conference – Natal-Transvaal Conference

In November 1902, the Natal-Transvaal Mission Society held their second meeting. At this meeting, it was decided as Swanepoel (1972:114) states: 'to request the South African Church Union for permission to form a local conference organization. This was granted at the Second Session of the Council, held in January 1903.'

2.4.3 South African Union Conference

The creation of a second conference in South Africa, paved the way for the creation of a higher organization level of administration. A level of administration above the conference level of administration. In this way the structures of administration would rise higher above the local church. It would pave the way for further hierarchical governance of the church.

Swanepoel (1972:114) succinctly points out: 'With two conferences in South Africa, it was possible to participate in the newly – created Union Conference plan. The delegates at the Council Session immediately set to draft a constitution for such an organization.'

In 1903 on January 21 the completed constitution was adopted. The General Conference was then requested to officially admit the newly established Union Conference into fellowship (Swanepoel 1972:114). At the same time 'the South African Conference... was renamed the Cape Colony Conference.'

2.4.4 African Division formed

Parkinson's Law was once again to show itself in the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. This time in the establishment of the African Division. This is an administrative level higher than the Union Conference. South African only had two established Conferences, with a Union level of Administration governing two conferences. Now a single Union initiates the establishment of a Division, whereby, the hierarchy continues to rise above the local church.

Swanepoel (1972:149) aptly states, 'The initiative to form an African Division came from the South African Union Conference in Session at Cape Town during July 1919.'

This clearly shows the Parkinson's Law 'that administration in a bureaucratic structure breeds more administrators' was already operative at an early stage in the establishment of administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa.

In summary, at the outset, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa started out in a rural setting. It was ordinary lay-people who initially got the church off the ground and through their efforts combined with help from the American Church got the church rooted in South Africa.

Once local congregations were established, as little as two, a conference was organized. This set the stage for the establishment of further administrative structures above the local church, three in all. In this way a

hierarchical system of church governance of the Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa was established, like its counterpart in America.

While the church had made several significant strides, its organizational setup of three levels of administrative structures above the local church set the stage for an embedded and ever expanding hierarchy. It would in later years put pressure on the tithe rand generated at local church level. Furthermore, it would lead to a "top down" relationship, whereas, the church initially operated on a "bottom up" relationship. However, after the establishment of the organizational administrative structures, it started operating on a "top down" ethos.

The following section deals with the challenges facing the church. To a large extent these challenges have to do with the organization and structure of the church.

2.5 Challenges facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa faces several key challenges. However, these challenges present the church with opportunities for re-evaluation and re-examination of its organizational structures and existing ethos and practices.

2.5.1 The threatening challenge of bureaucratization

The Seventh-day Adventist Church organization in South Africa is spread across the country, in all its provinces. To meet the need for organizational efficiency and administrative effectiveness, it has developed a strong hierarchical organizational administrative structure with an established hierarchy[1], and centralized executive committee control.

As such, the possibility exists for the organization to be taken up in the process of bureaucratization,[2] as it strives for efficiency and effectiveness. In order to facilitate and maintain an acceptable level of efficiency and effectiveness throughout the organization, church bureaucratization can easily be promoted.

On the Conference and Union levels of administration, there is a centralized executive committee that administers and controls the affairs of these two organizations. The ethos that exists on these two levels of administration is conducive to bureaucratization, especially since its authority is constitutionally established. Various aspects of its operation reveal this reality.

1. The Conference Executive Committee Authority

The Conference Executive Committee is vested with constitutional authority. An example of this kind of authority is seen in the appointment of ministers to various congregations.

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[1] Hierarchy is defined as 'system in which grades or classes of status or authority are ranked one above the other (bottom of a hierarchy). A hierarchical system (of government, management, etc.).' Della Thompson, (editor) 1996. The concise Oxford dictionary of current English. (Ninth edition). London : BCA

[2] Bureaucratization is defined as, 'the tendency for any organization to adopt bureaucratic principles and procedures in the interest of efficiency. Bureaucratization will tend to occur wherever a number of people have to be rationally co-ordinated in pursuit of common objectives' (Encyclopaedia of sociology 1975:30). The process of bureaucratization leads to the phenomenon of bureaucracy.

The executive committee has full and final authority in appointing ministers over churches. The minister, neither the church has a say in these appointments. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (1995:121) states:

> Pastors or assistant pastors are not nominated or elected to such positions by the church. Their connection with the church is by the appointment of the conference executive committee, and such appointments may be changed at any time.

Furthermore, it states, 'Because the pastor's appointment in the local church is by the conference, he serves the church as a conference worker, and is responsible to the Conference Committee (SDA[3] Church manual 1995:47, 48). The executive Committee system leaves members without a say. Decisions made by the Executive Committee on behalf of churches are done without consultation.

2. Structural hierarchy

As the administrative structures rise beyond the local church and conference level, leadership becomes more removed from members. They have less say in decision making and become increasingly passive. Members are expected to passively accept decisions passed down to them by the hierarchy.

3. The system of tithes and offerings

The membership of the church has no say in how the tithes[4] and offerings[5] are used and appropriated. However, they are expected to be faithful in returning tithe and giving offerings.

An appropriation of thirty-five and a half percent of tithe is passed on from the Conference to the Union for its operation, and the function of the General Conference. However, there is a paradox, that while conferences are struggling to meet their budgets, money sorely needed at conference level is passed on to the Union and further up. This is revealed in most conferences ability to employ more ministers, to service the churches in their conference, and to provide reasonable increases in salaries and travel budgets for ministers.

The reality of the situation is seen in the average number of service points a minister has to care for in each conference. In some conferences the situation is better than in others.

[3] SDA is an abbreviation for Seventh-day Adventist.
[4] Tithe refers to the amount returned to the Conference via the local church for the remuneration of ministers and to operate the conference and its sub-organizations e.g. such as schools and regional offices.
[5] Offerings refer to free-will giving of members and for stipulated projects.

Table 4 - Average number of Service Points

Conference	Average number of Service Points per minister (inclusive of Companies & Branches)
Cape	3
Kwazulu-Natal Free State	6
Southern Hope	21
Trans-Orange	8
Transvaal	2

The average number of service points that a minister is responsible for consists of organized churches and organized companies.[6] A minister has to care for a company in the same way that he cares for a church.

From the above table, it is clear that there are situations in which churches and companies are able to see their pastor at least once a month, twice and thrice a month. In the Trans-Orange Conference the pastor is seen every second month by his members. The Southern Hope Conference has an untenable situation. Home visitation and other care-giving functions of the pastor in many instances are weakened and non-existent.

The solution to the problem is to employ more pastors. However, the employment of more pastors is contingent on available finance. While tithe is meant to support the Gospel Ministry, much of the tithe rand is also used to support denominational institutions in South Africa, such as schools, Colleges, and other infrastructures, such as a Bible Correspondence School and a Publishing House. The Union office and its staff must also be supported and maintained from tithe.

Therefore, of the hundred percent tithe which conferences receive from various churches, thirty-five and a half percent is passed on to the Union. In former years the Union gave appropriations[7] to secondary schools and colleges. Subsequently, all secondary school appropriations have been withdrawn, and became the total responsibility of conferences. Complete withdrawal of appropriations to Colleges has almost been completed. Conferences and sub-organizations have no say in the matter of these withdrawals.

Ministry at the bottom of the organization is suffering. Ministers are paid from tithe. However, thirty five and a half percent of tithes are passed on to the Union. Conferences have sixty four and a half percent of

[6] The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (1995:36) states, "Where a number of isolated believers reside in proximity to one another, a company of believers may be organized for fellowship and worship with the objective of growing into an organized church."

[7] Appropriations are stipulated financial support to the Union sub-organizations.

tithe left to operate with. Before, applying the balance to ministry a further five percent is passed on to primary and secondary schools. The percentage differs from conference to conference.

After appropriations to educational institutions, the Conference is left with fifty nine and a half percent with which to carry on its ministry.

In order to change the ratio between the minister and his service points, a multi-faceted solution is necessary. While more ministers are needed, infrastructure that saps the financial resources must be reviewed.

It is clear that with the church structure and infrastructure as it is, presents two problems. On the one hand the organization can commit too much money in support of the top structure and infrastructure of the organization. The end result will be that the local conferences and its churches will not have sufficient funds to finance effective evangelism and sufficient remuneration for ministers to do their work effectively. Since money is being used elsewhere, the level of ownership of the mission of the church and its caring functions can diminish.

However, on the other hand, if the church retains too much of its financial resources for local use, the result could be a diminishing of effectiveness of its global mission. It could also be disastrous for the administrative structures and its infrastructure. If the administrative structures continue to increase, it will be hard to maintain a balance between the two alternatives.

Parkinson (1957:4) in his book *Parkinson's Law: And other studies in administration* points out that Parkinson's Law rests on "two motive forces." Firstly that, 'An official wants to multiply sub-ordinates' and secondly, 'Officials make work for each other.'

George Knight (1995b:2) a Seventh-day Adventist Church historian states 'Parkinson's Law holds in essence that administrators in a bureaucratic structure breed more administrators'. It rests on the above mentioned axioms. Knight (1995b:2) further states:

Parkinson's Law is built into the very nature of bureaucratic structures. Perhaps it should be thought of as a disease rather than a law. Even the mighty IBM Corporation recently had to face its ravages. The result: massive reorganization and massive downsizing of non-productive (i.e., administrative) structures. The alternative to such moves was eventually bankruptcy.

Knight (1995b:3) points out that 'Adventism needs to put its tithe dollar back to work in "real ministry." For too long has the tithe subsidized a massive bureaucratic "industry." '

Knight (1995b:2) states that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is built, on the corporate model. However, there is a major difference. IBM and other corporations have a board of directors that has the effectual power to mandate change. The church has no such effective body above and beyond the functionaries of the organization. Its highest governing bodies tend to be loaded with members having vested interest as "career bureaucrats". Thus change becomes more difficult than with IBM. Beyond that, the church has options that IBM never had. For example, the church can appeal to the conscience of its constituents to 'give more for the good of the cause'.

However, Knight (1995b:3) observes that, 'These are significant segments of Adventists who are tired of paying the cost of the administrative machinery.' Knight (1995a:18) in his book *The Fat Lady and the Kingdom: Adventist mission confronts the challenges of institutionalism and secularization*, makes the following statement : 'The history of the Adventist Church indicates that it never makes needed structural changes of a major sort until it is on the brink of organizational and financial collapse.'

2.5.2 Merging of Black and White Conferences in South Africa

One of the more complex challenges facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa came with the post-apartheid era. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa was a divided church during the apartheid years. Black, Whites, Coloured and Indians were segregated along racial and ethnic classification into different conferences and fields.

2.5.2.1 Historical context

The landscape of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has taken on several different shapes since the establishment of the first local conference – the South African Conference in 1892.

A decade later the South African Conference was upgraded to become a Union Conference – the South African Union Conference. From 1929 until 1958 the new Union Conference consisted of only two conferences – the Natal-Transvaal and the Cape Colony Conference, which was the former South African Conference (Swanepoel 1972:116, Du Preez 1994:3)

In 1933 the Cape Field was organized to supervise the work of the church among the coloured community. In 1936 the work of the church among black people was consolidated into two fields: The South Bantu Field and the North Bantu Field. The Indian Field was organized to supervise the work of the church among the Indian community. (Du Preez 1994:3, 7-8)

In 1960 a further organizational adjustment took place. The South African Union was divided into two organizational units. The first unit was group I comprised of both conference and field organizations, serving the non-Bantu people of the Union. Group II consisted of those organizations that served the Bantu people. These two groups divided the church into Bantu, non-Bantu groups. In 1965 it was decided to dissolve Groups I and II and form two separate unions. This resulted in the South African Union taking responsibility for the work of the church amongst Whites, Coloured and Indian people; and another union was formed; The Southern Union to care exclusively for the work among blacks in the church. (SAU Special Constituency Session Report 2004:1).

Through several decades this arrangements has proved unacceptable, since it resulted in unequal privileges and rights within the church organization. Amidst social change in South Africa, Seventh-day Adventists struggled with the question of how to re-align its organizational structures, to bring it in harmony with biblical principles.

2.5.2.2 Moves toward merging of Unions

In 1981 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists appointed a Commission on Church Unity to visit South Africa. Among other responsibilities, it had to recommend steps toward resolving the problems facing the church in South Africa. For the ensuring years, Merger Committees were formed on Union and Conference level to discuss the merging of racially separated organizations i.e. two Unions and several Conferences within each Union, (SAU Special Constituency Session Report 2004:6).

Du Preez and Du Pre (1994:19) state:

> Feverish activity at General Conference level throughout 1990 led to the Autumn Council action of October 1990 which demanded the immediate merger of the two Unions by the end of 1991 and the merger of the local conferences and fields, if at all possible, by the end of 1992/3. Until the latter became a reality, the East Africa Division was not prepared to admit the South African constituency into its fold.

The East Africa Division office was situated in Harare, Zimbabwe. By December 1991 on the campus of Helderberg College, the new unified Southern Africa Union Conference was formed, merging the two unions: The South Africa Union Conference and the Southern Union Conference. However, the conferences in the new union, in the same geographical areas remained separated, on racial grounds (Du Preez 1994:20).

2.5.2.3 Moves toward merging of Conferences and Fields

Conferences and Fields organizational structures within the new Union remained unchanged, operating along racial identities. The situation perpetuated the symbol of the past, therefore, further merger meetings between conferences were put forth. Since 1992 the question of merging local conferences and fields were considered.

1. Administrative mergers

In 1978 two administrative mergers took place in Natal and in Transvaal. In Natal, churches of the former "Coloured" Good Hope Conference and churches from the former Indian Field were incorporated in the all White Orange Natal Conference. In Transvaal a similar merger took place incorporating the former "Coloured" Good Hope Conference churches and the former Indian Field churches into an all White Transvaal Conference.

2. The first fully merged Conference – The Kwa-Zulu Natal-Free State Conference

The first complete merger between Conferences and Fields took place in Natal. Negotiations for merging the Orange Natal Conference (ONC) comprising of White, Coloured and Indian members and the Natal Field (NF) consisting of Black members, became a reality in 1995. The new organization in Natal was named the KwaZulu Natal-Free State Conference, since part of its territory included parts of the Free State.

3. The second fully merged Conference – Southern Hope Conference

Further negotiations for merging the Good Hope Conference (Coloureds), the Cape Conference (Whites) and the Southern Conference (Blacks) that covered the same geographical areas continued in earnest.

In 1997 negotiations were completed, merging the Good Hope Conference and the Southern Conference. The Cape Conference did not see their way clear to merge. The new conference was named the Southern Hope Conference.

4. Unmerged Conferences

Conferences that remained unmerged are the Trans-Orange Conference (Blacks) and the Transvaal Conference (White) covering the same geographical area and the Cape Conference (mixed). By this time the Cape Conference became mixed.

In spite of several merger attempts the Conference Sessions of both the Transvaal and the Cape Conference did not obtain a two-thirds majority vote to dissolve their conferences. On the other hand in Transvaal, the Trans-Orange Conference session voted in favour of merging with the Transvaal Conference.

5. Special Session of the Southern Africa Union Conference

A special session[8] of the South Africa Union Conference convened on March 14, 2004. The session was convened to consider a progress report[9] on re-structuring the organization in the Southern Africa Union, which included discussions on the unmerged conferences.

The session ended with the following action being taken:

> The Transvaal Conference and Cape Conference are invited to raise prior to their constituency sessions in 2004, for the attention of the Union and the Division any concerns relative to merger. The Union and Division shall arrange for a fair hearing of such concerns prior to the constituency sessions of 2004. If after these processes, a Conference Constituency chooses not to support merger, such action shall be deemed as rebellion. The Union shall then proceed according to General Conference Working Policy B 75.

This action provides that if the Cape and Transvaal constituency meetings do not vote to dissolve so that mergers could be affected, then both the Transvaal and Cape Conferences will be expelled from the Southern Africa Union Conference. It was stated in the draft document *Organizational Re-structuring in the Southern Africa Union* line 34-35 'If conciliatory efforts fail, a higher organization, in this case the Union Conference shall have the authority to act as outlined in policy.'

While certain conferences have merged, thus far it has proven to be ideologically and politically correct, but it has not yielded the desired unity and fellowship result. This has been recognised in the above mentioned document line 15-19:

> The spirit of unity and fellowship within Seventh-day Adventist Church is not entirely a result of organizational structure. It is a mistake to think that a voluntary or legislated restructuring of organizations itself will produce unity. Unless there is intellectual and spiritual acceptance of one another as equal members in God's family the creation of unified organization structure will be a body without a soul.

The matter of expulsion will have serious financial repercussions, since the Union will not be receiving tithe from these two Conferences as a result of their expulsion. The Transvaal Conference's contribution

[8] The researcher was an accredited delegate to the session.
[9] The restructuring report as read at the Session is shown in appendix A.

of tithe to the Union is the highest of any conference. Without the tithe contribution from the Transvaal and cape Conferences will result in the operation of the SDA Church in South Africa being severely affected.

A series of expulsion will be a further polarization between Black and White members of the SDA church in South Africa. A vote to expel the two conferences from the Union will be carried by a Black majority vote. Of the total population of Seventh-day Adventist in South Africa: Blacks make up 81%; Coloureds 11%; Whites 7%; Indians 1%.[10]

The threat of expulsion did not work. Subsequent special Sessions of the Cape and Transvaal Conferences did not yield the constitutional percentage needed for merging.

On the 6th November 2005, the Southern African Union convened a special Executive Committee to consider the outcome of the Special Sessions of the Cape and Transvaal Conferences.

The SAU Executive Committee accepted a proposal for new conferences to be formed in the territory of the Union. This proposal was retrieved from an action taken on the 17th of March, 2002, detailing the realignment of conference boundaries in South Africa. The implementation of the realigned boundaries was to be as follows:

1. The Northern Conference was to be comprised of: Limpopo Province, Gauteng, NW Province and Mpumalanga.
2. The Cape Conference was to be comprised of: E. Cape, W. Cape, N. Cape (parts of TOC) and (St. Helena Island) including TOC Churches in the N. Cape.
3. The Kwazulu-Natal Free-State Conference was to include TOC churches in the Free State. The SAU Executive Committee immediately amended its constitution to reflect the restructuring to include the above mentioned realignment.

This proposal was passed on to the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division (SID) held on 7 November 2005. The Division approved the recommendations of the SAU Executive Committee action 379/115/05 for implementation.

An SAU Business Session of 20th November 2005 reaffirmed the realignment of the conferences as set out above. It was also decided that the SAU will convene constituency meetings in the Terms of GC Working Policy B6505[11] in order to formally constitute new conferences, particularly to enforce mergers by realigning conferences. The union set forth to convene the session as follows:

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[10] These percentages were calculated from the 2001 census statistics.

[11] The exact text of the GC Working Policy B6505 is as follows:
'B 65 Territorial Adjustments in Conferences/Missions/Unions
B6505 Territorial Adjustments of Resizing of Territories- If it is proposed to make territorial adjustments between local fields or between unions, or to resize the territorial units, the proposal shall be considered by the executive committee of the next higher administrative organization, at a time when a full representation of the territories and organizations involved is present.

Conference 1: The Northern Conference Session was set for 19 March 2006 and Conference 2: The Cape Conference Session was to meet on 26 March 2006. However, by mutual agreement these dates were changed around, so that the Cape Conference Session would meet on 19 March and The Northern Conference Session would meet on the 26 March.

Further to these enforced sessions, the following was stated in supplement A of the SAU Session minutes held on 19/20 November 2005 that:

1. Affected constituencies in the territory of the restructured conferences shall have an opportunity to align themselves with the restructured conference designed by the timelines stipulated herein above.

2. Where such alignment as envisaged above is not realized by the said date, the restructured conference shall come into effect and be constituted on the basis of membership in that territory.

3. Should there be churches/members that do not align themselves by the said date, the newly formed churches shall set of appropriate ministry to reach out to such churches/members in order to secure their acceptance of the restructured conferences.

In other words it simply means that if you do not place yourself within the realigned structures, then you are out. On the 16th March at the Session of the Cape Conference, the Cape (old) Conference and the Southern Hope Conference merged under the above conditions. However, the Session of 26 March of the Northern Province ended in protest by the Transvaal Orange Conference delegates, mainly because the chairperson, the Union President would not allow discussion on the constitution. The officers of the Union and Session approached the Northern Province Session with faulty assumptions they took from the Cape Conference Session that the Spirit of submission in the Cape would also be found in the Transvaal. This was not to be.

The whole issue of merging was taken over by the top structure of the Church, the Union and Division and its Executive Committees. The implementation of the Northern Conference has been left in the top structures of the Church. The leadership of the Union and the Division worked with the assumption that if they could force partial and ideological mergers that they have also brought about unity. This is sadly a lack of insight as to what is happening or grassroots level. In fact they cannot know because they are never found at grassroots level of the church. This is clearly seen in the research results particularly the structured interviews.

When one considers the issue of mergers in the Southern African Union Conference in South Africa, that is the merger consultations between the Southern Hope Conference and the Cape Conference, the Transvaal and the Trans-Orange Conference, it has to do with system sensitivity – system sensitive leadership.

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2. If the proposal is approved by the executive committee of the next higher level of church organizations, the proposal shall then be routed to the executive committee of the division, in the case of union territories, where, in each, the final decision shall be made.
3. If the territory of a conference or union conference is involved, the administration of the next higher organization shall use its discretion to examine constitutions and legal requirements to determine whether a constituency meeting should be called and legal requirements to determine whether a constituency meeting should be called and, if so, at what point(s) in the procedure.'

Anticipated mergers would bring together systems into one pool in which Blacks dominate on ground of their superior numbers. This then brings about genuine fear, particularly amongst Whites. This in turn has resulted in lots of tension in terms of anticipated leadership styles and ethos.

In this whole scenario can also be seen the unlimited power and authority exercised by Executive Committee. Constitutions of conferences, particularly that of the old Cape Conference was totally disregarded. General Conference and Union policies can override the constitutions of conferences. It leaves people without power and authority. Those who have placed the leaders in their positions are now disregarded. The church at grassroots has to live with autocratic bureaucracy which they passively accept.

The Seventh-day Adventist hierarchical structures that are the Conference and Union administration in South Africa and also the General Conference, need to reaffirm that authentic authority in the SDA Church is found in the local church. Authority is then delegated up to the Conference level, its President is to act as a servant, working in the interest of the constituencies and not as a dictator.

Moving from the challenges of bureaucratization and mergers, the church faces other challenges, which will have a great impact on the future of the church. The comments that follow lead to further challenges facing the church.

2.6 Other challenges

There are other challenges facing the SDA Church in South Africa. To a large extent these challenges have been left unattended.

2.6.1 An inherited corporate administrative culture

The Seventh - day Adventist Church is entrenched in "an inherited corporate administrative culture." How this culture works for the church is a matter for concern. Rapid changes also bring different ways of thinking. This corporate culture tends to ignore changes taking place and also different ways of thinking. It resorts to protective measures when change threatens the corporate culture, especially when thinking is not in line with corporate thinking. Leaders tend to gather those around them that will not deviate from corporate thinking and preferably will maintain the status quo. This has led to certain "top positions" being held by certain individuals for great lengths of time, in spite of the fact that these individuals have not contributed meaningfully to the church at grassroots level. This is seen mostly at Union level and those serving on Executive Committees of Conferences.

Knight (1995a:51) underscores this when he says 'More administrators need to see themselves as servants and facilitators rather than "bosses" or "career bureaucrats".' Furthermore, Knight (1995a:51) acknowledges that 'it is largely the bureaucrats who continue . . . to vote the bureaucrats in.'

Gibbs and Coffey (2001:69-92) deals with the movement 'from bureaucratic hierarchies to apostolic networks.' They highlight several pertinent concerns which also affect the Seventh-day Adventist Church in

South Africa. They are: increasing diversity; distrust of institutional authority; financial concerns; increasing pastoral load and control issues.

These five concerns are typical of what is being experienced in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, and have become an integral part of the challenges facing the church. It is in need of urgent attention. However, it is not only attention that is needed, but change. These challenges have become extremely daunting as the need for change has outpaced the church's ability and capacity to promote and manage change. Sacks (2003:2) in his book *The dignity of difference* says 'Bad things happen when the pace of change exceeds our ability to change, and events move faster than our understanding.'

2.6.2 Increased diversity

It is said that diversity[12] must be celebrated (Gibbs 2001:70, 71) Foster (1997) writes about "embracing diversity." Mounting diversity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has left both the celebration and embracing of diversity unrealized.

Just as globalization has brought with it an increase in diversity, so has the merging of unions and conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, brought with it an increased diversity. However, the question is: did the church prepare its people for the increased diversity that resulted.

In spite of the merging of unions and conferences, bringing Whites, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians together in the same conferences, the embracing and celebration of the resultant diversity has not taken place. It is not seen. Sacks (2003:7) aptly states:

> Politics moves the pieces on the chessboard. Religion changes lives. Peace can be agreed around the conference table; but unless it grows in ordinary hearts and minds, it does not last. It may not even begin.' Our futures have become inseparably connected as Sacks (2003:2) states 'we all have a stake in the future, and our futures have become inexorably intertwined.

As such the diversity which the church is experiencing must be understood, appreciated and celebrated. This must take place at grassroots level, and not pontificated from the top administrators in a paternalistic way. The manner in which we practice our religion can become a stumbling block. 'If religion is not part of a solution, it will certainly be part of the problem' (Sacks 2003:19).

We must be careful not to misunderstand ideological and political correctness as compensating for our neglect to recognize and manage diversity. Being ideological and politically correct is only half the battle won.

Gibbs (2001:70-71) states:

> In a post-modern world, diversity must be celebrated. This should not come as a threat to biblically informed Christians, because creativity and variety are characteristic of the world that God created . . . The world is a riot of colours, forms, shapes and textures. The church, described as 'the body of Christ,' is an organic miracle of diversity expressed in a unity of purpose.

[12] Diversity refers to being diverse; a different kind; a variety. (The concise Oxford Dictionary (9th ed.) D Thompson (ed.).

2.6.3 Distrust of institutional authority

Church organizations can no longer enjoy trust that is not earned. As stated by Gibbs (2001:72) 'authority is vested not by virtue of the office bestowed but by the trust and respect that is earned.' Denominational leaders should no longer equate the faithfulness of its members to God as intrinsic of their trust for institutional authority.

Increase in annual tithe in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is often equated with the trust that its members have in denominational authority. However, it should rather be seen as people's increase of trust in God and their faithfulness to their calling, rather than their trust in administration.

The distrust of institutional authority has been aggravated in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. This has become evident in the recent past with the merger procedures of Black and White Conferences in South Africa. On either side of the divide there is distrust of institutional authority in one way or the other. Specifically from the White community side, the distrust is very strong since many feel that the Union that is Black led, has negotiated in favour of Black conferences, displaying a lack of responsiveness to the personal and social needs of non-black members.

Hendriks (2004:17) highlights the implications of networks, which serves as a challenge to centralized hierarchies and institutional authority, when he says:

> Primarily, it requires a new leadership style, **a style that works with trust not control.** Relationships are important and **an ethos of serving one another drives these relationships.** They are missional in their very being, vision driven, do not harbour a fixation on self and own survival, ...**Transparency and accountability are essential values** [emphasis mine].

2.6.4 Increasing pastoral load

In former year's pastoral loads differed greatly between White, Coloured and Black conferences. Black ministers always carried heavy loads – anything from 8-12 service points, and even more. White and Coloured ministers carried lesser loads, - anything from 2-3 service points. The coloureds sometimes up to six.

In most conferences, people would like to see their minister more often than they presently see him at their church. But, the lack is not only at church, but in the homes of members. Pastoral loads are unacceptable.

The worst scenarios are found in the Southern Hope Conference, Trans-Orange Conference and KwaZulu-Natal Free State Conference. In the Southern Hope Conference, on average a minister has twenty-one service points. Ministers in Kwa-Zulu-Natal Free State Conference have six on average.

The situation in the other two conferences by comparison is better. In the Cape conference each minister has three service points and in the Transvaal Conference each minister has two service points on average. Even in these two conferences members wish to see their minister more often at their church.

Administrators see baptisms – an increase in membership as a solution. They presuppose that an increase in members would automatically result in an increase in tithe and thereby, the capacity to employ more ministers. However, this solution is short sighted as it does not take into consideration a decrease in

administrative structures and other institutional structures that are supported by the tithe rand, and therefore, places added pressure on the tithe rand.

2.6.5 Financial concerns

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa are concerned about the financial resources that are used to bolster, administrative structures above the local conference level. More and more members are concerned about the lack of pastoral care they receive. However, they resent being told to be faithful in their tithe return, so that more ministers can be employed. Members are now questioning, why more ministers cannot be employed, while thirty five and a half percent of tithe is sent on to the Union, in support of structures above conference level of administration. This must be seen in the light of the fact that members hardly see their pastor at church, and home visitation is totally lacking.

A further demonstration of people questioning the actions of leaders concerning finance is how they reacted to a directive concerning the giving and application of offerings.

In 2003 another offering giving plan was introduced to churches by the general Conference, called the combined offering plan. The combined offering plan organizes all church support into four areas:

(a) Local Church - 50%

(b) Local Conference - 20%

(c) Union Conference - 10%

(d) General Conference - 20%

The source for funding the four areas of church support is the unspecified divine service offering. It is based on the understanding that no other specified offerings will be taken up as has been the practice previously.

Unlike previous offering plans – the combined offering plan met with resistance at the local church level. Normally the unspecified divine service offering was retained by the local church for local use. With the introduction of the combined offering plan, church members are of the opinion that the local church will have less money for local church use. Therefore, the plan has met with resistance and scepticism. Members no longer wish to fund projects that are removed from the local church scene, while the local church is in need of funds.

The following diagram is the present tithe and offerings envelope[13] indicating the allocation of the money inside.

[13] The tithe and offerings envelope is the container in which the total amount of cash is placed and allocated as indicated on the sample envelope.

TITHE & OFFERING ENVELOPE

Figure 2

			R	c
10% of income		**GOD'S TITHE**		
OFFERINGS – My response of love	5% of income	**LOCAL CHURCH**		
	2% of income	**CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENT**		
	2% of income	**WORLD MISSION**		
	1% of income	**SPECIAL OFFERING**		
OFFERINGS – My response of love				
SPECIAL PROJECTS				
		TOTAL ENCLOSED		

2.6.6 Tithe & offering

Beside the offerings indicated on the envelope, unspecified offerings are put in the offering plate during divine service. The unspecified offerings are retained for local church use. With the above system of offerings, the local church and conference development were well supported, the other offerings were not well supported. The local church offering and the unspecified offering in the offering plate were retained for local church use.

With the new plan – the combined offering plan does away with many specified offerings. It must now pass through the offering plate as unspecified and be divided as stated above.

The local church 50% allocation will be applied to the needs of the church and its missionary work. The use of the 20% allocated to the conference, will be determined by the Conference Executive Committee. The Union Executive Committee will determine the use of the 10% allocated to them and so will the General Conference Executive Committee determine the use of the 20% allocated to them. The offerings move from

the bottom, upward, but authority moves from top to downward. Members see this and have expressed their dissatisfaction at the new system of offering allocation.

In an article *If I were the Devil* written by George Knight (2000), he sets out to show how he would strategize to frustrate the SDA church in its mission. Knight (2000:14) says 'If I was the devil I would create more administrative levels and generate more administrators.' In this way the church organization would become top heavy, and more funds would be needed to support top structures, which must be generated at local church level. In another article by Knight (1995a:3)[14] he states:

> Adventism needs to put its tithe rand back to work in "real ministry." For too long has the tithe subsidized a massive bureaucratic "industry". The church might actually be more effective in accomplishing its mission if no more than 20-30 percent of present administrative expenditure went to bureaucracy and bureaucratic real estate and support structures.

This leads to issues of control.

2.6.7 Control issues

Gibbs and Coffey (2001:74) argue that 'Leaders operating within a hierarchical structure see their role as delegating and granting permission.' Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa the executive committee system has taken over this role, and takes control of the affairs in conferences, and Union. The conference and union executive committees work in close harmony with each other as conference presidents are union executive committee members. Both conference and union executive committees have full administrative power.

Montgomery (1942:155) in his book *Principles of Church Organization and Administration* writes about the Seventh-day Adventist Church administration says: 'The constitution and bye-laws of the various conferences and unions provide that the Executive Committee shall have full administrative power to conduct the affairs of the conference between sessions'. Montgomery (1942:156) further states, 'The full administrative authority of the Conference is vested in the committee.'[15]

Oliver (1989:60) in his book *Seventh-day Adventist Organizational Structure: Past, Present and Future,* points out that as early as the 1860's caution was advocated of the 'proper use of the committee system.' Caution was also given that 'one man's mind should not control decision-making processes.' One man's mind should not be allowed to overshadow many minds when decision-making is being contemplated (Oliver 1989:60). In his discussion of administrative centralized control, Oliver (1989:59) points out that in the 1800's of Seventh-day Adventist Church organization 'The centralization of authority was most evident in the tendency to deprive the constituent bodies of the organization of their decision-making authority.' In the 1880's the General Conference administrators were castigated 'for taking too much of the responsibility for decision making on themselves and failing to give others opportunity to exercise their prerogatives' (Oliver 1989:59).

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[14] This article was published on the internet AToday: Magazine Archives: May/June 1995.
[15] Committee is the shortened form of Executive Committee.

These same tendencies of centralized control can be seen today in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the exercise of authority vested in executive committees.

The following are indicative of the authority and control which executive committees are vested with:

1. The executive committees of conferences appoint ministers to churches and may change the appointment at any time (SDA Church Manual 1995:47, 48, 121). There is no policy or bylaw that restricts the executive committee in this matter. Neither is the committee under any obligation to consult with the minister or the church in the appointment or removal of the minister.
2. The executive committees have 'final authority between sessions of the constituency' (Beach and Beach 1985:67). Once more there are no policies or bylaws in place that make it obligatory for the committees to consult with churches before taking decisions that affect them. Churches are expected to accept decisions taken affecting them "as it is for their own good."

The ethos of the Union Committee is displayed along the same lines. Policies are formulated, many times adversely affecting workers in the field, without consultation. Not only policies, but allowances are decreased without proper consultation and preparation of workers before implementing changes in policy and decreasing of allowances.

Recent changes affecting medical aid allowances, is a case in point. Benefits were lowered for chronic medication without members being informed ahead of time. Members were also required to absorb an increase in their medical aid contributions without being informed well ahead of time. Another example was the selling and relocation of the church owned Publishing House – Southern Publishing Association. No church was consulted about this major change affecting scores of members and workers alike. Workers at the SPA felt that their rights were violated by the Union Executive Committee and General Conference. They then took the Union to court.

An observation made by George Knight (1995b:1) a church historian of the Seventh-day Adventist Church – writing about church structure for 2001 for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, states:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church [was] organized between 1861 and 1863. By 1901, however, the denomination had outgrown its earlier structures. Beyond that they had become too rigid. Consequently, between 1901 and 1903 the church reorganized in an effort to become more decentralized and more responsive to the needs of an ever-expanding mission. – Now, a century later, the reorganized structure has also become increasingly more rigid and bureaucratic . . . there are rumblings of a desire among some for more centralization in order to keep things "under control." The reaction to these hierarchical tendencies on the part of many has been an inclination to revert to local control and congregationalism.

People resent being controlled from the top. They no longer want to be controlled by rigid structures that leave them powerless, they rather prefer networking structures. In a network structure, individuals are at its centre (Naisbitt 1984:196).

In summary, this chapter outlined the problem of disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa in broad strokes. It reiterates the hypothesis which states that this disillusionment and alienation is due to the way in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered.

It was William Hunt a diamond speculator, who was the first Seventh-day Adventist to set foot on South African soil in 1870. He and two Dutch residents, Pieter Wessels and George van Druten were responsible for the initial spread of Adventism in South Africa.

From a rural setting the church quickly became urban based. The church in South Africa, which started out as a lay-movement soon set up structures that would later develop into a hierarchically structured organization.

The establishment of local churches gave impetus to further hierarchical organizational structures such as the Conference, Union and Division administrations. Like, with every organization the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, soon faced challenges that it never envisaged at the outset, challenges which the churches still struggles with today.

The challenges facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa are numerous and complex. Certain challenges, such as the merging of black and white conferences are a direct challenge to the structural hierarchy.

The challenge of bureaucracy manifests itself in several ways such as: the powerful centralized control of the Executive Committee system, the structural hierarchy of the church and the merging of Black and White Conferences in the Union.

Other challenges presents itself in the corporate administrative culture, increased diversity, distrust of institutional authority, increased pastoral loads, financial concerns and issues of control.

In this chapter the methodology described the past history and what is presently happening as the church faces its present challenges. As such, it outlines the present identity.

This identity does not reflect the biblical principles. Therefore, in chapter 6 a theological evaluation is given to help the identity of the church reflect Biblical principles in its administration.

CHAPTER 3

THE AMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND REPRESENTATIVE FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the main features of the Seventh-day Adventist Church administrative structures, and its representative form of church government.

Firstly, its presents the Seventh-day Adventist Church structure as being hierarchical. It also gives the rationale for church organization. Secondly, it shows how the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is organizationally structured, from it lowest level to its highest level, from the local church to the Union. The lines of communication and appeal operative within the structures are also given.

Thirdly, the representative form of church government is presented. It is demonstrated through the electoral system [21]starting with the local church elections to the Union elections.

The functions of the Conferences and Union are given. A brief outline of the executive committee system and the authority of the officer group are shown. It concludes with the brief mention of the role and functions of departments in the church structure.

3.2 Methodology

This chapter deal with the present. It brings the reader up to date with what is presently happening. It explains the present context of the SDA Church; its administrative structures and representative form of church government how it functions. As such one also gains insight into the present identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The purpose of describing these in such detail is to ask the theological question: is all of this congruent with Biblical principles? Chapter 4 will deal with this question.

3.3 Hierarchical structure

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is hierarchically structured.[22] As such it possesses an inherent potential for a dominating bureaucracy.[23] On the lowest level of the hierarchy is the local church. The next 'higher organization'[24] is the local Conference, then the Union Conference and at the top, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:94) writing on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church states:

> Probably the most significant step taken by these Michigan brethren in 1862 was to invite the other newly organized state conferences to send delegates to meet with them during their 1863 annual

[21] The electoral system procedures are outlined in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.
[22] Conner (1982:82) points out that: 'The word "hierarchy" means a group of officials who together rule the people' (Greek "Hieros" = sacred, and "Archos"= rule). Hierarchy is church government by a group of priests or clergy in graded ranks. Although this word does have religious connotations, the idea of "a group of officials" is seen in both civil and ecclesiastical forms of government.
[23] Conner (1982:82) defines bureaucracy as 'government by departmental officials following an inflexible routine.' It is governmental officialism or the officials collectively. It is the concentration of authority in administrative bureaus.
[24] The phrase "higher organization" is often used in Seventh-day Adventist parlance and writing, describing the level of organization as it ranks above the local church.

> conference, so that a general conference could be organized. This was an invitation to *conferences,* not individual churches. Thus the pattern was set for the indirect hierarchical structure adopted by the denomination [GC Working Policy italics].

In the General Conference working policy (1997-1998:31) the following statement is made, giving an idea as to the structural hierarchy:

> The General Conference is the highest organization in the administration of the worldwide work of the church and is authorized by its constitution to create subordinate organizations . . . it is therefore understood that all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world will recognize the General Conference in session as the highest authority under God. When differences arise in or between organizations and institutions on matters not already addressed in the Constitution and Bylaws, in the polices of the General Conference, or in its Executive Committee actions at Annual Councils, appeal to the *next higher organization is proper until it reaches the General Conference in session, or Executive Committee in Annual Council.* During the interim between these session, the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop, whose decision shall control on such controversial points, but whose decision may be reviewed at a session of the General Conference or an Annual Council of the Executive Committee [GC Working Policy italics].

Concerning the "Authoritative Administrative Voice of the Church" (GC[25] Working Policy 1997-1998:32), the following is stated:

> The General Conference Working Policy contains the constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference, the Mission statements and accumulated policies adopted by General Conference Sessions and Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee. It is therefore, the authoritative voice of the church in all matters pertaining to the mission and to the administration of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in all parts of the world.

In matters concerning the "Adherence to Policy" (GC Working Policy 1997-1998:32) states:

> The General Conference Working Policy shall be strictly adhered to by all organizations in every part of the world field. The work in every organization shall be administered in full harmony with the policies of the General Conference... No departure from these policies shall be made without prior approval from the General Conference Committee.

The focus of executive authority is vested in the upper levels of the hierarchy i.e. the Conference, Union Conference and General Conference. The consequent flow of authority is downward from top to bottom. From its inception the structures were set up from the bottom upwards on a representative basis. However, once the structure has been set up, there is a downward flow of authority.

It is therefore, necessary to provide an overview of the administrative structures. Not only to familiarize, but to sensitize the reader to the inherent potential of the structures, that give rise to the stated problem, formulated hypothesis and goals of this study.

3.4 Seventh-day Adventist rationale for church organization

Early Sabbatarian Adventists were anti-organization. In fact they were determined not to create another denomination. They were acutely aware of George Storr's warning that the church will become 'Babylon the moment it is organized' (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:83). George Knight,[26] a Seventh-day Adventist

[25] The abbreviation GC means General Conference.
[26] George Knight's article "Church Structure for 2001" Atodays: magazine Archives: May/June 1995:1.

historian, says, 'As a result, congregationalism[27] became the rule, and it was only with great reticence that many Adventists opted for organization. But functional organization was necessary if Adventist were to focus its missiological firepower.'

James White a leading early Sabbatarian Adventist was convinced 'that the "scattered flock" must have better direction and organization if they were to maintain their faith and expand their witness.' As James White saw the growth in membership, and the consideration of the possibilities for further expansion, he became convinced that organization was necessary (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:83, 88).

According to Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:90) 'the question of the legal ownership of property – the church buildings and publishing office eventually propelled the Sabbath-keepers into formal organization.' The debate around organization gained momentum during the first half of 1860. At the end of the summer of 1860, a conference was called at Battle Creek regarding the legal future of the publishing office.

However, with the roadblock to organization having been breached, Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:92) point out that the move toward 'denominational structure was steady.' At the start of the American Civil War 'a small group of Seventh-day Adventists gathered in Battle Creek, requesting nine ministers present to prepare recommendations for a plan for church organization. The ministers' report, which appeared in the *Review*[28] in June 1861, suggested a three level organization: local churches, state or district conferences and finally a General Conference to represent all the churches and speak on their behalf.'

Knight (1995b:1) reflecting on the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization since 1863 states:

> By 1901 . . . the denomination had outgrown its earlier structures. Beyond that, they had become too rigid. Consequently, between 1901 and 1903 the church reorganized in an effort to become more decentralized and more responsive to the needs of an ever-expanding mission. Now a century later, the reorganized structure has also become increasingly rigid and bureaucratic.

However, there are several major reasons, among others why organization was desirable and adopted by the church. It is stated in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (1995:20) that for any institution to be effective there must be proper organizational structures without which no institution is able to succeed in its mission. A church without an organized form of government will soon find itself in chaos and in a state of disintegration.

3.4.1 Organization needed to promote unity

Montgomery (1942:23) writing on the Seventh-day Adventist Church organization and administration states:

> The purpose of organization in the church is that unity may prevail. Order is a fundamental principle of unity.... The purpose of organization in the church is also that relationships may be understood,

[27] Congregationalism refers to church government in which, 'the local church is independent of external control and must not be drawn into a larger organization under a central government.' It is the church being governed by its membership. Its members elect their own officers, regulate worship services and determine the requirements for fellowship. Emphasis is placed on the individual making the congregation the seat of authority. Autonomy and independence of the local church is strongly emphasized. Christ alone is seen as head of the church. Co-operative associations are sought, but only in an advisory way and only when beneficial to the church, (Macleod 1988:145-146).
[28] The *Review* was the church's official publication at the time.

recognized, and appreciated; that leadership may be properly constituted, properly directed, and readily accepted.

3.4.2 The historical reality of the Church

Rice (1985:218) a Seventh-day Adventist theologian writing on Christian theology from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective identifies the following rationale for church organization.

From the point of contextualization, it is necessary for the church to have an 'identifiable form in the world.' Besides the church being a spiritual reality, it is also a visible community. Because the church 'is a social and historical reality as well as a spiritual one, and for this reason must have an organization or structure.' It is important for its mission, and communicating the gospel and therefore, 'the co-operative efforts of all its members.' Organization helps to co-ordinate members efforts and maximizes effectiveness. Order should characterize the work of the church (1 Cor. 14:40).

3.4.3 To harness spiritual gifts

Organization is needed for the harnessing of members spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12). Every person must be assisted in exercising their gifts. Organization will help members from working at cross purposes in the church. When the apostles felt the need of devoting themselves to ministry of the word; they created the office of deacon to help in the administration of the financial affairs of the church (Acts 6:1-6).

3.4.4 To aid in administering discipline

The question of discipline in the church requires proper organization and well defined order. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus sets out a pattern for dealing with those who err (Matt 18:15-17). Paul in his letter to the Corinthian Church encourages its members to settle their disputes among themselves, rather than using the courts of law (1 Cor. 6:1-2). He also admonishes the same congregation that they should expel a member 'whose scandalous sexual behaviour threatened to bring reproach on the church' (1 Cor. 5:1-2). For such disciplinary procedures to be carried out successfully requires organization and proper order.

3.4.5 To identify the church in society

The church is a social institution that exists alongside other institutions, such as economic, political, educational institutions. However, the church must define its purpose over other institutions, therefore, it needs to be organized.

In summary, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is hierarchically structured, with higher levels of organizations in ascending order. Executive authority is vested in the upper levels of the hierarchy, with the flow of authority from top to bottom. The rationale for church organization is multi-faceted.

3.5 Church organizational structure

3.5.1 The local church - congregation

The basic unit of organization of the SDA church is the local congregation. It is comprised of a group of individual believers, organized into a church and as a community of faith and functions as the "body of

Christ." The local congregation is autonomous, and operates within the first of four levels of administrative structures above the local church – congregation level.

3.5.2 Four levels of administrative structure

The four administrative levels above the local church are: the Conference, the Union, the Division, and General Conference. These structures gravitate upward in what is called "higher organizations." Each is considered of a higher level of administration. As these structures function on the "higher organization" basis, so does its lines of communication and appeal.

The Division and General Conference levels of administration do not form part of the SDA church structures in South Africa. Only two of the administrative levels above the local church – congregation level are found in South Africa. They are those of the Conference and Union levels of administration.

3.5.2.1 The local conference

Local congregations within a designated area such as, a province, or other local territory, belong to the "sisterhood of churches" within a local conference.[29]

3.5.2.2 The local union conference

Local conferences in a larger designated territory are grouped together to form a Union Conference, which forms the second administrative level of the SDA church above the local church level.

All conferences in South Africa are grouped together in a Union, called "The Southern Africa Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists."[30]

3.5.2.3 The Division

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists conducts "much of its work through division sections" (Beach and Beach 1985:59). Divisions, therefore, are sections of the General Conference in different territories. The Divisions are comprised of Union Conferences in various designated territories, and is responsible for these territories. The Southern Africa Union Conference belongs to the South Africa-Indian Ocean Division,[31] with its headquarters in Harare, Zimbabwe. Beach and Beach (1985:60-63) points out that the main objectives of the Division is two-fold:

1. To decentralize church administration.
2. For a more efficient procedure to call and send workers.

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[29] For example, the Transvaal Conference is comprised of SDA churches within the designated area north of the Vaal River, which includes: Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West Province and Limpopo Province.

[30] The SAUC is the highest administrative structure of the SDA church in South Africa. It is located in Bloemfontein. It is at this level where various auxiliary bodies operate from such as: SEDCOM and Trust Services, caring for all church properties and various insurances, such as church property and contents, workers homes and its contents and workers motor vehicle insurance. It holds church properties in trust. Then there is SEDMED, the medical Aid Scheme of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. ADRA is also part of the Unions operations.

[31] The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) is comprised of the following Unions: Angola Union; Botswana Union; Indian Ocean Union; Malawi Union; Mozambique Union; Southern Africa Union Conference; Zimbabwe Union Conference. The only two Union Conferences in the Division are South Africa Union Conference and Zimbabwe Union Conference. The others are Mission Unions, not fully self-supporting.

3.5.2.4 The General Conference

Union Conferences throughout the world belong to the General Conference of seventh-day Adventists. It is the most extensive unit of organization, divided into divisions, as administrative sections of the General Conference. General Conference Sessions take place every five years, at which time new officers and departmental directors are chosen.

3.6 Lines of communication and appeal

The administrative structure and governance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a structured line of communication and appeal as set out in the chart on page xiii.[32]

According to Verwey:[33]

> No individual or organization has the right to refuse the right of any appeal to go to the next higher organization should the decision they have taken not satisfy the one who has appealed.
>
> The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the right of every member in good and regular standing to express personally or by representation his convictions, ideas and differences of opinion to the executive bodies of the church, which are appointed by means of representation by its membership. Appeals against any decisions made by the church, also forms a part of the democratic right of its members who by virtue of their total support of the church program are shareholders in the organization.

Verwey explains the lines of communication and appeal with reference to the above chart as follows:

1. The specific lines drawn on the chart represent the lines of communication. No direct contact between bodies can officially be made where no line of communication exists, without prior arrangement and approval of the organization or individuals, through whom the item under discussion should have been processed. Any unauthorized direct contact between organizations or individuals, will be referred back to the organization concerned for their consideration and appropriate actions.

2. The church pastor is the representative of the organization in the local congregation and thus all approaches to the executive bodies of the church are to be made through him – Executive bodies within the local church as well as the higher organizations.

3. The nature of the item under discussion will determine the routing it will take and the body it will need to be referred to.

4. No individual or organization has the right to refuse an item of appeal to be passed on to the next organization in line.

In summary, the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a five level structure with the local church at the lowest level. In ranking order are four levels of administration. Knight (1999:16) comments on the structure and says 'that no other church in the world, including the Roman Catholic Church (which has two levels above the local congregation), has so many administrative levels to support.'

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[32] Published in the South African Union "Lantern" vol. xxxiii. No 3. May 1 1983. Adopted by the South African Union Conference Executive Committee action 1664/521/82. (Action, page, number and year).

[33] CD Verwey was the editor of the "Lantern", the official publication of the South African Union Conference. He was also the executive secretary of the Union at the time of publication.

The lines of communication and appeal in the church, operates along the same lines as its structure. No higher level of administration can be contacted, without the consent and approval of the lower level of administration. Protocol is strictly adhered to. This is where bureaucracy raises its head very strongly, to the detriment of the local church and its members. Each level of administration will support each other to the expense of those at grassroots.

3.7 Representative form of church government

Each level of administrative authority from the local congregation to the General Conference, practice a representative form of government (Beach and Beach 1985:33). Each level is representative in that it follows a democratic process of formation and election. However, the higher you go in the hierarchy the lesser representatives are found. On the levels of the hierarchy, the committee acts on behalf of people, when it comes to representation.

3.7.1 Local church elections

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (1995:127-132) contains the procedures of church elections.[34] Church officers and church boards are elected on an annual or bi-annual basis, as decided by the church.

At the local church level, the members elect their own officers and departmental directors, and church boards by majority voting. The election procedures are as follows: an "organizing committee" is chosen to nominate members to serve on the nominating committee. The purpose of the nominating committee is to nominate officers and the church board. At the completion of its work, the nominating committee presents its report to the church for final approval by majority vote.

3.7.2 Local conference elections

Conference elections are done at a conference constituency meeting called a "Session." 'The local churches in the organization of the conference elect delegates to the local conference session. These are duly authorized to represent the churches in the councils of the conference.' (Church Manual 1995:132).

The main function of the "Session," is to elect officers for the conference administration. It comprises: the president, executive secretary and treasurer. It also grants credentials and licenses to ministers and other workers, adopts or changes the constitution, elects departmental directors and transacts other business as may properly come before the session. 'One of the most important acts is the election of the Executive Committee, whose duty it is to function for the constituency between sessions. This committee is vested with delegated power and authority from all the churches within the conference' (Church Manual 1995:132).

Most times the executive committee usurps more authority than that delegated. They do not consult with churches, while making decisions concerning them.

The election procedure is similar to that found at local church level. An "organizing committee" is chosen to elect a "nominating committee," whose task it is to transact nominations. Once the nominating committee's

[34] The Church Manual is the official handbook of the church governing the practices of the church.

work has been completed, its report is than presented to the session for final approval by a majority vote of the delegates at the session.

3.8 Setting up of the organizing committee – conference session

From conference level of administration to General Conference level of administration, the organizing committee and the nominating committee is entrenched within each structure's constitution. So, both the organizing and nominating committees are constitutionally based. It follows the model constitutions and operating policies of the General Conference.[35]

The organizing and nominating committees play an important role in the representative structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church polity. At the local church level, the whole church becomes involved by majority vote in the appointment of the organizing and nominating committees.

However, as one moves up the hierarchy, actual participation of the church members in the electoral processes diminishes, since it is placed in the hands of delegates.

3.8.1 The organizing committee

The organizing committee is a committee set up to choose the nominating committee for the session. The organizing committee can be chosen at or prior to the (session) constituency meeting. If prior to the constituency meeting, then the time and place of the meeting must be officially given.[36] The organizing committee shall be constituted as follows:

(a) Each church represented at the constituency meeting shall choose, or empower its delegates to choose, one member plus one additional member for each (X numbers) _____ members or major fraction thereof.

(b) The chairperson of the organizing committee shall be the president of the (name) _____ Union, or his designee.

(c) The organizing committee shall nominate and the constituency shall elect:

1. A nominating committee
2. A constitution committee
3. Other committees as may be necessary.[37]

3.8.2 The nominating committee

The nominating committee shall consist of a set number of members. The constitution of each conference determines the minimum and maximum number. It shall include the president of the union or his designee who shall also serve as its chairperson. It is standard procedure that the membership of the nominating committee be balanced between conference employees and non-employees. Various segments of work and territories of the conference must be taken into consideration.

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[35] The model constitution operating polices as found in GC Working Policy (1997-1998:109-155).
[36] GC Working Policy (1997-1998:136). Art IV. Sec 1.
[37] GC Working Policy (1997-1998:135—136). Art W. Sec 1. Each conference in its constitution determines the number of members to serve on the organizing committee. The formula takes the number of members in each church into consideration. E.g. it could state one member for the church as an organization and one additional member for every 300 members or major fraction thereof.

Beach and Beach (1985:48) states: 'The function of the nominating committee is to nominate for election by the full assembly suitable people for the offices to be filled.' Once the nominating committee has completed its work of nominating names to take up office, its report is then presented to the full session. Once the report has been read, moved and seconded, a break of ten minutes is allowed for any possible objections. The chairperson and secretary of the nominating committee will attend to the objections and one other member of the committee, who may advise if the report should be referred back.

3.9 The function of conferences

The conference level of administration is the next higher organization above the local congregation. It's functions are as follows:

1. It serves as the governing body overseeing the sisterhood of churches located within its territory.
2. To co-ordinate and facilitate the proclamation of the gospel.
3. To co-ordinate and facilitate Christian ministry – pastoral, teaching, health, community services, women's ministries and children's ministries among others.
4. The conference administration is the central authority that controls and administers the placement of ministers within the territory of the conference. The Conference administration administers a centralized tithe fund from which ministers are remunerated. The administration through its executive committee appoints ministers to various churches. 'Pastors or assistance pastors are not nominated or elected to such positions by the church. Their connection with the church is by the appointment of the conference committee, and such appointments may be changed at any time' (Church Manual 1995:121). The minister as an appointee of the conference 'serves the church as a conference worker, and is responsible to the executive committee' (Church Manual 1995:47, 48).
5. The conference co-ordinates and preserves the unity in beliefs, plans and policies of the church.
6. It represents the church officially as the higher organization in legal and official matters.
7. It also operates Primary and Secondary Schools within its territory and other institutions such as Adventist Community Services among others, for which it acts officially.
8. It acts as the "go between" between the local church and the union.
9. It recommends to the union, ministers as candidates for ordination.

3.10 Union conference elections

The election procedures at Union Conference elections, follow similar procedures to that found at local conference elections. In essence it follows a representative system, recognizing 'that the authority in the church is vested in the membership and moves upward not downward' (Beach and Beach 1985:32). This of course is only so in practice at the Session. However, once the Session is over, it works top to bottom.

Representation at the Union Session is determined by the provisions of its constitution. For this study the constitution of the South African Union Conference (SAU) is used as an example.

3.10.1 Representation

Each member organization[38] shall be presented at SAU business sessions by duly accredited delegates as follows:

1. Each local conference shall be entitled to one (1) delegate without regard to conference membership and one (1) additional delegate for each five hundred (500) church members or major fraction thereof.
2. Such delegates shall be chosen by the respective local conference executive committees giving due consideration to adequate representation of between forty and fifty percent (40-50%) from persons not in the employ of the church.

At this level the local church has no say in choosing delegates to the Union Session. Here the Conference Executive Committee does the choosing. Once again limiting laity participation in who will be elected as a delegate to the Union Session.

3.10.2 The organizing committee

An organizing committee for each business session shall be appointed. It shall consist of:

1. One (1) representative from each local conference without regard to membership;
2. One (1) additional representative for each two thousand five hundred (2500) church members or major fraction thereof.
3. The organizing committee shall nominate and the business session shall elect all operating committees for the duration of the session. No delegate shall nominate more than one (1) person for the election to any one of the following committees:
    1. A nominating committee
    2. A constitution committee
    3. Other committees as may be necessary.

3.10.3 The nominating committee

The nominating committee shall consist of at least twenty-five (25) and not more than thirty six (36) members . . . The nominating committee shall be constituted as follows:

1. The president of local conferences comprising the SAU.
2. One (1) representative for each four thousand five hundred (4500) members or major fraction thereof in each conference.
3. Three (3) additional members to represent SAU institutions.
4. Six (6) additional employees to represent other categories of workers, three (3) of whom shall be currently serving as pastors.
5. At least forty percent (40%) of the membership of the nominating committee shall comprise of persons not in the employ of the church.

[38] The member organization referred to are the conferences within the Union.

3.11 The functions of the unions

The basic constituent blocks of the Seventh-day Adventist Church according to Beach and Beach (1985:57) are the unions. In 1984 the Commission on "the Role and Function of Denominational Organization" met, and came to the conclusion that unions perform vital functions (Beach and Beach 1985:57).[39]

Beach and Beach (1985:57) lists the functions as follows:

1. It serves as a resource centre, from which training counsel and guidance is given to local conference personnel.

2. It is responsible for coordinating the work throughout the Union, preserving unity in beliefs, plans, policies and focus for preaching of the gospel."

3. It acts as a link between local conferences and the General Conference.

4. It operates local institutions (i.e., colleges) on behalf of its constituency.

5. It acts as the representative body, officially acting on behalf of the church to government and other institutions.

6. It acts on behalf of the General Conference with conferences and its institutions. Actions, policies programs and recommendations are passed down via the Union. In this way the organization is united "behind the world program of the church."

7. It presents the local "needs and wishes, of the local conferences to the General Conference in two ways:

7.1 Union presidents are members of the General Conference Executive Committee.

7.2 The Union Conference is the constituent body of the General Conference, and its delegates help elect the committee, officers and departmental directors of the General Conference and divisions.

3.12 Executive committee system

The Seventh-day Adventist Church from Conference to General Conference level of administration functions on what is called the "committee system."

General Conference Working Policy (1997-1998:137) states:

> The executive of this conference is delegated the authority to act on behalf of the constituents between regular sessions, including the authority to elect or remove for cause officers, directors of departments/services, board and committee members.

Its administrative authority allows it to:

1. Fill any vacancies that may occur during its current term of office, which otherwise was filled by the conference session.

2. Appoint committees with their terms of reference.

3. Employ workers, such as ministers, teachers, secretaries or any other person as may be necessary.

4. "To grant and withdraw credentials and licenses."

[39] WR Beach and BB Beach was tasked with writing on the Role and Function of Church Organization, hence their book *Patterns for progress: The Role and Function of Church Organization.*

The president on all levels of administration "is the first officer." He reports to the Executive Committee 'in consultation with the secretary and the treasurer. He acts as chairman of the constituency meetings and the Executive Committee' (GC Working Policy 1997-1998:6,117,138). The secretary and the treasurer serve under the direction of the executive committee. Beach and Beach (1985:68) states:

> The secretary and the treasurer have their own constitutional authority, derived from election by the same constituency that elected the president, and under the authority of the committee. The president... lead and co-ordinate . . . . His co-officers are expected to acknowledge his leadership and work in close counsel with him and vice versa.

3.12.1 The authority of the executive committee officer group

The authority of the officer group, consisting of the president, secretary and treasurer has no additional authority beyond that which is constitutionally vested in them.

Beach and Beach (1985:69) states:

> The officers are not a substitute for the committee, but they have an important function. . . The officers have a management function, supported by the departmental directors, and supervise executive implementation of the actions of the committee.

3.13 Role and function of departments

The Seventh-day Adventist Church from the local church to the General Conference operates a departmental system. There are various departments in the local church, such as the youth, women's ministries, and personal ministries among others. These are duplicated at each level of administration. Departmental directors as stated by Beach and beach (1985:69) do not have executive functions, but primarily give 'leadership to program planning and field promotion.' At local church level, programs are locally generated in cooperation with conference and union departmental leadership. It is expected that local church departmental leaders carry out plans and programs as passed down to them from the higher organizations i.e. the conference and the union.

In summary, this chapter has outlined the problem of hierarchically structured church organization. It has a great impact on the way the church organization is administered. At its lowest level of the hierarchy is the local church. Above the local church are four other levels of administration: the Conference, the Union, the Division and the General Conference. However, the Division and General Conference levels are not localized in South Africa, but have a great influence on the administration of the church in South Africa.

The higher the organizational levels go, the fewer laymen and women become involved in the decision-making processes at these levels.

Up to this point, this chapter has argued that the "higher organizations" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has caused a distancing of the higher levels from the lower levels of the church as the lower levels become less involved, particularly in decision-making. The hierarchy at present is unchecked and unchallenged, possessing an inherent potential for a dominating bureaucracy, in which in turn could lead to disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file in the church. As such it supports the hypothesis of the dissertation. The chapter seeks to gain insight into the present identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The purpose of which is to seek congruity with biblical principles to be dealt with in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHURCH – INSTITUTION OR ORGANISM

4.1 Introduction

A well known debate through the ages has been the concern regarding the church as institution over and against the church as organism. The notion exists that the church as an institution, has a negative outworking on the life of the church, whereas, the church as organism gives life and vitality to the church. The tension between "institutional thinking" as opposed to "organism thinking" of the church has become a sobering challenge for the church today.

Cram (2000:1) writing in the Mennonite brethren herald, considers, the recovery of the church as organism. Among other comparisons that he makes, he says:

> Institutional imagery focuses on organization, definitions and structure. It assumes the work will get done if the administrative structures exist, designated leaders are in place, bylaws are adhered to and appropriate meetings are held. In contrast, organism thinking demands attention to the interrelationships of the various "parts" of the body and the degree to which they function as a community.

4.2 Methodology

This chapter deals with the institution – organism polarity. It is the more systematic theological part of the study. It is based on Scripture and what Scripture teaches us about the identity of the church and as such gives us a vision of what the church should be like in our present context in order to be a sign of the Kingdom of God.

4.3 Contributions to the current debate

An attempt is here made, to review some of the contributions made to the current debate, so as to establish the relationship between the two ways of thinking – institutional and organism. In reference to the debate Heyns (1980:191) states:

> In our day, with its anti-institutional attitude, it is most important that we emphasize the institution as essentially part of the church. The institution (so it is argued) can never be reconciled with a dynamic, kinetic living concept. As a congealed form out of the past, the institution tends to formalism as well as to externalism and superficiality; these constitute a serious threat to what is intrusive, spontaneous and actual in the Christian faith, which is supposed to be stimulated, deepened and broadened within the sphere of the church.

A non-biblical form of institution can be the source of many kinds of problems, to the extent, where it conflicts with that which is essential to the Gospel and frustrates its intention. The arguments which militate against the church as institution, comes about as a result of a non-Biblical view of the Church (Heyns 1980:192).

Guder (1985:65) considers the challenge of the institutional church and says:

> [P]erhaps the disappointment of Christian history surfaces most painfully when we consider that the church as a vast institution characterized by all of the familiar drawbacks of institutions: complexity, bureaucracy, power broking and politics, resistance to change, commitment to the status quo.... Certainly there are a few aspects of Christian reality that call forth more negative reactions, ...than the institutional realities of the church.

Guder (1985:65) refers to groups and movements that broke with the church in an effort to break away from the 'negativeness of the institution and the establishment'! Furthermore, he says, 'if we are going to be realistic about the church as Christ's incarnational witness in the world, we must deal with the sobering challenge of the institution.'

Stating the problem more pointedly, Guder (1985:65) says that the criterion that often seems to govern 'life and especially decision making in the church' is often organizational and not theological. In this way the institution thinks it is securing its survival.

In their assessment of the church today, Kilinski and Wofford (1973:134) express their concern at the failure of the church to realize its purpose. They attribute its failure largely to the fact that the church has 'ceased to be an organism'. They insist that:

> The church must not become a social institution whose goals are embodied in the accomplishment of some visible, external ends. It must not become enmeshed in its own organization and property. Whatever the particular environment or people of the church, it must stay true to the scriptural form of the church as an organism and a community.

Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:37) emphasizes the fact, that essentially, the nature of the church is that of a living organism as depicted in Scripture (I Cor. 12:12 – 20, 27). They categorically state that, 'we are members of a body, not an institution. Any expression that the church takes must be an expression in harmony with its nature, not a stumbling copy of man's notion for organizing institutions.'

They, furthermore, express concerns for the implications that the church as institution will have on church leadership. They say that there is a problem 'with imposing an institutional form of organization on the church. That kind of structure places leaders in *controlling* rather than *equipping* roles.' Therefore, Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:38) contends that:

> Institutional forms of organizations... tend to create or impose a leadership role that involves (1) control (2) authority over and responsibility for the behaviour of other; (3) judging, evaluating, and decision making; (4) concentration on problem resolution and reduction of deviant behaviour [Richards & Hoeldke's italics].

They further point out that in comparison to an organism in which each member is an integral part of a greater whole, essential to the wholeness of being, 'institutional organizations creates "layers" that lead to interpersonal distance.'

Snyder (1977:63) in his contribution to the debate says, 'The church as the people of God are definitely not an institution in the same sense that general Motors, Oxford University... are institutions... the church is something other than the institutional structures attached to it.' He insists that essentially the church is not an institution, but it does 'have an institutional side in the same way the family does.' Snyder (1977:63) cautions against institutional structures for the church that is closely akin to 'human organizations, corporations and bureaucracies.' He concurs that sociologically the church is an institution and to some extent institutionalization is inevitable and desirable for the church.

Moberg (1962:6) states:

> [E]very religious organization has some degree of formalism or institutionalization. This is true even of groups that claim to be 'merely a fellowship not a denomination,' and of these so informally and loosely organized that they claim to lack organization altogether

According to Douglass and Brunner as quoted by Moberg (1962:6):

> The attempt, then, to conceive of a non-institutionalized religion for modern man is sociologically infantile. It is an attack on rationality and ethical stability themselves. Religion cannot have currency without developing some generalized form implies habits resistant to change which are the essence of institutionalization.

From this point of view, it is acknowledged that institutionalization to some extent was evident in the New Testament such as: regular house meetings, leadership patterns, and the celebration of the Eucharist. It also recognized 'that these institutional elements were highly functional in the early church' (Snyder 1977:64).

Snyder (1977:65) shows that in the New Testament times there were no such a thing as official, structured and formalized organization such as seen in modern day denominations and societies. The more rigid, hierarchical type institutionalization rose in the second and third centuries. It was in part 'as reaction to the charismatic excesses of the Montanists.' The church will inevitably manifest some institutional patterns, but no institution can ever be the Church. 'The Church can never be essentially an institution, even though it will necessarily be institutional in some aspects of its life.'

However, Snyder (1977:65) says, 'in this sense the institutional elements is strictly secondary and derivative and must be functional.'

According to Moberg (1962:6) the church does have a social structure. As the church pursues its goals, it does so, 'as a social entity in a social world. This means that, like other institutions, it is subject to the play of social forces in both its formation and its operation.'

In summary: it is clear, that tension does exist between seeing the church as an institution to that of organism. The anti-institutional attitude stems from past experience. However, it is also clear that the institution is an essential part of the church. It is therefore, imperative that a proper relationship between the two be established and a healthy balance maintained.

4.4 The Church as institution

The church as institution evokes negative sentiments. These sentiments are unwarranted in terms of the definition of the term "institution." The definition does not establish the phenomenon of institution as the essence of the church, but rather as functional. It helps the church to function in an orderly manner (Coertzen 1998:21).

Van Gelder (2000:157) says, 'organization is essential to the church's existence... Organization expresses the church's ministry in concrete ways... It is also one of the most powerful aspects for shaping the lives and behaviour of those who participate in the church.' He further states that 'Organization binds people together through shared structures connectional processes, and leadership roles.' He observes, that, 'By the end of the first century, this organizational life was taking on institutional characteristics.' The "institutional identity" of the church Van Gelder (2000:158) says 'is a natural development, one the Bible anticipates and

legitimizes. The church had to organize itself to represent God's authority in the world. This authority came to be lodged in structures, processes, and leadership roles.'

Snyder (1975a:125) agrees and says:

> To do the work of God in the world the church is naturally forced to adopt structural patterns (organizations, institution and so on) which are appropriate to the surrounding culture. But such structures should always be understood as not being the essence of the church, and therefore as subject to revision, adaptation or even dissolution.

Heyns (1980:188) defines the word "institution" as denoting 'an establishment characterized by permanence of shape, of organization and polity, of meeting and procedure.' He proceeds to point out, that the church is an institution. It is clearly seen when it gathers together in meeting. However, even when it is not meeting together, the church community still officially functions in terms of pastoral visitation (Acts 20:28), works of charity (1 Tim 5:6) and the exercise of discipline (Matt 18:17). Heyns (1980:188) further points out, that as the origin of the church is to be found in the Old Testament so is that of institution. He states 'The organization of Israel's[40] religious institution in the service of the tabernacle and the temple is set out in exhaustive detail.' It is the institutional form of the church that allows the church to do what it does: creates the opportunity, whereby, people can come together in community with one another. However, the institutional character of the church is not to become an end in itself 'but an indispensable means of spiritual life in a fragmented reality.' (Heyns 1980:190). Segler (1960:11) speaks of the church as a "functioning institution" and as such, it is organizational.

Just like other institutions and organizations have constitutions, rules and regulations, to establish procedures of orderliness, so also does the church have its order. These guidelines are there for the smooth functioning and progress of church life, as the sovereignty of Christ is allowed to prevail. Church order forms part of the institutional aspect of the church. However, it must always be subject to the scrutiny of Scripture for correction and improvement (Heyns 1980:191).

Coertzen (1998:2-3) says 'It is in fact in the form of order that a church adopts that the church makes itself accountable in a contemporary way regarding what it is and what it wants to be.' Coertzen (1998:2) argues that church members cannot:

> Disassociate themselves or place themselves above certain order in the church... there must at least be some sort of arrangement stating the time and place where members are to assemble for a service. Members also need to be informed of, and conform to, the requirements for membership of the church. When a person moves from one congregation to another, certain rules apply regarding incorporation into the new congregation... there are certain formal requirements a person must comply with in order to take holy communion, just as certain qualifications are required before a person can be elected to an office or can perform a service in the church.

The idea of the church being an organization is implied by the imagery used to describe it as 'the people of god', 'a temple', 'a household', 'a flock' (Heyns 1980:188, Minear 1960). Heyns (1980:188) insists that without some kind of organization, these images cannot exist. As the word of God is proclaimed, those who accept and believe, come together in community around the word of God and in an organized way become

[40] According to the depiction by Ferdinand Deist (1984:55) in his book *A concise dictionary of theological terms*, states "Essence" as "the substance of a phenomenon, that of which a phenomenon actually exists.

visible. In order for the word to be proclaimed and to celebrate the sacraments, there is need for a permanent organization. The organization is to be a servant of the word performing its task in an efficient way. Within the ambit of the organization, there are elders who oversee the work and deacons who serve at the table and carry out charitable work.

The church as an institution must be affirmed as a necessity. The church cannot exist as a historical reality without it 'taking on the form of an institution' (Guder 1985:66). Guder (1985:66) says, those who wish to see the church continue its life, without its institutional form are deceiving themselves, 'they are becoming their own institution as they rebel.' A group of people repeating what they have done once before a second time, when meeting, becomes an institution. 'Social existence requires institutional form. The church as a family of faith, is an institution that functions as such in the world, just as the physical family is an institution that takes on particular ways of functioning in the world' (Guder 1985:66).

In conclusion, we have a polarity: institution and organism are two aspects of a phenomenon which is destroyed if one is over emphasised and the tension taken away.

4.5 The Church as institution in the New Testament

The New Testament Church does not present itself as being without organization or institution. The church is presented as institution in the New Testament.

From the beginning the church as institution is found in the New Testament. Jesus prepared his disciples for their ministry by giving them specific instructions for a specific kind of institution. It was to be vastly different from any other institution. With its radical contrast, difference was to be found in the following: concepts of authority, leadership, service, decision-making, and unique mission to the world (Guder 1985:66).

Guder (1985:66) states:

> [T]here was to be leadership, structure, form, purpose, and action. And from the very beginning, the church was such an institution. Since Pentecost it had ways of defining its membership, structures for decision making, processes for dealing with conflict among its members, and assignment of varying levels of responsibility.

Guder (1985:67) points out, that there had to be organization in the early church, not only for sociological reasons, but directed by God's spirit to be a particular kind of organization, so that it could carry on its mission in the world. While the New Testament does not give any definition, concerning the institutional structure of the church, but makes it clear that there should be some kind of tangible institutional form, so that, it could be 'the Body of Christ in the world.' The titles of bishop, elder, presbyter and deacon are indicative of the structures of leadership and service that had developed. 'The institutional existence of the church, then, is a sociological necessity. But more importantly, the incarnational nature of the church demands, ... that the church be a social reality' (Guder 1985:67).

4.5.1 The Church – It's birth and subsequent development

The birth of the New Testament church and its subsequent development did not take place in a vacuum. Organization and structure became an integral part of the New Testament church. This is portrayed by the following:

1. At the outset the disciples cared for the fledgling church and its administration. However, it soon became necessary to place this responsibility in the hands of elders. The biblical evidence reveals the oversight by the plurality of elders in churches at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:23); at Ephesus (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim 3:17; 5:17-25); at Philippi (Philippians 1:1); and in the churches on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5) and then also in the churches at Pontus, Galatia, Cappadonia, Asia and Bithynia (1 Pet 1:1; 5:1). Paul and Peter charged the elders of the church to oversee the local congregations (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1, 2). Paul always appointed elders in the churches that he planted (Acts 12:23; Titus 1:5). He did not consider a church as fully developed until it had qualified functioning elders (Titus 1:5). Paul also asks congregations to honour their elders (1 Tim. 5:17, 18). Elders are solemnly charged to protect the church from false teachers (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9-11). The people were instructed to obey the elders (Heb 13:7; Pet 5:5).

2. The election of the seven came as a result of circumstances which confronted the early church. Caring for the needs of the early church by the disciples, became time consuming and necessitated the election of seven for service. This freed the apostles from the everyday pastoral care, so that they could devote themselves to the preaching of the gospel. There was an established process by which the election took place. Firstly, conditions for elections were laid down (Acts 6:3). Secondly, the church had the final say (Acts 6:5). Thirdly, the apostles laid hands on them (Acts 6:6).

3. The church council described in Acts 15, concerns an appeal made to the authority of the organized church leadership in Jerusalem. Its decision was announced by letter to the gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.

4. The early church in belief, strictly adhered to the apostles doctrines and practices, that were approved by the Apostles and Elders of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:42; Acts 16:4)).

5. There was co-ordination among churches, aid was co-ordinated in the time of famine (Acts 11:29).

6. The apostles saw it necessary to fill the office of apostle left vacant by the death of Judas. By means of a specified procedure they elected Matthias to replace him (Acts 1:15-26).

Dudley and Hilgert (1987:26, 27) says 'In the Pastoral Epistles, those to Timothy and Titus, we encounter (the church) in its most thoroughgoing institutionalized form' (see also Tenny 1961:331-342). These letters were written to pastors of well-established congregations. The matters in question were largely those concerning order and organization, depicting authority and routine worship, within the various congregations. First Timothy takes up the following concerns: prayer must be offered for kings and for those in authority, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty' (1 Tim 1:2); women are admonished to dress modestly, they are to be silent and submissive (1 Tim 2:9-15); the appointment of

bishops must meet certain criteria: be a 'husband of one wife,' be of good reputation, be able to rule his own family well (1 Tim 3:1-7). The same qualifications are set forth for deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13). Young widows should remarry, older widows should be supported by their children (1 Tim 5:11-15). Slaves are admonished to be obedient and respectful, and should work harder if the masters are Christian (1 Tim 6:1-2). In the letter to Titus are repeated, many of the instructions. Second Timothy contained warnings against heresies with an appeal to remain faithful to the tradition as they received it (2 Tim 3:14-16). (Dudley and Hilgert 1987:27, see also Tenny 1965:314-318 and Tidball 1984:128-134).

According to Giles (1985:187):

> [T]he Institutional form is not something a group of people with an ongoing existence and a common life may or may not have. It is part of the giveness of social existence; groups spontaneously create structures to govern their life together and further their purposes.

Arbuckle (1993:25) comments that institutions are necessary for any human group life; it provides stability or order that is necessary to establish the life of the group even to the point of being creative.

It is therefore, not true to assume that the New Testament did not portray institutional structures which linked individual congregations to the wider church community. Giles (1995:188) states: 'The institutional forms that were needed and were appropriate for this period began to appear very early.' Luke in the book of Acts points out, those elders as general overseers of the Christian community in Jerusalem was already established, by the time the church at Antioch came into existence. Gifts sent from Christians in Antioch for distribution to the poor among the Christians in Jerusalem, were received by a group of elders on behalf of the church (Luke 11:30). Later Luke names James as chairman of the group of elders (Luke 21:18) (Giles 1995:188).

Snyder (1977:64) concurs that the church as institution was already evident in the New Testament when he states:

> [R]egular meetings in homes, some pattern of leadership, the celebration of the Lord's supper, and apparently some prayers and confessions. The striking thing, however, is that these institutional elements were highly functional in the early church.

However, the New Testament does not give an 'officially structured, formalized organizations' in the same way as that of modern day denominations. Institutionalization of the more rigid, hierarchical and organizational type grew up only in the second and third centuries in part as a reaction to the charismatic excesses of the Montanists' (Snyder 1977:64). Van Gelder (2000:158) adds:

> The Bible also makes it clear that the emerging historical, institutional church was never intended to be an end in itself. While the church must have organization, its organizational life must be consistent with the nature of the church and function in support of its ministry. It is critical that the institutional church continue to flow from, find its rationale within, and be maintained consistent with the nature and ministry of the church.

In summary, if the church is to exist in society in a meaningful way, it has to do so in the form of an institution. It is also clear that the church as institution existed in the New Testament at a very early stage. As Guder (1985:66) affirms, that from the very beginning, the church was an institution. The New Testament does not suggest a definition of such an institution or institutional structure. However, institutional forms are encountered in the New Testament, as the church met on a regular basis, under

specific circumstances. However, institutional forms of the church must be 'consistent with the nature of the church.'

4.6 Organizational theories and church organization

An important aspect of the debate is how people including Christians go about organizing themselves.

Church organizations have borrowed from management science and its organizational theories. Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:20) states that:

> There are many organizational theories . . . five that are operative in the church today. These are theories of how an organization should be structured and managed, how people should relate to one another within the organization and what constitutes appropriated leadership behavior.

The five theories stated by Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:21-23) are, the 'traditional, charismatic, human relations, classical (bureaucratic), and systems.' The reason for choosing these theories is, 'because they should serve quite well to introduce some components of organizational theories and to give a feel for the influence each theory might have upon a church organization when it is espoused by the leaders and put into practice.

Schoun (1997) uses the five organizational theories of Lindgren and Shawchuck and applies it to the church organization. Schoun (1997:17) states that, 'In the pre-scientific, pre-industrial age, organizational behaviour tended to be either traditional or charismatic' (see also Lindgren and Shawchuck 1984:26-27).

4.6.1 The Traditional theory

According to Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:21):

> The traditional theory focuses on the need to maintain the tradition by preserving the *status quo*. This theory views the leader's main function to be that of transmitting the heritage and of participating in ceremonial affairs. It sees the organization as a static, patrimonial institution whose primary concern is to safeguard the people from change, which is always seen as a threat to the tradition. In this theory members of the congregation are expected to have little initiative, or desire for progress, and little creativity, because internal threat to the *status quo* is even more disconcerting than external threat.

4.6.2 The Charismatic theory

> The charismatic leader theory focuses on intuition, a vision, or a call. It is the leader's main function to interpret and proclaim this message and to inspire the people to join together in rejecting the *status quo* and pursuing the organization's mission. This theory views persons in the organization as active and capable of rendering valuable service, but always in need of aggressive, directive leadership.

Schoun (1997:17) points out that, 'with the coming of the industrial age and factory, people began studying efficiency and employee behavior.' Then the organizational theory became known as the classical theory.

4.6.3 The Classical theory

According to Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:23) this theory is 'more commonly called bureaucratic.' Its main concern is 'the achievement of organizational goals.' It is hierarchically based, in which people serve the organization. They are 'a means by which the organization can achieve its goals.' The function of leadership is to maintain control 'by enforcing the rules and handing down decisions from the top.' Leadership manifests an aggressive and autocratic style. The lines of communication in the organization are vertical – top to bottom. The whole idea is to run an efficient machine. The dominant concern in this kind

of organization is the maintenance of control. As stated by Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:23) this theory of organizational approach is 'more commonly called bureaucratic.'

Schoun (1997:17) states 'The church also reflects this organizational approach.' Dulles (1978:34-46) speaks of the church as an institution as one of the five models he describes.[41] Dulles (1978:34) says:

> The notion of the church as society by its very nature tends to highlight the structure of government as the formal elements in the society. Thus it leads easily, though not necessarily, . . . to the institutional vision of the church – that is to say, the view that defines the church primarily in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers.

While the description of the church as an institution is not wrong, institutionalism is to be avoided. Dulles (1978:35) describes institutionalism as 'a system in which the institutional element is treated as primary.' Furthermore, he states that, 'institutionalism is a deformation of the true nature of the Church – a deformation that has unfortunately affected the church at certain periods in its history, and one that remains in every age a real danger to the institutional Church.'

Dulles (1978:35) speaks of 'institutionalist ecclesiology' in which 'the powers and functions of the Church' are divided into 'teaching, sanctifying, and governing.' As a result the following distinctions are made: 'the Church teaching and the church taught, the church sanctifying and the church sanctified, the Church governing and the Church governed.' This places the 'Church as institution ... on the giving end.' It identifies the church 'with the governing body or hierarchy.'

4.6.4 The Human Relations theory

Schoun (1997:20) states, 'In the 1940's people began to react to the classical theory. The behavioural sciences gave "a better understanding" of human behaviour in the work place and in organizations. Thus the Human Relations Theory was born.'

This theory focused on the personal needs of persons; their need to experience growth and the achievement of personal goals within the organization (Lindgren and Shawchuck 1984:22). It focused on the understanding of people and their attitudes which affect products or the results or both in the organization. Schoun (1997:20) points out that it 'resulted in what is called "the humanization of the market place."' He further states, Personnel departments were formed; employee benefits were established etc. There was an emphasis on motivation – intrinsic motivation.'

Mc Gregor (1960) in his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise* compares Theory Y to theory X. Theory X was seen as the approach stating that people will work only under coercion. In other words theory X relies on 'rewards, promises, incentives, or threats and other coercive devices.' (McGregor 1960:42). Mc Gregor (1960:43) further states, 'so long as the assumption of Theory X continues to influence managerial strategy, we will fail to discover, let alone utilize, the potentialities of the average human being.'

On the other hand, 'Theory Y assumes that people will exercise self-direction and self-control in the achievement of organizational objectives *to the degree that they are committed to those objectives*.' (Mc

[41] The other four models described by Dulles are: Mystical communion, Sacrament, Herald and as Servant.

Gregor 1960:56). When people's needs are met and their inner motivations stimulated, they will want to work [McGregor's italics].

Mc Gregor (1960:49) says:

> The control principle of organization which derives from Theory X is that of direction and control through the exercise of authority – what has been called "the scalar principle." The central principles which derives from Theory Y is that of integration: the creation of conditions such that the members of the organization can achieve their own goals *best* by directing their efforts toward the success of the enterprise.

Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:22) points out that in the "Human Rights Theory," the organization serves 'as a servant of the people, a means by which persons can experience self-worth, expression and personal goal achievement.' The main function of the leader, 'is to create an atmosphere conducive to open expression and democratic participation for all persons.'

Schoun (1997:20) states, that 'human relations is a democratic system' in which decisions are made by the group, leadership is non-directive, sensitive and encourages participation. Relationships are essentially based on horizontal lines. The negative side of this approach could 'lead to de-emphasis on tasks, leaderlessness (free reign), low goal achievement, over-emphasis on feeling, subjectivity, a self-oriented individualism and fragmentation.' The church model that reflects this organizational theory is the "mystical communion" model of Dulles (Schoun 1997:20). According to Dulles (1978:49-50) the mystical communion model places emphasis on horizontal relationships 'in a network of mutual interpersonal relationships of concern and assistance' brought about by the Holy Spirit.

In spite of its advantages the 'communal types of ecclesiology suffer from certain weaknesses' says Dulles (1978:59-60). Some of the potential weaknesses are: Firstly, it 'leaves some obscurity regarding the relationship between the spiritual and visible dimensions of the church. If the church is seen totally as a free spontaneous gift of the Spirit, the organizational and hierarchical aspect of the church runs the risk of appearing superfluous.' Secondly, 'it tends to exalt and divinize the church beyond its due.' A case in point as stated by Dulles (1978:60): 'the notion of the Body of Christ, which apprehends the Church in terms of the Incarnation. The same is true of the People of God, if this entity is viewed as coterminous with the Christian Church.' Thirdly, the communal type of ecclesiology 'fails to give Christians a very clear sense of their identity or mission.'

Finally, Dulles (1978:60) states that a certain tension exists, 'between the Church as a network of friendly interpersonal relationships and the church as a mystical communion of grace. The term *koinonia* (communion) is used ambiguously to cover both, but it is not evident that the two necessarily go together.' He says that idea of the church being a network of friendly fellowship, in some forms of Protestantism has led to the tendency, 'to fragment the church into a multitude of autonomous congregations' (Dulles 1978:61).

4.6.5 System theory

Schoun (1997:27) points out 'that it was in the 1960's that systems theory began to emerge.' According to Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:24) the theory developed 'as an attempt on the part of the organizations to cope with rapidly changing environment conditions.' Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:32) describe an

organizational theory as 'a set of components that work together to accomplish an overall objective and that possesses a sufficient boundary to distinguish it from its environment.' Martin (1969:49) says 'systems concepts emphasize the relationships between the parts and how these relationships affect the performance of the overall system.' Furthermore, Martin (1969:49) says the task of management 'is to design the organizational system so that it adapts successfully.'

The whole concept is that of an organization as a system with interrelated parts that is coordinated to achieve a set of goals.

4.6.5.1 The nature of Systems theory

The nature of systems theory can be summarized as follows:

1. Interrelatedness and interdependence

There is interrelatedness and interdependence of members to each other. Unlike the classical theory, departments are separate and functions independent of each other. The relationship between them is competitive. However, in any system each part functions as an integrated whole, each contributing to each other.

2 Is it wholistic?

Only as the parts are together do they constitute a whole. This essentially means that members must be active and involved, each a positive participant or they will act as a disruptive force.

3 Adaptation and adjustment

Interrelationships are dependent upon adaptation and adjustment. The parts must be able to work together in the system if the system is to survive.

4 Mission, goals, intentionality

Emphasis is placed on action, process and effect. Like a living organism it is never static, but dynamic. Here the growth and goals of the organization and those of people are of equal importance. It has clarified its mission and with intentionality moves towards the goals.

5 Flexible leadership behaviour

Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:25) states, 'Systems theory elicits flexible leadership behaviour contingent upon conditions in the environment, the goals, and characteristics of the church' (Lindgren and Shawchuck 1984:29-44, Schoun 1997:29).

According to Schoun (1997:29) the systems theory of organization, 'well reflects biblical and Christian principles, e.g. the organic nature of the church, the balance between emphasis on task and people.'

Schoun (1997:30) points out that general agreement exists that 'organizational theory has passed through two major stages in this century and that, since 1950, we have entered upon a third stage not yet fully clarified.' He sees the first as what is called the Classical period. This period showed an interest in 'efficiency,

economy, control, its hallmark was well-known organization chart. Bureaucratization represented ... predictability and rationality.' In the 1940's the movement "Human Relations" arose. It held 'that management must take into account the multitude of private and social concerns of its personnel. Organizations were restudied from the human standpoint.' (Schoun 1997:30).

The third phase according to Schoun (1997:30) is the Systems Theory. He sees it as a proven concept valuable in a 'wide variety of fields including the church.' The church is 'recognized as a living system.' The human body is seen as a system, and compared by Paul to the church (1Cor 12). 'In a system there is a combination of activities or events in which the whole is more efficient than the sum of the parts' (Schoun 1997:30).

It is noted by Hendriks (2004:55) in his work *Studying Congregations in Africa*, that systems theory 'originated in the United States with the work of Dr Clare Graves, a professor in developmental psychology. This was applied to the church scenario by two ministers, Michael C Armour and Don Browning in their book, *System-sensitive leadership: Empowering diversity without polarizing the church.*'

Hendriks (2004:56) aptly states, "Each system has its own unique way of organizing itself, of responding to crises of structuring relationships, family life and roles." The church itself is a system with sub-systems and would do well to organize and structure itself in harmony with this systems principle, considering interrelationships of its parts and their interdependency.

In summary: Organizational theories as stated by Lindgren and Shawchuck (1984:20), has had an influence on church organizations. Some churches have borrowed from organizational theories in setting up their organizational structures. It is widely agreed that "systems theory" comes closest to the biblical model of organization.

4.7 Institutionalization

Institutionalization is a process. As such it takes place over a period of time in which something becomes formalized and stabilized.

Tidball (1984:124) defines the process of institutionalization by saying that it is a:

> [P]rocess by which the activities, values, experiences and relationships of a group becomes formalized and stabilized so that relatively predictable behavior and more rigid organizational structures emerge. It is the name for the way in which free, spontaneous and living movement become structured and inflexible.

Van Gelder (2000:158) adds that there needs to be a distinction between 'The reality of institutional church ... [and] the dynamics of institutionalization.' He as well states that 'Institutionalization is the process whereby, particular organizational characteristics become legitimized as official forms and normative practices.' However, he warns that once legitimization has taken place, 'it is often difficult to introduce change.' An important observation made by Van Gelder (2000:158) is that 'It becomes all too easy for the medium to distort or replace the message.' Furthermore, he states that organization 'was never intended to displace the inner dynamic of the nature of the church.' The role of organization is 'to serve the purposes of the nature and ministry of the church under the continued creating, leading, and teaching of the Spirit.

Tidball (1984:124) also warns against institutionalized structures that have lost its original purpose and have become ends in themselves. In this way they no longer serve the interest of the organization for which they were originally set up. The impact of the process can become so vast 'so as to cause the nature of the movement to undergo a radical change of form.'

Burger (1999:261) also speaks of institutionalization as a process of giving shape or concretizing. It refers to the process in concrete situations in which form is given to plans and visions. It is also spoken of an embodiment. Burger (1999:263) says that institutionalization refers more specifically to the process through which choices of form over a period of time, become established or routine fixed usage. This is especially useful, when week after week routine things need to be repeatedly done. However, with the process of institutionalization, there will be no need to rethink and make new decisions on routine matters week after week. This is then the positive side of institutionalization. However, it has a negative side as well.

4.7.1 The negative side of institutionalization

Burger (1999:278) emphasizes that the process of institutionalization also has a dark side. The greatest problem that the church faces, is, that people especially leadership of the church often has a blind spot for the negative side of institutionalization or rather they have a tendency to underestimate it. He stresses the fact, that the problem is aggravated if the dark side of institutionalization is ignored, and further, that the negative effect is then greater. Burger (1999:278-81) deals with the negative side of institutionalization under four headings: Formalization, rigidness and unadaptablemess; selfishness, and power.

4.7.1.1 Formalism

Institutionalization has a tendency of breeding formalism. The negative side of institutionalization is seen in Scripture, as Israel is regularly accused of maintaining the outward form of their religious worship (a.o. Is. 15:29, 13), but their hearts are far from him. In 2 Tim 3:5 warning is given against a form of godliness. Formalism is a form of religion, but does not possess any heart and spirit. Formalism has to do with routinization. Once form has been found for a specific matter, you do not have to think and decide week after week about it. This is where the problem of formalism begins.

4.7.1.2 Rigidness and unadaptableness

One of the greatest frustrations that people experience with organizations is that organizations at times can strongly resist any plans to bring about change to existing practices. The worst is that reason and rationality often makes no impression on the system of the organization. It is as though "the organization" at times cannot think, it simply kicks in its heels and in a completely irrational way refuses to change.

Most institutions have a lifelong struggle with this kind of rigidness and unadaptableness. Burger (1999:279) says:

> Die reel is gewoonlik dat hoe verder institutionalisering in 'n organisasie gevoer is en hoe meer onkrities dit gedoen is, hoe groter is die rigiditeit wat 'n mens kan verwag om aan te tref. Hierdie rigidteit is van die mees negatiewe eienskappe van institute. Dit is die soort verskynsel wat 'n mens soms in 'n "Frankenstein" gevoel oor organisasies kan laat kry – dit is dat "iets" wat ons self help skep

> en vorm het, 'n eie lewe kry wat sterker is as wat ons verwag het, selfs tot op die punt dat dit "onbeheerbaar" raak.

It takes a lot of organizational discipline to maintain a good balance of the institutionalization process, whereby, practices are regularly needed, and allowing these to become so concretized, that the purpose for its use is lost sight of and it becomes a hindrance instead of a blessing.

4.7.1.3 Selfishness

Burger (1999:280) says that the rigidity seen in organizations is indicative of a deeper problem. Over a period of time, organizations forget the purpose for their existence. Thereafter, they use all their power and energy for their own survival. The usefulness of a greater goal is left behind. The life and maintenance of the organization becomes a goal in itself (typical in the SDA Church). It is as if the organization got a life of its own, apart from the cause it must serve. Burger (1999:280) sees this situation as one of the most crippling elements in the process of institutionalization.

4.7.1.4 Power

Burger (1999:281) points out that it is widely accepted and recognized that a person cannot speak about institution, without the theme of power rearing its head. Unfortunately, the church in its broader sense and on congregation level, has not avoided the problem. There are people who will say, that the most dangerous thing that has happened in the history of the church, had to do with power and the misuse of power. Here one thinks of the crusades, the persecution of people with divergent convictions in the Calvinistic tradition the unfortunate episode with Servet. In one way or another all these episodes has to do with power. It had to do with churches in a position of domination, and with power did not hesitate, to force their will and convictions on others.

According to Getz (1984:251):

> The process of institutionalization is a recurring phenomenon among God's people. What makes this pitfall particularly dangerous is that it is not exclusively related to the church or other Christian organizations. It happens naturally, wherever, you have people who band together to achieve certain objectives.

4.8 Institutionalism

Instead of trying to define institutionalism Getz (1984:251) says, it would be more beneficial to point out the symptoms. The process of institutionalism has already set in when the following symptoms appear:

1. The organization (the form and structure) becomes more important than the people who make up the organization
2. Individuals begin to function in the organization more like clogs in a machine.
3. Individually and creativity are lost in the structural mass.
4. The atmosphere in the organization becomes threatening, rather than open and free; people are often afraid to ask uncomfortable questions.
5. The structural arrangements in the organization have become rigid and inflexible.
6. People serve the organization more than the objectives, for which the organization was brought into existence. In other words, means have become ends.

7. Communication often breaks down, particularly because of a repressive atmosphere and lots of red tape.
8. People become prisoners of their procedures. The "policy manual" and the "rule book"' get bigger, and fresh ideas are few and far between.
9. In order to survive in a cold structure, people develop their own special interests within the organization, creating competitive departments and divisions. The corporate objective gives way to multitude of unrelated objectives which inevitable, results in lack of unity in the organization as a whole.
10. Morale degenerates; people lose their initiative; they become discouraged and often critical of the organization and of others in the organization – particularly their leaders.
11. As the organization gets bigger and as time passes, the process of institutionalization often speeds up. A hierarchy of leadership develops, increasing the problem of communication, from the top to the bottom and bottom to the top. People toward the bottom, or even in the middle of the organizational structure, feel more and more as if they "really don't count' in the organization.

Getz (1984:252) observes that when these symptoms appear in an organization, it means that institutionalism has developed to an advanced stage. He (1984:253) points out that there are 'at lest three major periods of institutionalism among the people of God' as revealed in church history.

4.8.1 Judaism

The first major period of institutionalism among the people of God concerns the children of Israel after their return from captivity in Babylon. For some time during the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the evidence of new life could be seen among God's people (Getz 1984:253). By the time of Jesus, Israel as a nation and in particular their religious system had become so overlaid with institutionalism, that it was almost impossible to distinguish truth from tradition. Jesus strongly denounced this kind of religious system. An example of this is founding Mark 2:27. Jesus' disciples were criticized by the Pharisees for plucking grain on the Sabbath. Jesus came to their defence by saying: 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath' What Jesus really was saying 'You have taken means and made it an end it itself. You have completely lost sight of the spirit of the law. You have lost the individual in your religious system. All you have left is "empty form"' (Getz 1984:253). Here Jesus points out the devastating results of institutionalism, reminding the religious leaders that they have succeeded in maintaining and preserving their religious system, their "orthodoxy" and tradition; they have also led the majority of people, to conform to the external and outward expressions of their religion (Getz 1984:253).

4.8.2 Roman Catholicism

Getz (1984:254) observes, that the New Testament church was eventually overcome by:

> A stagnant, lifeless Roman church... here and there were pockets of vitality and pure Christianity, but as a whole, the church was doomed to hundred of years of institutionalized religion. When the edict of Milan gave legal status to Christianity, many become "Christian" because it was the popular thing to do.

The reformers rose up against this system of religion, in defence of biblical truth and Christianity that was personalized. They were against religion that consisted of form and ceremony, instead of life and experience. Various kinds of traditions took the place of biblical truth.

4.8.3 Reformation Churches

The reformers reacted among others against institutionalism and dead orthodoxy of the Roman Church. The cardinal doctrines that were once again taught were: 'the authority of the Bible, justification by faith and the priesthood of every believer.' Conversion once more became a matter of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Getz (1984:255) raises concerns about the reformation churches 'forms and structures and approaches to communication.' He (1984:255) says: 'You cannot *force Christian* community. Some leaders eventually refused others the same liberty and freedom they demanded for themselves' [Getz's italics].

According to Getz (1984:259) Judaism, Roman Catholicism and the Reformation churches, became so engrossed in 'its dogmas and traditions and its form and structures – eventually became more important that the people themselves.' People developed an impersonal relationship with God. Getz (1984:259) further points out that these movements also developed a hierarchy of leadership, ''structures and form became rigid and inflexible. In fact, their means and ways of doing things eventually became ends in themselves and as sacred in the minds of people as their beliefs.' This is typical of what is imperceptibly happening in the SDA Church in South Africa.

In Summary: The word institution refers to that which has taken permanent shape. The church is institutional, as it provides opportunity for people to gather together in community around a common purpose. However, the institutional character of the church must not become an end in itself, it must be open to scrutiny.

Examples of the church as institution are found early in New Testament history, but radically different from other institutions, in terms of leadership decision making and mission. However, the New Testament does not define institutional structures of the church.

Institutionalization as a process of concretizing has a negative side and positive side. The positive side concerns, those processes, which are necessary for routinization of weekly activities. The negative side, concerns formalization, rigidness and unadaptableness, selfishness and power. Institutionalism sets in when among other an organization's form and structure, takes the place of people.

4.9 Form and structure

It has been pointed out that, whenever, people gathered together for a specific reason, some kind of form and structure starts taking shape. 'The challenge that ecclesial structures must meet is to enable the missional community to function faithfully in its specific cultural context. To put it another way, the structures of the church are to incarnate its message in its setting' (Gruder 1998:227).

Getz (1984:32, 33) concurs, 'whenever you have people, you have function. And wherever you have function, you have form.' He says '"form" and structure is inevitable.' You cannot have one and not the other. Stating it another way, 'you cannot have "organism" without "organization."' In order to achieve a goal or where a principle is applied, a procedure or pattern is necessary so that it can be done. If a "message" is to be communicated a "method" for doing so in necessary.

According to Getz (1984:38) 'The Bible often teaches function without describing form. Where it does describe form it is partial and incomplete. What form is described varies from situation to situation.'

To illustrate this we consider Hebrew 10:25 (NIV italic mine). 'Lets not give up *meeting together*, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us *encourage one another* – and all the more as you see the day approaching.' It is clear that the passage gives two directives and function – "meeting together regularly" and to "encourage one another." Getz (1984:36) observes, while the functions are stated no form or structure is mentioned in which these two functions are to be performed. The question Getz (1984:36) raises is whether the author of the epistle expects these functions to be carried on without form. It must be remembered that "form follows function." Christians are told to meet regularly. However, no specifics are given of when, how often, where, or, order of worship when meeting together. Getz (1984:36) is of the opinion that the larger context of the New Testament does answer the questions of time, frequency, place and order of worship.

Functions and directives are often found in the New Testament without the matching forms, just as was seen in the passage from Hebrews. Another example is taken from the book of Acts. The apostles 'never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is Christ' (Acts 5:42c, NIV). While Luke records these functions, there is no description of the methodology (form) used to teach and to preach. However, it is clear that you cannot "teach" or "preach" without having it taking on form and methodology of some kind (Getz 1984:37). Accordingly Getz (1984:37) observes 'when form is described it is always partial or *incomplete*' [italics mine]. He further points out, that it is impossible for biblical from and structure to be accurately duplicated, 'because certain details and elements are always missing in the biblical text' (Getz 1984:37). As example, in the same passage (Acts 5:42), the apostles 'kept right on teaching and preaching, from house to house.' Getz (1984:37) says 'Going from "house to house" is definitely form and structure.' However, the process is not defined in detail. The form going from "house to house" is incomplete and partial, nothing is said of how it was done. 'Form and structure that is partially described varies from one New Testament setting to another.' In the text under consideration, it is also found, that not only did they preach from house to house, but went to the "temple courts" (Getz 1984:37).

Getz (1984:38) says:

> It is not possible to absolutize something that is *not described* ; that is always *incomplete*; and that is *always changing* from one setting to another. This is why form and structures are not absolutes in the Bible... functions and principles *are* absolute – if they appear consistently throughout New Testament history and not self-delimiting [Getz's italics].

Guder (1998:227) is of the opinion, that in structuring the church to carry of its mission, it must 'be a profoundly scriptural process. Our disciplined use of a missional hermeneutic should shape and guide the continual formation of the church in our changing society.' Guder (1988:228) cautions against any 'form of organizational fundamentalism' whereby, it 'claims absolute biblical authority for a particular polity.'

Guder (1988:222) sees the church as an organization with structures, continuity and functions that can be defined. Included here are also the aspects of denominations. It is also an organization. It provides a corporate structure for orderly management, of purpose and identity, of congregations in its jurisdiction.

Naturally there will be processes of planning, organizing, structuring and management. One must keep in mind that these essential tasks establish order in the church, however, 'the church itself is more than its organization' (Guder 1998:71).

Guder (1998:71) states:

> A missional ecclesiology will always include organizational forms, but one should not see these as the essence of the church. Organization needs to serve, not determine the nature of the church, with its duality of being both divine and human. It also needs to serve the ministry of the church with all its diverse functions. We must establish clearly the church's nature and ministry before we proceed to design organizational forms to concretize both in specific cultural context. Unless we do so, we may fall subject to the illusion that managing the organization is equivalent to being the church.

Guder (1998:222) further points out that when consideration is given to the structural emphasis of the missional church 'our task is to apply the theological understandings rooted in the *mission Dei* to the church's structure.'

It must be kept in mind, that, whatever, organizational structures are set up, it must not become an end in itself. If it becomes an end in itself, the reign of Christ will be jeopardized. The goal of the organizational structure must support the mission of the church and represent God's reign on the earth. Guder (1998:230) sounds a word of caution when he says, 'A church can decide that it has organizationally reached a point of institutional perfection and, therefore, view itself as permanent, sacrosanct, even salvific in its structures.'

It will be good for the SDA Church in SA to take cognizance of what Guder says, since in many ways its leaders and members are structured and members see structure and organization as sacrosanct.

In summary: it is evident that where people gather together in community with a common purpose, the development of form and structure is inevitable. Where there are people, there is function and where you have function you have form.

Often the Bible teaches function, but do not describe its form. Where form is described it appears partially and incomplete, and therefore, cannot be absolutized, since situations change from place to place. Organizational forms must not be seen as the essence of the church. It is not an end in itself.

4.10 Curbing institutionalism

It is unwise to think that human structures can withstand the paralyzing effects of institutionalization. Human structures are also affected by the effects of the fall as humans are (Tidball 1984:134-135). According to Tidball (1984:135):

> The history of the church is a history of repeatedly alternating patterns of institutionalization and revitalization. Sometimes the renewal has taken place within existing structures...Our world today is consequently littered with dead structures that no one has had the courage to bury.

Tidball further points out that Paul apparently was aware of this danger in the early church. He gives advice to Timothy that will help in overcoming the institutionalization problem.

There are three principles, which he sets forth: Firstly, he admonishes Timothy 'to guard the original aim, teaching and life of the church (1 Tim 1:19, 4:16, 6:20 and 2 Tim 1:14). He is not to preserve its structure in a fossilized form but to hold fast to its principles, however, with flexibility he may apply them' (Tidball

1984:135). Timothy is counselled, to hold on to the message without deviation in spite of varied expressions of it. He must firmly hold on to principles, revealed truths, as opposed to forms of traditions and structures which are but vehicles for the expression of those principles. From time to time the church must critically evaluate itself: its goals, its aims and its needs. It must then revision its structures, and programmes in line with its goals, aims and needs (Tidball 1984:135).

Secondly Paul advises Timothy to remain vigilant at all time (1 Tim 18, 4:16, 6:12 etc). He must remember that he is at war. He must at all cost avoid being caught off guard and remain faithful to his commander (2 Tim 2:4). Tidball (1984:135) says 'part of the trouble with many churches today is that they no longer see themselves as in battle station. They demonstrate no alertness to what is happening to them and, accepting everything that comes their way.'

Thirdly, Timothy is reminded of the original spiritual resources that are at his disposal (1 Tim 4:14 and 2 Tim 1:6-7), Paul counsels Timothy of the need to renew his spiritual energies and maintain his spiritual stamina.

Tidball (1984:135-136) insists that in order to defeat institutionalization, there must be regular evaluation of the basics: what the aims are and how are they being achieved. Are the best people leading and are they suited for the tasks to be achieved? There must constantly be an awareness of the 'peril of mixed motives. The threat of unwieldy bureaucracy, the lessening of standard and the fossilization of principles.' From time to time the church needs new men who can lead the way to renewal. The church needs to stay in close contact with God and true source of life and vitality.

4.10.1 Evaluating the Church as Institution

It is clear that the church must be institutional, so that it can serve its community and further its mission. In doing so, it must avoid the characteristic drawbacks of the past.

According to Guder (1985:66) the all-important question is "how" the church will be institutional. If the church does not adequately deal with the "how" the disappointment of the past Christian history will repeat itself, in the characteristic drawbacks as pointed out by Guder (1985:65) as 'complexity, bureaucracy, power brokering and politics, resistance to change, commitment to the status quo.' In fact, if the "how" question is not taken seriously, the problem of institutionalism will present itself and the institutional aspect of the church, will become its dominant characteristic (Guder 1985:68).

It is therefore, important that we do not create a non-biblical institutional form for the church. A non-biblical institutional form will create all kinds of problems. It may well be that the Gospel and the mission of the church, will be placed in jeopardy, by the unscriptural view of the church as institution (Heyns 1980:191-192).

Guder (1985:68) says, 'the institution of the church is intended to serve the witnessing community as it obediently carries out its mission.' Concerning the institutional structures, Guder (1985:68) say it 'should be enabling structure(s); it should provide the ways and means for the Body of Christ to progress within history, under the leadership of the Spirit. It should not be the central model of the church,'

Guder (1985;68) observes that 'there is no eternally mandated Biblical institutional form' However, he explains that: 'The variety of institutional approaches we find in the New Testament (often discussed as Jewish and Hellenistic trends in church organization in the first century) reveals that, while institution is necessary it can take on various forms.' Guder (1985:68) is of the opinion that if the task of the church is clearly understood: the nature of its calling as being incarnational witness, only then can the church proceed to organize its life and its resources in an obedient and effective way to accomplish its task. The church as institution becomes the servants of the church's calling. Guder insists that a Christian community must be critical of the ways it has chosen to function in the world. The institutional forms must constantly be reviewed. With the help of the Spirit, learn to examine its practices, customs and traditions and forms that at one stage were useful in carrying out the tasks. However, if it has lost its usefulness, that other forms and practices be used to further the Kingdom of God on earth. Accordingly, Guder (1985:69) says:

> It is wise for the church...to test its organizational forms regularly, to ask itself: Do we best carry out our purpose and serve Christ in the form in which we now exist? Could we be better stewards of our resources in this particular historical situation by making changes in the form since the form is neither sacrosanct nor inspired? The stewardship that our mission requires of us will lead us to be critics of our institution to change where change will lead to heightened obedience.

The institutional forms and procedures must become part of the church's incarnational witness to the world. The world encounters the church in its mission as an institution. The concern is raised, whether the encounter is with the Gospel or is it a barrier to the gospel. If the church as institution fails to incorporate the gospel of love and grace in its functioning and compromises with the world, it must accept the criticism of hypocrisy (Guder 1985:69). Guder (1985:69) says 'Nothing is more damaging to the cause of Christians than the in-fighting, divisiveness, empire building and unprincipled pragmatism that are so much part of our churchly reality.'

The challenge is to submit to the tutelage of Scripture and seek the ways in which the institutional form of the church must be governed by the gospel. Attention must also be given to the instructions Jesus gave His disciples concerning: authority; servant-hood; the contrast between worldly standard of power and Christian self-sacrifice (Guder 1985:70).

4.10.2 Form follows function

"Form follows function" is a dictum from the management sciences. With some adaptation it can also be applied to the incarnational witness of the church. 'Planning answers the function question, what will we do? Organizational structure answers the form question, How will we organize ourselves to do it?' (Shawchuck and Perry 1982:51). Guder (1985:70) in applying the dictum states, 'The goal of the church is clear. Incarnational witness, as a concept links together our call and the way we go about pursuing it. Our function is inherently an expression of our call.'

The gospel must become enfleshed in who we are, what we say and what we do. Therefore, the institutional form adopted, becomes very important for the way in which we carry the gospel. It is therefore, also very important that the purpose for our being is always kept in focus and how the organizational institutional forms will assist in carrying out the purpose for our being (Guder 1985:70). If the church, however, drifts

into a situation where the organizational institutional structures becomes absolutised, and the main purpose becomes the maintenance of structures, traditions and forms; the church then will never succeed in it's God given purpose of mediating salvation and caring for the needs of people. Guder (1985:70) reminds us that 'the church is not an end in itself but rather an instrument created by God for the accomplishing of his great salvation purpose.' Shawchuck and Perry (1982:51) points out that it is unfortunate that most churches do not pay much attention, to tailoring organizational structures, so that it would achieve its goals in the most effective manner. Churches would rather keep the organizational structures unchanged. It is largely due to pressure exerted on pastors and congregations by denominational officials that churches should be organizationally identical. Shawchuck and Perry (1982:51) suggest 'that a denomination's identity and cohesiveness is sustained by its theology and ecclesiology, and not the shape of its organizational structures on denominational or local level.' Jesus intimated that where there are new goals, it should influence the structures that are to support and carry them when he said, 'Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved' (Matt 9:17).

According to Hanson (1987:490):

> The study of the biblical roots of contemporary communities of faith places ecclesial structures and politics in proper historical and theological perspective as subservient to and derivative of something more ultimate and dynamic than particular institutional forms. That ultimate form is God's ongoing gathering together of a people to carry on God's purpose of restoring a broken world and bringing it to its intended wholeness.

Hanson (1987:490) does not negate the importance of institutional structures and the role they play:

> of persevering and administering the traditions and means of grace that renew God's call and sustain the people in the vocation to which they have been called. The subservient role that institutional structures must take is established by criterion against which it must be evaluated and reformed, namely the degree to which they draw the community into creative, redemptive purposes of God.

It is important that communities of faith realize the necessity of their organization being open to changes, which becomes necessary by conditions that are subject to change. For example, an Eastern African culture in comparison to a European culture differs in form within which each experience, the call of God. (Hanson 1987:490) points out that:

> The dynamic notion of community to which the Bible bears witness has been a faithful guide to people precisely in such settings, for the Bible is filled with examples of new communities being born out of the experience of God's presence, and offers a wide range of possible forms and structures that can be used in constituting the people of God.

Israel in Egyptian bondage experience God as their deliverer. As they responded to God's initiatives, they constitute the people of God in the ancient world. Then again in Galilee and Judea a group of men and women responded to the announcement by Jesus of the kingdom of God that was drawing near. In their response, they formed a community in their social setting (Hanson 1987:490-491).

The question of how the church will be institutional, must take into account the observations of Hanson (1987:491) when he says:

> In our own day, those rediscovering community in response to God's grace for the first time as well as those rediscovering within structures that had grown stale, will recognize that faithfulness is

determined not by conformity to a particular polity or institutional structure, but by conformity to the redemptive purposes of God

Hanson (1987:491) stresses the fact, that communities must adopt such institutional forms that are in harmony with the embodiment of God's will. Once this has been done " a community of faith will not react to challenges to its particular institutional structure as threats to be repulsed, but very possibly as a sign of the Spirit prodding it to new life and a more fitting response to God's presence' (Hanson 1987:491).

However, Hanson (1987:491) cautions, that if institutional structures, even, if it was originally set up in response to divine initiatives, must not become ends in themselves, and thereby, shutting our continuous evaluation and reform. This could prove to be an obstacle rather than a blessing and become 'agents of human rather than divine purpose.'

To summarise, thus far the church was dealt with as an institution, an organization – providing people with opportunity to belong to a community of people. Its institutional aspect makes provision for it to exist in the world, thereby becoming functional in the world in which it exists. As an institution it becomes visible, representing the church's fixed structure. As Guder (1985:66) states 'The question is not 'to be or not to be institutional' but "how" will it be institutional.

It has been pointed out that institutionalism is one of the greatest threats which the institutional church faces. While institutionalization gives shape and concretizes various practices, in use, is the positive side of institutionalization. However it also has a negative side among others involving formalism rigidness and unadaptableness, selfishness and misuse of power.

It is clear that where people are, you have function and where you have function, you find form – form follows function. The goal of organizational structures is to serve and support the mission and ministry of the church.

It is also stated that the paralyzing effects of institutionalization can be avoided, if the church regularly evaluates itself against the basics: are the aims being achieved? Are the best people leading out; be careful of un-wielding bureaucracy and fossilizing of standards.

4.11 The church as organism

Up to this point, the discussion has concentrated on the church as institution, and how the church is to be institutional. However, the church is not only a visible institution or organization, whose life can be observed, but it is also a living organism.

Raubenheimer (1987:39) points out that, the church is more than an organization. It is an organism. It is not only an institution, but also the living "body of Christ." As a living organism, the church has a living head, Jesus Christ. Typical of the church as organism is that it is not distinguished by a hierarchical structures, but by a participatory structures, wherein, everyone is integrated as an integral part of the whole.

'The term "organism" implies that the church is a living reality. The opposite of organism is mechanism, which possesses no inherent principle of life. Because believers receive their life from God – at Pentecost it came alive in them and they were set in motion by the Spirit – the church is also described as an organism'

(Heyns 1980:192). According to Heyns (1980:192), 'The expression, *the church as an organism,* does not assign the organic images used to describe it (body, people, branches of the vine, growth, fruitfulness, and so on) a centrality that elevates them over the non-organic images....for all of them *together* offer a total image of the church.'

Berkouwer (1976:78) points out that, whenever, preference is given for 'a particular characterization,' it has been done because of special stress placed upon specific aspects of the church. As an example, he refers to the fact that the church at the time of the second Vatican Council was given exceptional significance as the "people of God." Berkouwer (1976:79) says, 'In salvation – historical terms, one can say that the characterization "body of Christ" is more a precise Christological determination of the people of God' However, he cautions, that the expression should not be seen as the definitive image of the church. Other images in the New Testament also express relatedness to Christ. The content of any particular characterization is crucially important because it can prevent the biblical witness of the church being one-sided.

4.11.1 The church as the "Body of Christ"

Working from the point of view that the church is a living organism, the image of the church as the "Body of Christ" comes most prominently to view in terms of living organism and as such also the image "people of God." It does not suggest that other images of the church cannot or does not represent the church as a living organism. There are other images that can do so, images such as: the bride of Christ; the church as servant; the church as herald etc.

The Bible uses many images to describe the church (Dulles 1978, Minnear 1960). However, the most distinctive description of the church is that the body of Christ found in Paul's writings (Ridderbos, 1975:362, Gangel 1997:32, Ladd 1974:545). Ridderbos (1975:365) points out that 'the qualification "body of Christ" is typically Pauline.' He says, 'it describes the Christological mode of the existence of the church as the people of God.' It denotes a bond relationship and communion that is characteristic between Christ and His church. It does not only qualify the fellowship among believers, 'but primarily the nature of the fellowship between the church and Christ himself' (Ridderbos 1975:363). Berkouwer (1976:81) also stresses the concern for the nature of the reality, pointing out that when Paul speaks of the "body of Christ" his concern is for that which is much more than the figurative language. The reality, which he has in view, is 'a specific reality.' A metaphor is not something vague nor, is it an expression that is unreal. Its intention is to reveal a deeper reality. It has in the main concern for the reality.

Coertzen (1981:24,25) concurs that it is only in the letters of Paul that the "body of Christ" imagery is explicitly used. In Mark 14:22; John 2:19-21; Heb 10:5 and 10, 13:3, 11-12 and 1 Pet 2:24 there are indirect references to the body of Christ, but it is Paul in his letters that deal with the different facets of the image.

Coertzen (1981:25-25) refers to FW Grosheide who points out that the words "body of Christ" does not always have reference to the church. It is for example the case in 1 Cor. 11:245 and 29. In both instances it concerns the physical body of Christ and not an image concerning the church. Coertzen further points out

that Grosheide has second thoughts on Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:2 and 1 Cor. 12:27 as to whether, it concerns the body of Christ and whether "body" in these texts are not just used to bring to the fore the organism character. However, Grosheide does conclude that in these texts there is a connection with the "body of Christ" image. Coertzen (1981:25) concludes that Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:2 and 27; Eph. 1:23, 4:12 and 16; 5:23 and 30 and in Col. 1:18 and 24 and 2:17,19 concerns the "body of Christ" image. In Rom 12 and 1 Cor. 12 attention is given to the mutual relations among members, while Ephesians and Colossians places emphasis on the unity between Christ and the congregation and the fact that Christ is head of the congregation.

4.11.2 "Body of Christ" metaphor in Romans & 1 Corinthians

Concerning the metaphor "Body of Christ" and the discussions regarding its significance, Ridderbos (1975:369) observes that "body of Christ" metaphor 'as definition of the essence of the church that Paul's pronouncements with respect to it, at least as far as Romans and 1 Corinthians are concerned, above all have a clear paraenetic purport'. Ridderbos, (1975:369) further comments that in Romans 12:3 Paul admonishes the Roman believers, that they should know their 'place in the church as a whole' Paul uses the body image, to show the "many" in one concept and shows that each member of the body has a different function. Paul admonishes the church to know themselves in this way: 'we as many are one body in Christ, but individually members one of another (v5)'. It follows, that believers aught to live to the rule by which they are to be content, each with their own gift and thereby, live useful lives.

Ridderbos (1975:369-370) points out that the:

> more elaborate "body periscope" of 1 Cor. 12:14ff is of the effect as that of Romans 12:3ff. There, too, it is a question of the many members (and functions) of the one body. The illustration then takes on the character of a parable: "if the foot said, 'because I am not the hand...,' and if the ear said" etc., whereupon the true nature of the body is expounded in its unity and diversity, with continuous indirect application to the church (vv. 15-27). In these pericopes it is therefore beyond question the mutual unity (and diversity) of the church that is elucidated and commended under the figure of the human body".

In the two pericopes of Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, Ridderbos (1975:371) points out that Paul does not infer, that the church as the "body of Christ" is such as an outgrowth of their coming together in community, but because of Christ and the bond that binds the church to Christ. The significance, thereof, is expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:27: 'Now you the body of Christ.' Heyns (1980:53) concurs, when he says 'The body cannot constitute itself as body; therefore Christ is its Saviour. The body cannot govern itself; therefore Christ is its head. Because of its perpetual tendency to regress into sin, the body cannot grant itself forgiveness; therefore Christ is its Mediator.' He further states, 'The image of the body points, first, to the relationship of the body to Christ.'

The all-important question is what is the expression "body of Christ" intended to convey? The feature of the "body," is the all-important idea. The "many" by virtue of their commonness of belonging to Christ and in him be formed a new unity with each other. Ridderbos (1975:371) says:

> They are not each one individually, but as a corporate unity, all together in him. The specific character of the qualification thus lies in placing in the forefront the new unity that "the many" form in Christ. But the constitutive factor of this unity is in the many being included in Christ." It is therefore

on this idea, so fundamental for Paul's preaching that the conception of the church as the one body in Christ, or, as it is put in 1 Cor. 12:27, as the body of Christ, now rests.

4.11.3 Body and "Head" metaphors in Ephesians and Colossians

Added to the similarities of Romans and 1 Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians, expand "the Body of Christ" image of the church to include a distinction of Christ being the head of the church or head of the body. This distinction does not occur in the Romans and 1 Corinthians body pronouncements framework.

Coertzen (1981:26,27) points out that there is an indissoluble connection between the body of Christ image and the fact that Christ is Himself the head of the church. This does not in any way do away with the unity between Christ and His church, but it does bring to the fore, that the head and the body is not equivalent and further, that the relationship between the two, cannot be reversed. Christ is head of His body, the church, and that means firstly, that Christ as the second Adam incorporates the church in Himself rules over the congregation. This fact is expressed unequivocally and explicitly in Scripture. For example in Eph 1:22 and 23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Here it is very clearly stated that Christ is given as head to the church and that, therein, a specific relationship of Christ is given as head to the church and that, therein, a specific relationship of Christ to his church is expressed. Seen against the background of the whole conclusion of the first chapter of Ephesians (vs. 15-23) the church is more strikingly brought to the fore. It is observed that Christ as head above all other things is given to the church. Herewith, it is established that there is nothing of which Christ is not the head: authority and power is subject to him. As head He is given to the church to go ahead in sanctification and love. An outstanding feature of Christ's sovereignty over the church is herewith expressed: He is the Ruler, that leads his flock as the good shepherd to water where rest is found, he is the head that gives himself over for the sake of this congregation, to sanctify it (Eph 5:25,26).

Equally, the headship of Christ is stated in Col 1:17 and 18. Here as well it is emphasized that He the Lord and Ruler of the church, is the one that gives leadership, direction and guidance through his Word and Spirit. The life and future existence of the church is dependant on the church's continual connection to Christ, its head. It must be emphasized that Christ's rule in the church is not done through all sorts of dictates, supernatural revelations or so called devout experiences. However, He rules His church through his Word and Spirit and therein he uses those he has given to equip the holy ones for their work of service and up-building of His body (Eph 4:11, 12).

According to Ridderbos (1975:378), 'What the church is in Christ, it is more and more to come. This is then elucidated with all kinds of figures borrowed from the organic composition of the human body.' It includes the closely knit whole, held together by its joints, receiving growth from Christ, so that it could be built up in love (Eph 4:16), also stated similarly in Colossians 2:19, 'the body, supported and knit together by joints and ligaments, draws its living growth from Christ, the head.'

In the periscope of Ephesians 5:22-33 the head-body relationship is presented in terms of a marriage relationship between husband and wife. In Ephesians 5 the idea of "Christ and the church, is described as

head and body. Christ is seen as the head of the church, and also the Saviour of the body (v23). In Ephesians 4:15ff speaks of the church growing up into Christ who is the head, and from whom the entire body receives growth. The same idea is found mentioned in Colossians 2:19 "the Head, from whom the whole body is equipped and knit together by means of sinews and connecting organs receives its divine growth." (Ridderbos 1975:379-380).

Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:21) says 'Headship in the New Testament does not imply position but rather relationship. Authority with its rights to control and demand obedience, is not suggested.' Jesus as head is presented to comfort and assures the church, that he is able to meet their needs. As head he is also the source and origin of life and sustains the whole body in supplying its needs. Ridderbos (1975:382) concurs and says that 'head...points not merely to superiority, control, rule, but first of all to a relationship of beginning, which is determinative for the whole of continuing existence....it implies that Christ is the beginning and the Firstborn of all things in general as well as of the church in particular' (cf. Col. 1:15-18). Ridderbos (1975:382) concludes that with "head" must not be formed "physiological conceptions" as seen in the human body, but the concept is to be 'understood from the structures and connections of the human community. ...In this inclusive and representative sense Christ is head of the church, just as he is head of all things, and he has thus obtained abiding control over the church and over all things.'

From Ephesians 4:11ff it is clear that Jesus authorized officials to the church. Heyns (1980:73) emphasizes that Jesus and not any of the officials, 'is and remains the head' of the church. Furthermore, he emphasizes two important points, when he says, 'First in principle there is no hierarchy among the officials so that no one can claim to be head of the Church or its ruler. Secondly, the exalted Jesus, who continues to work on behalf of the church remains its Head, even though he employs officials in its government.'

Heyns (1980:56) observes, that the various offices, such as apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers are there to equip the church for service, and to build up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12). He (1980:56) then says:

> The body is then, a *living organism* which can grow or decay. This growth process may be extensive or intensive. The body grows extensively, as new members are added to it, intensively as its members grow more and more fully into Christ (Eph 4:15), cleave more close to him (Col 2:19) and in consequence become more firmly bound to one another. The body grows and is built up and to the extent that it allows Christ, his word and Spirit to indwell it, obeys the command to seek the things above...being constantly renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator (Col 3:1,5,10) [Heyns's italics].

This also indicates that the community of believers is a living organism, in that they are not completed or rounded off at once, but is continually being built up to maturity.

In summary: The church is not only a visible organism. It has life, with Christ as its head. Organism speaks of a living reality consisting of an integrated whole.

Many images in Bible describe the church. However, the image of the church as the body of Christ is distinctive in Paul's writings, as the Christological mode of its existence. It points to the relationship and communion between Christ and His church.

The "body of Christ" metaphor in Romans 12:3ff and 1 Cor. 12:14ff is of "panaenetic purport" as Paul admonishes the church. The image of the church as the "body of Christ" is foremost in terms of church being a living organism. However, there are other images that also represent the idea of a living organism, e.g.: the bride of Christ, the church as herald, the church as servant etc.

Added to the "body of Christ" images in Romans and 1 Corinthians is the expansion of the image in Ephesians and Colossians to include Christ as the head of the church. The suggestion is that headship represents relationship rather than position. The concept of Christ as "head of the body" - the church, does not imply a hierarchical headship, that maintains itself by its authority and control that it exercises, but what the "head" means by relationship to the rest of the body as it equips and gives it nourishment for growth.

4.12 The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and its view of the Church as Institute and Organism

The New Testament uses multiple images to describe the church. Van Gelder (2000:106) points out that 'Paul Minear in *Images of the Church in the New Testament* identified ninety-six images and analogies that are used in the New Testament to refer to the church.' Van Gelder (2000:106) says, the images 'appear as a kaleidoscope of complementary perspectives.' None of these images are 'synthesized or standardized' in the New Testament. However, each context in which the church found itself, it 'drew on different images for its self-understanding' (Van Gelder 2000:107).

Van Gelder (2000:107) says that the diversity of the images:

> reflects the truth that the church's nature, ministry, and organization is multifaceted. Some of the biblical images, such as "people of God" and "temple," relate mostly to the nature of the church. Others, such as "body of Christ" and "communion of saints" relate to both the nature and ministry of the church.

Van Gelder (2000:107) speaks of core biblical images of the church. These core images help with understanding the visible church, and its 'organizational and institutional characteristics.' He further identifies four images as 'primary images that depict the church as a social community.' (Van Gelder 2000:108). They are: 'the people of God, the body of Christ, the communion of saints, and the creation of the Spirit.'

Dederen (2000:547) in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* suggests that the term *ecclesia* was used by New Testament writers 'to refer to the body of believers.' They also used other cognate ways, whereby their concept of the church is expressed. These cognate ways, included images and metaphors that occupy a prominent place. Dederen (200:547) says that the images and metaphors, 'effectively suggest the characteristic and qualitative components of the church idea.' He suggests four prominent images. They are 'body, bride, temple and people of God.'

4.12.1 The Church as a Bride

The church as a bride pointed out by Dederen (2000:547) is 'the church as the bride of Christ' it also speaks of unity amongst believers with Christ, specifically in the biblical context of monogamous marriage (Gen 2:24).

Jesus used the wedding imagery (Matt 25:1-13 cf. 22:1-14). However, he did not clearly state who the bride was. Jesus in His sayings and parable speaks of His return, in terms of the coming of the bridegroom (Matt 25:6). It is symbolized as a marriage feast (Matt 22:1-14). When Paul reflects on the image, he "specifically applied it to the church (cf. Eph 5:25). Here, as elsewhere in the Epistle, the metaphor is applied to the universal church (cf. Eph. 1:22; 3:10,21; 5:22,23,27,29,32)" (Dederen 2000:547).

According to Dederen (2000:547) the metaphor of "the church as a bride" 'involves the affirmation of the closes possible unity between Christ the head and the church as His bride.' Therefore, the church as the bride of Christ, 'must remain pure and faithful to her husband, Jesus Christ...' Dederen (1972:6) highlights the figure of the bride-bridegroom metaphor, since it 'adequately illustrates the actual relationship between Christ and His *ekklesia* in Ephesians 5:21-33.' It alludes to the marriage intimacy found in the Old Testament, where it represents the covenant relationship that existed between God and his people, Israel. (Is. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; Ezek. 16:8-14; Hosea 2:19). In the New Testament, Jesus adopted the relationship, when he refers to Himself as the bridegroom (Mark 2:20). Christ's love for the church is emphasized. His sacrificial love for His people 'so that they may become "one flesh" with Him' (Dederen 1972:6).

4.12.2 The Church as a Temple

With the metaphor, "the church as a temple", the thinking here is not in terms of a visible structure, such as on Mount Zion (Acts 17:24). However, the thinking is rather 'that God had erected His people as a Sanctuary by choosing to dwell among them (2 Cor. 6:16)' (Dederen 2000:548). In Ephesians 2:21, the church as a whole is seen as a "holy temple," also the congregations (1 Cor. 3:16,17). Each individual believer was also included (1 Cor. 16:19).

In Ephesians 2:21,22 the temple as a figure of the church is a single structure. It is seen to be growing into 'a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.' It is 'build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone' (Eph 2:20 cf. Mark 12:10). Furthermore, Peter explains the church as a "spiritual house". In this building, individual believers like living stones are built up (1 Peter 2:5) (Dederen 2000:548).

4.12.3 The Church as the People of God

Dederen (2000:548) points out that the idea of the church, being the people of God is often applied in the Old Testament to the nation of Israel, as God's chosen and protected people (Ex 15:13,16; Deut 14:2; 32:9; Hosea 2:23). The New Testament perceives the church as the continuation of God's covenant people. In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter writes, 'you are a chosen race, ...God's own people,' is reminiscent of the Sinaitic covenant (Ex 19:5,6).

According to Dederen (2000:548), "people of God" and related terms are not only used to describe Old Testament Israel (Heb 11:25; cf. Luke 1:68; Rom 11:1,2) but also to identify 'mixed Christian community of Jews and gentiles' (2 Cor. 6:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:9,10; cf. Rom. 9:25,26). In line with Old Testament fulfilment, the church in the New Testament is seen as the "true Israel" (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16) and true seed of Abraham

(Gal 3:29; cf. Rom 4:16; 9:7,8). Just like in the Old Testament Israel belongs to God, because 'He redeemed and purchased it.' In the same way the church belongs to Christ (Acts 20:28).

Minear (1960:259) identified various images of the church. He concludes that there are 'four master images: the people of God, the new creation, the fellowship in faith, the body of Christ.' He further amplifies his conclusion when he says (259):

> In context these images point to a reality which is pre-existent and post-existent, which transcends the boundaries of time and space, of present and future, of life and death. This reality is as high as the Most High God who lives within and moves through it to accomplish his eternal purpose. It is as high as the loving Lord in whom and from whom the church receives the fullness of God's life and glory. It is as high as the Holy Spirit who leads the church into all truth and sanctifies it with his gifts.

Douglas (1980:69) a Seventh-day Adventist Church historian, has chosen as a basis for the 'development of an Adventist ecclesiology' two images included in the four "master images" of Minear; that of "the people of God" and "the body of Christ."

Like Dederen (2000), Douglas (1980:69) points out that the image of the church as the "people of God" in the New Testament, finds its origin in the Old Testament idea, of Israel being God's chosen people. There are several writers who agree with this idea (Kung 1968:107-132; Minear 1960:66ff; Newbegin 1957:27ff).

Douglas (1980:69) states that the concept the "People of God" is not to be conceived as an association of people who, voluntarily agreed among themselves 'to accept and practice certain convictions about God.' To the contrary, it is by the act of God, whereby, the church as the people of God has been constituted. It is an act of God's grace. Seventh-day Adventists characterize themselves as a "called out" "people of God." At no time has early Adventists regarded 'themselves as the organizers of a religion,' but rather as a believer community, with Christ as its head (Douglas 1980:69).

Douglas (1980:70) insists that the church:

> is created by the fact that God does something; it is the action of God, that brings it together. It exists therefore and continues to exist only by the grace of God, only in virtue of His call and in virtue of the power which His spirit gives people to respond obediently to that call. From moment to moment the church exists, dependent on the one who summoned it.

In support of this understanding, Newbegin (1957:27) states: 'The Church does not depend upon our understanding of it or faith in it. It first of all exists as a visible fact called into being by the God Himself, and our understanding of that fact is subsequent and secondary.' It is, therefore, significant to observe, what Jesus left behind at His ascension. He left a visible community, which he called and gathered. This He did, by his own deliberate choice. It could then be said, that the church is divinely instituted (Douglas 1980:71). Douglas (1980:71) expresses concern at those who assert, the divine nature of the church without giving due recognition to the human. However, there are those who stress the human side, at the expense of the divine. Douglas, stresses that this kind of tension must be opposed. 'The church's divinity does not lie in its own powers or its own inherent character. The church does not witness to itself. In its own right it is a very human institution indeed' (Douglas 1980:71). Douglas (1980:71-72) defines the phrase "divinely instituted" as meaning that the church does not establish itself nor can it depend upon itself. Nor can it pretend to be something of great importance, all in its own right. 'It exists, and is what it is, because it is focused on Christ

and on God's call. It is a people who exist by always looking and providing beyond themselves and by being responsive to the call of the Word. In magnifying Christ, the church gains its identity' (Douglas 1980:71-72).

In the supplement to *Ministry* magazine Dederen (1995:5) speaks of the church as a spiritual organism in which all constituents parts are vitally interrelated as the spiritual body of Christ, of which He is the head. It is expected that the church disclosed this inner unity in a visible manner and seeks as much as possible to express it in some external organization. While a spiritual body, the church is, nevertheless, a tangible reality, the temple of the Spirit, priesthood, and a holy nation. All these terms point to a visible unity.

Dederen (1972:5) insists that the church, outside of faith, is nothing more than an association that is brought into existence by 'social instinct,' some kind of 'mutual affection' or some other 'natural attraction' that accounts for people coming together in association.

Furthermore, Dederen (1972:5) recognizes the church as a 'sociological reality, a human society, temporal ... visible, and still in this world, ...In this sense, it can be compared to other sociological groupings. However, in reality, the church exceeds that of a mere 'human community,' since it is called together by God, and those called, are believers in a covenant relationship. Dederen (1972:5,6) states, 'There exists side by side, we believe, the divine, objective element, and the subjective, human dimension, which must both be recognized in their encounter to give us a correct understanding of the New Testament view of the church.'

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, as pointed out by Dederen (1972:5,6) acknowledges, that, the church as organism and institution exists side by side. However, Heppenstall (1975:133) a theologian of the SDA church, cautions the church, when he says:

> Our church as an institution must not stand as an end in itself. It must lead to God. Organization, machinery, ritual, order, can represent that which is external and material, but not the personal God. If the love of Christ is not present in us as church members, then all we have for people is an organization to join.

Furthermore he says, 'The church as an institution must not stand in the place of God, as an end in itself' (Heppenstall 1975:140).

Knight (1995b:52) a church historian of the Seventh-day Adventist church says, that, 'organizational structures were not divinely inspired, but were established to facilitate mission.' With this in mind the organization-institution side of the church should never be allowed to become an end in itself. If this be the case, the future possibility can become a reality, in which the institutional survival will become an end in itself.

4.12.4 The Church as a Body

According to Dederen (2000:547) 'A major Pauline analogy for the church – and probably his most distinctive – is the body of Christ. The Church is not a body per say....but always as the body *in* Christ (Rom. 12:5) or the body *of* Christ (1 Cor. 12:27).' Dederen says, that Paul's use of the body metaphor, expresses a oneness of the church with Christ, primarily emphasizing the believers unity with Christ. Paul further emphasizes 'the complete dependence of the church upon Christ.' Dederen (2000:547) points out that

in the Prison Epistles, Paul introduces a new idea, of Christ as the head of the church (Eph 1:22,23; 4:15; Col 1:18. 'The head is exalted and occupies a unique position. As the head Christ is the source and the focus of authority that the whole body is to obey (Col 2:10). Believers united with Him are nourished through Him (verse 19).'

Of various descriptions of the church in Scripture, the concept of the church as "the body of Christ" more than any other image, under girds the importance to which Christ fills his *ekklesia* with his glorious riches (Eph. 1:18-23; also Rom. 12:4,5; 1 Cor. 6:15; 12:12-27; Col. 1:18,24; 2:19). Christ continuously bestows various gifts of ministries to His body, so that His body through its members reflect His character in their lives and have His purposes of grace worked out (Eph. 4:11-16).

Douglas (1980:73) points out that for Paul to make his point clear 'he compares the church to a body, a living organism'. As the church consists of a single body having many parts, with different functions, so the church consists of a variety of members, which not only belong to but also contribute to the single life of the church. The suggestion, which the image gives, is that the various members complement each other.

According to Douglas (1980:73) there is a 'serious challenge which the "Body of Christ" model poses for an Adventist ecclesiology ...in terms of unity in diversity as a necessary part of the nature of the church and its mission.' Douglas (1980:74) cautions that if the SDA church ecclesiology 'fails to reflect the notion of unity in diversity, we become guilty of what has become known as "structural fundamentalism", which identifies the structure with fundamental or absolute truth. A hierarchical or institutional church tends to oppose diversity'.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has not done well to maintain a good balance between the church as institution and the church as organization. In chapter 5, illustration 4 shows that people experience the leadership as being structure orientated; the organization and its functions take first preference. Illustration 9, shows that people experience organizational structures functioning on a top down relationship. Those at grassroots are expected to carry out that which is passed down to them. Illustration 13 shows that most people describe the conference as bureaucratic and illustration 18 shows the Union as being bureaucratic. Illustration 22 shows the administration as being rigid and illustration 23 shows the administration as imposing its will upon the people. Illustration 41 shows the Union as being influence more by tradition and the maintaining of roles and policies. The same is true of the Conference as shown in illustration 31.

The above mentioned results show that the SDA Church in South Africa has allowed its institutional side to take preference over its organism side in which participation, sharing and consensus takes place.

The structure of the Church finds it difficult to accept to changing times. On the other hand leadership within these structures has become obsessed with power and as a result become cut off and out of touch with the needs of the people at grassroots.

Seventh-day Adventism in South Africa is currently dominated by formal structures, executives, committees and boards, to meet the growing need of an ever expanding organization. Ritual and administrative

procedures regularize activities of the hierarchy. The temptation is to make the institution self-preserving and its extension the primary objective of its existence.

The Church needs to constantly, evaluate and critically assess its true goal and aims and to bring it, and its structures in line with biblical principles and objectives. In essence it needs to bring base theory and practice theory into harmony with each other.

In summary, this chapter dealt with the problem of the debate concerning the church as institution over and against the church as organism. It is thought that the over emphasis of church as an institution has a negative outworking on the life of the church, whereas, the organism aspect gives life and vitality to the church.

The institutional form of the church is often linked to leadership roles that assumes control, authority centralized decision making and maintenance of the status quo among leadership. However, the issue is not whether the church should be institutional or not, but how? The church will be institutional.

From a methodological point of view this chapter dealt with the more systematic theological part of the study. As such it is based on scripture and what it teaches about the church's identity. In this discernment process a new or better vision of how God's kingdom should be realized in church organization and structures is taking form.

In the development of a Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, prominent images of the church in the New Testament have been selected that "suggests the characteristic and qualitative components of the church idea." (Dederen 2000:547). These images are: body, bride, temple and people of God.

In discussion of these images, it is evident that the Seventh-day Adventist Church acknowledges that the church as organism and institution exists side by side. It is divinely instituted (Douglas 1980:71-72) and is also sociological reality in the world (Dederen 1972:5). Heppenstall (1975) and Knight (1995b) cautions against the institutional/organizational side becoming ends in themselves.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the results of the research. In particular it concerns the results of the pastoral surveys sent to pastors and structured interviews conducted with church boards. In these surveys and structured interviews, the opinions of pastors and church boards were obtained as to how they experience the administrative structures of the SDA Church in South Africa.

5.1.1 The question under view

It is clear from the observations that disillusionment and alienation has become an ever present phenomenon. Its intensity is strongly felt at certain times, especially at Session time and also events leading up to the session. Churches choose their delegates carefully. Delegates are chosen who are outspoken. In some instances delegates from various churches meet together before the session to plan their strategies for the session.

So then the question which this study wishes to find an answer for is: What are the key factors in the administrative set up of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa that has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file in the Church from the administrative structures of the Church.

The hypothesis that undergirds the stated problem is as follows: The way in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered, with particular reference to: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures has caused the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church.

In order to find answers to the stated problem and support for the hypothesis as stated, the following methodology was followed.

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Research procedures

Answers to the stated problem had to be found. It was decided to find the answers from among pastors and church members in the various conferences, since the pastors and members form the "living documents" from which data could be extracted. Furthermore, they are the ones experiencing disillusionment and alienation, and, therefore, serve as the target population. However, it would be time consuming and costly to visit each pastor and every church member.

Methods had to be used that would overcome this problem. It was decided to survey the pastors in each conference, and to use structured interviews on ten percent of church boards in each conference, using church boards as a sample of the population of church members in each conference.

Once these methods were chosen as methods whereby reliable data could be obtained, permission was sought and granted by Conference Presidents for surveying of pastors and to interview church boards. Presidents also randomly drew the sample of church boards to be interviewed.

5.2.1.1 Pilot studies

Pilot studies were conducted with both the surveys to pastors and structured interviews with church boards. This was necessary to test the instruments whether everything was understood as stated. With minor changes in wording, the research was commenced.

5.2.1.2 Pastoral surveys

Pastoral surveys[42] were used to solicit the opinions of pastors as to how they experience the administration of the Conference and the Union administrations.[43]

The pastoral surveys consisted of five guiding concepts of administration. They were as follows: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition (change), and organizational structures. The surveys consisted of a two-ended scale. On either end of the scale of 1 – 7 were guiding statements, concerning each of the five concepts of administration. Each concept was dealt with twice, giving a total of ten scales. On the left hand side of the scale were negative statements and on the right hand side positive statements. Respondents were asked to indicate their experience by marking it on the scale of 1 – 7. Marking toward 1 on the scale would indicate a negative experience, marking toward 7 would indicate a positive experience.

The surveys were colour-coded to differentiate between various conferences and difference racial group responses, within each conference. Surveys were sent to 146 pastors in all of the four conferences in the SAUC. Self-addressed envelopes accompanied each survey in which the results could be returned. Completed surveys were received from 74 pastors giving a 51 percent response rate of return.

5.2.1.3 Structured interviews

Structured interviews were conducted with church boards, to ascertain how churches experience conference administrations, and how they view the conference and union administration in relation to their church. A sample of church boards equal to ten percent of all churches, in each conference, were interviewed. Because of time and cost constraints, interviews were focused on churches in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg. Initially, 58 church boards were to be interviewed. However, this number was reduced to 41 church boards. The Trans Orange Conference administration,[44] withdrew their consent for the interviews to be conducted. The reason given was that churches were uncomfortable with the interviews to be conducted.

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[42] Appendix B contains a sample of the survey used.

[43] The Conference and Union administrations administers the church organization in South Africa.

[44] Appendix D contains the full text of the withdrawal of consent. The facsimile containing the withdrawal was received on Friday 7 May 2004, at 12:21pm. It was received two hours before the Research's flight departure for Johannesburg. The merger spoken of in the facsimile is the merger between the Transvaal Conference (previously an all white conference, now white, coloured, Indian and black. The coloureds, Indians and blacks combined is still in the minority in the Conference) and the Trans Orange Conference which is totally black. There has been a long stand-off between these two conferences on the matter of merging. The SAU which is referred to in the fax is the South African Union Conference. Two executive officers of the Union do not know any such query with them. However, the Union

The interview instrument[45] like the survey instrument to pastors was structured around the five concepts of administration of the church. Statements about each concept were made twice, giving a total of ten statements. Statements were made in the form of opposites on each of the five concepts. The respondents were given the opportunity to respond to ten options, according to their experience of the administrative ethos of their conference administration. The church boards were also asked to give their views of the Conference and the Union, by answering five questions. They were asked to respond "yes" or "no" or "not sure." The questions focussed on how the Conference and Union serve the local church.

5.3 Method of interviews

At each interview, every member of the church board was given a copy of the questionnaire. The researcher then read the relevant statements to which the members had to respond by consensus. They had to indicate how strongly they agree or disagreed with the statements read. The researcher then recorded their consensus by circling the appropriate answer.

At the end of the interview, the questionnaire was checked and signed by the elder and the clerk of the church interviewed.

5.3.1 Study results – structured interviews

The results of the study were obtained, from the data extracted from the structured interviews held, with church boards and from the surveys sent to pastors. The processing of the data was done by independent researchers[46].

The next section presents the results of the structured interviews. It presents the accumulated results of the responses to the interviews conducted in each conference. Illustrations 1 – 10 contain the combined results. The results cover the five concepts involving conference administrations: Administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures.

5.3.1.1 Administrative authority

The two statements concerning administrative authority, concerns how authority is used, and how people experience the use of authority, in the various conferences. In particular it concerns whether authority is concentrated in a few people or whether it is dispersed. In other words, do those entrusted with authority rigidly concentrate authority among themselves, by tenaciously holding on to it for purposes of control? On the other hand, do those vested with authority recognize that people by means of their God given gifts and several abilities can make a contribution by solicitation of their input? Where people do not have input, the tendency is that they become passive and may develop a critical spirit. There is also a tendency that may develop among the administration, that unless they maintain full exclusive authority they may lose control. The result is that authority is concentrated in a few who act on behalf of the majority.

(SAU) does not authorize research and their permission was not needed. The matter is shadowed by the merger that has as yet not taken place, so everything is seen through those lenses.

[45] Appendix A contains a sample of the instrument use in the interviews.

[46] The data were processed by the Unit for Religious and Development Research in the Department of Practical Theology and Missiology in the University of Stellenbosch.

5.3.1.2 Administrative authority – concentrated

Statement 2.1 as shown in illustration 1 states: "Administrative authority is concentrated in a few, who act on behalf of the majority." The respondents experience of statement 2.1 reflects the following:

64.2% - Strongly Agreed

31.0% - Agreed

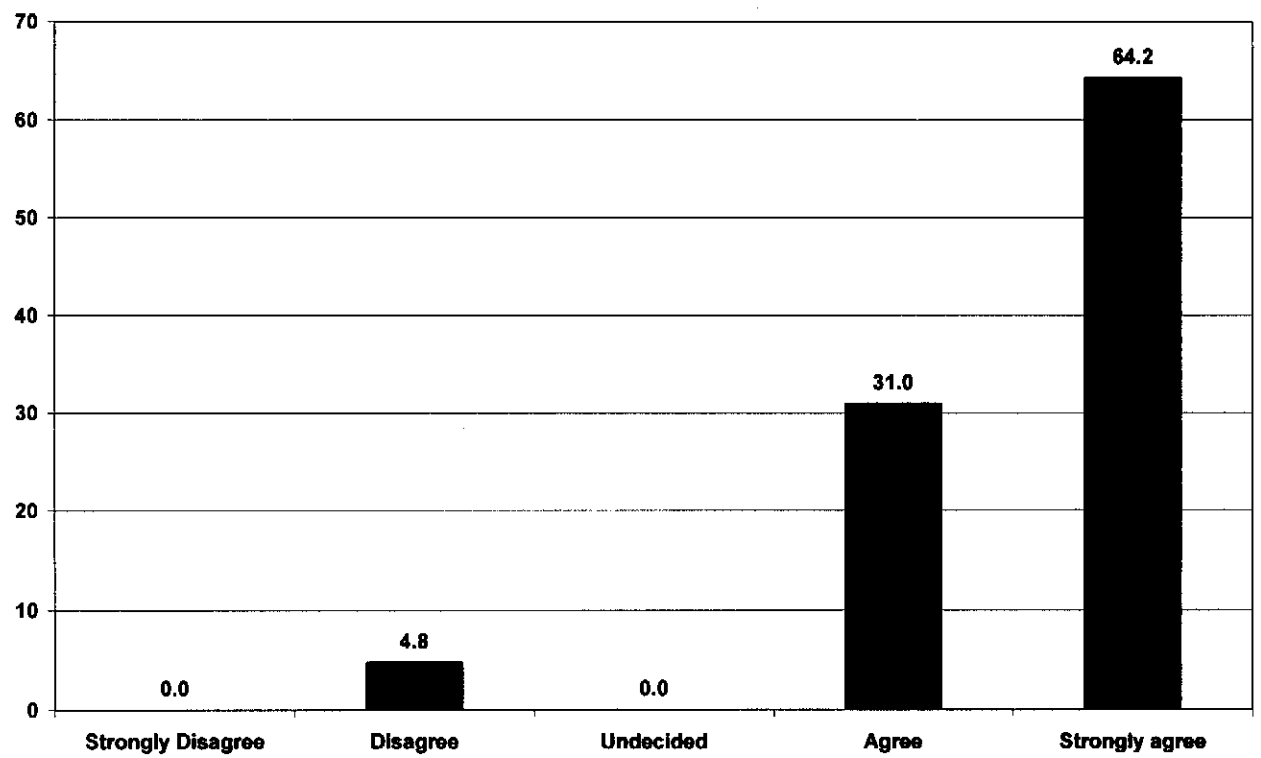
4.8% - Disagreed

Illustration 1

Structured Interview

Statement 2.1 - Administrative Authority

Administrative authority is concentrated in a few, who act on behalf of the majority



5.3.1.3 Administrative authority – dispersed

The second statement 2.3 as shown in illustration 2, concerns the opposite to statement 2.1. It states: "Administrative authority is dispersed; the conference solicits input and assistance from congregations."

The responses to this statement are as follows:

50.0% - Strongly Disagreed

35.7% - Disagreed

2.4% - were undecided

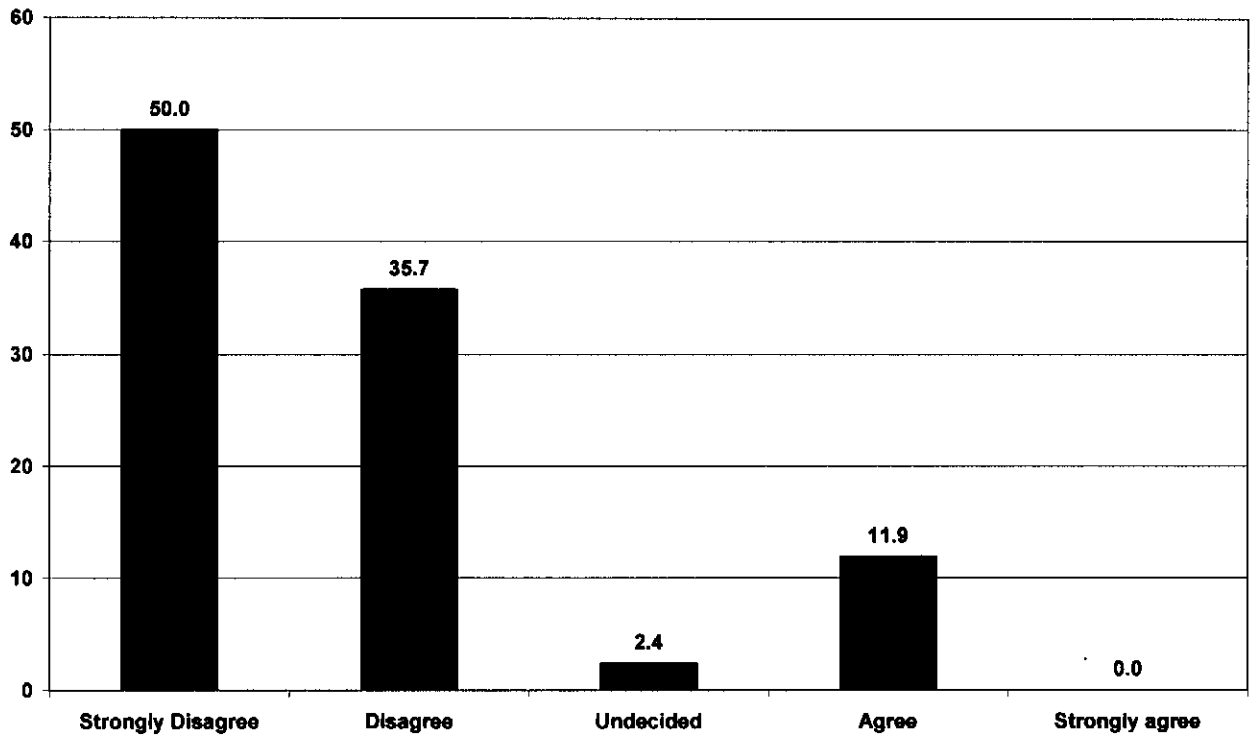
11.9% - Agreed

Illustration 2

Structured Interview

Statement 2.3 - Administrative Authority

Administrative authority is dispersed; the Conference solicits input and assistance from congregations



The results show that 95,2% of respondents, agree that administrative authority is the privilege of a few, acting on behalf of the majority. They agree that administrative authority is concentrated in a few, while only 4,8% disagreed. It is a significant indication that people at the bottom of the hierarchy experience the administrative authority negatively.

Statement 2.3 as shown in illustration 2, concerns administrative authority being dispersed, in which the Conferences consider, people and solicits their input and help. Here respondents also showed a clear and significant result in the area of disagreement. The result shows that 85,7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and only 11,9% agreed, with 2,4% being undecided.

The responses to statement 2.1 and 2.3 as shown in illustrations 1 and 2 respectively, shows clearly, that people at the bottom of the hierarchy of the church do not experience the exercise of authority by the administration of the conferences in a positive way. In fact they experience authority as exercised in a negative way. People expect the administrators and their executive committees to consult them before exercising authority over them. They are not against the exercise of authority, but how it is done. They want to be consulted. They want to be part of the processes and decisions that affect them and their lives.

How authority is exercised has a direct bearing on leadership. How leaders are to lead – the attitude in leadership.

5.3.2 Leadership

Leadership concerns how leaders of conferences and their executive committees engage people at grassroots level of the church. The question in particular is: How do leaders see the people they lead? Do they serve people and thereby lead from the point of service or do they first consider their position within the structures from which they lead, and give those structures and its function their highest priority. Maxwell (1993:80) puts it another way, when referring to leaders practicing good people skills, 'leaders must relate to their people from the soul, not merely by protocol.'

5.3.2.1 Leadership – people oriented

Statement 2.2 in illustration 3 addresses leadership from a people oriented position. "The leadership is people oriented: the wishes and feelings of members come first." The response to this statement reveals the following:

47,6% - Strongly Disagreed

38,1% - Disagreed

2,4% - were undecided

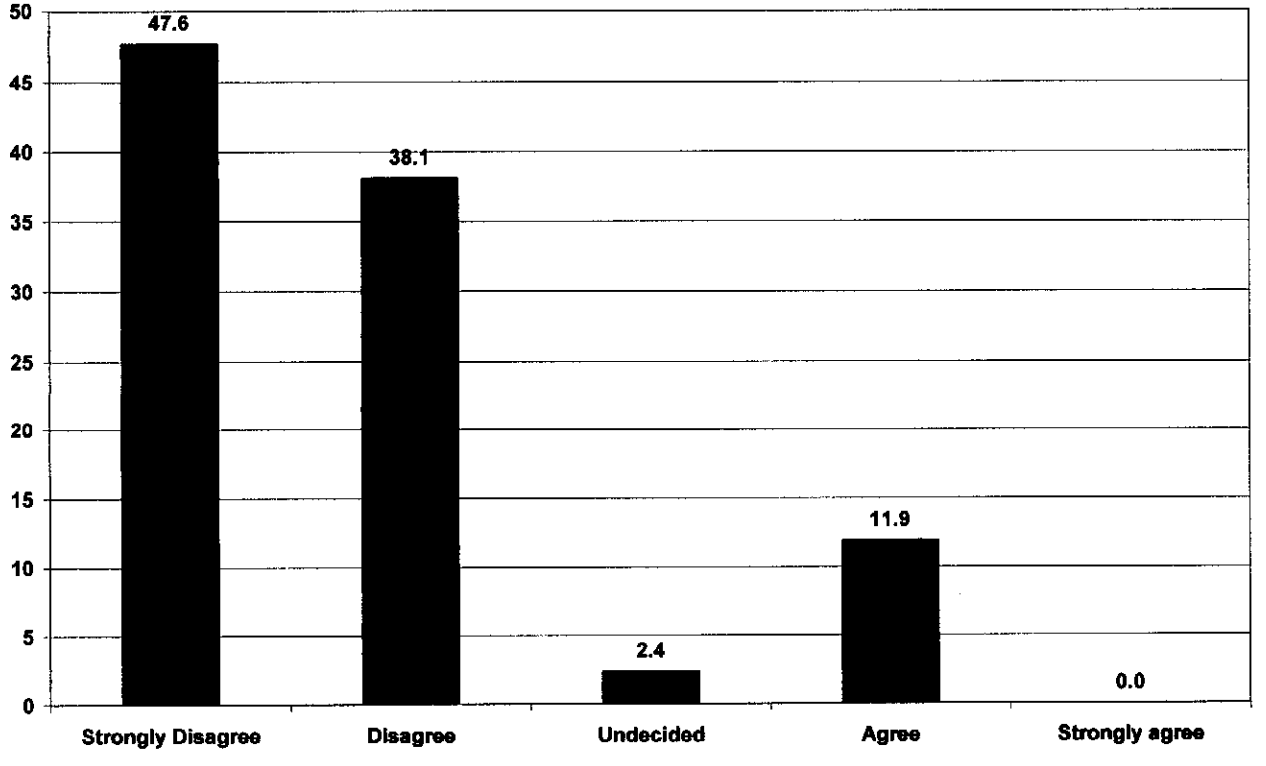
11,9% - Agreed

Illustration 3

Structured Interview

Statement 2.2 - Leadership

The leadership is people orientated; the wishes and feelings of members come first



The results show that a significant percentage of respondents experience the leadership negatively. In fact 85,7% of respondents disagreed, they do not experience the leadership as being people oriented. Only 11,9% of respondents agreed.

5.3.2.2 Leadership – structure oriented

Statement 2,5 as shown in illustration 4, the opposite to statement 2.1, states: "The leadership is structure oriented; the organization and its functions take first preference." The results show no significant shift from that shown in statement 2.2 in illustration 3. The results are as follows:

45,1% - Strongly Agreed

42,9% - Agreed

2,4% - were undecided

4,8% - Disagreed

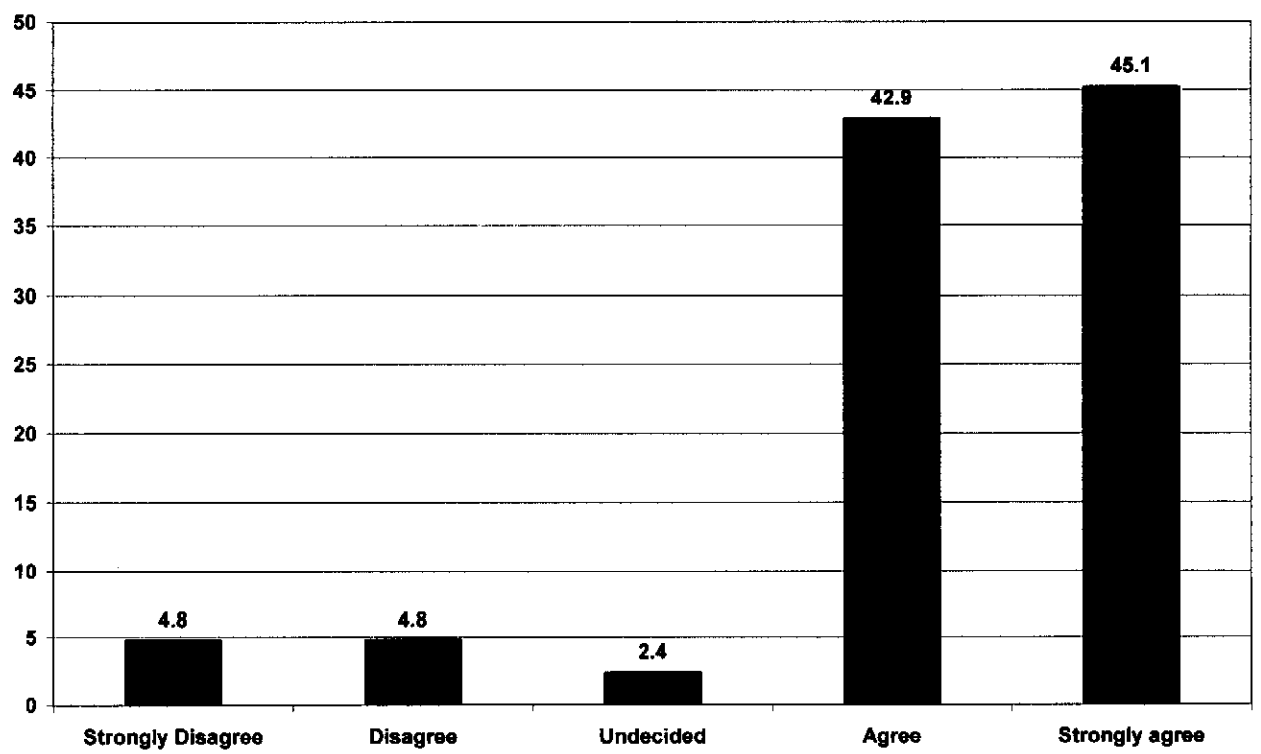
4,8% - Strongly disagreed

Illustration 4

Structured Interview

Statement 2.5 - Leadership

The leadership is structure orientated; the organization and its functions take first preference



Once more a larger percentage of respondents 88% in all, feel that leadership would first consider the organization and its functions, above the wishes and feelings of the people. Many feel that in this way leaders secure their positions in the organization. Leaders are more concerned with policies and seeing to it that policies are strictly carried out. Most policies are structure oriented than people oriented, especially when it involves money. These policies are always formulated in the top eschalons of the organization.

Normally, members and employees are expected to passively accept these policies, specifically financial policies, normally to their disadvantage, while large amounts of money is spent to maintain structures.

This state of affairs shows how much power the administrations hold and this power is wielded – "top down". This leads to the concept of power.

5.3.3 Power

The concept of power has to do with how power is used or wielded in the organization. Is power used to empower people or disempower them? Does power at the top benefit those at the bottom? It centres around two concepts, whether power is used in a way to dominate people and manipulate them or is power used as stated by Greenleaf (1977:41-42) 'to create opportunity and alternatives that individuals may choose and build autonomy.' Furthermore, Greenleaf (1977:42) states if individuals 'are coerced into a predetermined path. Even if it is "good" for them, if they experience nothing else, ultimately their autonomy will be diminished.' Greenleaf (1977:42) is of the opinion that, 'Some coercive power is overt and brutal. Some is covert and subtly manipulative. The former is open and acknowledged, the latter is insidious and hard to detect.' The dilemma we face says Greenleaf (1977:42) 'is that all leadership is, to some extent manipulative. Those who follow must be strong.' He adds that 'coercive power ... only strengthens resistance... if successful, its controlling effects last only as long as the force is strong.'

However, by contrast Greenleaf (1977:42) says:

> Servants, by definition, are fully human. Servant-leaders are functionally superior because they are closer to the ground – they hear things, see things, know things and their intuitive insight are exceptional. Because of this they are dependable and trusted, they know the meaning of that line from Shakespeare's sonnet: 'They that have power to hurt and will do none....'

The matter of coercive and manipulative power in contrast to servant leadership is a matter of deep concern in the administrative leadership of the SDA Church in South Africa. Especially as power is vested in the top position of the hierarchy.

5.3.3.1 Power – vested in top positions

Statement 2.4 shown in illustration 5 states: "Power in the organization is vested in those in the top positions of the Conference."

The replies of the respondents shows that:

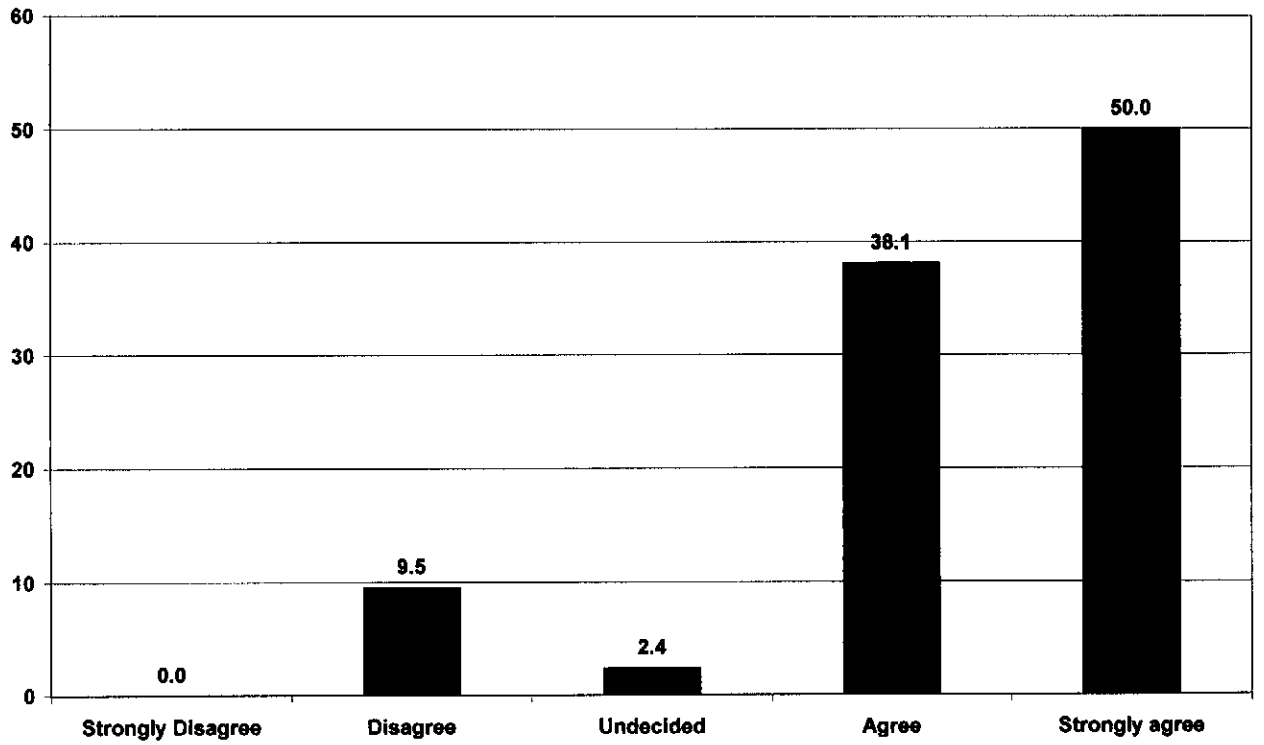
50,0%	-	Strongly Agreed
38,1%	-	Agreed
2,4%	-	were undecided
9,5%	-	Disagreed

Illustration 5

Structured Interview

Statement 2.4 - Power

Power in the organization is vested in those in the top positions of the Conference



The results shows that 88,1% of respondents experience power in the organization as being vested in those at the top of the hierarchy. Those at the bottom of the hierarchy must "be strong." In this way people who are disempowered and will never reach their full potential to autonomy. They will also remain dependent upon those with power in their possession.

5.3.3.2 Power – shared with "grassroots"

Illustration 6 contains statement 2.6 which states the opposite of statement 2.4. "Power is shared with those at "grassroots" level of the church." The respondents replied as follows:

64,3% - Strongly Disagree

19,0% - Disagreed

2,4% - were undecided

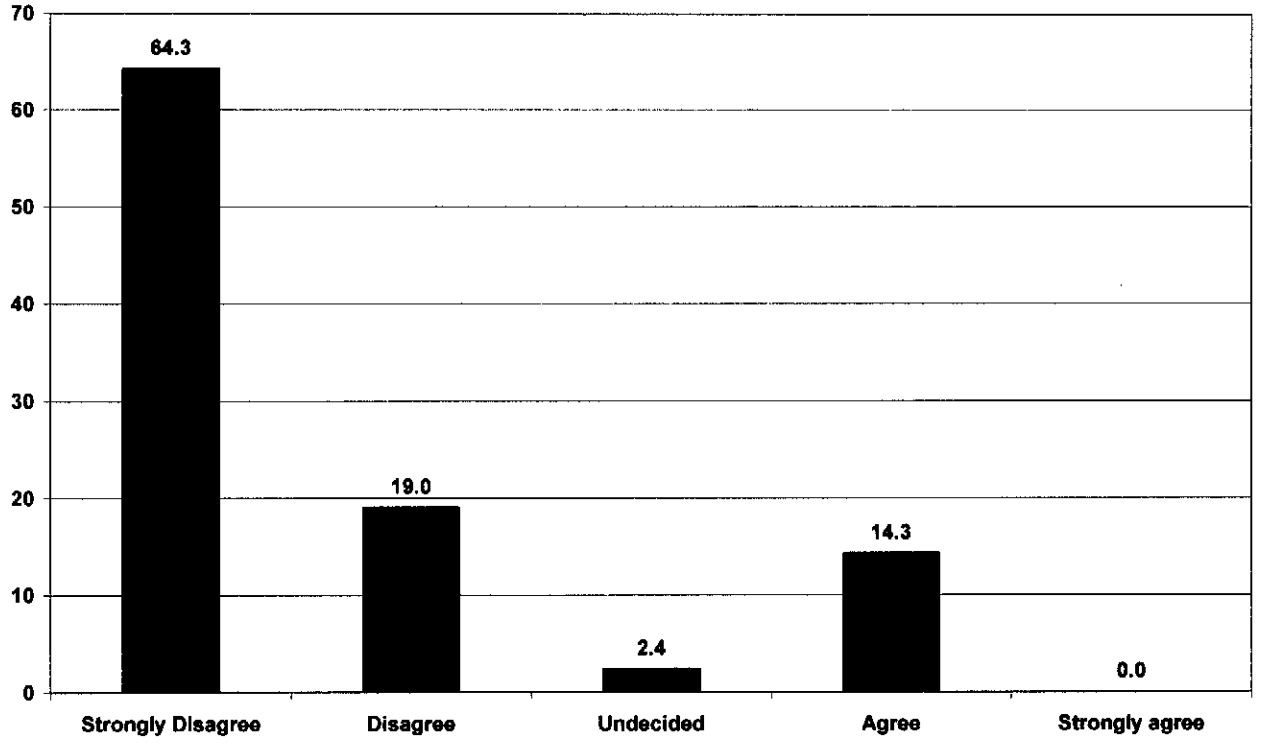
14,3% - Agreed

Illustration 6

Structured Interview

Statement 2.6 - Power

Power is shared with those at "grassroots" level of the church



A clear majority of 83,3% of respondents do not experience, the empowerment of power sharing. In fact they experience themselves being at the receiving end of power wielding. People respond in resistance language, such as "we don't care if the office knows how we have voted." The office being the leadership in the Conference office.

The respondents clearly show that power in the organization as they experience it, is the privilege of a few, while the majority goes powerless. Powerless people are uncommitted people. People want to be part of the "whole" – the church organization. However, they are denied this by strict rigid control of power. This is mainly done through a proliferation of policies that maintain the status quo.

To a large extent most churches and its people have moved out of a dependent/child stage. They are no longer dependent on the leadership for decisions affecting their lives. They want to express their opinions without fear of contradiction or victimization. People have become mature and are able to handle power with understanding. In fact most have moved to an accommodation stage in their church life as in their career lives. Therefore, they want to make a contribution that matters and not only to contribute their money. Many did express their opinion that their worth lies in their financial contributions to the church, and not in their humanity.

When power is vested in those in top positions of the Conference, then it has negative implications for change. Change only comes about by recommendations from those in the top positions. Power becomes

something very difficult to let go of, therefore, change does not take place easily, and that also becomes a potential problem.

5.3.4 Transition

Transition has to do with change and the outcome that change produces. Transition also has to do with letting go of the old situation. Transition is especially difficult, if it means letting go of a position, which guarantees power and control. In particular, it has to do with whether administrations are open to change, especially where transition means a change in status, letting go of the old familiar, comfortable situations, especially when transition means letting go of power and control.

5.3.4.1 Transition – administration open to change

Statement 2.7 as shown in illustration 7 addresses the issue as follows: "The administration is always open to change and promotes innovation for change." Respondents replied to the statement as follows:

59,5% - Strongly disagreed

31,0% - Disagreed

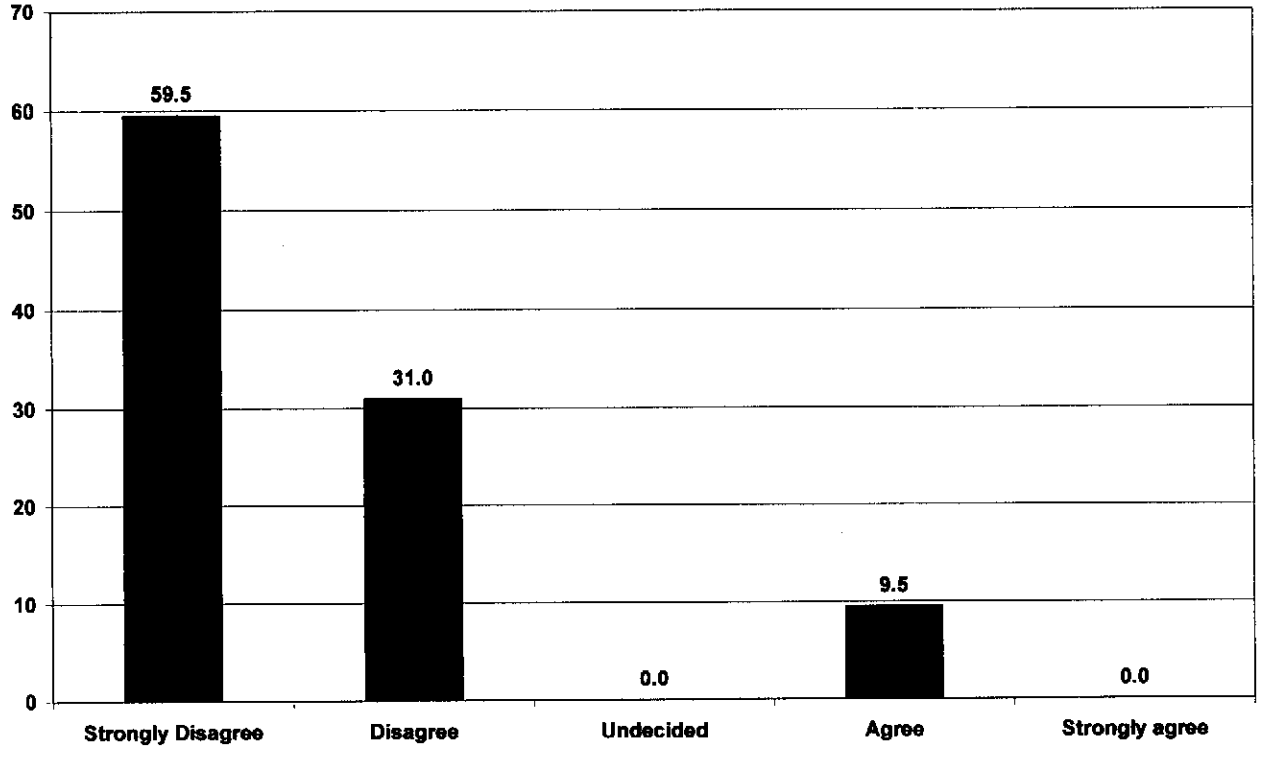
9,5% - Agreed

Illustration 7

Structured Interview

Statement 2.7 - Transition

The administration is always open to change and promotes innovation for change



An overwhelming 90,5% of respondents experience the administration as not being open to change, and does not take the lead in the promotion of change. In particular people want to see change in an administration which is far removed from them. They want openness, and transparency. They want an administration that

is approachable and not hedged in by numerous policies which are unknown to them. Most policies are seen as protecting the organization, but do nothing for the members in the church. The local church has no say in the formulation of policies affecting them. This needs to change.

5.3.4.2 Transition – administration maintains status quo

The second statement concerning transition is statement 2.9 as shown in illustration 8, which states: "The administration sees change as a threat and therefore, maintains the status quo."

The response to the above statement attracted the following result:

35,7% - Strongly Agreed

35,7% - Agreed

7,2% - were undecided

14,3% - Disagreed

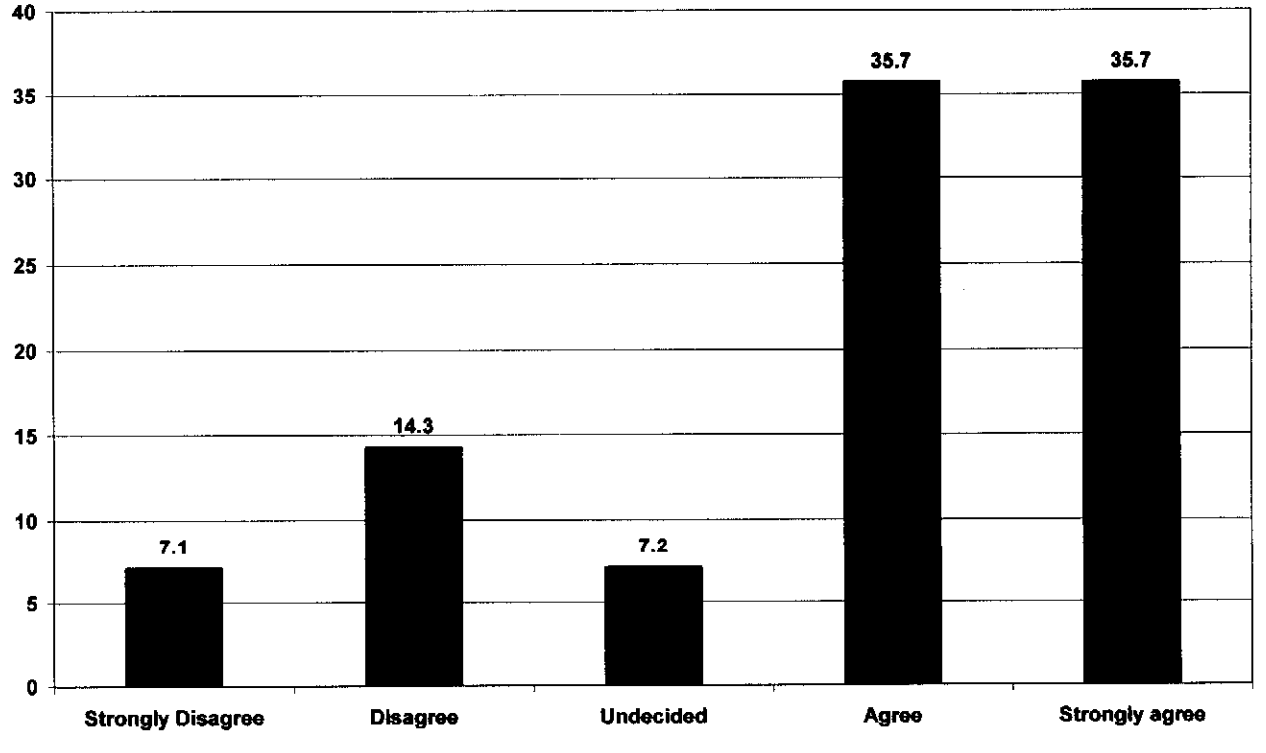
7,1% - Strongly disagreed

Illustration 8

Structured Interview

Statement 2.9 - Transition

The administration sees change as a threat and therefore, maintains the status quo



Some members felt that some leaders did not see change as a threat, because they were working toward the merging of conferences. However, the majority 71,4% in all still felt that the merging of conferences were not enough. Many still felt that change was necessary in the administrative set up, wherein, lay men and women, could participate in a meaningful way. For this to happen drastic changes, such as systemic change was needed, which would include the participation of a larger number of laity.

In particular people want to see a change in the way in which they are governed. From a "top down" way of doing things to a participatory way of doing things.

For this kind of change to take place, organizational restructuring would need to come into play.

5.3.5 Organizational structures

Organizational structure concerns how the administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is structured. In particular it has to do with how the hierarchy functions. What is the relationship between the top of the hierarchy and its bottom? Does it operate on a "top down" relationship, or does it operate on a participatory relationship, in which laity becomes involved.

5.3.5.1 Organizational structure – top down

Concerning the organizational structure, statement 2.8 in illustration 9 states: "The organizational structures operate on a top down relationship. The bottom of the organization is expected to carry out what is passed down to them." The respondents reacted to the statement as follows:

64,3% - Strongly agreed

23,8% - Agree

2,4% - were undecided

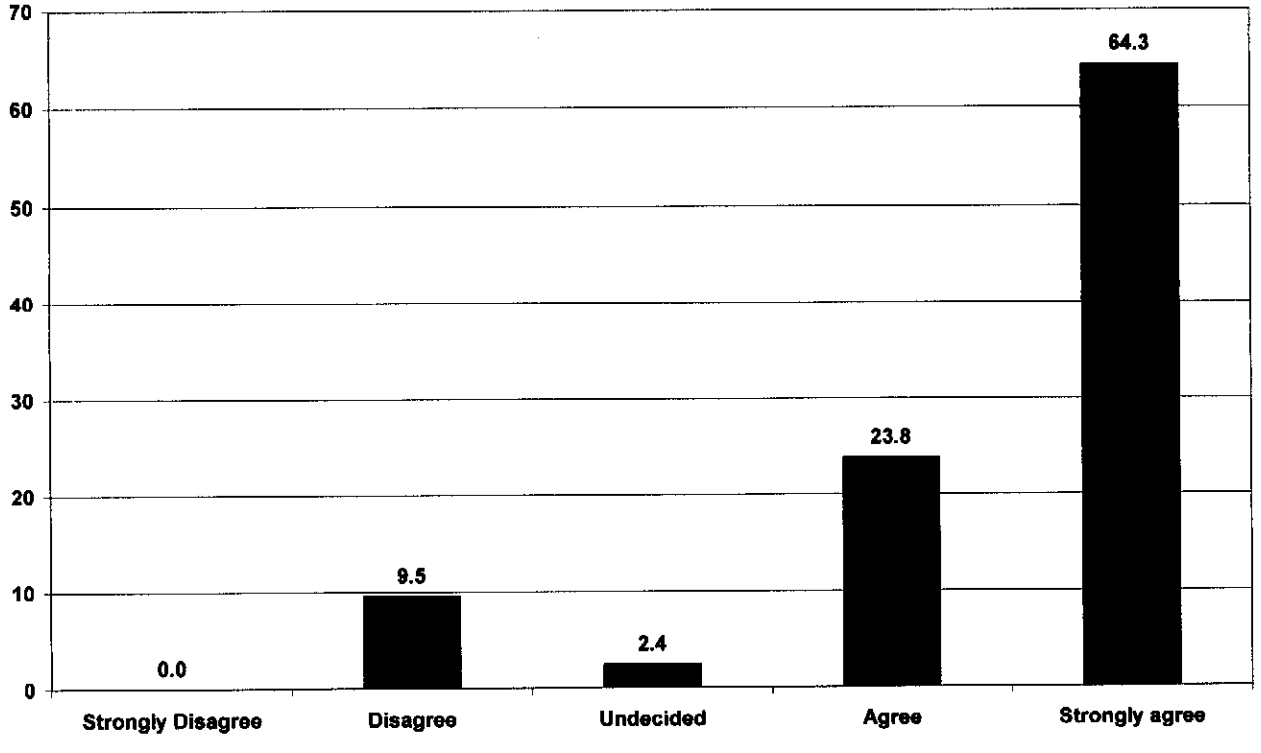
9,5% - Disagreed

Illustration 9

Structured Interview

Statement 2.8 - Organizational Structures

The organizational structures operate on a top down relationship. The bottom of the organization is expected to carry out what is passed down to them



This statement like the others evoked strong reaction and comments. A clear majority 88,1% in all were in agreement with the statements. The majority of respondents experienced their conference administrations from a "top down" relationship.

5.3.5.2 Organizational structure – participatory

The second statement, statement 2.10 concerning organizational structure as shown in illustration 10 states the following: "The organizational structure operates on a participatory basis; the leadership at the top sees those at "grassroots" as part of the administrative process." The reactions to the statement were as follows:

57,1% - Strongly disagreed

26,2% - Disagreed

2,4% - were undecided

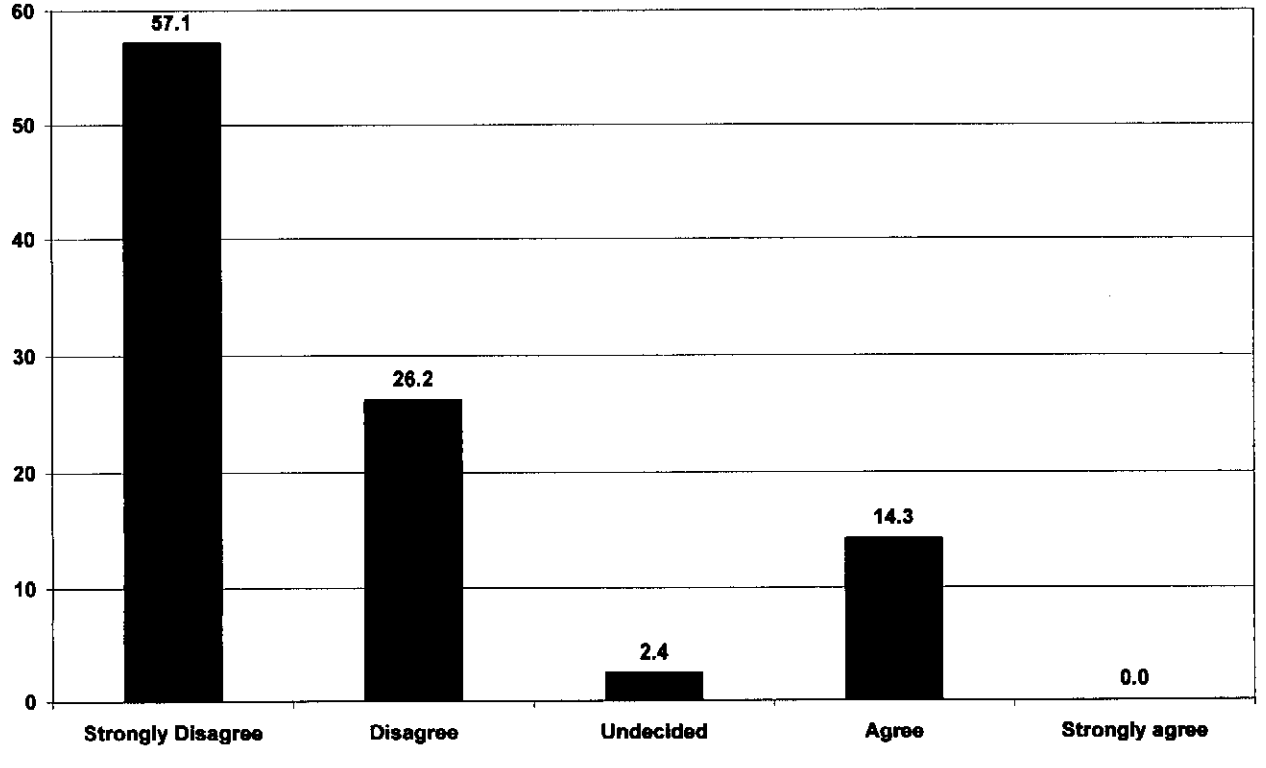
14,3% - Agreed

Illustration 10

Structured Interview

Statement 2.10 - Organizational Structures

The organizational structure operates on a participatory basis; the leadership at the top sees those at "grassroots" as part of the administrative process



A large majority of respondents 83,3% in all does not see the organizational structures as operating on a participatory basis. They do not see themselves as part of the administrative process.

Among the most repeated points of dissatisfaction, concerns church structure and people's relationship to it. Firstly, if people are responsible for the financial support of the organizational structure, then it must be structures they can afford. It must be structures that allow sufficient funds to be left a local church level so that the mission of the church could be carried out. Funds are always being sought for evangelistic purposes

at local church level. Secondly, if people are responsible for the financial support of these structures, then they need to have a say in the set-up of those structures.

In summary, the accumulative results of the structured interviews clearly show that an overwhelming majority of church members experience the conference administrations in a negative way.

The responses to statements 2.1 – 2.10 as shown in illustrations 1 – 10 shows the key factors that are causing the disillusionment and alienation among the rank and file in the church, from the administrative structures of the Church.

5.4 Congregational views of the Conferences and Union

The structured interviews also gave consideration, to questions concerning the congregation's view of their conference and the Union administration.

The next section deals with the responses given to specific questions about the Conference and Union administrations.

5.5 Congregation's view of the Conference

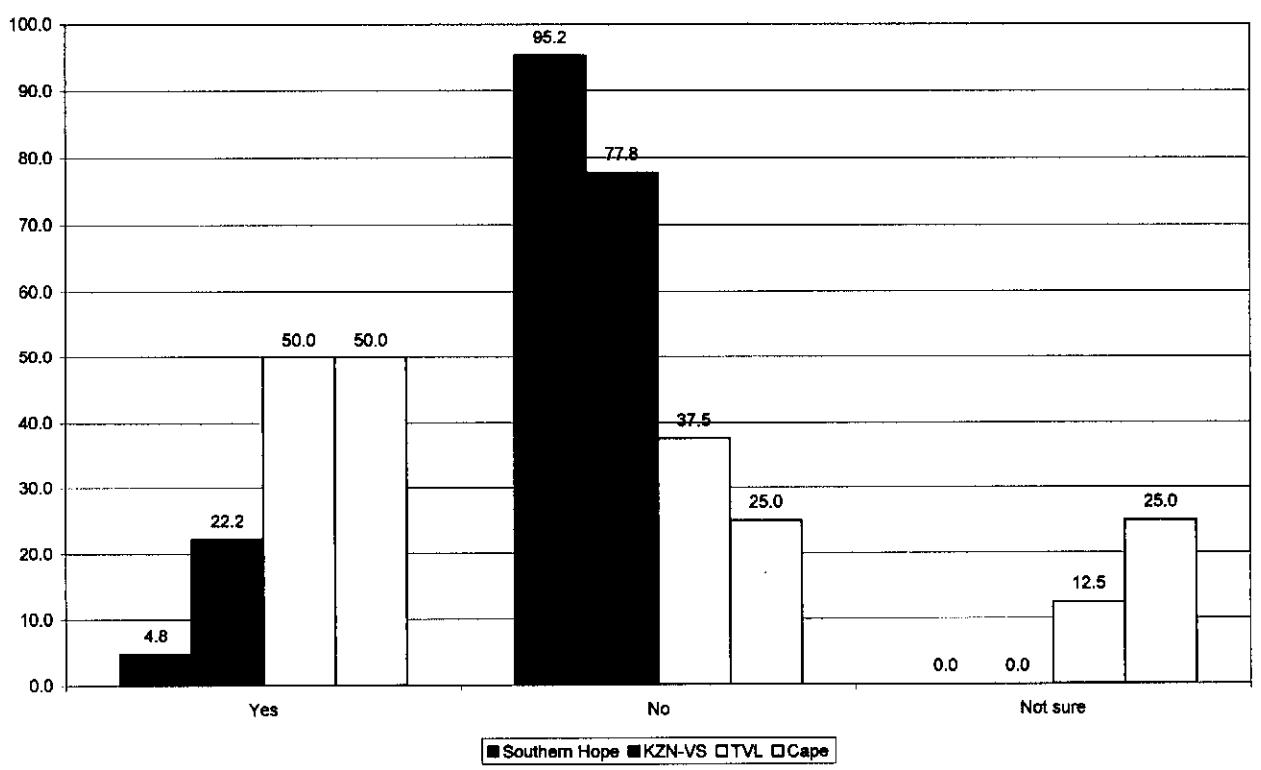
Question 3.1 as shown in illustration 11 states: "Does the Conference contribute to the effectiveness of your church?" The respondents from each conference responded as follows:

Illustration 11

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Conference

Question 3.1 - Does the Conference contribute to the effectiveness of your church?



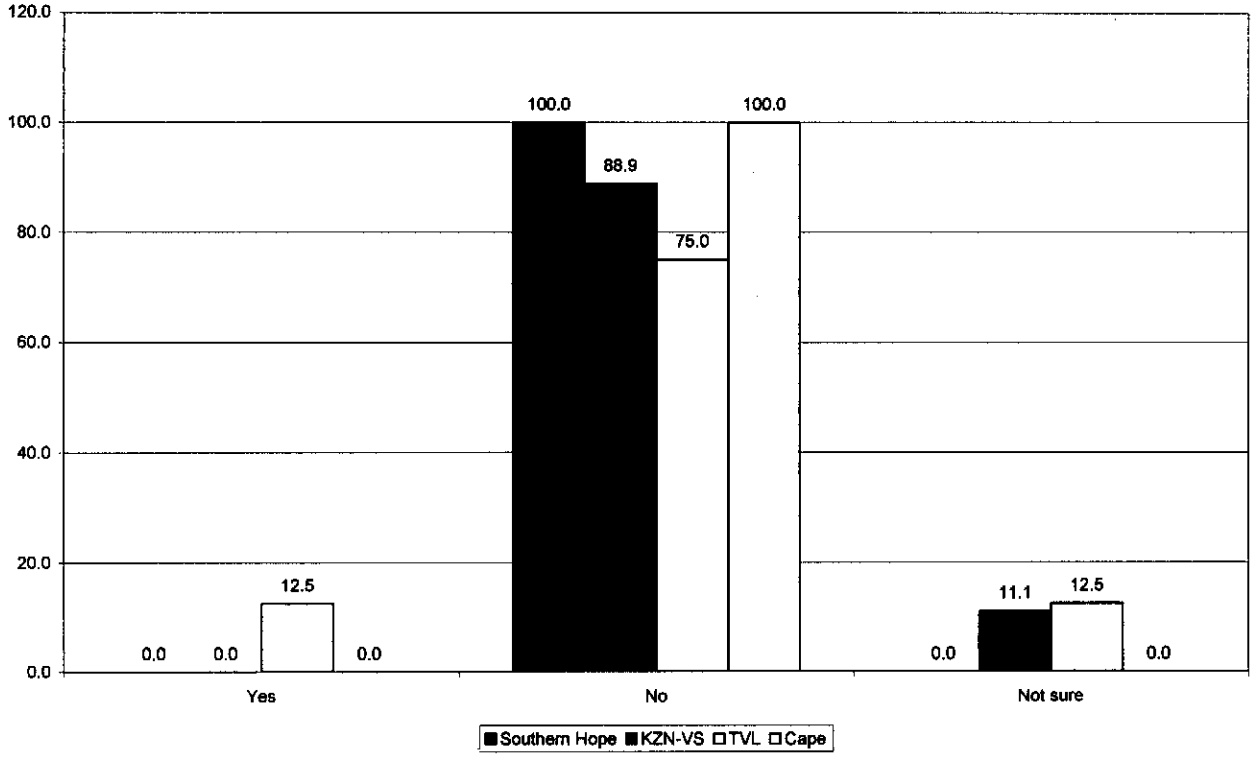
Question 3.2 as shown in Illustration 12, states: "Is the Conference leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?" The question attracted the following responses.

Illustration 12

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Conference

Question 3.2 - Is the Conference leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?



From the above responses, it is clear, that the leadership of each conference is not visible enough, at grassroots level of the church. It is important that the leadership in Conferences give consideration to being more than often at the grassroots level of the church. As stated by Greenleaf (1977:42) 'Servants, by definition, are fully human. Servant-leaders are functionally superior because they are closer to the ground as they hear things, see thing, know things,' that they will in no other way hear see and know.

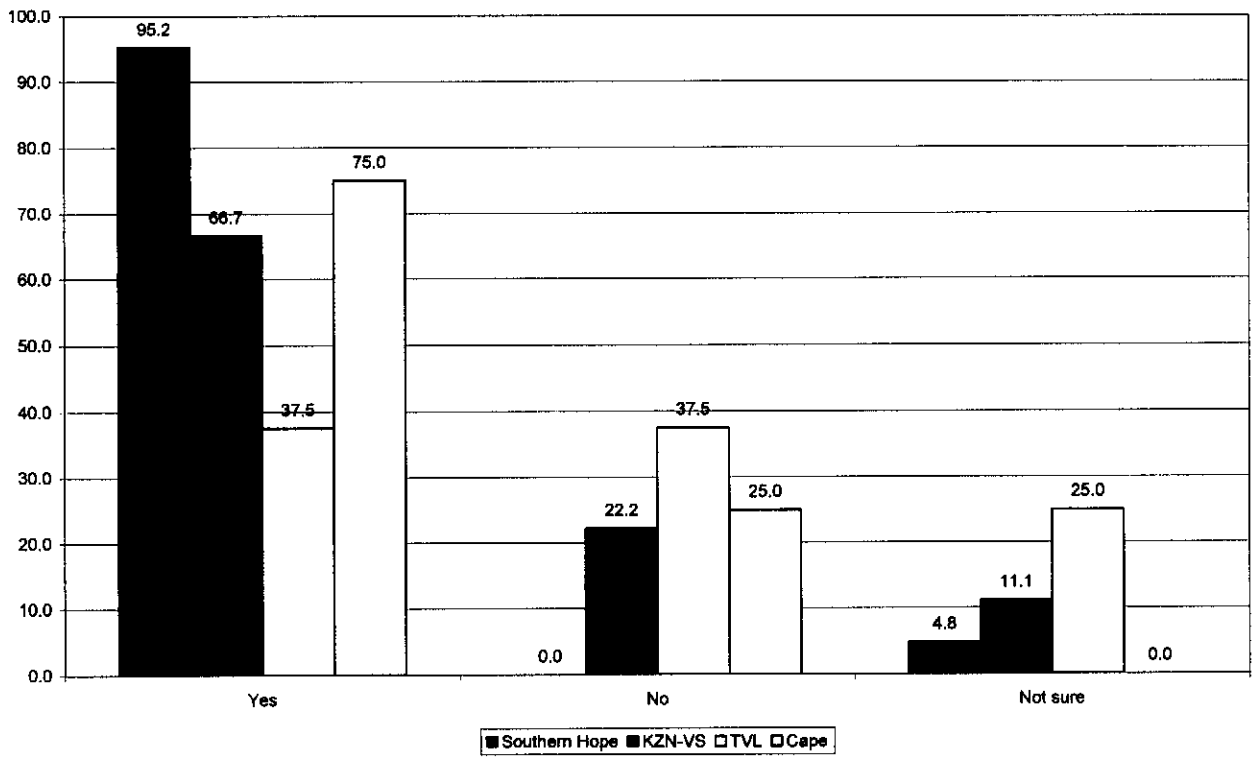
Question 3.3 as shown in illustration 13 states: "Would you describe the Conference as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"?" The respondents replied as follows:

Illustration 13

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Conference

Question 3.3 - Would you describe the Conference as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"?



The majority of respondents in each conference except for those in the Transvaal Conference describe the conference as being bureaucratic. In the Transvaal Conference there is no clear majority for "yes" neither for "no", and 25% were not sure.

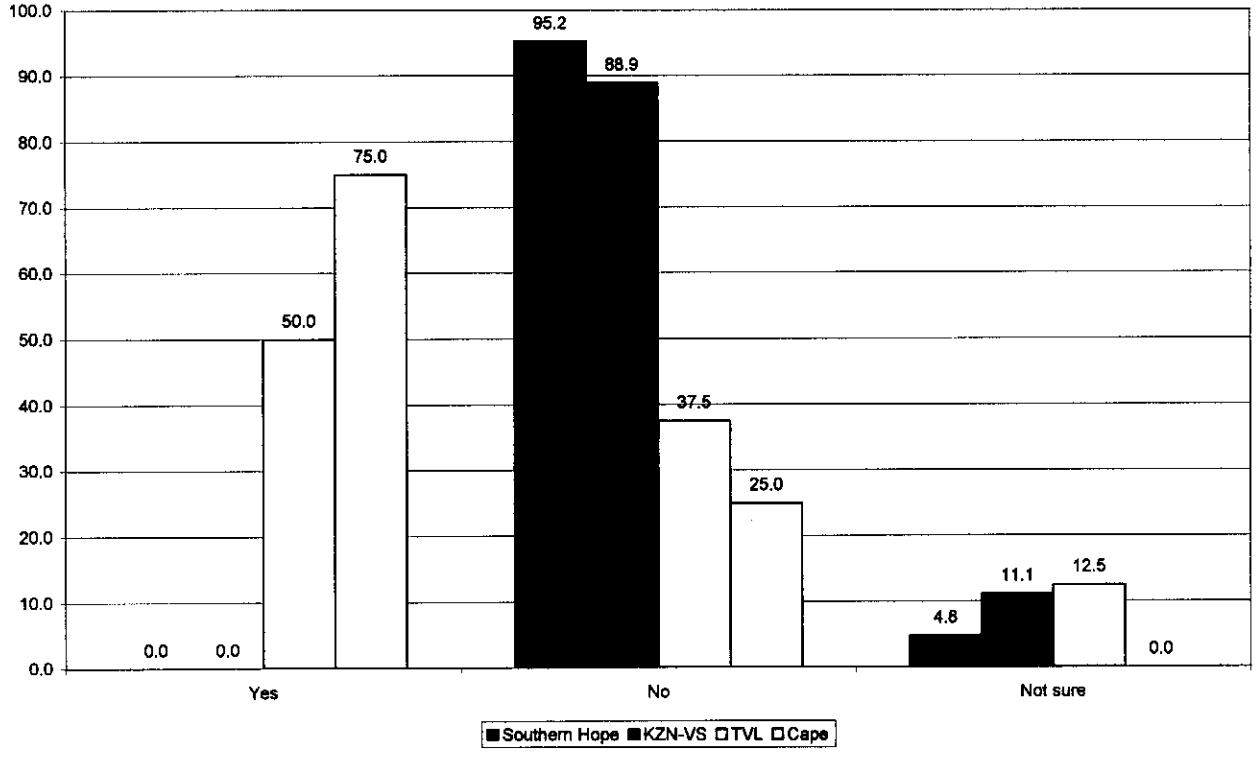
Question 3.4 as shown in illustration 14 states: "Do you think that the Conference serves the church in an enabling way?" Respondents replies shows the following:

Illustration 14

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Conference

Question 3.4 - Do you think that the Conference serves the church in an enabling way?



Only two Conferences, Southern Hope and KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference have a majority of respondents who replied negatively. Transvaal does not have a large majority replying yes, only 50% replied yes, while 37,5% replied "No" and 12,5% were "not sure."

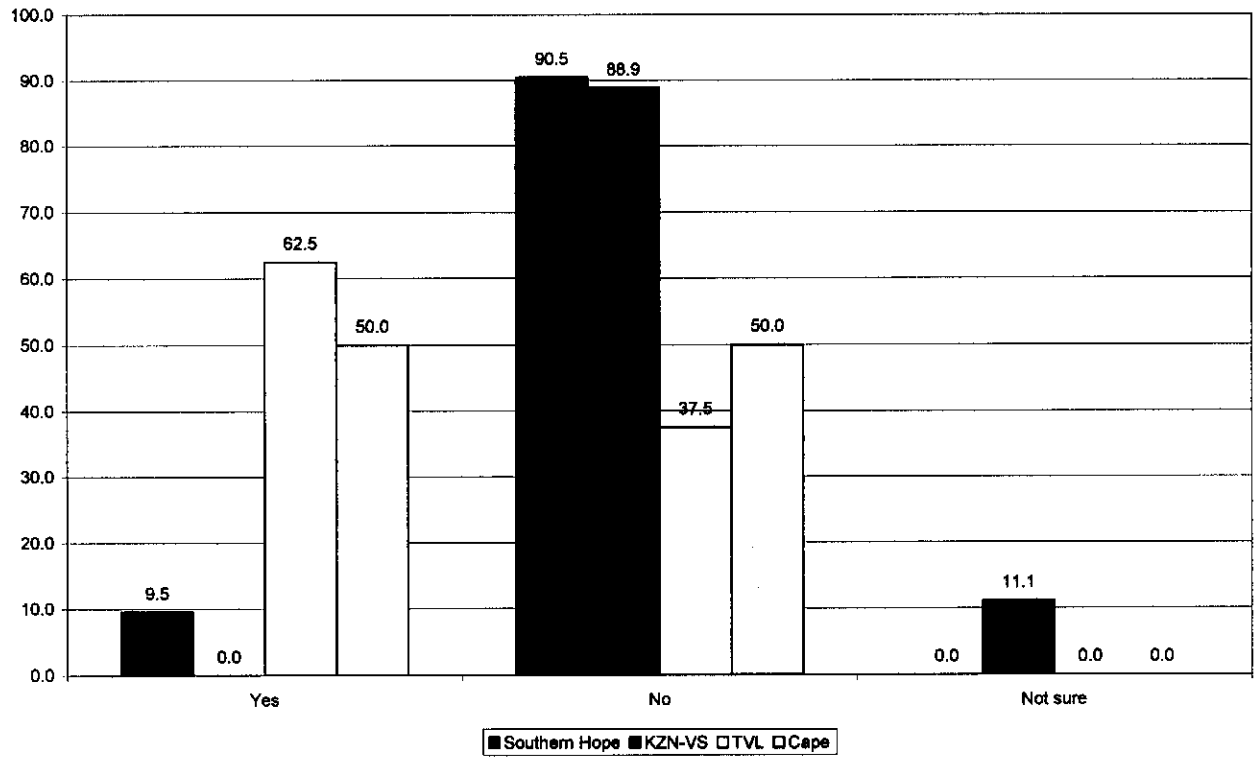
Question 3.5 as illustrated in illustration 15 states: "Does the conference serve as an effective resource centre?" Respondents replied as follows:

Illustration 15

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Conference

Question 3.5 - Does the Conference serve as an effective resource centre?



In two Conferences; Southern Hope and KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference, the respondents see the Conferences as a non-effective resource centre. Respondents in the Transvaal Conference represent a clear majority who considers the Conference as an effective resource centre. The Cape Conference has no clear majority either way.

A further look at the questions and the responses to them, reveals the following:

Question 3.2 as illustrated in illustration 12 is the only question to which the majority of respondents in each of the four conferences recorded the same opinion. The question states, "Is the Conference leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?" The answer to the question was an overwhelming "no".

This is indicative of the state of affairs in conferences. Leadership in these conferences are keeping the wheels of the organization well oiled and turning. However, their concern for people has taken second priority.

Question3.3 as illustrated in illustration 13 states: "Would you describe the Conference as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"? The majority of respondents in three conferences, namely: Southern Hope, KwaZulu Natal Free State and Cape Conference experience their administration as being bureaucratic. The Transvaal Conference respondents opinions were as follows: 37,5% replied "yes", 37,5% replied "no" and 25% were not sure. There was no clear majority either way.

A further observation is made from three other questions. Question 3,1 as shown in illustration 11, question 3.4 and 3.5 as shown in illustrations 14 and 15 respectively sees only two conferences respondents remaining together in their reply to those questions. They are Southern Hope Conference and KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference. In fact these two conferences throughout recorded majorities on each question, as to their view of the conference.

It is of interest to note, that both the Southern Hope Conference and the KwaZulu Natal Free State Conference are merged conferences[47]. However the Transvaal Conference and Cape Conference and Trans Orange Conference are still unmerged conferences.

In summary, the responses to the specific questions put to church boards during the structured interviews, are also indicative of where the causes of the disillusionment and alienation lies.

The issues addressed by the questions, are perennial issues, which are being spoken of continually. The structures that characterise the church, must be enabling and helpful to the church. If not it reacts negatively upon the church at "grass-root" as can be seen in the responses to the questions.

People want to see their leaders more often. As much as what people has to contribute financially to the Conference, the Conference has to contribute in an effective way to the local church, by making resources available to the local church. Churches are always looking for resources for evangelism and resources for carrying on the mission of the church. Churches would also like to see the use of less "red-tape" in their approaches to the administration.

The same questions applied to ascertain the views of the church boards concerning the Conferences, were applied to ascertain the church boards views of the Union.

5.6 Congregations view of the Union

Congregations do not have direct access to the Union. All contact is done via the conference. Church properties and contents are insured by Sedcom, the property holding body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. When an insurance claim is instituted, it is also done via the Conference or unless otherwise advised. When churches require the services of union personnel, it also has to go via the Conference.

All questions as applied to the Union were answered negatively by all church boards. The first question 4.1 as shown in illustration 16, states: "Does the Union contribute to the effectiveness of your church?"

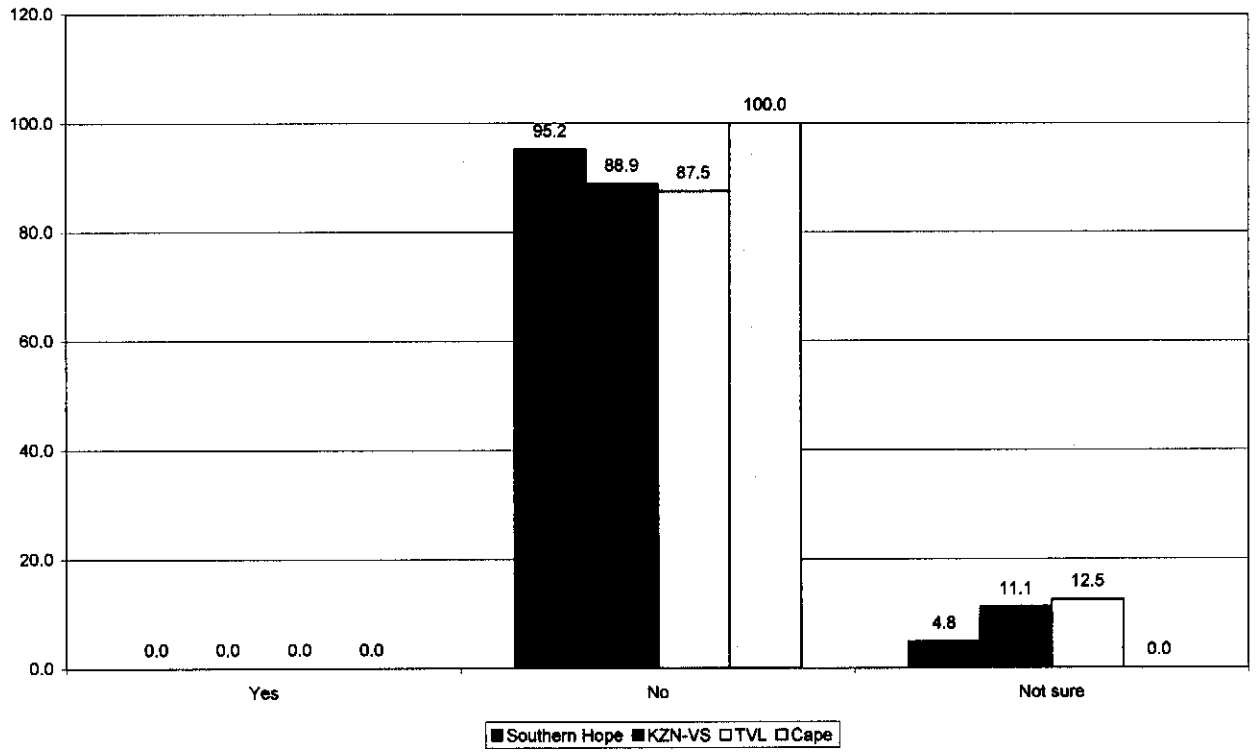
[47] "merged" means that there has been a merger of different conferences across the colour line in one geographical area. "Unmerged" means that there are still conferences that have not merged and operate separate conferences in the same geographical area, as have been in the old dispensation South Africa.

Illustration 16

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Union

Question 4.1 - Does the Union contribute to the effectiveness of your church?



It is clear from the above results, that the respondents experience the Union as an ineffective structure in the life of their church.

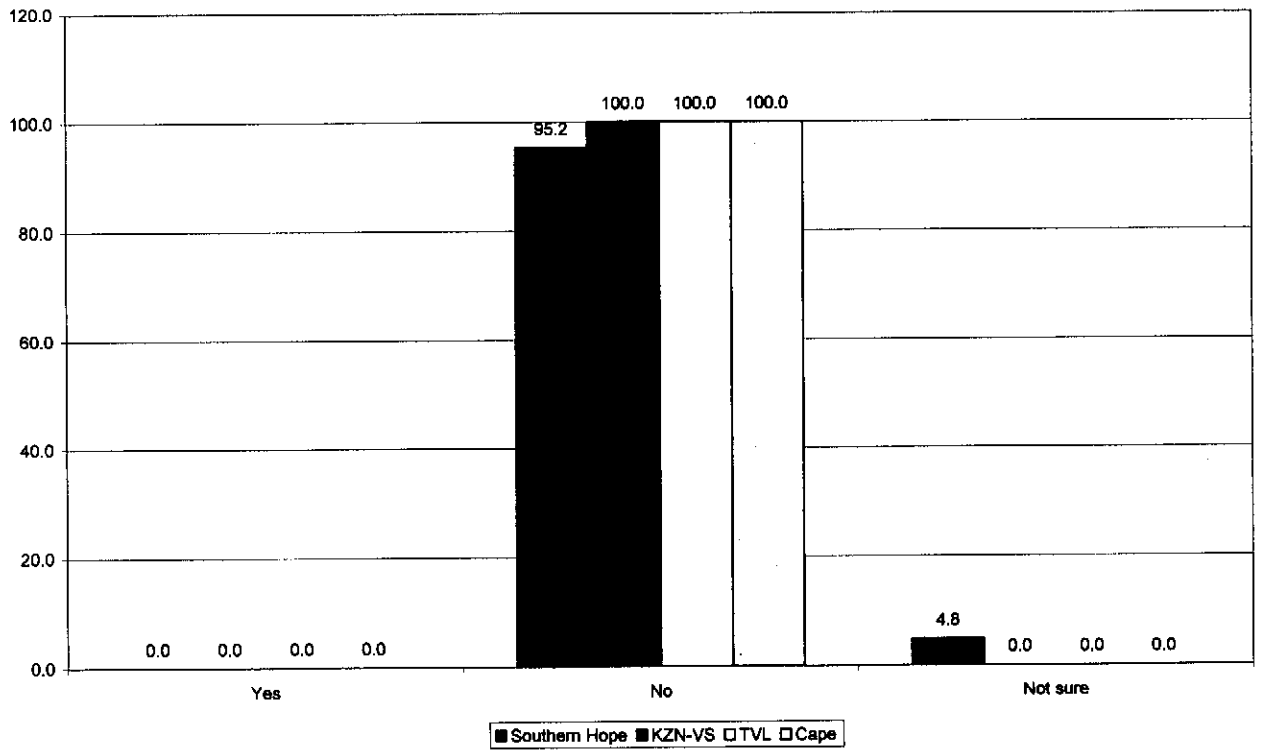
Question 4.2 as shown is illustration 17, state: "Is the Union leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?"

Illustration 17

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Union

Question 4.2 - Is the Union leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?



There is a clear correlation between the response on leadership visibility of conference and union leadership at grassroots level of the church[48]. The church boards' view of both the Conference and Union leadership, concerning visibility are poor. In both instances there are 100% "no" responses recorded. At Union level there are three conferences that recorded 100% "no" responses. They are KwaZulu Natal Free State, Transvaal and Cape Conference. At conference level the Southern Hope and Cape Conferences recorded 100% "no" responses.

As at Conference level so at Union level, leadership do not avail themselves to the "grassroots" of the church. However, organizational structures are maintained, the wheels of the organizational machinery are kept well oiled and working. Policies and byelaws are formulated to maintain orderliness, but people for which all of these are done are lost sight of.

Question 4.3 as shown in illustration 18 states: "Would you describe the Union as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"?

The responses were as follows:

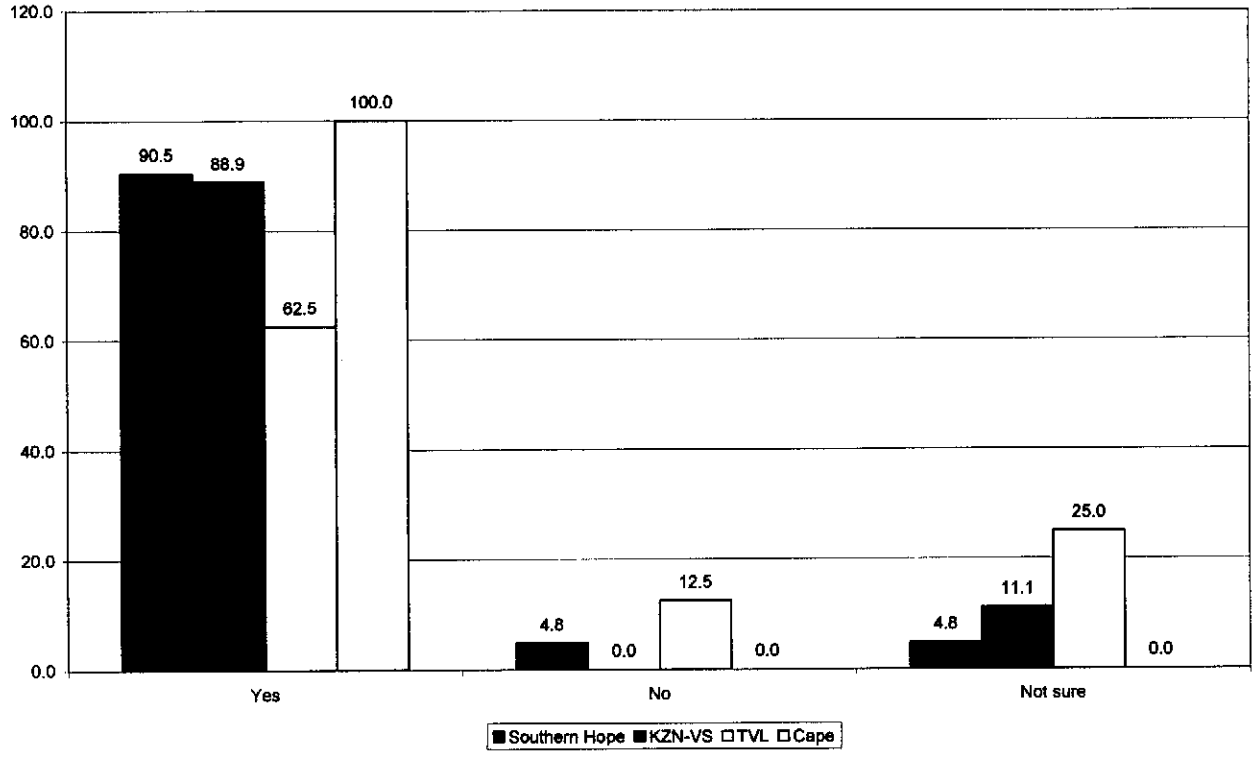
[48] See question 3.2 in illustration 4.2 in illustration in illustration 17

Illustration 18

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Union

Question 4.3 - Would you describe the Union as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"?



It is clear from the above percentages that the Union is experienced by conference membership as being bureaucratic. A very small percentage experiences it otherwise.

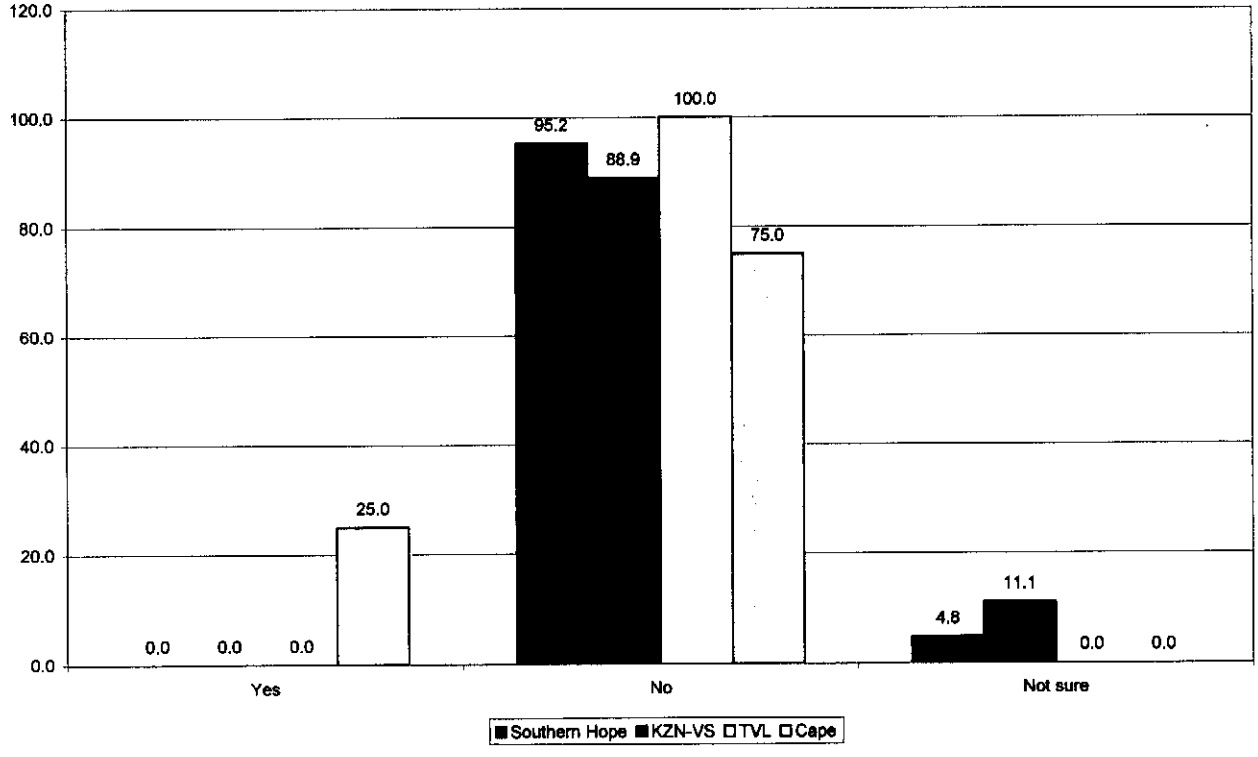
Question 4.4 as shown in illustration 19 states" "Do you think that the Union serves your congregation in an enabling way?" The responses were as follows:

Illustration 19

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Union

Question 4.4 - Do you think that the Union serves your congregation in an enabling way?



Once more the pattern of experience is the same. Churches do not experience the Union as serving their congregation in an enabling way. In fact many feel that the SDA Church is SA does not need the Union structure of administration. Many are of the opinion that the Conferences can handle what is done at Union level.

Question 4.5 as shown in illustration 20 states: "Does the Union serve as an effective resource centre?"

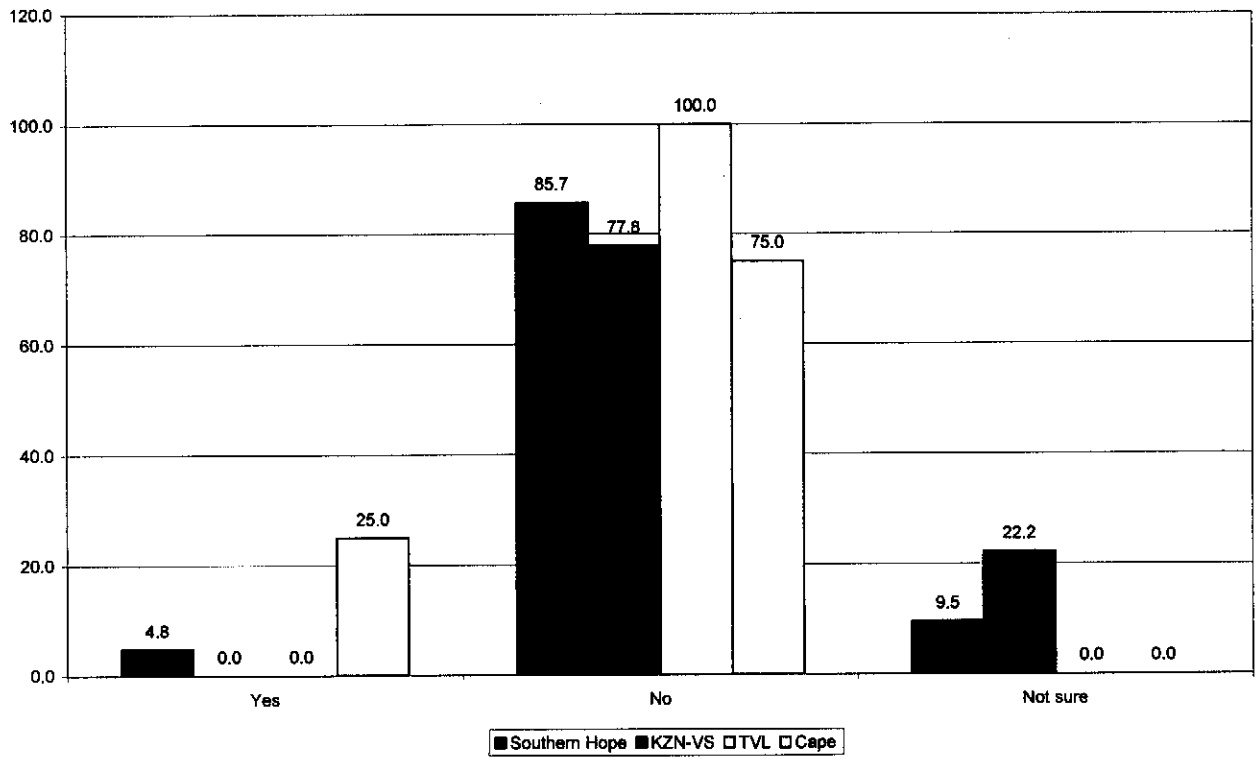
The response was as follows:

Illustration 20

Structured Interview

Congregations View of the Union

Question 4.5 - Does the Union serve as an effective resource centre?



With minor exceptions, the majority of responses, show that the Union does not serve the congregations as an effective resource centre.

In summary, the responses to the questions concerning the church boards' view of the Union are overwhelming.

This state of affairs is attributed to the fact that the Union and its administration are far removed from the people. Its position in the hierarchy places it beyond the "grassroots" level of the church. According to the lines of communication and appeal[49], as set out by Verwey (1983:10), 'No direct contact can be made between bodies ... where no line of communication exists.'

The responses to the questions are indicative of how people feel about situations which they have no power to change. The higher you go in the hierarchy the more disillusionment and alienation among the rank and file is experienced.

The next section deals with the results of the Pastoral Surveys. Surveys were used to solicit the opinions of the pastors in each conference, concerning the conference administration.

5.7 Pastoral surveys

Surveys were sent to 146 pastors. Responses to the surveys were received from 74 pastors, giving a rate of return of 50,6%. The response return percentage of each conference are as follows:

[49] As published in the official publication of the South African Union Conference "Lantern" in May 1982.

Table 5 - Response percentage of pastors

Conference	Response Percentage
Southern Hope	54.1
Trans-Orange	28.6
Kwazulu Natal	51.9
Transvaal	60.6
Cape	71.4

The statements put to the pastors covered the same areas of concern, as those in the structured interviews. They are: Administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures.

The statements were put in pairs, concerning each area of concern. It was placed on a scale of 1-7. The left hand side of the scale carried negative statements, and the right hand side positive statements. The respondents were asked to circle their response on the scale of 1 – 7. Marking toward the left hand side of the scale would mean a negative experience. Marking towards the right hand side on the scale, would mean a positive experience of the administration, in the specific area of concern. The section that follows deals with the accumulative results of the Pastoral Surveys.

5.7.1 Pastoral surveys – conference administration accumulative results

Moving from the centre of each scale, to the left, negative side and to the right positive side; the following results are shown:

5.7.1.1 Administrative authority

Statement 2.1 and statement 2.3 as shown in illustrations 21 and 22 respectively deals with administrative authority.

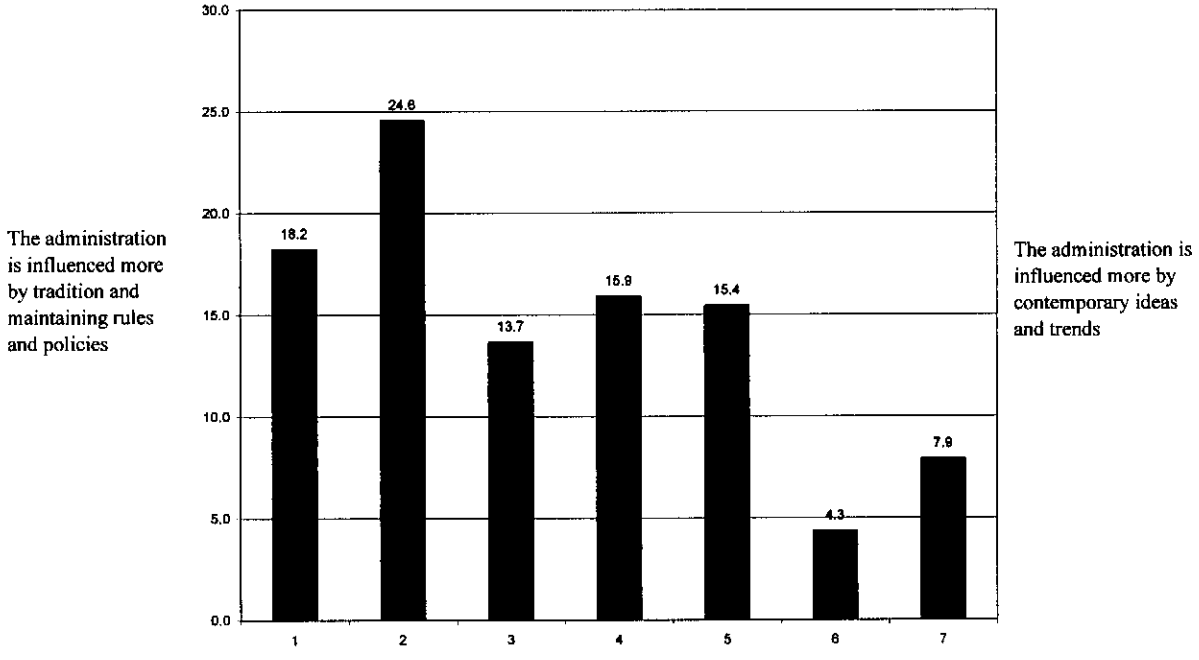
Illustration 21 shows that 56,5% of pastors answered to the left of centre on the scale, indicating that they experience the administrative authority as being influenced more by tradition and the maintenance of rules and policies. To the right of centre on the scale 27,6% of pastors, experienced the administrative authority as being influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends.

Illustration 21

Pastoral Survey

Conference Level of Administration - Administrative Authority

Statement 2.1



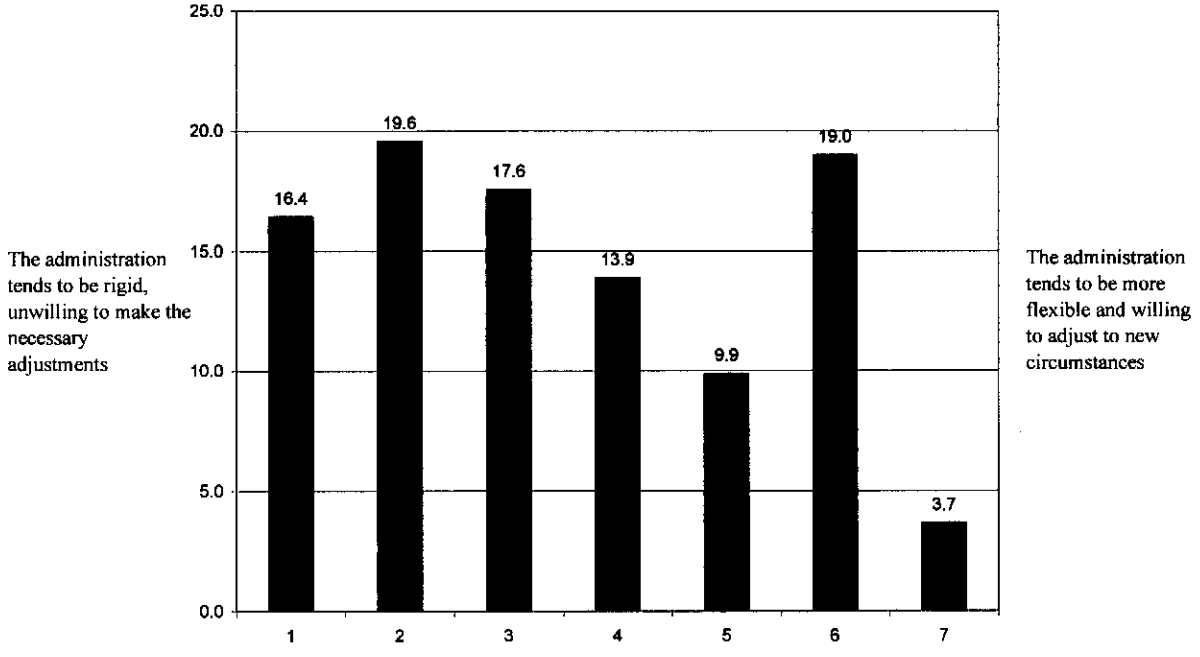
The second set of statements dealing with administrative authority is shown in illustration 22. It shows that 53,6% of pastors answered to the left of centre on the scale, indicating that they experience the administrative authority as tending toward rigidity, unwilling to make the necessary adjustments. To the right side of the scale 32,6% of pastors experienced the administrative authority to be flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances.

Illustration 22

Pastoral Survey

Conference Level of Administration - Administrative Authority

Statement 2.3



On average the percentages of both statements shows that 55% of pastors experienced administrative authority negatively and 30,1% experiences it positively.

5.7.1.2 Leadership

Statements 2.2 and 2.5 as shown in illustration 23 and 24 respectively deals with the aspect of leadership in the administration.

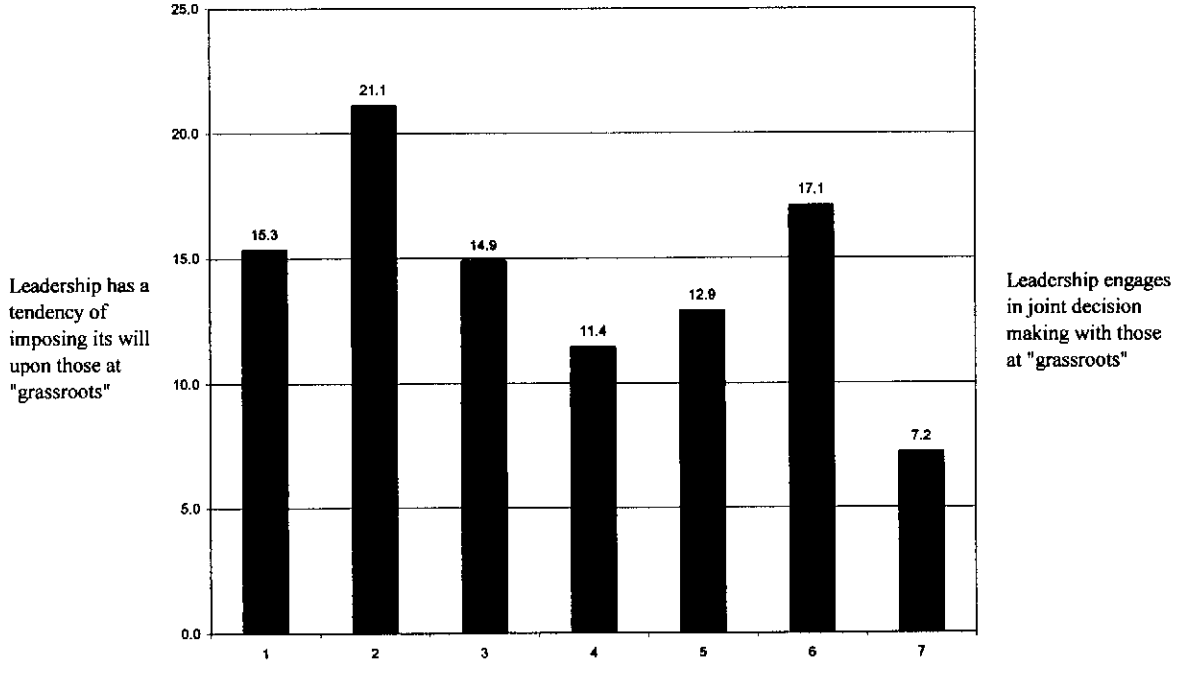
Illustration 23 shows that 51,3% of pastors experience leadership of the administration as tending to impose its will upon those at "grassroots" level of the church. On the side of the scale 37,2 percent of pastors experience leadership as engaging in joint decision making with those at "grassroots."

Illustration 23

Pastoral Survey

Conference Level of Administration - Leadership

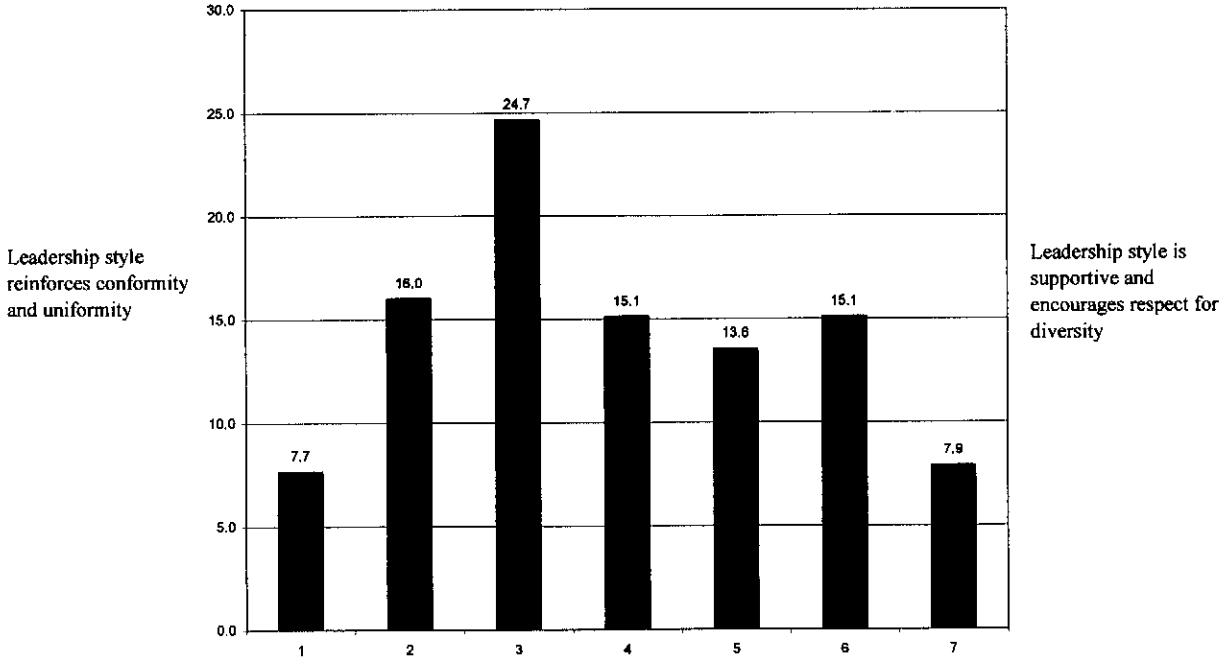
Statement 2.2



In illustration 24, the second set of statements dealing with leadership, shows that 48,4% of pastors experienced the leadership style as reinforcing conformity and uniformity, while 36,6% experience the administrative leadership as being supportive and encourages respect for diversity.

On the average the percentages of both statement, shows that 49,9% experienced leadership in administration negatively, while 36,9% experienced leadership positively.

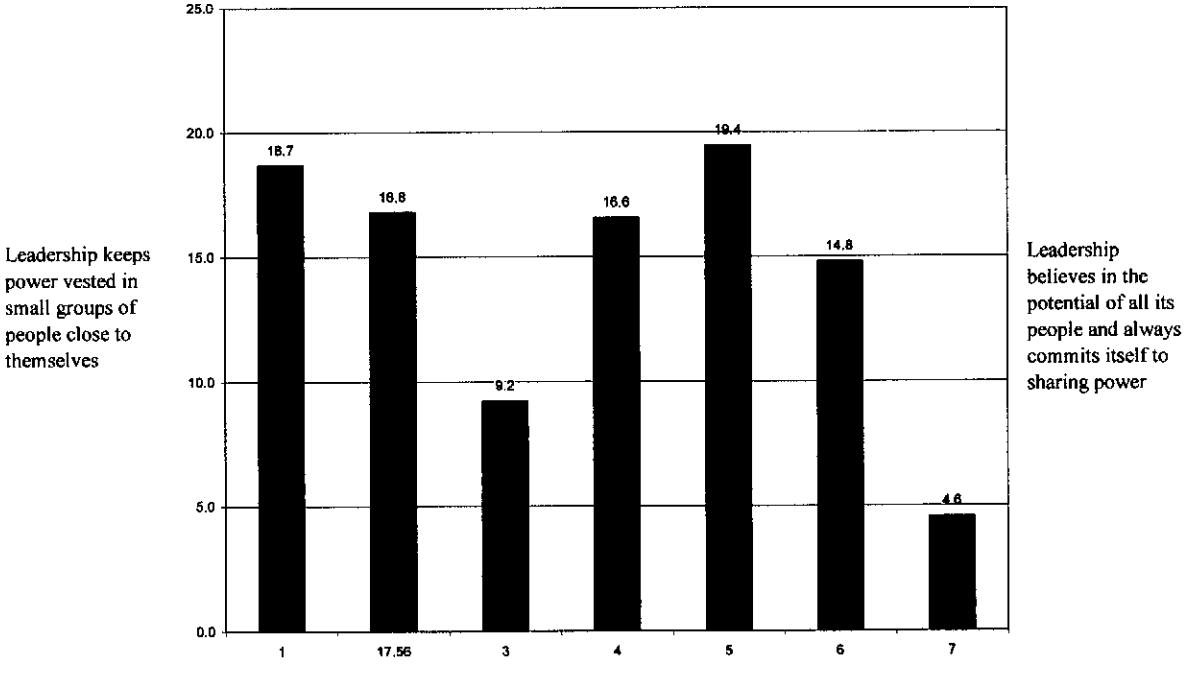
Illustration 24
Pastoral Survey
Conference Level of Administration - Leadership
Statement 2.5



5.7.1.3 Power

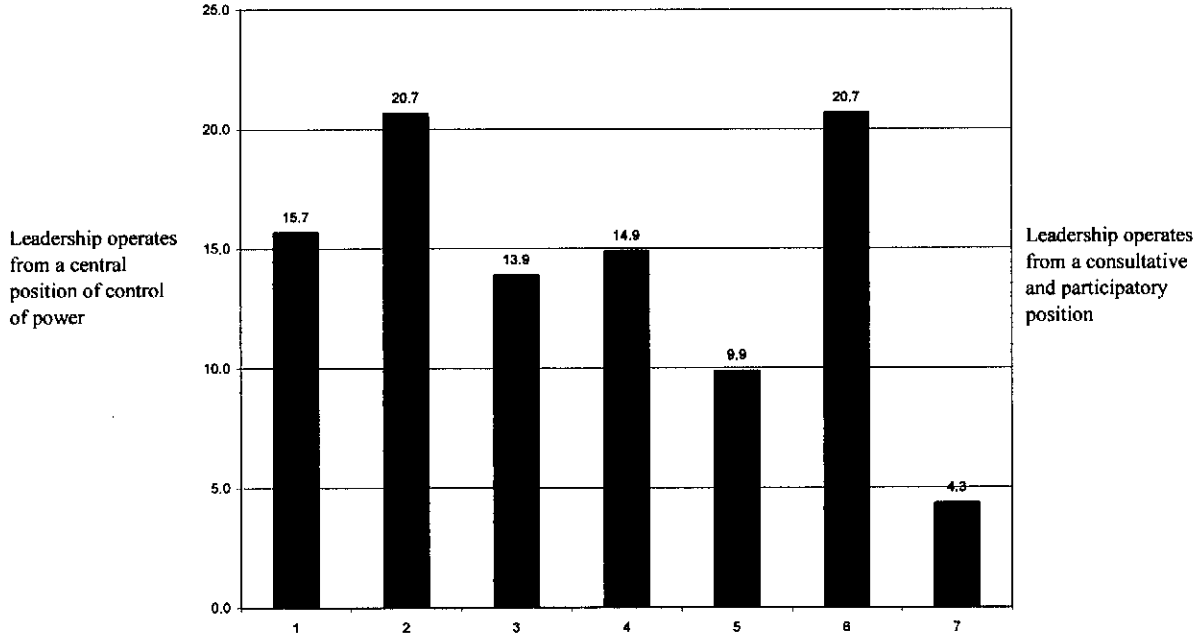
Statements 2.4 and 2.6 as shown in illustrations 25 and 26 respectively deals with the aspect of power in the administration of the church. Illustration 25 shows that 44,7% of pastors experienced power as vested in small groups close to leadership and 36,9% experienced it differently. Their experience is that leadership always commits itself to sharing power.

Illustration 25
Pastoral Survey
Conference Level of Administration - Power
Statement 2.4



The second set of statements concerning power, is shown in illustration 26. It shows 50,3% of pastors, feel that leadership operates from a central position of control of power. On the other hand 34,9% of pastors, feel that leadership operates from a consultative and participatory position.

Illustration 26
Pastoral Survey
Conference Level of Administration - Power
Statement 2.6

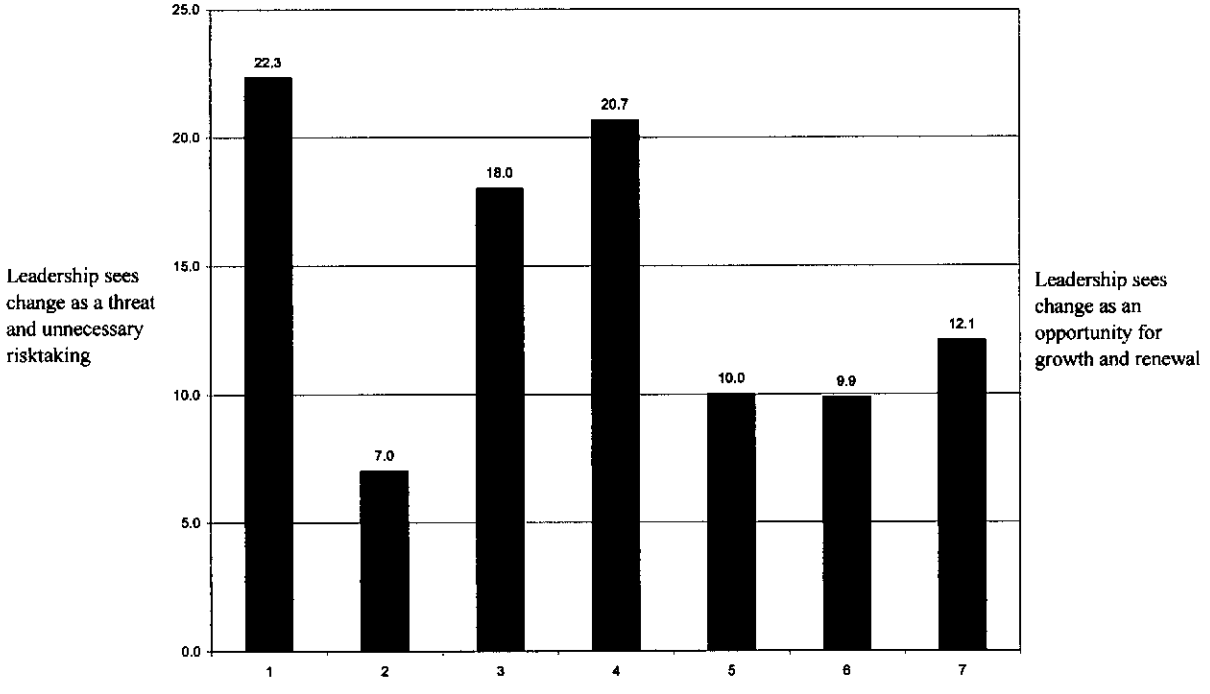


On average taking both illustrations into account 47,5% of pastors experience power in the administration in a negative way and 36,9 experience it positively.

5.7.1.4 Transition

Statements 2,7 and 2,8 as shown in illustration 27 and 28 respectively deals with the aspect of transition in the administration. It shows that 47,3% of pastors feel that leadership sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk -taking. On the positive side 32,0% of pastors feel that leadership sees change as an opportunity for growth and renewal.

Illustration 27
Pastoral Survey
Conference Level of Administration - Transition
Statement 2.7



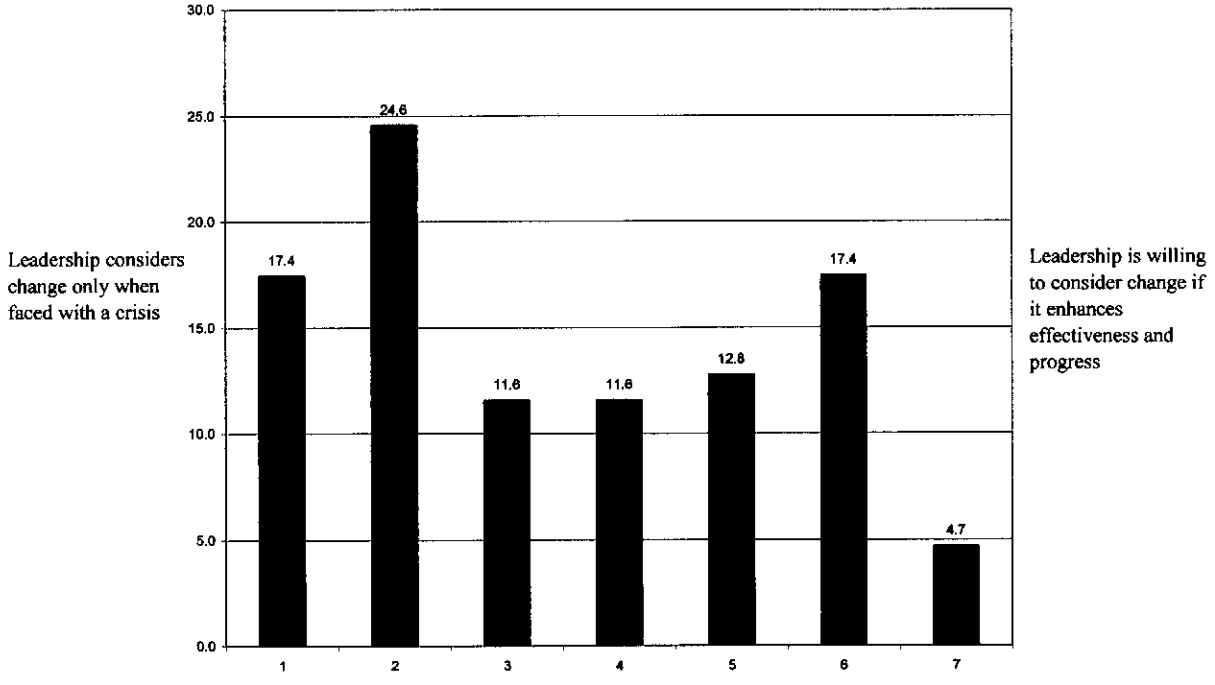
The second set of statements as shown in illustration 28, shows that 53,6% of pastors feels, that leadership considers change only when faced with a crisis. On the positive side 34,9% of pastors see leadership as being willing to consider change if it enhances effectiveness and progress.

Illustration 28

Pastoral Survey

Conference Level of Administration - Transition

Statement 2.9



On average 50,5% of pastors experience leadership and change in a negative way, while 33,5% sees leadership and change in a positive way.

5.7.1.5 Organizational structures

Statements 2,8 and 2,10 as shown in illustrations 29 and 30 respectively deals with organizational structures of the church.

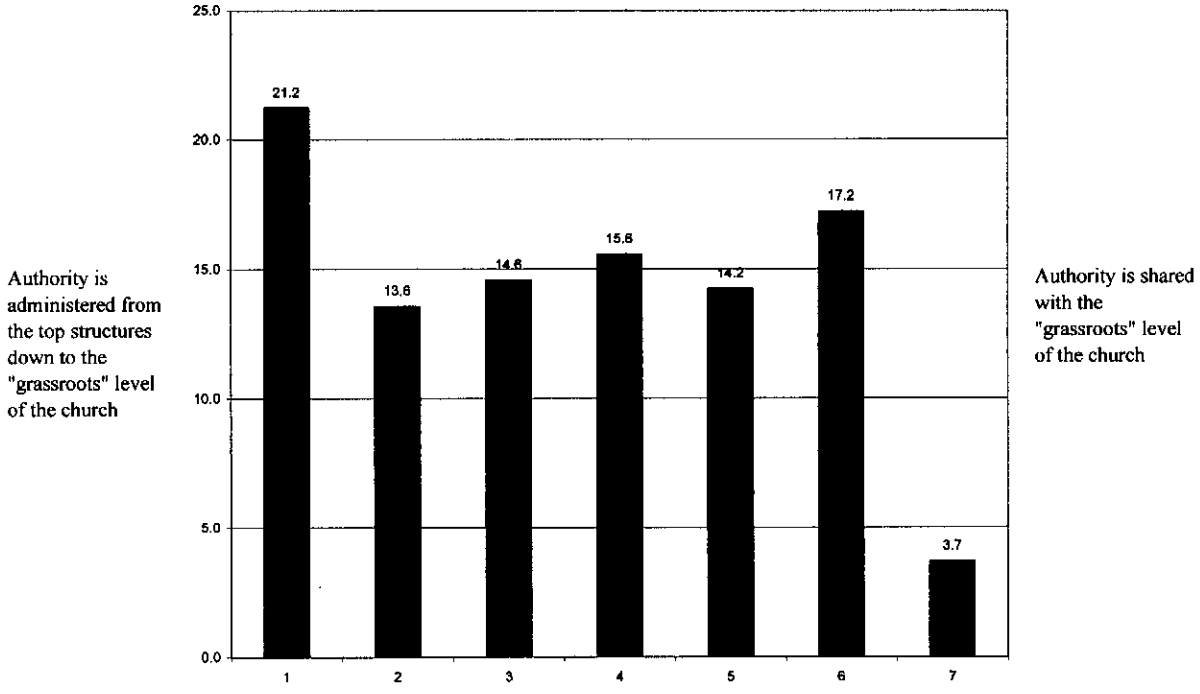
Illustration 29 shows that 49,4% of pastors experience the structures of the SDA Church as functioning from top to bottom, while 35,0% feel that authoritative structures shares authority with those at grassroots level of the church.

Illustration 29

Pastoral Survey

Conference Level of Administration - Organizational Structures

Statement 2.8



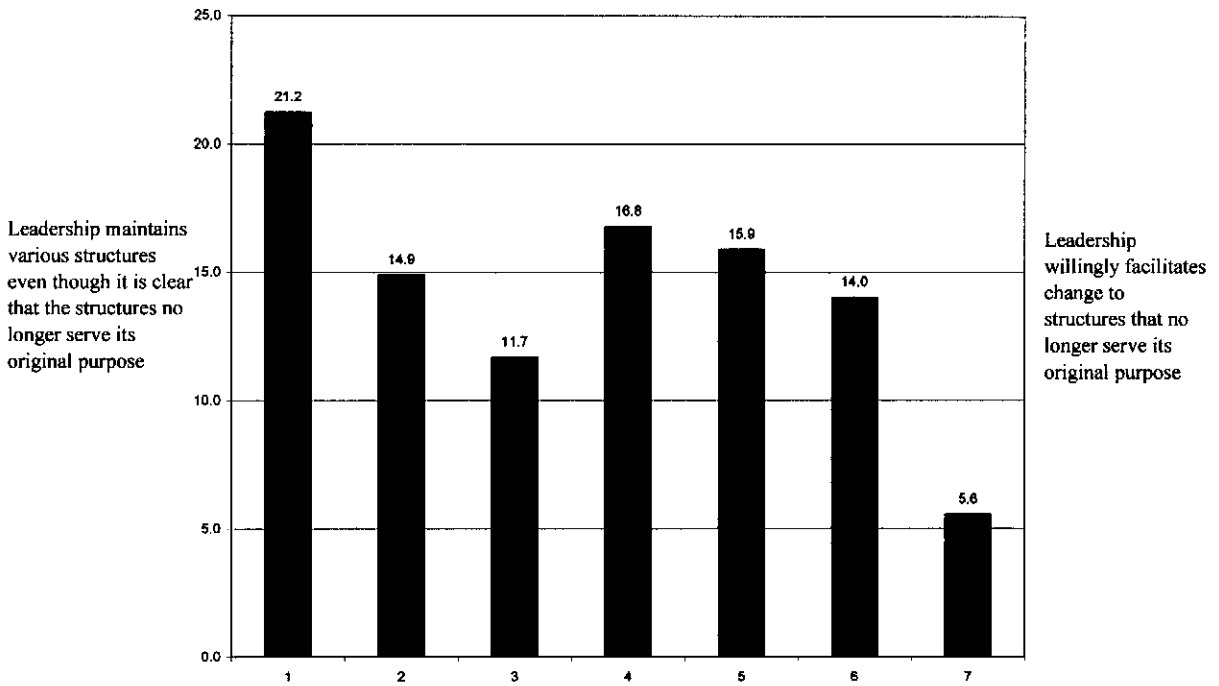
The second set of statements in illustration 30 shows, that 47,8% of pastors experience leadership as maintaining various structures that no longer serves its original purpose. On the other hand 35,5% of pastors see the administration as willing to facilitate change to structures that no longer serves its original purpose.

Illustration 30

Pastoral Survey

Conference Level of Administration - Organizational Structures

Statement 2.10



On average 48,6% of pastors sees the organizational structures in a negative light, while 35,0% experiences it positively.

The accumulative results of the responses of pastors to the various statements concerning the conference administration, shows that pastors experience the conference administrations in a negative way. However, on an individual basis there are conferences that have shown up better than others. It will be dealt with in the next section.

5.8 Results – individual basis

In this section the results of the pastoral surveys, will show how conferences on an individual basis has performed. It starts with the Conference in which pastors experienced the administration positively. Then the conference in which pastors experienced the Conference administration in an indifferent way, to the Conferences in which pastors experience the Conference administration in the most negative way. Thereafter, the last two, conferences in which pastors experienced their conference administrations negatively, shows the individual conference pastors responses.[50]

5.8.1 Cape Conference pastors

The Cape Conference is the only Conference in the SAU, in which the majority of pastors experience their conference administration in a positive way. The Cape Conference is also the smallest conference in the

[50] Illustrations for this section on pastoral responses are to be found on pages 109 - 114

SAU, with 40 churches and 14 pastors. Each pastor on average takes care of 2 – 3 churches. It has an all white administration, with an all white pastoral staff. The administration is at present involved with negotiations, of merging with the Southern Hope Conference that is already integrated, consisting of blacks and coloureds.

5.8.1.1 Administrative authority

Illustration 31 and 32 deals with the aspect of administrative authority. Illustration 31 shows that 30% of pastors felt that the administrative authority influenced more by tradition and maintaining rules and policies. On the other end of the scale 50% felt that the administrative authority is influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends. The second set of statements concerning administrative authority as shown in illustration 32, shows 20% of pastors experience administrative authority as tending towards rigidity unwilling to make the necessary adjustments. On the opposite end of the scale 50% felt that the administrative authority tends to be more flexible willing to adjust to new circumstances.

5.8.1.2 Leadership

Concerning the aspect of leadership, illustration 33 shows that 20% of pastors, felt that leadership has a tendency of imposing its will upon those at grassroots. However, on the opposite end of the scale, 60% felt that leadership engages in joint decision making with those at "grassroots." The second set of statements on leadership as shown in illustration 34, 20% of pastors experienced the leadership style as reinforcing conformity and uniformity. On the opposite end of the scale 70% felt that leadership is supportive and encourages respect for diversity.

5.8.1.3 Power

The results on the aspect of power are shown in illustration 35 and 36. Illustration 35 shows that 10% of pastors felt that leadership keeps power vested in small groups of people close to them. The opposite end of the scale shows that 80% felt that leadership believes in potential of all its people and always commits itself to sharing power. The second set of statements as shown in illustration 36, shows that 10% of pastors felt that leadership operates from a central position of control of power. On the opposite end of the scale 60% felt that leadership operates from a consultative and participatory position.

5.8.1.4 Transition

The results on the aspect of transition are shown in illustration 37 and 38. Illustration 37 shows 30% of pastors felt that leadership sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk-taking. On the opposite end of the scale 60% felt that leadership sees change as an opportunity for growth and renewal. The set of statements on transition, as shown in illustration 38, shows that 30% of pastors saw leadership as considering change if faced with a crisis. On the other hand 60% saw leadership as willing to consider change if it enhances effectiveness and progress.

5.8.1.5 Organizational structures

The results to the statements on organizational structure are shown in illustrations 39 and 40. Illustration 39 shows that 10% of pastors felt that authority is administered from the top structures down to the "grassroots" levels of the church. However, on the opposite end of the scale 50% felt that authority is shares with the "grassroots" level of the church. The second set of statements shown in illustration 40, shows that 30% of pastors felt that leadership maintains various structures even though it is clear that these structures no longer serve its original purpose. While on the opposite end of the scale 50% felt leadership willingly facilitates change to structures that no longer serves its original purpose.

In summary, the above results show that the majority of pastors in the Cape Conference experience their administration in a positive way, while a minority experience the administration negatively.

5.8.2 Trans-Orange Conference pastors

Pastors in the TOC displayed an indifferent experience of their administration. No clear majority pattern arose from their responses.

5.8.2.1 Administrative authority

Illustration 31 and 32 contains statements 2.1 and 2.3 respectively. It deals with the aspect of administrative authority. Illustration 31 shows that 55,5% of pastors responding to statements 2.1, felt that he administration is influenced more by tradition and maintaining of rules and policies. However, on the other end of the scale 33,3 felt that the administration is influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends.

The second set of statements 2.3 concerning administrative authority are shown in illustration 32. Pastors responded on a fifty-fifty basis. Fifty percent of pastors 44,4% in all, see the administrative authority, as having a tendency toward rigidity and unwillingness to make the unnecessary adjustments needed. The other 50%, that is 44.4% of pastors experienced the administrative authority as flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances.

5.8.2.2 Leadership

The results of pastors' response to the aspect of leadership in the Conference are shown in illustration 33 and 34 to statements 2.2 and 2.5 respectively. Illustration 33 shows the response to statements 2.2 in which 33,3% of pastors felt that the leadership of the conference has a tendency of imposing its will upon those at grassroots, while 44,4% felt differently, that leadership engages in joint decisions making with those at grassroots. Illustration 34 shows the response of pastors to statements 2,5, in which 33,3% felt that the leadership style is one of reinforcing conformity and uniformity while 44,4% sees the leadership style as supportive and encouraging respect for diversity.

5.8.2.3 Power

Pastors in the TOC experienced the aspect of power in the administration in a positive way. Illustrations 35 and 36 concerns power in the administration. Illustration 35 contains statements 2.4 which shows that 33,3% of pastors felt that leadership keeps power vested in small groups of people close to themselves, while 55,5%

felt that leaders believes in the potential of all its people and always commits itself to sharing power. However, on the second set of statements 2.6 concerning power, as shown in illustration 36, the result is different. Fifty percent of pastors 44,4% in all felt that leadership operated from a central position of control of power, while 44,4% felt that leadership of the Conference operated from a consultative and participatory position.

5.8.2.4 Transition

The aspect of how the administration handles transition is shown in Illustrations 37 and 38. Illustration 37 shows that 33,3% of pastors felt that leadership saw change as a threat and unnecessary risk taking, while 33.3% felt that leadership saw change as an opportunity for growth and renewal. The second statement 2.9 on transition is shown in illustration 38. It shows that 75% of pastors felt that leadership considers change only when faced with a crisis. On the other end of the scale 10% of pastors felt that leadership was willing to consider change if it enhances effectiveness and progress.

5.8.2.5 Organizational structures

The last aspect, organizational structures are shown in Illustrations 39 and 40 respectively. In illustration 39, 33,3% of pastors felt that authority is administered from the top structures down to grassroots level of the church, while 55,5% felt differently, that authority is shared with those at "grassroots". The second statement 2.10 concerning organizational structures are shown in illustration 40. Here 22,2% of pastors felt that various structures are maintained even though it was clear that those structures no longer serve its original purpose. However, 55,5% felt that leadership was willing to facilitate change to structures that no longer served its original purpose.

In summary, the overall results show that pastors of the TOC only partially experience their administration in a positive way. However, there are only two aspects of administration that shows this, that of leadership and organizational structures as shown in illustrations 33 and 34 and 39 and 40.

The Trans Orange Conference has an all black administration and its pastoral force is all black. Negotiations are presently underway with the Transvaal Conference to merge the two conferences into one conference.

5.8.3 Southern Hope Conference pastors

The conference in which the highest percentage of pastors, negatively experience their administration is the Southern Hope Conference.

5.8.3.1 Administrative authority

Concerning administrative authority as shown in illustration 31, statement 2.1 shows that 80% of pastors in the SHC experience their administration as being influenced more by tradition and maintaining rules and policies, while on the other end of the scale, moving form the centre only 5% felt that the administration was influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends. The second set of statements concerning administrative authority is shown in illustration 32, statements 2.3. Here 85% of pastors felt that he administration tends to

be rigid unwilling to make the necessary adjustments, while on the other end of the scale only 10% felt that the administration tended to more flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances.

5.8.3.2 Leadership

The aspect of leadership is shown in illustration 33 and 34, covering statements 2.2 and 2.5 respectively. Illustration 33 shows that 95% of pastors felts that leadership in SHC has a tendency of imposing its will upon those at "grassroots". At the other end of the scale only 5% of pastors felt that leadership engages in joint decision making with those at "grassroots". The second set of statements concerning leadership as shown in illustration 34, shows the following results: 75% of pastors experienced the leadership style of the administration in the SHC as reinforcing conformity and uniformity, while 15% felt that the leadership style is supportive and encourages respect for diversity.

5.8.3.3 Power

The aspect of the handling of power is shown in illustration 35 and 36 covering statements 2.4 and 2.6 respectively. Illustration 35, shows that 75% of pastors in the SHC felt that, leadership keeps power vested in small groups close to themselves. On the other end of the scale 20% of the pastors felt that leadership of the conference believed in the potential of its people and always commits itself to sharing power. The second set of statements concerning power is shown in illustration 36. Here 90% of pastors felt that the leadership of the SHC operate from a central position of power. On the other end of the scale10% of pastors felt the leadership operates from a consultative and participating position.

5.8.3.4 Transition

Illustrations 37 and 38 concern itself with the aspect of transition. Here 75% of pastors felts that, leadership in the SHC sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk taking. On the other end of the scale 5% of pastors, saw leadership of the SHC as seeing change as an opportunity for growth and renewal. Illustration 38 concerns the second set of statements concerning transition. Here 75% of pastors felt that leadership considers change only when faced with a crisis. On the other end of the scale 10% of pastors, felt that leadership was willing to consider change if it enhanced effectiveness and progress.

5.8.3.5 Organizational structures

Organizational structures are dealt with in illustrations 39 and 40. In illustration 39, 90% of pastors in the SHC, felt that authority is administered from the top structures down to the "grassroots" level of the church, while 5% felt that authority is shared with these at grassroots level in the church.

Illustration 40 shows that 80% of pastors in the SHC felt that leadership maintains various structures even though it is clear that the structures no longer serve its original purpose. On the other end of the scale 5% felt that leadership willingly facilitates change to structures that no longer serves its original purpose.

In summary, on every aspect of administration tested, a high percentage of pastors in the Southern Hope Conference, experienced the administration in a negative way.

The Southern Hope Conference is the result of a merger between the Good Hope and Southern Conferences. The merger took place in September 1997. This new Conference is seven years old and still going through a time of transition.

5.8.4 Results of Kwazulu Natal Free-State and Transvaal Conference pastors

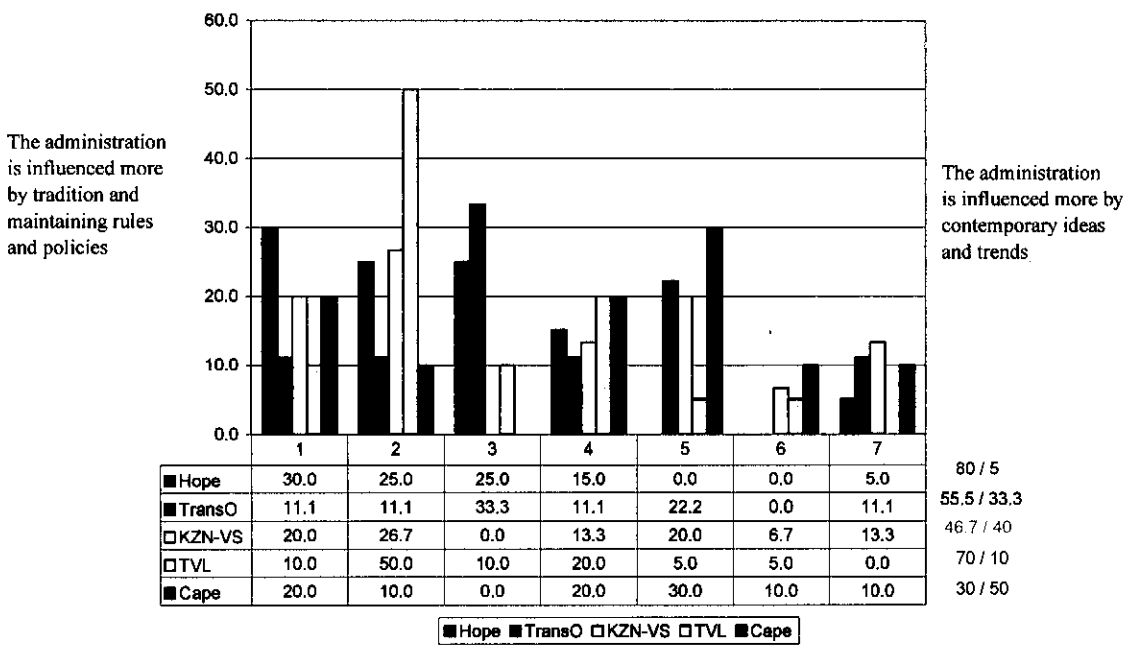
Pastors in the Kwazulu Natal Free State and the Transvaal Conferences, experienced their Conference administration in a negative way on all five aspects of administration. However, the percentage of negatively is not as high as in the Southern Hope Conference. The results are shown in illustrations 31 – 40.

Illustration 31

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Administration Authority

Statement 2.1



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	30.0	25.0	25.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	80 / 5
TransO	11.1	11.1	33.3	11.1	22.2	0.0	11.1	55.5 / 33.3
KZN-VS	20.0	26.7	0.0	13.3	20.0	6.7	13.3	46.7 / 40
TVL	10.0	50.0	10.0	20.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	70 / 10
Cape	20.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	30 / 50

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

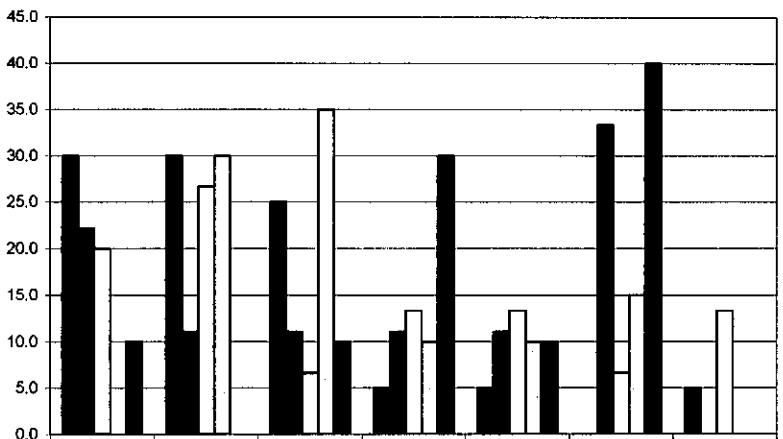
Illustration 32

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Administration Authority

Statement 2.3

The administration tends to be rigid, unwilling to make the necessary adjustments



The administration tends to be more flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	30.0	30.0	25.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	85 / 10
TransO	22.2	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	33.3	0.0	44.4 / 44.4
KZN-VS	20.0	26.7	6.7	13.3	13.3	6.7	13.3	53.4 / 33.3
TVL	0.0	30.0	35.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	65 / 25
Cape	10.0	0.0	10.0	30.0	10.0	40.0	0.0	20 / 50

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

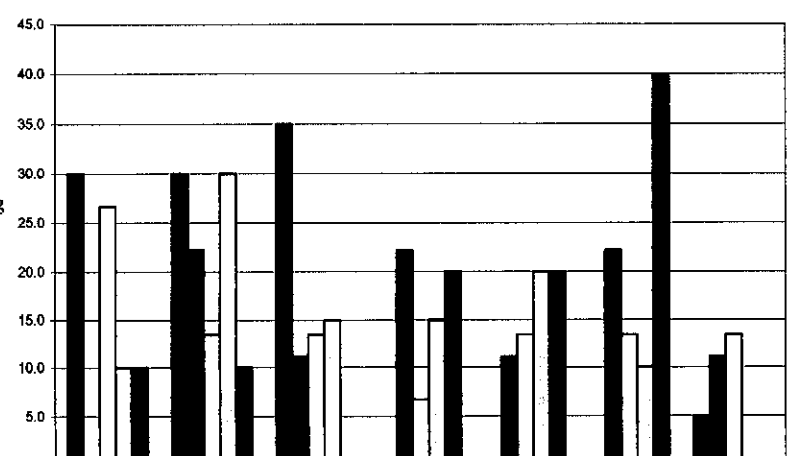
Illustration 33

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Leadership

Statement 2.2

Leadership has a tendency of imposing its will upon those at "grassroots"



Leadership engages in joint decision making with those at "grassroots"

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	30.0	30.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	95 / 5
TransO	0.0	22.2	11.1	22.2	11.1	22.2	11.1	33.3 / 44.4
KZN-VS	26.7	13.3	13.3	6.7	13.3	13.3	13.3	53.3 / 46.6
TVL	10.0	30.0	15.0	15.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	55 / 30
Cape	10.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	0.0	20 / 60

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

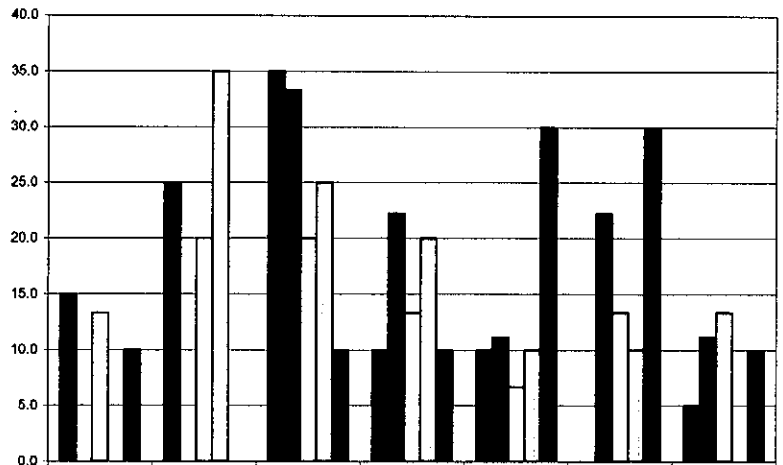
Illustration 34

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Leadership

Statement 2.5

Leadership style reinforces conformity and uniformity



Leadership style is supportive and encourages respect for diversity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	15.0	25.0	35.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	5.0	75 / 15
TransO	0.0	0.0	33.3	22.2	11.1	22.2	11.1	33.3 / 44.4
KZN-VS	13.3	20.0	20.0	13.3	6.7	13.3	13.3	53.4 / 33.3
TVL	0.0	35.0	25.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	60 / 20
Cape	10.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	30.0	30.0	10.0	20 / 70

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

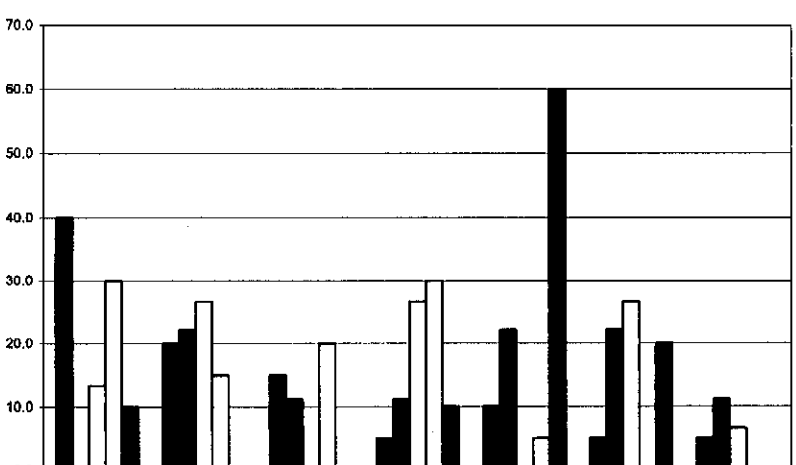
Illustration 35

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Power

Statement 2.4

Leadership keeps power vested in small groups of people close to themselves



Leadership believes in the potential of all its people and always commits itself to sharing power

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	40.0	20.0	15.0	5.0	10.0	5.0	5.0	75 / 20
TransO	0.0	22.2	11.1	11.1	22.2	22.2	11.1	33.3 / 55.5
KZN-VS	13.3	26.7	0.0	26.7	0.0	26.7	6.7	40 / 33.4
TVL	30.0	15.0	20.0	30.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	65 / 5
Cape	10.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	10 / 80

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

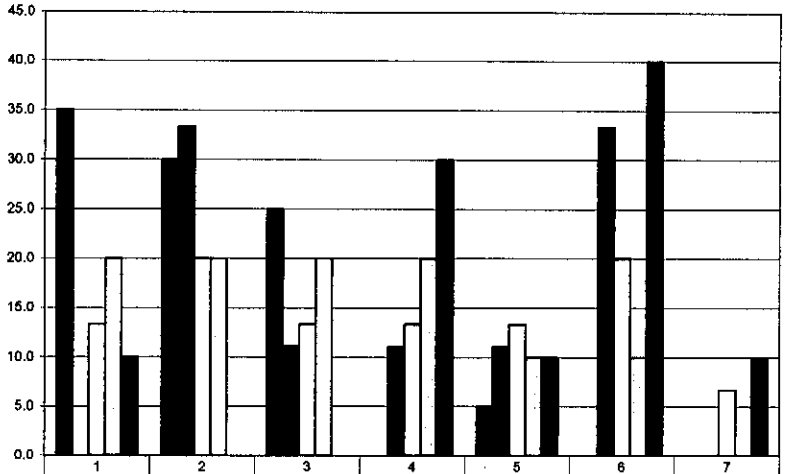
Illustration 36

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Power

Statement 2.6

Leadership operates from a central position of control of power



Leadership operates from a consultative and participatory position

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	35.0	30.0	25.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	90 / 10
TransO	0.0	33.3	11.1	11.1	11.1	33.3	0.0	44.4 / 44.4
KZN-VS	13.3	20.0	13.3	13.3	13.3	20.0	6.7	46.6 / 40
TVL	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	60 / 20
Cape	10.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	10.0	40.0	10.0	10 / 60

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

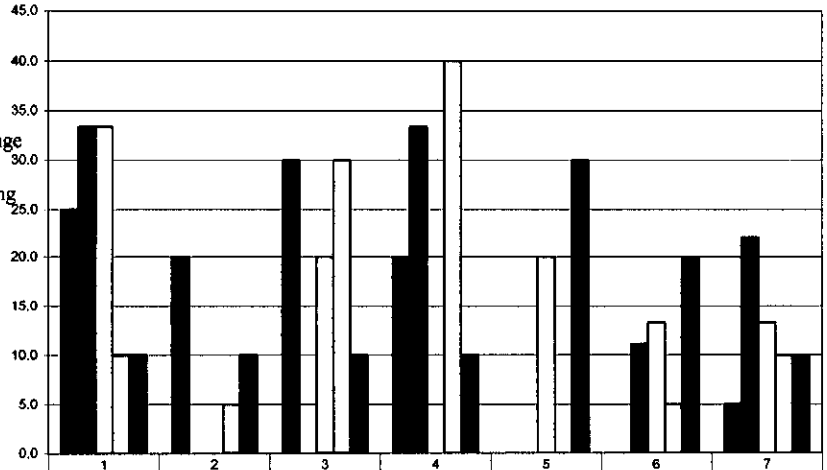
Illustration 37

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Transition

Statement 2.7

Leadership sees change as a threat and unnecessary risktaking



Leadership sees change as an opportunity for growth and renewal

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	25.0	20.0	30.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	75 / 5
TransO	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	11.1	22.2	33.3 / 33.3
KZN-VS	33.3	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0	13.3	13.3	50.3 / 46.6
TVL	10.0	5.0	30.0	40.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	45 / 15
Cape	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	30.0	20.0	10.0	30 / 60

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

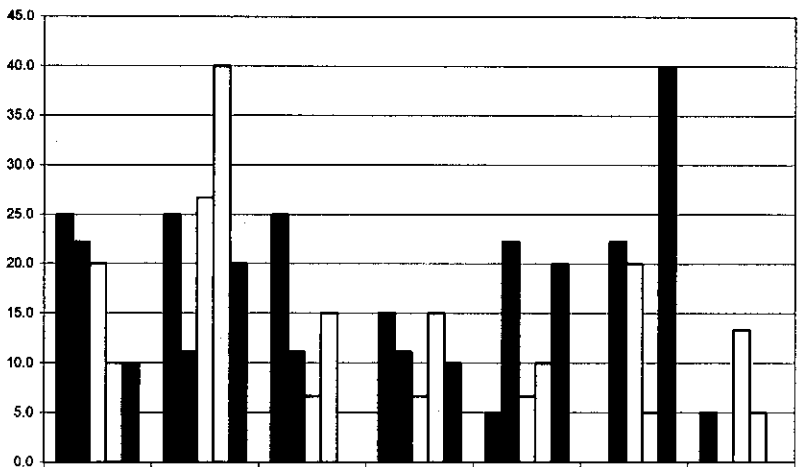
Illustration 38

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Transition

Statement 2.9

Leadership considers change only when faced with a crisis



Leadership is willing to consider change if it enhances effectiveness and progress

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	25.0	25.0	25.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	75 / 10
TransO	22.2	11.1	11.1	11.1	22.2	22.2	0.0	44.4 / 44.4
KZN-VS	20.0	26.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	20.0	13.3	53.4 / 40
TVL	10.0	40.0	15.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	5.0	65 / 20
Cape	10.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	0.0	30 / 60

Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

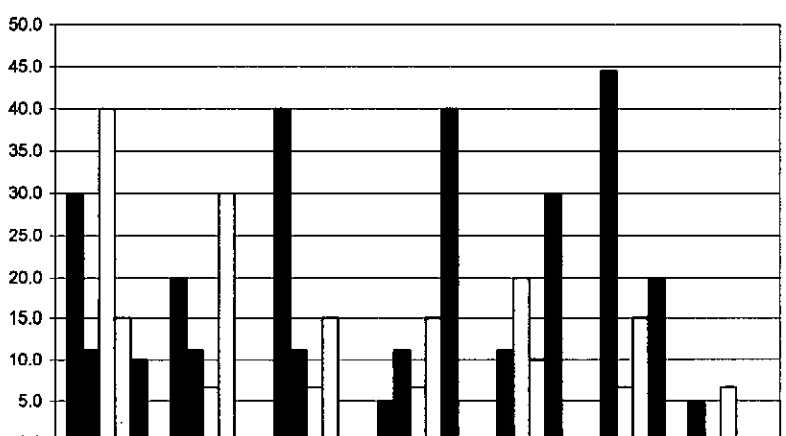
Illustration 39

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Organizational Structure

Statement 2.8

Authority is administered from the top structures down to the "grassroots" level of the church



Authority is shared with the "grassroots" level of the church

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	30.0	20.0	40.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	90 / 5
TransO	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	44.4	0.0	33.3 / 55.5
KZN-VS	40.0	6.7	6.7	6.7	20.0	6.7	6.7	53.4 / 40.1
TVL	15.0	30.0	15.0	15.0	10.0	15.0	0.0	60 / 25
Cape	10.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	30.0	20.0	0.0	10 / 50

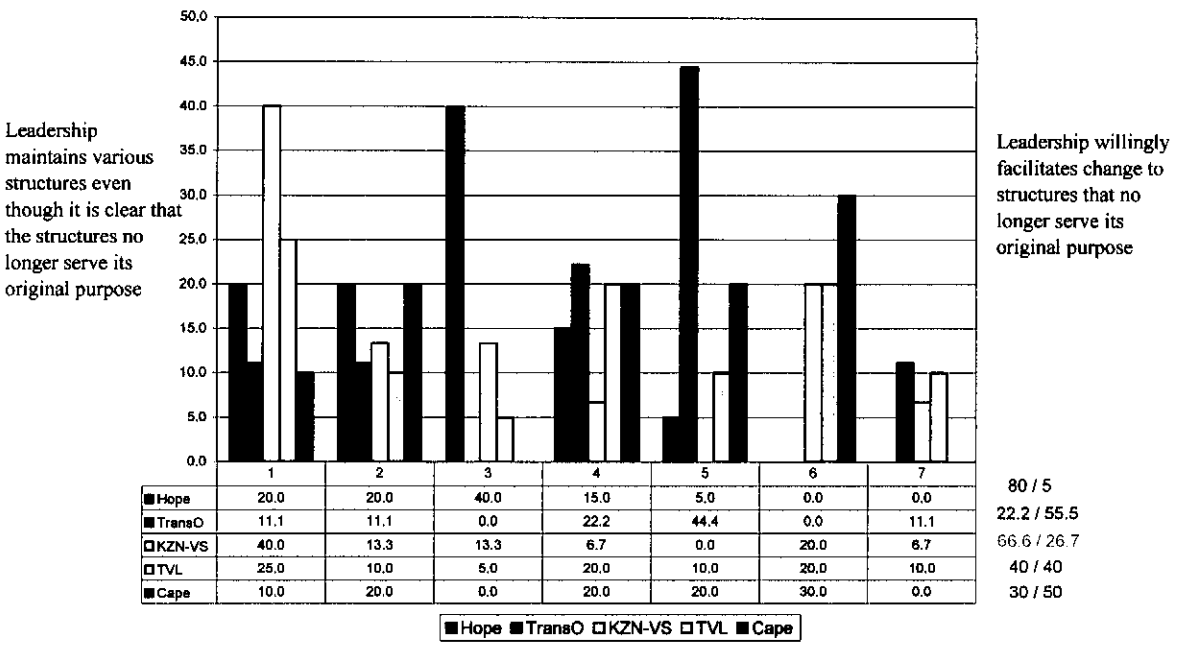
Hope TransO KZN-VS TVL Cape

Illustration 40

Pastoral Survey - Individual Conference Response

Conference Level of Administration - Organizational Structure

Statement 2.10



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hope	20.0	20.0	40.0	15.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	80 / 5
TransO	11.1	11.1	0.0	22.2	44.4	0.0	11.1	22.2 / 55.5
KZN-VS	40.0	13.3	13.3	6.7	0.0	20.0	6.7	66.6 / 26.7
TVL	25.0	10.0	5.0	20.0	10.0	20.0	10.0	40 / 40
Cape	10.0	20.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	30 / 50

5.9 Pastoral Surveys – Union level of administration

The pastoral surveys also included the union level of administration. The same aspects of administration tested on the conference level of administration were applied to the union level of administration.

The accumulative results are as follows:

5.9.1 Administrative authority

Illustration 41, moving from the centre of the scale to the left, shows that 68,9% of pastors, felt that, the administration is influenced more by tradition and maintaining rules and policies. On the opposite end of the scale 18,9% of pastors saw the administration was influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends.

Illustration 41

Pastoral Survey

Union Level of Administration - Administration Authority

Statement 3.1

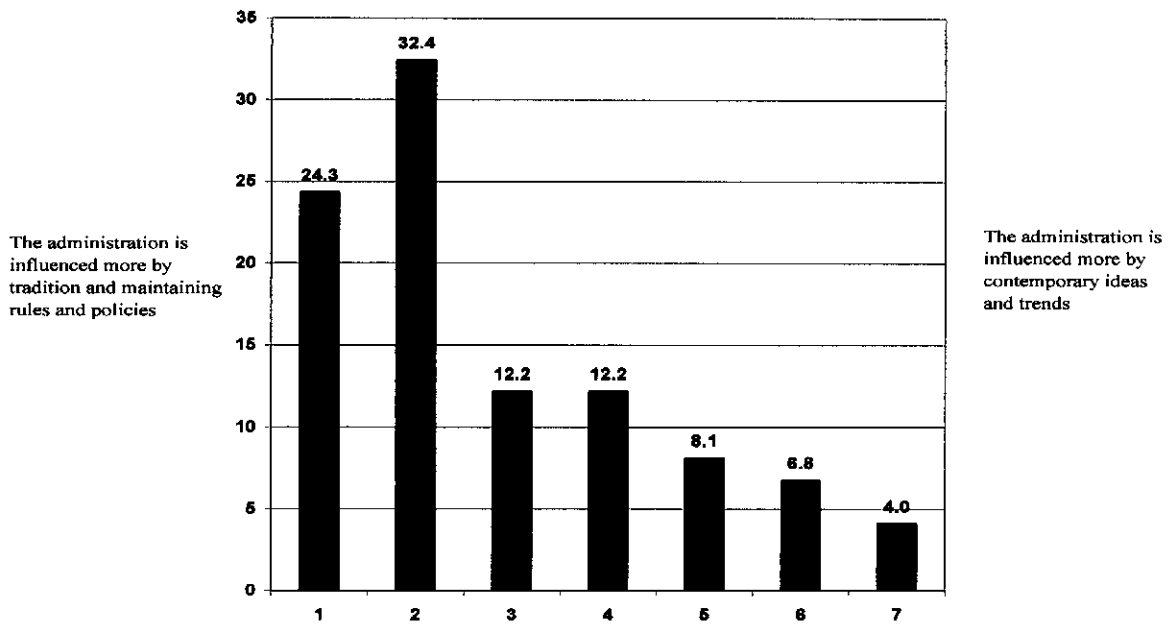


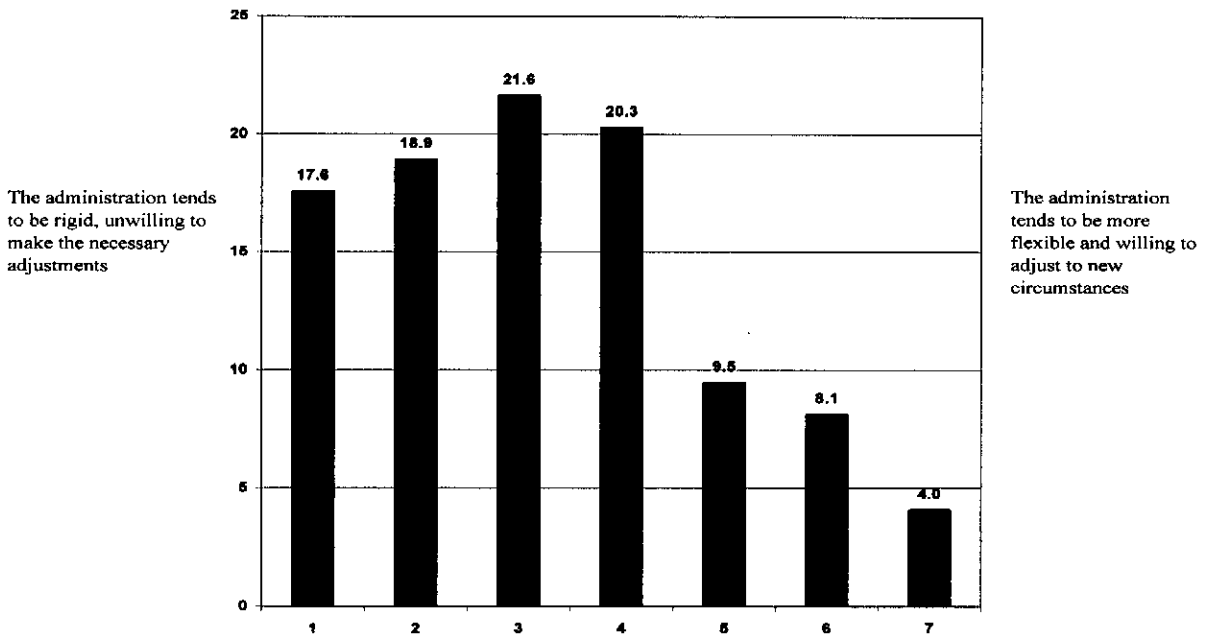
Illustration 42 deals with the second set of statements pertaining to administrative authority. It shows that 58,1% of pastors felt that the administration tends towards rigidity, unwilling to make the necessary adjustments. While on the other hand 21,6% of pastors felt that administration tended to be more flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances.

Illustration 42

Pastoral Survey

Union Level of Administration - Administration Authority

Statement 3.3



5.9.2 Leadership

Illustration 43 and 44 deals with the aspect of leadership. Illustration 43 shows that 74,3% of pastors saw leadership as having a tendency of imposing its will upon those at "grassroots" while 18,9% saw leadership as engaging in joint decision making with those at "grassroots".

Illustration 43

Pastoral Survey

Union Level of Administration - Leadership

Statement 3.2

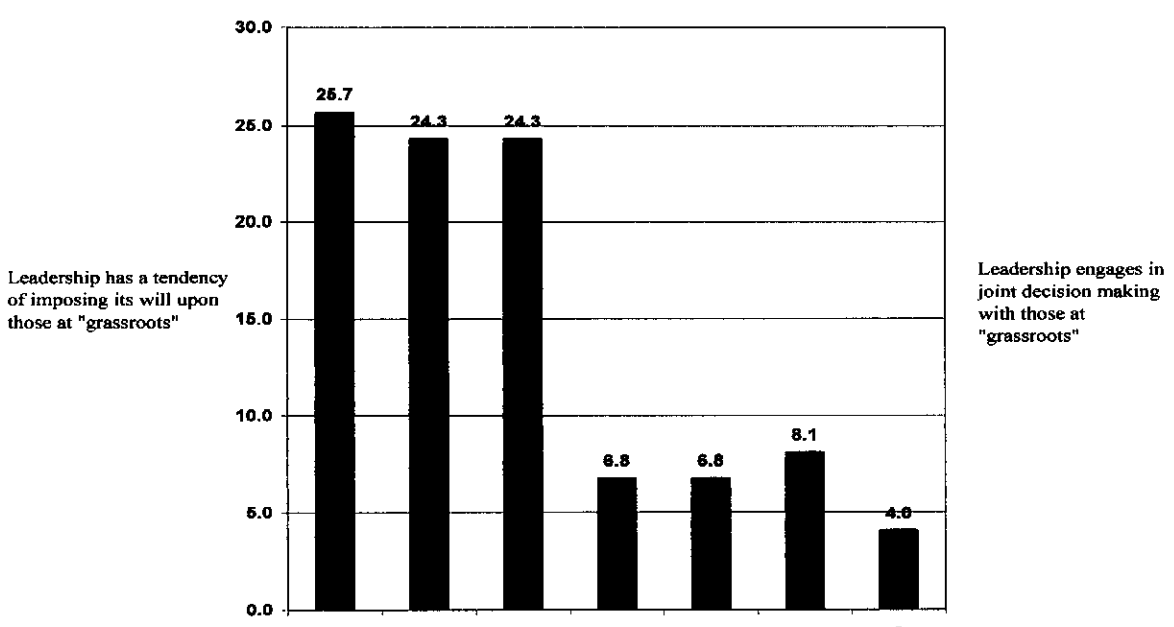
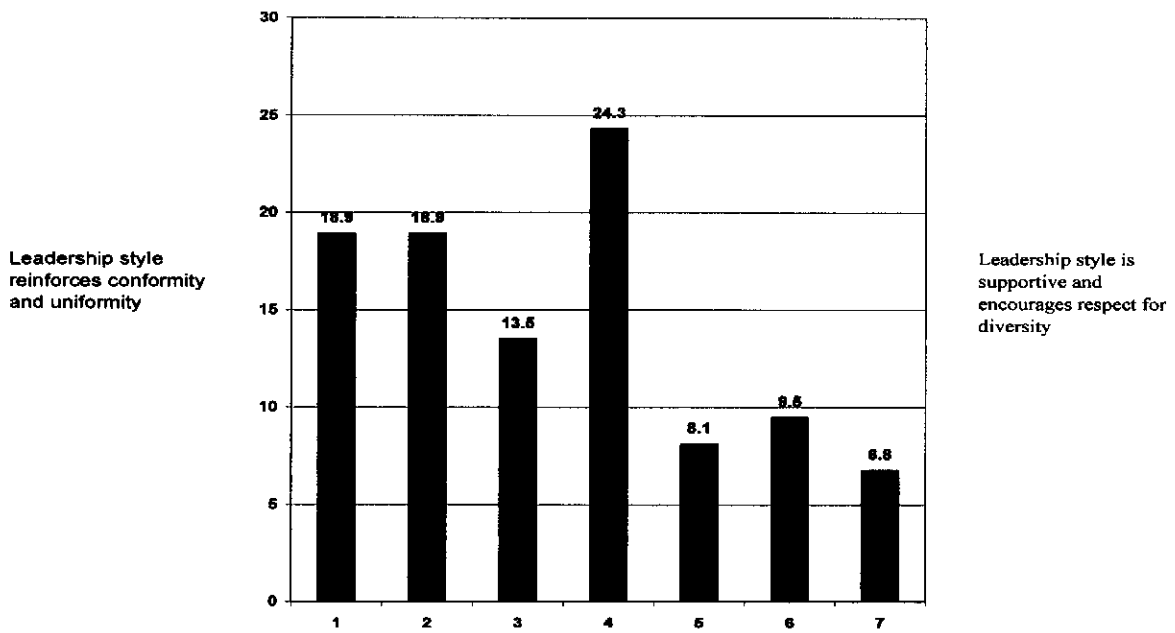


Illustration 44 deals with the second set of statements pertaining to leadership. It shows that 51,3% of pastors saw leadership style as reinforcing conformity and uniformity, while 24,4% felt that leadership style was supportive and encouraging of respect for diversity.

Illustration 44
Pastoral Survey
Union Level of Administration - Leadership
Statement 3.5



5.9.3 Power

In illustration 45 and 46 the aspect of power in administration is dealt with. Illustration 45 shows that 67,6% of pastors felt that leadership kept power vested in small groups of people close itself. On the opposite end of the scale 21,6% felt that leadership believed in the potential of all its people and always commits itself to the sharing of power.

Illustration 45
Pastoral Survey
Union Level of Administration - Power
Statement 3.4

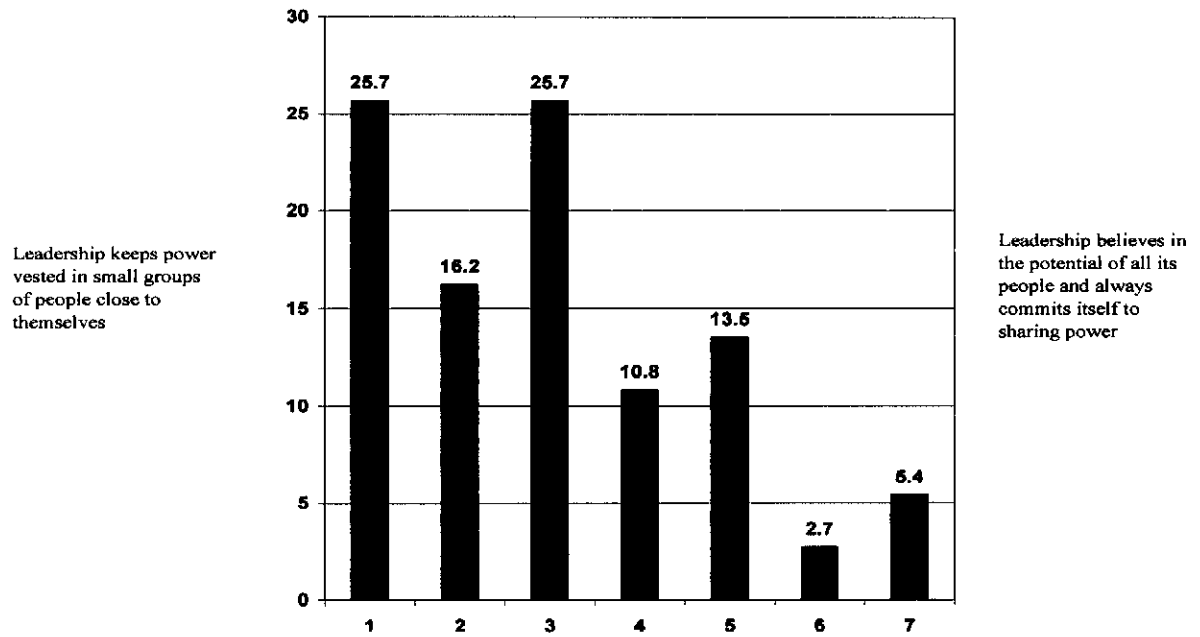
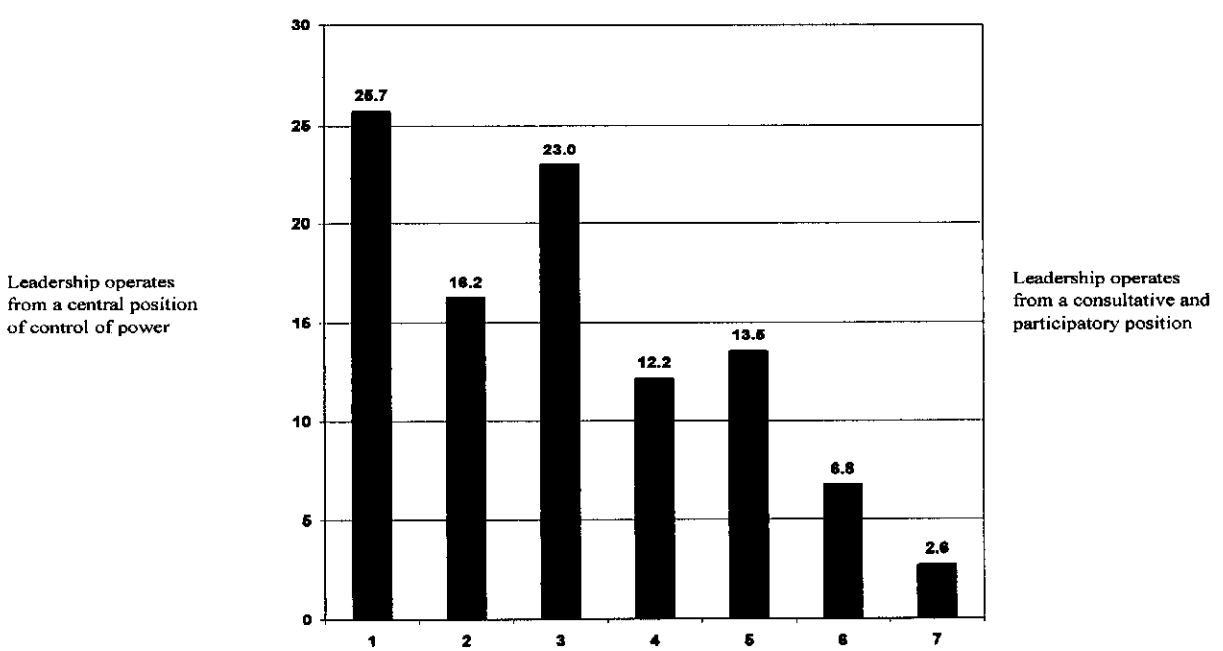


Illustration 46 contains the second set of statements concerning the aspect of power. Here 64,9% of the pastors felt that leadership operated from a central position of control of power, while 22,9% felt that leadership operated from a consultative and participatory position.

Illustration 46
Pastoral Survey
Union Level of Administration - Power
Statement 3.6



5.9.4 Transition

The aspect of transition is dealt with in illustration 47 and 48. In illustration 47 it is shown that 48,7% of pastors felt that leadership saw change as a threat and unnecessary risk taking, while 28,3% felt that leadership saw change as an opportunity for growth and renewal.

Illustration 47
Pastoral Survey
Union Level of Administration - Transition
Statement 3.7

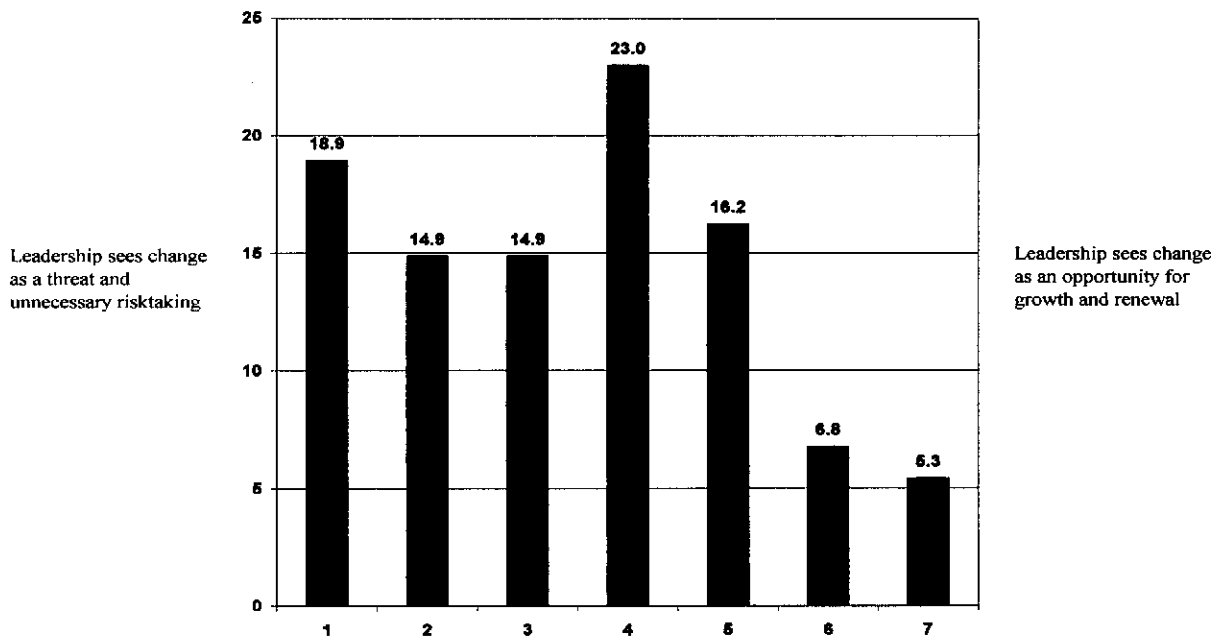


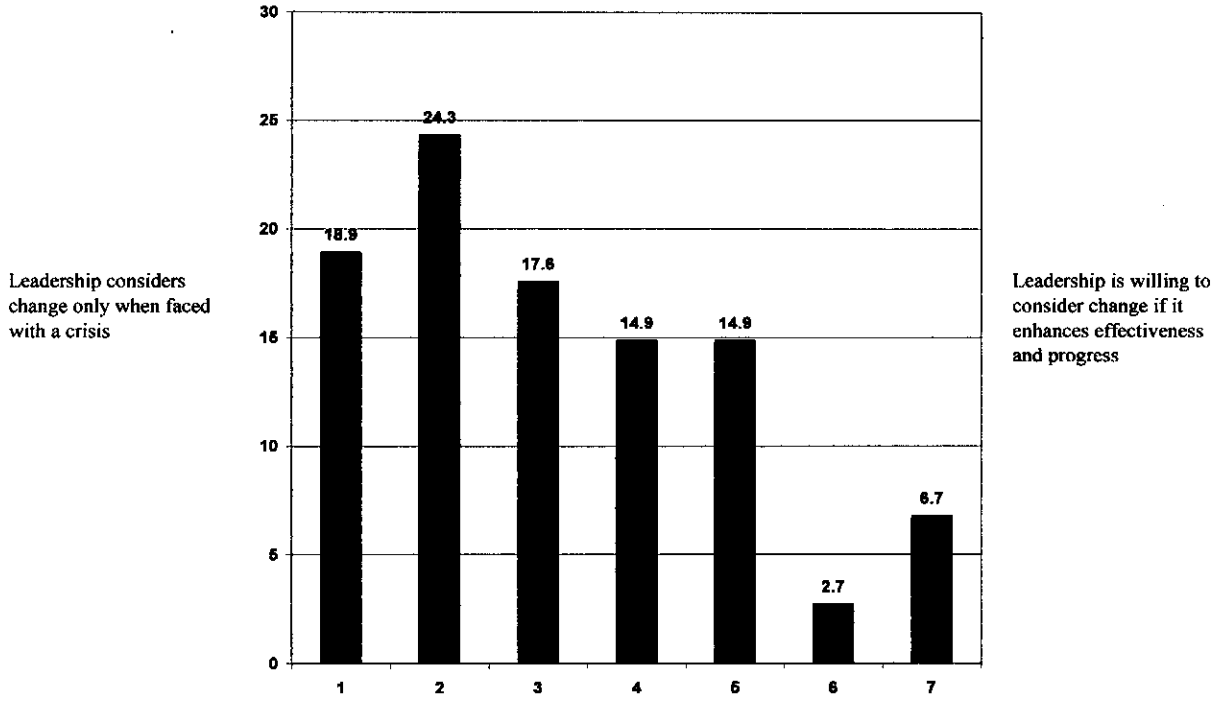
Illustration 48 deals with the second set of statements concerning transition. Here 60,8% of pastors felt that leadership considered change only when faced with a crisis, while 24,3% felt that leadership was willing to consider change if it enhanced effectiveness and progress.

Illustration 48

Pastoral Survey

Union Level of Administration - Transition

Statement 3.9



5.9.5 Organizational structures

The last of the five aspects of administration is dealt with in illustration 49 and 50. In illustration 49, it shows that 68,9% of pastors saw authority as being administered from the top structures down to the "grassroots" level of the church, while 14,6% saw authority as being shared with the "grassroots" level of the church.

Illustration 49

Pastoral Survey

Union Level of Administration - Organizational Structure

Statement 3.8

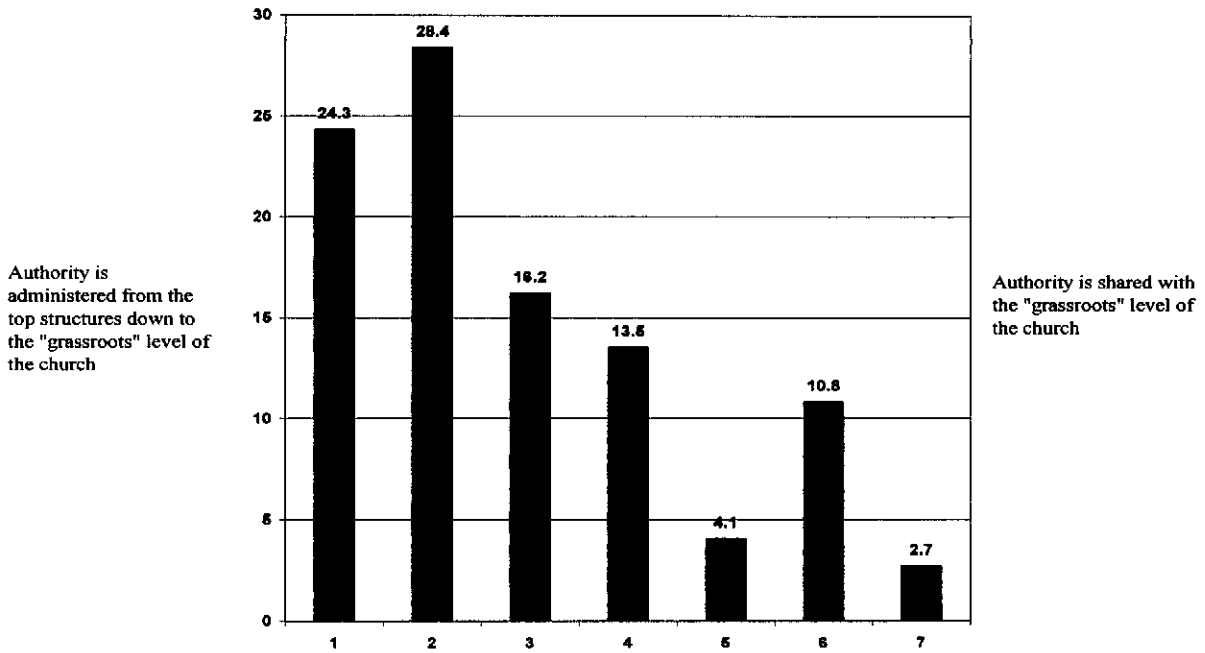


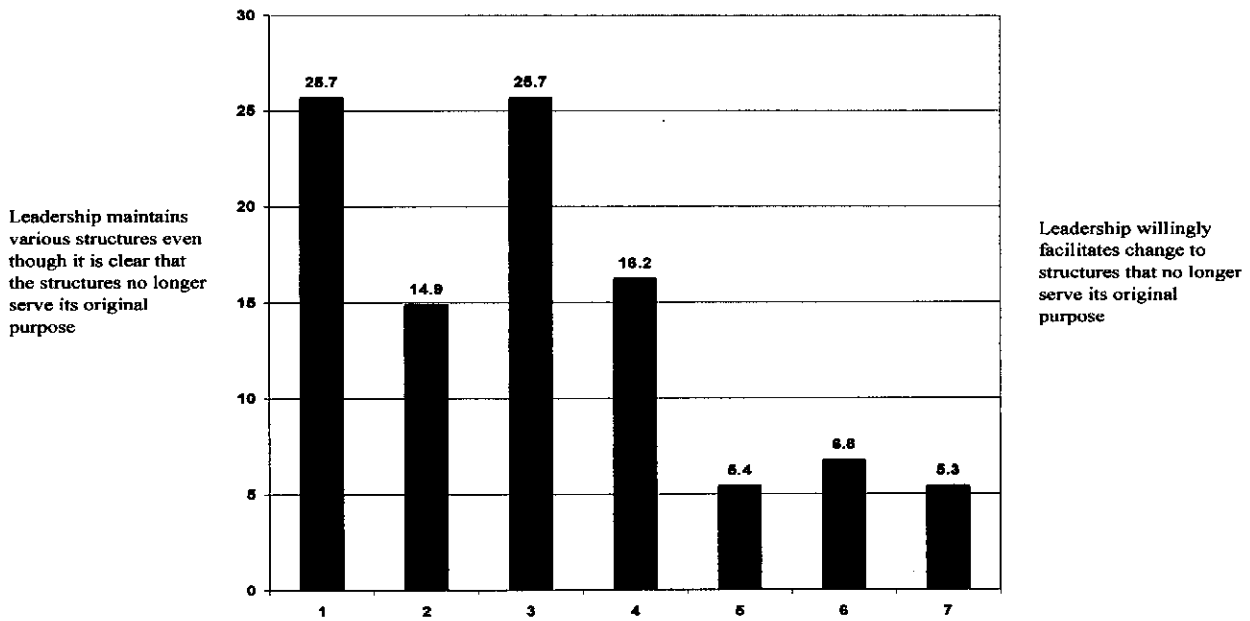
Illustration 50 shows the second set of statements concerning organizational structures. Here 66,3% of pastors experienced leadership as maintaining various structures even though it was clear that those structures no longer served its original purpose. On the opposite end of the scale 17,5% of pastors felt that leadership was willing to facilitate change to structures that no longer served its purpose.

Illustration 50

Pastoral Survey

Union Level of Administration - Organizational Structure

Statement 3.10



5.10 Pastoral surveys – The average accumulative responses of pastors concerning the Conference and Union administration

A comparison is made between the responses of pastors to the statements covering the five aspects of administration of the Conferences and the Union administration.

The average is taken of responses to both sets of statements of the same aspect of administration[51], is then compared on the two levels of administration. Illustration 51 shows the average accumulative responses of pastors concerning the conference and the Union Administration.

[51] E.g. Illustration 21 and 22 of the Pastoral Surveys, concerning Administrative Authority, the results on either ends of the scale are added and divided by two to get the average response on administrative authority.

Illustration 51

Accumulative Responses of Pastors Concerning Conference and Union Administrations

		Negative Experience %	Positive Experience %
Administrative Authority	Conf. Admin	55	30
	Union Admin	64	20
Leadership	Conf. Admin	50	37
	Union Admin	63	22
Power	Conf. Admin	48	37
	Union Admin	65	22
Transition	Conf. Admin	50	33
	Union Admin	55	26
Organizational Structures	Conf. Admin	49	35
	Union Admin	68	16

The comparisons shown in illustration 51 shows that on both levels of administration, the accumulative responses show that pastors negative experiences outweigh the positive experiences of both administrations.

It is important to note that the higher you go in the hierarchical structure of the church, the more negatively the structures are experienced. This is due to the fact that the higher you go in the hierarchy, less people at "grassroots" have a say. The representation of the "grassroots" to the higher structures become less and less.

Illustration 52

The Average Accumulative Results of the responses of the views of congregations concerning Conference and Union Administrations

1. Does the Conference/Union contribute to the effectiveness of your church?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Conference	32	59	9
Union	0	93	7

2. Is the Conference/Union leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Conference	3	91	6
Union	0	99	1

3. Would you describe the Conference/Union as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape."

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Conference	69	21	10
Union	85	4	11

4. Do you think that the Conference/Union serves your congregation in an enabling way?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Conference	31	62	7
Union	6	90	4

5. Does the Conference/Union serve as an effective resource centre?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Conference	31	67	2
Union	7	85	8

Illustration 52 shows the average accumulative comparison of the responses of the congregations views of the conference and union administrations. It shows the same trend at that shown in the pastoral surveys; the higher you go in the hierarchy, the less people at "grassroots" have a say. This state of affairs has caused people to experience the administrations of the conferences and Union in a negative way.

5.11 Contemporary Adventism in South Africa

The question to be asked is, what is happening to contemporary Adventism in South Africa? It is the opinion of the researcher, that in general over a broad spectrum many Adventists have learned to live with plurality and ambiguity. They have become disillusioned and frustrated by their church leadership and administration that have avoided and been unwilling to engage it.

Looking at it from the typical stages theory perspective (Hendriks 1993:95-114), the following comes to light: many people in the church have moved out of the dependent stage. They are no longer like little children who are dependent. In fact many members have tertiary education and holds high position of responsibility. They have been exposed to various opinions and have become open to the opinions of others. Their world has broadened, they no longer live in a small world like before. They are no longer dependent on a spiritual leader for spiritual growth. They have developed personal security and self-esteem. Their security is no longer dependent on that which the group provides as in the "clustering stage." They no longer access power through the group, but have found power in whom and what they are.

Many people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa find themselves in the "accommodation stage." Their centre of orientation is that which is open to various opinions. They are no longer limited to conformity and uniformity but have learnt to deal with diversity and pluralism. They have become more mature, giving acknowledgment and consideration to the "other." This is seen in the opinions of church boards members in the structured interviews. Many want to know, why tithe cannot be used for church buildings and not only for the remuneration of ministers. They are of the opinion that a percentage of tithes should remain at the local church, to be used for evangelism and humanitarian work. This kind of thinking is divergent of organizational thinking.

While the membership of the church has largely moved from a "dependent" to an "accommodation stage", leadership, the administration of the church has not made the necessary switches, to coincide with the switches made by its people. They are still administering people as if they are in a dependent stage, never knowing what to do, always having to receive instruction.

The problem essentially is the dysfunction between a transforming laity and an untransformed hierarchy. At the core of this phenomenon is the question of power. The argument here is, that a controlling hierarchical structure operates by the control of power. Those in the hierarchy in power do not recognize this phenomenon. They speak of authority that has been delegated to them. This of course is a euphemism for the control and manipulation of power. What is not realized by those in the hierarchy is that delegated authority, if not carefully managed can develop into absolute power of controlling those at local church level. Unrestricted power becomes absolute power. It is important for those in the hierarchy of the SDA Church in South Africa to recognize and give due cognizance of how those at grassroots experience their administration of the church.

The responses to the use of power as shown in the accumulative results of the structured interviews, concerning conferences were very negative. Responses to the statement "Power in the organization is vested in those in the top positions of the Conference" as shown in illustration 5, solicited the following response:

50.0% - Strongly agreed

38,1% - Agreed

2,4% - Undecided

9,5% - Disagreed

Adding the responses of those who strongly agreed and those who agreed, gives a response of agreement of 88,1%

The second statement as shown in illustration 6 states that "power is shared with those "grassroots" level of the church."

The response to this was as follows:

64,3% - Strongly disagreed

19,0% - disagreed

2,4% - were undecided

14,3% - Agreed

Adding the responses of those who strongly disagreed and those who disagreed gives a response of disagreement of 83,3%.

Taking the average collective experience of the responses of pastors shown in illustrations 35 and 36, shows that 47,43% of ministers felt that power in the conference administration are vested in small groups close to the leaders. They also felt that leadership operates from a central position of the control of power. This is with specific reference to the Conference administration supported by an Executive Committee. On the other hand 38,83% felt the administration shares power and operates from a consultative and participatory position, and 15,72% of pastors were not sure.

At the core of the negative experience of power in the church, by both church boards and pastors, lies the structural arrangement of church organization. It has a pyramidal church structure. The pattern of communication is from top to bottom. It flows monologues in one direction from the top. Any changes come from the top by decisions that are taken by those higher up in the hierarchy. All decisions passed down are authoritative and expected to be carried out.

This pattern has gradually led to the top losing touch with the needs and aspirations of those at the bottom of the pyramid. In fact, the structured interview shows that the leadership of both the conference and union administration are seldom seen at the local church level.

Illustration 12 deals with the question: "Is the Conference leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?" The results shows that on average 91% of respondents (church boards) answered "no" to the question. The same question was put to church boards concerning the Union.

Illustration 17 shows that 99% of respondents answered "no" to the question. The problem exists on both levels of administration. However, the higher the level of administration the worse it becomes.

The modern individual as a believer, no longer wants to be a member of a church in which he or she has to be uncritical of the monologues flow of communication. Members want to be involved not only at grassroots but in the decision-making process that involves them. Especially, in the appointment of pastors to local churches. Members want to be consulted as to who their pastor will be. This is not just for the sake of consultation, but to be part of the eventual decision, a decision with which they can live, because they were part of the decision-making process.

A further observation is made concerning organizational structure. The controlling of power spoken of is not about the capability of any particular person, but that the structure as constituted centralizes power in the hands of a few, the administrators and their executive committees. This state of affairs no long works as a form of serving God's people, but has become obsessed with itself and has resulted in the maintenance of its own control.

With this kind of structure, meaningful change is hard to bring about. Any changes that need to be made in this kind of structural arrangement and to the structural arrangement, can only come from the top. The organization is stringently controlled by numerous policies, which are formulated in the top positions of the hierarchy. All policies formulated must be formulated in harmony with General Conference policies. So to have policies changed is a laborious process, having to be processed by various committees upward, there after consideration will be made at the top of the hierarchy.

The structured interviews with church boards gave attention to the question of bureaucracy. In illustration 13, the question is posed "Would you describe the Conference as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape?" The aggregate response was 69% "yes" and 21% "no" answer and 10% were "not sure". The same question was also applied to the Union administration. Illustration 18 shows the aggregate response as 85% "yes" with 4% "no" and 10% "not sure".

The question of how people at grassroots experience the phenomenon of change by the administration of the conferences is shown in illustration 7 concerning the structured interviews with church boards. The statement put to church boards states: "The administration is always open to change and promotes innovation for change." Those who were in disagreement totalled 90% and 10% agreed with the statement. A second statement put to church boards was "The administration sees change as a threat and therefore, maintains the status quo." Those who were in agreement with the statement totalled 71%. Those who were in disagreement totalled 21% with 7% undecided. This shows that change in the organization as experienced by those at grassroots rarely take place with those in the top structures of the church.

If those on top of the hierarchical ladder have too much vested interest in the maintenance of the structure, they will not promote change. Then too, if there are too many external pressures bearing upon them, they will not be able to recognize the need for change. Neither will they have the necessary will to bring about change.

Under these circumstances change will only be considered when faced with a crisis. Illustration 28 shows that on overage 54% of pastors felt that change is only considered when the conference administration is faced with a crisis. In comparison, illustration 27 shows that 47% of pastors felt that leadership sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk taking, while 32% felt differently. Those on the top rungs of the hierarchical ladder will not promote change, if it means risking their position. They will maintain the status quo.

Change is occurring at local church level within the SDA church in South Africa. People are becoming hermeneutically more sensitive as to what is happening around them and within the church organization. Therefore, they need a broader ecclesial base, which is of the primary concern. However, if a broader ecclesial base is not created for a broader participation of people, we face sustained disillusionment and alienation.

There is a difference between the responses of the church boards and that of the pastors. In particular, the church board members were extremely critical of the administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. The pastors were less critical in their responses to the statements made concerning the administration.

The reason for this difference can only be explained from the point of conjecture. It is supposed that pastors for various reasons such as among other being employees of the organization which they have to be critical of, may not want to be too critical, since it could also have a reflection on them. Furthermore, it would be advantageous to be less critical and more loyal, since the results would be published. They would want to maintain an appropriate image of what is happening. On the other hand pastors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church tend to be very conservative in how they present themselves and the structures wherein they work.

How they speak about the administration among themselves is of course very different. At which time they are very critical and outspoken. However, they would not so to say "hang out the washing," for others to see.

However, it must be kept in mind that the researcher could not research this aspect head-on. It would not work. Racial tensions are too high and the situation very sensitive. Therefore, the role of race in all of this could not be tested. Also the role of distrust could not be tested for the same reasons. If the researcher attempted such testing, he would not be allowed to do this research, as was the case in the Trans Orange Conference, were ultra sensitivity exists.

Blacks were also very negative. Here once again, it could be that service delivery is weak, which is better among Whites and Coloured. However, this is only a conjecture. Here too the tensions were too high to be tested.

In summary, this chapter dealt with the empirical research of the study. In particular it set out to investigate the question: What are the key factors in the administrative setup of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa that has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file in the church from the administrative structures of the church?

In this chapter the primary argument of the hypothesis was elaborated and tested. The hypothesis that under -girds the study is as follows: The way in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered, with particular reference to: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures, has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church. The hypothesis is considered proven.

The methodology is served, as the chapter reflects the present reality of the administrative structures, and as it shows strong traditions of administration.

In conclusion, the danger that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa faces, is the exacerbation of the wedge of alienation, displayed in dissatisfaction and disillusionment between the local church community and the wider institutional church. The exacerbation will worsen, if the church organization neglects to address the questions of power and structure, which has had a negative outworking on the administrative authority, leadership and transition in the hierarchy of the church.

The way in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered, with particular reference to: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures have contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the Church.

The formulated hypothesis in which it is conjectured that something is the matter is stated as follows: "The way (ethos) in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered is the cause of the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church.

The conjectures of the hypothesis are strongly supported by the results of the structured interviews and pastoral surveys. The key factors identified as contributing to the alienation are in the areas of administration authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures. These five areas were tested in the structured interviews and pastoral surveys. The results of both instruments supported the hypothesis identifying these five areas in particular as being the key factors for the alienation that exists between the administrative structures and the rank and file in the SDA church in South Africa.

Finally, it must be stated that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, with its hierarchical administration structure functions along strong institutional lines and methods. However, the local church in its life and activities functions organically along the lines of an organism, alive through the authority of God's Spirit and in faith seeking a living relationship with God.

CHAPTER 6

THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to apply theological evaluation to certain aspects of administrative practice inherent in the polity of the SDA Church in South Africa. In particular it wants to establish a biblical understanding of the five aspects of administration as tested in the surveys to ministers and structured interviews with church boards. These aspects are: Leadership, organizational structures, administrative authority, power and transition.

This chapter is a correlational hermeneutical dialogue between the SDA world and Word, the Scriptural principles. This is where the study is discerning about the problem the church has and which reality has been proven through the empirical research results described in chapter five.

It is also partly, going back to Scripture and Systematic Theology to discern what it says about the five crucial aspects of ecclesiology.

6.2 Methodology

This chapter concerns itself with the discernment process as it allows for a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue to take place between the different points of the cross. It has to do with "transformative action at different levels." It involves the five aspects of administration: leadership, organizational structures, administrative authority, power and transition. It points forward to recommendations in chapter seven, its strategy, future implementation and its evaluation and progress. In all, it involves the discerning the will of God, and participation in God's mission.

The discussion that follows involves taking the five aspects of administration in the SDA church and look at it through the lenses of scripture as its normative authority. The discussion then refers to chapter five which contains the results of the structured interviews conducted with church boards and surveys with pastors. In this way the experiences of church boards and pastors will be evaluated against Scripture as a normative guide concerning the five aspects of administration.

Before proceeding with the discussion, a brief overview is given of the basis for SDA organization which acts a backdrop to the discussion.

In applying a theological evaluation to these aspects of administration, it must be done against the background of denominational organization. The current administration practice is a direct outgrowth of denominational polity and its structures. The Seventh-day Adventist Church organization and structure, its origin and development has its roots embedded in American soil. Oliver (1989:326) observes that the organizational structures 'were conceived largely by persons from one particular socio-cultural community.'[51] After much discussion and opposition to organization, Adventists decided in 1860 to organize

[51] Oliver (1989:325) points out that at the General Conference Session of 1901, "there were only three delegates ... who did not consider themselves North American.

themselves into a formal denomination and adopt the name Seventh-day Adventists (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:94).

Before proceeding with the theological evaluation, a brief overview of the history of organization building will be given. The church basically has two periods of organizational building: 1860 – 1863 and 1903 – 1903 (Oliver 1989, Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000).

6.3 Church organization building 1860 – 1863

According to Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:90) the first half of 1860 saw the discussion on church organization gain momentum. By the end of that summer a full-scale discussion took place, in spite of strong opposition to organization.

However, with the roadblocks to organization removed, Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:92) observes that the move toward 'denominational structure was steady.' Furthermore, they state that, 'at the beginning of the American Civil War a small group of Seventh-day Adventists gathered in Battle Creek, and requested the nine ministers present to prepare recommendations for a plan of church organization.'

The form of organization suggested was simple. The ministers suggested a three level organization: local churches, state or district conferences, and a General Conference, to represent all churches and act on their behalf. The first conference[52] to be formed was the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in October 1861 (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:92-93).

Not only was the form of organization kept simple but Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:93) points out that officials of the conference were kept to a minimum, consisting of 'a president, a clerk, and a three man executive committee.' According to Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:93) six other conferences were organized within a year. Church organization consisted of the election of one elder and deacons from among the members. The local elder could baptize and administer the Lord's Supper in the absence of an ordained minister.

Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:93) states, that 'Laymen played an important role in these early years.' This is shown by the election of a layman William Higley, as president of the Michigan Conference at its first annual meeting. At this conference session, it was decided to pay ministers a regular salary and they were required to report their activities.

6.3.1 The General Conference

In 1862 the Michigan Conference invited the newly organized conferences to send delegates to meet with them during their 1863 annual conference, so that a general conference could be organized. Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:93) note that the invitation was extended to conferences and not to individual churches. In this way 'the pattern was set for the indirect hierarchical structure adopted by the denomination' (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:94).

[52] Conference was 'a term already employed by the Methodists' (Schwarz and Greenleaf 2000:93). Here it applies to an administrative unit of churches in a designated area.

Five other conferences sent delegates to join with delegates from the Michigan Conference, May 20-23, 1863. According to Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:94) the delegates met 'to adopt a constitution and elects officers for the General Conference.' The constitution made provision 'for a three-member executive committee.' The three-member executive committee included the president. He was to exercise general supervision of the ministers and that they were equitably distributed. He was also to promote missionary work, and authorize expenditure. John Byington became the first president of the General Conference, Uriah Smith became secretary and EL Walker became treasurer. It is noted by Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:95) that by the time the General Conference was organized, Seventh-day Adventist was a minority group among American Christians. Membership totalled 3500 in 1863 in Northern United States with thirty ministers. General Conference Sessions were to be held annually.

In a three page articles written by Barry Oliver (1990:1) *The Organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, he states:

> An obvious question that should be asked and answered is the question of why it was necessary to organize the "advent believers" into a denomination. Certainly there was some concerted opposition to the whole idea. Interestingly, a theological answer cannot be found for that question. It is clear that the founding fathers of the church did not decide on a church organizational form which was strongly theologically grounded or which was based on any particular biblical mode. While some general notions of stewardship of personal and financial resources certainly did influence the discussion, that is as far as it went theologically.

A further question raised by Oliver (1990:1) concerned what dictated the need for church organization. It was 'pragmatic necessities' as stated by Oliver 'if left unattended, would stifle the growth of the fledgling organization.' AG Daniels, the General Conference President, in 1907 listed various reasons for organization in 1863. Oliver (1990:1) cites it as: '(1) failure to keep church membership records, (2) lack of church officers, (3) no way of determining who were accredited representatives of the people, (4) no regular support for the ministry, and (5) no legal provision for holding property.'[53]

Schwarz (1979:93) in his book *Light Bearers to the Remnant* says, 'the question of the legal ownership of property-church buildings and the publishing office – eventually propelled the Sabbath keepers into formal organization.'

6.4 Reorganization 1901 – 1903

The church grew rapidly however, it remained a small denomination. Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:241) shows that by 1901 membership grew to 78,000 members compared to 3,500 in 1863. Growth was also evident in the amount of conferences. From the original six in 1863 by 1901 there were fifty-seven. Missions, forty-one in all were 'scattered in every major part of the world' including South Africa, but excluding China. Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:241) note that the expansion of the church was not without problems. It experienced external problems – 'relating to politics and their reaction produced changes in both church policy and organization . . . internal, relating largely to institution and management.' With the rapid growth of the church, it was soon realized as Oliver (1990:2) puts it 'that the meager organization that

[53] For further discussion see *Development of Organization in the SDA Church* in Don F. Neufeld (ed) *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* p. 1042-1054.

was set in place in 1863 could not cope with this numeric, geographic, and institutional growth.' By the turn of the century, its membership had spread across the United States, into Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Its "mission fields" had also increased substantially.

Oliver (1990:2) points out that the organizational structures of 1863 could no longer cope with the extensive growth of the church. Oliver states:

> The organizational structures of 1863 did not foresee and therefore could not cope with this nor with the increase in departments and institutions which began to spring up in order to care for the publishing, educational, health, and missionary interest of the church. Each of these became a separate entity in itself, outside the existing organizational structure of the church, but calling on the services of already over-extended administrators. The church was in danger of drowning in its own bureaucracy.

However, there were leaders as indicated by Oliver (1990:2) who felt that changes were necessary. Schwarz and Greenleaf (2000:313) points out that the 1901 General Conference Session brought about various structural changes, the reason being to ensure two major reforms:

(1) decentralizing decision-making, administrative responsibility and the establishment of Union conferences

(2) integrating ever-expanding church programs through various departments, to be represented on conference executive committees. Years subsequent to 1901 the church also 'systematized its financial support of the world program.'

Oliver (1990:2) points out that the 1901 and 1903 General Conference Sessions adopted a representative form of organizational governance. Oliver (1990:2) describes it as follows: The local church of believers is the first basic unit and functions as the body of Christ. The second unit is the local conference comprised of the grouping of churches in a designated area. Local conferences in a designated area are constituted into a Union Conference. Union Conferences throughout the world belong to the general Conference of SDA.

6.5 Historical theological basis for organization

Schwarz (1979:93) observes that it was the need 'of legal ownership of property – church buildings and the publishing office' that eventually influenced the church leaders to opt for formal organization. Oliver (1989:48) points out that James White one of the founder members felt that 'organization was called forth by some theological considerations.' However, as Schwarz (1979:93) states White made this claim basing it on the fact that the word of God 'calls on us to act the part of faithful stewards of his goods.'

However, as time went on, it became apparent that the form of the organization which was originally adopted was in need of refinement and adjustment. Therefore, Oliver (1989:218) states 'Thus it was a question of form—the form that the organizational structures of the church should assume – that was the focus of reorganization.' As Oliver (1989:218, 219) indicates that the leaders did not want the 'refinement and adjustment' to take place in a haphazard manner. They wanted some '"under-girding principles" which were foundational to structural forms' and other positions adopted by the church. Oliver (1989:219) states 'Yet, in spite of their insistence on the necessity of "principle," Seventh-day Adventists did not develop systematic theological positions which provided a framework by which the principles could be prioritized.' According

to Oliver (1989:219) they rather concentrated on distinctive doctrines as a denomination and further, that they were overly-occupied with expansion than finding 'consensus on a distinctive ecclesiology.'

Oliver (1989:219) argues that 'historical data reveals different view points regarding the selection of theological material to be used to support reorganization of denominational structures.' These different viewpoints concentrated itself in two schools of thought. The first school of thought was led by AT Jones, EJ Waggoner, DJ Paulson and PT Magan. This group placed emphasis on theological images that 'emphasized the local nature of the church' but overlooked those that 'emphasized the universal nature of the church.' They were against naming one person as "president" of the General Conference. They felt that it would 'detract from the headship of Christ and removed the focus of attention from the mystical nature of the church to be the human, visible nature of the church.'

The second school of thought pointed out by Oliver (1989:220) was represented by AG Daniells, WC White and WA Spicer. They on the other hand insisted "that the church was not only local but also universal in nature." They argued that the "universal unity of the church" took precedence over the local congregation. They recognized Christ as head of the church that the church was the body of Christ, and spiritual gifts were given to the church. Important to the church was the "reformation principles of the priesthood of all believers." They believed that "organizational principles derived from emphasis on those theological concepts could facilitate the task of the church . . . the transmission of the gospel. ... For them the task informed their concept of the church. For Jones and his associates, their concept of the church informed the task' (Oliver 1989:220-221).

A full discussion of the conflict between these two groups is beyond this study. However, it does give insight into how the thinking went at the time.

6.5.1 A Functional ecclesiology

According to Oliver (1989:327) the church had committed itself to the imminence of Christ's return and its urgent task of evangelizing the world that it did not work toward 'the development of an introspective ontological ecclesiology.' Here once again Jones and his associates who thought theologically about the church sought after biblical images as 'their foundation for an ecclesiology which emphasized ontological images of the church - - that is an ecclesiology which was more focused on what the church was rather than on what the church did.'

Many leaders of the church then, concerned themselves with the great task of evangelism, saw it as 'far too pressing for the church to commit itself to an ecclesiological position which did not give sufficient attention to the urgency of the task and its global scope' (Oliver 1989:327). It was this understanding of "the task" that called the church into being and action. Therefore, Oliver (1989:328) says 'since the church was defined in terms of its mission and its function, administrative structures were needed which optimized the realization of these functions.' Oliver (1989:328) further makes the statement 'The Seventh-day Adventist Church still operates with ecclesiological priorities which are better described as functional than ontological.

A thorough, well-defined or systematic ecclesiological under-girding for its structure has not been formulated.'

Oliver (1989:328) speaks of a phenomenon that is also prevalent among those in administrative positions in South Africa.

Oliver (1989:328) referring to the lack of a systematic ecclesiology to under-gird the structure of the SDA Church says:

> Despite that deficiency, the impression is often given by many who hold positions of responsibility within the denomination that structures of organization in the church are not subject to adaptation or change. They seem to assume that rigidity is necessary for unity and that uniformity enhances organizational solidarity in the church. Their contention appears to be founded on the pragmatic assumption that change would invite disunity. They appear to assume that the form of organization adopted by the church was itself specified by divine revelation.[54]

Oliver (1989:329) argues that the argument held by those in administrative positions concerning adaptation and change in the church is inconsistent. This is based on the fact that rigid ecclesiastical structures are normally a result of a systematic ecclesiology that is well-defined, focusing on 'ontological images of the church.' Oliver points out that 'Roman Catholic hierarchical structure [as] a case in point.' He further states 'any church which has a theology of apostolic succession and is presided over by bishops has rigid structures which arise directly from it theological stance.' Therefore, it is inconsistent of the SDA Church 'whose ecclesiology is nearly always thought of in terms of mission - - the function of the church' to have such rigid structures. Especially is this the case in the SDA Church in which the accomplishment of the great commission has been prioritized.

Oliver (1989:329) argues for 'centralization and co-ordination of administrative structures in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.' This he base's on the fact of a world-wide church. However, he argues against rigidity that makes it unable to adapt its structures. He states 'Flexibility and the ability to adapt accord well with the ecclesiological emphasis of the church and the contingencies of its task.'

Oliver (1989:333) stress the need for a systematic ecclesiology, in the light of the fact that the SDA church structure arose as a result of the need to accomplish a task. 'Structures were the servant of the task' and not as a 'result of systematic theological reflection regarding the nature of the church.' It must not be understood that the early church leaders did not have some theological presuppositions and principles in mind when considering church organizational structure. They addressed the 'eschatological-missiological dimensions of

[54] In 1979, a former vice-president of the General Conference said that "anything that undermines the basic church structure, however effective and efficient the program might be momentarily, eventually results in disunity and ineffectiveness" (Walter R Beach, "More on Preserving Unity Worldwide," RH, 27 December 1979, 12). In the same paragraph Beach admitted that "certain adaptations" may be necessary in view of the need for "relevancy and growth." However, having stated that probability, Beach appears, in the sentence quoted his position: "Uniformity will be reserved for the basics of church unity" (ibid. 13). It has been reported that in 1984, William Bothe, secretary of the North American Division at the time, said: "We can say with the utmost conviction that the basic principles of church organization followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church are as truly inspired as are the basic beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that we hold so dearly' (Terrie D Aamodt, "Laity Transform North Pacific constitution, "Spectrum 15 (December 1984: 29) (quoted by Oliver 1989: 328 -329 in footnotes).

the task to which the church had addressed itself.' However, the nature of the church was not considered as necessary in order to determine the structure that would best realize the accomplishment of the task.

Oliver (1989:335) subsequently appeals for an ecclesiology that 'integrates both ontological and functional categories.'

6.5.2 Ecclesiological discussions

It must not be thought that there have been no discussions regarding the doctrine of ecclesiology in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

6.5.2.1 Conference with World Council of Churches

During 1970 a conference took place between Seventh-day Adventist theologians and representatives of the World Council of Churches. At the Conference participants of the ecumenical group requested a concise but clear statement of Seventh-day Adventists position with regard to the nature and mission of the church. Doctors Raoul Dederen and Gottfried Oosterwal both from the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University were requested to prepare a fifteen page document. Dederen was to write on the nature of the church and Oosterwal on the mission of the church. Their documents were presented and discussed at a joint conference in July 1971.[55]

6.5.2.2 Walter Douglas – nature and function of the church

In 1980 Walter Douglas,[56] wrote on the nature and function of the church. According to Douglas (1980:68) 'the task of developing an Adventist ecclesiology is an urgent one.' He, therefore, attempted 'to provide a biblical grounding for an Adventist view of the church in the light of [its] special calling as the people of God.' Douglas (1980:74) observes, 'If our ecclesiology fails to reflect the notion of unity in diversity, we become guilty of what has become known as "structural fundamentalism," which identifies the structure with fundamental or absolute truth.'

6.5.2.3 Richard Rice – "People of God" and "Body of Christ"

Rice (1997:205-234)[57] in his book *The Reign of God* discusses the church under the title, *The Church: The Reign of God as Christian Community*. Rice (1997:210) places emphasis on two particular images of the church, among many other biblical descriptions of the church. The first is the "people of God", the second is the "body of Christ." The former 'calls attention to the church's place in history,' and the latter 'emphasizes its intimate relation to Christ.'

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[55] For further reading see Dederen, R. 1972. *The Nature of the church* in JR Spangler (ed) *Ministry*. Vol. XLV. No. 7:3-6, 32-35. Oosterwal, G. 1972. *The mission of the church* in J.R. Spangler (ed) *Ministry* vol. XLV. No. 7: 7-10, 36-39.

[56] At the time of writing Douglas was associate professor of Church history and the history of religion in the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

[57] Richard Rice is professor of Theology at Loma Linda University a SDA institution.

6.5.2.4 Raoul Dederen – nature and scope of the church, its mission and government

In 2000 the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* was published. Dederen (2000:538-581) wrote on the doctrine of the church. Among others Dederen deals with the nature and scope of the church, its mission and government.

According to Dederen (2000:553) church government is 'basically . . . a set of rules and regulations designed to facilitate the task of the church and the work of those involved in it.' However, according to Dederen (2000:553) 'The question remains as to which form is prescribed in the scriptures.' In answer to the question he concedes that in the record of the New Testament there is 'little detailed information about the organization of the church, except in the book of Acts and in Paul's Pastoral Epistles.'

The various discussions by SDA writers on the doctrine of the church, concentrates on the nature of the church, its function and missional task. However, except for Dederen (2000:552-554) no one deals with the government of the church, its structure and how it relates to the ecclesiology of the SDA church.

If the structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are to reflect its theological understanding of the church, then the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa has to take a fresh look at its structures. Stating it another way. Is the church structure only to be defined with reference to the task of the church or should it not also give more attention to those elements of New Testament ecclesiology that addresses the being of the church, and not only from an efficiency point of view.

Administrative practices within the present structures of the SDA Church in South Africa should be theologically evaluated and not just seen from a pragmatic-functionality point of view.

6.6 Hierarchical church structure

An important aspect of the hierarchical administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, is its accommodation of the phenomenon of bureaucracy. It is marked by the maintenance of established organizational policies, fixed rules, a hierarchy of authority, and a proliferation of officials. In particular, the organism reality has been overtaken by its institutionality.

It starts with the church's line of communication and appeal, based on the Jethro model of Exodus 18. From this incident the SDA Church has structured its church organization as follows:

Council of Seventy ----------	GC Executive Committee
Moses ----------	GC President
Tribes ruled over by chiefs or Princes ----------	Divisions and their Presidents
Captains over thousands ----------	Union presidents
Captains over hundreds ----------	Conference Presidents
Captains over fifties ----------	Church Pastors

Captains over tens ---------- Church Elders[58]

The following statement is made as part of the SAUC committee action: 'The SDA Church organization is Bible-based and divinely structured according to the organization structure of the church in the wilderness.'

The SDA Church has taken the Jethro[59] model of Exodus 18 with its entire structure of captains over thousands to captains over tens, the council of seventy, and structured its church organization accordingly. It has applied it in a pyramidal structure of ranking order from lower to higher levels of administration. Its command structure is from top to bottom.

The question is, was this the inception of government structures in the nation of Israel? Was it the institution of organizational structures at all?

However, by taking the immediate context into consideration, it is observed that prior to Exodus 18, there was government organization in Israel. It had a natural form of tribal government,[60] by means of a system of elders[61] (Ellison 1982:97). The elders of Israel served as representatives of their families, of tribal sub-divisions and tribes in governing Israel (Hyatt 1970:190).[62] This representative type governance was non-hierarchical and non-pyramidal. They served as representatives of their families and tribes leading out by giving counsel and guidance.

A further point for consideration is the fact that Jethro arrangement was not the beginning of organizational structures of governance. However, it concerned itself with the justice system. Keil and Delitzsch (1956:87) states, that judges were appointed 'to administer justice to the people, by deciding the simpler matter themselves.' The greater matters were referred to Moses (Ex 18:26).

According to Childs (1974:335) the Jethro arrangement provided for sharing 'the burden of administering justice with men of judgement and integrity within the community according to their natural abilities.' Noth (1962:150) writes of: 'The new ordering of the administration of justice which is derived from a practical, mater-of-fact counsel by the father-in-law of Moses.' Durham (1987:246-253) views the Jethro arrangement as 'the beginning of Israel's legal system.' Durham (1987:252) suggests that 'Exodus 18 ... might be called a

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[58] Adopted as per SAUC committee action 1664/521/82. The action provides for among others 'appeal to go to the next higher organization.' Persons can express their 'convictions, ideas, and differences of opinion o the executive bodies of the church.' 'Any unauthorized direct contact between organizations or individuals, will be referred back to the organization concerned for their consideration and appropriate action.' Since the pastor is 'the representative of the organization in the local congregation and thus all approaches to the executive bodies of the church are to be made through him.'

[59] Richards (1980:16) and Greenleaf (1977:84), argue against the Jethro model for church leadership. The fact that Moses was eventually sacked by the Lord is linked by Greenleaf to 'the fatal flaw in Jethro's advice.'

[60] Keil and Delitzsch (1956:87) says that the arrangement of chiefs over thousands, hundred, fifties, and tens 'was linked on to the natural division of the people into tribes and families.'

[61] In his discussion of the term "elder," Orr (1930:923,924) states, 'Among primitive peoples authority seems naturally to be invested in those who by virtue of greater age and consequently, experience are best fitted to govern. . . From the first Hebrews held this view of government.' Benzinger (1967:103-104) observes that, 'The patriarchal and later officers, whose position was due to their status as heads of families. Until the establishment of the kingdom the Israelites had a tribal organization the characteristic feature of which was that the (constituents) families of the tribe as well as the individuals were fully independent. There was no organized government.'

[62] The difference between the harder or greater matters and the smaller matters consisted in this: 'questions which there was no definite law to decide were greater or harder, whereas, on the other hand, those which could easily be decided from existing laws or general principles of equity were simple or small' (Keil and Delitzsch 1956:87-88).

"Jethro-compilation," consisting as it does of the two principle Jethro-narratives of the Old Testament, one describing the important reunion in which Jethro represents the desert-nomad side of Abraham's family, the other describing the beginning of Israel's legal system.'

The events of Exodus 18:13-27 does not suggest the beginning of a hierarchical-ranking system of governance, in which authority is centralized in a few at the top of the pyramid, from which they delegate responsibility. Rather as evidence shows, it concerned itself in a practical way with sharing the burden of administering justice.

When the church sees itself as the "people of God" as expressed by several of its theologians in its own theology, it must be careful that it does not become guilty of cosmetic language. Migliore (1991:187-188) points out 'that Israel and the early church were a people up against the wall – poor, weak, and in peril – their language about the reality of the people of God had a dignity. It was intended to comfort and support God's little, marginal, often persecuted people.' This is not easily accomplished by a hierarchical up-and-down structure of church organization.

Jesus in a very specific way warned against a hierarchical model for the church, when he spoke to the multitude and his disciples in Matt 23:8. 'But be not ye called Rabbi:[63] for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' There is a parallel in Pauline terminology with the concept that all are members of the body, the church, which has one head – Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23). The Bible provides among others "the gift of administration"[64] or leadership (1 Cor. 12:28).

However, Knight (1995b:4,5) points out that:

> [T]he New Testament model is built upon unworldly, uncorporate, unhierarchical, and generally unchurchly view that the function of leadership is service. In that model administrators are neither above, or below the pastor. Administrators are not seen as "bosses" but as facilitators and co-ordination of pastoral ministry.

In the corporate model of administration, there is established hierarchy, with administration at the top, and sub-ordinates carrying out the will of the administration. This is also how the SDA Church is structured with administration on top and the ministers and church members as sub-ordinates. The gift of administration like any other gift, is 'For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ' (Eph 4:12). Administration is not a gift that connotes lording it over God's people. The gift of administration was given for the good of the body of Christ not for lording it over.

Knight (1995b:4) insists that 'The biblical model is different from the corporate model. It refutes the idea that some people or positions are more important than others. Rather it is a model based on calling and spiritual gifts.' The gifts of the spirit have been given to the whole church, for its renewal, expansion and

[63] Rabbi, Rabboni. Heb. *Rab* meant 'great' hence 'master' and later 'teacher', 'my teacher,' a reverential form of address in the time of Christ, later became a title for the authorized Jewish teachers. In the New Testament *rhabbi* - - - is applied once to John the Baptist and twelve times to our Lord. In Mt. xxiii.7f., in contrast to the scribes' delight in being called 'rabbi,' the disciples are told not to be so called – for them only one is Teacher . . . 'Rabboni' is a heightened form of 'rabbi' used to address our Lord in Mk. X.51 and Jn. Xx.16 (Bruce 1962:1072).

[64] Wagner (1994:144) prefers to use the terminology "the gift of administration" rather than "the gift of governments" as used in the Kings James Version. Wagner (1994:145) defines the gift of administration as 'the special ability that God gives to members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.'

execution of its God-given task. Ridderbos (1975:436) refers to the expansion and renewal as the 'quantitative extension and the "inner qualitative upbuilding and growth" of the church.'

According to Dederen (1995:9) the gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30; and Ephesians 4:11 do not 'concentrate in a few persons, such as leaders or officeholders, thus supplying us with a kind of leading class or officeholders [administrators] that would stand apart from the community and rise above it to lord it over it.' Dederen (1995:9) further argues that spiritual gifts in the scriptures 'do not fall under the heading of "official officers," but ecclesiastical offices do fall under the heading "charismata."' They are granted to all believers, for 'to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good' (1 Cor. 12:7), and 'each man has his own gift from God, one is this manner and another in that' (1 Cor. 7:7). In Peter's words 'as each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God' (1 Peter 4:10).

According to Ridderbos (1975:442) 'the general purpose of the "*charismata* chapter," 1 Corinthians 12, is simply to reject hierarchical distribution between what is to be valued in the gifts and service in the church.'

6.7 Theological evaluation of the five areas of administration

6.7.1 Leadership

A biblical understanding of the church of God, necessitates a biblical understanding of church leadership, that will as Richards and Hoeldkte (1980:32) puts it 'reaffirm the nature of the church as body and that we learn how to help the church be and become what it ought to be'

However, the form of organization that the church adopts and the kind of structure in which leaders are placed, has its implications in which leaders are placed. It will determine, whether the nature of the church is reaffirmed, allowing the church to be what it ought to be – the body of Christ. Richards and Hoeldkte (1980:21, 37) argues that in an 'institutional form of organization,' and a hierarchical structure, leaders are placed 'in controlling rather than equipping roles.' According to Dulles (1974:32) the institutional form of the church in which the institutional element of the church is primary, primacy is assigned to the formal structure of its governance. Its activities are hierarchically governed, authority is delegated, formality is embedded, and ministry is program driven. However, in this kind of organizational structure, leadership will not come unto its own right, wherein, it is able to 'reaffirm the nature of the church'

The New Testament form of leadership however, is the only kind of leadership that will 'reaffirm the nature of the church' and help the church become what it ought to be. Denominational leaders often find themselves in leadership positions that include managing the work of the church. Rush (1987:10) asserts that from a historical perspective, 'most of Christendom has received its management philosophy and principles from the secular business world.' He further asserts that 'secular management philosophy is often both humanistic and materialistic.' The popular definition of management is stated 'as getting work done through

others' (Rush 1987:10). Rush (1987:10) states that such a concept appeals to the sinful nature of man 'because it gives managers and leaders the "right" to control and exploit those under them.' [65]

Rush (1987:11, 12) sees it as tragic, that many Christian organizations have opted for 'the world's philosophy of management...diametrically opposed to biblical principle.' He contends that leaders in secular systems of management often use authority and power to "lord it over" people. The incident recorded in Matthew 20:20-28 records Jesus approach to such leaders in secular management.

> But Jesus called them together and said, "Among the heathen, Kings and tyrants and each minor official lords it over those beneath him. But among you it is quite different. Anyone wanting to be a leader among you must be your servant. And if you want to be right at the top, you must serve like a slave. Your attitude must be like My own, for I, the messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give My life as a ransom for many"(Matt 20:25-28 Living Bible).

Blanchard and Hodges (2003:12) commenting on Matthew 20:25-28 observes that who you follow determines how you will lead. They further state: 'In His instruction to his first disciples on how they were to lead, Jesus sent a clear message to all those who would follow Him that leadership was first and foremost an act of service...for a follower of Jesus, servant leadership isn't just an option; it's a mandate.'

Servant leadership is in opposition to self-serving leadership. A servant-leader never has to fear for his or her position, because their position is God-given. However, according to Blanchard and Hodges (2003:18). 'One of the biggest fears that self-serving leaders have is to lose their position. Self-serving leaders spend most of their time protecting their status.' This type of leadership described by Jesus is found among "Kings and tyrants" (Matt 20:25-28 LB). As such self-serving leaders are addicted to power and position.

Rush (1987:12) aptly states: 'The Christian leader is to serve those under him by helping them to reach maximum effectiveness. And the higher up in the organization a person goes, the more he is to serve. In fact, the head of the organization is to be totally at the service of those under him (like a slave to a master).' Greenleaf (1977:13-14) underscores Rush, when he defines "who is the servant-leader." 'The servant-leader is servant first...it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive...For such it will be a later choice to serve-after leadership is established'

Greenleaf (1977:13) distinguishes "leader-first" and "servant-first" as "two extreme types." Between the two he sees 'shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.' The difference is in the care that the servant-first leader portrays, in seeing to it 'that other people's highest priority needs are being served.' Greenleaf (1977:13-14) further elaborates on who the Servant-leader is, by stating 'the best test...is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served,* become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?' [Greenleaf's italics].

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[65] Bennis and Nanus (1985:21) defines the difference between management and leadership as follows: '"To manage" means "to bring about, to accomplish, to have change of or responsibility for, to conduct.' "Leadership" is "influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion." The distinction is crucial. '*Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.*' [Bennis's italics]

It boils down to what Shawchuck and Heuser (1993:35) says 'The desire to serve others must be stronger than the desire to lead – so that leadership becomes a means of serving' Spears (1998:4) points out that Greenleaf raises the need 'for a new kind of leadership model, one that prioritizes serving others... as the number one priority.' 'Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others' (Spears 1998:4). The highest priority in servant-leadership is to see that other people's needs are met. An important observation made by Spears (1998:4) is that 'servant-leadership is not a "quick fix" approach. Nor is it something that can quickly be instilled within an institution. At its core, servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work – in essence, a way of being – that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society'

Spear (1998:15) points out that life is full of paradoxes, and that servant-leadership is one such paradox. Servant-leadership provides a framework that helps to improve the way in which people are treated within various institutions. Spear (1998:15) aptly states 'servant-leadership offers hope and guidance for a new era in human development and for the creation of better more caring institutions' An important premise of Greenleaf is pointed out by Spears (1998:114) is that which:

> [D]istinguishes a leader as *religious* ...is the quality of the consequences of his or her leadership. Does it have a healing or civilizing influence? Does it nurture the servant motives in people, favor their growth as persons, and help them distinguish those who serve from them who destroy. [Spears's italics]

If the servant-as-leader wishes to make optimal use of his or her resources, the pivotal question as Greenleaf (1977:19) puts it must constantly be: 'How can I use myself to serve best.' The motivation behind the servant-leader is the acknowledgment of his or her own healing. The servant-leader must keep in mind the fact that between him or herself and those led lies a common search for wholeness (Greenleaf 1977:37).

6.7.1.1 The Old Testament and servant leadership

The Old Testament provides a prime example of a king who rejected servant-leadership and, thereby, setting himself up as a self-serving leader. King Rehoboam had chosen to ignore God in his approach of leading God's people. Instead he opted to "lord it over" God's people. Rehoboam inquired of the older men of the nation, as to how he should go about leading God's people. The older men's advice to him was 'If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favourable answer they will always be your servants' (I King 12:7). However, Rehoboam chose to ignore the advice and instead chose to use the power and authority at his disposal – power and authority that exercised itself in manipulation, control and exploitation of the people of God. The end result was that the nation rebelled against him losing the majority of people. Rush (1987:12) is of the opinion that 'The authoritarian approach to management stimulates discontent, frustration, and negative attitudes towards leadership.'

Jesus was acquainted with the approach of the world to management and leadership. He therefore, instructed his disciples, that they should not pattern their lives after the similitude of worldly philosophy in which authority and power were used to control and manipulate people. However, he emphasized that leadership should use power and authority to be of service to those under their jurisdiction. Rush (1987:13) therefore, defines the biblical approach to leadership in management as follows: 'management is meeting the needs of

people as they work at accomplishing their jobs' he further states 'As the (leader) manager gives himself to serving the needs of those under him, he will make a happy discovery. People will voluntarily, eagerly, and continually meet his needs in return' (1 King 12:7).

The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would be a "suffering servant" (Is 42) as pointed out by König (2004:68). Engstrom (1976:37) states that 'His service did not degenerate into servility; He was humble, but retained dignity.' Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:103) states that 'The dominant Old Testament servant figure in the Old Testament...is the Messiah...will be the servant of the Lord.' Isaiah 42:1-4 depicts the servant 'highlighting His relationship to God and His attitude as he goes about His ministry.' (Richards & Hoeldtke 1980:103)

Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:103) points out that 'Servanthood as pictured in the Old Testament is highlighted in the following sketch of Christ the Servant as portrayed in Isaiah.'

The servant was chosen by the Lord (42:1; 49:1) and endued with the spirit (42:1); he was taught by the Lord (50:4), and found His strength in Him (49:2, 5). It was the Lord's will that He should suffer (53:10); He was weak, unimpressive, and scorned by men (52:14; 53:1-3, 7-9), meek (42:2), gentle (42:3), and uncomplaining (50:6; 53:7). Despite His innocence (53:9), He was subjected to constant suffering (50:6; 53:3, 8-10) so as to be reduced to near-despair (49:4) but His trust was in the Lord (49:4; 50:7-9); He obeyed Him (50:4-5), and persevered (50:7) until he was victorious (42:4; 50:8,9).

Servanthood as stated by Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:104) 'involves a covenantal relationship with God.' There is no forced obedience, but a 'willing commitment by the servant to a master who fully commits Himself to the servant as well.'

In the Old Testament, leadership of God's people was first and foremost 'a servant of God and of His people' (Damazio 1988:17). Servanthood preceded leadership and was an integral part of leadership. Damazio (1988:17-18) points out that:

> All of the Old Testament leaders named below were described as servants, of God and of others:
> Abraham: God's servant (Genesis 26:24)
> Moses: God's servant/ Exodus 14:31; numbers 12:7,8; Deuteronomy 34:5; Joshua 1:1, 2,7).
> Joshua: Moses servant (Exodus 33:11)
> Caleb: God's servant (Numbers 14:24)
> Samuel: God's servant (1 Sam 3:9)
> David: Saul's servant (1 Samuel 29:3; God's servant, 1 Chronicles 17:4)
> Elijah: God's servant (11 Kings 9:36)
> Isaiah: God's servant (Isaiah 20:2)

These are some of Old Testament leaders whose leadership was based on servanthood both to God and others. Damazio (1988:18) observes that Joshua and David 'were servants to the leaders over them, whose positions they were later to fill.'

A leader over God's people must have the necessary 'inner attitudes and motivations, and the outer service of a servant' (Damazio 1988:82).

6.7.1.2 New Testament and servant leadership – authority and power

Servanthood also appears in the New Testament. Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:105) observes that the 'primary insight into servanthood and the New Testament are provided in the Gospels and the example of Jesus'

6.7.1.3 Christ example of leadership

Christ's method of leadership sets the example of what church leadership should be like. For Jesus himself says, 'Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45 NIV). Leadership in the church today should portray his lifestyle of leadership.

Engstrom (1976:37) contends that 'Any study of Christian leadership is incomplete unless the life of Christ is studied. It is essential to recognize at the outset that He epitomized the concept of leadership by His own statements as in Mark 10:45.' He also says in Luke 22:27 (Living Bible) 'Out in the world the master sits at the table and is served by his servants. But not here! For I am your servant.' In Luke 22:25 (Good News Bible) Jesus says to his disciples 'The Kings of the pagans have power over their people...(vs. 26) But this is not the way it is with you; rather, the greatest one among you must be like the youngest, and the leader must be like the servant.'

Jesus set the example of how leaders should serve. He was willing and like a servant washed his disciples feel (John 13:5). Christ method of leadership was one of servanthood, of unselfishness and in self-sacrifice his life culminated in His death on the cross. He set the example for his followers of how and what it is to serve his fellowman. Engstrom (1976:37) states that 'Jesus teaches all leaders for all time that greatness is not found in rank or position but in service.' However, Shawchuck and Heuser (1993:35) observe that 'choosing to be servant-leader is always difficult since it runs counter to the values of leadership for the sake of power and position. To become a servant-leader, therefore requires the desire to reflect through our leadership that which we see in God.' In a more private situation, Jesus extended his teaching from theory to practice. He moved beyond words to the point, where "actions speak louder than words." In the privacy of the upper room Jesus translated his words into action. He knelt before his disciples, to their embarrassment. They felt that it was not correct that Jesus, their "Lord and master" should perform such a menial task. However, Jesus does not succumb to their embarrassment, but insists on serving them. Once he had finished serving them, He asked them:

> 'Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me "teacher" and "Lord" and rightly so, for that are what I am. Now that I, your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Once you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them' (John 13:12-17 NIV).

In the Kingdom of God and in the fellowship His faith community – the church leaders as servants are to minister from a servant's position. Both the Old and New Testament portrays the essential attitude of the servant-leader. However, as pointed out by Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:106) the striking incident recorded

in Matthew 20 and Mark 10, wherein, Jesus is depicted as going beyond attitude, in order to define more distinctly, what the leadership style of the servant-leader should be. 'More than a servant's heart is required. There is also to be a servant's *method*' [Richard's italics]. The incident is brought about by the request of the mother of James and John. Her request of Jesus was for foremost positions for her two sons. The other disciples were indignant at the request. Jesus then took the opportunity to speak to his disciples about the nature of leadership in the church. Jesus then shows the 'leadership style and method of the secular rules against the leadership style and method of those called to lead in His body' (Matt 20:25-28). Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:106) makes the following observations: 'This passage attacks many of our ingrained presumptions about leadership and helps us define how a servant leads'. Furthermore, they make the following contrasts that are "explicit and implied" in the illustration used by Jesus (Richards and Hoeldtke 1980:106-107):

- Relationship with the led – a ruler is "over" those he leads. However, the servant is "among" those he serves. 'we cannot be servant leaders if our position or role or our own attitude tends to lift us above others and makes a distinction between us and the rest of the people of God.'
- Command – rulers "Lord it over" and they exercise "authority" over those they are leading. This is a command-type authority, wherein others are told what is expected. It is inconceivable to imagine a servant making commands in a household. Such commands command authority calls forth strong rebuke of Jesus: "not so with you."
- Mode – With the command authority others are told what to do. It involves the issuing of orders and the passing on of decisions made by the leader. Servants on the other hand, serve the household. Rather than tell, the servant shows "Example" and not "command" is the primary mode of service from the servant.
- Effect – Command authority as used by secular rulers does not effect behavioural change. They use sanctions and other methods to secure required behaviour. By contrast servants depend on the inner responses of those they influence. They do not use coercive power to effect behavioural change; they depend on the free choice of those they lead.
- Power – Secular leadership depends on the power they wield as a means to coerce a response. In the church of God no such coercive power should be used. The words of Jesus "not so with you" disposes of those approaches that imply rulership style. Jesus limits church leaders 'to a leadership that finds expression in servanthood and relies on a servants seeming weakness' (Richards and Hoeldtke 1980:109).

6.7.1.4 Jesus' way to servanthood

The way to servanthood is demonstrated by Jesus as a conscious, deliberate act:

'Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness' (Philippians 2:6-7 NIV).

Marshall (1991:75-76) contends, that, whatever, our understanding of *kenosis*, the deliberate self emptying of Jesus, several facts are to be taken into consideration. Among others, is the fact, the Jesus willingly, in a deliberate way, consciously took the nature of a servant. In this way 'he was as fully and completely a servant by nature as he was God by nature.' Marshall (1991:76) cogently states 'He was not merely acting like a servant or doing servant things, servanthood was his nature.' The fact that servanthood was the nature of Christ accounts for the fact that service to man came naturally. Service flowed out of his servant nature. There was nothing artificial about his acts of service, neither was it forced. It was authentic and spontaneous as a result of what he was – a man – servant. Marshall (1991:76) appropriately states, 'that servant nature was human nature.'

Marshall (1991:79) contends that if the "self-emptying" process has not been completed in man, then servanthood will remain as being only a concept, without practice.

The Biblical view of leadership is that of servanthood. It has to do with service to others. Servant leadership has as its highest priority, to see that the needs of other people are met. Jesus set the supreme example when he washed his disciples' feet. In this He shows the heart and method of servanthood. Being a servant was His very nature. His actions were a direct outgrowth of His servant nature.

Church leadership should be that which is akin to Biblical leadership. However, the structured interviews conducted with SDA church boards, the results of which are recorded in chapter five does not show this. An overwhelming majority of church boards experience the conference administration in a negative light. Eighty six percent of church boards felt that leadership at the conference level of administration was not people oriented; that the wishes and feelings of people were not a priority of the leadership. Eighty eight percent of church boards felt that the leadership was more structure oriented; that the organization and its functions take first preference above the needs of its people.

The results of the pastoral surveys also show a higher percentage of pastors that experience the conference administration in a negative light. Pastors who experienced the conference leadership in a negative light were 51.3%. They felt that leadership has a tendency of imposing its will upon those at grassroots. This is unlike the Biblical view of leadership. On the other hand 48.4% of pastors felt that the leadership style of conference leaders was that of reinforcing conformity and uniformity. On the other hand 36.6% felt differently. This of course is not the style of the servant leader.

The union level of leaders did not do any better in the pastoral survey results. A rather high percentage of pastors experience union leadership in a negative way. In all 73.4% of pastors felt that union leadership displayed a tendency of imposing its will upon the grassroots of the church, while 51.3% of pastors felt the leadership style of the union leadership was to reinforce conformity and uniformity.

The leadership displayed by both the conference and union leadership is what Jesus warned His disciples against in Matt 20:25-28 (Living Bible):

> But Jesus called them together and said, among the heathen, Kings and tyrants and each minor official lords it over those beneath him. But among you it is quite different. Anyone wanting to be a leader among you must be your servant. And if you want to be right at the top, you must serve like a slave.

> Your attitude must be like My own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served but to serve, and give My life as a ransom for many.

In summary, as a whole the Biblical model for leadership is not practiced by all the leadership of the SDA church in South Africa at both levels of administration, and neither is the Biblical model experienced by the rank and file in the church. Rather, what is experienced is that which Jesus warned against in Matt 20:25-28.

The Biblical model of leadership stands in stark contrast to that which is practiced in the world. Worldly leadership tends to control and exploit, and used authority and power to "Lord it over" people. On the other hand biblical leadership is one of servant hood, it is an act of service to people, meeting their needs.

6.7.2 Organizational structures

The way in which organizations, especially the church – are structured can become a cause for great concern, if it does not take biblical principles into account. Church organizational structure like any other, lends itself to the question, who is in control? It can become a very complex problem, especially when authority and power are in the hands of a small group, which the structure itself encourages. It can become the breeding place of "continual and overextended control", against which Walsh writes. Walsh (1991:95) cogently states:

> Gradually, the status quo is accepted by all; even worse, not only is it accepted by all, it becomes an internal part of their worldview. The structures themselves are so ingrained that even those who suffer from the mal-distribution of power will now resist change. In this way even the victim becomes part of the problem. A relationship of dependency and powerlessness is not only legalized but canonized.

Walsh (1991:95) highlights another problem, which he calls "the dangerous part". The small group in authority 'sets up its organization in such a way that those in power decide who gets into power.' In this way Walsh (1991:95) says the group maintains the status quo and holds onto power and its advantages it has gained. They also 'perpetuate the control of power' and control the inner circle (Walsh 1991:97). As a result, Walsh (1991:97) says 'the structures are....deformed. *What began as a personal sin now becomes systemic or structural sin.* The system itself becomes both addicted and addicting' [Walsh's italics].

6.7.2.1 The Problems of wineskins

The way in which church organizations are structured, has attracted lots of discussion.[66] The organizational structure of the church should reflect the nature of the church. However, if it does not reflect the nature of the church, it will reflect some other reality. Richards (1970:121) makes the following observation:

> In most human organizations decision-making is a function of leadership, of "top management." Others in an organization may make certain decisions that relate to their jobs, sections, departments or divisions. But these are normally limited to the implementation of the broader policy, decisions which are made at the top level.

Richards, contends that 'this way of doing business has tended to carry over into church government.' In many instances it reflects principles employed in secular organizations. Snyder (1975a:13) in his book, *The problem of wineskins* expresses his particular concern with the wineskins and the gospel wine, secondly he is concerned 'with the question of *what kinds of wineskins* are not compatible with the gospel in modern

[66] See, Richards 1970, Saucy 1972, Kilinski and Wofford 1973, Snyder 1975 and Richards and Hoeldkte 1980.

techno-urban society.' So Snyder asks the question 'where do these wineskins come from? Who supplies them? How are they made? What determines their usefulness?' (Snyder 1975a:18).

According to Snyder (1975a:13) Jesus' words in Luke 5:37-38 about wineskins and wine, is of vital importance for the very life of the church. Snyder's argument is:

> There is that which is new and potent and essential – the gospel of Jesus Christ. And there is that which is secondary, subsidiary, man-made. These are the wineskins, and include traditions, structures and patterns of doing things which have grown up around the gospel.

Theologically, Snyder (1975a:106) says 'the church is the constituted people of God, but in fact it often fails to demonstrate this reality in space and time.' Furthermore, Snyder (1975a:110) insists that:

The people of God do not exist for nothing or by accident. The basis of the church's existence as a people is all-important. 'Therefore, in *the church's structuring of itself the basis of the church's existence as a people must be kept central'* [Snyder's italics].

The church constituted as the people of God has as its basis the word of God (Ex 6:7cf Deut 7:6, Luke 1:17, 1Pet 2:9-10) with Christ as it's living and active head. Ridderbos (1975:393) points out that:

> The essential idea of the qualification of the church as the body of Christ lies in that of the people of God...There is a close relationship between people of God and the Body of Christ...Therefore, "Body of Christ" gives expression to the unity of all who in Christ are the people of God and the true seed of Abraham.

Ridderbos (1975:394) sees the underlying support for the concept "people of God" as the body of Christ 'in the unity of the church with Christ himself.'

6.7.2.2 Church structure to reflect its nature

The reality of the nature of the church must be reflected in its structure. Snyder (1977:139) is of the opinion that church structure must be in accordance with biblical principles if it wishes to achieve quality growth and authentic discipleship as intended by God. Snyder (1977:139), furthermore, states:

> In itself, church structure is neither evil nor illegitimate. The question concerns the kinds of structures which best serve the Church in its life and witness. Particular structures will be legitimate or illegitimate depending not on what they are intended to accomplish, but on their function – what they actually do accomplish.

There is very little specific guidance given by scripture regarding church structure. Snyder (1977:140) recognizes with regard to the question of structure there is a 'broad area of freedom within form which the Bible allows.' However, he also recognizes that scripture has no explicit prescriptions for specific structures. Yet he is of the opinion that the picture of the church, does assist with practical criteria for the evaluation of church structure in various context.

Snyder (1977:140) suggests three criteria for such an evaluation:

1. **Church structure must be biblically valid** – that means that the church structure must reflect compatibility 'with the nature and form of the gospel and the Church as biblically presented.' The writers of the New Testament were passionate about guarding the gospel truth and the church against any incursions from both the world and Judaism (Snyder 1977:140). Insistence on circumcision was regarded as denial of the gospel (Gal 5:2-6). Making distinctions within the community of faith 'on the basis of wealth, social

status or religious traditions' were regarded as the transgression of God's law (James 2:1-13, Gal 2:11-21). Obeying human traditions were regarded as making void the word or God (Matt 15:6). Snyder (1977:140) insists that 'any tradition, structure or pattern which leads believers to contradict in practice what they profess in faith is unbiblical and must be rejected... They become the unbiblical traditions and rigid institutions.'

2. Church structure must be culturally viable – Church structure must be adaptable to society's cultural forms. It means that church structures are not sacrosanct. It carried over from one culture to another; it must be done in a critical way so that there is no misunderstanding of the true nature of the church. Snyder (1977:141) shows that the church of the first century provides examples 'of cultural adaptation and viability.' He points out that:

> Through Stephen, Phillip, Paul and others, the early church quickly reached into the Greek-speaking Mediterranean world (Acts 6 and following). Meeting in homes, and generally following the synagogue pattern in local structure, the first Christians were able to multiple rapidly without a large organizational superstructure.

Snyder (1977:141) argues that in modern missions the church grew most effectively and authentically when it was able to adapt to the realities of various cultures, without compromising the truth of the Gospel. Whenever, adaptation to cultural realities did not take place, there was retardation of growth. However, Snyder (1977:142) insists on the precedence of biblical validity over cultural validity. While the church will always stand in tension with surrounding culture, it must be because 'the antithesis between light and darkness, and not from its incompatibility of cultural forms.'

According to Snyder (1977:142) that "where possible, the church should structure itself along the lines of other structures of a given culture. But this calls for discernment, as it can be done only to the extent that biblical faithfulness is not compromised." Like the church must be critically when transplanting itself from one culture to the next, so the Church must be critical when aligning itself alongside structures of culture. Each structure must be evaluated for its biblical and cultural validity.

3. Church structure must be temporary and flexible

Church structure must be flexible. It must take into account changing circumstances. It must be able to adapt to changing circumstances. Cultures are not static, they do change. Snyder (1977:142) insists that church structure must be compatible to changing times, because structures that are presently effective may not be effective or less effective in ten years time. This is especially so in a climate in which technology is in a state of discontinuity and rapid change. 'The fact is that faithfulness to unchanging biblical truth often requires changing structures as time passes' (Snyder 1977:143).

Snyder (1975a:125) insist that 'structure must be flexible.' He points out the silence of the Bible with regard to specific structure, should make us aware of its secondary nature and therefore, 'constant re-evaluation in the light of the Word of God is necessary.' Snyder (1975b: 125) rightly states:

> To do the work of God in the world the church is naturally forced to adopt structured patterns (organizations, institutions and so on)... But such structures should always be understood as not being the essence of the church and therefore as subject to revision, adaptation or even dissolution.

Erickson (1983:1077,1078) places emphasis on adaptability when he says:

> The church must be versatile and flexible in adjusting its methods and procedures to the changing situations of the world in which it finds itself. It must go where needy persons are found, even if that means a geographical or cultural change. It must not cling to all its old ways. As the world to which it is trying to minister changes, the church will have to: adapt its ministry accordingly, but without altering its basic direction.

6.7.2.3 Structure in the early church

According to the book of Acts, [67] the early church did portray some structure. However, according to Snyder (1977:143) 'no formal organizational structures existed.' Various functions were provided for, such as worship community, leadership, nurture and witness. Snyder (1977:143) points out that these functions were all prevalent and taken care of in the early church:

1. Worship – Early Christians came together for worship in the temple courts (Acts 2:46; 5:42), 'praising God and having favour with all the people' (Acts 2:47.) Prayer and fellowship in various homes were also in practice (Acts 2:46).

2. Community – early Christians devoted themselves to fellowship (Acts 2:42), meeting in private homes (Acts 2:46; 5:42) and taking care of the community's material needs (Acts 4:34-35). The centre of the church's life in the first two centuries was the homes of people. The home was the centre of the common life of the church during its first two hundred years' (Snyder 1977:143).

3. Leadership – The early church committed themselves 'to the apostles teaching' (Acts 2:42). Signs and wonders were performed 'by the apostles' (Acts 2:43) – Initially, the apostles were the leaders of the young church (Acts 4:32-35). However, Snyder (1977:143) states 'later additional leaders also emerged or were chosen.'

4. Nurture – 'The early church devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles' (Acts 2:43). Truth was carefully taught. The apostle were found teaching in the temple (Acts 5:25). Daily the apostles were found in the temple, and from house to house, 'they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ' (Acts 5:42).

5. Witness – The early church devoted themselves to evangelistic witnessing, by the proclamation of the apostles (Acts 4:33; 5:42) and also by example and witness of the larger body of believers (Acts 8:1-4). 'And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved' (Acts 2:47).

Snyder (1977:144) points out that throughout the New Testament these five functions were continually carried out in various ways. Paul himself preached, taught established churches, emphasizing worship and help provided for continual leadership.

Snyder (1977:144) makes the following observation:

> What kind of structures nourished this varied life of the early church? It is fruitless to try to discover a formal organization underlying the life of the early church. The supposition that the first believers

[67] According to Snyder (1977:203) 'One's theology of the Church must be derived predominantly from the Epistles and the Gospels, rather than from Acts. But Acts is the best source of information as to how the early church functioned and was structured.'

> "must have had" a more formal organization than appears in the New Testament which say more about modern mania for getting organized than about what the church really needs in order to be effective. It is noteworthy that not only is no formalized structure detectible, but also that none is prescribed.

In his discussion of the construction of a system of church government for today Erickson (1983:1094-1097) insists that any attempt 'to develop a structure of church government that adheres to the authority of the Bible encounters difficulty at two points. The first is the lack of didactic material.' The Bible does not give a prescriptive exposition of what the government of the church should be like. The New Testament does not lay down a particular church order to be adopted. Erickson (1983:1094) points out that, 'The only didactic passages on church government are Paul's enumerations of basic qualifications for offices that already existed' (1Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). Erickson (1983:1094) prefers using as a basis for constructing a system of church government, "didactic or prescriptive" passages, rather than "narrative or descriptive passages." However, he is of the opinion that there is little choice.

He says the second problem presents itself when examining the descriptive passages. He states that 'there is no unitary pattern' (Erickson 1983:1094). Erickson (1983:1094) points out that there are strong elements in favour of the advocates of the congregational form and the Episcopal approach. However, he concludes that the New Testament evidence is inconclusive. He says that the New Testament does not portray anything that resembles closely any of the developed systems in existence today. Erickson (1983:1095) is of the opinion that 'even if it were clear that there is one exclusive pattern of organization in the New Testament, that pattern would not necessarily be normative for us today. It might be merely the pattern which was, not the pattern which must be.' Furthermore, he says 'there is so much variation in the descriptions of the New Testament churches that we cannot discover an authoritative pattern.' Therefore, he is of the opinion that church government should be constructed from principles found in the New Testament.

Erickson (1983:1095) suggests that two questions must be asked when an attempt is made to construct church government on the basis of New Testament principles. 'First, in what direction was church government moving within the New Testament period? Is there anything which would indicate the ultimate outcome?' However, he concludes, 'There is no indication that the church was moving toward a specific from of church government.' The second question concerns:

> [W]hat are the reasons for the church government? What values are it intended to promote and preserve? Once it can be established what the teaching of scripture is concerning the matter, then in accordance with the established guidelines a suitable model can be constructed for church government today.

Erickson (1983:1096) points out at least three principles to take into consideration. The first principle evident in the New Testament is that the value of order specifically in 1 Corinthians. Individuality got the upper hand in Corinth. It became necessary for some control 'over the highly individualized ways in which spirituality was being expressed (1Cor 10:40).' It was also necessary to place certain persons in charge of specific ministries. It is reminiscent of Act 6 where seven men were placed in charge of the ministry of widows. Secondly, there is the principle of the priesthood of all believers. In which case, all believers have the capacity of relating to God directly. Several texts support this teaching either explicitly or by implication (Rom 5:1-5, 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 4:14-16). No intermediary is needed. There is direct access to God. What is

true at the beginning of the Christian life is also true of its continuation. Each believer can know the will of God for himself. Finally, that each person is important in the Body of Christ is explicit throughout the New Testament. It is explicit in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Erickson (1983:1096) states 'The multiplicity of gifts suggests that the input into decision making should be broadly based. The Book of Acts stresses group consensus (Acts 4:32; 15:22).' He further points out that 'This is a special sense of fellowship and ownership whenever all the members of a community feel that they have played a significant part in determining what is to be done.'

6.7.2.4 Administration and organization – Biblical examples

Getz (1984:185) adds to the discussion on organizational structure when he agrees with others that 'The Bible is relatively silent regarding organizational and administrative patterns.' It is, however, as he says 'not without design, for nothing becomes obsolete as quickly as structural forms. They are but a means to divine ends. Furthermore, life is made up of so many variables and unpredictable events that creativity in this area must be constant.'

According to Getz (1984:185) the illustrations of organization and administration as found in the Old as well as New Testament portray 'the same basic principles.' He is of the opinion that these help to establish the fact the 'patterns are not absolute, but principles are.'

Getz (1984:185) presents four biblical examples of structure - two from the Old and two from the New Testament. In the first two examples taken from the Old and New Testament he closely aligns them to show the comparison in the nature of the problems, its solutions, and the results. In the second two examples, one from the Old and one from the New Testament, he uses examples to show uniqueness in difference, "demonstrating similar principles."

In the first example Getz (1984:185ff) uses Exodus 18 and Acts 6 in his comparative study. In both these incidents, structures were set up to solve a particular problem. The problems different in its particulars. However, Getz (1984:191) establishes four similarities, which has implications for church structure today.

Firstly, in either instance 'both Moses and the apostles *established priorities*.' Secondly, responsibilities were delegated to qualified men. Thirdly, 'they organized to meet the need that existed at the moment and in those peculiar circumstances.' Getz (1984:190) commenting on the divisions in Exodus 18:25, says, 'This was the best strategy for the occasion. This organizational plan was a fitting structure for a nation on the move, and this arrangement was linked on to the natural division of he people and the tribes and families, etc.' [Getz's italics].

Getz (1984:190) quotes Robert Jamieson comments:

> The arrangement was an admirable one, and it was founded on a division of the people which was adopted not only in civil in but in military affairs; so that the same persons who were officers in war were magistrates in peace (see Num 31:14)... care was thus taken by the minute submission to which the judicial system was carried, that, in suits and proceedings a law, every man should have what was just and equal, without going far to seek it without waiting long to obtain it, and without paying and exorbitant price for it.

The fourth similarity reveals 'that in both these circumstances, *the structures set up were temporary.* When the children of Israel settled in the land, the organizational plan changed.' Similarly, in a short period of time, Christians were driven out of Jerusalem through persecution, 'and some of those who were serving tables became evangelists (Acts 7-8).' Getz (1984:190) says 'The whole situation changed, creating new needs, and called for new forms and structures, particularly as permanently located churches were established in various communities' [Getz's italics].

6.7.2.5 Organizational principles

According to Getz (1984:210) 'from a study of administration in the Word of God – *principles are normative*! Patterns are not' [Getz's italics]. Getz (1984:210-213) suggests several principles for organization as follows:

1. Set principles as goals

When setting out to organize 'apply New Testament principles and to reach New Testament purposes.' Getz (1984:210) says:

> [O]rganizational structures in the Bible are always presented as a means to an end. They were never ends in themselves. Therefore, the first and most important biblical principle of organization is always to develop structures for the church which will help us to reach New Testament objectives.

He suggests that this become one of the criteria, whereby, organizational structures are evaluated. Do the structures function according to principles of the New Testament? Are they accomplishing New Testament purposes?

2. Meeting of needs

Organization is to meet needs. Getz (1984:210) point out that a distinctive feature of the New Testament church was meeting needs. It did not simply just organize for organization sake. Rather, organization was put in place as needs arose, 'whether it was to "feed the people in need" or to "solve a theological problem."' To carry out the Great Commission – to "make disciples" and to "teach those disciples," needed some kind of organization to do so. Getz (1984:211) quotes Georges Peters who said, 'Whenever there are people, there is function; and whenever there is function, there is form.' This is in keeping with the management science dictum "form follows function." Getz (1984:211) concedes that the New Testament is limited in references to organizational structure. However, he insist that there are enough illustrations to indicate that structure is necessary and enough variance that proves that certain structures are not absolute. Furthermore, the illustrations reveal "dynamic principles" making it applicable to various cultures. So then in design and creation of organizational structures it must be in line with New Testament objectives for the church.

Paul acknowledged organization, for he wrote to the Corinthians, 'let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner' (1 Cor. 14:40). Furthermore he instructed Titus to remain in Crete to 'set in order what remains' (Titus 1:5). He was also very well aware of the fact that every culture in the New Testament had to be approached differently. As stated by Getz (1984:211) 'he therefore bore down on the absolutes – qualifications for leadership positions – knowing that men of God who are wise and prudent could develop structures necessary to meet the specialized demands of any culture at any time in history.'

3. Keep structure simple

This principle is closely related meeting needs. Organization must be kept as simple as possible if it is to be functional. Getz (1984:212) is of the opinion that 'complicated organizational patterns frequently become "ends" in themselves.' However, there are complex organizational patterns. This is revealed in the pattern of Exodus 18 – an intricate pattern, designed to meet the needs of over 2 million people travelling throughout the wilderness. In spite of its complexity, it was functional.

Getz (1984:212) observes 'A good test of whether or not simplicity is being lost, even in a complex pattern, is whether or not the structure is serving biblical objectives. If it is not, it needs to be carefully evaluated in the light of scriptural criteria.'

4. Keep structure flexible

Organization of the church must be kept flexible. The structures which served a people in the wilderness, who was "on the move", changed when the people were "settled in the land." When the building of the walls of Jerusalem was completed, Jerusalem was governed differently. Persecution in Jerusalem brought structures of Acts 6 to an end. When the problem of "law and grace" recorded in Act 15 were solved, 'new ways of solving new problems' were adopted. Getz (1984:212) observes that 'Biblical leaders were never locked in organizational structures.'

The organizational structure of the church should reflect the nature of the church, which is constituted as the people of God (Ex 6:7cf., Deut 7:6, Luke 1:17, 1Pet 2:9-10). The people of God are the body of Christ. Jesus' words about wineskins in Luke 5:37-38 is of great significance. Wineskins include such things like traditions, structures and patterns of how things are done. It is subsidiary to the Gospel and man-made.

Church structure must be kept simple and flexible meeting the needs of people in different eras under varied circumstances. In all church structure calls for discernment in which biblical faithfulness is not compromised while adapting to changing circumstances.

The multiplicity of gifts suggests that structure must be broad based accepting input from a broad consultative basis in decision-making. It suggests a horizontal basis for church structure and not a hierarchical up and down structure, where the top of the hierarchy tells the bottom at grassroots of the church what to do and how to believe.

The Research results

The results of the research as shown in chapter 5 concerning organizational structure at conference level reveals the following. Church boards 88.1% in all experienced the organizational structures as operating on a top down relationship. The bottom of the organization is expected to carry out what is passed down to them. Secondly, 83.3% of church boards say that the organizational structure of the church does not operate on a participatory bases; the leadership does not see those at grassroots as part of the administrative process.

On the other hand the larger percentage of pastors experienced the local conference organizational structures in a negative way, 49,4% of pastors experienced the structures of the SDA church as functioning from top to

bottom, while 35% felt that from the organizational structures authority is shared with those at grassroots level. On the other hand 47,8% of pastors felt that leadership maintain various structures that no longer serve its original purpose and only 35,5% sees administration willing to change structures that no longer serve its original purpose.

As one climbs the hierarchical pyramid, the percentage negative experience increases.

On the union level of administration, 68,9% of pastors experienced the organizational structures as administering authority from the top down to grassroots. On the other hand 66,3% of pastors experienced leadership as maintaining various structures even though it no longer serves its original purpose.

Administrative structures of the SDA church in South Africa are in need of revisioning in order to remain faithful to Biblical principles and not holding on to outdated traditions. Furthermore, it needs to change to meet the needs and aspirations of its people, the "people of God".

In conclusion, the New Testament does not prescribe organizational and administrative patterns. From the examples given, structures were temporary not absolute. Van Gelder (2000:161) states 'First of all church polity must never become an end in itself. The church's organizational practices must be maintained as servant tools to shape the church's ministry as it fully lives out its nature.' He further states 'church polity must always be seen as contextual and provisional. Maintaining these perspectives is crucial for keeping a proper perspective on the relationship between a proper perspective on the relationship between organization and power.'

However, the SDA Church in South Africa does not see its organizational structures as temporary and it is definitely not flexible as shown in the research results in chapter 5. In fact Adventist history shows that organizational structures are seen as being inspired as are the basic beliefs.[68]

6.7.3 Church organization – authority and power

The church on earth represents the authority of God. According to Van Gelder (2000:161) 'This authority finds expression through becoming structured within the organizational life and practices of the church.'

The organizational structures of the church and those denominational structures that rise above the local church – its administrators, boards and policy making committees, are vehicles through which the nature and ministry of the church is represented. As far as Van Gelder (2000:161) is concerned 'these express some aspects of power as they related to the exercise of God's authority within the church.' While on the one hand these vehicles share similar characteristics as found in other forms of organization, however, Van Gelder (2000:161) insist that 'in the church they are intended to express the redemptive purposes of God.' He also points out that the redemptive purposes of God reveals itself in 'an arena of a power encounter.' In this

[68] It has been reported that in 1984, William Bothe, secretary of the North American Division at the time said: "'We can say with the utmost conviction that the basic principle of church organization followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church are as truly inspired as are the basic beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that we hold so dearly'" (Terrie D. Aamodt "Laity Transform North Pacific Constitution," Spectrum 15 [December 1984]:7). The same journal stated the concern of some that "Adventist church structure is being raised to the level of doctrinal orthodoxy" (as quoted in footnotes – Oliver, 1989:328).

encounter in which the church finds itself, the church must live differently. It must live by a different "set of values" and display a "different set of behavior." This is exemplified in the teaching of Jesus concerning leadership (Matt 20:24-28). Jesus teaching here is that leaders are not to function like gentiles who Lord over those who follow them. Church leaders including denominational administrators, who rise above the local church structure, must function as servants to those whom they lead.

Here the church is to be alerted, as pointed out by Van Gelder (2000:162) 'What functioned as a redemptive servant in one generation can all too easily become a coercive master in the next.'

In summary, the way in which church organizations are structured impacts on whether the nature of the New Testament church is truly reflected or is some other reality reflected, which detract from the given nature of the church – "as the people of God" – "the body of Christ."

Structures must not alienate people, but have a mediating influence (Lee and Cowan 2003:108). The structure must serve people and not become their master. It must be a servant (Spear 1998:148).

The next section, deals with a biblical understanding of authority and power as practiced in church organizations. It has a direct bearing on the ethos displayed by those in authority.

6.7.3.1 Administrative authority and power

Whenever, there is administration, or governing bodies, the two aspects of authority and power is present. This is even so in church administrations or governing bodies. Authority and power becomes the central concern in organizations such as the church. It becomes the central concern because of how authority is exercised and power is used.

Spear (1998:47) makes reference to the view of William Pitt and Lord Acton on the use of power. He refers to William Pitt's statement in the House of Commons in 1770, when he said, 'Unlimited power is apt to corrupt the minds of those who possess it' then also the statement of Lord Acton in the late 19th century, when he said, 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' Lord Acton was a Catholic layman and made this statement in opposition 'to the assumption of Papal infallibility in 1870.' The phrase 'The opportunity to wield power' as stated by Spear (1998:47) is latent in many kinds of administrations including that of the church.

Greenleaf (1977:103) asserts that "power" and "authority" have many meanings. In his work referred to, the word power is used to mean 'coercive force – either overtly to compel, of covertly to manipulate' and authority is used to mean 'a sanction bestowed to legitimate the use of power.' (Greenleaf 1977:167).

The different kinds of power that leaders may choose to exercise are analyzed by Spear (1998:82-87) as 'coercive power,' 'manipulative power,' and 'persuasion as power.' Spears (1998:82) assert that the distinctions of these three kinds of power 'exist more in the attitudes and values of wielders of power.'

1. Coercive power

Spears observes that:

> *Coercive power* exists because certain people are granted (or assume) sanctions to impose their wills on other. These sanctions may be overt, as when one may be penalized or punished if one does not comply; or the sanctions may be covert and subtle, if one's weaknesses and sentiments are exploited and thus pressure is applied. Another complication is that some coercion is masked behind idealism and is employed by people who are highly civilized and motivated for noble needs [Spear's italics].

2. Manipulative power

Spears (1998:84) see 'manipulation as distinct from coercion' because manipulation is founded more on 'plausible rationalizations than on the threat of sanctions or on pressure.' Spears (1998:84) aptly observe that: 'People are manipulated, when they are guided by plausible rationalizations into beliefs or actions that they do not fully understand.'[69]

3. Persuasion as power

Persuasion is not easily defined. Spear's (1998:85) consultation of dictionaries raised five definitions. However, Spears prefers to use persuasion with reference to 'a process that does not allow either coercion or manipulation in any form.' Spears (1998:85) is of the opinion that 'One is persuaded...upon arrival at a feeling of rightness about a belief or action *through one's own intuitive sense*' [Spear's italics]. He elaborates that, 'one takes an intuitive step, from the closest approximation to the certainty to be reached by conscious logic, to that state in which one may say with conviction, "This is where I stand."' Spears (1985:85) cogently insists that:

> The one being persuaded must take that intuitive step alone, untrammeled by coercion or strategies. Both leader and follower respect the autonomy and integrity of the other and each allows and encourages the other to find his or her own intuitive confirmation of the rightness of the belief or action.

Spears (1998:86) is convinced that a persuasion practicing leader patterns a model that with time, will encourage his followers to deal with him as leader by persuasion. He says: 'Power is generated in this relationship because it admits of mutual criticism, spirited arguments can occur, and it does not depend on artful stratagems.'

However, Spears (1998:86) makes an insightful and relevant observation when he says:

> This poses a problem for conventional organization structures in which those "at the top" hold coercive power and, because of their superior information sources, are in a good position to manipulate" He says those who even use coercive power sparingly are "somewhat disqualified to persuade."

[69] Spears (1998:84) is also of the opinion that 'some manipulation by leaders is unavoidable because some who follow are not capable of understanding or will not make the effort to understand. But not all manipulation by leaders can be justified on these grounds.'

6.7.3.2 Power in the Lord's Prayer

In the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is found the source of all power. In verses 13 the confession is found, 'For thine is...the power' (KJV). The confession has its roots in the Old testament passage of 1 Chronicles 29: 11-13, in the context of the prayer of David:

'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory...for all that are in heaven and in earth is therein; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.' (1 Chronicles 29:11 KJV).

Kistner (1988:69) points out that :

> That in Israel...this affirmation is placed in a different context and thereby obtain a different meaning. Authority and power belongs to God. The king can exercise his power and authority only as far as he recognizes his responsibility towards God. According to this understanding of power and authority the people over whom the king rules are God's people and not the king's people.

Kistner (1998:69) asserts that 'against the Old Testament background...the affirmation: "Thine is the power," indicates the limitation of the power of human authority, the reliance of God's people on God's power and the obligation to share power.'

Kistner (1998:70) aptly observes 'The more power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few people, the more they lose power and authority and the more they are forced to resort to violence for protecting their own interest.' In the church organization, those in power may not resort to violence to protect their own interest. However, they will do everything in their power to maintain the status quo in protection of their own interest.

6.7.3.3 Authority in the New Testament church

Just like it is necessary for the church to have some kind of organization, so the organization needs authority structures. Both are needed to avoid chaos and on the other hand to plan and carry on the function and mission of the church.

According to Kilinski and Wofford (1973:152) 'The scriptural form for church organization includes an authority structure.' Those in authority are held accountable. They are to rule well, exhort, rebuke and disciple (1 Tim 5:17; Titus 2:15). However, the exercise of authority must be done with gentleness, love, faith and purity (1 Tim 3:3; 4:12). Those who are under church authority are to obey and submit to those in authority (Heb 13:7,17). The scriptural form of authority, places it in honour and respect.

Kilinski and Wofford (1973:157) list some advantages and disadvantages of the wrong use of authority.

Advantages:

- The use of authority facilitates the coordination of activities...a direct command or at least a strong influence is usually required to blend the function.
- The use of authority assures that there will be a minimum of confusion...There is comparatively little wasted effort or disorder.
- The use of authority assures uniformity. If you wish to have a consistency in educational material, a decision to use material from a single press from the entire Sunday School can gain this end. Failure to use direct authority here leads to a wide range of approaches and quality of material.

- From the above advantages, it is clear that the use of authority is an important instrument for a leader. Kilinski and Wofford (1973:157) points out the disadvantages where a church uses authority 'as the primary method of leadership will reach only a small proportion of its total potential.' The following are the disadvantages of the use of authority:
- Authority tends to be met with resistance. Since the use of power places the person being led in a dependency role, he often resents this position. His self-worth is threatened. Although not exhibiting open hostility, he may often resolve to do no more than the minimum. In some cases, the member will even sabotage the operations because of his resentment.
- Reliance on authority also results in a stagnation of members. The dependency fostered by authority tends to cause the member to sit back and wait for orders or suggestions. Thus they lose confidence in their own ability and certainly do not grow in their ability to assume greater responsibility.
- Although conformity is desirable in certain situations, it is undesirable in many others. If there is excessive conformity, the creativity and spontaneity of the organization is lost.
- The use of authority can thwart or distort communication. The member may begin to feel pressured and will not feel free to state his position.
- The full human potential is not being utilized. As authority is abused, a leader may exercise his power for sheer desire to dominate.
- The authority system is not responsive to change. Since the members do not have a part in initiating change, they tend to be fearful of its consequences.

Kilinski and Wofford (1973:158) suggests, in the light of the disadvantages a team centred approach rather than 'the reliance on strong authority as the primary system of accomplishing objectives.'

Finally, their discussion on the nature of authority which leaders in the body of Christ have, Richards and Hoeldkte (1980:142) says that it is a different authority from secular authority. Firstly, leaders in the body of Christ do not seek to coerce others to do their will, but help them to be responsive to Christ. Secondly, the Christian leader does not depend on 'power and position as a basis for authority.' The exclusive right to any authority which the Christian leader has is the fact that Christ speaks to the faith community through him. Finally this kind of authority is supernaturally based. Jesus Christ is alive and active in the lives of people. It is therefore, only because of this reality that the servant-leaders' voice is heard. In the final analysis, the opening of the heart is the work of God. According to Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:143) 'leaders in the body of Christ are free to set aside all trappings of power and to live humbly among the brethren.'

Dudley and Hilgert (1987:26, 27) says that at the beginning of the 'New Testament story stands the institutionalized church of two generations later.' They remark that the pastoral epistles of Timothy and Titus portray the church in its 'most thorough going institutionalized form.' According to them, 'these letters were addressed to pastors of established congregations...are concerned largely with order and organization in their congregations,' such as:

- Women are to dress modestly, by silent and submissive (1 Tim 2:9-15)
- Bishops are to be appointed and qualifications set down (1 Tim 3:1-7)
- Young widows should remarry, older ones should be supported by their children (1 Tim 5:11-15)
- Slaves were to be obedient to their masters (1 Tim 6:1-2)

- Titus repeats much of the instruction contained in 1 Timothy. Second Timothy has largely to do with warning against heresy.

The above in indicative of a type of settled community established by Paul that 'have become thoroughly organized and institutionalized' (Dudley and Hilgert (1987:27).

It is pointed out by Dudley and Hilgert (1987:27-28) that all Christian communities did not reach this same 'stage of development simultaneously.' They contend that 'the churches reflected in the three epistles of John...appears to have had a notable lower level of formal organization.'

6.7.4 The New Testament and hierarchical structures

The New Testament supports the idea of elders being in charge of churches. Berkhof (1939:589) states 'Very likely the apostles were guided by the venerated custom of having elders in the synagogue rather than by any direct commandment, when they ordained elders in the various churches founded by them.'

The church at Jerusalem had elders (Act 11:30). Paul and Barnabus ordained elders in churches they organized on their first missionary journey (Acts 14:23).

Evidently, there were functioning elders at Ephesus (Acts 20:17) and Philippi (Phil 1:1).

Elders are repeatedly mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 3:1,2; Titus 1:5,7). Elders are always spoken of in the plural (1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7,17,24; 1 Pet. 5:1).

Furthermore, Berkhof (1939:589) points out that the elders were chosen by the people as 'specially qualified to rule the church.' Berkhof contends that 'scripture evidently intends that the people shall have a voice in the matter of their selection, though this was not the case in the Jewish Synagogue, Acts 1:21-26; 6:1-6; 14:23.' Berkhof (1939:589) stresses that it is 'evident that the Lord Himself places these rulers over the people and clothes them with the necessary authority, Matt 16:19; John 20:22,23; Acts 1:24,6; 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11,12; Heb. 13:17.'

Berkhof is of the opinion that the election of the elders by the people 'is merely an external confirmation of the inner calling by the Lord himself.' He further highlights the point, that although the elders are the representatives of the people, they 'do not derive their authority form the people, but from the lord of the church. They exercise rule over the house of God in the name of the King, and are responsible only to Him.'

6.7.4.1 Organizational structures above the local church structure

While the New Testament supports the idea of plurality of elders at local church level, however, it does not give the idea of developed hierarchical administrative organization above the local church organization. Neither does it identify or name any office bearers for such structures, other than that of the local church.

The question could be raised about the role of the apostles as found in Acts 15. Should this not be seen as an administrative structure above the local church. Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:307) sees Acts 15 portraying a safeguard for the discerning of the will of God. They state:

> This safeguard is illustrated in Acts 15, in which a significant issue was in dispute. Days were spent exploring the issue. Finally the council of leaders reached a consensus expressed by James. In the

letter to Gentile believers that came out of this council, these words appear: 'It has seemed good to us, having come to one accord.'

Richard and Hoeldtke (1980:307) says: 'This is the heart of consensus.' Those who came together, all used their God given capacities prayerfully seeking the will of God and came to consensus. Richard and Hoeldtke (1980:307) further states: 'In seeking consensus all the feelings, thoughts, ideas, and concerns of each person need to be expressed and considered.'

In this way it was not a decision of some remote administration, but representatives of the church with the apostles and came to a decision. People from grass-roots had input to the decision taken.

The immediate concern would be the functioning of authority and prerogatives within those structures above the local church organization. If these structures are at all necessary, its purposes would seem to be, for the maintenance of unity and good order, furthermore, for the effectiveness of its work and mission.

In his discussion on the government of the church, Berkhof (1939:589-590) states that the 'reformed Church government recognizes the authority of the local church'

He further points out what it means:

(1) That every local church is a complete church of Christ, fully equipped with everything that is required for its government. It has absolutely no need of it that any government should be imposed upon it from without. And not only that, but that such an imposition would be absolutely contrary to its nature.

(2) That, though there can be a proper affiliation or consolidation of contiguous churches, there may be no union which destroys the autonomy of the local church. Hence it is better not to speak of classes and synods as higher, but to describe them as major or more general assemblies. They do not represent a higher, but the very same, power that inheres in the consistory, though exercising this on a broader scale.

(3) That the authority and prerogatives of major assemblies are not unlimited, but have their limitation in the rights of the sessions or consistories. They are not permitted to lord it over a local church or its members, irrespective of the constitutional rights of the consistory; nor to meddle with the internal affairs of a local church under any and all circumstances.

Organizational administrative structures above the local church must adhere to the same principles of authority and the exercise of authority as prescribed for the local church – no lording it over God's people. Carroll (1991:36) remarks that:

> Authority and power are sometimes contrasted, sometimes used interchangeably. How are they related? Power is a resource that enables individuals or groups to achieve their purposes, with or without the consent of others who are affected by its use. When a leader uses power to get her or his way without the consent of those affected, the leader is using force or coercion. In contrast, authority is legitimate power. When individuals in a group *consent* to the directives of a leader, or to the mandates of the group's constitution, or to the teachings of scripture, for example, they are acknowledging the authority – the right – of the leader, constitution, or scripture to give direction to the group's life. They submit themselves to the directives of that authoritative person or cultural object because they believe the directives to be consistent with the core values, beliefs, and purpose of the group.

However, Carroll (1991:37) is critical of the person that exercises authority 'in a hierarchical, top-down, authoritarian fashion that keeps the congregation dependant and submissive.' On the other hand the leader may exercise authority in such a way, whereby the gifts of others are acknowledged and recognized, helping them minister with authority. 'In either case,' Carroll (1991:37) says 'so long as the group acknowledges

that leader's right to exercise power, the leader is acting with authority.' The point that Carroll (1991:38) insists on 'is that authority has a relational dimension. We don't possess it apart from a group or community that accords us the right to lead.'

6.7.4.2 Paul and authority

Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ sees himself as one with authority, because he has been called by God. He believed that he was the mouthpiece of the exalted Christ, knowing the will of God from his own opinions (1 Cor. 7:6, 25; 2 Cor. 8:10).

According to Ladd (1974:418) 'Paul's sense of authority is not a private possession but has been conferred by the Lord upon him as apostle.' Ladd (1974:419) also points out that 'As an apostle, Paul did not bear an exclusive authority but one that he shared with other apostles' (2 Cor. 10:8, 13:10). He allowed for participation in his authority as he was allowed participation in Christ authority, 'a delegate of the risen Christ...his representative and in his authority' (Ladd 1974:419).

Ladd (1974:420) states 'The authority embodied in and through the apostolate was an authority to which the apostles themselves were subject. Their authority was that of God himself (1 Thess. 2:13), but they were themselves subject to Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 4:1).' Ladd (1974:420,421) emphasizes the fact that authority of the apostles was not under their control or at their disposal; they were controlled by the authority of the risen Lord and his Spirit.' Furthermore, Ladd categorically states that although the apostles were bearers of divine authority, they did not "lord it over the faith" of churches (2 Cor. 1:24) neither exalted themselves, but were servants of those to whom they ministered (2 Cor. 4:5). The authority with which the apostles were invested was not worldly, external authority that could be wielded in an arbitrary way, but was such which was imparted by the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:37). Paul exercised his authority in such a way, so as 'not to gain submission to his lordship over the churches but to seek fellowship with them,' appealing to their consciences (2 Cor. 4:2) (Ladd 1974:421). Lee and Cowan (2003:54) says, 'How power functions are a major issue in the contemporary church.' They point out that Pope John Paul II in his letter "*Ut Unum Sint*," 'recognized that even the exercise of papal power needs to be assessed (not whether, but how).'

Lee and Cowan (2003:54) states:

> Jesus did not give his community of followers any specific structure for the function of power. Instead he defined root metaphors: how shepherds function (especially...for the stray); how stewards function (they do not "own" the community by trying to make it work well on someone else's behalf); and how servants function (they do no create the agenda, they serve it).

The concern which Lee and Cowan has gives particular attention to the 'servant metaphor for how power functions' (Lee and Cowan 2003:54). Reference is made to the request which James and John made of Jesus for special honour above the other disciples to their displeasure (Mark 10:35-44). Jesus then reprimanded all of them, by telling them 'that power must be understood very differently in the rein of God on earth' (Lee and Cowan 2003:54).

Jesus likened leaders who lord it over others as doing as pagans, wanting their authority felt. However, the opposite attitude as stated by Lee and Cowan (2003:54) finds the leader 'at the lower end of the traditional

power structure, where the servant is found.' They point out that the kind of power 'celebrated in dominant U.S. culture, is unilateral. Effects move in one direction...The alternative is relational power, the capacity to receive effects as well as to have effect' (Lee and Cowan 2003:55). Lee and Cowan (2003:55) sees the servant leader as serving the community and not the community the leader.

They contend that, 'leadership in the small Christian communities tends to be collaborative and relational, often as a reaction to the experience of unilateral power in the institutional church.'

It is well known that wherever there is organization, there is administration and where there is administration especially with hierarchical structure, the two aspects of authority and power becomes a reality.

However, authority and power is not a private matter. Paul did not bear exclusive authority. He shared it with the other apostles (2Cor 10:8, 13:10). He allowed for participation in the authority he received from Christ. The way in which Paul exercised his authority was in such a way as not to gain their submission but fellowship with them.

Power and exercise thereof, needs to be assessed from time to time as suggested by Lee and Cowan (2003:54) so that it can be kept in line with Biblical teaching (Mark 10:35-44). Those in authority exercising power need to understand that they cannot create their own agendas for authority and power, but that it is kept in subjection to biblical principles. It is to be found in the metaphors of how shepherds and servants function.

The question is; how does the rank and file in the SDA Church in South Africa experience the exercise of authority and power in the administrative structures of the church?

The research results show overwhelmingly that church boards experience the conference administration with regard to authority and power in a negative way. The results of the structured interviews shows that 95,2% of church boards, feel that administrative authority is concentrated in a few who act on behalf of the majority, without consultation of the majority. On the other hand, 85,7% of the same church boards, felt that authority is not dispersed and that the conference does not solicit input and assistance from congregations. However, members felt that whenever, extra money is needed for specific projects of the conference then only do the administrators approach and congregations for assistance but not in decision making.

The way the conference administration uses power was no better than their use of authority. Church boards, 88,1% in all experienced the use of power as vested in those in the top positions of the conference. On the other hand 83,3% of church boards felt that power is not shared with those at "grassroots" level of the church.

Power should be seen as an opportunity to serve rather than "lording it over." God blessed Joseph not so that he could wield power for the sake of power, but to save God's people. The whole idea of "lording it over" with all its overtones, violating people's rights and their God given abilities should be set aside. Power is given as a means of blessing, meant to serve God's people.

The following discussion looks at how pastors experienced the use of authority and power by the conference administration.

The use of power by conference administrations shows that 44,7% of pastors experienced the use of power negatively. Leadership is seen as keeping power vested in small groups close to themselves, while 36,9% of pastors felt that power was shared.

The majority of pastors (50,3% in all) experienced leadership as operating from a central position of the control of power, while 34,9% felt that leadership operated from a consultative and participatory position.

The next discussion looks at how pastors experienced the use of authority and power by the Union administration.

Pastors, 68,9% in all felt that the union administration with regard to authority was influenced more by tradition and the maintenance of rules and policies, while only 18,9% that the union administration was influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends.

On the other hand 58,1% of pastors experienced the union administration as tending to be rigid, unwilling to make the necessary adjustments, while 21,6% felt that the administration was flexible.

Concerning the matter of power, 67,6% of pastors felt that the union administration kept power vested in small groups that were close to them. On the other hand 64,9% of pastors felt that the administration operated from a central position of the control of power.

When one compares the research results of the exercise of authority and use of power by the conference and union administrations, there is a clear dichotomy between what scripture says about authority and power and the way it is practiced by the church at its two levels of administration.

In both cases the rank and file in the church, to a large extent is left without authority and are powerless.

In summary, authority and power are two aspects necessary in administering the church. However, it needs to be carried out in a way that is compatible with Jesus' teaching on the exercise of authority and power. The way leaders lead must be different to that seen in the secular world. Power must be relational (Lee and Cowan 2003:55) in this way the temptation to wield power will be neutralized and as stated by Greenleaf (1977:85) 'No one should be powerless'. However, the results of the research show that both administrations of the church in their effort to maintain unity and conformity have not taken the biblical principles governing authority and power into consideration.

6.7.5 Transition

'The world we live in,' says Walsh (1991:60), 'and the world our faith must confront is a world of change.'

Change has been an ever-present phenomenon and so has transition.[70] It affects every sphere of life. Since it cannot be stopped it must be managed (Bridges 1991). According to Bridges (1991:3) change is dependant

[70] Bridges (1991:3) defined *change* as 'situational: the move to a new site, the retirement of the founder, the

on transition: Getting people through the transition is essential if the change is actually to work as planned. When a change happens without people going through a transition, it is just a rearrangement of the chairs. It's what people mean when they say, 'Just because everything has changed, don't think that anything is different around here.'

Bridges (1991:4-5) presents the managing of transition as a process involving three phases through which people are to be helped:

1. Letting go of the old ways and the old identity people had. This first phase of transition is an ending, and the time when you need to help people to deal with their losses.
2. Going through an in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational. We call this time the "neutral zone." It's when the critical psychological realignments and repatterning take place.
3. Coming out of the transition and making a new beginning. This is when people develop the new identity, experience the new energy and discover the new sense of purpose that make the change begin to work.

Bridges (1991:7) insists that there are important differences between change and transition, which needs to be taken cognizance of. Change focuses "on the outcome that the change produces...transition is different." He asserts that, "The starting point for dealing with transition is not the outcome *but the ending that you'll need to leave the old situation behind*"[71][Bridges' italics].

It is clear as stated by Bridges that effective change, is dependant upon transition having taken place. Transition has been an ever-present phenomena. It will always be part of life. It affects every sphere of life. Since it cannot be stopped, it has to be managed. (Bridges 1991).

Barna (2001:17,18) says 'change is our middle name.' Furthermore, he says 'change will happen whether you are ready or not...like it or not. Change is inevitable...the absence of change is death...the presence of change is a sign of life, a necessary component to being alive.' Barna (2001:18) is of the opinion that even if proposed changes are in the best interest of people, often they would fight it, because they are scared to exchange the familiar with the unknown. They prefer the problems they know than the solutions they don't know. They will deplore progress, because of the uncertainty and insecurity that change will bring to their lives.

Barna (2001:18) is of the opinion that the challenge is not simply to endure change, but the pace at which change is taking place must be reckoned with. He remarks that 'our world is changing faster than ever before.' He further states 'not only is change inevitable, occurring at a blistering pace and invading every dimension of our lives, but also the pace of change is accelerating at what seems to be a geometric rate' (Barna 2001:19).

Futurist Toffler (1970:12) in his book *Future Shock* concerns himself with the effects that change has on people. 'It is about the ways in which we adapt-or fail to adapt to the future.' He further comments on the

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reorganization of the rules on the team, the revision of the pension plan. *Transition,* on the other hand, is psychological; it is a three phase process that people go through as the internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about.'

[71] Bridges (1991:7) argues, that "Situational change hinges on the new thing, But psychological transition depends on letting go of the old reality and the old identity you had before the change took place."

rate of current change. He speaks of it as 'the roaring current of change,...so powerful today that it overturns institutions, shift values and shrivels our roots. Change is the process by which the future invades our lives.' Snyder (1995:13) observes that 'change and the coming of a radically new epoch cuts across all fields of knowledge.' Naisbitt (1984) in his book *Megatrends* lists new megatrends affecting life in America. Among the ten Megatrends mentioned are the following:

Centralized to Decentralization

Institutional help to self help

Representative democracy to participating democracy

Hierarchies to networking[72]

Transition is taking place, affecting every sphere of society. Gibbs (2000) in his book *Church Next* lists nine quantum changes in Christian ministry, among which is found a change 'from bureaucratic hierarchies to apostolic networks.' Toffler (1970:20) describes change as 'avalanching upon our heads.' He (1970:25) speaks of accelerating change that 'influences our sense of time, revolutionizes the tempo of daily life...radically affecting the way we relate to other people, to things...art and value.' Furthermore, Toffler (1970:26) says 'we have cut ourselves off from the old ways of thinking, of feeling, of adapting. We have set the stage for a completely new society and are racing towards it.' He questions the capacity of man to adapt to change. If man cannot adapt to the imperatives, is he able to alter them? However, Toffler (1970:30) insist the 'rate of change has increased so much that our imagination can't keep up.' According to Roxburg (2000:16) we find ourselves 'in the midst of pervasive and profound change in western culture.' Roxburgh (2000:25) call this 'new in-between location' in which we find ourselves – transition.

Naisbitt and Abudene (1980:1) in their book *Megatrends 2000* says: 'We stand at the dawn of a new era.' They call for a re-examination of 'ourselves, our values and our institutions.'

Theological understanding of transition

There are people who do not want to think of change and prepare for the future or just feel that things should remain the way they are. As reference points, they cite Proverbs 3:5 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding' and Matthew 6:34 'Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own' (NIV).

Barna (2001:21) is of the opinion that God 'wants us to consider the future.' Prophets of old were sent to tell of what was coming, to give 'a reasonable chance to change in accordance with his will.' Barna (2001:21) points out that scripture ends with the description of future plans - the Revelation. Examples in scripture such as the men of Issachar were applauded for they were men 'who understand the times and knew what Israel should do' (1Chron. 12:32 NIV). They possessed the ability 'to look ahead and empower God's people to live responsibly in light of knowledge of the present and future.' Barna (2001:21) remarks that 'Jesus himself emphasizes the value of future thinking by scolding the Pharisees and Sadducees for being

[72] Snyder (1995:14) in his book *Earthcurents* cites eight global trends

predict the weather but remaining oblivious to the available signs of the significant realities to come' (Matt 16:1-3).

6.7.5.1 Jesus and change

Wagner (2004:15) speaks of the 'New Apostolic Reformation' that is bringing 'radical change to the church.' He sees for example, one of the most radical changes that we find in the Bible – the change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

One of the ways in which Jesus described change was the subject of wineskins (Wagner 2004:15). When John the Baptist disciples were finding difficulty in understanding transition 'from the old which he represented, to the new, which Jesus represented' (Wagner 2004:16). Then Jesus replied to their question:

> No one pours new wine into old wineskins. The wine would swell and burst the old skins. The wine would be lost, and the skins would be ruined. New wine must be put into new wineskins. Both the skins and the wine will then be safe. (Matt 9:17, Contemporary English Version)

The church from one age to the next was always in need of new wineskins even today. Particularly, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa as it struggles with old wineskins.

Wagner (1999:15) observes that the history of the church shows that God created new wineskins for his church from one era to the next. He says:

> [T]he church grew in a variety of ways. It grew one way in New Testament times and another way in the Roman Empire before Constantine. It grew another way in the Middle Ages and another way at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Then it grew another way during the era of European colonization, another way in post-World War II and another way in our own times.

Through the ages Jesus has continuously been building His Church as he had promised (Matt 16:18), and in every era there was change.

Wagner (1999:15, 16) further states 'One of the constants, through, was that as each change appeared on the horizon of history, a new wineskin was required to contain the new wine of the Holy Spirit.' The question is raised can denominations survive for the future? Wagner (1999:28) quotes Lyle Schaller who says that they must be 'willing and able to adapt to a new era.' In fact Donald Miller says, as quoted by Wagner (1999:18) 'If Christianity is going to survive it must continually reinvent itself.'

Snyder (1975a:13) comments on the words of Jesus in Luke 5:37-38. He says: 'There is that which is new and potent and essential – the gospel of Jesus Christ and there is that which is secondary, subsidiary, man made.' He contends that 'these are the wineskins, and include traditions, structures and patterns of doing things which have grown up around the gospels.' According to Snyder (1975a:14), 'New wine must be put into fresh wineskins.' 'The old Judaism could not contain the new wine of the gospel of Christ. The Christian faith would have to grow and burst the wineskins of Judaism. And that is what happened. The church began to spread into the whole world shedding the old Jewish forms.'

Snyder (1975a:15) says there are two things to be learnt from the parable. The first is, that we are reminded 'that God is always a God of newness.' It is observed that the Old Testament frequently speaks of new things: A new song (Ps. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; Is. 42:10), a new heart (Ez. 11:19; 18:31), a new Spirit

(Ez. 11:19; 18:31), a new name (Is. 62:2), a new covenant (Jer. 31:31), a new heaven and a new earth (Is. 65:17; 66:22).

Snyder (1975a:15) shows that the New Testament frequently refers to new things. In Hebrews 10:20 the gospel is spoken of as 'the new and living way.' At the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus said 'this is my blood of the new covenant' (Matt 26:28 RSV).

God is described in James 1:17 as 'the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' Jesus in turn is described as 'the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb 13:8 RSV).

Snyder (1975a:15) contends that 'this does not mean that God is static or stationary. The history of God's people in the Bible and the history of the Christian church is a message of newness and renewal. God has not stopped doing new things.' The expectation in (2 Peter 3:13) is that of looking for 'new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (KJV). In revelation the last book of the Bible God says 'behold I make all things new' (Rev 21:5) KJV).

Snyder (1975a:15) says that while the gospel is ever new 'we try to contain the new wine of the gospel in old wineskins – outmoded traditions, obsolete philosophies, creating institutions, old habits.' He contends that 'with time the old wineskins begin to bind the gospel. Then they must burst, and the power of the gospel pour forth once more' throughout the history of the church this has happened. The fact is that human nature is inclined to conserve and preserve, divine nature on the other hand wants to renew.

Snyder (1975a:16) makes the following observation 'It seems almost a law that things initially created to aid the gospel eventually become obstacles – old wineskins.' Therefore, 'the *necessity* of new wineskins' exists [Snyder's italics]. Snyder (1975a:16) aptly observes that 'Wineskins are not eternal. As time passes they must be replaced – not because the gospel changes, but because the gospel itself demands and produces change! New wine must be put into new wineskins – not one - for all, but repeatedly, periodically.' Snyder (1975a:16) emphasizes that church structures are relative, it needs updating from time to time.

6.7.5.2 The New Testament church in transition

The church of the New Testament period was a church that was experiencing transition. It was a church in transition. From its inception in Act 2, to its establishment on foreign soil, converts met regularly for worship. Jesus spent three and a half years ministering on earth. He selected twelve men whom he trained. They became witnesses of his ministry on earth. Getz (1984:56) points out that after the three years 'Jesus had basically accomplished two major goals in terms of strategy: *He had saturated the minds of the multitude* with His teachings, and *prepared* a *small group of men* in depth to enter into his labors and bring in the harvest.' (John 4:35-58) [Getz's italics].

After the death and resurrection of Jesus he gave his followers the great commission; to make disciples. Immediately they began to build upon the foundation which Jesus laid. They began in Jerusalem, in the temple from house to house, in the synagogue, on the streets and before the Jewish council. The response was great, believers were scattered throughout Judea, Samaria and throughout the then known world. Getz

(1984:57) observes that because of expansion of the church and its impact on the then known world, 'both Jew and gentile entered the family of God.' He points out that a new phenomenon appeared:

> something which had not existed while Christ was on earth. It began in Jerusalem after Christ's ascension and then spread throughout the New Testament world. Wherever believers *made disciples*, local churches came into being. People who lived in various communities and cultures were brought together to form new relationships [Getz's italics].

Fleming (2003:1) observes significant transitions in the New Testament narrative as follows:

> The transition of the church's membership from being completely Jewish to being significantly Gentile (non Jewish), and the transition of public worship within the framework of established Jewish forms and customs (both temple and synagogue) to the church's own forms and practices.
>
> The transition of the training and appointment of leaders being done by Jesus personally together with miraculous confirmation from God through signs and wonders (Mark 16:20, Hebrews 2:3, 4), to second generation leaders being trained and appointed by the preceding generation with accreditation of leadership being a matter of personal faith and the outcome of each individual's way of life (1 Timothy 3:1ff, Hebrews 13:7).

According to Fleming (2003:1) the observed changes were not only gradual but natural as a result 'of two other fundamental conditions: the original apostles (and other eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus)' were passing off the scene and the other 'the changing landscape of the mission field...beginning with Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and then on to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Colossians 1:6, 23).' It is observed by Fleming (2003:1) that 'some of these trends and developments were so radical and substantial that fixation on any point in the process before its completion could result in a very strong expectation and stunted development of the church'

6.7.5.3 Transition themes in the Bible

Roxburgh and Regele (2000:85-94) in their book *Crossing the bridge,* identify several 'transition themes in the Bible.' These biblical themes provide resources that furnish us with understanding of transition experience. It also provides us of how people responded in the past when confronted by the challenge of change.

- **The Exodus experience**

According to Roxburgh and Regele (2000:85-86) the exodus experience provides 'one image of the transition phase in the Biblical material.' They point out that the story of the children of Israel in Egypt in slavery 'had become their normative ideology and a central feature of their self-identity.' Because of this reality their move out of Egypt was not an easy one. In fact they were confused, frightened and terrified because their normal world and way of life was being taken away from them. Despite their slavery and hardship they longed to 'return to the security and habits of that know world.' Roxburgh (2000:86) observes that 'one of the primary reasons it took forty years for these offsprings of Israel to enter a land that was little more than a month's journey by foot, was because they found it almost impossible to get four hundred years of Egypt out of their collective souls.'

Roxburgh (2000:86) points out that the desert wandering was characteristic of a people experiencing transition. Egypt was a loss to them. For generations it was all they had known and got used to. It was difficult for them to imagine anything else.

Because of this, they resisted the leadership of Moses and consistently wanted to return to Egypt; that which was familiar to them and their experience. They preferred Egypt – the familiar, the well known to the unknown which only was known to them in promises.

Roxburgh (2000:86) says:

> There is ample evidence in Biblical stories to suggest that the generations that have lived in and been shaped by long periods of stability, move with great difficulty into the transition phase. Those who have been shaped by the stable periods seem incapable of constituting that group which participates in the reinvention of a new identity for their people.

- **The exile**

Another transition experience is found in those who were taken into Babylonian exile. In the books of Jeremiah, Ezra and Nehemiah can be found stories that illustrate transition (Roxburgh 2000:86). For a long time Israel had lived in the land of Canaan during the period of the judges and kings. Roxburgh (2000:87) observes that 'religious and political life had settled into a predictable pattern of responses to the Lord and alliances with the surrounding nations. Then suddenly...Judah was removed from Jerusalem into exile.'

In spite of the fact that the exile affected a small portion of the population of Judah, it had an adverse effect 'on the central assumptions of the people' (Roxburgh 2000:87). There was nothing in their long history in the land that prepared them for the exile. Roxburgh (2000:87) contends that it was for this reason that 'Jeremiah's warning and gross visual representations of what was to come fell on deaf ears.' The whole experience was 'beyond the framework within which almost all of Israel lived'

Within their framework they assumed that proper regulated religious orders and festivals, secured the covenant promises of god's continual protection and security in the land.

However, this was not to be. They were ripped up by their roots and at all cost would want to get back to Jerusalem – their familiar world. However, as stated by Roxburgh (2000:88) 'the underlying implication of the exile is that it would take at least seventy years in Babylon to get the old forms of Jerusalem out of their souls and get very different people ready to return to the city'

Roxburgh (2000:88) points out that what happened in Babylon could never have happened in Jerusalem by the 'regulatory assumptions among the priestly class.' Furthermore, what was achieved during those years of separation was 'the re-framing of the dominant story of God's relationship with Israel and their understanding of the Covenant that defined that relationship.' Roxburgh (2000:88) aptly observes that the religious leaders that eventually returned to Jerusalem were different to those who were taken away. 'A generation of leaders had to die and a new one emerge in order for the re-invention of covenant life.' The new leaders did not lose the historical memory of God's dealings with Israel, 'but it was filtered through the Babylonian experience.'

On their return they had a new vision of the future as a covenant people. There was a dramatic shift in the life and faith of Israel of the exile. 'Transition and liminality were the essential forms in which this process took place...leaders...compelled to re-think and re-imagine the meaning of their original primary stories in the light of the exile.'

The New Testament also presents additional resources in the life and ministry of Paul and Peter.

- **Paul**

Saul was educated in the elite schools of his day. Roxburgh (2000:89) states that he was 'a cross-cultural Jew at home in the cosmopolitan world of the Roman Empire.' Saul's zeal for God was way beyond that of his contemporaries. He speaks about it when he says 'I was ahead of most fellow - Jews of my age in any practice of the Jewish religion, and was much more devoted to the traditions of our ancestors' (Gal 1:14 Good News Bible).

Roxburgh (2000:89) says 'The long-established frameworks of post-exile Judaism were so powerfully embedded in Saul, as in Peter, that they had become the normative tradition.' Saul was ardent to superintend all aspects of Jewish life, so that syncretism and the incursions of paganism and unfaithfulness to the law were eliminated. This is what spurred him on to eliminate the followers of Jesus. He was prepared to use any means at this disposal to attain the righteousness of Israel and spur on the day of the Lord. However, it was this belief, moulded by tradition that made him unprepared for the cause of God.

- **Peter**

The life of the apostle Peter prior to the resurrection was embedded 'within a framework that predetermined what he would hear and how he would respond to Jesus' (Roxburgh 2000:90). Roxburgh (2000:90) aptly states 'Peter was shaped by a set of assumptions about who God was, what it meant to be the people of God, and who belonged to that people.' According to Roxbugh Peter represents how most Israelites framed their world. It is through this framework, shaped by hundreds of years that 'Peter filtered the words and actions of Jesus' (Roxburgh 2000:90). After the resurrection Peter encountered the forces of transition as found in the early chapters of Acts in which the questions concerning Judaism and the claims of the Gospel are depicted. Roxburgh (2000:91) points out that 'for Peter, as for most of the converts, the gospel remained embedded within the long held frameworks of Judaism.'

However, Acts 10 finds Peter 'disembedded from this framework.' Roxburgh (2000:91) is of the opinion that one of the purposes for Luke retelling the story 'was to show the trouble and struggling Gentile Christians that the gospel announced in Jesus would break boundaries. Its force was to cross the traditional frameworks of a stable world and turn those worlds upside down.' Roxburgh (2000:92) further expands his opinion, placing the emphasis of the clean and unclean animals in the following perspective:

> What these texts are unfolding is that people may have all kinds of charismatic experiences, and at the same time, continue to function within structures and frameworks that are themselves impediments to the movement of the Gospel. Peter's vision...was far more about the way in which God's spirit confronts a religiously constructed world whose regulatory practices and functions have become obstacles to encouraging the gospel. This world must be broken even as people, like Peter, remain fundamentally opposed to that challenge because they are so deeply embedded in the stability and normally of their constructed world.

In this story Peter is forced to deal with the boundaries in which he was embedded. Peter's whole world was being turned upside down. A gentile was being accepted into Christian identity without the need to be circumcised.

Roxburgh (2000:92) succinctly states:

> The result of this story of Peter being disembedded from his Jewish boundaries was that the church itself had become a different kind of society, one that could not have been imagined by any in the circle of the disciples. Prior to Cornelius, the church had been a society embedded within the cultural world of Israel. Now it would become something radically different. This was to be a very painful transition.

The Cornelius, Peter encounter was a transition experience for Peter. Peter had to restructure his framework as a Jew. To a large degree 'Judaism had reduced the central symbols of covenant life to regulatory formulas for controlling the identity of the community' (Roxburgh 2000:93). Circumcision became an edifice to have Jewish identity clearly marked off, became an end in itself that was 'far removed from the original vision.'

The Biblical view of transition is that era after era change has been taking place. The only constant is that God was preparing new wineskins to contain the new wine of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, several biblical transition themes establish the need for change and how people respond when confronted by the challenge of change.

The Seventh day-Adventist Church in South Africa, particularly its administrative structures has not confronted the challenge of change with much success.

Structured interviews with church boards show that an overwhelming 90,5% of church boards experienced the administration on conference level as not being open to change and to promote innovation for change. Furthermore, 71,4% of church boards felt that the administration at conference level saw change as a threat and therefore, they maintained the status quo. Leaders are fearful of loosing their positions and the power of control and status that goes with it.

The pastoral surveys on the other hand shows that 47,3% of pastors felt that leadership of the Conference sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk-taking, while 32% of pastors felt that leadership recognizes change as an opportunity for growth and renewal. A further 53,6% of pastors felt that leadership will only consider change when faced with a crisis, while 34,9% disagreed.

Pastoral surveys also showed that 48,7% of pastors felt that the Union leadership saw change as a threat and unnecessary risk-taking, while 28,3% of pastors felt differently. The pastoral surveys also showed that 60,8% of pastors felt that the Union leadership only considered change when faced with a crisis, while 24,3% did not agree.

Unlike the biblical examples cited, the administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa does not see change as an opportunity for growth and renewal. However, the maintenance of unity and structural conformity plays a greater role than growth and renewal. In fact, the discernment of the will of God has been replaced by a smooth running organization for its own sake and for those in positions of power and control.

Church Boards were also asked to give their views about the Conference and Union administrations, by responding to five questions concerning both administrations. The first question, concerned whether the two administrations contributed to the effectiveness of the local congregation.

The combined average responses for the Conference were 59% said no, 32% said yes and 9% were not sure.

The combined average responses for the Union were 93% said no and 7% said they were not sure. It is of significance to note that none of the churches saw the Union Administration as contributing anything to the effectiveness of their congregation.

It is clear that the distance from which these two administrations operate has proved ineffective to the majority of the congregations. The Union shows up worse than the Conference, this is because they have created a greater distance between themselves and the grassroots of the church.

The second question concerned whether leadership of both administrations were visible enough at grassroots level of the church. The combined averaged responses for the Conference were 91% said no 3% said yes and 6% were not sure.

The response for the Union was 99% said no, 1% were not sure. It is significant to note that there was not yes response. Leaders of these higher organizations do not have people in mind, therefore, their needs are not met by the leaders in the hierarchy.

The third question, concerned whether the two administrations are bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape". The responses on Conference level were that 69% said yes, 21% said no and 10% were not sure.

The responses on the Union level were 85% said yes, 5% said no and 10% were not sure.

The answer given clearly shows the hierarchical nature of the administration and once more their lack of concern and understanding of the church at grassroots level.

The fourth question concerned itself with whether the administrations serve the local church in an enabling way.

On Conference level 62% said no, 31% said yes and 7% were not sure. On Union level 90% said no, 6% said yes and 4% were not sure.

Both levels of administration do not serve the church in an enabling way. If they are not serving the local church for which they were created, then these leaders must be self-serving leaders. Those structures and its leadership basically have nothing to do with the church and its people. They have grown to protect the status quo. They are there for the sake of the organization.

The last question deals with whether these administrations are effective resource centres for the local church.

On the Conference level 67% said no, 30% said yes and 3% were not sure. On Union level 85% said no, 7% said yes and 8% were not sure.

Churches have to struggle on their own for resources, while the Conference and the Union have departments to cater for the needs of the churches or to refer them to other sources, however, this is not done. This in itself causes greater distance between those at the top and those at the bottom of the hierarchy.

The answers given to questions in the structured interviews concerning the congregations views of the Conference and Union administrations revealed several areas of concern.

Firstly, it revealed a great need for understanding the biblical nature of the church by the hierarchy of the SDA Church in South Africa. It has to be understood by what Scripture teaches and not by the dictates of its earthly structures.

Secondly, the church is first and foremost an organism – the body of Christ. While the church also has an organizational entity within society, it must be said that the SDA Church in South Africa leans more strongly toward its institutional, organizational side than its organism side.

The answers to the questions concerning congregations views of the two administrations shows that the administrations are more concerned with keeping the wheels of the organization turning, structural maintenance and keeping rules and policies in place, than having concern for people and their needs.

Thirdly, there exists an imbalance, a tension at that, between revelation and tradition on the one hand, distress and needs of people on the other hand. This way of working by the administrations leaves the needs of people largely unmet.

Coertzen (1981:25-26) sees the church as the creation of God, however, it is also a human institution. Verryn's (1983:56) concerns are that church organization must be such that it should not impede 'the realization of ecclesiastic aims' and that the church's structure be 'adequate to achieve these goals.' These aspects are not given attention by the two administrations. As long as the tried and tested are maintained, everything else must fall in line.

Transition presents both challenges and opportunities. It is paradoxical in a way, in that it involves letting go of the old, the familiar on the one had and on the other hand entering the new the unfamiliar at the same time.

Over long periods of time, religious and political life settles into predictable patterns of behaviour and responses. Various frameworks are developed with its assumptions in which people become embedded.

For progress to take place, people need to become un-embedded, so that transition can take place.

The problem statement asked the question: what the key factors were that were contributing to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church. The hypothesis alluded to the factors of: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures.

The above mentioned result confirms the problem and supports the hypothesis. The objective of the study is also brought to view. The result creates the awareness for the administration that disillusionment and alienation has taken place. That a broader basis for representation be created. The results also serve as a catalyst for change, with reference to the five aspects of administration.

In summary, this chapter examined the five aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist Church administrative practice (ethos) against biblical understanding thereof. These aspects are: leadership, organizational structures, administrative authority, power and transition. These aspects formed an integral part of the stated

problem and the formulated hypothesis. These aspects were tested in the research of structured interviews and pastoral surveys, the results of which are stated in chapter 5.

This chapter basically formed a correlation hermeneutical dialogue that took place between the specific aspects of administrative practice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa and scriptural principles found in the Word of God concerning these aspects.

Methodologically, it concerned itself with a discernment process, creating a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue between the different points of the cross. It points forward to transformative action suggested in chapter 7.

In the final analysis it concerns discerning the will of God and participation in God's *missio Dei*.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

For a long time the ethos that prevailed in the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, has gone unchallenged and deliberately avoided by those in power. To a large extent those in the hierarchy of the church, the administrative bureaucrats, have attached sacro-sanctity to the structures which provide them with power and control.

This is clearly seen in the way administrative authority is exercised; in leadership practices; the way power is used; transition stifled as the status quo is maintained and organizational structures distancing itself from the rank and file in the church.

This study set out to address the prevailing ethos of the administrative structures of the church. Its structural administrative ethos could either aid or hinder the mission of the church and the calling of its people. What is needed is an organization with administrative structures that are capable of meeting challenges and change never thought of before.

Today's environment demands a responsive, innovative and flexible organization. In fact, a new ecclesiology is needed that will essentially incorporate new organizational concepts that will include the mission of the church and its laity as higher priority than the maintenance of structure and policies that govern it. If the leaders of the church are to rise to the challenge, they must become leaders that not only see to the transformation of ministry but also to the organization itself.

Our era is defined by accelerating change and the SDA Church and its sub-organizations must of necessity adapt to manage this change, instead of avoiding it.

From chapter 1, it is evident that the chapter serves as an introduction to the study. It gives the motivations for the study which comes as a direct result of observing the common phenomenon of disillusionment and alienation among the rank and file in the church. It then also states the research problem as seeking the key factors that has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church.

The guiding hypothesis highlights five aspects as the main causes for the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file in the church as: administration authority, leadership power, transition and organizational structures. The multifaceted study objectives are also given.

The research methodology is given in which structured interviews with church boards and pastoral surveys were conducted. The basic concepts are dealt with and the operationalization given, setting out the chapters. Finally, the methodology for practical theology is discussed.

Chapter 2 deals with the early administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa and the present challenges facing the church. It mainly focuses on the early development of the administrative structures. It starts out with the establishment of local churches, which in turn resulted in further organizational structures such as the Conferences, Union and Division levels of administration. Like with most organizations, the SDA Church with its hierarchical structures in later years had to face various challenges.

The challenges are numerous and complex. The merging of Black and White Conferences is a direct challenge to the hierarchy. The challenge of bureaucracy, powerful centralized control by an executive committee system, poses many unanswered questions of the laity.

From a methodological point of view chapter 2 basically deals with the past, represented by the right point of the cross, as it reflects on the past developments of the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. It also deals with what is presently happening, represented by the left side of the cross, among other challenges, particularly, as it struggles to fully unite the SDA Church in South Africa.

Chapter 3 takes us to the inner workings of the representative form of church governance within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church starting at the local church level to the level of the General Conference operates by means of a representative form of governance. This means that authority in the upper structures is derived from the constituency, the grassroots of the church. This is of course hardly recognizable, as is also shown in chapter 5 containing the research results. Once a Session is over the authority of the people practically disappears, until the next Session.

It is also evident that the higher the administrative structure goes, the fewer members become involved. Then elections are carried out according to predetermined election formulas of higher organizations. Between Sessions the executive committee sways authority and power in which laity has very little say.

The aspect of the methodology applied to chapter 3 is that which is represented by the left side of the cross. Chapter 3 brings the reader up to date with what is presently happening. It explains the present context of the church and how its functions.

In chapter 4 a discussion is held concerning a well-known debate about the church as institution over and against the church as organism. It becomes clear from the discussion, that the issue is not whether

the church should be seen as an institution or organism, but how the church should be an institution of society and how it should be an organism.

Seventh-day Adventists have selected images of the New Testament Church that 'suggests the characteristic and qualitative components of the church idea' (Dederen 2000:547). These include the images such as: body of Christ, bride, temple and people of God.

Methodologically, the chapter is the more systematic theological part of the study. Because it is based on Scripture. It is represented by the right, bottom and top points of the cross. Scripture in this case teaches about the ideal identity of the church (bottom) and gives a vision of what the church contextually should be like, as a sign of the kingdom.

Chapter 5 focuses on the results of the research. Specifically, it examines the results concerning the five aspects of the SDA Church administration; administrative authority, leadership, power, organizational structures and transition. These aspects were the focus of the research. The research wanted to establish how the rank and file of the SDA Church in South Africa experienced the ethos of the administrations; the Conferences and Union. The results of the research would either support or reject the hypothesis of the study which states thus:

The way in which the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is administered, with particular reference to: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures, has contributed to the disillusionment and alienation of the rank and file from the administrative structures of the church.

The results of the research certainly did support the hypothesis.

From a methodological point of view, chapter 5 brings the reader up to date with what is contextually happening. It also brings the reader up to date with the actual views of people and problems on the ground, which is represented by the left side of the cross.

Chapter 6 is a chapter on theological evaluation. In this chapter theological evaluation is applied to the five aspects of administration tested and results shown in chapter 5. They are the aspects of administration authority, leadership, power, organizational structures and transition. Biblical principles were applied to these aspects with the view of comparing, the administrative ethos with the principles of scripture. The results of the pastoral surveys and structured interviews are compared with the biblical principles, which show the administrative ethos of the SDA Church administrations in South Africa as wanting.

In chapter 6 is found the discernment process, allowing a hermeneutically sensitive dialogue which takes place between the different points of the cross, which leads to a strategy for change as found in chapter 7.

Chapter 7 deals with recommendations to remedy the negative results of chapter 5 and to achieve the multifaceted objectives outlined in chapter 1. The answer to the dialogue in chapter 6 is spelt out in the strategy of chapter 7. This chapter invites the administrations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa to participate in transformative action on the different aspects of its administration, administrative authority, leadership, power, organizational structures and transition.

7.2 Administrative authority

The administrative authority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is vested in an Executive Committee system. As a result a small group of people make decisions that affect the majority of people. In other words administrative authority is in the hands of a few people, while the majority are passive observers.

Hillock (1972:27) writing about the *Need for Organizational change in the Adventist Church* states with reference to the committee system "the system concentrates authority in a few persons." Hillock (1972:26) acknowledges that 'significant influence on decisions is denied church members, who theoretically are the source of church authority (This is so in the electoral system of the church and final decision making, however, Jesus in the source of all authority). [Researcher's observation]. This is particularly unfortunate in a church that subscribes to the principle that few men should not control the whole church, and that every person in the church should unite in planning." Hillock (1972:27) contends that if one accepts the fact that presently "the decision-making influence of church members is severely limited, then the question that arises is: where does authority actually lie within the church?" Since kingly power does not exist in the church, leaders of the church are "answerable directly to the members. Officers at all levels who become responsible to members then become amenable to the ideas of the members to who they are accountable" (Hillock 1972:28). All are accountable to Christ who is the head of the church.

Hillock (1972:28) points out that 'behavioral scientists generally accept that one of the primary means of securing participation in *achieving objectives* is to begin with participation in decision-making'. He further states that 'This is a biblical principle: "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety"' (Proverbs 11:14 KJV).

Hillock insists that those who are allowed to participate and become involved "in defining goals and developing programs can be expected to contribute to the activities called for by plans that he has helped develop, for people work hard when they have a stake in the outcome of a program." Hillock (1972:28) draws on the fact that Adventist subscribe to a belief that the task of the church will never be accomplished by its ministers alone. "It follows, then that decision-making should not be the private preserve of church administrators."

Naisbitt (1984:159) writes about "The ethic of participation" which radically alters "the way...people in institutions should be governed. Citizens, workers, and consumers are demanding and getting a greater voice in government, business, and the marketplace." He insists the, "people whose lives are affected by a decision must be part of the process of arriving at the decision. The guiding principle of this participatory democracy is that people must be part of the process of arriving at decisions that affect their lives." Naisbitt (1984:159) sees this as a megatrend – "From representative Democracy to Participating Democracy." A reminder that the church is also a theocracy.

The concept of participation (1 Cor 12) is not only an important concept for faith communities, but a concept that must be seen to be implemented.

The question must be raised, how can the local congregation participate in and be part of administrative authority? Or must administrative authority vested in an Executive Committee continue to be apart from "the church," making decisions for the church without its participation? Pieterse (1983:62) emphasizes the importance of the congregation when he says, "The local congregation is not just one manifestation of the church: it is *the* church, a complete church in its own right. Because the Word and the sacraments are administered there, the congregation is manifested as the Church of Christ." He points out that "there is a delicate balance between the role (and authority) of the local congregation and that of the denomination."

Pieterse (1983:62) insists that "we should guard against the domination by the central organs of the church...The role of local congregations acquires greater significance when we consider the emergence of the laity...Lay parishioners are increasingly playing a full part in the life of the church, and domination by assemblies outside the local congregation, can only be counter-productive."

The research results, of the structured interviews as shown in chapter five, shows that many churches experience administrative authority in a negative way. A large percentage feels that "administrative authority is concentrated in a few, who act on behalf of the majority," 64.2% strongly agreed with the statement and 31.0% agreed. The statement that "Administrative authority is dispersed, the conference solicits input and assistance from congregation" attracted 50.0% who strongly disagreed and 35.7% disagreed.

The majority of pastors also experienced administrative authority in a negative way.

Administrative authority in the hands of a few, may have worked well in the past, when churches went through a dependant stage – a stage in the life of the church in which 'members act like dependant children' with little power and the leader play a pivotal role (Hendriks 1993:95-114). However, this practice no longer enjoys much support. Major shifts have taken place in the lives of members. Their worldviews have changed, even in the way in which they view and experience the church. The status of many members has changed. Their mobility has turned upward. Many are in decision-making positions. Education has played a major role, resulting in personal success and achievement and with it a change in thinking and understanding the world around them.

Laity, being part of the body, should take their fair share in the discernment process. The Spirit may give guidance and revel important missional directives in and through all members. ... at the "bottom" where faith has to be incarnated in ordinary life.

Members are no longer satisfied to be spectators to the decisions made on their behalf without being consulted.

In the political and economic world people are demanding and being granted a say in the decisions that are made which affects their lives. However, in the church, it is not so. Administrators give the impression that because the people have voted them into positions of authority, that it is absolute authority. A triumphalistic attitude is displayed, in that, whatever the executive committee decides, God will bless it and justify it, no matter how it affects the members and ministers on the ground.[71]

The Executive Committees should give serious consideration as to how members and ministers experience their behaviour and actions in decision making. Of great importance are the decisions that affect and have an impact on members and minister's daily life.

7.2.1 Recommendations – Administrative authority

Participation of laity should be seen on all levels of church structure, especially on those levels, where Executive Committees hold sway. The involvement of member participation should be such that they are well-informed in a meaningful way. To enhance this kind of participation, of lay involvement in administrative authority, the following is recommended:

1. That the constitutions of conferences include a clause in which it becomes constitutional, for churches to be informed of the dates of Executive Committee meetings. Furthermore, that the Executive Committee agenda where applicable be made available to churches for their input on matters of practical concern to churches and the conference as a whole. This would allow for member participation, giving their input to matters on the agenda before the Committee commences. It would also decisively increase the influence of both lay people and local church leadership.

2. That the opinion of churches be invited on matters that directly affect them and the functioning of the Conference. It is no longer good practice to inform people only once every three years at a Conference Session of what took place in the Conference in the past three years, and what decisions were taken.

3. That the constitution be revisited to include provisions for the ready availability of information. At the conclusion of each Executive Committee meeting, administration be compelled to inform its constituency of its decisions. Furthermore, that quarterly abbreviated financial statements be made available to church boards. People have a right to know what effect their giving is having on the operations at the Conference.

[71] Most conference Executive Committees do not consult with churches or ministers when transferring a minister from one church or district to the next. The Executive Committees has full authority when transferring ministers. This leaves members without say. Members and ministers are expected to be submissive and compliant; having confidence in the decisions of the Executive Committee.

This kind of availability of information will improve the quality of participation of those who make up the church, and maintain credibility of those in office

The availability of information to the local churches will prove effective in the support of the administrative authority. Effective administrative authority will keep its people informed. It is part and parcel of their authority to inform meaningfully. The intention of the information provision to be included in the constitution is to improve the quality and the quantity of available information. A further intention for an increased flow of information is to strengthen the loyalty of members; otherwise, it weakens with increased suspicion, as it presently exists.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church can no longer depend solely on a triennial session for leaders to give an account. Colvin (1983:38) states that 'Conference operations should be continually responsive to ...local church leaders.'[72] In 1972 Robert Pierson, the then president of the General Conference of Seventh day Adventists sought advice from D W Holbrook concerning decision-making at the General Conference. Holbrook wrote back stating:

> We need to review our changing thinking about administration as it relates to the decision-making processes of our church. We need to review how major decisions are currently made, who makes them, who ought to be making them; are the people most vitally affected allowed enough in-put in decision-making.

Holbrook continued by stating:

> The fundamental question, I believe, is how can decisions be best made...What is the best process of arriving at decisions. "Best process" should be defined as the most effective and most efficient method of decision-making, so that those decisions will have willing support, will be readily and enthusiastically accepted, and will demonstrate a high percentage of right decision, thereby heading off mounting frustrations, bitterness, and cynicism.

It is evident from the content of the correspondence that the issue of in-put in decision making, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is an old but ever present phenomenon.

The question is raised, what happens to decisions taken by Conference Executive Committees? Is it the sole property of the Executive Committee members? It cannot be since the Executive Committee and the Administrators exercise delegated authority and not absolute authority. The Executive Committee with the administrators are accountable to the constituency that they represent.

In summary, participation in the administrative authority of the SDA Church in South Africa, should be open as wide as possible to accommodate the laypeople of the church. Involvement of laity should be implemented in an informed and meaningful way. The constitution, therefore, should promote participation in a meaningful and decisive way. Furthermore, that it be done in a sex-neutral manner.

[72] At the time of writing George Calvin was a doctoral candidate in government at Claremont Graduate school and secretary of the association of Adventist Forums Tack Force on church structure.

7.3 Leadership

The importance of people-sensitive oriented leaders cannot be over emphasized. It is a critical need of contemporary ecclesial leadership. Church leaders who do not make this their highest priority, are in most cases more concerned with organizational structures and the maintenance thereof. Relationships with the people they lead become unimportant, and the ethos of serving those led are noticeably absent. Hendriks (2004:17) writing about networking, which he says, 'required a new leadership style, ...that works with trust, not control' aptly states 'relationships are important and an ethos of serving one another drives these relationships.'

Relationships with people meant everything to Jesus. He became a person to be among people. As a person he took on our humanity and thereby, identified with us as his people. As incarnate he did not isolate himself from the people among whom he was born. 'And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14 KJV). The phrase "and dwelt among us" is suggestive of his presence amongst his people. He was one who was among people.

In his humanity he was found "among" men and women, was able to understand human nature and respond to human needs. Mckenna (1989:42) states 'For years, leadership theory ignored the culture within which leaders were expected to serve.' Furthermore, he says 'effective leaders were sensitive to the needs of their followers.' Mckenna (1989:48) writes that not only did Jesus take on 'the whole of our humanity, but He also took the risk of identifying with us.' His identification was so compatible, says Mckenna (1989:48) 'that his own townsfolk ridiculed His teaching and rejected His miracles.' Yet he points out 'that the common folk heard Him gladly, religious leaders admitted that He taught with authority and civil authorities could find no fault in Him. By living among us, Jesus gained the commitment of His followers, the confidence of the public and the begrudging respect of religious and political leaders.'

The administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa are in dire need of incarnational leaders,[73]leaders who "tabernacle" with those they lead, and not fossilize in some administrative office. Maxwell (1993:173) aptly warns that 'Leaders can easily be separated from their people.' It is possible that leaders easily replace people, with administrative functions, the maintenance of policies and organizational structures. They become so absorbed in these, that they become isolated from their followers. Where leaders have become separated from their followers, they will do well to remember, that 'Relationships do not develop in a vacuum' (Shawchuck and Heuser 1993:213).

The incarnation of Christ, his dwelling among us is pivotal to our leadership today. Mckenna (1989:16) succinctly says 'our incarnational "being" is *to embody the Spirit of Christ;* our incarnational "doing" is *to empower His people.*' Mckenna (1989:20) further states that the attributes of Christ's character must become 'the pattern for incarnational leadership.' Mckenna (1989:20, 21) presents the incarnational pattern as follows:

[73] Incarnational leaders are leaders who care about people. They are leaders who have cultivated the capacity to become one with people. Being keenly aware that they are not above their people, but from among them and being back with them.

His incarnate nature 'The Word become Flesh' His incarnate style 'And lived for a while among us'. His incarnate gift 'Full of grace and truth' his incarnate influence 'We have seen His glory.' Paul wrote 'for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...' (Eph 2:10 KJV). Mckenna 1989:22 suggests that ours 'is the experience of being born *in His likeness*, in order to live *among His people*, serve *from His fullness* and lead *for His glory*' [McKenna's italics].

The results of the structured interviews as recorded in chapter 5 shows a negative picture of leadership in local conferences. The statement that, "The leadership is people orientated; the wishes and feelings of members come first" received the following response:

47.6% strongly disagreed and 38.1% disagreed with the statement. People see the leadership as not being people orientated. The response to the statement that, "The leadership is structure orientated: the organization and its functions take first preference" was responded to as follows:

45.1% strongly agreed and 42.9% agreed. People felt that the leadership were more concerned with church structure and organizational function than with people for which the organization came into being.

In the structured interviews church boards were asked to give their views to the question "Is the conference leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?" The responses to the question from all conference were "no." Southern Hope 100%, Kwazulu-Natal Free State 88.9%, Transvaal 75% and Cape 100%. The visibility of leaders at grassroots level of the church needs serious attention. In fact some members did not know who certain leaders were.

It is recommended that the Conference and Church leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa; deliberately liberate themselves from the administrative machinery that separate them from the people they lead. Firstly they need purposefully to adopt an incarnational leadership style that puts them among the people they lead. Serving the people they lead, by being among them on a regular basis must become a natural outgrowth of their incarnational being. A way in which to do this will be firstly by making it an itinerary item, since itineraries are voted by the Executive Committee. Any itinerary of leadership that does not include being among people must be sent back for revision.

Secondly, Union leadership must plan with Conference leadership for Conference wide rallies, where Union leadership, will speak to and encourage their followers, giving reports of what is happening Union wide. Conference leadership on the other hand must plan with local church leadership for Conference wide rallies. At which time they will encourage and present reports on what is happening in the conference. In this way the church will be encouraged and kept informed, the confidence in leadership will increase and accountability of leadership be sharpened.

Thirdly, at such rallies the leadership of the Conference allow for questions from the laity. In this way they will become acquainted with the needs and wishes of people on a first hand basis. Furthermore, that these needs and wishes be studied by the leadership to find the best way of meeting those needs and wishes.

Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003:25) says "if we are to follow the example of Christ, we must aim at incarnation" They further add, that we must consciously release ourselves from the attachments of our comfort zones, whatever, that may be: the comfort of an administrative office and its routine; the comfort of delegated authority and its vested power.

In summary, relationships between the leadership of the church and the rank and file in the church cannot develop in a vacuum. Incarnational leadership is necessary, so that leaders and followers do not become separated from each other. Leadership must therefore, consciously in a deliberate way be amongst those they lead. They must make themselves available to their followers for dialogue and conversation, which is a natural outflow of their incarnational being. In this way they will be exemplifying the example of Jesus who came to be among the people he eventually died for.

7.4 Power

Theologically, all power is from God. He is the source of all power. Therefore, men and women and the leadership of the church must keep this uppermost in their minds. Whatever, power men and women may have and leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church, it must all be placed in subjection to God's power and what His will is concerning the use of power.

If one asks, where the seat of power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church lies, the usual answer will be

with the people. However, in practice, people only have voting power, that is voting individuals into positions of administrative authority. Once that is done, their power is suspended until the next session, when it is needed again. Up until then power resides in the administration via the executive committee.

Shawchuck and Heuser (1993:197) says 'The issues of power and authority are always of central concern in any organization, and the church is no exception.' Abraham Lincoln once said, 'Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power' (Maxwell 1993:173). Maxwell (1993:173) compares power to a great river. While it remains within its bounds, it is beautiful and useful. However, if it exceeds it bounds it becomes a destroying power. Maxwell (1993:173) states 'the danger of power lies in the fact that those who are vested with it tend to make its preservation their first concern. Therefore, they will naturally oppose any changes in the focus that have given them this power.' In 1989 in his inaugural address, George Bush prayed, 'For we are given power not to advance our own purposes not to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one use of power and it is to serve people' (Maxwell 1993:173)

Shawchuck and Heuser (1993:198) quotes the maxim attributed to Lord Acton, 'power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' They are of the opinion 'that the use of power at every level of the church'

should be carried out 'within a system of checks and balances so that the potentially corrupting influence of power is not realized.' This is not the case in the SDA Church in South Africa.

Despite the fact that administrative leaders and an executive committee are installed by the vote of the members, they only have delegated authority and power, not absolute authority and power.

However, when leadership and executive committee assume absolute power, that is, they do not consult with those who installed them, while making decisions affecting those who installed them. A mechanism is needed to neutralize such power. Administrative leaders and executive Committees, normally do very well in following organizational working policies. However, they fail to acquaint themselves of how to be in authority and how to exercise power. It is necessary and important to learn to know how to be in authority and how to exercise power in authority. The church does not only suffer from those who do not know how to obey, but untold damage is done by those in authority, who have not learnt how to exercise power when in authority. There is nothing wrong with being in authority and the power that goes with it. However, these entities need to be kept in check from time to time making sure that they are serving their intended purpose. Miglore (1991:193) points out that where the church is hierarchically structured 'power always flows from the top to the bottom. Furthermore, power is centralized in the hands of the few who are supposedly ordained by God to rule over the silent and powerless masses of believers. Above all, there is the mentality of maintenance of the institution and, if possible extension of its power.' Miglore (1991:193) goes further, and points out that 'Protestant polemics' portrays the above as typical of the Roman Catholic Church. However, it is also true of 'Protestant ecclesial life.' 'When this happens hierarchy triumphs over community, and the mentality of survival supplants the spirit of service.'

Greenleaf (1977:5) speaks of 'legitimate power' becoming 'an ethical imperative' when those who hold power and their authoritative actions are called into question. This state of affairs does not develop within a vacuum. Nouwen (1989:58-59) gives an apt description of the historic style of religious leadership:

> One of the greatest ironies of the history of Christianity is that its leaders constantly give in to the temptation of power...even though they continued to speak in the name of Jesus, who did not cling to his divine power but emptied himself and became as we are. The temptation to consider power an apt instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel is greatest of all...With this rationalization, crusades took place; inquisitions were organized; Indians were enslaved;...moral manipulation of conscience was engaged in. Every time we see a major crisis in the history of the church...we always see that a major cause of rupture is the power exercised by those who claim to be followers of the poor and powerless Jesus.

If the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa wishes to neutralize, the "potentially corrupting influence of power" then it will need to include such intentions to action in its working policies and constitutions that will deliberately and effectively lead to such neutralization. They also need to discern the will of God in this regard.

The structured interviews with church boards, presents the following results. Church boards were requested to respond to the statement that "Power in the organization is vested in the top positions of the Conference." It received the following response: 50% strongly agreed, 38.1% agreed. Church boards were also asked to respond

to the statement that "Power is shared with those at "grassroots" level of the church." It received the following response: 64.3% strongly disagreed and 19.0% disagreed.

People experience power as being vested in the top structures of the church, with those at grassroots being powerless.

However, it must be stated that ultimately, it is not about the power of the laity versus the power of leadership. Both are wrong. Either power should be derived from God. It is Christ's power, the work of the Holy Spirit and value of the scriptures that should flow from members and those serving in leadership positions.

The following recommendations are toward bringing about the neutralization of the "potentially corrupting influence of power" in the hierarchy of the church.

1. Layman's Council

That Layman's Councils be established in each conference. That these Layman's Councils be vested with authority to act in the interest of and on behalf of the laity in each Conference. In this way a broader consultative base will be created engaging the laity. It will also involve laity between sessions and not only at session time in various aspects of organizational life.

2. The composition of the layman's councils

The composition of layman's council will be comprised of one member of every organized church in the conference.

3. Powers of the layman's council

The layman's Council should be vested with the following powers:

3.1 To appoint fifty percent plus members who serve on the following decision making or recommendation making sub-committees that report to the Conference Executive Committee:

3.1.1 Finance Committee – giving guidance to the Conference Treasurer on matters of finance.

3.1.2 Pastoral Placement Committee – giving guidance and Insight from the laity's perspective when pastors are being placed throughout the Conference.

3.1.3 Furthermore, that the appointment of lay-delegates to the Union Sessions be made by the Layman's Council and not by the Conference Executive Committee as is the current practice.

3.1.4 That a representative from each layman's Council serve on the Executive Committee of the Conference. The representative must be chosen by the Council members.

In conclusion, power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church can no longer be vested in a privileged few, it must be shared with grassroots of the church. Neither should power only flow from top to bottom. If this continues, it means that the masses of people who make up the church will remain powerless. Power must be shared with

those at the grassroots level of the church. This must not be done to make people simply feel better about themselves or to carry favour, but because it is a biblical imperative, to empower the "people of God."

7.5 Transition

The church past, present, and future has been called to live in what is called the "in-between." It is called to live 'between the resurrection and the eschaton, between the "already" and the "not yet"' (Lee 2001:7). Lee (2001:7) further states that the church was 'called to be a "wilderness' people", a people always in transition. Therefore, the church must always be open to the variety of new challenges and opportunities provided by God and history.

Lee (2001:7) is concerned that discerning leadership is needed to lead the church through transition. Leaders who can read the signs of the times and 'promptly steer the church in a new direction that keeps it moving toward its ultimate destinations.' Therefore, the church should constantly be ready for change. Small adjustments will not suffice to deal with the challenges the church faces.

Lee (2001:7) calls for skilled leaders to manage the introduction for change on all levels of church organization. According to Lee (2001:7) the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in need of leadership whose "core competency is their ability to read and interpret the signs of the times" as the church moves into the 21st century. Lee (2001:1) insists that, destabilizing change is the field in which the church will sow the seeds of faithfulness and effective ministry." He further identifies the various forces that will together necessitate changes in the church. These forces are, "secularism, technology, globalization, diversity, relativization, and post-modernism." In South Africa, the main driving forces for change in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are as follows:

Firstly, ever increasing financial restraints. It concerns the commitments that syphons money from the local church to support administrative structures and its sub-organizations that rise above the local church, such as:

- The Union
- The Division
- The General Conference

Secondly, increase in pastoral loads is a matter for urgent consideration. This is a direct outgrowth of financial restraints. However, it is more symptomatic than problematic. Part of the bigger problem is that a large amount of pastors are occupying positions in the administrative offices of the church. For example, in the Southern Hope Conference alone, twelve pastors are occupied in office work.

Thirdly, the ever expanding financial needs to support an expanding hierarchy.

In the structured interviews church boards were asked to respond to the statement that "The administration is always open to change and promote innovation for change." In response 59.5% strongly disagreed and 31.0% disagreed. A further statement was, "The administration sees change as a threat and therefore, maintains the status quo." Members response to this was that 35.7 agree and 35.7 strongly agreed.

In making a recommendation concerning transition, it is imperative that the following be foremost in making a recommendation. Firstly, that church leaders on all levels of church administration become skilled in how to introduce change and the management of change. It envisages pastors, administrators and lay church leaders in concert to workshop the principles and processes needed for the introduction and management of change in the church.

Before change or transition can be introduced and brought about, it must first be understood. A helpful resource is Alan Roxburgh's work *Crossing the Bridge (2000).* Roxburgh's (2000:12) work as stated 'is about leading congregations or denominations through a period of tumultuous transition.' He then further states that, 'understanding is a crucial element in this process' the model which Roxburgh (2000:31) recommends is a five phase model,[74]'through which change is continuously moving.'

Roxburgh (2000:33-44) places emphasis on leadership in the various phases. According to Roxburgh (2000:46) 'leadership in these phases is the ability to understand and move a system through a period outside of traditional, stable frameworks.' It is also important to note that in the understanding of "change process," it is essential that the big picture be seen at every phase (Roxburgh 2000:45). According to Roxburgh (2000:45) 'movement through these phases takes place over a long period of time.' Further, recommendations concerning change will be made in the next section.

In summary, the church will always be in transition until the *parousia*, the *eschaton.* There will always be new challenges along the way, new ways of doing things. Therefore, the church need to respond to change in a responsible way. Its leaders must be on the cutting edge of being able to read and interpret the times – which will necessitate change in the way things are done in the church.

7.6 Organizational Structure

In 2001 Harold Lee[75]wrote an article in the *Adventist Review*[76]titled *Church Structure in 2005.* The article concerns itself with "organizational changes the Adventist Church will be forced to make over the next 10-25 years" (Lee 2001:1). Over the years others have repeatedly called for structural change. Among others are[77] Barry Oliver (1989) and George Knight (1995,[78]2001[79]). Numerous articles were also written at various times in Spectrum.[80] Knight (2001) insists that major change in the SDA Church organization is not only long overdue,

[74] The five phase model consists of phase one: stability, phase two: discontinuity, phase three: disembedding, phase four: transition, phase five: re-formation (Roxburgh 2000:33-44).
[75] At the time of writing Harold Lee was the president of the Columbia Union Conference of SDA. He holds a doctorate in church Administration from Mc Cormick Theological Seminary.
[76] The Adventist review is the official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The article appeared in the online edition of the Adventist review
[77] Barry Oliver wrote a doctoral dissertation on *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, present, and Future*
[78] George Knight, SDA Church historian published his book, *The Fat lady and the Kingdom: Adventist mission confronts the challenges of institutionalism and seculization.*
[79] In 2001 George Knight published, *Organizing to beat the Devil.*
[80] "Spectrum" is the journal of the Association of Adventist forums.

but change has become imperative for the church, if it wishes to fulfil its mission. Among several other concerns which Knight (2001:159-161) highlights are firstly that of finance. He observes:

> That many no longer sees the need to support a church structure with four levels above the congregation. Some are calling for a trimmed-down institution that puts money and personnel on the front lines where "doing church" actually takes place. They point out that no other church in the world, including the (Roman Catholic which only has two levels above the local congregation), has so many administrative levels to support.

Secondly Knight (2001:160) points out there is also the concern that some have, that those in the "hierarchy" does not listen 'to the needs of the local congregations, but seem to be pursuing their own goals at the expense of congregations.' Thirdly, Knight (2001:161) points out that there exists 'a perception of resistance to change on the part of church leaders. Many members and pastors resent leaders who seem to believe that the present way of doing things is the only way to do them. Such concerned individuals fear that the denomination may confuse its structure with its mission.'

Knight (2001:169) contends that 'structures and institutions are not ends in themselves, but means to an end.' Therefore, he insists that only those structures and institutions be maintained that continuously contribute effectively and efficiently to the fulfilment of the churches mission. According to Knight (2001:171-174) there are several factors that need to be taken into consideration for church restructuring. They are as follows:

1. '*That reorganization is a valid possibility*' There are many who see 'the present organizational model as established by divine command.' However, no structure is unchangeable [Knight's italics].

2. '*The purpose of church organization.*' Knight (2001:172) states 'It is the mission rather than any exact structure that lies at the basis of any Adventist "orthodoxy" on the topic of organization' Knight (2001:172) emphasize that it 'does not mean that Adventist can neglect biblical *ecclesiology.*' He also states that, 'Perhaps the doctrine of the church is one of he weakest understandings in Adventism.' He concludes that both the 'eschatological mission of the church' and 'the nature of the church' as set out in the Bible, 'needs to undergird any future discussion on the topic of reorganization in Adventism' (Knight 2001:173). [Knight's italics]

3. A third factor is 'an *affordable* organizational structure.' Knight (2001:173) aptly observes:

   > If the present four-tiered structure with relatively small administrative units has been difficult to support in develop countries, it has been almost impossible to finance in developing nations. In 1995, for example, 56 percent of the worldwide Adventist membership lived in union missions[81]rather than union conferences...Thus most Adventists belong to administrative units that are unable to pay their own bills. [Knight's italics]

Schantz (1999:103) points out that in spite of the fact that many mission fields[82]have gained financial independence, 'too many fields, even where the Adventists message was planted more than a century ago, are

[81] The difference between union missions and union conferences is that a union conference "'is financially independent, whereas a mission (Or union mission) is dependent" (Schwarz 1999:99).
[82] A field has been defined in the lest of terminology.

still dependent. This borders on a scandal.' Knight (2001:173) states that this state of affairs, not only places the dependant fields 'in a uneviable position' but places strain on those sectors that must make up the short fall. One of Schantz's (1999:103) suggestions toward a remedy is that, 'Western-style administrative superstructures should be partially dismantled or indigenized.'

According to Knight (2001:174) the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the beginning of the twenty-first century portray 'one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse groups in the world.' Oliver (1989:355) argues that 'diversity necessitates structural adaptation' He further adds, 'to remain viable, change should not only be requested, it must be anticipated.' Knight (2001:174) is of the opinion that the SDA Church accepts 'diversity as a tool' that will enable the church to 'reach an extremely diverse world.'

Knight (2001:175) argues that the Seventh-day Adventist Church must drop the idea that 'one size fits all' and must cultivate the freedom that will enable its structures to adapt 'to the needs and financial capabilities of the various fields in which it works.' Knight (2000:175) vies for flexibility in reorganization discussions.

It was this that Daniels had in mind when he said 'we ought to advance with it, and not hold rigidly to old forms and old methods. Because a thing is done in a certain way in one place is not reason why it should be done in the same way in another place, or even in the same place at the same time' (Oliver 1989:320).

Knight (2001:176) and Oliver (1989:302) quote MC Wilcox a SDA Church leader who in 1903 observed 'We may pass all these resolutions, all these principles of organization, and go on and do just the same as we have been doing for the last twenty-five years.' Then he expressed the hope 'we will not bind ourselves about with red tape and feel that everything must go in just the same way. There are different fields sometimes that demand different organizations.' He then went on to express the idea that there will be times that leaders 'will be willing to break the red tape, if necessary, and form the organization in harmony with the field, and according to the demands of the occasion.'

Another important aspect in the discussion on reorganization as stated by Knight (2001:177) is 'the necessity of checks and balances.' He quotes Andrew Mustard[83]who points out that 'in the interest of efficiency, there may well be a temptation to cut short consultation and decision-making processes and concentrate authority in a few leaders.' The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa shares in the corporate culture of the worldwide organizational structures. All levels of administrative structures above the local church are closely knit in ethos of organizational practices. It is very difficult to penetrate the structural hard core shell that administrations develop around themselves and policies which gives further protection.

The recommendations made in this section are multifaceted. It has a direct bearing on organizational structures.

[83] Andrew Mustard wrote his PhD dissertation on *James White and the Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Organization 1844-1881*. Andrews University, 1987.

Firstly, the recommendation addresses the lack of financial resources at local church level. For years church members have continuously[84]questioned the appropriation of funds to the "higher organizations" above the conference level of administration. When these questions arise, it is often stifled by the response, that a large portion of funds are appropriate to the union by appropriations from the General Conference. However, these funds are normally tagged or earmarked by the donor organization of how such funds may be used. This is no longer today. Knight (1999:16) aptly observes that, 'Many are tired of hearing that a large portion of the funds come back through appropriation from higher levels.' At the local church level people do not want to work with funds that are stipulated for certain programs. The local church needs funds that can be used at their discretion and for activities of their choice, which will best promote the mission of the church in is local context.

Churches want more of the tithe which is generated at the local congregation level to be used at the level where "doing church" and "being church" takes place. It is where the "real" church is realized as the body of Christ.

The reason for this thinking is, because many members cannot see why they need to support heavy administrative structures, while they have to share a minister with so many other churches. They want more personnel in the front lines, and want the tithe to be used for its intended purposes, which is the spreading of the gospel and sustaining the work of God, through the ministry..

It is a well known fact that whenever, the monthly financial statement[85]of a conference shows a downward trend, the Union immediately voices its concern. If the trend continues, the officers of the union will make a visit to the Conference office. If working capital and liquidity percentages[86]are not maintained at acceptable levels, the Union[87]will quickly make certain recommendations. This is especially so at the year-end executive committee meeting of the Conferences, at which time the budget for the ensuing year is presented. Normally the Union's recommendations among others will include the following:

1. No further intake of pastors
2. No increment for pastors
3. Cut on travel budgets of pastors and administrative staff.
4. No bonuses

These measures suggested are more to protect the interest of the Union and higher organizations. If a specific conference working capital and liquidity drops to unrealistic levels, it also places the Union and higher

[84] The "higher organizations" above the conference levels are: the union, the division and the general Conference. Funds are appropriated as a percentage of tithe income to support the functions of the higher organizations. These appropriations are governed by the higher organizations policies.

[85] The monthly financial statement is a comprehensive statement of anything from 14-20 pages depending on the type of organization. It consists of firstly, a statement of financial position, secondly a statement of working capital and liquidity and thirdly a statement of financial activity. Then all the supporting schedules and exhibits.

[86] The working capital and liquidity percentages are the measuring instruments that measure the percentages of requirements of working capital and liquidity. Working capital and liquidity must be maintained at hundred percent

[87] The term Union as used refers to the administrative officers of the Union.

organizations finances in jeopardy. In such a situation tithe appropriations[88]and Trust funds [89]due to the Union will not be realized. It will cause a domino effect, because tithe from the local congregations via the conference feed the higher organizations. Therefore, the higher organizations will always express concern for diminishing working capital and liquidity of conferences. The recommendation of this study, takes into consideration, the fact that the local church is the centre of the church's mission. It needs more pastors to help the church fulfil its God given mission. People can no longer want to be asked to contribute more, when the money they have already given is not used for its intended purpose. People want to see more pastors in the field and so does God. Discernment asks about God's will. What is God's will as far as pastors in the field are concerne.

Church boards in the structured interviews were ask to respond to two statements. The first was, "The organizational structures operate on a top down relationship. The bottom of the organization is expected to carry out what is passed down to them." Members responded as follows: 23.8% agreed and 64.3% strongly agreed. The second statement was, "The organizational structures operates on a participatory basis; the leadership at the top sees those at "grassroots" as part of the administrative process." Members responded as follows: 57.1% strongly disagreed, while 26.2% disagreed.

It is recommended that the Union, phase out within a five year period tithe appropriations to their sub-organization, such as the VOP and Publishing, which comes from tithe. That these entities be encouraged to become self-supporting. That they set up a five year plan wherein, they will become self-supporting, so that the combined 1.75% and 3.5% be re-deployed in pastoral ministry at local church level. If we are serious about the church and its mission at local church level, then radical steps need to be taken to place more money in ministry where it ought to be.

It is further recommended, that sub-committees be set up comprising of lay members. The sub-committees shall have the authority to make recommendations to the Conference Executive Committee on specific issues, such as evangelism and how evangelistic funds should be spent, identifying projects and areas for evangelism identified by the laity; a sub-committee on constitution with the frame of reference to study the constitution to see where changes need to be made in the constitution so as to provide for greater in-put from the grassroots to

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[88] Tithe appropriations are percentages applied to tithe income from conference, past on to the Union. They are as follows:

Tithe of tithe	10%
Special tithe SAU	3.25%
Special tithe GC	4.75%
Sustentation	7.25%
VOP Appropriation	1.75%
Publishing	3.50%
Colleges	5.00%

Tithe of tithe and special tithe are used at the Union for their operations. Special tithe GC- these funds contribute towards the operation of the General Conference. Sustentation funds are used for fund future sustentees of the church organization. VOP appropriations are funds used in the operations of the VOP Bible School located in Claremont Cape Town. Publishing funds are contributions made towards the operation of the publications of the SDA Church. A percentage of tithe is used toward the operations of the two colleges run by the SDA Church in South Africa

[89] Trust Funds are offering taken up in the various congregations earmarked for special projects, throughout the world field.

administration; a placement sub-committee, that will provide the Executive Committee with specific in-put that will have a direct influence on the placement of ministers. This sub-committee will give study to the needs of the congregations and ministers alike. Some ministers have children in their matric year and moving such a family could have devastating effects on the children. There are others needs such as medical, and other needs consideration. On the other hand there are congregations with specific needs, which will be better taken care of by a more senior pastor than a younger pastor who has less experience.

In this way there would be a healthy upward flow from grassroots to administration and greater participation by the laity in the organizational structure.

In summary, the organizational structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa operate on a top down relationship. The administrative process is separated from the grassroots of the church on a non-participatory basis. Those at the bottom are expected to carry out the wishes and the thinking of those in the top eschalons of church structure.

This state of affairs has particular negative implications on the finances of the church. An expanding organizational structure with its sub-organizations will always make undue demands on the finances generated by those at grassroots level of the church.

The above discussion of the five facets of administration and its transformation has more to do with transformation from a democratic perspective. However, the church is not only a democracy, but it is also a theocracy. Democracy must be based on theocracy in the church of God.

The church must be seen as "the people of God" (Ex 6:7). The church, Saucy (1972:20) sees as 'Being chosen and elected by God, the church belongs to God. It is "the people of God" (1Pet 2:20), "a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet 2:9, ASV; Titus 2:14, ASV) or simply "my people" Rom 9:25*f*; 2 Co 6:14-16; cf. Ac 15:14; 18:10). These titles which God previously applied to Israel He now applies to the church, showing a historical continuity in His redemptive program, . . . the church, does not constitute an egotistical claim to superiority above other peoples, but rather indicates the priority of God.'

God's eternal purpose is made clear in the person of Christ. Saucy (1972:60) aptly states, 'The church as the new creation of God rests upon the person and work of Jesus Christ.' In fact Christ is the head of the church (Eph 1:22; Eph 4:23; Col 1:18). When Jesus ascended he 'gave gifts to people' (Eph 4:8 Contemporary English Version). Saucy (1972:60) points out that, "These spiritual gifts on which the function of the church depends were bestowed through the Spirit.' (Jn 16:7).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa is giving attention to the five facets of administration: leadership, administrative authority, power, transition and administrative structures, must do so at a deeper level, in which the church is not only seen as a democracy but a theocracy. All five levels must be subject to the

church as a theocracy, in which the will of God is sought concerning "the people of God." On every level of administration the will of God must be sought.

The Administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa must take cognizance of the deeper and broader ecclesiological implications, that God has given gifts to men and women in the church (Eph 4:8). Those in administration must help in the development of these gifts. God also speaks to men and women at grassroots level of the church therefore the top of the church needs to listen to those at the bottom and may not divest itself from the bottom. The top then needs to list to what God has to say via the bottom of the chuch. If not the full voice, the complete conversation, which carries the guidance and the will of God will not be heard and carried out.

7.7 Merger Issues

The following discussion is made to address the racial issues in the church especially as it relates to the merger issues.

Sacks (2003:vii) says 'we must learn to feel enlarged not threatened, by difference.' After Moses had led the children of Israel from Egypt and brought them to the brink of the land of promise, he assembled them and presented them with a fateful choice: ' I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse, and I call heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life . . . and then you descendants will live long' (Deut 30:19 Today's English Version).

Sacks (2003:viii) says, 'That is still the choice facing mankind. Will we endlessly replay the hatreds of the past? Or will we choose differently this time? Perhaps, this is a question Seventh-day Adventists Whites and Blacks in the Trans-Orange Conference and Transvaal Conference needs to ask themselves. Even those in merged Conferences need to ask themselves the same questions, because unity does not necessarily come by merging people into one organizational grouping.

Sacks (2003:5) poses several other pertinent questions that needs to be considered by the White and Black situation in the Seventh-day Adventist church, in spite of some of the forced mergers. 'Can we make space for difference? Can we hear the voice of God in a language, a sensibility, a culture not our own? Can we see the presence of God in the face of a stranger?'

Sacks (2003:2) correctly states, 'we all have a stake in the future, and our futures have become inexorably intertwined' In a second conversation Sacks (2003:17,18) with urgency and importance asks, 'Can we live together? Can we make space for one another? Can we overcome long histories of estrangement and bitterness? . . . a supreme challenge, one that we have been able to avoid in the past but can no longer do so. Can we find in the human 'thou', a fragment of the Divine 'Thou'? Can we recognize God's image in one who is not in my image? There are times when God meets us in the face of a stranger. . . . Can I . . . recognize God's image in one who is not in my image?'

These two conversations held by Sacks are conversations that go deeper than the political mergers of the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa.

The researcher makes the following recommendations against the backdrop of this statement of Sacks (2003:2) 'We have acquired fateful powers. We can heal or harm, mend or destroy on a scale unimaginable to previous generations. The stakes have never been higher, and the choice is ours.'

Since the choice is ours, the Seventh-day Adventist church and its leadership structures must make sure that, what they have done with mergers are to heal and not to harm mend and not to destroy.

Answers to the above questions do not only seek to satisfy the political stance in the country, but answers that seek God's will, for this, discernment from God is desperately necessary, through prayer and supplication.

On a more practical level, the conversation between the top of the church and the bottom must continue to take place. Continuous dialogue between the two should narrow the gap between top and bottom concerning mergers.

Consultation about future mergers and already merged conferences should be taking place. However, the consultations must take place in open dialogue, with brute honesty, recognizing differences, fears and other hang-ups.

It is recommended that workshops be held in each of the merged conferences. However, these workshops should be facilitated by a neutral person or persons, highly skilled with experience of ecclesial issues. Such arrangements not be made by the Union or Conference administrations, but by laymen and women who can take the church at grassroots further in God's program for the church.

It is recommended that at these workshops, we look beyond the political arrangements, but at the deeper, the real issues that are at stake, the issues raised by Sacks (2003). That in every choice made, the will of God is honoured and the m*issio Dei* of God advanced.

A valuable work is that of Parker (2004) *Towards heterogeneous faith communities: Understanding transitional processes in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in South Africa.* In the final section of his work, his aim is to show how to grow in togetherness without losing identity. This is one of the great fears among Whites in the Seventh-day Adventist church in South Africa. This fear must be lifted from its tacit level, into the open with brute honesty, in a workshop situation. It must be worked through by means of open and kind dialogue between Blacks and Whites in conversation.

Parker (2004:212) makes reference to the challenge of leadership, principles that are also applied to the leadership challenge in this study. He says 'A final challenge of leadership remains in the area of decision-making. *People outside of the areas of control tend to feel isolated and marginalized*' [Researcher's italics for emphasis]. He quotes Foster who suggests 'the need for "decision making strategies that require the

participation and contribution of all people and groups" in which decisions are built instead of made' [Researcher's italics for emphasis].

In conclusion, the recommendations made in this chapter concerning: administrative authority, leadership, power, transition and organizational structures are by no means exhaustive.

These recommendations are intended to be embryonic, to act as a catalyst for a broader and more extensive change and transition. It is hoped that these initial recommendations will spurn further co-laboration and initiate meaningful dialogue and conversation between the administrators and lay people of the SDA Church in South Africa, that will lead to change and bring the administrative ethos of the church into harmony with biblical principles, so that the mission of the church could be accomplished.

APPENDIX A

FORMAT OF STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH CHURCH BOARDS FOR THEIR VIEWS IN ASSISTING LEADERSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE AND UNION IN IDENTIFYING MATTERS OF COMMON CONCERN

Instructions: Tick the appropriate block. All information furnished will be treated with the strictest confidence.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Tick the appropriate block

1.1 Size of your Congregation:

1	25 – 150	☐
2	151 – 250	☐
3	251 – 350	☐
4	351 – 450	☐
5	451 - 550	☐
6	551 – 650	☐
7	651 – 750	☐

1.2 Age of your Congregation:

1	00 - 05	☐
2	06 - 10	☐
3	11 - 20	☐
4	21 - 30	☐
5	31 - 40	☐
6	41 - 50	☐
7	51 - 60	☐

1.3 Annual tithe contribution:

1	000 - 999	☐
2	1,000 - 5,000	☐
3	6,000 - 20,000	☐
4	21,000 - 40,000	☐
5	41,000 - 60,000	☐
6	61,000 - 80,000	☐
7	81,000 - 100,000	☐
8	101,000 - 120,000	☐
9	121,000 - 140,000	☐
10	141,000 - 60,000	☐
11	161,000 - Excess	☐

1.1 (1-7)

1.2 (1-7)

1.3 (1-11)

1.4 Is your church the only church that your pastor serves? 1.4 (1-2)

1 Yes ☐
2 No ☐

1.5 How many other churches does your Pastor serve? 1.5 (1-12)

1	☐	5	☐	9	☐
2	☐	6	☐	10	☐
3	☐	7	☐	11	☐
4	☐	8	☐	12	☐

1.6 Are you satisfied with the frequency with which you see your pastor? 1.6 (1-2)

1 Yes ☐
2 No ☐

1.7 What percentage of your members are: 1.7 (1-8)

1	-	Professionals	% .....
2	-	Technicians and Associate Professionals	% .....
3	-	Services workers, shops, and market sales workers	% .....
4	-	Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	% .....
5	-	Craft and related trade workers	% .....
6	-	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	% .....
7	-	Elementary occupations	% .....
8	-	Other occupations	% .....

1.8 What percentage of members attend Divine Service? 1.8 (1-8)

1	10 – 20%	☐	5	61 – 70%	☐
2	21 – 40%	☐	6	71 – 80%	☐
3	41 – 50%	☐	7	81 – 90%	☐
4	51 – 60%	☐	8	91 – 100%	☐

In order to assist leadership identify matters of common concern, please answer the following questions honestly. Circle the appropriate letter to indicate your agreement or disagreement with the various statements. **DO NOT MARK AS YOU THINK IT SHOULD BE, BUT THE WAY YOU ARE EXPERIENCING IT.**

SD = Strongly disagree
D = Disagree
U = Undecided
A = Agree
SA = Strongly agree

2 CONFERENCE LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Administrative authority is concentrated in a few, who act on behalf of the majority. 2.1 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.2 The Leadership is people oriented; the wishes and feelings of members come first. 2.2 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.3 Administrative authority is dispersed; the Conference solicits input and assistance from congregations. 2.3 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.4 Power in the organization is vested in those in the top positions of the Conference. 2.4 (1.5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.5 The Leadership is structure oriented; the organization and its functions take first preference. 2.5 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.6 Power is shared with those at "grassroots" level of the church. 2.6 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.7 The Administration is always open to change and promotes innovation for change. 2.7 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.8 The organizational structures operate on a top down relationship. The bottom of the organization is expected to carry out what is passed down to them. 2.8 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.9 The administration sees change as a threat and therefore, maintains the status quo. 2.9 (1-5) _____

SD D U A SA

2.10 The organizational structure operates on a participatory basis; the leadership at the top sees those at "grassroots" as part of the administrative process. 2.10 (1-5)

SD D U A SA

3. CONGREGATION'S VIEW OF THE CONFERENCE

3.1 Does the Conference contribute to the effectiveness of your church?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

3.2 Is the Conference leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

3.3 Would you describe the Conference as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

3.4 Do you think that the Conference serves the church in an enabling way?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

3.5. Does the Conference serve as an effective resource centre?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

4. CONGREGATION'S VIEW OF THE UNION

4.1 Does the Union contribute to the effectiveness of your church?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

4.2 Is the Union leadership visible enough at grassroots level of the church?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

4.3 Would you describe the Union as bureaucratic, insisting on "red tape"?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

4.4 Do you think that the Union serves your congregation in an enabling way?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

4.5 Does the Union serve as an effective resource centre?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Not sure**

3.1 (1-3) _____

3.2 (1-3) _____

3.3 (1-3) _____

3.4 (1-3) _____

3.5 (1-3) _____

4.1 (1-3) _____

4.2 (1-3) _____

4.3 (1-3) _____

4.4 (1-3) _____

4.5 (1-3)

APPENDIX B

FORMAT OF PASTORAL SURVEYS

A SURVEY FOR PASTORS TO ASSIST IN HELPING THE LEADERSHIP OF CONFERENCES AND UNION IN IDENTIFYING MATTERS OF COMMON CONCERN

Instructions: Tick the appropriate block. All information furnished will be treated with the strictest confidence.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Tick the appropriate block

1.1 Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

1.2 Marital Status: Married ☐ Unmarried ☐

1.3 Age Group: 18-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61-65 ☐

1.4 Educational Status: Prof Dipl ☐ B.degree ☐ M/degree ☐ D/degree ☐

1.5 How long have you been a Pastor: 00-05yrs ☐ 06-10yrs ☐ 11-20yrs ☐ 21-30yrs ☐ 31-40yrs ☐ 41-50yrs ☐

1.6 Pastoral Status: Ordained ☐ Unordained ☐

1.7 How long ordained: 00-05yrs ☐ 06-10yrs ☐ 11-20yrs ☐ 21-30yrs ☐ 31-40yrs ☐ 41-50yrs ☐

1.1 (1-2)

1.2 (1-2)

1.3 (1-5)

1.4 (1-4)

1.5 (1-6)

1.6 (1-2)

1.7 (1-6)

In order to assist the Conference and Union leadership to identify matters of common concern, please answer the following questions honestly. Circle the appropriate number 1-7 to indicate your agreement with statements below. Scoring more toward the left column of statements, means you agree more with the statements on the left, scoring more toward the right column of statements means you agree more with the statements on the right. **DO NOT MARK AS YOU THINK IT SHOULD BE, BUT THE WAY YOU ARE EXPERIENCING IT**.

2. CONFERENCE LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATION

1. The Administration is influenced more by tradition and maintaining rules and policies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The Administration is influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends	1 (1-7)
2. Leadership has the tendency of imposing its will upon those at "grassroots"	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership engages in joint decision making with those at "grassroots"	2 (1-7)
3. The administration tends to be rigid, unwilling to make the necessary adjustments	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The administration tends to be more flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances	3 (1-7)
4. Leadership keeps power vested in small groups of people close to themselves	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership believes in the potential of all its people and always commits itself to sharing power	4 (1-7)
5. Leadership style reinforces conformity and uniformity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership style is supportive and encourages respect for diversity	5 (1-7)
6. Leadership operates from a central position of control of power	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership operates from a consultative and participatory position	6 (1-7)
7. Leadership sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk-taking	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership sees change as an opportunity for growth and renewal	7 (1-7)
8. Authority is administered from the top structures down to the "grassroots" level of the church	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Authority is shared with the grassroots level of the church	8 (1-7)
9. Leadership considers change only when faced with a crises	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership is willing to consider change if it enhances effectiveness and progress	9 (1-7)
10 Leadership maintains various structures even though it is clear that the structures no longer serve its original purpose	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership willingly facilitates change to structures that no longer serve its original purpose	10 (1-7)

3. UNION LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATION

Circle the appropriate number (1-7) as in 2 to indicate your agreement to the statements below: Do not mark as you think it should be, but what you have experienced.

1. The Administration is influenced more by tradition and maintaining rules and policies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The administration is influenced more by contemporary ideas and trends	1 (1-7)
2. Leadership has a tendency of imposing its will upon those at "grassroots"	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership engages in joint decision making with those at "grassroots"	2 (1-7)
3. The administration tends to be rigid, unwilling to make the necessary adjustments	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The administration tends to be more flexible and willing to adjust to new circumstances	3 (1-7)
4. Leadership keeps power vested in small groups of people close to themselves	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership believes in the potential of all its people and always commits itself to sharing power	4 (1-7)
5. Leadership style reinforces conformity and uniformity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership style is supportive and encourages respect for diversity	5 (1-7)
6. Leadership operates from a central position of control of power.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership operates from a consultative and participatory position.	6 (1-7)
7. Leadership sees change as a threat and unnecessary risk-taking	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership sees change as an opportunity for growth and renewal	7 (1-7)
8. Authority is administered from the top structures down to the "grassroots" level of the church	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Authority is shared with the grassroots level of the church	8 (1-7)
9. Leadership considers change only when faced with a crisis	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership is willing to consider change if its enhances effectiveness and progress	9 (1-7)
10. Leadership maintains various structures even though it is clear that the structures no longer serve its original purpose	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Leadership willingly facilitates change to structures that no longer serve its original purpose	10 (1-7)

APPENDIX C

SAU – PROGRESS REPORT TO THE SPECIAL SESSION 2004

a. Organizational Re-structuring in the Southern Africa Union - A Progress Report

For presentation to the
Southern Africa Union Special Constituency Session
March 14, 2004

The Context for Re-structuring

The General Conference Executive Committee, on October 25, 1990, appointed Commission on the Church in South Africa. The Commission was asked to prepare a report "regarding what has been achieved in line with the recommendations of the May 1981 General Conference Commission on Church unity" and to determine "what the Church needs to do to meet the multi-racial needs of the Church within the biblical framework of church unity and equality of all members." The Commission include representation from the General Conference, a division, and various entities within South Africa.

In October 1991 the General Conference Executive Committee, meeting as an Annual Council in Perth, Australia, received and adopted the report and recommendations of the Commission on the Church in South Africa. The recommendations called for merger of the two union entities functioning in South Africa and further mergers of local conferences and fields with boundaries drawn geographically. Prior to the end of 1991, the two unions in South Africa agreed to merge as the Southern Africa Union Conference directly attached to the General Conference.

Since 1992 the question of mergers has been considered at local conference and mission levels. The Kwa-Zulu Natal-Free State Conference and Southern Hope Conference resulted from local conference and mission mergers in 1994. Two more mergers have been envisioned however not all constituencies have expressed sufficient support to proceed. The passage of time prompted the General Conference Executive Committee, at Spring Meeting, April 2002, to issue an appeal for the remaining conferences to "take actions that will establish a unified administrative structure in each geographic territory."

From time to time during the last ten years the Southern Africa Union Executive Committee has discussed re-organization of territory in order to achieve greater operational efficiencies in the use of resources and the deployment of personnel. A specific plan of action began to emerge in 1999-2000. The Southern Africa Union Constituency in 2000 receive and adopted a recommendation from the Executive Committee giving the incoming administration and Executive Committee a mandate to consider an overall restructuring of the Union, its organizations and institutions with the following terms of reference:

Assess and project trends in church growth and development in the SA U;
Identify organizational and structural factors which could facilitate stronger growth, unity and stability for the church in SA U;
Design for the SAU a model for
Fostering further church growth/development in all language groups;
Con figuring conference territories;
Providing an ongoing adequate leadership training system;
Ensuring viable denominational infrastructure.

It was expected that a restructuring plan could be in place by the end of 2002. In preparing for this the Executive Committee reviewed several re-organizational models and recommended that the "Revised Traditional Model" be adopted. This model provides for 3-6 departmental directors at conference level and specialized services, as deemed necessary, at regional levels. The plan included a field configuration of six conferences:

Limpopo Province, Gauteng, North West Province, Mpul1 1afanga (Swaziland included later)
Kwa-Zulu Natal and Free State (Lesotho included later)
Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape and St Helena Island
Lesotho (temporarily)
Swaziland (temporarily)
Namibia Field

Several committees were established to address various elements of the restructuring. However it was recognized that the restructuring could not be accomplished by the end of 2002.
Consequently, the Executive Committee (July 2002) voted to postpone special conference sessions planned for October/November 2002. Instead it set July 2003 as the time frame for dissolution sessions at local conferences and October 2003 as the comp1etion date for mergers of conferences. Further actions were taken by the Executive Committee to ensure that the necessary progress would be made within the projected time-frame. A special session of the Union in November 2002 endorsed the "Revised Traditional Model" and approved the revised time frame for mergers.

The Union Year-End Executive Committee meeting, November 2003, reviewed the yet incomplete status of mergers. After considering the matter the Executive Committee formulated a proposal for consideration at a special union constituency session in March 2004. The elements of the proposal include:

A summary report concerning the mandate for re-structuring.
A report on progress to date describing what has happened in each of the four conferences.
Cape Conference report: There has been a delay in convening a constituency

Session due to the auditor's disclaimer of financial statements from its merger partner. This rendered the pro forma budget, envisioned under merger, unreliable. It is expected that audited statements (without disclaimer) for 2003 should be sufficient basis for Cape Conference to use for its decision regarding merger and dissolution no later than its regular session scheduled for December 2004.
Southern Hope Conference report: A constituency meeting voted in favour of dissolution and merger subject to corresponding action by the Cape Conference. Union administration is working with conference officers to bring financial records into conformity with accounting standards. An auditor's opinion on 2003 financial records is expected in October 2004.
Trans-Orange Conference report: A constituency meeting voted in favour of dissolution and merger subject to corresponding action by the Transvaal Conference.
Transvaal Conference report: A constituency meeting in 2003 did not express sufficient support to proceed with dissolution and merger. It is recommended that the Transvaal Conference reconsider its action and support merger at its forthcoming constituency meeting in 2004. The Union and Division administrations are requested to assist in discussion of any concerns relating to the merger proposal prior to the upcoming constituency meeting.

1. The expectation that joint conferences sessions TC and TOC, CC and SHC) to effect mergers should take place as soon as possible following affirmative constituency decisions regarding merger. Those churches in the TOC which are in the Northern Cape and Free State, will then join the conferences in whose territory they fall in line with the model voted at the 2002 Special Session. The churches in the Eastern Cape who were formerly in {he SHC, but now fall within the territory of the KNFC will now belong to that conference.

2. A review of denominational policy regarding territorial reorganizations.
3. 4. A rationale on the place of merger as an expression of unity in South Africa.
4. Each administration should underwrite all actions, regarding mergers, with a spiritual emphasis. Definitive actions plans may include:

    * Requesting conferences that have not supported merger to identify specific reasons or concerns that limit their constituencies support of merger.
    * Establishing a schedule of meetings to address such concerns with fairness and openness. It may be helpful to involve representation from the Division and General Conference in the dialog among groups immediately affected by a Merger. Such meetings would be expected to result in fair, mutually acceptable Recommendations that address the specific concerns identified as barriers to Merger and therefore open the way to proceed with merger.
5. The Restructuring of SAU Administration and Institutions Committee is currently at work and its work will be completed before the end of the year.

For a variety of reasons the restructuring envisioned by the 1991 Commission on South Africa and the 2000 Union Session mandate and the 2002 Union Special Session endorsement of

The restructuring plans have not yet materialized. Today a special constituency session of the Southern Africa Union Conference meets to receive the recommendation of the Union Executive Committee (November 2003) which outlines all action agenda for the future.

1. General Conference Policies Concerning Mergers

General Conference *Working Policy* B 70 20 outlines the process for the merger of local conferences/local missions. A proposal to merge may be initiated at any of the administrative levels of the Church. (See General Conference .*Working Policy* B 70.) In the present situation the recommendations for merger originate with the General Conference Executive Committee after receipt of a report from the Commission on the Church in South Africa and also with the Union Session and Executive Committee actions regarding restructuring for operational efficiencies.

Under the provisions of policy, opportunity is given for executive committees at local conference/mission, union conference/mission and division levels to consider a merger proposal. Following a division's approval of a merger, or in this case approval by the Southern Africa Affairs Committee, the union is authorized to call for separate constituency meetings of the local conferences, inviting each to approve the merger proposal and to vote the dissolution of their current organizations.

How should the union proceed if one or more of the conference constituencies continue to withhold support for merger after their concerns have been addressed. Can a merger proceed or is it effectively stalled, perhaps indefinitely, by the absence of one party's support? What situations provide sufficient grounds for a union or division to proceed with a merger against the wishes of a local conference or mission? What happens when the desire of the larger Church family is in tension with the desire and action of a member organization?

Such questions open the top of how the Seventh-day Adventist Church addresses matters or organizational well-being when there are differences that threaten unity and harmonious operation. General Conference *Working Policy* B 75 outlines procedures for discontinuing conferences, missions, unions or unions of church by dissolution and/or expulsion. A basic principle is that before adopting dissolution/expulsion procedures every effort should be made to bring harmony. If conciliatory efforts fail, a higher organization, in this case the union conference, shall have the authority to act as outlined in policy.

Disciplinary measures in Church life are never undertaken hastily, yet they may be required. It is possible for an organization to demonstrate its unwillingness to co-operate with the interests of the larger Church family and to thus disqualify itself from membership in the family. Apostasy or rebellion by an organization is demonstrated by a constituency meeting action contrary to constitutional requirements, policies or actions of the larger Church family. The General Conference Executive Committee action of] 99 I expressed the intent of the larger Church family, namely that organizational mergers resulting in unified administrative structure in each geographic territory should take place in South Africa. Further actions of the Union Sessions and Executive Committee outlined the stated policy with respect to restructuring.

Whether or not an entity has demonstrated a posture of rebellion or apostasy is a decision made by a higher organization. For example: a decision as to whether or not a local conference has demonstrated rebellion or apostasy belongs to the relevant union executive committee. However, before taking any further action in the matter the union executive committee shall seek council from the division.

A local conference/mission that is viewed by the union as being in rebellion may request the division to undertake a review of the situation. This provision is in keeping with the spirit of General Conference *Working Policy* B 40 30 that "every agency in the work. . . is assured full privilege, without prejudice, of representing opinion and conviction, and asking consideration and counsel in matters affecting life and service." In such cases the division shall counsel with the union concerned so that all regular or special constituency meeting convened for the purpose of dissolving the local conference shall not take place before the division has had sufficient opportunity to review the matter and render its report.

In the event that a union constituency session proceeds with expulsion and dissolution of a local conference/mission the union constituency shall, in a companion action, determine how to cafe for the churches of the dissolved conference/mission.

The Place of Organizational Mergers As an Expression of Seventh-day Adventist Church Unity in South Africa

1. The Historical Context

The history of most nations is rich with details of economic and social turbulence South Africa is no exception. Its development and progress involves a saga of changing relationships among tribes, groups, languages, cultures and races. For several recent decades the participation of citizens in local and national life was largely determined by racial and ethnic classification. The resulting lack of access to equal civil rights lifted South Africa to heightened global attention and concern.

National and international developments affecting South Africa led to a major restructuring of government and society. This was marked by: 1) the public repudiation of racial and ethnic classification as a basis for determining roles in society; 2) new constitutional guarantees of equality and; 3) the dismantling of policies and organizational structures that symbolized the past. Enormous and far-reaching changes began to emerge in all facets of public life.

2. The Church Context

Seventh-day Adventist Church structure in South Africa has taken several different shapes since the first formation of a local conference in 1892. Ten years later the South African

Conference became a union conference with two local conferences and several mission fields. From 1929 until 1958 there were two conferences within the South African Union. The Cape Field was organized in 1933 to supervise work among the Colored community. In 1936 work among the African people of South Africa was consolidated into two fields, the South Bantu Field and North Bantu field. The Indian Field was organized in 1956.

In 1960 the South Africa Union was divided into two groups of organizational units. Group I comprised the organizations, both conference and field, serving the non-Bantu population of the union while Group II comprised organizations serving the Bantu population. By 1965 it was decided to dissolve Groups I and II and form two separate unions, namely the South African Union, with responsibility for the work among the White, Colored and Indian people; and the Southern Union, to care exclusively for the work among the blacks.

Through several decades there has been g rowing discomfort over the organization of denominational work along these lines. Although the supervision of work among distinct groups within the population assisted in membership growth there was the perception that organizational structure on this basis was less than an adequate representation of the gospel. In addition, there were growing tensions in South Africa over the disequilibrium in civil rights. Amidst the social ferment in the nation, Seventh-day Adventists struggled with the question of how to align organizational structures in harmony with biblical teaching.

The General Conference, in 1981, Appointed a Commission on Church Unity to visit South Africa with a view to:

1. Receiving information from as many different sources as possible regarding race relations in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa.
2. Developing an evaluation of the current situation in regard to race relations in the South Africa national community.
3. Reporting on any recent or anticipated changes in the country which 11 light affect the Church.
4. Recommending steps toward the successful resolution of problems facing the Church in South Africa.

The 1980s witnessed massive changes in South Africa. Laws, government and organizations underwent enormous transformation to usher in a new era of equality among all citizens. Structures reminiscent of the past were replaced with ones that symbolized a new reality and attitude in South Africa. However, Seventh-day Adventist Church infrastructure remained unchanged.

In 1990 the General Conference Executive Committee again took up the matter of the Church in South Africa declaring that: "The church must move forward and serve as a living example of and witness to the reconciling gospel ministry assigned to the Church of the Remnant. This is in harmony with the Church's Fundamental Belief no. 13, where it is stated that distinctions of race, culture, learning, rank, wealth and sex must not divide the Church, and since 'we are all equal in Christ.. .we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation' in a true fellowship." The Commission on the Church il1 South Africa was appointed and asked to

determine "what the Church needs to do to meet the multi-racial needs of the Church within the biblical framework of church unity and equality of all members."

The Commission's 1991 report to the General Conference Executive Committee cited many Bible references concerning the nature of unity in the family of God. These included:

* John 17:11, 21-23 -- The intercessory prayer of Jesus for unity among His followers.
* Acts 7-11 -- The Holy Spirit leads to the inclusion of Gentiles in the family of God.
* Acts 15 -- The Holy Spirit guides believers in overcoming prejudice and bigotry.
* Ephesians 1:1-11 -- Human separateness is gathered together in Christ.
* Ephesians 3:8-11 -- The unity of the Church on earth is symbolic of unity in eternity.
* Hebrews 13:10-14 -- An appeal for early believers to move beyond their roots in Judaism and focus on their destiny as a new community in Christ Jesus.

In summarizing the spiritual imperatives for the Church in South Africa the Commission observed: "What is the Spirit saying to us today in these words? That there come times when every Christian will see deeper meanings in the cross than ever before. That there are times when for His sake and in harmony with His purposes we must leave the camp of race, nation, community, friends, and even family to go forth unto Him outside the gate bearing His reproach:"

3. Merger as an Expression of Unity

The Church in every land is called to give witness to the gospel. That witness will have elements of uniqueness because the gospel is lived out within a certain historical context. Several hundred years ago martin Luther remarked that if one preaches the gospel in all its fullness except for where the gospel addresses pressing issues of the day he/she has not preached the gospel at all. The proclamation of the gospel must be done within the setting that people, groups and communities experience.

Because of South Africa's particular history, organizational structures apparently designed along racial identities perpetuate the symbol of a past which the whole world has rejected and which Christianity never endorsed. The Seventh-day Adventists Church is constrained to call for mergers in South Africa not because present structures are faulty or inadequate for supervision but because they fail to give a convincing argument that the4 Church also rejects the social dynamics in South Africa's recent past. Why should South Africa or the world pay any heed to evangelism endeavours if Seventh-day Adventists are unable to demonstrate that the Lordship of Jesus Christ enables members to rise above the experience and symbols of South African national history?

It has been a sound missiological principle for people to work among and for their own people groups. This principle has been employed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in many parts of the globe. Separate organizations for ethnic groups had been established because it was believed they would benefit the work. Now, however, they are perceived, in light of the country's history, to be a hindrance and a denial of unity in the Seventh-day Adventist family.

The Church must align its organizational structure with its message and mission. Certainly there is much more to unity that the merger of organizational structures. But a unity in South Africa that does not embrace organizational structures reveals a weakness at its very heart.

The merger of local conference administrations in South Africa must not lead to the loss of interest in or value of any member, group, or language. Instead, merger must affirm the importance of each within the context of a faith community. Any new organizational structure must serve the needs of the whole membership. Careful planning and consultation has already been done to ensure that members and local churches are not deprived of communication, materials and pastoral services which best suit their needs.

An Appeal

The spirit of unity and fellowship within the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not entirely a result of organizational structure. It is a mistake to think that a voluntary or legislated restructuring of organizations by itself will produce unity. Unless there is intellectual and spiritual acceptance of one another as equal members in God's family the creation of unified organization structure will be a body without a soul.

As members of God's family let us join together to help fulfil the prayer of Jesus. We are given the opportunity to rise to a higher expression of Christian witness. We can expect the blessing of God as we follow His leading. The Commission on the Church in South Africa closed its report with these words: "Is it not to the maturity of a truer identification with the crucified Christ, the suffering, the joy, and the closer unity with one another that today God is calling us? Our church in South Africa even as it grows in number will also grow in Christ likeness, in godly character, and in spiritual power. It will witness for its divine Head and sound His message first and foremost with the unanswerable argument of the Cross."

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APPENDIX D

FACSIMILE – TRANS-ORANGE CONFERENCE
WITHDRAWAL OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Pastor C W Plaatjes
Helderberg College
P O Box 22
SOMERSET WEST
7129
Fax: 021 855-2917

Dear Pastor Plaatjes

Greetings!

In response to your Doctoral Research, our churches are not comfortable with your coming to interview them. They think this has something to do with the merger. Checking with the SAU, we discovered that they are not aware of this questionnaire. If this exercise can be done after the merger, the churches may consider calling their church boards.

God bless.

Yours sincerely

T M KUNENE
PRESIDENT

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