

REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY

“EFFICIENCY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT”



OFFICE FOR REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY

June 3, 2021

Greetings.

Attached please find the final draft of the Efficiency Committee Report. This group was formed with the goal of looking at the financial and human resources of our Regional Conferences with the idea of maximizing both sets of resources by examining our use of them.

I have often said that any business that does not constantly re-examine **how** it is **doing** business is asking to go out **of** business. The individuals listed below have engaged in a needed re-examination of how we do business in Regional Conferences.

- **Kymn Astwood**, Bermuda Conference
- **LaMel Burch**, Bermuda Conference
- **Elethia Dean**, Allegheny West Conference
- **Dawn Eversley**, Bermuda Conference
- **Doris Gothard**, Lake Region Conference
- **Keith Hackle**, Central States Conference
- **Mark Howard**, Pacific Union Conference
- **Joseph Ikner**, Central States Conference
- **Latoria Thomas-Lee**, Lake Region Conference
- **Oneil Madden**, Nevada Utah Conference
- **Rudolph (Rudy) Peters**, Pacific Union Conference
- **Sheena Smith**, Bermuda Conference
- **David Steede**, Bermuda Conference
- **Edward Woods III**, Lake Region Conference

I am personally very grateful to them and hope and pray that this report-which will be presented to the Regional Presidents Council in their meeting in **August** – is just a beginning.

Special thanks go to Mrs. Doris Gothard of the Lake Region Conference who filled in for me at the final meeting of this group and helped bring closure to this endeavor. Additional thanks go to Ms. Melonie Gurley, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of the Office for Regional Conference Ministries (ORCM) who handled all of the logistics in bringing this committee together and getting out its final report.

May this document assist Regional Conferences in maximizing the resources that God has placed in their hands to facilitate the expansion of His kingdom and the taking of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.



Blessings,

Dana C. Edmond

Elder Dana C. Edmond

Executive Director

Office for Regional Conference Ministries

Subcommittee on Efficiency: Innovation and Technology in Ministry Group Report

Innovation & Technology In Ministry Group Members:

- Kymn Astwood, Bermuda Conference
- Doris Gothard, Lake Region Conference
- Mark Howard, Pacific Union
- Edward Woods III, Lake Region Conference

The Pandemic

COVID-19 has been the impetus that brought technology innovation to the forefront, and has driven Regional Conferences and churches to develop the digital infrastructure to continue proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Innovation and Technology in Ministry is often measured by new ideas, new products and new services. But it's their help to "adopt and spread the gospel more widely" that is the real metric of innovative evangelism success.

In the year of COVID - we are facing the urgency and importance of innovation and technology in Regional Conference Ministry.

Introduction and Background

Elder Dana Edmond, Executive Director/ORCM, Chair - identified the following challenge areas in which Regional Conferences Leadership could operate more efficiently, including:

- Human Resources
- Time, Governance, Meetings
- Mental Health, Sabbaticals
- Technology
- Financial Resources
- Innovation
- Making best use of physical resources
- Professional Development

When Elder Edmond convened the Efficiency Subcommittee Zoom Meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 – the Innovation and Technology Group was formed and tasked to identify areas in which Regional Conferences could operate more efficiently with innovation and technology, in its quest to meet the Regional Conferences mission and goals.

The Subcommittee on Efficiency:

Innovation and Technology in Ministry Group was formed in 2021. **Innovation** is the creation, development and implementation of a new process or service, with the aim of improving efficiency, and effectiveness in Regional Conference Ministry.

Being innovative **means** doing things differently (using words, graphics, photos and videos) or doing things that have never been done before.

An innovator is someone who has embraced a new ministry idea and creates environments in which pastors and others are given the tools and resources to challenge the status quo, push boundaries and achieve Regional Conference growth.

The Innovation and Technology Group Members realize that our knowledge of innovative evangelism and technology in Regional Conference Ministry, merely scratches the surface of the opportunities that remain – to reach the unchurched.

The world is changing! Regional Conference Ministry must also change.

Virtual meetings are now taking place with people in any country, without leaving your room. Innovation and Technology is crucial to the success and effectiveness of Regional Conference Ministry.

The Subcommittee on Efficiency:

Innovation and Technology Group recommends the following:

We believe unique and new ministries using innovation and technology should be valued and reported to each Regional Conference President to help build-up the Kingdom of God in SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY. Conferences are encouraged to use words, graphics, photos and videos to show how innovation and technology is being used in Regional Conference Ministry.

We believe each Regional Conference needs “Innovators” identified all over the conference who engage and inspire Leadership support in the use of Technology and Innovative Evangelism. This effort will bring about a sea change in new Regional Conference growth.

As the year 2021 dawns – let us remember that JESUS is our only safe harbor. Let us pray that the effort initiated by the Innovation and Technology in Ministry Group – will continue unabated in Regional Conferences – in the years to come.

Conclusion

Innovation and Technology, prayerfully viewed and used, can enhance the ministry and mission of Regional Conferences. The Innovation and Technology in Ministry Group recommends the following to enhance Efficiency and Effectiveness in Regional Conference Ministry:

Implement a New State of the Art Website Design Experience for each Regional Conference!

- Note: When someone first encounters your Regional Conference website, you have a few seconds to convince your visitor they have arrived on a site worth some of their precious time. To make that first positive impression, it almost goes without saying your site must display quickly and navigate easily on a mobile phone, tablet or computer.

Leverage Regional Conference resources and strategic partnerships to overcome efficiency and effectiveness obstacles.

Create an online knowledge base to support the implementation of Innovation and Technology initiatives that will enhance Regional Conference Ministry.

Approve a Budget to Fund Regional Conference Innovation and Technology Implementation, Hire Technical Support and Purchase/Upgrade Technology Equipment, as Required – Annually!

PLAN – develop a written plan for utilizing Innovation and Technology in Regional Conference ministry, Disciple-Making and Mission – on a Digital platform, **committed to the mission of Christ (“fishers of men”)**. (Innovators).

Subcommittee on Efficiency: Finance Group Report

Finance Group Members:

- LaMel Burch, Bermuda Conference
- Elethia Dean, Allegheny West Conference
- Keith Hackle, Central States Conference
- Joseph Ikner II, Central States Conference
- Oneil Madden, Nevada Utah Conference
- David Steede, Bermuda Conference

Physical Plant Management

While it is understood that each Conference may be similar as to the constituents they serve, organizational structure, and focus on preaching the Gospel message, it is important to understand that each Conference is unique as it relates to income and assets. Time constraints did not afford the opportunity for us to analyze each Conference's specific situation but we believe the two-phase plan that is being proposed, if adopted, would be beneficial to all Conferences.

Phase 1 - Internal Analysis

The first phase is for each Conference to identify all real property (parsonages, offices, campgrounds, etc.) and determine how maintaining the property fits into their desire to be efficient financially. Some questions to consider include but are not limited to: is the property a legacy holding (bequest) or was there a purchased made in the past, if the Conference had the chance to buy it again would they by the property, what is the maintenance costs vs usage value, and could selling the property create an opportunity for the Conference to take possession of something better. Ultimately, the Conference must decide if they feel the property is a want or a necessity. An ability to articulate this point will transition the Conference to phase 2 of this proposal.

Phase 2 - External Analysis

The next phase is to allow a designated committee of knowledgeable and unbiased individuals analyze the benefits of retaining or releasing the property. The importance of having unbiased individuals cannot be overstated. Many Conferences find themselves holding on to property because the constituents have fond memories or emotional attachments to the asset. Additionally, the knowledge of the committee members need not be restricted to construction or real estate professionals though those skills will be beneficial to the team. The committee's objective would not be to begin the process of disposing of any property, the committee's objective limits their involvement to conducting a needs assessment and making a recommendation.

In a time where the entire world is feeling the broad effects of COVID-19, many organizations have had to be open to the reality that shifts in societal operations (i.e. social distancing, limited capacity in public places) have given way to the need to consider shifts in organizational operations (i.e. limited staffing, work from home staffing). The goal is not to hinder but enhance the work of the Conference, arriving at this goal may require streamlining operations and even liquidating assets like real estate that were necessary for the work of yesteryear but may serve as obstructions to the work of tomorrow.

Subcommittee on Efficiency: Human Resources Group Report

Human Resources Group Members:

- Dawn Eversley, Bermuda Conference
- Rudolph (Rudy) Peters, Pacific Union
- Latoria Thomas-Lee, Lake Region Conference
- Sheena Smith, Bermuda Conference

Governance

The Problem

The SDA Church has many committees at the local, conference, union, division and world levels. Much time is spent praying, deliberating and debating in a bid to achieve effective operations and the spreading of the gospel of Christ Jesus. Governance speaks to the need to ensure that the rules, norms, and actions taken by these committees are structured, sustained, regulated and ensure that a degree of accountability is in place. Through-out the SDA church this level of governance is haphazard and inconsistently present which increases to the degree of disorganization and wasted time a direct contradiction to the stewardship principles geared to using our time, treasures and talents to the honor and glory of God.

Another problem centers around the skill set of meeting participants to effectively add value to the desired meeting outcomes. This in turn adds to the degree of dysfunction and compounds the reality of there being a lack of proper counsel being received for key matters of consideration.

Recommendation

- A. Enhance all meeting protocols as follows:
 1. Minutes should be shared with the committee 7-10 days in advance of the next meeting
 2. All Minutes should include a 'Matters Arising' section with a person identified for achieving the stated action. Such a step would ensure committee members are acquainted with the required follow-up and resolution needed before the next meeting.
 3. Written departmental/agenda reports should be required and circulated to committee members in advance of the meetings in order to ensure that all members are well informed of the issues at hand.
 4. Each level (Local, Conference, Union, Division) should invest in software to house all board/committee documents/minutes for the following reasons:
 - a. Housing Minutes, resolutions etc. in one place for ease of reference especially during audits
 - b. Ease of reference to documents which will increase meeting productivity
 - c. Dissemination of sensitive information especially personal information protected by legislation such as HIPPA and PIPA
 - d. Saving money by not having to print and waste paper, stuff binders, etc.

- B. Ensure the right skill sets are included for the relevant committees or have them as invitees to provide guidance regarding specific agenda items. For i.e. Financial, Human Resource, Education, Real Estate, Legal/Compliance skill sets in addition to ministerial/pastoral realm are often missing from the table.

Performance Evaluation

The Problem

There is currently an inconsistent, irregular, irrelevant, or nonexistent performance appraisal process in place. The result is that many conference employees are robbed of engaging in a consistent and relevant review that evaluates their job performance and provides the necessary challenge and support needed to improve as servants in ministry. Additionally, for those employees who are reviewed, the process is usually undertaken by an immediate supervisor only which can be argued is a limited line of sight that neglects a more balanced and comprehensive view that includes feedback from direct reports, colleagues, committee members, church members, board members, parents, community members, constituents, etc. to name a few.

Recommendation

The recommendation is for a systematic performance review process to be adopted for all conference employees (Pastors, Staff, Teachers, Administration) that gleans feedback in a comprehensive way. The instrument recommended is the 360° performance review process with a view to capturing feedback aimed at enhancing an employee's overall development and growth.

Purpose for implementing a 360° Performance Review

A 360° Performance Review instrument will provide greater degrees of accountability and provide an objective review of productivity and effectiveness in an assigned role from varying standpoints. This will have the added benefit of employees identifying first-hand, the impact they make in the fulfillment of their call.

Implementation Process

Employees will be given several categories (pastoral care, committee participant, community engagement, etc.), relevant to their specific role, to select 1-3 representatives in each of these areas who will be contacted via email to participate in the performance review process on this employee's behalf. Participation will include answering a number of questions relevant to their interaction and experience with the employee. Sample questions will include:

Survey Monkey Assessment Areas:

- Communication Skills
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Follow-Through
- Meaningful Contribution
- Customer Service
- Professionalism

Succession Planning

The Problem

Gift-based ministry is often neglected in the face of highly orchestrated political campaigns to elect friends and those with popularity. Additionally, there is a level of divisiveness and hostility associated with elections of administrators and departmental directors that often arises. Lastly, there is an increased number of leaders elected to conference administration and departments who lack the required human resource competencies and understanding in the areas of finance and business acumen.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to use succession planning to identify individuals with the skill set to fill key leadership positions at the conference level. These positions will include all administrators, departmental directors, educational superintendents etc.

Create a pipeline of potential leaders who have been trained and who are ready to assume the leadership positions under consideration. Such training will involve development of leadership skills and capabilities geared towards meeting the changing needs of each conference. The outcome will be a cohort of qualified leaders equipped to carry out the mission of the church and fully knowledgeable of the task before them.

Better leaders which give rise to higher employee engagement. Improvement in critical leadership competencies: building trust, coaching leadership change, resolving conflict etc.

Implementation Process

1. Participants will engage in a variety of assessments.
2. Participants will be selected to engage in the talent management (leadership development) pipeline solely on the results of their assessments.

The Leadership Development Plan

1. Create cohorts for training and development
 - President cohort
 - Secretary cohort
 - Education Superintendent cohort
 - Youth Director cohort
 - Personal Ministry cohort
 - Ministerial Director cohort
2. Create a Leadership development program to cover the following areas:
 - Leadership capabilities
 - Conflict Management
 - Emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
 - Change Management
 - Leading teams and developing others
 - Financial acumen: understanding a financial statement.
 - Strategic influence
 - Relationship building
 - Delivering on result
 - Knowledge of the Policy & Polity of the Church

Cost

To be decided by each Conference but a financial investment of \$3K-\$6K per participant is recommended.

Program management

To be determined at the Conference level if not at the Regional or Union level to cascade down to ensure consistency and a greater degree of efficacy.

Sabbatical Policy

The Problem

1. Pastoral Ministry is a high stress occupation where pastors carry the pain, and burdens of church members 24-7.
2. From time to time pastors can crack beneath the weight of ministry and need time away to renew, rejuvenate and refocus.
3. Some conferences do not have a sabbatical policy.
4. Pastors run the risk of losing their sabbatical benefit if they move from one conference that has the policy to one that does not.
5. Some conferences require a pastor to serve a certain number of years in their field before they can qualify for sabbatical. This can be disadvantageous to pastors who take a call to another conference. For example, a pastor in a conference that has a 7-year service requirement for sabbatical takes a call in the sixth year of employment. If his or her new conference has a 7-year requirement as well, that pastor will need to serve 7-years to be considered for a sabbatical regardless of his mental, physical and spiritual condition.

Recommendation

Develop a uniformed sabbatical policy across all regional conferences to support the mental, emotional, and spiritual need for pastoral renewal and revival.

Implementation Process

1. One year in advance, all pastors who are eligible for sabbatical should be informed.
2. The conference puts in place protocols and procedures for sabbaticals.
3. Develop guidelines as to the requirements of pastors during sabbatical. This should create opportunities for the pastor to relax, spend time with God and engage in non-demanding activities.
4. The conference allows a three-month sabbatical to all pastors.
5. The pastoral responsibilities will be carried out by the elders and conference administrators.
4. When a call is extended to a pastor both conferences must take into consideration the pastor's sabbatical needs.
5. Develop guidelines for the church to operate during a sabbatical.
6. Upon completion of the sabbatical the pastor meets with the ministerial team to talk about his stress level and how he or she is better ready for ministry.
7. The pastor's re-entry to the church should be well planned.

REGIONAL CONFERENCE SUMMIT SUBCOMMITTEE ON EFFICIENCY SUB-GROUPS

Innovation & Technology In Ministry Group:

- Kymn Astwood, Bermuda Conference
- Doris Gothard, Lake Region Conference
- Mark Howard, Pacific Union
- Edward Woods III, Lake Region Conference

Finance Group:

- LaMel Burch, Bermuda Conference
- Elethia Dean, Allegheny West Conference
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Human Resources Group:

- Dawn Eversley, Bermuda Conference
- Latoria Thomas-Lee, Lake Region Conference
- Rudolph (Rudy) Peters, Pacific Union
- Sheena Smith, Bermuda Conference



OFFICE FOR REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY

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Executive Assistant

Office for Regional Conference Ministry



OFFICE FOR REGIONAL CONFERENCE MINISTRY