

Editorial

The *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* has dedicated this issue to structure and mission because of the vital importance of this topic to the mission of the church. Church organization and structure can impact the mission and ministry of the church either positively or negatively. However, there is a tendency to just continue to work within the structural and organizational form that was inherited from the past rather than doing the hard work of analyzing and deciphering the exact needs of the present. The Adventist Church has waited far too long to look at how the five levels of organization utilize human resources and money, but the process and discussions have begun. The challenge will be to see if the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have the courage needed to make changes or if they will allow the status quo to dominate. This is an area where all need to seek wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit.

A closely related theme involves methods of outreach to those in one of the world's religions. Adventists have become proficient in presenting the distinctive doctrines of Adventism to those who are already Christian, but how much time and effort has been invested in honing skills needed to present the gospel to those who have never heard the good news? The Adventist Church needs much more effort to be directed at the development of new methods and approaches to share the gospel with Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims.

An additional area that is addressed in this issue is the challenges of working with an international church. The *Church manual* must be written for all people, not just for those from the West. Many church leaders throughout the world feel that the forms and methods described in the *Church manual* are the required forms rather than examples of possible ways of conducting ceremonies or planning programs for the church. Unless Adventism can distinguish between theology and methodology the church will be in danger of seeing unity in terms of uniformity rather than living comfortably with a multiplicity of forms that express and convey biblical meanings. Join us in this journey of dialogue and discussion.

Bruce L. Bauer, editor