

**PRINCIPLES FOR REORGANIZATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, 1888-1903: IMPLICATIONS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CHURCH**

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This study investigates the process of reorganization of the administrative structures of the Seventh-day Adventist Church between 1888 and 1903. From the findings of the investigation are drawn some implications that relate to the need for contemporary denominational structures that accommodate and facilitate the mission of the church.

The first three chapters present a documentary account of the process of reorganization. Chap. 1 places the study within the context of the nineteenth-century American Protestant missionary movement. Chaps. 2 and 3 tell the story of reorganization on the basis of denominational archival materials. Chaps. 4 and 5 analyze theological foundations and principles of reorganization that have been induced from the historical data. Chap. 6 applies the findings of the research to the contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Church, with special emphasis on implications that are relevant to its international composition.

The principal findings of the study reveal that it was a powerful missionary motivation that guided the reorganization of Seventh-day Adventist administrative structures between 1888 and 1903. That commitment to mission and concern for the accomplishment of the evangelistic task gave a strong impulse toward a functional conception of the church. It is suggested that this functional dimension of ecclesiology has continuing validity as the church seeks to remain responsive in both form and function to the changing circumstances of its life and mission. It is also suggested that the structures of the church should remain flexible, adapted to the needs of an international constituency, insofar as (1) they were reorganized in order to accommodate and facilitate the missionary endeavor of the denomination, and (2) the structures themselves were not closely bound to a formally defined ecclesiology that would confine them within a particular ecclesiastical framework.

The principal implications that arise from the findings are: (1) The primacy of mission as the organizing principle that calls forth structures appropriate for the Seventh-day Adventist message and mission, (2) the need for an undergirding ecclesiological basis for structural forms that relate to a Seventh-day Adventist theology of mission, and (3) the need for flexibility and adaptability of administrative structures.