

30 meeting, but there was no discussion on those measures. The commission meets again in September.

Davenport's Church Membership

Another important action took place at a business meeting of Davenport's local congregation in May, when the Loma Linda University Church voted to discontinue Davenport's membership. Pastor Louis Venden said his congregation did not come to the decision easily or quickly. "We had been considering this matter since last July, and felt that we had to act based on the materials at hand. Davenport was very much the Christian gentleman throughout the process. It was a difficult situation for him, because the church at large is his adversary in court. As a church family, we needed more help from him which he could not give. The meeting was not a hatchet job. We did not presume to make a legal judgment. We acted as a church family."

Davenport was invited to speak at the meeting, or to have someone talk on his behalf, but he declined the invitation. He told Pastor Venden that he did want to remain a member, but legal concerns prevented him appearing at the meeting, even though his membership was at stake. At the business session, a motion to censure, rather than to disfellowship received a second, but was easily defeated. The moral implications of some of Davenport's actions and the disrepute he brought to the church were cited as grounds for discontinuing his membership.

In making the motion to disfellowship Davenport, Gordon Thompson, M.D., referred to Paul's experience in the early church where such an action was intended to be a call to the church to give the individual supporting care.

Mrs. Davenport sent a request to the University Church in June requesting that her name also be dropped from the membership list.

Commission Proposes Genuine Full-Fledged North American Division

by Bonnie Dwyer

Saying that the Adventist organization has too many levels, a lengthy and dramatic study on church structure commissioned by the Pacific Union Conference recommends adoption of new organizational models for the local church and local conference, and a substantially different role for the union conference within an organized, full-fledged North American Division.

The six-member committee which prepared the report said there is no reason to have a union conference as it is now constituted. It suggested that the function of union conferences be changed to purely administration, eliminating the need for departmental work. Under this proposal, the unions would exist as regional offices of the North American Division and the number of unions would be reduced. The local church and local conferences would become the key operational organizations.

After hearing a two-hour presentation on the committee report June 1, 1983, the Pacific Union Executive Committee voted to accept the 300-page document, and created a second, 39-person committee to suggest by November 1984 how to implement the report's six recommendations.

Adoption of new organizational models came first on the list. The report suggested working with the General Conference and North American Division in establishing a new role for the unions. "Develop a sound organizational transition plan," it said, "communicate it and implement it in increments. Do not attempt to patch present structures—more drastic change is needed."

Secondly, the report urged decentralizing decisions, plans, and programs to the local

church and administration support to the local conference.

Maintaining unity of beliefs, mission, priorities, and direction through the local conference was the third recommendation. It specified that the local conference should have approval of strategic plans, operating plans, budgets and performance standards, selection and removal of key conference personnel, and major policies and methods.

Fourthly, it was suggested that existing resources at the union conference level be redeployed through vigorous streamlining efforts, with a specific goal of eliminating in the short run the top-heavy department functional structure. "Combine every feasible functional department at the local conference, too," it said, "with those people and resources to be used on an approved budget basis at the local churches primarily for outreach activities, but also available for additional pastoral staff, a business administrator, educational assistance, and the great training needs."

According to the report, pastors and others need training in management and finance, program and project management, team and task force organization, and the utilization of volunteers. Thus, the fifth suggestion was that local conferences design and provide education development and training programs as soon as possible.

Lastly, the report recommended communicating its findings and recommendations to the General Conference and North American Division, so the Pacific Union can join them and appropriate laymember representatives in pursuing further studies. A list of 12 areas needing attention were given: mission and priorities, new resources (re-examination of tithe and other fund formulas), constitutional changes, compensation and reward systems, representation of laymembers and election system, a communication network, new roles for publications and media, foundations and trusts direction, performance evaluation system, integrated strategic planning, as well as integrated conference and institutional

systems, time schedules and bench marks.

To prepare the report, the committee went through five procedures. Loma Linda University statistician David Abbey surveyed pastors, lay church members, Association of Self-Supporting Institutions members, local conference employees, and union workers. He passed out 2,500 questionnaires to use in compiling information. Secondly, over 450 in-depth interviews were conducted at eight select churches, three local conferences, and the union. One committee member compiled all the relevant information on organization structure from the writings of Ellen G. White. Business consultant Paul Cone contributed organizational theories from the financial world. Finally, committee members read materials currently in print by Adventist leaders on organizational structure.

Summarizing the findings of approximately 450 interviews in churches, conferences, and the union office, the report said, "Most agree that the church organization structure needs to be cut back. Except for its feet, the elephant is too big. What part of the elephant you personally believe is too big depends on your perspective, but all groups surveyed concur that more funds and effort need to go where the mission is accomplished—the local church."

Former Loma Linda University President David J. Bieber chaired the six-member committee. He will also chair the new 39-member group appointed to implement the report. Composition of this large second committee will be: nine people from the local conference offices, one (non-administrative) union conference representative, one retired worker, and the balance divided among the various conference constituencies, with lay members to outnumber by one the pastors selected within the conference constituencies.

According to one Pacific Union Conference official the report cost approximately \$50,000, which the union considered a bargain because much of the consultant's services were donated.