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## Mission on Autopilot: The Untold Story

Once upon a time the Seventh-day Adventist Church was about mission. As the church grew and diverse entities developed, mission appeared to lose its intentionality and attention. Today mission appears to be running by default, without a strategic focus. Church leadership is aware that mission is too critical to be relegated to autopilot, and steps are being taken to remedy the situation.

### The Report Card

The church has come a long way. From a tiny group of 3,500 believers in 1863 when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organized, it has grown to 15.7 million baptized members in 2007 (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 2007:4).<sup>1</sup> We rejoice in the more than 1 million accessions every year (2007:4). In 2007 it was the sixth time in the history of the church when more than a million people joined the Adventist communion annually (2007:2). We take pride in having established work in 201 of the 230 countries and areas recognized by the United Nations (2007:77). We delight in the 64,000 organized churches, 571 local conferences and missions, and 103 unions in 13 divisions (2007:4). In terms of institutions, we thank God for the 168 hospitals and 433 clinics spanning the globe, not to mention the 62 publishing houses and 7,300 schools with 1.5 million students (2007:6).

Indeed, the church has brought the Three Angels' Messages to the world on a scale never before imagined. Every day in 2007, 2,849 believers joined the church and almost six new churches were established (2007:2). That the church has grown exponentially is nothing short of amazing. The faithfulness of our members who had contributed \$2.7 billion in tithes and offerings (2007:2, 4)<sup>3</sup> is no less remarkable.

Yet beneath this seemingly rosy picture of progress lurks a troubling reality of imbalanced development in mission: rapid expansion in some

areas and lamentable non-growth or decline in others. Looming large on the horizon is the 10/40 Window, where two thirds of the world's populations live. Yet the church has scarcely made headway in this vast region.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the phenomenon of uneven growth in the global church. First, we will examine the current situation in mission. Second, we will examine selected church-sponsored programs to ascertain how well they measure up to meeting the formidable challenges of the 10/40 Window. Third, we will analyze the data collected and conclude with some recommendations.

### Mission Assessment

Performance assessment is done in the following five areas: accession trends, membership distribution, population per member ratio, membership per million population ratio, and the 10/40 Window.

#### Accession Trends

Accession means baptism plus profession of faith. A careful perusal of the accession figures reveals evidences of uneven growth. On one hand we have had huge accessions in Latin American and the African continents. In 2007, the accessions in South American Division (SAD) and Inter-American Division (IAD) represented 22 and 19 percent of the total world accessions, while East-Central Africa (ECD) and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions (SID) chalked up 18 and 14 percent respectively. Hence these four divisions combined were responsible for 73 percent of the total world accessions.

At the other end of the spectrum were the 9 divisions with low accessions (table 1). These divisions accounted for 27 percent of world accessions. The three European divisions combined represented 1.5 percent of accessions as a percentage of the total accessions, reflecting a difficult continent where the gospel has had limited impact.

In broad strokes, figures in 2007 accessions indicate rapid growth in Latin America and Africa, and slow growth in Europe and the South Pacific.

**Table 1. Accessions as Percentage of World Total (2007)**

South American	21.8%
Inter-American	19.2%
East-Central Africa	17.6%
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean	14.0%

Southern Asia	9.8%
Southern Asia-Pacific	5.8%
West-Central Africa	3.9%
North American	3.6%
Northern Asia-Pacific	1.9%
South Pacific	1.0%
Euro-Asia	0.6%
Euro-Africa	0.5%
Trans-European	0.4%

### Membership Distribution

Another way of considering uneven growth is examining world membership distribution. Perhaps not surprisingly, the same demographics in accessions are also reflected in membership distribution. Increase in accessions moved in tandem with a rise in membership. Thus we see a heavy concentration of membership in Latin America and Africa, and a much smaller membership in Europe, the South Pacific, and some parts of Asia (table 2). Suffice it to say that large accessions engender expansion of membership, and large membership in turn spurs further increase in accessions.

Thus membership distribution in the world divisions is regrettably disproportionate, with the African divisions (except WAD) and Latin American divisions accounting for 8 million members, or 64 percent of world membership. Membership in the European continent accounts for about 2.6 percent of world membership.

**Table 2. Church Membership by World Divisions (2007)**

DIVISION	MEMBERSHIP	% OF WORLD MEMBERSHIP
Inter-American (IAD)	2,968,485	18.96
East-Central Africa (ECD)	2,617,706	16.72
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SID)	2,283,279	14.58
Southern Asia (SUD)	2,187,125	13.97
Southern Asia-Pacific (SSD)	1,345,615	8.59
North American (NAD)	1,062,189	6.78
Southern Asia-Pacific (SSD)	902,394	5.76
West Central-Africa (WAD)	798,494	5.10
Northern Asia-Pacific (NSD)	590,684	3.77
South Pacific (SPD)	399,979	2.55

Euro-Africa (EUD)	176,047	1.12
Euro-Asia (ESD)	137,676	0.88
Trans-European (TED)	107,050	0.68

### Population Per Member Ratio

The third way of examining uneven growth is to look at the population per member ratio. Back in 2007, the church had a population per member ratio of one for every 423 persons on planet earth (2007:2). This figure, while heartening, masks the huge disparity between both ends of the spectrum. On one hand are countries with a low population per member ratio, and on the other hand are countries with an exceedingly high population per member ratio.

The top ten countries with the lowest population per member ratios comprise of Pitcairn (1:2), Montserrat (1:5), Grenada (1:8), Saint Vincent and Grenadines (1:8), Belize (1:10), Dominica (1:11), Antigua and Barbuda (1:11), Saint Lucia (1:12), Jamaica (1:12), and Cayman Islands (1:12) (2007: 78-80).

At the other end of the scale are countries with high population per member ratio. The top 20 countries in this category include Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Morocco, Iran, Algeria, Turkey, Bhutan, Djibouti, Comoros, Mauritania, Western Sahara, Tunisia, Brunei, Maldives, Iraq, Egypt, and the Channel Islands (table 3). Seven of these countries are located in EUD and six in TED territories. Thus the two European divisions shoulder the lion's share (65 percent) of these countries with few or no Adventist membership. These divisions not only have to contend with secular Europe, but also with the huge Muslim population in their backyards.

**Table 3. Population Per Member Ratio (2007)**

COUNTRY	POPULATION PER MEMBER RATIO	DIVISION	MEMBERSHIP
Saudi Arabia	1:27,601,000	TED	0
Yemen	1:22,389,000	TED	0
Syria	1:19,929,000	TED	0
Somalia	1:9,119,000	ECD	0
Afghanistan	1:6,378,000	EUD	4
Morocco	1:6,342,20	EUD	4
Iran	1:2,848,320	EUD	24
Algeria	1:1,003,059	EUD	33
Turkey	1:986,227	EUD	74

Bhutan	1:896000	SUD	0
Djibouti	1:833,000	ECD	0
Comoros	1:711,000	SID	0
Mauritania	1:624,800	WAD	4
Western Sahara	1:480,000	EUD	0
Tunisia	1:428,042	EUD	23
Brunei	1:372,000	SSD	0
Maldives	1:304,000	SUD	0
Iraq	1:167,590	TED	172
Egypt	1:99,080	TED	740
Channel Islands	1:88,000	TED	0

### Membership Per Million Population Ratio

The fourth way of appraising mission trends is to examine the membership per million population ratio. Membership alone is not necessarily a precise gauge of the depth of mission penetration. The membership per million population ratio may be a more accurate measurement of the extent of mission challenge.

In 2007, there was only one Adventist for every 1 million Turkish population (table 4). In Iran there were none. In Egypt the ratio was 10 Adventists to 1 million Egyptians, and in Pakistan 67. All these three countries at the bottom of the scale are Islamic countries. Again, these figures are a grim and painful reminder that the church is confronted with the colossal responsibility of reaching the Muslim world for Christ.

**Table 4. Membership Per Million Population (2007)**

COUNTRY	POPULATION ESTIMATE	CHURCH MEMBERSHIP	MEMBERSHIP PER MILLION POPULATION	DIVISION
China	1,317,955,000	360,822	274	NSD
India	1,131,883,000	1,339,606	1,184	SUD
United States	302,201,000	1,000,578	3,311	NAD
Indonesia	231,627,000	190,405	822	SSD
Brazil	189,335,000	1,331,282	7,031	SAD
Pakistan	169,271,000	11,396	67	TED
Bangladesh	149,002,000	27,196	183	SSD
Nigeria	144,430,000	257,943	1,786	WAD
Russian Federation	141,681,000	51,875	366	ESD
Japan	127,730,000	15,213	119	NSD

Mexico	106,535,000	597,540	5,609	IAD
Philippines	88,706,000	571,653	6,444	SSD
Vietnam	85,134,000	9,077	107	SSD
Germany	82,254,000	35,925	437	EUD
Ethiopia	77,127,000	163,524	2,129	ECD
Turkey	77,127,000	74	1	EUD
Egypt	73,418,000	740	10	TED
Iran	71,208,000	24	0	EUD
Thailand	65,706,000	12,083	184	SSD
Congo, Dem. Rep.	62,636,000	507,790	8,107	ECD

Of the top 20 most populous countries in the world, 5 are located in the SSD, 3 in EUD, 2 in TED, 1 in NSD, and 1 in SUD. Probably the most onerous division in the world in terms of reaching large populations is NSD with China and its humongous population of 1.3 billion. SUD is not far behind with its Indian population of 1.1 billion.

In short, NSD, SUD, SSD, EUD, and TED have the unenviable task of working in large populations with small membership in their territories. Whether division human and financial resources are aligned in direct proportion to the extent of the enormous task remains to be seen.

### 10/40 Window

The fifth way of assessing the missionary enterprise of the church is to examine it from the 10/40 Window arena. The 10/40 Window is a term generally believed to have been coined and popularized in 1990 by Luis Bush, International Director of the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement. The Window is the rectangular area stretching across northern Africa and Asia, between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator. The makeup of the countries within the rectangular has changed through the years. Bush's original list encompasses 59 nations. Subsequent lists vary from 52 to 62 to 69 countries. Some argue that although geographically within the 10/40 perimeter, the Philippines, Portugal, and South Korea as Christian countries should be excluded, and nations such as Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan should be included.

The 10/40 Window, as defined in this paper, encompasses the following 65 nations: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, China, Djibouti, East Timor, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauri-

tania, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Western Sahara, and Yemen.

TED tops the list with 16 countries in the 10/40 Window (table 5), followed by SSD (11 countries), and EUD (8 countries). IAD, NAD, SAD, SID, and SPD do not have countries in the 10/40 Window.

Seventh-day Adventist membership in these 10/40 Window countries is small or even non-existent. Open evangelism in some of these countries is either fraught with danger or impossible because of government restrictions and persecution. Though access is restricted to foreigners, some Global Mission (GM) pioneers are working among the indigenous populace.

These sobering figures show that the Great Commission, by no stretch of the imagination, could be described as near completion in the 10/40 Window. Those divisions in the Window are confronted with huge challenges perhaps unimaginable to people elsewhere. They will certainly need more funds, trained personnel, and other provisions to work in such forbidding and at times inhospitable conditions.

**Table 5. Distribution of 10/40 Window Countries in World Divisions (2007)**

Trans-European Division (TED)	16	Albania, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
West-Central Africa Division (WAD)	11	Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal
Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD)	11	Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
Euro-Africa Division (EUD)	8	Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Western Sahara
Euro-Asia Division (ESD)	6	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD)	5	China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, Taiwan
East-Central Africa Division (ECD)	4	Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia

Southern Asia Division (SUD)	4	Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal
Inter-American Division (IAD)	0	
North American Division (NAD)	0	
South American Division (SAD)	0	
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)	0	
South Pacific Division (SPD)	0	

### Adventist Response

We have taken a quick survey of the church's state of affairs by examining five aspects of the 2007 statistical reports: accession rate, membership distribution, population per member ratio, membership per million population, and the 10/40 Window. We have become somberly aware that the growth of the church has been noticeably disproportionate: phenomenal in some areas and sluggish in others. How should the church address the considerable disparity of growth in different parts of the world? Have the current church-sponsored mission programs helped rectify the situation, or have they contributed to the growth imbalance?

To answer these questions truthfully and objectively, we draw upon the 10/40 Window as an assessment tool. Granted, the 10/40 Window is not the only benchmark to measure effectiveness. However, as far as mission is concerned, there is perhaps nothing more urgent and challenging than the 10/40 Window, which is largely untouched by the gospel.

The following programs are evaluated according to the footprints they have impacted on the 10/40 Window:

Inter-Division Employee (IDE)  
 Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS)  
 Global Mission (GM) Pioneers  
 General Conference (GC) Staff Evangelism  
 ShareHim



### Inter-Division Employee (IDE)

The Inter-Division Employee (IDE) program has been the cornerstone of the international mission of the church. Typically IDE appointees go to mission service for five years. They serve on the front line of evangelism. Many work in institutions as administrators, professors, or physicians. Mission advances were due in no small measure to the pioneering spirit of the early IDEs.

During the flourishing years of the 1970s, we had more than 1,500 IDEs.<sup>4</sup> The number has since steadily declined. As of 2008, 919 IDEs were sent around the globe, costing the church more than \$21 million per annum,<sup>5</sup> or about 16.5 percent of the GC world budget. The North American Division (NAD) was the principal contributor of IDEs. It used to supply almost half of all missionaries.<sup>6</sup> The trend had since waned. In 2008 NAD sent out 33 percent of all missionaries. SSD was the largest consumer of IDEs, taking in 19 percent of all IDEs.<sup>7</sup>

Table 6 shows a telling picture of the state of mission in 2008. IDEs were deployed in 63 percent of the 10/40 Window countries. Two countries (North Korea and China) were access restricted countries. Countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Israel, UAE, East Timor, and Pakistan have open access, yet church membership remains relatively small.

**Table 6. Inter-Division Employee (IDE) in 10/40 Window (2008)**

DIVISION	COUNTRIES WITH IDEs	COUNTRIES WITH NO IDEs
TED (16) <sup>8</sup>	Albania, Egypt, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, UAE	Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia
WAD (11)	Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal	Benin, Guinea, Mali
SSD (11)	Bangladesh, Cambodia, East Timor, Sri Lanka, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam	Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia
EUD (8)	Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Tunisia, Turkey	Morocco, Libya, Western Sahara
ESD (6)	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan
NSD (5)	Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan	North Korea, China (except Hong Kong)
ECD (4)	Djibouti, Ethiopia	Eritrea, Somalia
SUD (4)	India, Nepal	Bhutan, Maldives

Not all IDEs work in a “mission field” in the traditional understanding of the term. Many of them work in the GC Headquarters as well as in GC

institutions. In fact, these two groups of IDEs represented 19 percent of all IDEs in 2008.<sup>9</sup>

### Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS)

The AVS volunteers are short-term missionaries. Typically they serve from a month to a year. Many extend their stay in the mission field after their initial term has expired. In 2008, the church was blessed with 755 volunteers.

The United States, with its renowned culture of volunteerism, was the largest contributor of volunteers in 2008, sending a whopping 476 (63%) volunteers to virtually every continent on earth. Other contributors of volunteers included South Africa (6%), Australia (5%), Canada (3%), and Argentina (2%).

The largest consumer of volunteers was South Korea. With its vast network of English language institutes, the country understandably has an insatiable appetite for more volunteer teachers. Not surprisingly, in 2008 the country absorbed 195, or 26 percent of all volunteers. Volunteers were also very much in demand in Micronesia (6%), Taiwan (5%), Marshall Island (4%), and Guam (4%). Most schools in Guam and Micronesia have been dependent on volunteer teachers for years.

What was the distribution of volunteers in the 10/40 Window? Most volunteers served wherever they were needed. Of the 65 countries in the 10/40 Window, volunteers appeared in 22 of them, or about 34 percent (table 7).

**Table 7. Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) in 10/40 Window (2008)**

DIVISION	COUNTRIES WITH VOLUNTEERS	COUNTRIES WITH NO VOLUNTEERS
TED (16)	Egypt, Kuwait, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates	Albania, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen
WAD (11)	Burkina Faso, Chad, Nigeria, Senegal	Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger
SSD (11)	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand	Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Vietnam
EUD (8)	Afghanistan	Algeria, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Western Sahara
ESD (6)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan	Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

NSD (5)	China, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan	North Korea
ECD (4)	Djibouti	Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia
SUD (4)	India, Nepal	Bhutan, Maldives

Many volunteers were institutional workers serving in the Adventist school system. Some schools offered volunteers free housing and utilities, round-trip airfare, and a generous stipend. The enormous difference between remunerations of volunteers working in institutions and non-institutions has effectively blurred the line between volunteerism and livelihood. If individuals “volunteer” to work in Korea or Taiwan where life is relatively cushy, who would volunteer in Jordan, Bhutan, or East Timor? How then would the people from the 10/40 Window countries ever hope to hear the gospel?

### Global Mission Pioneers

The Global Mission (GM) pioneer program is part of the GC Office of Adventist Mission. GM pioneers are nationals working in their own contexts in unentered territories without having to adapt to a new culture or learn a new language. GM projects are jointly selected by the local mission/conference in consultation with the union and division. Funding is shared among the GC, division, union, and conference. The total cost of 2008 GM projects amounted to almost \$15 million, to which the GC contributed \$5.1 million.

**Table 8. Global Mission (GM) Pioneers in 10/40 Window (2008)**

DIVISION	COUNTRIES WITH GM PIONEERS	COUNTRIES WITH NO GM PIONEERS
TED (16)	Albania, Israel, Pakistan, Sudan	Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
WAD (11)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria	Senegal
SSD (11)	Bangladesh, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam	Brunei
EUD (8)	Algeria, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey	Afghanistan, Western Sahara
ESD (6)	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan	Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan

NSD (5)	China, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan	North Korea
ECD (4)	Djibouti, Ethiopia	Eritrea, Somalia
SUD (4)	India, Bhutan	Maldives, nepal

In 2008, there were 1,604 GM pioneers working on 1,236 projects in 113 countries. Pioneers were found in 41 (or 63%) of 65 countries in the 10/40 Window.

### General Conference Staff Evangelism

While hundreds of IDE, AVS, and GM pioneers are busy serving the world church, GC personnel are also involved in short-term missions. Special funding of \$100,000 has been set aside for this purpose, and GC workers are encouraged to participate. The idea is to conduct reaping campaigns somewhere in the world field, with special funding ranging from \$1,500 to \$10,000 according to the size and nature of the meetings. The funds do not cover travel, per diem, and accommodation costs, which would come from travel budgets of traveling staff. The GC staff evangelism fund stipulates one third of the GC subsidy must be budgeted for adequate follow-up and funding of facilities.

**Table 9. General Conference Staff Evangelism in 10/40 Window (2005-2009)**

DIVISION	COUNTRIES WITH GC REAPING CAMPAIGNS	COUNTRIES WITH NO GC REAPING CAMPAIGNS
TED (16)	Egypt (1 time)	Albania, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
WAD (11)	Nigeria (2 times)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal
SSD (11)	Indonesia (20 times); Malaysia (3 times)	Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
EUD (8)		Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Western Sahara
ESD (6)	Kyrgyzstan (2 times)	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
NSD (5)	Mongolia (1 time)	China, Japan, North Korea, Taiwan

ECD (4)		Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia
SUD (4)	India (11 times)	Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal
<p>Non-10/40 Window countries where GC staff conducted reaping campaigns between 2005 and 2009: Philippines (17 times), USA (11 times), Ghana (5 times), Mexico (4 times), Zambia (4 times), Brazil (3 times), Mozambique (2 times), New Zealand (2 times), Tanzania (2 times), Hungary (2 times), Croatia (2 times).</p> <p>Following are countries where GC staff conducted reaping campaigns since: Australia, Angola, Belgium, Burundi, Bulgaria, Egypt, Kenya, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Peru, Russia, Romania, Samoa, Singapore, Tahiti, Ukraine, UK, and Yugoslavia.</p>		

From 2005 to 2009, GC personnel conducted reaping campaigns in 36 countries. Indonesia appears to be the destination of choice with 20 visits (table 10), followed by the Philippines with 17 visits, and the USA and India with 11 visits each. The rest of the tally includes Ghana (5 times), Mexico (4x), Zambia (4x), Brazil (3x), Mozambique (2x), New Zealand (2x), Tanzania (2x), Hungary (2x), Croatia (2x), Kyrgyzstan (2x), Nigeria (2x), and Australia, Angola, Belgium, Burundi, Bulgaria, Egypt, Kenya, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Peru, Russia, Romania, Samoa, Singapore, Tahiti, Ukraine, UK, and Yugoslavia with one visit each.

What was the distribution of GC evangelists in the 10/40 Window? Out of the 65 countries in the 10/40 Window, GC personnel selected only 7 countries (11%) where they conducted reaping campaigns in the past 5 years (Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Nigeria). In other words, the places they went tended to cluster around countries where the work had been well established, and very few went to difficult countries. Basically GC personnel went wherever they wanted to go or requested to go. Participating in evangelism is a laudable endeavor. But going to countries where membership is small, workers are few, resources are meager, and the goings is tough is even more commendable.

### ShareHim

Different divisions adopt diverse approaches to lay training. The 1000 Missionary Movement was born in SSD and later adopted by other divisions. Peru’s renowned small group ministry model has been much emulated beyond the boundaries of the union. NSD’s special brand of His-Hands Mission Movement has successfully inspired many young people to be home missionaries. The list goes on. Perhaps one of the largest short-term mission programs is ShareHim, a ministry of the Carolina Conference in partnership with The Quiet Hour and Amazing Facts. ShareHim<sup>10</sup>

(formally Global Evangelism) has adopted “Experience God’s Power through Witnessing” as its motto. Each year it organizes and sends evangelistic teams around the world. Besides its global outreach, it also trains members and pastors to do evangelism in North America (table 10).

How conspicuous were ShareHim volunteers in the 10/40 Window? A study of their 2003 to 2008 records suggests that volunteers under their banner conducted meetings in 11 (17%) of the 65 countries in the 10/40 Window (table 8). India stood head and shoulder above others with about 270 campaigns. Malaysia was a distant runner-up with 68 campaigns, followed by 41 in Benin, 33 in Mongolia, and 32 in Indonesia. Other nations included Ethiopia (31), Nigeria (18), Guinea Bissau (12), China (11), Taiwan (3), and Kazakhstan (1).

**Table 10. ShareHim in 10/40 Window (2003-2008)**

DIVISION	COUNTRIES WITH SHAREHIM VOLUNTEERS	COUNTRIES WITH NO SHAREHIM VOLUNTEERS
TED (16)		Albania, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
WAD (11)	Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria	Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal
SSD (11)	Indonesia, Malaysia	Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam
EUD (8)		Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Western Sahara
ESD (6)	Kazakhstan	Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
NSD (5)	China, Mongolia, Taiwan	Japan, North Korea
ECD (4)	Ethiopia	Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia
SUD (4)	India	Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal

### Analysis of Statistics

The church is serious about the Great Commission. Leadership has frequently and adroitly communicated to the church about mission being its sole *raison d’être*. Through the media and pulpit, the message appears to be getting through to membership about the importance of “finishing the work.” Huge resources have been committed. A relentless push for evangelism is becoming a way of life. New work has started in previously unentered areas. Churches are being established in far-flung corners of the earth. Given our puny size and limited resources, we praise the Lord

for these breathtaking achievements thus far.

The success story is somehow belied by a troubling trend of disproportionate growth. It is well documented that Latin America and the Africa continent have been engines of growth for years. The two continents represent 73 percent of world membership. On the other hand, the European continent accounts for about 2.6 percent of world membership. In terms of accessions, the three European divisions make up only 1.5 percent of world accessions.

The same trend of disproportionate growth is also noted in the population per member ratio. While Latin America and Africa generally have low ratios, elsewhere the ratios are incredibly high. For example, in Jamaica or Saint Lucia, the population per membership ratio is 1 to 12. But in Turkey it is 1 to 986,227, and in Mauritania 1 to 624,800. The colossal disparity is a cause for concern.

The phenomenon of uneven growth extends to the 10/40 Window as well. The European divisions are located in or near the Window, with 30 out of the 65 countries in their territories. Along with WAD, SSD, ESC, and ECD, all these divisions face the mammoth task of reaching the 3.2 billion people (two thirds of the world population) living in the Window. On top of that, NSD, SSD, and SUD have the additional challenge of working in some of the most populous nations on earth, many of them having humongous cities of more than 10 million people.

The trend of uneven growth can become an intra-division situation as well. In the TED, membership in the country of Sudan is growing in leaps and bounds, averaging a 6.8 percent growth rate from 2003 to 2007, and outperforming the world average of 3.97 percent in the same period. Yet, the rapid expansion emblematic of Sudan is atypical in the rest of the division. Another case in point is the SSD, where the Philippines and Indonesia have been engines of growth. The membership in these two countries amounts to about 84 percent<sup>11</sup> of the total division membership, and the remaining 16 percent are distributed in 16 10/40 Window countries, where growth rates are almost infinitesimal.

### **Analysis of Adventist Response**

How did the church tackle the situation of uneven growth? There have been numerous responses from official quarters, as well as supporting ministries, to fulfill the Great Commission. Formally we have the IDE program for cross-cultural ministry, the AVS program for short-term mission, and GM pioneers for unentered territories. These formal programs are augmented by many supporting ministries as well as short-term mission projects sponsored by conferences and institutions.

In terms of mission footprint on the 10/40 Window, the IDE program

probably has the best record. In 2008, they were touching lives in 63 percent of the 65 countries in the 10/40 Window. AVS missionaries covered about 34 percent, GM pioneers 63 percent, GC staff 11 percent, and Share-Him 17 percent (table 11).

What do we make of this footprint assessment? We can probably draw several conclusions. One telling revelation is that as a church we have not been doing as well as we could in the 10/40 Window. Somehow in the multiplicity of tasks and priorities, as well as financial and personnel constraints, the Window is in increasing danger of being overlooked or forgotten. This apparent neglect surfaces time and again in our study. Three significant trends are noted: a shift from frontline mission to institution, from proactive to reactive, and from pioneer mission to mission of least resistance.

### A Shift from Frontline Mission to Institution

There has been a notable shift from frontline mission to institution maintenance. In 2008 we sent out 755 IDEs, of which 424 (or 56%) were institutional missionaries working in ADRA, GCAS, as well as in educational and medical institutions. Ten years ago, institutional IDEs accounted to only 45 percent of the total IDEs. A similar trend is noted in the AVS program. Volunteers in Korea, Taiwan, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Guam represented 45 percent of all volunteers. Almost all of them worked in educational institutions.

The shift of sending more missionaries to institutions than to frontline evangelism comes about perhaps not by design but by default. The early Adventist mission movement, beginning in the 1890s through to the 1930s, concentrated almost exclusively on foreign mission. The work rapidly expanded from its home base in North America to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Whenever missionaries were sent, they were sent to foreign lands to establish mission stations. As membership expanded, missionaries invariably established medical, educational, and publishing institutions. So the shift from frontline mission to institution is indicative of a maturing church in foreign mission and is not necessarily a negative development and should not constitute a scathing rebuke to the church's missionary programs. Be it as it may, is it possible that the large deployment of missionaries to institutions has been done at the expense of the 10/40 Window whose critical significance has not diminished and whose massive needs are ever present? Should national workers take on greater responsibilities in institutions, thus freeing foreign missionaries to work in more critical areas?



### A Shift from Proactive to Reactive

Most calls for long-term and short-term missionaries are generated from divisions, which in turn respond to requests coming from subsidiary organizations. The GC screens the calls and provides partial funding. As a rule, the GC doesn't initiate calls, even though it finances most of the IDE budgets. Invariably these calls derive from the needs of existing ministries and institutions and are seldom related to frontline mission. Few missionaries are sent for strategic reasons. Granted, in recent years we did send missionaries to Yemen, Mauritania, and Syria. But such initiatives are few and far between compared with mission in the 1960s and 1970s.

The current situation is reminiscent of the time of Judges when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6). With good intentions, every entity does what it thinks is best in the interest of mission. Redundancy of similar efforts is not uncommon. Except for GM pioneers, the current scenario of calling missionaries and fulfilling those calls appears largely reactive rather than proactive, which is a far cry from the heydays of the single-mindedness of the Foreign Mission Board. Created in 1889, the Board was tasked with a strategic function "for the management of the foreign mission work" of the church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 1889:141, 142).

As the work expanded and matured, it was easy to lose its strategic focus. To be strategic is to behave like a chess player, planning several moves in advance and anticipating possible countermoves. This is different from the myopic player, who looks ahead only one step at a time and responds to one opposing move at a time. Could it be that the lack of zeal for a renewed strategic focus on the 10/40 Window is not so much due to the absence of resolve and knowhow but rather to the absence of a structure or mechanism to bring about that focus?

### A Shift from Pioneer Mission to Mission of Least Resistance

According to Ohm's law, an electrical current takes the path of least resistance. Recent mission endeavors have tended to follow the same law. Whatever is most economical, wherever is most responsive, whenever is most convenient, that's where we consign resources. We continue doing what we are used to doing with little or no evaluation.

This study has repeatedly shown that the church is predisposed to spending time and resources in areas where the work has already been well established. A case in point is the GC staff evangelism program where 17 evangelistic meetings were conducted in the Philippines by GC personnel from 2005 to 2009. The ShareHim program mobilized roughly 295 teams to conduct similar reaping campaigns in the same country within the same time frame. But the question is, Why the Philippines of

all countries? Why would the Christian country need foreign help when it has a membership of close to 600,000 Adventists, 6,200 churches, 10 hospitals, 6 colleges and universities, 1 publishing house, and 3,500 literature evangelists?

Besides the Philippines, other favorite destinations of these short-term missionaries include Sabah and Sarawak, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. Sabah and Sarawak already have a large Adventist membership. Jamaica and Saint Lucia have some of the lowest population per member ratios in the world.

Granted, GC personnel and ShareHim evangelists, as well as many conference-sponsored mission teams, are not necessarily tasked to reach the 10/40 Window. Some of these groups make it clear that their aim is to train and motivate Western lay people for evangelism and not to reach the unreached. Their aspiration is well taken. But could the resources spent on these "easy" places be redirected somewhere else in the world where the going is "harder" and the level of gospel penetration minimal or even non-existent? Can we live with less glamorous results or is the numbers game more important?

This research study has a sense of *déjà vu* about it—the same old patterns appearing with new names. Once upon a time the old name was Burma. The early leadership subscribed to the theory of least resistance by concentrating on the ethnic minorities who were more responsive to the gospel. The outcome a generation later is that we have a membership of almost 26,000 in 2007, most of whom are ethnic minorities who make up less than 10 percent of the general population. By concentrating evangelism on the minorities, we excluded ourselves from focusing on the Burmans, Burma's main ethnic group, which constitutes 68 percent of the population. Today millions of Burmans live in huge cities along the central valley, stretching from Rangoon in the south all the way to Mandalay in the north, and we have less than 100 Burman Adventist believers.

The almost same episode was replicated in Taiwan, where missionaries found the 9 indigenous tribes to be much more responsive to the gospel than ethnic Chinese. Most tribal people lived in the mountains, and the Han Chinese preferred the plains. The perpetuation of the mission of least resistance resulted in huge indigenous membership and much smaller ethnic Chinese membership. This imbalance in membership is also reflected in ministry. Today we have a dearth of ethnic Chinese pastors and overabundant minority pastors. The conundrum deepens when ethnic Chinese churches refuse to accept indigenous pastors and indigenous pastors refuse to pastor ethnic Chinese churches.

The same can be said of following the path of least resistance by working almost exclusively in rural areas. It is no wonder that today we are a

church of villages and islands. Cities are languishing for lack of attention. Yet population growth in cities is fast outpacing that of rural areas.

Mission taking the path of least resistance is fine as long as it doesn't exclude itself from reaching other more onerous groups. We should by all means watch for open doors and receptive groups and move ahead with them, but we cannot forget the difficult. It may have been more expensive and arduous to win the Burmans in Burma and the Han Chinese in Taiwan, but these people groups deserve the right to hear the gospel and be called children of the living God (Rom 9:25, 26).

### Summary and Conclusion

In this paper we have outlined the admirable accomplishments of the world church. We have analyzed statistical trends from 2003 to 2007 in terms of accession, membership, population per member ratio, membership per million population ratio, and the 10/40 Window. We have enumerated the Adventist response to mission in the 10/40 Window through the IDE, AVS, GM, GC, and ShareHim venues.

The study highlights two disquieting trends in mission: disproportionate growth in the world field and near negligence of the 10/40 Window. Mission as we know it today is being defined by the reality of huge disparity in the distribution of resources. Making the situation even more untenable is the lack of coordination and leadership in mission to correct the current autopilot syndrome. Mission appears to be running by default without a coordinating body to oversee the strategic interests of mission. Which entity is responsible for mission? Some might answer "Adventist Mission." After all, it has the right name. A closer scrutiny, however, reveals that other entities are also inextricably involved. Presidential is a stakeholder in mission by way of its association with the IDE Budget Oversight Committee (IDEBOC), a committee that allocates and keeps track of IDE budgets around the world. Secretariat is in partnership with mission by virtue of its role in identifying, recruiting, training, and sending missionaries. Treasury works through the Financial Planning and Budgeting (FP&B) Committee as well as with Secretariat in the financial aspects of mission through the Interdivision Employee Remuneration and Allowances Committee. The Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department, as well as Adventist Mission, oversee and promote the 13th Sabbath mission projects. World divisions identify mission projects and request funding from the GC. Media ministries such as Hope TV and Adventist World Radio contribute much through the airwaves and cables. Supporting ministries are at the forefront. Each of these entities works almost independently, with separate silos and agendas raising funds for their causes. So which agency is really responsible for mission? When

everyone is responsible, nobody really is.

To remedy the current state of affairs, it seems imperative that the church provides strategic directions. In warfare, mission command and control is critical to provide purpose and direction. The church needs a mission command and control to provide global leadership in redressing imbalance in mission, identifying human and financial resources, channeling these resources to unreached areas, starting new initiatives, and realigning territories if necessary.

The church has not been known for taking challenges lying down. It always rises to the occasion, no matter how difficult the task may be. The church leadership is aware that mission is too critical to be relegated to autopilot. It is convinced of the urgent necessity to give coordination and attention to mission and to assume a global leadership role commensurate with the immensity of the task remaining. To streamline operations, steps are being taken to merge IDE functions in the GC secretariat and TRIPS. Three mission-related committees are being eliminated in favor of a more centrally coordinated committee. On top of that, a high-powered strategic planning and budgeting body is being established to give strategic direction to mission. That body is chaired by Presidential and members include leaders in Secretariat, Treasury, and Adventist Mission.

We are hopeful that as the result of these significant changes, mission under the Lord's guidance will again find its focus and direction to move forward valiantly until "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The 2007 edition of the *Annual Statistical Report* has been used for this article.

<sup>2</sup>Accessions are defined as additions to the church by baptisms and profession of faith.

<sup>3</sup>Each day in 2007, members contributed \$7.3 million to the mission of the church.

<sup>4</sup>There were 1,561 IDEs in 1979. The highest ever recorded figure was in 1983 with 1,584 IDEs.

<sup>5</sup>In 1999, the cost was \$16.1 million per annum. The annual IDE cost excludes costs to divisions and the GC.

<sup>6</sup>NAD contributed 48% of all IDEs in 1999.

<sup>7</sup>The percentage declined a decade ago. In 1999, 22% of IDEs served in SSD.

<sup>8</sup>The figure denotes the number of 10/40 Window countries in the division.

<sup>9</sup>As of 2008, the total number of IDEs serving in GC headquarters were 119 and in GC institutions 56. They included ADRA-Africa (5), Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (27), Adventist University of Africa (6), GC Auditing Services (6), HIV/AIDS (2), and Adventist World Radio (10).

<sup>10</sup>ShareHim has as its objective “to develop in Seventh-day Adventist members and pastors in the ‘first world’ a renewed ownership of this Movement’s Message and Mission as well as confidence that God will work through each to achieve His objectives by making public evangelism a lifestyle for each congregation.”

<sup>11</sup>SSD 2007 membership was 902,394. The combined membership of the three Philippine unions was 571,653 and the combined membership of the two Indonesian unions was 190,405.



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