

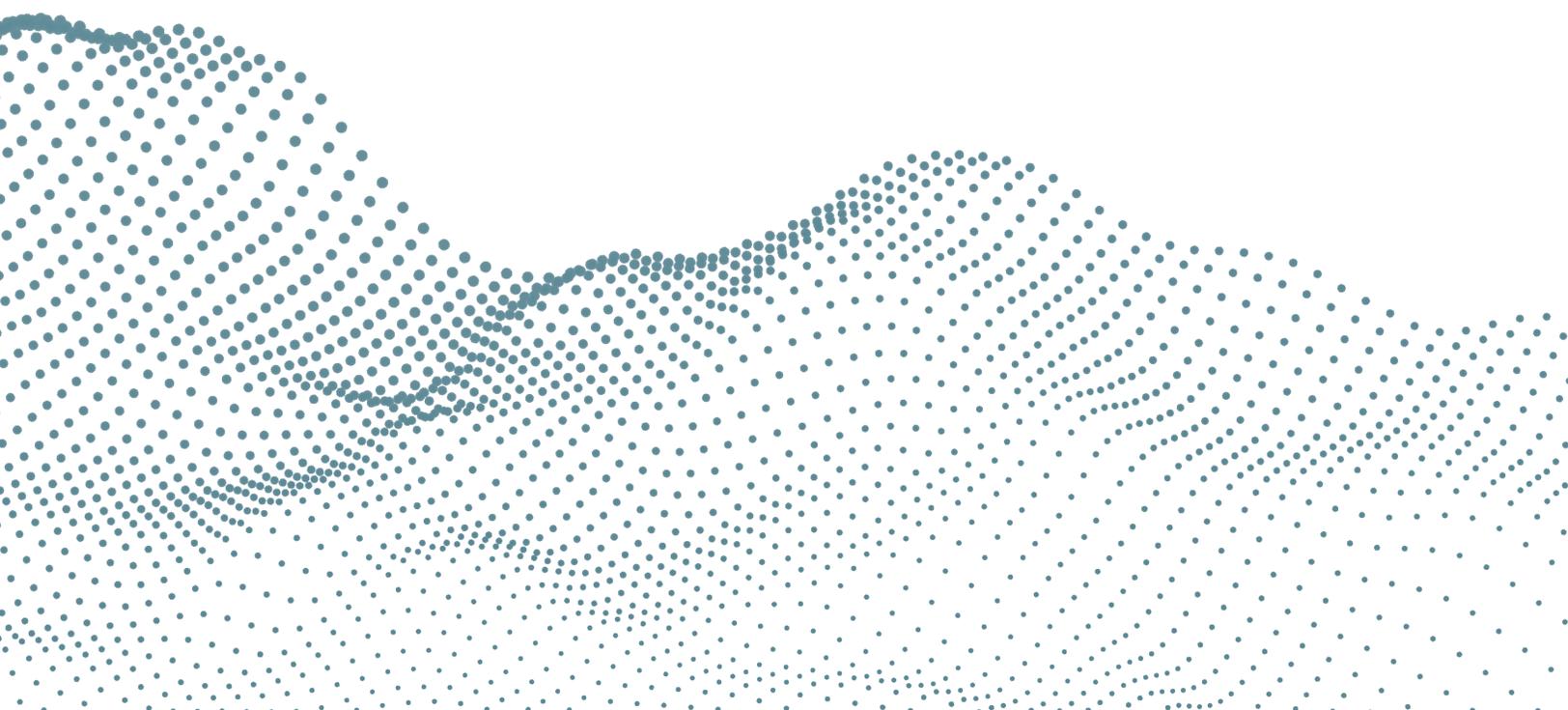


Southern California Conference
of Seventh-day Adventists
AD HOC REGION STRUCTURE
EVALUATION COMMITTEE

A SUMMARY of the Ad hoc Region Structure Committee's Study & Analysis Report

An Informal Sequential Mixed-Method Study

An Easy-to-Read Synopsis of the Full Report





SCC's Strategy

Our Vision is

To embrace community in Christ.

Our Mission or Purpose is

To exalt Christ by serving its diverse communities through networked churches and schools who are creatively engaged.

Our Values are

- **Integrity with Transparency** • We value and recognize the transforming power of God's word in our lives as we pursue wholeness in our character. We will not be bought or sold, because we are sold out for Christ.
- **Engagement** • We will do anything short of sin to reach people who don't know Christ. To reach people no one is reaching, we will have to be fully engaged, doing things no one is doing.
- **Stewardship** • We are spiritual contributors not spiritual consumers. The church does not exist just for us; we exist for the world
- **Unity in Diversity** • We recognize that the local church is the hope of the world, and we are confident we can accomplish infinitely more together than apart.
- **Relationships & Team** • We value relationships and are unapologetic in our love. We are committed to honoring each other's gifts, talents, and strengths united together to accomplish Christ's mission.

Our Objectives/Goals are to

- **Develop** rigorous leadership and accountability processes
- **Create** discipleship processes that lead others to Christ
- **Implement** affordable education solutions
- **Engage** with communities surrounding our churches and schools
- **Cultivate** extravagant givers

Historical Beginnings

The motivation behind the 1996 change in the organizational arrangement of SCC was recognizing that the size, diversity, and complexity of challenges facing the Southern California Conference made it difficult to effectively manage and lead the church under the centralized Conference structure.

During this reconfiguration, the purpose focused on four points, intended to align priorities with delegates, church members, and conference leadership goals: (1) Shift "much of the authority and responsibility from SCC to the Regions;" (2) Change the emphasis from conference authority to "congregational life and pastoral functioning;" (3) Enhance "grassroots connectedness between churches;" and (4) "Acknowledge great diversity at the local church level."

The intention was to bring about improved performance of the Conference, pastors, and local churches and allow increased involvement of lay members in the church's leadership and decision-making. By separating responsibilities, leadership could be more focused, responsive, and effective, as seen below:

The Regions assumed responsibility for:

- Supervision and nurture of pastors,
- Coordination of pastoral assignments,
- Allocation of evangelism funds,
- Development of Region strategic and evangelism plans,
- Mediation of church disputes, and
- Developing teamwork among churches.

The SCC retained responsibility for:

- All technical services such as payroll, insurance, accounting, trust services, etc.,
- All Conference-wide programming and activities such as Education, Youth Camp, etc.,
- Conference strategic planning,
- Determining the shape and size of Regions, and
- Overseeing and evaluating the performance of Region Directors

SCC's Measurables

Metrics are one way to assess how SCC has changed since 1996. Between 1996 (when the region structure began) and 2020, SCC experienced a decline in membership, baptisms and professions of faith, tithe and number of employees, as seen in the right sidebar.

It is unreasonable to say the region structure caused or affected the declining membership and baptism numbers. Nevertheless, SCC must prayerfully consider the command with which Jesus left us:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

(Matthew 28:19-20 ESV)

1996-2020 Membership -23.4%
1996-2020 Baptism & POFs: -77.4%
1996-2020 Tithe (with inflation:) -43.5%
1996-2020 # of Employees: -36.2%



Research Assumptions

The Ad hoc Committee used both a survey (**1,027 respondents**) and Focus Group interviews (about **100 participants**) to collect its research. The survey produced valid and reliable results with a +/- 3% error threshold, meaning, if 100 different people took the survey, at least 97 would answer the questions the same way. The surveys comments (around 8,000) fell into one of five classifications:

- Improving knowledge
- Improving motives
- Improving resources
- Improving structure/systems
- Improving information/communication

The **Focus Groups responses** were also classified into the same five classifications, analyzed and the results placed in the *Focus Group Report*. For the [full Report](#), [Survey Results](#), and the [Focus Group Report](#), please see the SCC Constituency website or click directly on each underlined title. Also available is the short, 5-page, 2003 Revision of the [Region Structure Guidelines](#).

The **underlying assumptions** for the research included understanding the four elements (depicted in the “Elements of Culture” to the right) that create structure: Behaviors, unwritten rules, values, and basic assumptions or biases. The Ad hoc Committee also identified results that fell within the four **symptoms or evidences of structural weakness**:

- The absence of collaboration
- Delayed or low-quality decision-making
- Lack of innovative response to a changing environment
- Employee performance declining or goals not met. Other assumptions included the life cycle of organizations and global leadership skills

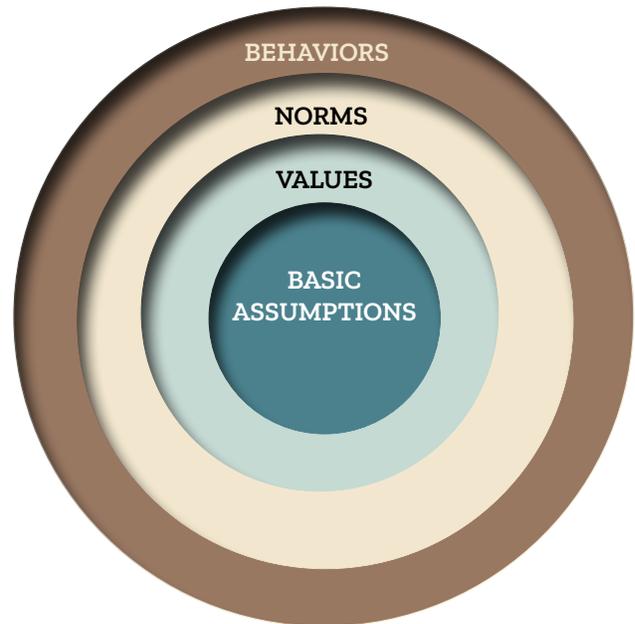
Other assumptions guiding the research included: an understanding of the skills needed for global leadership; identifying where SCC might be in the organizational life cycle; and numerous other research-based, organizational design (structure) topics.

Using a typical **SWOT Analysis**, the Ad hoc Committee placed the results in a grid of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. As indicated in Table 1 on the following page, the results vary in every category. Not all results fit neatly into the four SWOT categories, so the Ad hoc Committee included a couple of in-between sections.

As a reminder, the motion and subsequent vote at the 65th Constituency Session, September 2019, read:

That SCC conducts a comprehensive region structure assessment and bring an analysis and report to a special session of the Constituency in 24 months.

In alignment with the vote of the delegates at the 2019 Constituency Session, the role of the Ad hoc Committee was to conduct a comprehensive region structure study and analysis and produce a report. The role of SCC Administration will be to listen and direct what and when implementing change occurs.



Elements of Culture



Research Results

	Positive Strengths	Negative Weaknesses
Internal (SCC can control)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodates diverse language groups Allows for the diversity of expressions such as worship and evangelism Pushes decision-making closer to the local church Allows more representative input Allows for more agility to reach new groups of people within SCC. <p>Between Strengths and Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General satisfaction with allocation of resources, though lower than in 1999. General satisfaction with pastoral placement, though more standardization would help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low member experience (NPS) Cross-region experiences lacking Lack of lay leadership training Absence of employee development Insufficient vertical and horizontal communication processes with feedback loops Life cycle of SCC indicates it is time to streamline and innovate Lack of perceived unity “We are one church” <p>Both Weaknesses and Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declining membership (-23.4%) and baptisms (-77.4%) between 1996 and 2020 Linkage between schools and regions
External (SCC cannot control)	Opportunities	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society’s current focus on socioeconomic and racial inequality. Covid-19 pandemic’s attention on physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Advancement of technology such as on-line conferencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2024, those under 15-years old will be less than those over 65-years old for the first time in recorded history. Exodus of Californians to other states. Rapidly increasing number of Americans giving up on God. Decline in church attendance in all religious groups.

Table 1: SCC SWOT Analysis

Basic Recommendations

Suggestions to improve unity:

- ☞ Create affinity networks (based on similar interests or hobbies) that cross region boundaries—for employees and lay members alike—across socioeconomic, education, racial, and gender boundaries.
- ☞ Pulpit exchanges between regions
- ☞ Combine worship services with another church different than yours

Suggestions to improve knowledge:

- ☞ Accelerate learning through intentionally designing active learning
- ☞ Provide training for accountable outcomes, coaching for development, and mentoring to practice new skills

- ☞ Develop on-the-job training
- ☞ Play training games
- ☞ Provide self-directed learning

Suggestions to improve structure:

- ☞ Develop conflict management system with training
- ☞ Reshape the culture
- ☞ Develop accountable leaders
- ☞ Create performance appraisals aligned to SCC objectives
- ☞ Rethink staffing, aligning staffing to objectives and goals
- ☞ Redesign system processes (i.e., recruiting, hiring, training)
- ☞ Create job interviewing processes

Suggestions to Improve communication/information

- ☞ Create a knowledge management system, readily accessible to all SCC leaders—employees and laypersons
- ☞ Develop both vertical and horizontal communication networks
- ☞ Create a balanced scorecard visible to all members
- ☞ Streamline meetings
- ☞ Create newsletters for local church functions to opt in/out of
- ☞ Increase the Communication Department to include public relations campaigns to connect externally to communities
- ☞ Debrief formally and informally