

# MEMO

Date: November 2, 1998

To: NAD Ministry Directors

From: Paul Richardson  
NAD Research Consultant

Re: 1998-99 Needs Assessment

Enclosed you will find the identified needs which surfaces through five focus groups strategically placed across the North American Division. Please look this document over carefully.

As one of the important steps in the process, we want to receive your input before this survey instrument goes to conference committees. I'm especially looking for items you believe are missing from the list of 17 needs.

If you have something to add, please give me your input by November 23 via e-mail—PARichardson@compuserve.com. If I don't hear from you, I will assume that you like what you see and we should move forward.

Thank you for your participation in this process.

SHIRLEY CHRISTSON  
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**LOCAL CHURCH FELT NEEDS - 1998**  
**Union and Conference Executive Committee Members Survey**  
**North American Division**

Dear Executive Committee Member:

There are two sections to this questionnaire—items 1-17 and questions 18-21. Read carefully all 17 of the items in the first section—including those on the back side of this sheet. Choose the seven (7) you think are the most important. Circle the number at the beginning of those seven descriptions. Please make sure you have not chosen more than seven (7). It is important that you also complete the second section. Thanks for your participation.

—NAD Office of Information & Research

**SECTION ONE**

1. **Help for Hurting Members** • Our churches need to become "safe" places offering unconditional acceptance and emotional support to regular and new members—doing a better job at fostering kindness, social interaction and hospitality.
2. **Discipling Program** • We need to develop a discipling program for the local church that is intentional and easily understood—giving particular attention to incorporating new members into the life of the church.
3. **Ministry to Men** • In recent years most conference constituencies have established a women's ministry to provide retreats, resources, and in some cases a helpline. It is felt something especially targeted to the spiritual needs of men needs to be developed.
4. **Evangelism for the 21st Century** • We need to explore alternative approaches to evangelism for today's world. This includes finding ways to reach the secular mind and express the Adventist message and mission in relevant and contemporary ways.
5. **Youth Needs** • We need to strengthen the relationship between the youth and the adults—meeting the felt needs of our young people and intentionally finding ways to keep them in the church.
6. **Help for the Local Church Elder** • Many wrongly look at this position as "Honorary." It would be good to have a resource and training available that would clearly identify the responsibilities associated with this position.
7. **Involving Members In Friendship Evangelism** • Church leadership needs to find better ways to motivate, enlist, and train members in the area of informal, unstructured, personal witnessing among friends, work associates, neighbors, relatives.
8. **More Member Involvement In Church Activities** • We need to find ways to better involve, motivate and train members to hold church office and/or be a volunteer worker in the church infrastructure and program.

9. **Support Groups** • We need to have a greater number and variety of support groups in the local church—finding ways to better encourage members to join a cell or small group. This would help "build" the church.

10. **Resistance to Change** • In these times of rapid change we need to discover ways to help members handle changes in methodologies occurring in the church without them becoming, critical or discouraged.

11. **Relevant Sabbath Services** • We may need to explore alternative approaches to worship—rethinking how we do Sabbath morning services, perhaps even doing a little "reinventing." We need more resources for intergenerational services.

12. **Adult Sabbath School Quarterly** • This study tool should be made less complex and easier to understand for the members and teachers.

13. **Conflict Management** • Pastors seem to be regularly involved in arbitrating disputes between members. An outline of steps that should be taken by members to bring healing and peace in such situations would be helpful.

14. **Professional Referral Services and Resources** • Given the great strides in technology, we should be able to help our pastors be better "networked" with Christian professionals who are available to serve the needs of hurting members.

15. **Children In Worship** • We need to find more creative ways to involve our children in ~~Sabbath School and~~ divine worship in ways that are meaningful to ~~them~~. *all*

16. **Family Support** • We need to find ways to help the church support families of all types. This includes doing more to help those members who live in single parent homes and/or blended families where there are stepparents and stepchildren.

17. **Understanding our Communities** - We need to do better at identifying and addressing the felt needs of our communities—getting involved in social action programs such as for the homeless, single parents, teen pregnancy, the poor, and those who grieve.

## SECTION TWO

18. What is your gender? 1. Female 2. Male

19. What is your ethnic background? (Please circle only one number)

1. Asian/Pacific Islander 2. Black 3. Caucasian 4. Hispanic 5. Other

20. In what year were you born? (Please circle only one number)

1. Born in 1965 or after 3. Born in 1930 to 1945  
2. Born in 1946 to 1964 4. Born in 1929 or before

21. Are you employed by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination? 1. Yes 2. No

Comments? Suggestions?