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GENERAL CONFERENCE
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
September 2003

**GLOBAL REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**I. THE SDA COMMISSION
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) was appointed by the Annual Council (2000) with the following **terms of reference**:

1. Develop, in conjunction with the General Conference strategic planning process, a global plan for Adventist higher education, in response to the current and projected needs of the Church in fulfilling its mission.

2. Conduct research, surveys, and evaluations regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges at each Adventist college, seminary, and university.

3. Identify areas of duplication in institutions and programs of higher education within each division.

4. Outline conditions necessary to establish new institutions of higher learning and to launch new educational programs.

5. Develop strategies to strengthen the unity, integrity, and financial viability of the Adventist system of higher education.

6. Develop lines of administrative authority designed to apply appropriate means of compliance to the recommendations made.

The **authority** and **responsibility** assigned to CHE were as follows: for terms of reference 1, 4-6: "Recommend to Annual Council through ADCOM and GCDO"; for terms of reference 2 and 3: "Power to act."

The following were voted as CHE **members**: C. B. Rock (Chairman), H. M. Rasi (Vice-chairman), C. G. Dulan (Secretary), R. E. Ryan (Associate Secretary), E. Becerra, G. B. de Boer,

J. M. Fowler, A. Galicia, J. Gurubatham, T. T. Jones, K. C. Keith (Sr.), R. E. Lemon, M. L. Ryan, C. Sabot, D. R. Sahly, and A. H. Tolhurst. Division and attached union Department of Education directors. Three women with experience in higher education. Consultants: Experts with experience in international education, as needed. [After the retirement of C. B. Rock, G. D. Karst has been the Chairman.]

The year **2001** was employed by CHE to **gather academic, financial and other information** in specially prepared forms sent to SDA colleges and universities, worldwide, and to their sponsoring organizations (Unions, Divisions, and General Conference). The information thus obtained was condensed into **five summary tables per Division** and used in preparation for the **CHE consultations** with each Division (2002-2003). During each Division consultation, participants completed other forms (A-I), to help CHE understand their views on a variety of issues. The **information received in forms A-I** has been, in turn, **summarized by Divisions**. Out of the Division summaries, a **World Summary form** has been completed on each issue (2003).

1 The information gathered and processed now appears in the **CHE GLOBAL REPORT**
2 **AND RECOMMENDATIONS** (2 volumes), including the **APPENDICES**.

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4 While the information was being gathered, the following two issues were explored as
5 needed background for the study.

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8 **II. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST**
9 **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

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11 The most strategic factor to strengthen the unity and integrity of the Adventist system of
12 higher education is a clear understanding combined with a balanced application of the SDA
13 philosophy of education.

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15 Chapter II begins with a list of key elements of SDA philosophy of education, followed
16 by long excerpts from the General Conference *Working Policy* statement on Adventist
17 Educational Philosophy, the *Working Policy* section on “What Total Commitment to God
18 Involves for Colleges and Universities,” and selected E. G. White statements. The chapter closes
19 with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses in the application of our philosophy of
20 education as perceived by SDA institutions and by participants in the Division consultations.
21 There are many perceived strengths, but also some weaknesses. Special attention needs to be
22 given to ways of constantly renewing and deepening the understanding and application of the
23 SDA philosophy of education.

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III. THE SECULARIZATION OF CHURCH-RELATED
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

With the help of books authored by Robert Benne (2001), James T. Burtchaell (1998), and George M. Marsden (1994), chapter III traces the gradual process of secularization that has affected, in the U.S.A., numerous Protestant and Roman Catholic colleges and universities. The most significant factors are:

1. **Increasing number of students from other denominations** due to (a) government requirement to accept qualified students from any denomination, as a condition to authorize the operation of the institution, (b) being the only college in a town/region, (c) declining enrollment of students of the sponsoring church/denomination, and other reasons.

2. **Diminishing emphasis on education for ministry (clergy)** due to increasing interest in new professions designed to serve an emerging industrial technological society. In time, separate “divinity schools” and seminaries were established for the preparation of the clergy. No religion courses were required for students in other professions. A lecture series on moral philosophy became popular in a number of schools for a while.

3. **Gradual disappearance of other expressions of the initial religious vision**, that included: required attendance to weekly/daily chapels and to Sunday religious services, emphasis on conversion of students (no drinking, no smoking, no swearing), revivals, annual days of prayer, mission and evangelism, all part of a shift towards a liberal, secularized Protestantism.

4. **Growing percentage of faculty from other religious backgrounds**, interested more and more in their own academic disciplines and less and less in inspiring students to be pious, leading to the concept that the college should be as pluralistic inside as the society outside.

5. **Increasing number of members of the board of trustees not connected to the sponsoring church/denomination**, combined with the fact that the board itself had often the power to amend the charter and limit the influence of the sponsoring entity.

6. **Diminishing financial contributions** to the institutional budget by the founding denomination, together with the increasing availability of endowments, and of foundation and government funds for non-sectarian schools.

7. **Visionary presidents**, normally attractive and trusted, yet feeling somehow “confined, stifled, or trivialized by their church or denomination,” who wanted to transform their colleges, in harmony with the times, into prestigious universities.

Robert Benne has developed a 4-type continuum of church-related colleges: **orthodox, critical mass, intentionally pluralist, and accidentally pluralist**. He uses a list of nine characteristics to compare the four types (page 49). The nine characteristics of his **orthodox type** appear to correspond quite well [yet not 100%] to the characteristics of almost all SDA institutions of higher education until about thirty years ago:

- + Pervasive, publicly relevant, Christian vision
- + Unabashed invitation for fellow believers to an intentionally Christian enterprise
- + Near 100% of membership requirement [leadership and faculty]
- + Large religion/theology department, with theology privileged
- + Religion/theology required courses, and all courses affected by religious perspective
- + Chapel required in large church at a protected time daily
- + Overt piety of sponsoring tradition
- + Indispensable financial support by church and majority of students from sponsoring tradition
- + Owned and governed by church or its official representatives.

A **critical mass** school requires only two or three religion courses, chapel attendance is voluntary, at least 50% of students and faculty, and only a majority of the board are from the sponsoring tradition. The **intentionally pluralist** institution defines itself as a liberal arts school with a Christian heritage, requires only one religion course, has only a small minority of students and a minority of board members from the tradition. The **accidentally pluralist** school considers itself secular with possible allusions to its Christian heritage, receives token indirect support and few students (numbers no longer recorded) from the church. During the last three stages (types) the college/university becomes autonomously owned and governed.

Benne explains that “in reality schools are frequently mixtures of the various types even though they might most resemble one” (page 48). How far along the orthodox-secular continuum are SDA colleges and universities?

IV. STUDENTS

Opening **student enrollments** in SDA institutions of higher learning went from 42,562 in 1990 to 66,393 in 2000, an increase of 56%. At this rate, it is possible to project an enrollment of more than 103,500 students by the year 2010.

The **non-SDA student enrollment** in SDA institutions went from less than 18% (1990) to nearly 32% (2000), with a projected increase to more than 45% by 2010. Two Divisions (AID and NSD) had more than 50% of non-SDA enrollment in 2000. At least 21 SDA schools have fewer than 50% of Adventist students. On SDA enrollment, for these schools, we have already gone beyond the “orthodox” and “critical mass” stages in Benne’s orthodox-secular continuum.

Worldwide, there are about four SDA students enrolled in an SDA college/university for every 1,000 church members. On the other hand, **only about 25% of the potential SDA college/university students are studying in SDA schools**. The other 75% attend other schools. Why have SDA colleges not been successful in attracting more, including more of the graduates of SDA secondary schools? Does the church have a direct responsibility for the large numbers of college/university SDA students that are not enrolled in SDA schools?

According to the SWOT analyses and the rating of institutions done by the schools and by the Division consultations, the increasing ratio of non-SDA students is impacting some schools unfavorably. While this presents opportunities for evangelizing non-SDA students, **the spiritual climate on many campuses is declining** as a result of this shift in the make-up of the student bodies. On the other hand, the cost of tuition and fees is making it difficult for many students to attend SDA tertiary schools. In addition, recruitment and job placement of students after graduation, and follow-up of alumni are weak in many institutions.

V. FACULTY

There were 3,407 faculty members in SDA institutions of higher learning in 1990, and 5,676 in 2000 (an increase of 66.6%). At this rate, the projected total for the year 2010 is 9,456.

In 1990, slightly fewer than 4% of the faculty members in SDA tertiary level schools were non-SDA. By 2000, this had quadrupled to more than 16%. If the trend continues, by 2010 about 28% of the faculty members will be non-SDA. **In 2000, nearly 53% of the tertiary institutions (51 of 97) had more than 5% of non-SDA faculties. Of these schools, 33 had more than 15% non-SDA. And of these 33, seven had more than 50% non-SDA.** Of the 97 institutions for which data were available, 33 fell below the critical-mass type on the orthodox-secular continuum. On the other hand, 36 institutions had no non-SDA faculty members in 2000.

The study of the potential correlation between the percentages of non-SDA students and of non-SDA faculty in SDA institutions has shown that **institutions with higher percentages of non-SDA students enrolled tend to have higher percentages of non-SDA faculty members.** (The short and long term spiritual impact of non-SDA faculty needs to be carefully considered.)

SWOT analyses and rating of institutions indicate the existing concern for the **lack of sufficient qualified SDA teachers** in many areas. With new institutions being started and the likelihood that student enrollments will continue to increase through the current decade, which will require additional faculty, this lack will probably become even more acute. **Low salaries** for faculty members in some areas are making it **difficult to recruit and retain** well-prepared teachers.

Some SDA schools do not have or do not implement **effective grievance procedures, initiation procedures for new faculty** and, to a somewhat lesser extent, a **clear process for promotion in academic rank.**

VI. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Church appropriations for higher education. On average (1996-2000), the General Conference contributed nearly one-fourth of its annual tithe income equivalent for higher education; Divisions appropriated slightly more than 19%; Unions appropriated about 16%;

and local fields contributed less than 3% of their title income equivalent for this purpose.

Appropriations per SDA tertiary student (yearly average for 1996-2000):

a. General Conference (GC institutions only):	\$2,897.20
b. Divisions:	\$511.58
c. Unions:	\$462.19
d. Local Fields:	\$1,524.85

Minister's salary and benefit equivalents per SDA student (given in appropriations by Unions) ranged from 0.01 to 3.45, with a median (middle) of about one-third (0.35).

Operating gain/loss of tertiary level institutions. About one-fourth of the institutions that returned data had experienced, on average, an operating loss during the five-year period 1996-2000. About one-fifth had operating gains without appropriations. About two-fifths had operating gains after adding sponsoring organization appropriations.

Components of institutional income (world averages):

a. Tuition:	48.84%
b. Service income (cafeteria, farm, industries, store, dormitories, etc.):	21.35%
c. Church appropriations:	11.38%
d. Government subsidies:	5.26%
e. Fundraising :	2.75%
f. Endowments:	1.27%
f. Other:	9.74%

For more than one-third of the institutions for which data were available (24 of 63), Church appropriations accounted for less than 10% of their operating income; half of these (12 institutions) derived less than 5% of their operating income from Church sources. Clearly these **24 institutions could not be considered financially dependent upon their sponsoring organization** and could not be classified as either "orthodox" or "critical-mass" institutions in this regard.

Per student costs for tuition and fees, board, and room for one school year (2 semesters) calculated as number of local minister's monthly salaries and benefits:

a. For undergraduate institutions:	were from 0.50 to 15.65; median of 3.16
b. For graduate institutions:	were from 1.11 to 9:00; median of 2.92.

Relationship between non-SDA student enrollments and operating appropriations.

Increasing the percentage of non-SDA student enrollment neither significantly reduces an institution's dependence on church appropriations nor significantly increases the percentage of its operating income from tuition and fees. Thus, increasing non-SDA student enrollment in order to improve financial viability does not seem to be working for many institutions.

Other financial concerns:

- a. “Weak or fragile financial situation” due to “inadequate funding sources” is the most frequently mentioned weakness/threat in SWOT analyses and the rating of institutions done both by institutions and by participants in Division consultations.
- b. While some Divisions, Unions, and local fields spend little for higher education in their territories, others spend a very large percentage of their tithing income equivalents for their higher educational institutions. This may hamper their ability to finance effectively other areas of the Church’s work in their territories.
- c. While Church appropriations accounted for only about 11% of all institutional operating income, nearly one-fifth of the institutions were heavily dependent on such funding.
- d. Government subsidies. More than one-tenth of the institutions received 10% or more of their operating income from government sources. In a few cases, government subsidies covered a larger percentage of the operating budget than Church subsidies. Such funding frequently implies, either explicitly or implicitly, some measure of government control.
- e. Need of developing balanced guidelines on the financial involvement of church organizations with SDA institutions of higher education.

Thus far, we have examined three indices (students, faculty, finances) that can help us locate SDA educational institutions on the orthodox-secular continuum proposed by Benne. While departure from the “orthodox” or “critical-mass” position on one of these indices might not by itself be cause for concern, departure from this position on two or all three indices should indicate the direction an institution seems to be heading on this continuum. **Eighteen SDA institutions fall below the “critical-mass” category on two of the three indices, and seven more fall below this category on all three indices.**

VII. INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

Institutions. In 1990 there were 76 SDA institutions of higher learning, worldwide. The number increased to 94 by 2000 (almost 24%). The projection is that by 2010 there will be about 116 institutions.

Competing programs. Only a few institutions (mostly from one world Division) expressed some concern about potentially competing programs offered by other SDA institution(s) in the same Division. (Institutions in several Divisions indicated that they saw themselves competing for students with public or private universities in their respective areas.)

However, as SDA demographics continue to change rapidly, as institutions of higher learning multiply and grow in size (and programs) in all Divisions, and as more institutions offer programs by extension in their own Division territories and outside of them, the concern could spread.

Programs to add. A comparatively long list of planned/desired new programs has been suggested by the institutions and by participants in the Division consultations.

Programs to discontinue. Participants in the Division consultations mentioned several programs to be discontinued, more in number than the list supplied earlier by the institutions of higher learning. Are church leaders more ready to discontinue existing programs than institutional leaders? Reasons given at the Division consultations included: not enough faculty, not enough students, equivalent programs are offered in other SDA colleges not too far away, most students are not SDA, not cost effective, the church does not need it.

Conditions for the establishment of new institutions or programs. A list of ten items of information needed by the church before acting on a request to establish a new institution or to start a new program was rated by participants in the Division consultations (Form G). These ten items do not cover all conditions; they highlight the denominational character of the projected institution/program and the financial responsibility assumed. The mean world scores for the ten items range from 4.08 to 4.48 points, all in the upper half of the “Agree” range.

VIII. GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

Preamble. How can the SDA Church help one of its institutions that appears to be drifting away from the purpose for which it was established? Should the institution be left to its own devices? Should the institutional board have the final word? What role does the executive committee of the sponsoring/founding organization (Union, Division, General Conference) have in the process? This leads to a consideration of issues of governance and compliance.

The SDA system of education has always been closely attached to the church organizational system. Participants in the Division consultations considered that the system is not yet fully developed (3.38 points out of 5.0), and that it should be developed (4.06), refined and strengthened (4.35).

The role of the Department of Education was also examined at the Division consultations, in search of ways of strengthening it. No clear consensus emerged on what should be done.

The role of the sponsoring organization was considered at the consultations. There was basic agreement (4.02 out of 5.0) that the sponsoring organization normally assumes ultimate responsibility for the operation of the new institution, and that the board of trustees

cannot assume the ultimate responsibility for the financial operation of the institution (3.64).

The role of the General Conference was well accepted (Division consultations) in giving final denominational approval for the establishment of new institutions (4.04 out of 5.0) and for the approval of additional programs requested by existing institutions (4.31), for the denominational accreditation of institutions (**AAA**, 4.51), and as the final instance for the resolution of issues of non-compliance that could lead to suspension of accreditation (4.31).

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION (2004)

Recommendations to be submitted to the 2003 Annual Council for approval, for implementation beginning 2004.

1. Strengthening the Understanding of the Adventist Philosophy of Education

Many Adventist faculty in SDA institutions are not graduates of SDA schools, and thus have not been adequately exposed to the Adventist heritage nor to the Adventist philosophy of education that they are expected to model to their students. Therefore, it is **recommended** to provide graduate level courses on SDA history, theology and lifestyle; SDA philosophy of education (in the context of the mission of the church and the SDA worldview); and E.G.White ministry and writings, for all faculty in SDA colleges/universities who have not been already taken equivalent courses before.

The clarity and strength of the SDA philosophy of education in each SDA institution will also depend on the understanding and conviction of the leaders of the sponsoring organization, the members of the institutional board, and the school administration. Therefore, it is **recommended** that a special yearly retreat be planned by the board chair, in consultation with the institutional president, for the board members, centered each time on one of the crucial elements of the SDA philosophy of education.

In addition, it is **recommended** that a course in Adventist Philosophy of Education be required for all students majoring in Religion/Theology/Ministry, and in Education, and be also available for students taking other majors offered in SDA colleges/universities, worldwide.

2. Involving All Faculty in the Integration of Faith, Learning and Life

Recommended, that each Division Director of Education, in consultation with the General Conference Department of Education, take the initiative to offer in the next two years one or more seminars on Integration of Faith and Learning specifically planned to help prepare two or more outstanding teachers from each college/university within each Division as future seminar

leaders and resource persons in their respective institutions.

1 Recommended, that with the strong support of the institutional board chair, and under the
2 guidance of the chief academic officer, each SDA college/university administration select two or
3 more outstanding teachers that would receive the preparation to offer the integration of faith and
4 learning seminars and would also guide the faculty in the yearly scheduling of special
5 lectures/discussions and undertaking writing projects that will enable the faculty to help their
6 students see how their different specialties/disciplines connect with their view of God, the
7 Scriptures, and the mission of the church.
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10 **3. Duplication of Programs**

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12 There is, already, some duplication of programs. As institutions multiply and more
13 programs are offered in all Divisions, the potential for duplication is increasing. The best way to
14 prevent duplication is to follow the established denominational procedure for authorization of
15 new programs. A two-step approach is suggested for instances in which duplication exists:
16

17 If two institutions within a Division territory are involved, the Director of Education of
18 the Division will call a meeting with equal number of representatives of each institution to
19 try to solve the problem. If unsuccessful, the issue will be referred to the Division
20 Commission on Education (or Division Board of Higher Education), for resolution.
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22 If the duplication issue involves a General Conference-sponsored institution, or
23 institutions of neighboring Divisions, or institutions that offer extension programs outside
24 their Division base, the General Conference Director of Education or his/her designee
25 will meet with the institutional representatives to attempt a resolution. If unsuccessful,
26 the issue will be referred to the General Conference IBE/IBMTE (and AAA, if
27 necessary), for resolution.
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31 **X. ISSUES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

32 **AND IMPLEMENTATION (2005)**

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34 It is suggested that CHE subcommittees give further study to the following issues and
35 bring recommendations by early 2004 for CHE approval and referral to the 2004 Spring Council,
36 for implementation beginning 2005. The full Report contains additional information to facilitate
37 the work of the subcommittees.
38

39 **1. Growing Percentage of non-SDA Students and**

40 **Faculty in SDA Institutions (cf. IV and V, above)**

41
42 How do we explain the dramatic increase in the percentage of non-SDA students and

1 teachers in a number of SDA institutions of higher education? What are the effects of that
2 increase on the SDA identity/atmosphere of SDA schools? What can we learn from the SDA
3 institutions that have been more directly affected by the recent trends? What parameters should
4 be used to define an Adventist school?
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6 The CHE subcommittee that will examine student and faculty issues will need to
7 undertake a survey/study of the institutions that have been more affected. A number of
8 suggested elements have been listed in the full *Report* to facilitate that study. In addition,
9 pertinent information on E. G. White views on non-SDA students and on SDA teachers in SDA
10 colleges is included.
11

12 It was clear for Ellen G. White that what distinguished SDA institutions of higher
13 learning from the institutions of the world was the SDA message, mission, and lifestyle. Some
14 non-SDA students could be admitted if they were willing to study under SDA influence. But for
15 the SDA schools to be of spiritual help to SDA and non-SDA students, it was necessary that all
16 teachers be fully identified with the SDA Church. A preliminary guideline in harmony with this
17 position has been already approved by the CHE Committee.
18

19 **2. Financing SDA Higher Education**

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21 It is a known reality for church-related colleges/universities that, as the church financial
22 support diminishes, the risk of the institution drifting away from the influence of the church
23 increases, as other sources of funding are discovered and exert their own influence.
24

25 The data gathered (1996-2000) suggest a great disparity in the way in which different
26 SDA sponsoring church organizations face their responsibility in higher education (see VI,
27 above). Great disparity is also seen between institutions on the cost of higher education for SDA
28 students, when compared with the value of the ordained minister's salary of the area where each
29 school is located.
30

31 The CHE subcommittee on finances is asked to review all the available data, obtain
32 additional information as needed, and recommend to CHE by early 2004 a workable and fair
33 system of denominational support for SDA institutions of higher education. Guidelines are also
34 requested on other specific financial issues (such as cost to SDA/non-SDA students, government
35 funding, and strengthening institutional Development/Trust departments).
36

37 **3. Guiding SDA Students in Non-SDA 38 Tertiary Level Schools**

39 How should the SDA Church relate to three fourths of its college-age youth that are
40 studying in non-SDA schools? They are a significant percentage of the membership. A number
41 of them will, eventually, be employed by the church, even as teachers in SDA institutions. Does
42 the church have any responsibility for their spiritual growth while they study?
43

1 The CHE subcommittee assigned to this issue will need to first gather information on
2 what the church is currently doing for and with these students around the world. One source of
3 information is the General Conference AMiCUS Committee. See also *General Conference*
4 *Working Policy* FA 15, FE 95, and FY 25, about public campus ministry. Some suggestions are
5 given on other areas to explore. Guidelines/recommendations will be expected by early 2004.
6

7 **4. Establishing New Institutions, Starting New Programs,** 8 **Compliance and the Roles of IBE/IBMTE and AAA** 9

10 Without the benefit of a coordinated world-wide plan, the recent rapid growth in the
11 number of institutions and the multiplication of programs that these institutions offer
12 (particularly the ones that have reached recognized university status) increase the potential risk
13 of overlap/competition for SDA students, faculty and financial resources.
14

15 The CHE subcommittee on new institutions, new programs, and the roles of IBE/IBMTE
16 and AAA may need to consider the urgency of : (1) requesting the development of well-
17 coordinated educational strategic plans at the institutional, Division, and General Conference
18 levels; (2) updating/refining existing conditions for the establishment of new institutions and
19 programs; and (3) strengthening the role of IBE/IBMTE and AAA. The Commission's findings
20 make it apparent that the role and function of the AAA needs to be more clearly defined,
21 functionally strengthened, and organizationally supported in order to accomplish the important
22 objectives for which the world church established the AAA.
23

24 **5. Compliance with Recommendations and Policies** 25

26 What should be done when a new institution is established, when a new program is
27 established that will impact across organizational boundaries, when duplication of programs
28 compete for faculty and students, or when institutions do not follow recommendations of the
29 IBE, IBMTE, or AAA? How does one deal with situations when policy exists, yet
30 administration does not choose to follow it? How should one deal with an institution whose
31 focus and mission has changed, yet the local administration has chosen not to deal with this
32 issue? How should the future role of the education department be defined?
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36 **6. "Conflict of Faith"** 37

38 Where there is a "conflict of faith" among teachers and/or employees, or where
39 intellectual and moral integrity is in question (i.e., a worker is clearly and avowedly not in
40 accord with the beliefs and/or practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church), that a review
41 process be established to help resolve this conflict or discrepancy, with an eye toward
42 reclamation of the individual.
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