

# Elder's Induction Course

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Ministerial, Elders and Diaconate Ministries

British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts WD25 9JZ

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Dear Elder,

Welcome to your new and noble role as one of the overseers or elders of God's family.

The enclosed material has been put together to help equip you for service to the flock over which you share the responsibility of leadership. It is by no means exhaustive but rather an easy guide and introduction to the skills and knowledge that an elder needs to operate effectively.

The material covers seven areas as follows:

1. Preaching
2. Governance and Procedures
3. Church History
4. Visitation Skills
5. Transformational Character
6. Core Theology
7. Keeping the Church Family Safe

It would be best if you went through the material with your pastor or another experienced elder and in the case of the 'Visiting Skills' module, with a team of people who will also be visiting the members and visitors. Some of the material is very practical and some more informative. Much more could have been included in the course but it is our hope that the material will whet your appetite for more learning and courses that will help you progress in excellence in the ministry of being an elder.

The last page of this material will provide you with links and ideas for resources.

May the Good Shepherd bless you as an under-shepherd.

*Llewellyn Edwards*

BUC Ministerial, Elders and Diaconate department of the British Union Conference  
January 2016

We are indebted to a number of individuals whose materials have contributed to the content of this course – among them are Pastor Patrick Boyle, Mr Godwin Benjamin and Pastor Cyril Sweeney.



# Elder's Preaching Course

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Work through the A to J sections below. Respond to the exercises after each section and then sit down with your pastor, mentor, or another experienced preacher and discuss your answers.

## **A) CONSIDER THE CONGREGATION**

1. How are they made up? Old, young, male, single, married? White, black Romanian, Nigerian, etc.
2. What do they expect when they come to church?
3. What do they need?
4. What do they see? Preacher? Church?
5. What are some things which might have a negative effect upon them?
6. What things might have a positive influence?
7. What are some things we should consider to do well? [For instance – Smile, warm handshakes, appearance, etc]

*Exercise: The next time you are at your church answer the above questions and share your observations with your mentor.*

## **B) PREACHING TO YOUTH**

They are looking for answers and direction in life. Sex, Lifework, Creation and Evolution. Morals - right and wrong. Origins – relationship – identity.

They are often badly served by preachers in these areas. They need a cause to belong to and which challenges and inspires them. They need a personal God who is their Creator, delights in them, and counts them as His son or daughter.

*Exercise: Make a list of how the beliefs of the Adventist Church address the above issues. Talk them over with your mentor or the Church Youth Leader.*

## **C) GENERAL HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PREACHING**

1. Talking about yourself. Your latest holiday, aches, pains etc.
2. Beginning with apologies. You have been rushed. You have been asked to preach at the last minute.
3. A long introduction to your subject

4. General comments about the weather, the music, the special guests, the church announcements etc
5. Excessive piety. Long prayers before you begin.
6. Telling the congregation you have four or seven points in your sermon. If you are boring after point two the tego [their eyes glaze over] factor kicks in and you have lost the congregation.
7. Hobby horses. Your special subject using Ellen White quotes to support your view.
8. Beginning with a quotation.
9. Excessive humour.
10. Same sermon in a different dress.
11. Poor vocal communication. Speaking too fast, too slow, stumbling over words, poor pronunciations. See the speech exercises below [Section K].
12. Criticism, bigotry.
13. Your deportment in the pulpit. Dress, bare feet etc. Don't call attention to yourself. You are there to uplift Christ.
14. Disorganization. See that the music, mikes, lights, Power Points are ready for use before you go onto the pulpit.
15. Lack of study and preparation.
16. Do not let others read the Scripture unless they are well prepared. Poorly read Scriptures mean it isn't important.
17. Give people time to find the text.
18. Pray short not long, boring prayers.

*Exercise: Talk the list through with your pastor.*

#### **D) WHEN PEOPLE ARE OPEN TO CHANGE**

It is recognized that there are five situations in a person's life when they are most likely to be open to God.

1. In early youth
2. In old age
3. In a time of transition and trouble
4. Through friendship
5. Hearing the Gospel preached

Are there any persons in the Bible whom you can identify who might fit into these categories?

Example: In trouble - The Prodigal Son.

*Exercise: Make a list of Bible passages that speak to these five situations and explain how they do that to your mentor.*

#### **E) WHAT PREACHING IS NOT**

1. It is not standing in the pulpit and talking.
2. It is not a lecture.
3. It is not a person standing in the pulpit and telling people their personal beliefs. Even if it is shouted at them.
4. It is not information transfer, passing information from one person to another.
5. It is not lecturing people and telling them what they should believe or how they should behave.
6. It is not a person standing in the pulpit and displaying their learning or ignorance.
7. It is not a power point presentation as a substitute for preaching.
8. It is not a talk interspersed by slides or video clips.
9. It is not a series of stories strung together which entertain a congregation.
10. It is not repeating pointlessly Scripture passages without exposition.

*Exercise: Explain why these are not preaching to someone else.*

If we can say what preaching is not, can we attempt to say what it is?

#### **F) WHAT IS PREACHING?**

**It is an experience**

Involving:   The Preacher  
                  The Congregation  
                  The Divine  
                  The Demonic

Its purpose is to:

Encourage and persuade the Mind and Heart of man  
To unite with the Heart and Mind of God into a saving fellowship

*Exercise: Talk this section through with your pastor or mentor.*

#### **G) SERMON STRUCTURE**

**A Sermon Is Like A Fish**

It has a head  
It has a body  
It has a tail

It is vital that the **Head** - the Introduction, and the **Tail** - the Conclusion, are in proper **proportion**, that is not too far apart.

The **Body** must not be too fat, too thin, too long, too bloated, but full with nourishing food, that is the gospel.

Exercise: Discuss this with your pastor or mentor.

## H) PUTTING THE SERMON TOGETHER

The most difficult part of preaching is knowing clearly what you want to say to the congregation or what you want them to know, believe or do. Exactly what is your message?

If you cannot write it down in a sentence or two, then you do not know clearly what you want to say. Ask your sermon what is its SNDT [Single Narrow Dominant Theme]? If you cannot work out what it is neither will your listeners!

When you know your aim the next step is first to gather and then organise your material.

1. Use the following basic resources:
  - a. Have a number of versions – NKJV, NIV, TEV, NRSV, The Message.
  - b. The “Conflict of the Ages” series, “Christ’s Object Lessons”, “Steps To Christ” by Ellen White
  - c. Talk to your pastor or mentor about how to find good commentaries.
2. Read the passage or text over and over in as many different versions as you can find? Always have at least two Bibles to hand when you are studying.
3. Write down everything you know or think the text or passage is saying. Remember the before and after rule, what is the context? Also look at the marginal references. They may direct you to material in a parallel passage or to the Old Testament if you are preaching from the New Testament.
4. Go to the commentaries for further information. Only do this when you have exhausted your study of the text or passage.
5. Look up any reference from Ellen White that might be helpful.



Organising your material.

1. Hopefully you will have more information than you need. In organising your information it helps if you can break it up into two or three units. Three is usually the most helpful.
2. Try to make each unit of equal length and time.  
**Example** a 30 minute sermon could be broken up as follows.  
**Introduction** 2 minutes - no longer  
Section 1 - 8 minutes  
Section 2 - 8 minutes  
Section 3 - 8 minutes  
Conclusion 2 to 3 minutes  
Total Time 30 minutes
3. Now look for your introduction and conclusion.

**Remember** the structure is important but it only serves to make your sermon presentation more effective. Sermons without structure tend to wander and the congregation do likewise.

*Exercise:* Take a sermon you have given or are preparing and write down its **SNDT**. Talk to your pastor or mentor about how to discover good commentaries.

#### I) **PASSAGES FOR PREACHERS TO MEDITATE UPON**

1. 2 Corinthians 4:6 We preach not ourselves.
2. Acts 4:12 Only one Saviour. Only one way to God John 13:6. Only one foundation 1 Corinthians 3:11
3. 2 Timothy 2:15 Study to show yourself **approved** unto God, a **workman** that needeth not to be **ashamed**, rightly **dividing** the Word of truth.
4. 1 Timothy 5:12-16 **Note** verse 13 "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.
5. 2 Timothy 24 "The **servant** of the Lord must not **strive**, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."
6. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 The ordination charge to ministers note verse 2 **"Preach the word."**
7. Read 'Gospel Workers' for Ellen White's guidance to preachers.

[Note: If you have access to lexicons, dictionaries or Word studies look at the words in **bold** above, they all tell an interesting story.]

*Exercise: Jot down what these passages said to you then share the thoughts with your mentor or pastor.*

## **J) PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATION YOUR SERMONS AND SETTING REVIEW GOALS**

1. They should be **RELEVANT** - If they are not or of low value, don't pursue them.
2. They should be **ACHIEVABLE** - If they are beyond available resources or abilities, they will not be achieved. Ignore them.
3. They should be **SPECIFIC** - If they are not it will be difficult if not impossible to evaluate them.
4. They should be **MEASURABLE** - that is they can be quantifiable.
5. They should be set within a **TIME FRAME** This period of time to be clearly defined.

In the final analysis we are required to evaluate what we do and see if we have achieved what we set out to do, or if we have failed and what are the lessons to be learned?

*Exercise: After your next sermon evaluate and discuss with your mentor or pastor how your sermon preparation and final presentation fulfilled these principles.*

## **K) EXERCISES BEFORE PREACHING**

These help to make lips, facial muscles and tongue more flexible which aid clarity of speech.

1. Thirty thousand Thracian thieves threatened Thessaly.
2. Strange strategic statistics were propounded by a strange statistical statistician.
3. The Thatcher thrust three thieves through the throat.
4. Betty Batter bit a better bit of bitter butter. If Betty Batter bit a better bit of bitter butter where's the better bit of bitter butter Betty Batter bit?
5. Fry fake food for Freddie Ferguson.

6. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper where's the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked?
7. Lanky Lilly Lallingham lolled languidly.
8. Three thieves threw thistle sticks at Thelma.
9. Mona made Mary make muffins.
10. Wayward Walter waged war against Willie.
11. The weakest goes soonest to the wall.

**Practice reading aloud. Poems, passages from the Bible or paragraphs from the newspaper.**

*Exercise: Memorise at least three of these to practise just before you go out to the pulpit to preach. Teach your mentor or pastor to say them!*

SIGN OFF

I can verify that .....  
has completed the above sections satisfactorily, as part of her or his  
development as an Elder.

Mentor/Pastor:.....

Date of completion:.....



# Governance and Procedures Part 1

## Elders and Church Organisation

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### **Introduction**

This section of this training manual seeks to inform elders of the procedures and processes of the governing principles and applications thereof within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Elder should have in his possession such manuals as:

- The Church Manual
- The Elders Handbook

The Elder should also be aware that there are other manuals and resources that may be very helpful to them.

- The BUC Minister's Handbook [Very helpful should the Elder need to take any services normally taken by the minister]
- The Deacon's and Deaconess's Handbook
- Official statistics and Statements

All of the above can be seen or purchased from the Adventist Book Center and the Statistics and Statements can be viewed as well as The Church Manual that can be downloaded from the GC website - <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/>

Everything that is given in the papers that follow are in fuller form in the various manuals [particularly the Church Manual] but are given here as part of this Elders training as a general and shortened overview of the essentials that elders should be cognisant of.



# Governance and Procedures Part 2

## The Church and its Organisation

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### **Purpose of the Church**

The church is God's idea:

The church is a divine plan.

God works in an organized way.

The church was founded by Christ.

“People who want to be part of God's plan, but not part of an organization, do not understand how God works.”

### **What is the Church?**

Bible images to represent the church:

A holy nation.

A covenant people.

The body of Christ.

The family of God.

“The church is not a museum, but a living workshop.”

A household of faith.

The bride of Christ.

A royal priesthood.

“Every church member, in receiving the Holy Spirit, receives a spiritual gift to be used in soul winning ministry.”

### **Bible Models:**

Israel model: The 12 tribes and theocratic nation.

Body model: The body of Christ and its members.

New Testament model: Eklesia.

### **The Seventh-day Adventist organisation:**

Prophetic Origin: Revelation 12:17 and 14:12

Prophetic Message: Revelation 14:9-11

Great Commission: Matthew 28:19, 20

### **Four forms of church Government:**

1. Episcopal /Papal -Strong hierarchy of ordained Clergy above the local congregation.
2. Presbyterian –A series of church courts with emphasis upon the local presbytery.
3. Congregational-Emphasis upon the local congregation and democracy.
4. Representative –Emphasis upon the autonomy of the individual as led by the Spirit

#### Episcopal/Papal:

Government of the church by bishops.

Believe that Christ invested authority and government of the church directly & exclusively to bishops as successors of the apostles(apostolic succession)

The supreme bishop is the bishop of Rome: the Pope.

#### Presbyterian:

Consists in rulership by elders as representatives of the church.

Authority is exercised by a series of representative bodies.

Christ's authority is seen as bestowed on individual believers who delegate it to elders who represent them and exercise authority on their behalf locally and at governing assemblies.

#### Congregational:



The system of church government that stresses the role of the individual Christian and the local congregation, the seat of authority

Autonomy and independence of the local congregation emphasised –no upper tier.

Christ alone is head.

### Representative:

Christ is the head of the Church and the source of authority in all things (Eph. 1:22-23)

And he put all things under His feet, and gave Him to behead over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Eph. 1: 22-23 (NKJV)

Christ exercises His authority through Elders but does not abdicate his power to them. Theirs is a delegated or derived authority.

Leaders called by God and chosen by the congregation are set aside to fulfil the worldwide mission of the church

Authority rests with church members. Planning and coordination is delegated to other administrative levels, reviewed at periodic “sessions.”

The form of church government which recognizes that authority in the church rests in the church membership, with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the church. This form of church government recognizes also the equality of the ordination of the entire ministry. The representative form of church government is that which prevails in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (Church Manual p28-29)

## **World Church Structure & Governance**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organised with a representative form of church government in that it reflects a democratic process of formation and election.

Authority in the Church comes from the membership of local churches.

Executive responsibility is given to representative bodies and officers to govern the Church.

Four levels of Church structure lead from the individual believer to the worldwide Church organisation.

## **Levels of Seventh-day Adventist church organisation:**

1. Local Congregations: Includes organised churches and companies.
2. Local Field: Refers to Conference or Mission.
3. Union: Serves Conferences and Mission.
4. General Conference: The 13 Division world field(Regional Representatives)

### Local Congregation

Local church (e.g. Croydon or South Shields) is made up of individual believers. The local church is the foundation level of the organisational structure and is the public face of the denomination. Every baptised Adventist is a member of a local church and has voting powers within that church. Local churches-elect their own officers and church boards by majority voting.

### Local Field –Conference/Mission

Directly above the local church is the "local conference". Local conference (eg South England Conference [SEC]), or local field/mission (Irish Mission [IM]). The conference or mission is made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory. It appoints ministers, owns churches & church land through SDAA Ltd and organises the distribution of tithes and payments to ministers.

Conferences-Churches elect delegates to the conferences which meet "in session" every four or five years.

### Union

The Union Conference or union field/mission is made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country).

The British Union Conference (BUC) is made up of:

- South England Conference
- North England Conference
- Welsh Mission
- Irish Mission

## Scottish Mission

### General Conference

The General Conference is the highest earthly authority for the Church and has regional representatives through 13 “Divisions”, each assigned to various geographic locations. E.g. Trans European Division (TED)

Unions, Division & the GC operate Union sessions (usually 4-5 years) and General Conference sessions, at which times officers and committees are elected, reports given and policies decided.

Executive authority between sessions is exercised by the Conference Executive Committee and the executive officers (normally President, Secretary and Treasurer), all of whom are elected at the session.

During the interim between GC sessions, the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop.

When differences arise in or between organizations and institutions, appeal to the next higher organization is proper until it reaches the General Conference in session eg Ordination of women.

### **Institutions**

Within the four organisational levels the Church can operate various institutions:

Educational

Health-care

Publishing

Media (radio, print, television, web, satellite) and other institutions

All find their organisational unity in the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists in which they have representation.

### **Why Have A Church Manual?**

God is a God of order as evidenced in His works of creation and redemption. Consequently, order belongs to the essence of His church.

Order is achieved through principles and regulations that guide the Church in its internal operations and in the fulfilment of its mission to the world.

In order for it to be a successful ecclesiastical organisation at the service of the Lord and humanity, it needs order, rule and discipline. Scripture affirms that “all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40)

Ellen G. White pointed out such needs in 1875: “The church of Christ is in constant peril. Satan is seeking to destroy the people the people of God and one man’s mind. One man’s judgement is not sufficient to be trusted. Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline and all subjects one to another, esteeming others better than themselves”.

Church leaders did not quickly produce a book of rules for Church governance, even though the General Conference (GC) met annually in session during the Church’s early years and delegates voted on matters of church order and life. Finally, in 1882, the GC in session voted to have prepared “instructions to church officers, to be printed in Review and Herald or in tract form.” (RH, Dec 26 1882).

This revealed the growing realisation that order was imperative if organisation was to function effectively and that uniformity in order required its guiding principles to be put into printed form. However, when the proposal to place the article in permanent form as a Church manual came before the 1883 General Conference session, delegates rejected the idea. They feared a manual might formalise the Church and take from its pastors their individual freedom to deal with matters of order as they desired.

This fear doubtless reflecting the opposition that had existed 20 years before to any kind of organisation evidently soon lessened. The annual GC sessions continued to take actions on matters of order. Though the Church officially declined to adopt a manual, leaders from time to time gathered together in book or booklet form the generally accepted rules of church life. Perhaps the most impressive was a 184 page book published in 1907 by pioneer J N Loughborough entitled “The Church, Its Organisation, Order & Discipline”, which dealt with many of the topics now covered by today’s Church Manual.

As the Church worldwide grew rapidly in the early twentieth century, it increasingly recognised the need for a manual for worldwide use by its pastors and lay members. In 1931 the GC committee voted to publish a church manual. J L McElhany, later president of the GC, prepared the manuscript, which was published in 1932.

The opening sentence of the preface of that first edition observed that “it has become increasingly evident that a manual on church government is needed to set forth and preserve our denominational practices and polity.”

This was no attempt to suddenly create and impose upon the Church a whole pattern of church governance. Rather it was an endeavour first to preserve all the good actions taken through the years and then to add rules required by the Church’s increasing.

### **Functions of the Church Manual**

The current Church Manual existed in its present format since 1932. Revised 2010 –18th Edition

It describes operation and functions of local churches.

It describes their relationship to denominational structures in which they have membership.

It expresses the church’s understanding of Christian living, Church Governance and Discipline based on biblical principles and the authority of a duly assembled General Conference session.

*Many of the problems ministers have in their local churches stem from ignoring the Church Manual for their own.*

"God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority."

(Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 261)



# Governance and Procedures Part 3

## Church Elections

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### **Before the Elections**

The annual planning should be finished.

Plans for the upcoming year finalized and voted by the church.

In view of the responsibilities of church officers and the character of the work required of them, the electing of church officers is an important work.

Officers are elected every one or two years (CM p71)

The normal term of office for officers is one year.

Can be two years where members in a business meeting votes to have elections every two years.

Two years to facilitate continuity and development of spiritual gifts and eliminate the work involved in having yearly elections.

While it is NOT advisable for one person to serve indefinitely in a particular position, officers can be re-elected.

### **The Nominating Committee**

ALL officers are elected through an appointed nominating committee. This committee brings its report to the church which then votes on the names presented.

This procedure enables the church to give careful study to each name prior to the election.

The nominating committee shall study the needs of the church and inquire into the fitness of members to serve in different offices.

The Church Manual does not determine the exact size of the nominating committee

The size will range from five in a small church to a larger number depending on the size of the church.

The exact number is left to the discretion of the church members with advise from the church board.

A suitable recommendation should then be brought to the church, using a minimum amount of time in the Sabbath worship hour.

The nominating committee should be appointed early in the closing quarter of the church year.

Should report at least three weeks before the final Sabbath of the church year.

The pastor or in the absence of the pastor, the elder should bring the matter to the attention of the church.

The church will then appoint an organizing committee who will be responsible to nominate the nominating committee.

### **Organising Committee (previously selection committee)**

Chosen in one of two ways:

By nominations, verbal or written, from the floor.

If verbal nominations are made from the floor, it must be understood that no member may nominate more than one person.

The effort of one individual or a small group to dictate to the entire membership of the church is disapproved.

Every effort should be made to ensure fair representation in the composition of the Organising Committee.

Everything of a political nature should be avoided.

### **Tools required by the nominating committee**

1. An up to date list of church members (no addresses).
2. A list of ALL current serving church officers and departments/ministries.
3. A list of leaders/officers needed by the church and a job description for each. This will be the list from which it operates.

### **How the process Works**

The steps of the nominating process are:

The church appoints by vote the organising committee by either of the two methods mentioned previously.



The organising committee recommends to the church names for the nominating committee, with suggestions for the secretary.

The church appoints by vote the nominating committee and the secretary.

The pastor is an ex-officio member of the committee, but is NOT automatically the Chairperson.

It is in order for the church to give the nominating committee authority to choose their own secretary and chairperson.

The nominating committee meets to prepare the list of church officers, which will be presented to the church for approval

The church appoints by vote the various church officers for the ensuing year/two years.

Only members who are in regular standing should be chosen to serve on the nominating committee.

They should be persons of good judgment and, above all, have the welfare and prosperity of the church at heart.

The pastor is an ex-officio member of the nominating committee and his/her primary role is to provide guidance.

### **Work of the Nominating Committee:**

As soon as possible after its election, the nominating committee should be called together by the one chosen to act as chairperson.

With earnest prayer for guidance the committee should begin its work of preparing a list of names to submit to the church for officers and assistants.

The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting of the church.

The list of officers will vary in size according to the size of membership.

The committee deals with all leadership positions except Sabbath school teachers who are recommended by the SS council and approved by the board.

### **Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers:**

Having nominated persons who are faithful loyal members of the local church, appropriate members of the committee should be chosen to inform them.

A Job description should be provided to the nominated members.

Nominated members consent to serve should be secured before their names are read out.

### **Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee:**

Opportunity should be given to members who desire to appear before the committee to make suggestions or objections.

After they have addressed the committee and retired from the room the committee should only then consider their comments.

### **Nominating Committee Discussions are Confidential:**

All inquiries and discussions of the committee are confidential.

It is a violation of Christian ethics and the spirit of the golden rule for a member of the committee to repeat outside of the committee any personal or sensitive information discussed.

Violation of confidentiality is reason for excluding the committee member for further & future participation in the work of a nominating committee.

Should the necessity arise for inquiries to be made outside the committee, the chairperson or someone nominated by the committee should make them.

### **Reporting to the Church:**

The nominating committee report is presented to the church as a whole and not to the church board which has no jurisdiction in the process.

The report is presented by its chairperson and secretary.

It is presented at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting.

Names should be placed in member's hands or read aloud.

The members of the church board MUST also be read in the report and the quorum of the board.

Newly elected officers should be presented before church members.

The Chairperson should announce that the church will vote on the report at least one week later and that time is given for any objections.

Objections should be directed to the nominating committee.

Avoid public discussions of names

Every member should vote in the election of officers.

Election is by majority vote of those present and voting.

### **Dealing with an Objection to the Report of the Nominating Committee:**

Members may object to the committee's report and should present their objections in person to the committee before the second reading of the report by making an appointment through the chairperson or pastor.

Objection can also be raised at the time of the second reading of the report, where a member may request that the whole report be referred without discussion to the committee for further consideration.

Usual procedure for the chairperson to accept the referral.

However, if the request becomes a motion, it is non-debateable and is decided by majority.

The chairperson should announce when and where the committee will meet to hear objections.

All members making objections should appear before the committee individually.

If the election is deferred because of objections, it is a serious matter if those raising objections fail to appear before the committee.

The committee should give due consideration to the objections presented.

If the objection is justified, the committee must select new names for those who were removed because of objections.

The pastor should visit the members whose names are being removed with an explanation as to the removal of their name.

When the report is re-presented, the church proceeds to vote on the amended report.

*Trivial or groundless objections to any name should never be made, but if there are serious reasons that any nominations should be changed, these reasons should be stated to the nominating committee.*

Once the report has been read, and voted by the church, the nominating committee is usually dissolved as their work has been completed. Any vacant offices will be nominated by the new board and voted by the church members. However, larger churches may wish to continue using the nominating committee to fill occurring vacancies throughout the year. This decision will have to be voted by the church membership.

## **Filling Vacancies Between Elections**

If an office becomes vacant during the term of office because of death, removal, resignation or any other reason the following procedure must be followed:

1. The Church board discusses names and nominates a successor to fill the vacancy for the remaining time of the term.
2. If the person accepts the office, the name is brought to the church for election.
3. Once the church has voted, the member takes up the office.
4. The member is NOT appointed to that office until the church has voted.

# Governance and Procedures Part 4

## The Membership Process

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### **Ways to Become a Member of a Local Church**

There are three ways to become a member of a local Seventh-day Adventist Church:

Baptism

Profession of Faith

Transfer from another Seventh-day Adventist church

No name can be added to the membership list of a church without the vote of the church membership, NOT just the church board

### Baptism

The church believes in baptism by immersion and accepts into membership only those who have been baptised in this manner.

### Re-Baptism

See Church Manual pages 49 & 50.

Rebaptism is specifically mentioned only in Acts 19:1-7, where the apostle Paul endorsed it for a group of believers whose previous baptism of repentance had been by John.

Apostasy & Rebaptism –Although apostasy existed in the apostolic church (Heb. 6:4-6), Scripture does not address the question of rebaptism. Ellen G White supports rebaptism when members have apostatised and then are reconverted and wish to re-join the church.

“The Lord calls for a decided reformation and when a soul is truly re-converted, let him be re-baptised. Let him renew his covenant with God and God will renew His covenant with him.” (Evangelism p 375)

On the basis of biblical teaching and the guidance of Ellen G White, rebaptism should occur only in special circumstances and should be relatively rare.

To administer baptism repeatedly or on an emotional basis lessens its meaning and represents a misunderstanding of the gravity and significance that Scripture assigns to it.

A member whose spiritual experience has become cold needs a spirit of repentance which leads to revival and reformation. This experience will be followed by participation in the communion service to signify renewed cleansing and fellowship in the body of Christ, making rebaptism unnecessary.

Where a member re-baptises for personal reasons, but has not had their name removed from the church roll, the re-baptism should NOT be recorded in the church clerk quarterly report.

If a person had previously been dropped from the membership roll due to church discipline, then it is recorded in the church clerk quarterly report as re-baptism.

### Profession of Faith

1. A Christian coming from another denomination who has already been baptized by immersion as practiced by the SDA Church.
2. A member of the SDA Church who, because of world conditions, is unable to secure a letter of transfer from his/her home church.
3. A member of the SDA Church whose request for membership transfer has received no response of any kind from the church where he/she is a member. In this case the assistance of the conference shall be sought. In case the requesting church is located in another conference, the assistance of both conferences should be sought.
4. An individual who has been a member, but whose membership has been misplaced or has been withdrawn because he/she was a missing member, yet who in reality has remained faithful to his/her Christian commitment.

### Transfer of Incoming Membership

1. Member verbally requests transfer to new church "A"
2. Clerk of Church "A" asks member to complete Membership Transfer Request Details form.

3. Church clerk "A" completes a "Request for Transfer of Church Membership" and e-mails or posts it to the church clerk of the SDA church (Church "B") holding the membership of the person requesting the transfer.
4. Receives "Recommendation for Transfer of Church Membership" form from Church "B".
5. Church clerk "A" presents the recommendation to the church board for approval.
6. Church Board "A" Approves transfer.
7. First reading of recommendation of transfer to membership of church "A".
8. One week later, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of recommendation of transfer to membership of church "A" & vote taken.
9. If affirmative vote by Church "A", record the date of acceptance into church fellowship and return the "Acknowledgment portion of Transfer of Church Membership" form to the church "B".

### Transfers from Companies

All company transfers must be routed through the Conference Church Clerk.

Members wishing to transfer to a company from a local church should ask the clerk of the church they are transferring to, to contact the Conference Church Clerk with their details to instigate the transfer process.

Transfer process the same as detailed previously, but instead of vote by the congregation the members is transferring to, the vote will be by the Conference Executive Committee.

### Transfer of Outgoing Membership

Four ways to leave the membership of a local Seventh-day Adventist Church:

1. Death
2. Transfer to another Seventh-day Adventist church
3. Apostasy
4. Considered Missing –Whereabouts Unknown

NO NAME be may be removed from the church membership list (apart from the death of a member) without the vote of the church membership, not just the church board.

(Church Manual, Chapter 6, section entitled “The Church Clerk”)

#### Membership upon death

1. Upon the death of member, the church clerk, without action from the church, notifies the Conference Church Clerk as soon as possible by letter, phone call or e-mail.
2. Record information in the local church membership records.
3. Adds information to church clerk quarterly report.

#### Outgoing Membership –Transfer

1. Church Clerk “B” receives “Request for Transfer of Church Membership” is received from church clerk “A”.
2. Church clerk “B” presents the request to the church board for approval.
3. The first reading of recommendation of transfer in church “B”.
4. One week later, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of recommendation of transfer in church “B” & vote taken.
5. If vote by Church “B” is affirmative, Clerk “B” completes top portion of “Recommendation for Transfer of Church Membership” form and sends it to church clerk “A”. (Retain copy of form for church records).

Remember, the person remains a member of the local church until notification of acceptance by the other church has been received. The members name should not be removed from the records until such acknowledgement of transfer arrives (See Church Manual, Chapter 5).

6. If no response is received after six weeks, a second request should be sent, indicating such on the form.
7. Following vote by the membership and Confirmation of acceptance by the new church, the information should be recorded in the local church membership records.
8. The information should also be added to the church clerk quarterly report.



### Outgoing Membership –Apostasy

All apostasies have to be confirmed by vote of the church membership (not just the church board), at a duly called business meeting before a name can be removed from the church membership.

The Pastor or Board of Elders CANNOT discipline a member.

Once the church has voted that a person's name be removed from the church membership for apostasy, the church clerk must complete A "Report on Name to be Removed from Church Roll" form giving the personal details of the person and the reason for the decision to remove their name from the church roll.

The form must be signed by the church clerk & the Pastor.

### Outgoing Membership –Missing Whereabouts Unknown

If he/she could not be traced following careful investigation and failure to establish contact after attempts have been made.

Permissible period before this action should take place, is if the member has been missing for a minimal period of two years.

The removal of the name has to be confirmed by vote of the church membership and not just the church board.

Even if a member may be missing for an extended period, the church leadership, church clerk or anyone else has no authority to remove names from the church membership list, for the purpose of good housekeeping, without a vote of the church membership.

Following vote by membership that a name be removed from the church roll "considered missing –whereabouts unknown".

The Church Clerk completes a "Report on Name to be Removed from Church Roll" form and signs it together with the pastor.

The information should be recorded in the local church membership records.

The information should be added to the church clerk quarterly report & when sending the form to the conference church clerk at the end of the quarter, include a copy of the completed and signed "Report on Name to be Removed from Church Roll" form.

### Notes on Removal of Name from the Church Roll

No member may be removed from a church membership list who is known to be worshipping in another SDA church, and who has not requested transfer.

It is the responsibility of the member to request transfer and no church can transfer a person against his/her wishes.

It is customary for members to transfer their membership if they plan to stay for longer than six month in a new district.

Transfers are only granted to members in regular standing. In cases of doubt, the transfer request should not be granted.

Under no circumstances should a church vote a letter of transfer to a member who is under discipline.

Members may not be dropped from the church membership list for non-attendance at church services, provided they remain faithful to church teachings.

Neither can they be dropped for failure to support the church in their giving.

#### Removal of Name at Members Request

Great care should be exercised in dealing with members who request to be removed from membership. Although the church recognises the right of members to decide whether to belong to the church, ample time should be given such members for thought and reflection, and every effort made to restore them to a satisfactory experience.

Letters of resignation should be presented to the church board, which will forward them to a business meeting. Out of Christian consideration for the individuals involved, action shall be taken without public discussion.

# Governance and Procedures Part 5

## Church Discipline

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### General Principle

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy set forth in clear, unmistakable language the solemn responsibility that rests upon the people of God to maintain their purity, integrity and spiritual fervour. If members grown indifferent or drift away, the church must seek to reclaim them for the Lord.

In dealing with erring church members, God's people are carefully to follow the instruction given by the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. 18:15-18)

Ellen G. White affirmed: “No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this has been done, the church has cleared herself before God.” (Gospel Workers p501)

As spiritual leaders we should be careful in the way we treat the problems members face. We cannot compromise the name of the church by our thoughtless behaviour and our lack of Christian ethics. We do not have the right. We are representatives of the church and of our Lord before the community. We need to represent both well.

### Forms of Discipline

When grievous sins are involved, the church has two ways in which disciplinary measures can be taken:

- By vote of censure

- By a vote to remove from membership

In cases where the offence is not considered by the church to be so serious as to warrant the extreme course of removing membership, the church may express its disapproval by a vote of censure.

Censure has two purposes:

To enable the church to express its disapproval of a grievous offense that has brought disgrace upon the cause of God

To impress offending members with the need for a change of life and reformation of conduct and to give them a period of grace and probation during which to make those changes.

A vote of censure is for a stated period of time, from a minimum of one month to a maximum of twelve months; it terminates the erring one's election or appointment to any and all offices he/she may hold in the church and removes the privilege of election to office while under censure.

A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or by vote in the affairs of the church or lead church activities, such as teaching a Sabbath School class. They are not deprived, however, of the privilege of sharing the blessings of Sabbath School, church worship or communion. Members may not be transferred during the period of censure.

Votes of censure must not carry any provision involving removal of membership in case of failure to comply with any conditions imposed.

Assessment should be made at the expiration of the period of censure to determine whether the disciplined member has changed course.

If their conduct is satisfactory, they may then be considered in regular standing without further action and shall be notified that the censure has ended.

If their conduct is not satisfactory, the church again should consider appropriate discipline.

Any return to church office must be by election.

### **Forms of Discipline –Removal of Membership**

Removing an individual from membership in the church, the body of Christ, is the ultimate discipline that the church can administer.

Only after the instruction given in chapter 7 of the Church Manual has been followed, counsel from the pastor or conference when the pastor is unavailable and after all possible efforts have been made to win and restore them to right paths, should an individual be removed from membership.

## **Disciplinary Process**

The church must care for the disciplinary process within a reasonable time and then communicate its decision with kindness and promptness. Delay in administering discipline may increase the frustration and suffering of the member and the church itself.

Members may be disciplined for sufficient cause, but only at a “properly called business meeting” after the church board has reviewed the case.

The church board may recommend to a business meeting the removal of a member from church membership, but under no circumstances does the board have the right to take final action.

The meeting must be presided over by an ordained pastor or licensed pastor who is ordained as a local elder of the church concerned or, in the pastor’s absence and in counsel with the pastor or with conference president an elder of the local church.

Members have a fundamental right to prior notification of the disciplinary meetings and the right to be heard in their own defence, introduce evidence and produce witnesses. No church should vote to remove a member under circumstances that deprive the member of these rights.

Written notice must be given at least two weeks before the meeting and include the reasons for the disciplinary hearing.

The church does not recognize the right of members to bring legal counsel to represent them in any meeting called to administer order or discipline or for the transaction of any other church business.

Members wanting to bring legal counsel into a meeting should be informed that they will not be given a hearing if they insist on bringing legal counsel.

The church should also exclude all non-members from any church meeting called for the administration of church order or discipline, except when they are called as witnesses.

A church removing members from church membership **MUST** notify them in writing of the action taken but with the assurance of enduring spiritual interest and personal concern.

This communication should, where possible, be delivered in person by the pastor or by a church board designee.

The former members should be assured that the church hopes they will return to the church and that one day there will eternal fellowship together in the kingdom of God.

Part of the instruction given by Christ relates to visiting the member at fault. Yet many people who were removed from the church roll, without having received a visit or any communication about the church's decision. That is unconscionable.

### **Reasons for Discipline**

□ The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are:

1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.
2. Violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbath-breaking and wilful and habitual falsehood.
3. Violation of the seventh commandment of the law of God as it relates to the marriage institution, the Christian home, and biblical standards of moral conduct.
4. Sexual abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults, fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual practice, the production, use or distribution of pornography and other sexual perversions.
5. Remarriage of a divorced person, except the spouse who has remained faithful to the marriage vow in a divorce for adultery or for sexual perversions.
6. Physical violence, including violence within the family.
7. Fraud or wilful misrepresentation in business.
8. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the cause.
9. Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organisation. (See CM p. 59.)
10. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.
11. The use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages.
12. The use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption.
13. The use or manufacture of illicit drugs or the misuse of, or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs.

### **Right of Appeal**

While it is the right of the church to administer discipline, this does not set aside the rights of members to seek fairness.

If members believe that they have been treated unfairly by the local church or not had the right to be heard fairly, and the church is unwilling to reconsider the case or if the officers refuse to consider their applications for reinstatement, the former members have a right to appeal in writing to the church for a hearing.

The church should not neglect or refuse to grant such a hearing.

If it does or if the former members still feel unfairly treated by the church after the appeal, they have the right to a final appeal for a hearing to the executive committee of the conference.

If, after a full and impartial hearing, the conference committee is satisfied that an injustice has been inflicted by the church, the committee may recommend reinstatement to membership. But if membership is still refused by that church, then the conference committee may recommend membership in some other church.

On the other hand, if it finds good grounds for sustaining the church in refusing to reinstate the former member, it will so record its decision.





# Governance and Procedures Part 6

## The Business Meeting

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### **Definition:**

The local church operates within defined roles in the Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Within the context of those, ***the business meeting is the governing body of the local church.*** (CM p 123)

Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote.

Business meetings shall be held at least once a year.

The pastor or the board in consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting.

Business meetings should typically be announced in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service with details of the time and place.

The pastor or an elder arranged by the pastor serves as the chairperson of the business meeting.

### **Meeting Procedures:**

Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings.

Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting.

The ***business meeting has authority over the board*** and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the Church Manual. (CM p124)

***The church membership can vote to overturn a decision voted or recommended by the church board.***

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church.

At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities.

Based on those reports, presentation of a proposed plan of action for the next year should be presented for approval.

When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing.

The membership should be informed of major decisions taken by the church board.

### **Suggested Reports for Business Meetings**

- A report from the **Church Clerk** showing the present membership of the church and the number of members received and those transferred to other churches. Note also should be made, giving the number but not necessarily the names, of those who may have had to be removed from fellowship during the year, as well as those who have died. A brief statement of the decisions of the church board in its meetings would naturally be of interest to all members of the church.
- A report from the **Personal Ministries leader**, giving a statement of outreach (missionary) activities, including Community Services activities, together with any plans for future work. This should be followed by a report from the **Personal Ministries secretary**.
- A report from the **Treasurer**, showing the amount of tithe received and sent to the conference treasurer; also a full statement of mission offerings received and forwarded; and a statement showing local church funds received and disbursed.
- A report from the **Deacons and Deaconesses** concerning visits to the members, their activities in behalf of the poor, and any other features that come under their supervision.
- A report from the **Secretary of the young people's society** outlining the activities in outreach (missionary) and other lines by the youth of the church.
- A report from the **Sabbath School secretary**, giving the membership, attendance and other matters pertaining to the Sabbath School.
- A report from the **Communication secretary** covering press, radio, television, and other related activities involving church and community.

# Governance and Procedures Part 7

## Relationship to Church Organisation

GC Minister's Handbook Chapter 11

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### **Organization Is Needed**

Structure and organization, an observable reality in both the physical and social worlds, remains as the basis of all creation. From the minutest particles of an atom to the grand design of the cosmos, the structuring hand of God is observed. "Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God's people on the earth" (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 26).

Biblical basis of church organization. — Throughout biblical history God seeks to provide order and structure for His people. He gave ancient Israel an intricate system of organization, calling them from dysfunctional slavery in Egypt to become His chosen nation. Jesus founded the church, appointing His disciples as its leaders, and the Holy Spirit led the New Testament church as it grew in its mission and structure.

Christ called the church into being, and while demonstrably evident that the church exists as an imperfect organization (being made up of imperfect people), yet "enfeebled and defective as it may be, [the church] is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard" (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 15). To be Christian means to love His church, for Christ "loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

Practical basis for church organization. — A nation, a business, or even the human body would fail without organization. The church, with the task of proclaiming God's saving grace to the world, would surely also fail without organization. Early in Adventist history the need for structure was clearly observed. "As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the

publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable” (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 26).

### **Benefits of Organization**

Many and varied forms of church structure can be found in the world of the Christian church. Unless a church operates as a standalone unit, there will be need for leadership of, and association among, the churches of a given denomination. Adventist Church polity is based on a representative form of governance, with the church unit as part of the sisterhood of churches in a conference, as delineated in the Church Manual and the General Conference Working Policy. Conferences depend almost totally on pastors for both church growth and nurture, since conference funds come from churches. Evangelism and church growth occur in the local congregations.

Pastors and elders lead the local congregation, and they shepherd the flock. “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Administrative support. — Through actions of the conference executive committee, administrators assume the responsibility of providing pastors for the churches in their territory. In Adventist policy, employing entities have the responsibility of providing secure salary delivery systems for their pastors.

Departmental resources. — Departmental directors serve as specialists and make their expertise available to pastors as they work with them in training their members. They do not have line authority over pastors, but serve as advisers and resource providers. Departmental leaders should make pastors aware of programs and materials available for church ministry, which will assist in the development of pastoral objectives and plans.

Ministerial association secretary. — The ministerial association secretary serves as the pastor’s pastor and provides specific services that include: a listening interest, a supervised internship, training in pastoral and evangelistic ministries, soul-winning tools to aid in ministry, continuing education opportunities, assistance in training church elders, support for the pastor’s family, and a subscription to Ministry magazine.

## Cooperative Ministry

Ministry, as an intensely personal calling and service, must be performed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in accord with one's conscience. However, this does not give the minister license either to lead the church counter to its principles or to espouse positions contrary to the stated fundamental beliefs of the church.

“Never should a labourer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body” (Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 260).

An Adventist pastor may make an individual choice in accepting church employment. However, upon becoming an employee and leader in the church, the pastor accepts certain obligations to the church body.

1. **Trust leadership.** While church leadership cannot be described as perfect, it remains as the duly constituted authority in the church. While dialogue on variations in opinion is both permissible and good, when decisions are reached it becomes the responsibility of the pastor to support leadership. “Let us cherish a spirit of confidence in the wisdom of our brethren” (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 500).

2. **Consult leadership.** Counsel with leadership before you enter into any activity that makes inroads on time normally meant for regular ministry. It may be helpful to get advice before buying or building a house, enrolling in an academic study program, or inviting guests to speak in the church.

3. **Hold leadership accountable.** The Adventist form of church governance is representative rather than congregational, providing a democratic process that is both a privilege and an obligation to its members. While sensitive to individual church needs and wishes, it takes into account the broader perspective of both the sisterhood of churches and the worldwide work.



# Church History Part 1

## General History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

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This short introduction is meant to whet your appetite. As an elder you need to know as much as you can about our history. Our stories define and tell us who we are. As you read some of these stories it would be well for you to use some when telling the children's story in Church.

*“In reviewing our past history, having travelled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”— Ellen G White*

### **World-Wide Revival**

A Protestant, Christian denomination, the Seventh-day Adventist Church grew out of the world-wide religious revival in the mid-nineteenth century. People of many religious persuasions believed that Bible prophecies indicated that the second coming or advent of Christ was imminent.

### **A Great Disappointment**

When Christ did not come in the 1840s, a group of these disappointed Adventists in the United States continued their Bible studies and concluded that they had misinterpreted prophetic events and that the second coming of Christ was still in the future. This same group of Adventists later accepted the teaching of the seventh-day Sabbath and became known as Seventh-day Adventists. The Church organised formally in 1863 and began its mission to the world. An excellent collection of pictures and details of the [Adventist Pioneers](#) is available in the Adventist Pioneer Library based in Loma Linda, California.

### **Only the Bible**

Basing its faith and practice wholly on the Bible, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed [28 fundamental beliefs](#). It is these key beliefs which unify the otherwise very diverse world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church:

## **Rapid Growth**

The organisational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has enabled it to keep pace with its rapid growth. A heavy emphasis on medical and missionary work has led to steady growth in the western world and phenomenal growth in the third world. A separate page is available describing the [current status](#) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

- See more at: <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/history/>



# Church History Part 2

## SDA History – Religious Background

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Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged from religious fervour of 19th Century



**Millerite Camp Meeting**

The early Adventist Church emerged from a climate of religious revival in the Northeastern United States. Camp meetings, such as this Millerite gathering, were a hallmark of the Second Great Awakening. [photos courtesy Office of Archives, Statistics and Research]

Elizabeth Lechleitner

When Baptist preacher William Miller said Jesus was coming back on October 22, 1844, many Americans weren't just surprised that he had set a date. The notion that Christ was literally returning was in itself a radical idea.

By the 19th Century, most established churches were preaching that the Second Coming was more myth than reality—and more human than divine. Religious leaders taught that a metaphorical “second coming” symbolized the rise of a new God-fearing, socially responsible generation.

But the Millerites' belief in a literal Second Coming—along with new understandings of prophecy, the seventh-day Sabbath and the state of the dead—would prove pivotal. These core doctrines would anchor the early Advent movement amid a climate of religious turmoil.

The U.S. Northeast in the early 19th Century was a hotbed of revival. The so-called Second Great Awakening ignited movements such as the Shakers, early Mormons, the forerunners of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Millerites and a host of eccentric offshoots. In fact, upstate New York was dubbed the "burned-over district," referring to the fact that evangelists had exhausted the region's supply of unconverted people.

In this climate, the Millerites weathered the Great Disappointment, when the group expectantly, but futilely, waited for Christ's return. With what Adventist historian George Knight calls the "mathematical certainty of their faith" dashed, many Millerites deserted the movement.

Those who remained were split over the significance of October 22. Some claimed the date was altogether bogus. Others maintained Christ had returned, but only in a spiritual, illusory sense. A final group—the future leaders of early Seventh-day Adventists—were convinced the date was right, but the event was wrong.

Reinvigorated by this possibility, they regrouped and returned to Scripture, determined to discover the truth. What they concluded is that instead of returning to Earth on October 22, Jesus had begun the last phase of his atoning ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

A young Methodist woman named Ellen Harmon (later White) lent prophetic credibility to this interpretation. Her December 1844 vision of a "straight and narrow path" to heaven confirmed that prophecy had indeed been fulfilled on October 22 and galvanized what would be the denomination's central focus on Christ.



Adventist historian David Trim is struck by the Millerites' ability to transcend a "spectacularly wrong" initial message. While he says it's true that apocalyptic movements often surprisingly keep some of their followers even when their ideas are "patently disproved," these "aren't the sort of people who go on to found a very successful church. That Adventists did so—it's not proof that God is on your side, but it is proof that you have intelligent, rational leaders."

Perhaps more telling is the Adventist Church's belief that God was orchestrating events, Trim says. "I think early Adventists had a strong calling from the Holy Spirit. It's terribly old-fashioned, but I believe our church was called into being at that time for a purpose," he says.

They also demonstrated a keen desire for biblical truth, he says. "This is what sustains them when all of the other ex-Millerites are going down either eccentric routes or just very mainstream and cautious routes," Trim says.

For early Advent believers, so-called "present truth" was dynamic. And indeed, as the few hundred Sabbatarian Adventists of the 1840s grew to 3,000 by 1863 when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially established, their doctrinal understanding underwent no less striking changes.

Early on, pioneers such as James White were fervent in their call to “come out of Babylon.” At first, this was a message to leave organized religion and return to gospel simplicity.

This doesn’t surprise religious historians, who have observed that every few generations, people feel compelled to go back to the fundamentals of their faith. Indeed, this trend fueled the Second Great Awakening.

But what is striking, Trim says, is the reversal White pulls as the movement expanded. By 1859, James had come to believe that the call to “come out of Babylon” actually meant to leave disorganization and accept church structure.



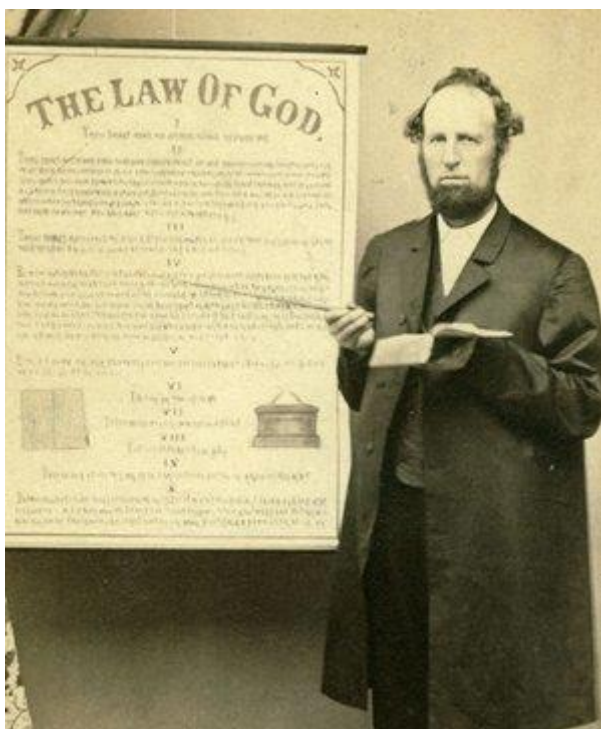
“This of course plays very nicely on the fact that Babylon ultimately comes from Babel—or confusion—and White says the call to come out of Babylon is actually to leave all this chaotic and incredibly exciting and fervent religious current and come into something a little more organized. So what it means to ‘come out of Babylon’ completely gets turned on its head and subverted,” Trim says.

But as they moved toward church structure, early Adventists didn’t lose their initial zeal. Rather, they were able to carve out a balance between the radicalism that pervaded much of the religious expression in the mid-1800s and the conservatism that would follow. It’s an equilibrium the Adventist Church still maintains today, Trim says, and it finds its roots in the longstanding tension between spirit and order, dating back to the early medieval church.

“You have to have the spirit because order becomes staid and ossified and hierarchical, but you have to have the order because the spirit becomes chaotic and self-destructive,” he says.

Adventist Church pioneer Ellen White was crucial in preserving this balance. Through her prophetic gift, Trim says White was ideally situated to temper inevitable squabbles between early Adventist leaders such as her husband, James, Joseph Bates, Uriah Smith, John Nevins Andrews, George Butler and others. All of them were “incredibly high-powered, driven individuals,” personalities necessary to propel a localized movement into a global church, he says.

While some students of church history might find tension between core leaders “disconcerting,” Trim says the early Advent movement is unique in that it stayed united in a climate where most religious groups tended to splinter off, following a charismatic leader, or dissolve altogether. Despite disagreement, Adventists ultimately rallied behind biblical truth achieved through prayer and Bible study or revealed through prophecy.



“These men are wholly persuaded that [Ellen White] is God’s messenger. If she says, ‘I have been shown this,’ they accept it even if they don’t initially like it,” Trim says.

“They’re very quick to debate, and they do so in very straight-up terms, but they’re also very quick to forgive and they don’t hold grudges,” Trim says. “They have an openness that would serve us well to copy.”

Modern Seventh-day Adventists might find early Adventist pioneers peculiar. Some didn’t believe in the Trinity or the personhood of the Holy Spirit, and thought Christ was a created being. Many observed Sabbath from 6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Saturday, regardless of actual sunset times. They also had no qualms over eating unclean meats. All this, however, would change in the coming decades.

What today’s Adventists likely would recognize in their forbearers is conviction. In the Sabbath, Second Coming, Sanctuary and other fundamental beliefs, early Adventists believed they had discovered what Trim calls a “key” to unlocking the entirety of biblical truth.

“They realize that these doctrines are all saying the same thing about God, they’re all pointing in the same direction, and so early Adventists feel compelled to stand by them.”

“This concern for truth is inspiring,” he says.

# Church History Part 3

## Early Adventist Pioneer Stories

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The links below to stories will give you a taste of our pioneers and where have travelled from to today. Stories are important in understanding the reasons and meaning in much that we do. Please click on the links below to read the stories.

### [ANNA KNIGHT EDUCATOR AND MEDICAL MISSIONARY](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/56/resources/pioneer-stories/anna-knight-educator-and-medical-missionary)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/56/resources/pioneer-stories/anna-knight-educator-and-medical-missionary>

### [CHARLES KINNY: FIRST ORDAINED BLACK PREACHER](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/52/resources/pioneer-stories/charles-kinny-first-ordained-black-preacher)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/52/resources/pioneer-stories/charles-kinny-first-ordained-black-preacher>

### [DR. LOTTIE I. BLAKE: THE FIRST SDA BLACK PHYSICIAN](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/58/resources/pioneer-stories/dr-lottie-i-blake-the-first-sda-black-physician)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/58/resources/pioneer-stories/dr-lottie-i-blake-the-first-sda-black-physician>

### [EVA B. DYKES: THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/59/resources/pioneer-stories/eva-b-dykes-the-impossible-dream)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/59/resources/pioneer-stories/eva-b-dykes-the-impossible-dream>

### [J. H. LAURENCE: PIONEER BLACK EVANGELIST](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/54/resources/pioneer-stories/j-h-laurence-pioneer-black-evangelist)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/54/resources/pioneer-stories/j-h-laurence-pioneer-black-evangelist>

### [JAILED FOR THEIR RELIGION](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/60/resources/pioneer-stories/jailed-for-their-religion)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/60/resources/pioneer-stories/jailed-for-their-religion>

### [PERCY TILSON MAGAN](http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/90/resources/pioneer-stories/percy-tilson-magan)

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/90/resources/pioneer-stories/percy-tilson-magan>

### **SAREPTA M. I. HENRY**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/57/resources/pioneer-stories/sarepta-m-i-henry>

### **STUKELY CHURCH: OLDEST CONGREGATION IN CANADA**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/55/resources/pioneer-stories/stukely-church-oldest-congregation-in-canada>

### **THE BLESSED HOPE**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/93/resources/pioneer-stories/the-blessed-hope>

### **THE MONOMANIAC**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/102/resources/pioneer-stories/the-monomaniac>

### **THREE PRAYER BANDS AND HOW THEY GREW**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/53/resources/pioneer-stories/three-prayer-bands-and-how-they-grew>

### **WILLIAM MILLER: SECOND ADVENT PREACHER**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/51/resources/pioneer-stories/william-miller-second-advent-preacher>

### **WILLIAM MILLER: FARMER AND JUSTICE OF THE PEACE**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/49/resources/pioneer-stories/william-miller-farmer-and-justice-of-the-peace>

### **WILLIAM MILLER: PREPARING TO PREACH**

<http://www.adventistheritage.org/article/50/resources/pioneer-stories/william-miller-preparing-to-preach>



# Church History Part 4

## SDA History – Reluctant Missionaries

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Ironically, early Adventists were reluctant missionaries



**Michael Czechowski**

Though the Adventist Church didn't endorse him, Michael Czechowski was the first person to take the Adventist message outside of the United States. He actually arrived in Switzerland a decade before John Nevins Andrews, who is widely known as the denomination's first official missionary. [photos courtesy Office of Archives, Statistics and Research]

Ansel Oliver and George R. Knight

Though John Nevins Andrews is rightfully credited as the Seventh-day Adventist Church's first foreign missionary, the preaching of the Adventist message in Europe actually preceded his 1874 arrival in Switzerland by a decade.

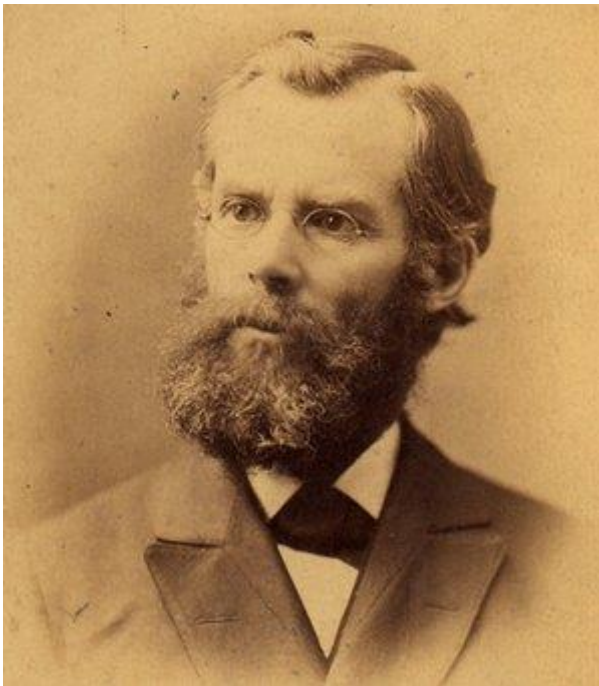
Michael Czechowski, a former Roman Catholic priest originally from Poland, had requested to be sent to his native continent to spread his newfound faith that heralded the soon Second Coming of Jesus. Adventist Church leaders, uncertain of his reliability and honesty, declined his request. He would, however, go on to become the fledgling denomination's first overseas missionary, oddly enough, by validating their suspicions.

Czechowski, who had deserted his wife and children, later gained missionary sponsorship from the Advent Christian denomination – the main group of

Sunday-keeping Adventists. Having his way paid, he ignored the teachings of his sponsors upon arrival in Europe in 1864 and proceeded to teach the Seventh-day Adventist message, gaining converts throughout the continent, including in Switzerland, Hungary, Italy and Romania.

With a church structure having recently been created, thus began the expansion of the Adventist message outside of the United States. But it would be many years before the Adventist Church would commit wholeheartedly to foreign mission.

Within the church at home – based in the U.S. state of Michigan – debate flared over the meaning of Jesus' call in the Gospel of Mark to "Go into all the world." Most of the 3,500-member church in 1863 thought reaching diverse immigrant populations within America was sufficient, some suggesting those immigrants would convert their friends and relatives in their mother country.



The 1871 General Conference Session passed a resolution to send "Bro[ther] Matteson as a missionary to the Danes and Norwegians" ... in the nearby state of Wisconsin.

"It wasn't our church's finest hour," says Adventist historian David Trim, who serves as director of the world church's Office of Archives, Statistics and Research.

Meanwhile, in Europe, some of Czechowski's followers accidentally discovered an Adventist magazine among his papers informing them that, to their surprise, they weren't the world's only Adventists. Adventists in the U.S., still arguing over the feasibility of taking their teachings beyond national borders, were similarly taken aback.

"Adventists in America were actually sort of embarrassed to learn that there were already Adventist believers in Europe," Trim says.

The mutual discovery led to American Adventists inviting a Swiss representative to the 1869 General Conference Session. He arrived too late, but spent the next year in the U.S. learning Adventist beliefs more thoroughly before returning home as an ordained minister.



At that 1869 session, however, the establishment of a missionary society was a key step in triggering a two-decade process of reversing the church's mindset toward mission. The transformation was aided by a boldness of the small group of believers who thought they in fact could reach the world, and more importantly, leadership was becoming increasingly comprised of former missionaries.

The church's prophet and co-founder, Ellen White, later penned her strongest calls for overseas mission after spending time herself in Europe in the 1880s and Australia in the 1890s.

In 1901, she declared at the General Conference Session, “The vineyard includes the whole word, and every part of it is to be worked.”

That same year, Arthur G. Daniells became the first missionary elected as the Adventist Church’s president, having served in New Zealand and Australia for 15 years.

“It’s a remarkable story of how our pioneers changed their mindset because they were such a small group,” Trim says. “The confidence of this tiny group to think they could reach the whole world is astonishing.”

The pattern for overseas mission can be traced back to when the church expanded to the west coast of the U.S. It was in 1868, one year before the landmark mission focus of the 1869 General Conference Session, that church leaders responded to a request for a minister in the far-off state of California. John N. Loughborough and D. T. Bordeau accepted the call and worked to build what would become a recipe for entering new areas – gain a sufficient following and then establish a printing press, a magazine and a medical facility.



The year 1874 was another key year for mission – widower Andrews, a former Adventist Church president, took his two children to Europe as the church’s first official missionary, and the denomination established its first mission periodical, “True Mission.” Also,

Battle Creek College in Michigan was established to train ministers to work both in the U.S. and abroad.

By 1910 a steady stream of missionaries was heading out – the mission fields prior to the 1880s were joining the U.S. as the new Adventist homelands. The Germans took responsibility for Egypt, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, the Swedes for Ethiopia, the British for East and West Africa, and the Australians for Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Jamaica, too, sent missionaries; one of them, C. E. F. Thompson, went to Ghana.

A new publication, “Mission Quarterly,” was established in 1912, telling the stories of missionary families, including the Stahls in South America, Gustav Perk in Russia, the Robinsons in South Africa, and others who had left the U.S. knowing they might never come back.

William A. Spicer, who was appointed church president following Daniells and had served as a missionary in India, published his thoughts on mission in the 1921 book, “Our story of Missions for Colleges and academies”: Mission “is not something in addition to the regular work of the church. The work of God is one work, the wide world over.... To carry the one message of salvation to all peoples ... is the aim of every conference, every church, every believer.”



# The Ministry of Visitation

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## Introduction

The art or ministry of visitation is possibly the most important thing you do as an elder. It is where you meet the needs of your church family on a very personal level. Visit in such a way that the members love you to come and visit them again. Go to the homes not as their leader but as their servant - with a deep love for their welfare and eagerness to serve them. Work closely with the pastor to implement a visitation programme with your Head Deacon and Head Deaconess and help them to serve well too. Ask for the pastor or Field Ministerial Secretary to come and teach the art of visitation.

The following information seeks to be as helpful as possible but unless you are already familiar with counselling or listening skills, it would be good to have someone who has those competencies to help train you and the others of the elder and diaconate team.

You might like to organise a team training session with any who are competent plus the liberal use of role playing.

“Some of the reasons for visitation are: to become better acquainted with the membership; strengthen new members and absentee members; reclaim backsliders; call on the sick and shut-ins; identify and follow-up on the needs of the elderly, disabled, widows, and single parents (such as house cleaning, yard work, meals, transportation, child care, home weatherization, and other improvements); address family crisis (such as spiritual problems, disaster, illness, domestic violence, bereavement, marital problems, financial problems, and children’s behavioural problems); and encourage faithful mess in matters of stewardship.” [‘The Twenty-First Century Deacon & Deaconess’ Vincent White pp 143-147]

Expert visitation requires a loving compassionate, serving heart; the wisdom God gives; and trained competence.

First – develop a servant heart. Elders and deacons needs to love the sheep assigned to their care. They will aspire to the humility of the Lord Jesus in

serving His disciples and humanity. They will carry those members and families on their hearts constantly bringing them to the Lord in prayer and in doing so also asking the Lord to put love for their charges into their hearts.

Second – ask for wisdom. Before every visit and also during the visit claim the promise of wisdom in James 1:5 [*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*]

A literal translation brings out the rich promises of this verse:

**If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask** - well that's each of us! The text says 'any of you'. This promise is not limited to high and holy people, anyone may claim it. It carries the sense of the 'whosoever' of John 3:16. If 'whosoever' means me, so does 'any' here. So ask!

Who do we ask?

**of the giving God** – the Greek literally says that we ask of the God of giving! That's why He will answer your ask. He cannot deny His nature of giving – He is the God of that!

How will He give?

**[Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly**, - again to 'everyone' and not stingily but generously! We should ask more often!

But our Enemy will whisper to you "After you messed up the last time God helped you, what makes you think He will help you now?"

**without reproaching or fault finding**, - wow, He does not find fault! To reproach someone is to remind them of their past failure and demand that they shape up. Not this God of giving – He never keeps a record but rather loves to give wisdom every time!

Result?

**and it will be given him!**

Third – learn the skills of visiting. Arrange for a competent person to give some training to the elders and deacons in listening and counselling skills. Here are some hints:

1. Listen. Did you hear that? LISTEN! The power of saying nothing – just listen – the best listener listens so well that the person goes away having worked out their own solution. That person will come back to you again



because your deep listening has told them that they are cared about. You are there not to give your experience but to listen to theirs.

- a. Listen without judgement
- b. Affirm what the person is going through but don't contradict
- c. Keep eye contact but don't stare
- d. Use open and toward body language
- e. Use lots of 'ah-huh' type responses – indicating you understand
- f. Ask questions if you aren't clear

Good listening opens people up to match God's solutions to their needs. Note that I said God's solutions, not your solutions. The art of good listening is to end up with the person coming up with their own solutions – the solutions God's Spirit has been saying to them all along.

2. Listen to the first thing they say – explore it when the time is right. Our emotions unconsciously float very close to the top of our minds.
3. Identify the feeling you are feeling, as you listen.
  - a. Listen with your gut– is there anger? guilt? pain? sorrow? in what the person is saying?
  - b. What is the feeling in the pit of your stomach? – is it in a knot?
4. Reflect the statement back – make sure you heard & understood it correctly.
  - a. Do I hear you saying?
  - b. Have I understood that you mean?
  - c. I have a hunch that..
  - d. It sounds to me like...
  - e. I sense that you feel...
  - f. What did you mean when you said...
5. Ask honest, open questions, that don't seek to fix, set straight or advise. The essence is to 'ask' not 'tell'. The 'Ask' approach encourages each individual to learn and to take responsibility for his or her own development. Ask questions like...

- a. What leads you to say what you just said?
- b. Where does that come from in your life?
- c. Why did you say...?
- d. What do you sense God is saying to you in this situation?
- e. What implications do you think that has for your life?

These kind of questions tell the person that who they are is appreciated. They do not have to be afraid to bare themselves.

Parker Palmer uses the analogy of how to see a wild animal. If you charge into the jungle yelling for an animal to show itself – you will never see it. But if you sit quietly all the time it takes, the animal may appear in a spectacular experience for you.

[<http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/grace-great-things/>]

6. Do not ask questions like..
  - a. Have you thought about seeing a therapist?
  - b. Can't you see the problem is...?
  - c. Have you read...?
  - d. Have you tried...?

They are not open, honest questions. They are speeches or advices in disguise and shut people down.

7. Know the stories of Jesus – ask God's Spirit to impress you about which story to tell - matching a story of Jesus to the person's experience is the most powerful tool you have.
8. If you encounter a problem, situation or question that is beyond your ability or expertise or needs specialist help, get the help – don't give guidance in areas that you are not competent in. There may be someone in the church with competence in substance abuse, counselling, financial guidance, marriage problems, illness, demonic oppression, etc, - go and ask their help or speak to the pastor. Give your charge the best care they can get.

# Transformational Leadership

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**How do you develop the character that makes you a leader worthy of trust, respect, and admiration – a leader being transformed by Christ rather than conformed to the world?**

Rom 12:2 *“Do not be **conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Again the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Cor 3:11 *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed** into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”*

This section of training seeks to challenge you as an elder to “walk...worthy”  
Col 1:9-14 *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Elders are Christ-centred, Spirit filled people who know how to abide in Christ and live lives worthy of admiration and emulation. They are daily being transformed “from one degree of glory to another”. They are people that our youth should be observing and inwardly saying to themselves – “That is the kind of person I want to be like!”

To challenge yourself to the examined life that this section recommends, it would be good for you to do this either in a small fellowship [of elders and the pastor] or with a mentor that you trust and know will allow you to grow and not dictate your growth.

**When and how do you find transformation?**

You need two ingredients:

**1. An intimate relation with Christ through contemplation of His life in the Gospels and then throughout the Bible.**

Effective leadership begins with an intimate relationship with God, resulting in Christlike character and a clear sense of God's calling for leader's lives. How slowly and reflectively do I read the stories of Jesus?

**Be still and know that I am God Psalm 46:10**

In the noise of our world we need to find quietness  
to hear the quiet voice of God

**2. Prayerful, intentional and rigorous self-reflection**

**A well-ordered heart will ask questions like:**

- Have I acted in a self-reflective manner today?
- Did I allow myself to get caught up in the emotions and urgency of the day?
- Did I do what I said I would do, or did I fall short of my own expectations?
- What did I do well?
- Where could I have done better?
- What could I do now to better prepare myself for the next day?
- How did I treat people?
- How did I lead people, and how did I follow people?
- Am I proud of my interactions? Did I keep myself Christ-centred, or was I out of control?
- How can I fill my daily tasks with a sense of the presence of God?
- How do the people closest to me experience God working in and through me?
- Am I growing in a love for God and people?

Lead yourself exceptionally well by asking...

Am I leading out of the overflow of time spent with God?

Is my calling sure?

Is my vision clear?

Is my passion hot?  
Am I developing my gifts?  
Is my character submitted to Christ?  
Is my pride subdued?  
Are interior issues undermining my leadership?  
Is my pace sustainable?  
Is my love for God and people increasing?

Lead:

Your emotions  
Your time  
Your priorities  
Your energy  
Your thinking  
Your words  
Your personal life

“If a man love Me,” Christ said, “he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23. The spell of a stronger, a perfect mind will be over us; for we have a living connection with the source of all-enduring strength. In our divine life we shall be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. We shall no longer live the common life of selfishness, but Christ will live in us. His character will be reproduced in our nature. Thus shall we bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit—“some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.” {COL 61.3}



# Core Beliefs

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## Core Belief in the Lord Jesus

The Early Seventh-day Adventists held to five or six core beliefs – our 28 doctrines can be seen as an expansion of those core teachings. They were the

Scriptures as the Word of God

Salvation by grace and faith in Christ alone

The Heavenly Sanctuary where our Great High Priest ministers

The Sabbath

The Sleep of the dead

The Second Coming of Jesus

These are the doctrines that an elder must be so familiar with - they are the pillars that hold up all else that we believe in.

It may be helpful as a memory aid to note that they can be listed as six Ss

Scripture

Salvation

Sanctuary

Sabbath

Sleep

Second coming

But more than that – our beliefs are in the end a description of the work of the Lord Jesus. Is He not...

all that **Scripture** points to,

the **Saviour**,

the One who ministers to us from the **Sanctuary**,

the Lord of the **Sabbath**,

the one whose voice will wake those who **sleep** and

the He is the One whose **second coming** we wait for.

Elders – study our beliefs in such a way that you can present the Lord Jesus.

**JESUS** – is the revelation of our loving and gracious God. He is revealed through the Scriptures.

He is the seed promised in **Gen 3:16**/the ram in the thicket of **Gen 22/John 5:39** *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.* / **Luke 24:27** Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.

### **The Testimony of the Scriptures to Christ --**

Looking forward into the future from the earliest ages, God's servants saw One who was to come, and as the time approached this vision grew so clear that it would be almost possible for us to describe Christ's life on earth from the Old Testament Scriptures, of which He Himself said, "They testify of Me."

There was one central figure in Israel's hope. The work of the world's redemption was to be accomplished by one Man, the promised Messiah. It is He who was to bruise the serpent's head ([Gen 3:15](#)); He was to be descended from Abraham ([Gen 22:18](#)), and from the tribe of Judah ([Gen 49:10](#)).



Isaiah looked forward and saw first a great Light shining upon the people that walked in darkness ([Isa 9:2](#)). And as he gazed, he saw that a child was to be born, a Son was to be given ([Isa 9:6](#)), and with growing amazement there dawned upon him these names, as describing the nature of the child.

- *Wonderful*- Wonderful, indeed, in His birth, for the advent of no other child had ever been heralded by the hosts of heaven. His birth of a virgin ([Isa 7:14](#)), and the appearance of the star ([Num 24:17](#)), were alike wonderful. Increasingly wonderful was He in His manhood, and most wonderful of all in His perfect sinlessness.
- *Counsellor*- "Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" ([Col 2:3](#)).
- *The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father*- There dawned upon Isaiah the consciousness that this promised One was none other than God manifest in the flesh, "Immanuel, God with us" ([Isa 7:14](#)). As Jesus Himself said, "I and my Father are One" ([Joh 10:30](#)).
- *The Prince of Peace*- This name specially belongs to Jesus, for "He is our Peace." His birth brought Peace on earth, and leaving it He bequeathed Peace to His disciples, "having made Peace through the blood of His Cross."

Then the prophet sees the child that was to be born seated on the throne of His father David, and he sees the glorious spread of His kingdom. Though born of a royal house, it was to be in the time of its humiliation. "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock [stump] of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit" ([Isa 11:1](#) RV). We have, in this, a glimpse of His lowliness and poverty.

And now the prophets, one by one, fill in the picture, each adding a fresh, vivid touch. The prophet Micah sees the little town where Jesus was to be born, and tells us it is Bethlehem ([Mic 5:2](#); [Mat 2:6](#)); Isaiah sees the adoration of the Magi ([Isa 60:3](#); [Mat 2:1](#)); Jeremiah pictures the death of the innocents ([Jer 31:15](#); [Mat 2:17,18](#)); and Hosea foreshadows the flight into Egypt ([Hos 11:1](#); [Mat 2:15](#)); Isaiah portrays His meekness and gentleness ([Isa 42:2](#); [Mat 11:29](#)), and the wisdom and knowledge which Jesus manifested all through His life from the time of His talking with the doctors in the Temple.

Again, when He cleansed the Temple, the words of the Psalmist came at once to the memory of the disciples, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" ([Psa 69:9](#); [Joh 2:17](#)). Isaiah pictured Him preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken-hearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and giving the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ([Isa 61:1-3](#); [Luk 4:16-21](#)). Mourning was turned into joy when Jesus came into the presence of death. The poor woman "whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years," was loosed at His word. His gospel was indeed the message of good tidings. Isaiah pictured even that sweetest scene of all, the Good Shepherd blessing the little children, for "He shall gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom" ([Isa 40:11](#); [Mark 10:16](#)). Then Zechariah sings, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion," for he sees her lowly King entering Jerusalem, riding on an ass's colt, another Psalm adds the Hosannahs of the children. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" ([Zech 9:9](#); [Psa 8:2](#); [Mat 21:4,5](#)).

The prophets foresaw something of the character and extent of the Saviour's work. The light that was to shine forth from Zion was to be for all the world; Jew and Gentile alike were to be blessed. The Spirit of God was to be poured out upon all flesh ([Joel 2:28](#)). "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" ([Isa 52:10](#)). The picture of a victorious, triumphant Messiah was a familiar one to the Jews of our Saviour's time. So engrossed were they with this side of the picture that they did not recognise Him when He came, and John the Baptist said, "There standeth One among you *whom ye know not*." "Had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." But they ought to have known it, for the prophets who foretold His glory had spoken in no less certain tones of His lowliness, His rejection and His sufferings. "Behold," says Isaiah, "my Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high" ([Isa 52:13](#))-- when suddenly, what does he see in the next verse? "As many were astonished at Thee, His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." And how shall we picture the astonishment of the prophet as the vision of the

fifty-third chapter dawns upon him with all the majesty of the suffering Messiah? From the root of Jesse was to spring up a tender plant who was to be rejected by Israel. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" ([Isa 53:3](#)).

As the prophet's steadfast gaze is fixed upon the future, he sees this Holy One led "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, so He openeth not His mouth" ([Isa 53:7](#); see [Mat 27:12-14](#)). He sees Him dying a death by violence, for "He was cut off out of the land of the living" ([Isa 53:8](#)). Daniel takes up the same thought and tells us, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself" ([Dan 9:26](#)). And now once more a chorus of the prophets unite their voices to tell us the manner of His death. The Psalmist sees that He is to be betrayed by one of His own disciples-- "Yea, Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me" ([Psa 41:9](#)). Zechariah tells us of the thirty pieces of silver that were weighed for His price, and adds that the money was cast to the potter ([Zech 11:12,13](#); [Jer 19](#); [Mat 27:3-10](#)). He also sees the sheep scattered when the Shepherd was smitten ([Zech 13:7](#); [Mat 26:31,56](#)). Isaiah sees Him taken from one tribunal to another ([Isa 53:8](#); [Joh 18:24,28](#)). The Psalmist foretells the false witnesses called in to bear witness against Him ([Psa 27:12](#); [Mat 26:59,60](#)). Isaiah sees Him scourged and spit upon ([Isa 50:6](#); [Mat 26:67](#); [27:26-30](#)). The Psalmist sees the actual manner of His death, that it was by crucifixion, "They pierced My hands and My feet" ([Psa 22:16](#)). His being reckoned with criminals and making intercession for His murderers were alike foretold ([Isa 53:12](#); [Mark 15:27](#); [Luk 23:34](#)). So clear did the vision of the Psalmist become that he sees Him mocked by the passers-by ([Psa 22:6-8](#); [Mat 27:39-44](#)). He sees the soldiers parting His garments among them, and casting lots for His vesture ([Psa 22:18](#); [Joh 19:23,24](#)), and giving Him vinegar to drink in His thirst ([Psa 69:21](#); [Joh 19:28,29](#)). With quickened ear he hears His cry in the hour of His anguish, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" ([Psa 22:1](#); [Mat 27:46](#)), and His dying words, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit" ([Psa 31:5](#); [Luk 23:46](#)). And, taught by the Holy Gost, the Psalmist writes the words, "Reproach hath broken My heart" ([Psa 69:20](#)). John tells us that though

the soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves to hasten their death, "when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.... For these things were done, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again, They shall look on Him whom they pierced" ([Joh 19:32-37](#); [Ex 12:46](#); [Psa 34:20](#); [Zech 12:10](#)). Isaiah tells us that "though they had made His grave with the wicked"-- that is, intended to bury Him in the place where they buried malefactors [criminals]-- yet it was ordered otherwise, and He was actually buried "with the rich in His death." "For there came a rich man of Arimathaea named Joseph... and begged the body of Jesus... and laid it in his own new tomb" ([Isa 53:9](#); [Mat 27:57-60](#)).

But the vision of the prophets stretched beyond the Cross and the tomb, and embraced the resurrection and ascension and final triumph of the Saviour. David sings: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" ([Psa 16:10,11](#)). And Isaiah, after he has prophesied the humiliation and death of the Messiah, closes the same prophecy with these remarkable words: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" ([Isa 53:10,11](#)).

From the remotest past, the saints looked forward to events which still lie before us in the future. "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all" ([Jude 1:14](#)). The patriarch Job said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth... whom I shall see for myself" ([Job 19:25-27](#)). Zechariah had a vision of the Mount of Olives with the Lord standing there, King over all the earth, and all the saints with Him ([Zech 14:4-9](#)).

And as the prophecies of the past have been fulfilled, so certainly shall

also the prophecies of the future. "Now we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour" ([Heb 2:8,9](#)). And He says, "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

**JESUS** – is our Saviour. He redeems us by His death on the cross and by faith in Him we become children of God.

**John 1:29** <sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world/**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** <sup>3</sup> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures; <sup>4</sup> that he was buried; that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures;/ Jn 14 If you have seen me you have seen the Father/ **John 10:31-33** <sup>31</sup> The Jews again picked up rocks to stone him. <sup>32</sup> Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?" <sup>33</sup> The Jews answered him, "We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God."/ **Mark 2:7** <sup>7</sup> "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?"

**JESUS** – is our Great High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary. From there He cares for His people; He sends the Comforter; He empowers the church through the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.

**JESUS** – is the Lord of the Sabbath. He gathers his people together from Sabbath to Sabbath to remind them of who He is and unite them together in community through His love. As Creator He gives us our origin, our relationship to the Father and our identity as sons and daughters of God.

**JESUS** – is the holder of the keys of the grave. Not only does Christ care for us in life but when we fall asleep in death we fall asleep - 'in Christ'. (Where safer to fall asleep?)

**JESUS** – is the returning and resurrecting King. *'When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am'* (John 14:3) - is His promise. This is the blessed advent hope – to see Him face to face.

# A Quick Guide on Child & Adult Safeguarding for Elders

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As a world-wide church we affirm the dignity and worth of every human being and decry all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and family violence.

Because the church recognises the world-wide extent of the problem and the serious long term effects upon the lives of all involved, we believe the church must respond to abuse and family violence whether it occurs in the church or in the community. To remain indifferent and unresponsive is to condone, perpetuate and potentially extend such behaviour.

Most church denominations have a policy, in keeping with government guidelines, for safeguarding of children and adults. The Seventh-day Adventist church has produced such a policy for safeguarding the welfare of children and adults with its territory. It is called 'Keeping the Church Family Safe'.

## **Best practice**

Having a policy in and of itself will not act as a safeguard for children and adults unless it is put into practice.

Elders have an important role to play working with and assisting the Pastor in this vital area.

For best practice to be followed by the elder, he should:

- have a copy and have a knowledge of the KCFS Policy, ie Policy and procedures for your region, such as Ireland, Scotland, Wales etc (A)
- have a Disclosure and Barring Service check or regional equivalent by way of an example for the members and for yours and Child/Adult Protections.
- be familiar with the definitions of Abuse (A1)
- have a clear understanding of the churches safeguarding structure and roles and function of key individuals, ie Designated Safeguarding Person  
Disclosure Clerk

- know how to choose, manage and train staff church members and volunteers (B, C, D)
- be able to identify 'good working practices' (E)
- know how to respond to concerns (F) and how to care for those affected by abuse (G)
- understand how the policy is implemented at the various levels of the church (H)
- ensure easy access to important national organisations for guidance helplines and useful websites

### **Elders must practice the following code of conduct (appendix 1)**

Staff and volunteers are to conduct themselves in line with the following safeguarding code of conduct. Individuals should:

- maintain Christian standards of courtesy, morality and honesty
- work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- avoid any conduct which would lead to any reasonable person questioning their motivations and intentions
- behave in such a way as to avoid any unnecessary risk to the safety and wellbeing of self and others
- keep all aspects of their behaviour purely related to the requirements of their job role
- not allow relationships to develop that exploit or abuse their position of trust or power over a person
- comply with church policies, procedures and role descriptions issued to guide their work
- continually monitor and review their practice and behaviour to ensure they abide by church standards and policies
- be faithful stewards of all resources entrusted to them

To fulfil our mission we must reflect Christian care and compassion treating all with dignity and respect as individuals created in the image of God. Christians should always ensure that their behaviour properly reflects their high calling.



# Some Resources

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- Once you are registered as an elder at your conference or mission office you will be sent the 'Elder's Digest' quarterly. You should also visit the Elder and Deacon/nesses website - <http://www.eldersdigest.org/> which will alert you to many resources.
- You can download the Church Manual at <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/church-manual/>
- Two links that may be very profitable for theological perspectives and learning <http://www.perspectivedigest.org/> and <http://atsacademy.org/>
- Finally you may like to explore the GC Evangelism website - <http://www.gcevangelism.com/> It is a bit tricky and you may have to register with a password but there is a lot of sermon resources there once you get in.