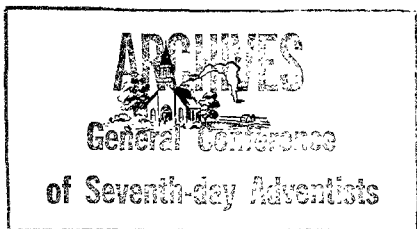


Seventh-day Adventist

CHURCH  
MANUAL



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## PREFACE

In fulfillment of the divine plan the Advent Movement began its prophetic journey toward the kingdom in the year 1844. Few in number, often with unhappy memories of having been cast out of their churches because they had accepted the Advent doctrine, the Movement's pioneers walked at first uncertainly. They were sure of the doctrines they held, but unsure as to the form of organization, if any, that they should adopt. Indeed, most of them so sharply remembered how strong, well-organized church bodies had used that strength to oppose the Advent truth, that they instinctively feared any centralized order and government. Nevertheless, certain pioneer leaders saw with increasing clarity that some kind of government was imperative if good order was to prevail and the Movement grow strong. Their conviction was greatly strengthened by messages coming from the pen of Ellen G. White.

The result was that in 1860 a church name, Seventh-day Adventist, was chosen, and a legal body created to hold church property. This was followed, in 1861, by the organization of our first conference, Michigan. This involved the organizing of local churches, with the members signing a church covenant, and the organizing of the various churches into one united body to constitute what we now call a local confer-

ence. Action was also taken to give identifying papers to the ministers, thus protecting the churches against impostors who might seek to prey upon them.

In 1863 the General Conference was organized, thus gathering into one a number of local conferences which had by that time been created. This set the Advent Movement on a coordinated, organized course.

As the General Conference met year by year, in session, actions began to be taken on various matters of church order, in an endeavor to spell out the proper rules for different situations in church life. The 1882 General Conference session voted to have prepared "instructions to church officers, to be printed in the *Review and Herald* or in tract form."—*Review and Herald*, Dec. 26, 1882. This action revealed the growing realization that church order was imperative if church organization was to function effectively, and that uniformity in such order required its guiding principles to be put into printed form. Accordingly the articles were published. But at the 1883 General Conference session, when it was proposed that these articles be placed in permanent form as a church manual, the idea was rejected. The brethren feared that it would possibly formalize the church and take from its ministers their freedom to deal with matters of church order as they might individually desire.

But this fear—doubtless reflecting the opposition to any kind of church organization that had existed twenty years before—evidently soon departed. The annual General Conference sessions continued to



take actions on matters of church order. In other words, they slowly but surely were producing material for a church manual. At times certain prominent brethren sought to gather together in book or booklet form the generally accepted rules for church life. Perhaps the most impressive of such endeavors was a 184-page book by none other than the pioneer J. N. Loughborough, entitled, *The Church, Its Organization, Order and Discipline*, which was published in 1907. Elder Loughborough's book, though in a sense a personal undertaking, dealt with many of the topics now covered by our *Church Manual*, and long held an honored place in the Movement.

Meanwhile the Movement continued to grow rapidly both at home and abroad. It was therefore in the best interests of the very order and proper uniformity that had long been our goal, that the General Conference Committee took action in 1931 to publish a church manual. J. L. McElhany, then vice-president of the General Conference for North America, and later president of the General Conference for fourteen years, was asked to prepare the manuscript. This manuscript was carefully examined by the General Conference Committee and then published in 1932. The opening sentence of the preface of that first edition well observes that "it has become increasingly evident that a Manual on church government is needed to set forth and preserve our denominational practices and polity." Note the word "preserve." Here was no attempt at a late date suddenly to create a whole pattern of church government. Rather, it was an endeavor, first to "preserve" all the good

actions taken through the years, and then to add such regulations as our increasing growth and complexity might require.

Realizing increasingly how important it is that everything "be done decently and in order" in our worldwide work, and that actions on church government should not only express the mind but have the full authority of the church, the 1946 General Conference session adopted the following procedure:

"All changes or revisions of policy that are to be made in the *Manual* shall be authorized by the General Conference session."—*General Conference Report*, No. 8, p. 197 (June 14, 1946).

However, in different parts of the world, local conditions sometimes call for special actions. Accordingly, the 1948 Autumn Council, which had taken action to submit suggested revisions of the *Church Manual* to the 1950 General Conference session, also voted:

"That each division, including the North American Division of the world field, prepare a 'Supplement' to the new *Church Manual* not in any way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed."—*Autumn Council Actions*, 1948, p. 19.

This present edition incorporates all revisions and additions accepted up to and including the 1975 General Conference session.

The 1946 General Conference session action that

all "changes or revisions of policy" in the *Manual* shall be "authorized by the General Conference session," reflects a conception of the authoritative status of General Conference sessions that has long been held among us. In the 1877 session this action was taken:

"Resolved, that the highest authority under God among Seventh-day Adventists is found in the will of the body of that people, as expressed in the decisions of the General Conference when acting within its proper jurisdiction; and that such decisions should be submitted to by all without exception, unless they can be shown to conflict with the word of God and the rights of individual conscience."—*Review and Herald*, vol. 50, No. 14, p. 106.

Ellen G. White, in 1909, wrote: "When, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer 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.

Long before this—in 1875—Mrs. White had written in the same vein: "The church of Christ is in constant peril. Satan is seeking to destroy the people of God, and one man's mind, one man's judgment, is not sufficient to be trusted."—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 445. She immediately added: "Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline, and all sub-

ject one to another, esteeming others better than themselves."

In these inspired words, in the 1877 General Conference action, and in the need for well-defined rules that are requisite to good order, is found not only the justification for this *Church Manual* but also its rightful claim upon us all, both ministry and laity.

GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

## CHAPTER 1

### THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

To belong to the church of God is a unique and soul-satisfying privilege. It is the divine purpose to gather out a people from the far corners of the earth to bind them into one body, the body of Christ, the church, of which He is the living head. All who are children of God in Christ Jesus are members of this body, and in this relationship they may enjoy fellowship with each other, and fellowship also with their Lord and Master.

The church is referred to in the Scriptures by such expressions as "the church of God" (Acts 20:28), "the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12), "the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15), the last name being the term chosen for the title of this introductory chapter.

The word "church" is used in the Biblical record in at least two senses: a general sense applying to the church in all the world (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:28), and also in a particular sense applying to the church in a city or a province. Observe in the following texts where local churches are mentioned: the church at Rome (Rom. 1:6, 7), the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2), the church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 1:1). Note also the reference made to provincial churches: the churches of Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1), the churches of Asia (1 Cor. 16:19), the churches of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41).

Christ, being the head of the church and its living Lord, has a deep love for the members of His body. In the church He is to be glorified (Eph. 3:21); through the church He will reveal the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). Day by day He "nourisheth the church" (Eph. 5:29), and His longing desire is to make of it "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

### No Wall of Partition

Christ sought by precept and example to teach the truth that with God there was to be no dividing wall between Israel and the other nations (John 4:4-42; 10:16; Luke 9:51-56; Matt. 15:21-28). The apostle Paul wrote, "The Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6, R.S.V.).

Nor was there to be among Christ's followers any preference of caste or nationality or race or color, for all men are of one blood, and "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The elect of God are a universal brotherhood, a new humanity, "all one in Christ Jesus" (John 3:16; Gal. 3:28).

"Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 225.

"No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. . . . In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 386.

### The Supreme Object of Christ's Regard

Those in His service who are called to leadership in the church are "to take care of the church" (1 Tim. 3:5); they are to "feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28); and upon the shoulders of some will rest "the care of all the churches," as was the experience of the beloved apostle to the Gentiles (2 Cor. 11:28). The following extracts from the Spirit of Prophecy illustrate the great love of Christ for His people gathered together into church fellowship.

"I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard. While He extends to all the world His invitation to come to Him and be saved, He commissions His angels to render divine help to every soul that cometh to Him in repentance and contrition, and He comes personally by His Holy Spirit into the midst of His church. 'If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and

in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. . . . Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.'

"Ministers and all the church, let this be our language, from hearts that respond to the great goodness and love of God to us as a people and to us individually, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and forever.' 'Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto His name; for it is pleasant. For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure. For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.' Consider, my brethren and sisters, that the Lord has a people, a chosen people, His church, to be His own, His own fortress, which He holds in a sin-stricken, revolted world; and He intended that no authority should be known in it, no laws be acknowledged by it, but His own.

### **The Opposition of the Enemy**

"Satan has a large confederacy, his church. Christ calls them the synagogue of Satan because the members are the children of sin. The members of Satan's church have been constantly working to cast off the divine law, and confuse the distinction between good and evil. Satan is working with great power in and through the children of disobedience to exalt treason and apostasy as truth and loyalty. And at this time the power of his satanic inspiration is moving the living agencies to carry out the great rebellion



against God that commenced in heaven.

“At this time the church is to put on her beautiful garments—‘Christ our righteousness.’ There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The beauty of holiness is to appear in its native luster in contrast with the deformity and darkness of the disloyal, those who have revolted from the law of God. Thus we acknowledge God, and recognize His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and throughout His earthly dominions. His authority should be kept distinct and plain before the world; and no laws are to be acknowledged that come in collision with the laws of Jehovah. If in defiance of God’s arrangements the world be allowed to influence our decisions or our actions, the purpose of God is defeated. However specious the pretext, if the church waver here, there is written against her in the books of heaven a betrayal of the most sacred trusts, and treachery to the kingdom of Christ. The church is firmly and decidedly to hold her principles before the whole heavenly universe and the kingdoms of the world; steadfast fidelity in maintaining the honor and sacredness of the law of God will attract the notice and admiration of even the world, and many will, by the good works which they shall behold, be led to glorify our Father in heaven. The loyal and true bear the credentials of heaven, not of earthly potentates. All men shall know who are the disciples of Christ, chosen and faithful, and shall know them when crowned and glorified as those who honored God and whom He has honored, bringing them into posses-

sion of an eternal weight of glory. . . .

### The Church Complete in Christ

“The Lord has provided His church with capabilities and blessings, that they may present to the world an image of His own sufficiency, and that His church may be complete in Him, a continual representation of another, even the eternal world, of laws that are higher than earthly laws. His church is to be a temple built after the divine similitude, and the angelic architect has brought his golden measuring rod from heaven, that every stone may be hewed and squared by the divine measurement, and polished to shine as an emblem of heaven, radiating in all directions the bright, clear beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The church is to be fed with manna from heaven, and to be kept under the sole guardianship of His grace. Clad in complete armor of light and righteousness, she enters upon her final conflict. The dross, the worthless material, will be consumed, and the influence of the truth testifies to the world of its sanctifying, ennobling character. . . .

“The Lord Jesus is making experiments on human hearts through the exhibition of His mercy and abundant grace. He is effecting transformations so amazing that Satan, with all his triumphant boasting, with all his confederacy of evil united against God and the laws of His government, stands viewing them as a fortress impregnable to his sophistries and delusions. They are to him an incomprehensible mystery. The angels of God, seraphim and cherubim, the powers commissioned to co-operate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and

joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven.

“To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display. The declaration in His intercessory prayer, that the Father’s love is as great toward us as toward Himself, the only-begotten Son, and that we shall be with Him where He is, forever one with Christ and the Father, is a marvel to the heavenly host, and it is their great joy. The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory. ‘Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 15-19.

## CHAPTER 2

### FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Seventh-day Adventists hold certain fundamental beliefs, the principal features of which, together with a portion of the scriptural references upon which they are based, may be summarized as follows:

1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament were given by inspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:15-17.)

2. That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. (Matt. 28:19; Isa. 44:6; 48:13; Matt. 12:32; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:8, 11.)

3. That Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father. While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on the earth as a man, exemplified in His life as our example the principles of righteousness, attested His

relationship to God by many mighty miracles, died for our sins on the cross, was raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father, where He ever lives to make intercession for us. (John 1:1, 14; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2; 4:14-16; 7:25.)

4. That every person, in order to obtain salvation, must experience the new birth. This comprises an entire transformation of life and character by the re-creative power of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:16; Matt. 18:3; Acts 2:37-39.)

5. That baptism is an ordinance of the Christian church, the proper form being by immersion, and should follow repentance and forgiveness of sins. By its observation faith is shown in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Rom. 6:1-6; Acts 16:30-33.)

6. That the will of God as it relates to moral conduct is comprehended in His law of ten commandments. These are great moral, unchangeable precepts, binding upon all men in every age. (Ex. 20:1-17.)

7. That the fourth commandment of this unchangeable law requires the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. This holy institution is at the same time a memorial of creation and a sign of sanctification, a sign of the believer's rest from his own works of sin, and his entrance into the rest of soul that Jesus promises to those who come to Him. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Heb. 4:1-10.)

8. That the law of ten commandments points out sin, the penalty of which is death. The law cannot save the transgressor from his sin, nor impart power to keep him from sinning. In infinite love and

mercy God provides a way whereby this may be done. He furnishes a substitute, even Christ the righteous one, to die in man's stead, making "him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). We are justified, not by obedience to the law, but by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. By accepting Christ, man is reconciled to God, justified by the blood of Christ for the sins of the past, and saved from the power of sin by His indwelling life. Thus the gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." This experience is wrought by the divine agency of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin and leads to the Sin Bearer, inducting believers into the new-covenant relationship, where the law of God is written on their hearts; and through the enabling power of the indwelling Christ, their lives are brought into conformity to the divine precepts. The honor and merit of this wonderful transformation belong wholly to Christ. (1 John 3:4; Rom. 7:7; 3:20; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 2:1, 2; Rom. 5:8-10; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Heb. 8:8-12.)

9. That God "only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16). Mortal man possesses a nature inherently sinful and dying. Eternal life is the gift of God through faith in Christ. (Rom. 6:23.) "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12). Immortality is bestowed upon the righteous at the second coming of Christ, when the righteous dead are raised from the grave and the living righteous translated to meet the Lord. Then it is that those accounted faithful "put on immortality." (1 Cor. 15:51-55.)

10. That the condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness. That all men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the resurrection. (Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4; John 5:28, 29.)

11. That there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. The resurrection of the just will take place at the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the unjust will take place a thousand years later, at the close of the millennium. (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:5-10.)

12. That the finally impenitent, including Satan, the author of sin, will, by the fires of the last day, be reduced to a state of nonexistence, becoming as though they had not been, thus purging the universe of God of sin and sinners. (Rom. 6:23; Mal. 4:1-3; Rev. 20:9, 10; Obadiah 16.)

13. That no prophetic period is given in the Bible to reach to the Second Advent, but that the longest one, the 2300 days of the prophet, Daniel, terminating in 1844, reaches to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary. (Dan. 8:14; 9:24, 25; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6.)

14. That the true sanctuary, of which the tabernacle on earth was a type, is the temple of God in heaven, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews 8 and onward, and of which the Lord Jesus, as our great high priest, is minister. The priestly work of our Lord is the antitype of the work of the Jewish priests of the former dispensation. That this heavenly sanctuary is the one to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, its cleansing being, as in the type, a work of judgment, beginning with the entrance of Christ as the high priest upon the judg-

ment phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, foreshadowed in the earthly service of cleansing the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. This work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844. Its completion will close human probation. (Dan. 7:9, 10; 8:14; Heb. 8:1, 2, 5; Rev. 20:12; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6.)

15. That God, in the time of the judgment and in accordance with His uniform dealing with the human family in warning them of coming events vitally affecting their destiny (Amos 3:6, 7), sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the Second Advent of Christ; that this work is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14, and that their threefold message brings to view a work of reform to prepare a people to meet Him at His coming. (Amos 3:6, 7; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 14:6-12.)

16. That the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, synchronizing with the period of the proclamation of the message of Revelation 14, is a time of investigative judgment, first, with reference to the dead, and second, with reference to the living. This investigative judgment determines who of the myriads sleeping in the dust of the earth are worthy of a part in the first resurrection, and who of its living multitudes are worthy of translation. (1 Peter 4:17, 18; Dan. 7:9, 10; Rev. 14:6, 7; Luke 20:35.)

17. That the followers of Christ should be a godly people, not adopting the unholy maxims nor conforming to the unrighteous ways of the world; not loving its sinful pleasures nor countenancing its follies. That believers should recognize their bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that



therefore they should clothe them in neat, modest, dignified apparel. Further, that in eating and drinking and in their entire course of conduct they should shape their lives as becometh followers of the meek and lowly Master. Thus the followers of Christ will be led to abstain from all intoxicating drinks, tobacco and other narcotics, and to avoid every body- and soul-defiling habit and practice. (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 9:25; 10:31; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 John 2:6; see also pp. 58, 62, 222, 223, 248.)

18. That the divine principle of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel is an acknowledgment of God's ownership in our lives, and that we are stewards who must render account to Him of all that He has committed to our possession. (Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 9:6-15.)

19. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). That the gift of the Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church (1 Cor. 1:5-7; 12:1-28; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; Amos 3:7; Hosea 12:10, 13). They recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. (See also pp. 59, 62.)

20. That the second coming of Christ is the great hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel and plan of salvation. His coming will be literal, personal, and visible. Many important events will be

associated with His return, such as the resurrection of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the purification of the earth, the reward of the righteous, and the establishment of His everlasting kingdom. The almost complete fulfillment of various lines of prophecy, particularly those found in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, with existing conditions in the physical, social, industrial, political, and religious worlds, indicates that Christ's coming "is near, even at the doors." The exact time of that event has not been foretold. Believers are exhorted to be ready, for "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man" will be revealed. (Luke 21:25-27; 17:26-30; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; James 5:1-8; Joel 3:9-16; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Dan. 7:27; Matt. 24:36, 44.)

21. That the millennial reign of Christ covers the period between the first and the second resurrection, during which time the saints of all ages will live with their blessed Redeemer in heaven. At the end of the millennium the Holy City with all the saints will descend to the earth. The wicked, raised in the second resurrection, will go up on the breadth of the earth with Satan at their head to compass the camp of the saints, when fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them. In the conflagration that destroys Satan and his host the earth itself will be regenerated and cleansed from the effects of the curse. Thus the universe of God will be purified from the foul blot of sin. (Rev. 20; Zech. 14:1-4; 2 Peter 3:7-10.)

22. That God will make all things new. The earth, restored to its pristine beauty, will become forever

the abode of the saints of the Lord. The promise to Abraham that, through Christ, he and his seed should possess the earth throughout the endless ages of eternity, will be fulfilled. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Christ, the Lord, will reign supreme, "and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea," will ascribe "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power," unto "him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 4:13; Heb. 11:8-16; Matt. 5:5; Isaiah 35; Rev. 21:1-7; Dan. 7:27; Rev. 5:13.)

## CHAPTER 3

### ORGANIZATION FOUNDED ON DIVINE PRINCIPLES

Correct organization is of God; it is based on divine principles. "System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 26. The myriads of stars that speed through space move in perfect order. In the structure of every plant that grows and in every living creature we have a marvelous demonstration of order and system.

In heaven there is absolute, faultless organization. "Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements."—*Ibid.*, p. 28. "Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God's people on the earth."—*Ibid.*, p. 26.

#### Biblical Basis for Organization

When God called the children of Israel out of Egypt and chose them as His peculiar people, He provided for them an impressive system of organization to govern their conduct in both civil and religious matters. "The government of Israel," we are told by the messenger of the Lord, "was characterized by the most thorough organization, wonderful alike for its completeness and its simplicity. The order so strikingly displayed in the perfection and arrangement of all God's created works was manifest in the Hebrew economy. God was the center of author-

ity and government, the sovereign of Israel. Moses stood as their visible leader, by God's appointment, to administer the laws in his name. From the elders of the tribes a council of seventy was afterward chosen to assist Moses in the general affairs of the nation. Next came the priests, who consulted the Lord in the sanctuary. Chiefs, or princes, ruled over the tribes. Under these were 'captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens,' and, lastly, officers who might be employed for special duties."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 374.

When we consider the New Testament church we find the same perfection in its organization. It could not be otherwise, for it is of divine origin. Christ Himself, who formed the church, "set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18). It was He who endowed them with gifts and talents adequate for the functions devolving upon them and organized them into a living, working body, of which He is the head.

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:4, 5).

"And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one

body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Cor. 12:4, 5, 12, 27, 28.)

### Vital Importance of Organization

Just as there can be no living, active human body unless its members are organically united and functioning together under central control, so there can be no living, growing, prospering church unless its members are organized into a united body, all performing their God-given duties and functions under the direction of a divinely constituted authority.

Without organization no institution or movement can prosper. A nation without organized government would soon be in chaos. A business enterprise without organization would fail; so would it be with the church: without organization it would disintegrate and perish.

For the sake of her healthy development and for the accomplishment of her glorious task of carrying the gospel of salvation to all the world Christ gave to His church a simple but effective system of organization. Success in her endeavors to achieve her mission depends on loyal adherence to this divine pattern.

"Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is

no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 489.

"How Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the word of God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time."—*Ibid.*

### Divine Purpose in Organization

"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."—*Ibid.*, p. 26.

"In our work we must consider the relation that each worker sustains to the other workers connected with the cause of God. We must remember that oth-

ers as well as ourselves have a work to do in connection with this cause. We must not bar the mind against counsel. In our plans for the carrying forward of the work, our mind must blend with other minds.

“Let us cherish a spirit of confidence in the wisdom of our brethren. We must be willing to take advice and caution from our fellow laborers. Connected with the service of God, we must individually realize that we are parts of a great whole. We must seek wisdom from God, learning what it means to have a waiting, watching spirit, and to go to our Saviour when tired and depressed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 500.

“As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church. Mark the prayer of Christ: ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The unity of the church is the convincing evidence that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 619, 620.

“‘By the cords of tender love and sympathy the Lord linked all men to Himself. Of us He says, Ye ‘are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.’ This relationship we should recognize. If we are bound up with Christ, we shall constantly manifest Christlike sympathy and forbearance toward those who are striving with all their God-given ability to bear their burdens, even as we endeavor to bear our appointed burdens.’”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 495.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE FORM OF ORGANIZATION IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Saviour's commission to the church to carry the gospel to all the world (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15) meant not only preaching the message but ensuring the welfare of those who accepted that message. This involved shepherding as well as housing the flock, and also meeting problems of relationship. Such a situation called for organization.

At first the apostles constituted a council that directed the activities of the infant church from Jerusalem (Acts 6:2; 8:14). When the company in that city became so large that the administration of its practical affairs became a problem, deacons were appointed to look after the business of the church (Acts 6:2-4).

Later, other congregations grew up, not only in Asia, but also in Europe, and this called for further steps in the matter of organization. We find that, in Asia Minor, elders were ordained "in every church" (Acts 14:23). It seems clear also from the divine record that the extension of the work throughout the various provinces of the Roman Empire called for the organization of churches into what might be called conferences which, it seems, included the churches in a specific province, such as "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2). Thus step by step the early church was organized. As the needs arose God guided

and directed the leaders of His work so that, in counsel with the church, a form of organization was developed which safeguarded the interests of the work of God as it extended to every land.

### Forms of Church Government

There are four generally recognized forms of church government. These may be summarized as follows:

1. Episcopal—the form of church government by bishops, usually with three orders of ministers, as bishops, priests, and deacons.

2. Papal—the form of church government in which the supreme authority is vested in the Pope. From him the church is governed by cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests. The local church or individual member has no authority in church administration.

3. Independent—the form of church polity that makes the local church congregation supreme and final within its own domain. This is usually referred to as congregationalism.

4. Representative — 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.

### Five Steps in Our Organization

Among Seventh-day Adventists there are five steps leading from the individual believer to the worldwide organization of the work of the church.

1. The local church, a united organized body of individual believers.

2. The local conference or local field, a united organized body of churches in a state, province, or territory.

3. The union conference or union field, a united body of conferences or fields within a larger territory.

4. The division, a section of the General Conference, embracing local or union conferences or fields in large areas of the world field.

5. The General Conference, the largest unit of organization, embracing all divisions and churches in all parts of the world.

Thus, beginning with the individual believer, we see in the church and in the local and union conference or section organizations a relationship that unites the whole worldwide company of believers into one common body in the General Conference, which operates through its various divisions.

“Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Con-

ference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 236, 237.

### **Relationships Between Organizations**

The General Conference is the highest organization in the administration of our worldwide work, and is authorized by its constitution to create subordinate organizations to promote specific interests in various sections of the world; it is therefore understood that all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world will recognize the General Conference in session, and the Executive Committee between sessions, as the highest authority, under God, among us. When differences arise in or between organizations and institutions, appeal to the next higher organization is proper till it reaches the General Conference in session, or the Executive Committee at the Annual Council. During the interim between these sessions the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop. The committee's decision may be reviewed at a session of the General Conference or at an Annual Council of the Executive Committee.

### **General Conference the Highest Authority**

"I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one

man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered."—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 492.

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### Membership on a Spiritual Basis

The serious, solemn obligations of church membership should be impressed on every one who applies for admittance to the church. All should be faithfully taught what it means to become a member of the body of Christ. It is due to each person seeking admittance to the church that he be informed of the principles for which the church stands. Thorough instruction in the fundamental teachings of the church should be given to every candidate for church membership before he is baptized and received into church fellowship. Only those giving evidence of having experienced the new birth, and who are enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus, are prepared for acceptance into church membership.

This is a spiritual relationship. It can be entered into only by those who are converted. Only in this way can the purity and spiritual caliber of the church be maintained. It is the duty of every minister to instruct those who accept the principles of the truth, that they may enter the church on a sound, spiritual basis.

“The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository

of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

### **Baptism a Gospel Requirement**

The New Testament establishes baptism as the rite for admission to the church. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

***Baptism a Prerequisite to Church Membership.***— "Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God's spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, 'The Lord our Righteousness.' Jer. 23:6.

"Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare

publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing.' And to them is fulfilled the promise, 'I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' 2 Cor. 6:17, 18. . . .

"The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, 'I believe,' but to practice the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character, that we prove our connection with Him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 91, 92.

**Mode of Baptism.**—Seventh-day Adventists believe in baptism by immersion; they practice this method only. When a person acknowledges his lost state as a sinner, sincerely repents of his sins, and experiences conversion, he may, when properly instructed, be accepted as a proper candidate for baptism and church membership.

**Ministers Thoroughly to Instruct Candidates Previous to Baptism.**—A minister should not present any candidate for baptism and church membership until he can satisfy the church by a public examination that the candidate has been well instructed and is ready to take such a step (see p. 61). In churches where frequent baptisms might reduce the significance



of a public examination, an alternative plan should be observed. The minister's work is not completed until he has thoroughly instructed the candidates, until they are familiar with all points of the faith and hence prepared to assume the responsibilities of church membership. Our churches should insist on the application of this as a guiding principle in the reception of new members. Our churches, through the church board, should insist that candidates be instructed individually and, in addition, wherever possible, that they be taught in a baptismal class.

"The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord's side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before baptism there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism."—*Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.

"When they give evidence that they fully understand their position, they are to be accepted."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 128.

**Public Examination.**—The church has a right to know concerning the faith and attitude of every individual applying for church membership. It is proper for a public examination of all candidates to

be held prior to their baptism, preferably in the presence of the church. If this should prove to be impracticable, then it should be before the church board or a committee appointed by the church board, such as the board of elders (see p. 89) whose report should then be rendered to the church prior to the baptism. In using the alternative mentioned under the preceding section opportunity should be given for candidates to give public expression of their desire to unite with the church and to be identified with and by the church.

***Baptismal Covenant.***—A summary of doctrinal beliefs, prepared especially for the instruction of candidates for baptism, together with Baptismal Vow and Certificate of Baptism have been adopted by the denomination as a baptismal covenant. A printed copy of this covenant, with the Certificate of Baptism properly completed, should be furnished all those who are accepted for church membership by baptism. In the case of those received on profession of faith, an appropriate certificate will also be given.

### **Doctrinal Instruction for Baptismal Candidates**

This summary of doctrinal beliefs is especially prepared for the instruction of candidates for baptism. Every candidate should thoroughly familiarize himself with the teachings contained in this outline and with the duties enjoined upon believers, demonstrating by practice his willing acceptance of all the doctrines taught by Seventh-day Adventists and the principles of conduct which are the outward expression

of these teachings, for it is "by their fruits ye shall know them."

1. The true and living God, the first person of the Godhead, is our heavenly Father, and He, by His Son, Christ Jesus, created all things. (Matt. 28:18, 19; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6; Eph. 3:9; Jer. 10:10-12; Heb. 1:1-3; Acts 17:22-29; Col. 1:16-18.)

2. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, and the eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour from sin; and man's salvation is by grace through faith in Him. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 3:16; Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:21; 2:5, 6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11, 12; Eph. 1:9-15; 2:4-8; Rom. 3:23-26.)

3. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is Christ's representative on earth, and leads sinners to repentance and to obedience of all God's requirements. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:1-10; Eph. 4:30.)

4. Through Christ, believers receive forgiveness of sins which are forsaken and confessed, and for which, as far as lies in their power, restitution is made. (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14, 15; 1 John 1:7-9; Isa. 55:6, 7; Eze. 33:15; Matt. 5:23, 24; 6:14, 15.)

5. The Bible is God's inspired word, and is the full, the sufficient, and the only basic rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Ps. 119:9, 11, 105, 130; 1 Thess. 2:13; Isa. 8:20; Jer. 15:16; Heb. 4:12.)

6. All who enter the kingdom of heaven must have experienced conversion, or the new birth, through which man receives a new heart and becomes a new creature. Thus, regardless of ethnic or social background, he becomes a member of "the whole family

in heaven and earth." (Matt. 18:3; John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eze. 36:26, 27; Heb. 8:10-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2; Acts 17:26; Eph. 3:15.)

7. Christ dwells in the regenerate heart, writing upon it the principles of God's law, leading the believer to delight to obey its precepts, and imparting power for such obedience. (2 Cor. 6:16; Ps. 40:8; Heb. 8:10-12; John 14:15; Col. 1:27; 3:16; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:14-21.)

8. Upon His ascension Christ began His ministry as high priest in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, which sanctuary is the antitype of the earthly tabernacle of the former dispensation. As in the type, a work of investigative judgment began as Christ entered the second phase of His ministry, in the most holy place, foreshadowed in the earthly service by the Day of Atonement. This work of the investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844, at the close of the 2300 years, and will end with the close of probation. (Heb. 4:14; 8:1, 2; Lev. 16:2, 29; Heb. 9:23, 24; Dan. 8:14; 9:24-27; Rev. 14:6, 7; 22:11.)

9. The second coming of Christ is the hope of the church, the climax of the gospel, and the goal of the plan of redemption, when Jesus will come literally, personally, and visibly, with all His holy angels. Many signs of the times testify that His coming is at hand. And the almost complete fulfillment of all the various lines of prophecy indicate that "he is near, even at the doors." (John 14:1-3; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 9:28; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 25:31; Luke 9:26; 21:25-33; Matt. 24:14, 36-39, 33, margin.)

10. The righteous dead will be raised to life at

Christ's Second Advent. Together with the righteous living, they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will go with Him to heaven, there to spend the one thousand years known as the millennium. (Rev. 1:7; John 5:25, 28, 29; Hosea 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:51-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 11:24, 25; 14:1-3; Rev. 20:6, 4, 5; Isa. 25:8, 9.)

11. The wicked who are living at the time of Christ's Second Advent will be slain by the brightness of His coming. These, with the wicked dead of all ages, will await the second resurrection, at the close of the one thousand years. (2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; Jude 14, 15; Rev. 20:5, 12, 15; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; Isa. 24:21, 22.)

12. At the end of the one thousand years, the following events will take place: (a) Christ and the righteous will descend from heaven, with the Holy City, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 10); (b) the wicked dead will be resurrected for final judgment (Rev. 20:11, 12); (c) the wicked will receive the final wages of sin when fire comes down from God out of heaven to consume them (Rev. 20:7-10, 14, 15); and (d) this fire, which destroys the works of sin, will purify the earth. (2 Peter 3:10-14; Mal. 4:1, 3; Rev. 20:8, 4.)

13. The earth, cleansed by fire and renewed by the power of God, will become the eternal home of the redeemed. (2 Peter 3:9-13; Isa. 65:17-25; 35:1-10; 45:18; Matt. 5:5; Mal. 4:1-3; Prov. 11:31.)

14. The seventh day of the week is the eternal sign of Christ's power as Creator and Redeemer, and is therefore the Lord's day, or the Christian Sabbath, constituting the seal of the living God. It should be

observed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 16:23-31; 20:8-11; John 1:1-3, 14; Eze. 20:12, 20; Mark 1:21-32; 2:27, 28; Isa. 58:13; Luke 4:16; 23:54-56; 24:1; Acts 17:2; Heb. 4:9-11; Isa. 66:22, 23; Lev. 23:32.)

15. The tithe is holy unto the Lord, and is God's provision for the support of His ministry. Freewill offerings are also part of God's plan for the support of His work throughout the world. (Lev. 27:30-32; Mal. 3:8-12; Num. 18:20-28; Matt. 23:23; Prov. 3:9, 10; 1 Cor. 9:13, 14; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7; Ps. 96:8. See also pp. 60, 86, 192-195.)

16. Immortality comes only through the gospel, and is bestowed as a gift from God at Christ's second coming. (1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 51-55; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 John 5:11, 12.)

17. The condition of man in death is one of unconsciousness. All men, good and evil alike, remain in the grave from death to the resurrection. (Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 115:17; 146:3, 4; Job 14:10-12, 21, 22; 17:13; John 11:11-14; 1 Thess. 4:13; John 5:28, 29.)

18. The Christian is called unto sanctification, and his life should be characterized by carefulness in deportment and modesty and simplicity in dress. (1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3, 7; 5:23; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:15, 3-5; Isa. 3:16-24; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10. See also pp. 37, 223.)

19. The Christian should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. He will therefore honor God by caring for his body intelligently, partaking in moderation of that which is good and avoiding the use of that which is harmful, abstaining from all

unclean foods, from the use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco in any of its forms, and from the abuse or misuse of narcotics and all other drugs. (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20; 9:25; 10:31; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:17-21; 6:7, 8; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 Cor. 10:1-11; Lev. 11:1-8. See also pp. 36, 37, 62, 222, 223, 248.)

20. The church is to come behind in no gift, and the presence of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy is to be one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. (1 Cor. 1:5-7; 12:1-28; Amos 3:7; Hosea 12:10, 13; Rev. 12:17; 19:10. See also p. 37.)

Seventh-day Adventists recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White.

21. The Bible teaches a definite church organization. The members of this organization are under sacred obligation to be subject thereunto, loyally to support it, and to share in its maintenance. They are admonished not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. (Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 1:10-23; 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 14:33, 40; Titus 1:5-9; Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 12:12-28; 16:1-3; Heb. 10:25; Acts 4:32-35; 6:1-7.)

22. Baptism by immersion typifies the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and openly expresses faith in His saving grace and the renunciation of sin and the world, and is recognized as a condition of entrance into church membership. (Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41-47; 8:35-39; 16:32, 33; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:1-3. See also p. 52.)

23. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper commemorates the Saviour's death; and participation by members of the body is essential to Christian growth and fellowship. It is to be preceded by the ordinance of

foot washing as a preparation for this solemn service. (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; John 6:48-56; 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 11:27-30.)

24. In the Christian life there is complete separation from worldly practices, such as card playing, theatergoing, dancing, etc., which tend to deaden and destroy the spiritual life. (2 Cor. 6:15-18; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; Eph. 5:8-11; Col. 3:5-10. See also pp. 225-230.)

25. Through the study of the Word God speaks to us, imparting light and strength; and through prayer the soul is united with God. These are Heaven's ordained means for obtaining victory in the conflict with sin and for the development of Christian character. (Ps. 19:7, 8; 119:130; John 6:63; 17:17; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1; Ps. 55:17; Isa. 50:4.)

26. Every church member is under sacred command from Jesus to use his talents in personal soul-winning work in helping to give the gospel to all the world. When this work is finished Jesus will come. (Matt. 25:14-29; 28:18-20; Rev. 22:17; Isa. 43:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Rom. 10:13-15; Matt. 24:14.)

27. In accordance with God's uniform dealing with mankind, warning them of coming events that will vitally affect their destiny, He has sent forth a proclamation of the approaching return of Christ. This preparatory message is symbolized by the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, and meets its fulfillment in the great Second Advent Movement today. This has brought forth the remnant, or Seventh-day Adventist Church, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. (Amos 3:7; Matt. 24:



29-34; Rev. 14:6-10; Zeph. 3:13; Micah 4:7, 8; Rev. 14:12; Isa. 26:2; Rev. 22:14.)

### Baptismal Vow and Baptism

*Baptismal Vow.*—In the presence of the church or in the presence of a properly appointed body (see pp. 53, 54), the following questions should be posed and answered in the affirmative by candidates for baptism, and by those being received on profession of faith.

1. Do you believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit?

2. Do you accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, and believe that through faith in His shed blood men are saved from sin and its penalty?

3. Renouncing the world and its sinful ways, have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, and do you believe that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven your sins and given you a new heart?

4. Do you accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, recognizing Him as your Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and do you claim His promise to strengthen you by His indwelling Spirit, so that you may receive power to do His will?

5. Do you believe that the Bible is God's inspired word, and that it constitutes the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian?

6. Do you accept the Ten Commandments as still binding upon Christians; and is it your purpose, by the power of the indwelling Christ, to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the

**Sabbath of the Lord?**

7. Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that you are to honor God by caring for your body, avoiding the use of that which is harmful, abstaining from all unclean foods, from the use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco in any of its forms, and from the abuse or misuse of narcotics and all other drugs? (See pp. 36, 37, 58, 222, 223, 248.)

8. Do you accept the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and do you believe that the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church? (See pp. 37, 59.)

9. Is the soon coming of Jesus the blessed hope in your heart, and is it your settled determination to prepare to meet Him in peace, as well as to help others to get ready for His glorious appearing?

10. Do you believe in church organization, and is it your purpose to support the church by your tithes and offerings, your personal effort, and influence? (See also pp. 37, 58, 88, 204-207.)

11. Do you accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion, and do you desire to be so baptized as a public expression of your faith in Christ and in the forgiveness of your sins? (See also p. 59.)

12. Knowing and understanding the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is it your purpose, by the grace of God, to order your life in harmony with these principles?

13. Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy, into which people of every nation, race, and language are

invited and accepted, and do you desire membership in its fellowship?

*Welcoming Candidates.*—After the candidates have satisfactorily answered the foregoing questions, or assurance has been given to the church that such answers have already been given, the church body should be asked to vote on their acceptance into the church, subject to baptism, which ordinance should not be unduly delayed.

*Receiving Members Who Are Not Known.*—In preparing for the baptism of his converts, an evangelist should invite the pastor or elder to visit his baptismal classes and become acquainted with his converts. Such contacts will enable the church to be better prepared to receive the new members into church fellowship. This general procedure should not apply in the case of isolated believers who wish to unite with the conference church.

*Baptismal Ceremony.*—At this ceremony the deacons should make the necessary preparation and assist the male candidates into and out of the water. The deaconesses should assist all female candidates. (See pp. 94, 96.) Care should be exercised to see that proper attire is provided for the candidates. Robes of suitable heavy material are preferable. If such are not available, the candidates should dress in such a manner that they will be modestly attired. The baptismal ceremony should be followed by extending the right hand of fellowship and the giving of a few words of welcome by the pastor or elder in behalf of the entire church.

## Transferring Members

*Transferring Church Members.*—When a church member moves from one locality to another for a period of longer than six months, he should, after becoming located, make immediate application for a letter of transfer to a church near his new place of residence, or in case he is isolated, the customary plan is to make application to join the conference or local field church. Such a letter of transfer is valid for three months from date of issue, and unless acted upon within that time is void. In cases where members transfer from one continent to another, six months would be the period of validity for a letter of transfer.

*Method of Granting Letters of Transfer.*—Application for a letter should be made to the clerk of the church with which the member desires to unite. The clerk then sends the request to the clerk of the church from which the member desires to be transferred. On receiving this, the clerk brings the request to the pastor, if he is an ordained minister, or to the church elder, who in turn lays the request before the church board. After due consideration the board recommends to the church, favorably or otherwise, concerning the application. (See pp. 65, 67, 89, 97, 98, 132.) The pastor or elder then brings the recommendation to the attention of the church, announcing that this is the first reading. Final action is taken the following week, when the request is again presented and a vote of the church is taken. The purpose of allowing one week's interval is to give any member opportunity to object to the granting

of the letter if he knows of any valid reason for so doing. This objection should not ordinarily be publicly stated, but be lodged with the pastor or elder, whose duty it is to call the church board to consider the objection. The objector should be given opportunity to appear before the board to state his objections. If they are not based on valid grounds, he should be admonished to withdraw them: On the other hand, if they are based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the church board to institute such investigation as may be needed. In such case the final action on granting the letter by the church is deferred until the matter has been satisfactorily settled.

If the difficulties involve personal relationships every effort should be made to effect reconciliation. If public offenses are involved, disciplinary measures may be called for. If there is some spiritual lapse, efforts should be made to restore the member in question.

***Clerk to Make Out Letter.***—When the church has granted the letter of transfer, the church clerk fills out the regular form used for this purpose, and forwards it to the clerk of the church which the member proposes to join. The clerk of this church passes the letter to the pastor or church elder, who presents it first to the church board for recommendation, after which the request is presented to the church at its next regular service. It is then held over for one week, when final action is taken by vote accepting the person into membership. The clerk of the receiving church then writes the member's name in the church roll, with the date of admittance. The clerk also fills out the return portion of the church

letter, certifying that the member has been accepted, and sends it back to the clerk of the church from which the member was transferred. (See also pp. 64, 97, 98.)

***Membership During Interval of Transfer.***—Under no circumstances shall the clerk of the church granting the letter remove the member's name from the church roll until the return portion of the letter has been received, certifying that the member has been voted into the fellowship of the receiving church. To follow any other plan is to deprive the person of church membership during the period of transfer and is a procedure which should never be followed. The clerk, the elder, the minister, and the conference president are all responsible for seeing that the above plan is uniformly adhered to in all the churches.

***The Receiving of Members Disturbed by World Conditions.***—On account of world conditions there may be instances of persons concerning whom no communication can be sent to or received from the church where their membership is recorded. In such cases the church where they are residing, in counsel with the local conference or local field, should satisfy themselves as to the standing of these individuals, and then receive them upon profession of faith. If later the way opens to communicate with their former church, a letter should be sent by the receiving church giving information of what has been done.

***Counted in Statistical Reports.***—At the end of the quarter and of the year, when church statistical reports are made up, all members to whom letters

have been granted, but whose return certificates have not been received, are to be counted in the membership of the church granting the letters. When the return certificate has been received, certifying that the member has been accepted by the receiving church, the name is then dropped from the list of the granting church and is not included in the next quarterly statistical report. The receiving church will place the name on its roll and the member will be included in its next quarterly report.

*If Member Is Not Accepted.*—The church to which the letter of transfer is addressed is under obligation to receive the member, unless it knows a good and sufficient reason why it should not extend the privilege of membership. In case it does not receive the member, the church clerk should return the letter to the granting church, with a full explanation of the reasons. The person's membership then rests just where it was before the request for transfer was made, namely, with the granting church. The member should cooperate with the church in clearing up any questions that arise out of the refusal of the objecting church to receive him as a member.

*No Letters to Members Under Discipline.*—In no case should a church vote a letter of transfer to a member who is under discipline. To do so would be a violation of the spirit of the golden rule.

*Church Letters Granted Only to Those in Good and Regular Standing.*—Church letters are granted only to members who are in good and regular standing. Qualifying statements on church letters are out of order. If a member who has moved away from his home church, has grown cold and indif-

ferent, the church elder may, to be clear in the matter of granting a letter of transfer, take up the question with the elder of the church in the community to which the member has moved, before a transfer is granted.

***Not to Vote Letter Without Member's Approval.***—In no case should a church vote a letter of transfer contrary to the desire or request of the member in question, nor should any church accept into membership a member by a letter granted under such circumstances.

Church membership is the personal relationship of an individual to the body of Christ. The church should recognize this relationship and avoid any course which might be construed as arbitrary.

On the other hand, the member is under obligation to recognize the welfare of the church, and to make every effort to relieve the church of the problems incident to absentee members. When he moves from the area in which his church membership is held, it is his duty cheerfully to cooperate in this matter by requesting a letter of transfer.

***Church Boards Cannot Grant Letters.***—A church board does not have authority to vote letters of transfer or to receive members from other churches by letter. Their powers in this matter are limited to making recommendations to the church. Action on all transfers of membership, favorably or otherwise, should be taken by the church. (See pp. 64, 89.) The clerk has no authority to drop or add names to the church roll except following a vote of the church. When a member dies, no action is necessary



in dropping the name, the clerk simply recording the death and its date.

### Conference or Field Church

Isolated members should unite with the conference or local field church, which is a body organized for the benefit of scattered believers who are otherwise without church privileges. Aged and infirm members who live adjacent to a local church organization should be members of the local church. It is the duty and responsibility of the local church to minister to such members. Such should not be transferred to the conference or field church, which is not designed to function in place of the local church. Although conference and field officers are the officers of their field churches, they should hold their membership in the church in the locality in which they reside. The conference or local field church is not intended to provide a church home for conference or local field workers. Ministers and workers should unite with the local churches in the community in which they reside.

The conference or field president shall be the presiding elder of his conference or field church and the work normally carried by the church clerk and the church treasurer shall be handled by the secretary-treasurer of the conference or field. Any business normally conducted by a local church and its board shall, in the conference or field church for which in the nature of the case there is no board, be conducted by the conference or field committee. They shall also appoint the delegates from the conference or field church to attend their respective sessions.

### Organized Companies

Where a number of isolated believers reside in close proximity to one another, they may be organized into a company of believers for fellowship and united worship.

The organization of such a company may be effected by the district pastor or by some other minister appointed by the conference or mission committee, who, in counsel with the local members, shall appoint from the baptized membership of the company a leader and a treasurer.

All other appointments such as Sabbath school officers, lay activities officers, and Missionary Volunteer Society officers should be made by vote of the baptized members of the company at a meeting presided over by the district leader or by such person as may be authorized by the conference or mission committee.

The leader of such a company shall not be ordained to office. He does not have the authority to perform those functions that are vested in an elder of the church.

The treasurer of the company shall keep careful record of all moneys received and disbursed. He shall send promptly each month all tithes and offerings, other than funds collected for local purposes, to the conference or field treasurer, who is also the treasurer of the conference or field church.

Since all baptized members of an organized company are members of the conference or field church, the company does not possess the right to administer church discipline. All such matters must be referred to the conference or field committee, which consti-

tutes the board of the conference, or field church, the president being the elder of that church.

Such a company of believers should grow and eventually develop to the point that would call for a regular church organization. The company leadership should therefore promote and foster all the church campaigns and activities that are usually carried forward by regular churches, thus preparing the members for the wider responsibilities that are associated with full church organization.

### Queries Concerning Receiving and Dropping Members

*Receiving Members on Profession of Faith.*—Great care should be exercised in receiving members on profession of faith, especially if they have formerly been members of some other church in the denomination. Instances are not lacking of persons disfellowshipped from some church, later presenting themselves to other churches for membership on profession of faith. When a person applies for membership on profession of faith, earnest inquiries should be made concerning his former experience. The church officers should seek the advice and help of the conference president. Sufficient time should be taken to extend the investigation as far as needed to reveal all the facts. If it is found that the member has been disfellowshipped from another church within the denomination, contact should be made with that church, in an endeavor to clear the way for his acceptance again into church relationship. After this has been done he may, if now living a consistent Christian life, be received into church membership,

either by profession of faith or by rebaptism, as the circumstances in the case may indicate.

In case a person applies for membership on profession of faith, and it is found that he is still a member of some other church in the denomination, no steps should be taken to receive him until the church holding his membership grants him a letter of transfer. If the church refuses to grant such a letter, and the member feels he is unjustly denied a letter, he can appeal to the conference committee of the conference where his membership is held. The church where his membership is held or the conference committee are the proper ones to decide whether his past conduct has been such that he is entitled to a church letter. Following such a course will result in a higher appreciation of the sacredness of church membership and in wrongs being made right where this is called for.

***Dropping Names.***—Names should be dropped from the list only on a vote of the church, by granting letters of transfer, or by disfellowshipping, except in the case of deceased members. (See also p. 98.)

***No Retired Membership List.***—Each church should have but one membership list. Under no circumstances should the practice of keeping a retired list be followed. The church roll should contain the names of all members. Names should be added to this list only on the vote of the church after the individual concerned has requested membership by profession of faith or baptism or letter.

### **Rebaptism**

Although the church does not insist on the re-

baptism of those coming to us from other religious communions who have already been baptized by immersion and who have lived consistent Christian lives in harmony with the light they then had, it is recognized that rebaptism is desirable.

*Of Converts From Other Religious Communions.*—“This is a subject which each individual must conscientiously take his position upon in the fear of God. This subject should be carefully presented in the spirit of tenderness and love. Then the duty of urging belongs to no one but God; give God a chance to work with His Holy Spirit upon the minds, so that the individual will be perfectly convinced and satisfied in regard to this advanced step. A spirit of controversy and contention should never be allowed to come in and prevail on this subject. Do not take the Lord’s work out of His hands into your own hands. Those who have conscientiously taken their position upon the commandments of God, will, if rightly dealt with, accept all essential truth. But it needs wisdom to deal with human minds. Some will be longer in seeing and understanding some kindred truths than others, especially will this be the case in regard to the subject of rebaptism, but there is a divine hand that is leading them—a divine spirit impressing their hearts, and they will know what they ought to do and do it.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 373, 374.

*Of Church Members and Former Seventh-day Adventists.*—In the case of a member who has moved away from his home church, and who has grown cold or indifferent and even given up the faith, yet whose name is still on the books of his home church,

should he regain his Christian experience and desire to be rebaptized, the pastor or elder of the church with which he now associates should, before baptizing him, communicate with the church where his membership is held, notifying it of the revived spiritual standing of the member in question, and make the necessary adjustment in the matter of his membership. To avoid any confusion, such a person should not be taken into the membership of the receiving church without this step being taken.

When members have fallen away in apostasy and have lived in such a manner that the faith and principles of the church have been publicly violated, they should, in case of reconversion and application for church membership, enter the church as in the beginning, by baptism. (See also p. 269, para. 9.)

“The Lord calls for a decided reformation. And when a soul is truly reconverted, let him be rebaptized. Let him renew his covenant with God, and God will renew His covenant with him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 375.

## CHURCH OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Choosing officers for the church or conference is an important matter. The prosperity of the work depends largely upon its leadership. The greatest care should be exercised in calling men and women into positions of sacred responsibility. The following qualifications should be earnestly sought in those who are nominated for church office.

### Their Qualifications

*Moral Fitness.*—"Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (Ex. 18:21).

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

"Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:7).

"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

*Religious Fitness.*—"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

A bishop [elder] then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:12-16).

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou



shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:5-11).

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine. . . . In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:1, 7, 8).

*The Church Must Be Guarded and Fed.*—The apostle Paul in his administrative work called together "the elders of the church." He then counseled them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse

things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:17, 28-31).

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:1-3).

*Respect and Deference Due to Ministers and Officers of the Church.*—"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5:12, 13).

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17).

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:7, 17).

"The Thessalonian believers were greatly annoyed by men coming among them with fanatical ideas and doctrines. Some were 'disorderly, working not at all, but . . . busybodies.' The church had been

properly organized, and officers had been appointed to act as ministers and deacons. But there were some, self-willed and impetuous, who refused to be subordinate to those who held positions of authority in the church. They claimed not only the right of private judgment, but that of publicly urging their views upon the church. In view of this, Paul called the attention of the Thessalonians to the respect and deference due to those who had been chosen to occupy positions of authority in the church.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 261, 262.

“Many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship and are loath to submit to restraint and discipline. Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church, and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice. Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 17.

**Men Not to Be Hurried Into Office.**—“In many places we meet men who have been hurried into responsible positions as elders of the church when they are not qualified for such a position. They have not proper government over themselves. Their influence is not good. The church is in trouble continually in consequence of the defective character of the leader. Hands have been laid too suddenly upon these men.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 406, 407.

“The apostle Paul writes to Titus: ‘Set in order

the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop [elder] must be blameless, as the steward of God.' It would be well for all our ministers to give heed to these words and not to hurry men into office without due consideration and much prayer that God would designate by His Holy Spirit whom He will accept.

"Said the inspired apostle: 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.' In some of our churches the work of organizing and of ordaining elders has been premature; the Bible rule has been disregarded, and consequently grievous trouble has been brought upon the church. There should not be so great haste in electing leaders as to ordain men who are in no way fitted for the responsible work."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 617.

***Those Opposed to Unity Not Suitable for Office.***—  
"There have of late arisen among us men who profess to be the servants of Christ, but whose work is opposed to that unity which our Lord established in the church. They have original plans and methods of labor. They desire to introduce changes into the church to suit their ideas of progress and imagine that grand results are thus to be secured. These men need to be learners rather than teachers in the school of Christ. They are ever restless, aspiring to accomplish some great work, to do something that will bring honor to themselves. They need to learn that most profitable of all lessons, humility and faith in Jesus. . . .

“Teachers of the truth, missionaries, officers in the church, can do a good work for the Master, if they will but purify their own souls by obeying the truth. . . . As members of the body of Christ, all believers are animated by the same spirit and the same hope. Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world, and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course. Paul’s instructions were not written alone for the church in his day. God designed that they should be sent down to us.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 238, 239.

*Unsafe to Choose Men Who Refuse to Cooperate With Others.*—“God has placed in the church, as His appointed helpers, men of varied talents, that through the combined wisdom of many, the mind of the Spirit may be met. Men who move in accordance with their own strong traits of character, refusing to yoke up with others who have had a long experience in the work of God, will become blinded by self-confidence, unable to discern between the false and the true. It is not safe for such ones to be chosen as leaders in the church; for they would follow their own judgment and plans, regardless of the judgment of their brethren. It is easy for the enemy to work through those who, themselves needing counsel at every step, undertake the guardianship of souls in their own strength, without having learned the lowliness of Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 279. (See also p. 87.)

### The Church Elder

*The Office an Important One.*—In the work and organization of the church, if a pastor has not been

provided by the conference or mission, the office of elder ranks as the highest and most important. In the foregoing paragraphs the moral and religious fitness of elders as well as other church officers has been set forth.

*A Religious Leader of the Church.*—The local elder must be one recognized by the church as a strong religious and spiritual leader, and must have a good reputation “with them that are without.” In the absence of a pastor, he is the religious leader of the church. By precept and example he must continually seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience.

*Capable of Ministering the Word.*—The elder should be capable of conducting the services of the church. It is not always possible for the conference to supply ministerial help for all the churches; consequently the elder must be prepared to minister in word and doctrine. However, he should not be chosen primarily because of his position in the world, nor because of his ability as a speaker, but because of his consecrated life and ability as a leader. This should be taken into consideration by the nominating committee in preparing its report at the time of the church election.

*Elected for One Year.*—Like all other church officers, the elder is elected for one year: this is his term of office. Usually it is not advisable for one man to serve indefinitely, but he may be re-elected to repeated terms of service. The church is under no obligation, however, to re-elect, but may choose another for the eldership whenever a change seems

advisable. Upon the election of a new elder, the former elder no longer functions as elder. The former elder, however, may be elected as a deacon, Sabbath school superintendent, or to any other church office.

**Ordination of Local Elder.**—Election to the office of elder does not in itself qualify a man as elder; he must also be ordained. Until this is done he is not an elder and has no authority to function as such. During the interim between his election and his ordination he may, however, perform the functions of a church leader. Before entering upon the work of administering the ordinances of the church, he must be ordained. The ordination service is performed only by an ordained minister who holds credentials from the conference. It is not customary or advisable for an ordained minister visiting from another conference or local field to ordain local church elders, unless requested to do so by the officers of the conference in which he is visiting. Nor is it customary for a sustentation minister to ordain church elders unless requested to do so by the conference officers. Having been once ordained as a church elder, a man does not need to be ordained again upon re-election, or upon election as elder in some other church, provided that in the meantime he has maintained good and regular standing in the church. One who has been ordained as elder may later function as a deacon without further ordination. His ordination to the higher office qualifies him also for the office of lower degree.

**Work of Church Elder Is Local.**—The authority and work of an ordained local elder are confined to

the church electing him. It is not permissible for a conference committee by vote to confer on a local church elder the status of an ordained minister by asking him to serve other churches as elder. If there exists the need for such service, the conference committee may recommend to the church or churches requiring his services that they elect him and ask him to serve them also. Thus by election one individual may, when necessary, serve more than one church at a time. When such an arrangement is made it should be in counsel with the conference committee. However, this authority is inherent in the church and not in the conference committee. The only way a man may be qualified for serving the church at large is by ordination to the gospel ministry. (See also p. 85.)

***To Foster All Lines of Missionary Work.***—Under the pastor and in the absence of a pastor, not only is the local elder a spiritual leader of the church, he is responsible for fostering all branches and departments of the work. The Sabbath school work, the Missionary Volunteer work, the missionary activities of the church, the interests of the church school, and every other line of activity should receive his attention, his advice, and his encouragement. He should sustain a helpful relationship to all other church officers, and they to him.

***Relationship to the Ordained Minister.***—In a case where the conference committee assigns an ordained minister to labor as a pastor of a church, he should be considered as the ranking officer, and the local elder as his assistant. Their work is closely related;



they should therefore work together harmoniously. The minister should not gather to himself all lines of responsibility, but should share these with the local elder and other officers. The minister serving the church regularly as pastor acts as the chairman of the church board. (See also pp. 107, 183, 184.) There may be circumstances, however, when it would be advisable for the elder to act in this capacity. The pastoral work of the church should be shared by both. The elder should, in counsel with the minister, carry much of the pastoral responsibility, visiting the church members, ministering to the sick, and encouraging those who are disheartened. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on this part of an elder's work. As an undershepherd he should exercise a constant vigilance over the flock for which he is responsible. If the appointed pastor is a licensed minister, the local church or churches that he serves should elect him as an elder. (See also p. 185.)

Because the pastor is appointed to the position in the local church by the conference, he serves the church as a conference worker, and is responsible to the conference committee, yet he maintains a sympathetic and cooperative relation to and works in harmony with all the plans and policies of the local church. Because the elder is elected by the local church he is naturally responsible to that body, and also to its board. (See pp. 84, 183.)

*Conduct of Church Services.*—Under the pastor, or in the absence of a pastor, the elder is responsible for the services of the church. He must either conduct them or arrange for someone to do so. The communion services must always be conducted by an or-

dained minister or by the elder himself. Only ordained ministers or ordained elders holding office are qualified to do this.

The pastor usually serves as chairman of the business meeting, and in his absence the elder shall officiate as chairman.

*The Baptismal Service.*—In the absence of an ordained pastor, the elder shall request the president of the conference or local field to arrange for the administration of the rite of baptism to those desiring to unite with his church. (See also p. 63.)

*The Marriage Ceremony.*—In the marriage ceremony the charge, vows, and declaration of marriage are given only by an ordained minister. Either an ordained minister, licensed minister, or a local elder may officiate in delivering the sermonet, offering the prayer, or in giving the blessing. It should be remembered, however, that in some countries or states a minister must be legally appointed and registered in order to conduct the marriage service. In many lands he may, so far as the public is concerned, perform the ceremony in the church, but the marriage contract is legally signed by the district registrar, who usually sits in the vestry and listens to the approved form of marriage declaration. In still other lands, the minister cannot perform the ceremony at all, for it is recognized as a state responsibility and is looked upon as a civil contract. In such cases our members usually retire to the home or place of worship, where a special service is conducted by a minister, to seek the blessing of the Lord upon the couple. (See also pp. 233, 234, 264-269.)

*To Cooperate With the Conference.*—All church officers, including the pastor and elder, should cooperate fully with the conference officers and departmental secretaries in carrying out all local, union, division, and General Conference plans. They should inform the church of all regular and special offerings, and should promote all the programs and activities of the church.

The elder should work very closely with the church treasurer, and see that all conference funds are remitted to the conference treasurer at the close of each month. He should give his personal attention to seeing that the church clerk's report is sent promptly to the conference secretary at the close of each quarter.

He should regard all correspondence from the conference office as important. Letters calling for announcements to the church should be presented at the proper time.

The elder should see that delegates to conference sessions are elected, and that the names of such delegates are sent to the conference office by the clerk. As a wise counselor he should help every officer in the church to measure up fully to his responsibility in cooperating with the conference, in carrying out all plans and policies, and in seeing that all reports are accurately and promptly forwarded.

*To Foster Worldwide Work.*—Another important feature of the elder's work is to foster our world mission work. This he should do by making a careful study of our worldwide work and presenting its needs to the church. He should talk with and encourage the church members to take a personal part

in both supporting and working for the cause of missions. A kindly, tactful attitude on the part of the elder will do much to encourage liberality on the part of the church members both in the regular church services and in the Sabbath school.

**To Foster Tithe Paying.**—The elder can do much to encourage the church members to pay a faithful tithe, but only if he himself is a faithful tithepayer. A man who fails to set an example in this important matter should not be elected to the position of elder or to any other church office. (See also p. 207.) Tithe paying can be fostered by public presentation of the scriptural obligations of stewardship and by personal labor with the members. Such labor should be carried on in a tactful and helpful manner. The elder should regard all financial matters pertaining to church members as confidential: he should not place such information in the hands of unauthorized persons. (See also pp. 58, 202-207.)

**To Distribute Responsibility.**—In the distribution of duties pertaining to church activities, care should be taken not to lay too much responsibility upon willing workers, while others with perhaps lesser talents are passed by. The election of one individual to several offices is to be discouraged unless circumstances make it necessary. The elder especially should be left free from other burdens to perform effectually the many duties of his sacred office. It may be advisable in some cases to ask the elder to lead the missionary work of the church, but even this should be avoided if other talent is available.

**First Elder.**—In churches with a large membership it is advisable to choose more than one elder. The burdens of office may be too great for one man, and should be shared by as many as are required to do the work. In such event one of them should be designated as “first elder.” The work should be divided among the elders in harmony with their experience and ability.

**Elder Not a Delegate Ex Officio.**—In order to serve as a delegate to the conference session, the elder must be elected as a delegate by the church. He is not a delegate *ex officio*.

**Limitation of Authority.**—An elder does not have the authority to receive or dismiss church members by his own act. This is done only by vote of the church. The elder and the church board may recommend that the church vote to receive or dismiss members. (See also pp. 64, 68.)

### Church Leader

Occasionally in newly organized churches, and sometimes in older ones, there is no one possessing the necessary experience and qualifications to serve as elder. Under such circumstances the church should elect a person to be known as “leader.” In the absence of a minister the leader is responsible for the services of the church, including the business meetings. He must either conduct these himself or arrange for someone else to do so. A church leader does not have authority to preside at any of the church ordinances. He cannot administer baptism or the Lord’s Supper; he cannot perform the marriage ceremony; neither can he preside at business meetings

when members are disciplined. A request should be made to the conference president for an ordained minister to preside at such a meeting.

### The Deacon

The office of deacon is described in the New Testament (see 1 Tim. 3:8-13) where the Greek word *diakonos* is used from which the English "deacon" is derived. The Greek word is variously interpreted as "servant, minister, writer, attendant" and in Christian circles acquired the specialized meaning now attached to "deacon." Scripture clearly endorses the office in the New Testament church: "They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13). On this authority, the church elects some of its members to serve in eminently practical ways, caring for several aspects of church services, as well as for church property.

*Importance of the Office.*—In the account of the choosing of the men who came to be known as the seven deacons of the apostolic church, as recorded in Acts 6:1-8, we are told that they were chosen and ordained to attend to the "business" of the church.

But the call to the office of deacon included more than caring for the business of the fast-growing Christian community. The deacons were engaged in an important part of the Lord's work, demanding qualifications but slightly less exacting than those of an elder. (See 1 Tim. 3:8-13.) "The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of

looking after the needs of the poor, did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success."—*Ibid.*, p. 90. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and Philip, afterward called "the evangelist," were among the first seven deacons chosen in the Christian church (Acts 6:5, 6; 8:5-26; 21:8).

This inspired arrangement resulted in great progress in the building up of the work of the early church. "The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church; and by their prudent management and their godly example, they were an important aid to their fellow-officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 89. The appointment of deacons in the present-day church through election by the church brings similar blessings in church administration by relieving pastors, elders, and other officers of duties that may well be performed by deacons. "The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church, should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle."—*Ibid.*, p. 93.

*Board of Deacons.*—Where a church has a sufficient number of deacons to warrant the formation of a board of deacons it is well to organize such a board, with the first or head deacon as chairman with another deacon serving as secretary. Such a body affords a well-ordered means of distributing responsibility and coordinates deacon contributions to the well-being of the church. It also provides a training ground where younger men, rightly recruited as deacons, may be instructed in their duties. The head deacon is a member of the church board.

*Deacons Must Be Ordained.*—A newly elected deacon cannot fill his office until he has been set apart by an ordained minister who holds current credentials from the conference.

The sacred rite of ordination should be simply performed in the presence of the church by an ordained minister, and may consist of a brief reference to the office of deacon, the qualities required of such a servant of the church, and the principal duties he will be authorized to perform for the church. After a short exhortation to faithfulness in service, the minister, assisted by an elder where appropriate, ordains the deacon by prayer and the laying on of hands. (See also p. 258.) If he has been once ordained as deacon, and has maintained his church membership, it is not necessary for him to be ordained again even though he has transferred to another church. When the term for which he was elected expires, he must be re-elected if he is to continue to serve as deacon. Should one who has been ordained as elder be elected as deacon of a church, it is not necessary for him to



be ordained as deacon; his ordination as elder covers this office.

*The Duties of Deacons.*—The deacons have responsibility for the care of the church property. It is their duty to see that the building is kept clean and in repair, and that the grounds upon which the church stands are kept clean and made attractive. This also includes ensuring that the janitor work is cared for. In large churches it is often necessary to employ a janitor. The deacons should recommend a suitable person to the church board, which takes action by vote to employ such help, or the church board may authorize the deacons to employ a janitor. Church board authorization should be obtained for all major repair expenses. All bills for repairs, as well as for water, light, fuel, et cetera, are referred to the church treasurer for payment.

At church services, the deacons are usually responsible for welcoming members and visitors as they enter the church, and for assisting them, where necessary, to find seats. They also stand ready to cooperate with pastor and elders for the smooth functioning of the meetings conducted in the church.

Another important duty belonging to deacons is that of visiting church members in their homes. In many churches this is arranged by a distribution of the membership by districts, assigning a deacon to each district, with the expectation that he will visit each home at least once a quarter. (See also under deaconesses, p. 95.)

*To Assist in Church Ordinances.*—The deacons assist in the celebration of the ordinances of the church.

They should assist at baptismal services, ensuring that the baptistry is prepared and water heated, and that male candidates are cared for both before and after the ceremony. They should do their part in making the necessary preparations for this service; there should be no confusion or delay. (See also p. 63.)

At the celebration of the ordinance of foot washing, the deacons or deaconesses provide towels, basins, water, hot or cold, as the occasion may require, buckets, et cetera. After the service they should see that the vessels and linen used are washed and returned to their proper place.

At the ordinance of the Lord's Supper the deacons should place the communion table in position after it has been arranged by the deaconesses. They should then be seated on the front row of seats, facing the communion table. After the minister or elder has asked the blessing on the bread and has broken it, he will pass the plates to the deacons. The deacons in turn will pass the emblem to the congregation. After serving the people, the deacons return the plates to the elder or minister, who then serves the deacons. If two ordained persons are officiating, they serve each other; otherwise a deacon serves the minister or elder who then returns the plate to the table. All should then be seated. The same procedure is to be followed in serving the wine. (See also pp. 120-122.)

Great care should be exercised in disposing of any bread or wine left over after all have partaken of these emblems. Any wine remaining that was blessed, is to be poured out. Any of the bread remaining of that which was blessed should be burned.

The deacon is not authorized to preside at any of the ordinances of the church, nor can he perform the marriage ceremony. He may not preside at any of the business meetings of the church, neither may he officiate at the reception or transfer of members. Where a church has no elder or no one who has been elected as church leader, such duties may be performed only by a visiting minister authorized by the conference.

*The Care of the Sick and the Poor.*—Another important responsibility of deacons is the care of the sick, relieving the poor, and aiding the unfortunate. Money should be provided for this work from the church fund for the needy. The treasurer, on recommendation from the church board, will pass over to the deacons or deaconesses whatever may be needed for use in needy cases. This work is the particular charge of the deacons and the deaconesses, but the church is to be kept fully acquainted with the needs, in order to enlist the membership's support.

### The Deaconess

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches (Rom. 16:1, 2). Phebe was a servant—servant in this instance meaning “deaconess”—of the church at Cenchrea. Other references indicate that women served in the early church as deaconesses. There is no record, however, that these women were ordained; hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The deaconess is elected to office, serving for a term of one year. It does not follow that the wife of a man chosen as deacon thereby becomes a deaconess, nor is it incumbent upon a church to choose the wife of a deacon as deaconess because her husband is a deacon. The deaconess is to be chosen from the standpoint of consecration and other qualifications that fit her to discharge the duties of the office.

*The Duties of Deaconesses.*—Deaconesses are to do their part in caring for the sick, the needy, and the unfortunate, cooperating with the deacons in this work.

The deaconesses prepare the bread for the Lord's Supper. They also neatly arrange the ordinance table, pour the wine, place the plates of unleavened bread, and cover the table with the linen provided for that purpose, et cetera. All these matters should be cared for before the service begins.

The deaconesses also assist in the ordinance of foot washing, giving special aid to women visitors or those who have newly joined the church. It is also the duty of the deaconesses to see that the table linen, towels, et cetera, used in the celebration of ordinances, are laundered and carefully set aside.

Deaconesses should also assist at the baptismal services, giving such counsel and help as may be necessary regarding suitable garments for baptism. Robes of suitable material should be provided. Where robes are used, the deaconesses should see that they are laundered and carefully put aside for future use.

(See also pp. 63, 93, 94.)

**Board of Deaconesses.**—Where several deaconesses have been elected, a board of deaconesses should be formed, with the head deaconess serving as chairman and another as secretary. This board is authorized to assign duties to individual deaconesses, and cooperates closely with the board of deacons especially in welcoming members and visitors, and in home visitation. (See p. 92.)

### The Church Clerk

**An Important Office.**—The clerk of the church has one of the important church offices, upon the proper administration of which much of the efficient functioning of the church depends. The clerk is elected for a term of one year. In large churches an assistant also is elected. The clerk serves as the secretary of all the business meetings of the church, and should keep a correct record of all such meetings. If for any reason the clerk must be absent from any meeting, he should arrange for the assistant to be present to take the minutes of the proceedings. These minutes should be recorded in the Church Record book, giving the time and date of meeting, number attending, and a report of all actions taken. The clerk should also make a list of any committees appointed at such meeting, giving to the chairman a list of the members of each committee, together with its terms of reference and an outline of the work it is asked to do. The Church Record book may be secured from the Adventist Book Center, or in some countries, from the publishing house.

This Church Record book contains a place for recording the church membership, giving the columns

necessary to show how and when members are received or removed. This record must be kept chronologically, and supporting data for each entry should also be recorded in the section where minutes of membership actions are kept. The church membership record must be accurately and currently maintained in order to show the official standing of the membership.

*No Names Added or Dropped Without Vote of the Church.*—There must always be a vote of the church to add or drop a name from the church membership roll, except in the case of the death of a member. No name is to be added or dropped on the action of the church board alone. The clerk has no authority to add or drop names from the church list without a vote of the church. When a member dies the clerk should, at an early date, record the date of the death opposite the name in the membership book. (See also p. 72.)

*Transferring Members.*—The church clerk handles the correspondence between individual members and churches in the transferring of church membership. (See also pp. 64-69.)

*Corresponding With Members.*—The clerk should endeavor to keep in touch with absent members by correspondence. He should pass on to them interesting items of church progress, encouraging them, in turn, to report their own Christian activities each quarter. It is desirable for the clerk to write to them frequently.

The Church Record should contain a brief statement of special services, visits of ministers, et cetera.

For example: "Elder Blank, the president of our conference, spoke at the morning service, Sabbath, June 23, on 'Our Glorious Reward.'"

***Delegates' Credentials for Conference Session.***—

The clerk on authorization of the church board issues credentials for all delegates elected to represent the church at any session of the local conference, and send them promptly to the conference secretary. All blanks for records, reports, credentials, church letters, et cetera, are provided by the conference office. (See also pp. 198-200.)

***Reports to Be Furnished Promptly.***—It is the duty of the church clerk to furnish promptly certain reports. Some of these are annual, while others are quarterly. It is essential that they be sent to the conference secretary within the time specified. The information required for these reports is to be secured from the treasurer, the lay activities secretary, the deacon, the Sabbath school secretary, the Missionary Volunteer secretary, and the church school teacher, and from the clerk's own records.

Every item of information called for in the blanks should be supplied. Special attention should be given to the transfer of members, and members received and dropped for various causes, as indicated by the blank. The conference secretary must report quarterly to the union conference secretary, and the union conference secretary must report to the division, and the division secretary to the General Conference office, relative to these important items; any omission or delay in the report seriously affects the work all along the way. Faithful attention to the

details specified in the report blanks greatly assists in keeping accurate records of our worldwide work.

**Church Records.**—The church clerk is the keeper of the church records. These should be carefully preserved. All records and account books of the various church officers are the property of the church; they are to be surrendered to the newly elected clerk at the expiration of the term of office, or to the church at any time during the term on request of the pastor or elder.

### The Church Treasurer

**A Sacred Work.**—The treasurer is called to an important task and is elected as are other officers for the period of one year. In large churches it may be deemed advisable to elect also an assistant treasurer.

The treasurer can greatly encourage faithfulness in the payment of tithe and deepen the spirit of liberality on the part of the church members. A word of counsel given in the spirit of the Master will help the brother or sister to render faithfully to God His own in tithes and offerings, even in a time of financial stringency.

**Church Treasurer the Custodian of All Church Funds.**—The church treasurer is the custodian of all church funds. These funds are (1) conference funds, (2) local church funds, and (3) funds belonging to the auxiliary organizations of the local church.

All funds (conference, local church, and local church auxiliary) are deposited by the treasurer in one bank checking account in the name of the church. This is a separate bank account which is



not to be combined with any personal account. In some countries a postal account is more convenient. Surplus church funds may be deposited in savings accounts upon authorization of the church board. Where large balances are carried for building or other special projects, the church board may authorize separate bank accounts. Such accounts, however, shall be operated by the treasurer.

**Conference Funds.**—Conference funds, which include tithe, all regular mission funds, and all funds for special conference projects and institutions, are trust funds. At the close of each month, at the time of mailing his monthly report to the conference, the church treasurer sends to the conference treasurer the entire amount of conference funds received during that month. The church may not borrow, use, or withhold such conference funds for any purpose.

**Sabbath School Funds.**—All Sabbath school offerings for missions are to be passed over to the church treasurer by the Sabbath school secretary-treasurer weekly, the church treasurer keeping a careful record of all such offerings. Such mission funds are transmitted to the conference office as outlined on pages 101, 105 of this *Church Manual*. Sabbath school expense funds are to be passed over to the church treasurer weekly, to be held in trust, subject to the orders of the Sabbath School Council (see pp. 147, 148), to meet the routine expenses of the Sabbath school.

**Missionary Volunteer Society Funds.**—Missionary Volunteer Society funds have to do with both the

MV and the JMV Society, and the funds of each society shall be kept separately on the church treasurer's books. Society offerings to missions and general church work or to conference enterprises shall be handed to the church treasurer as soon as possible after they are received, to be forwarded by him to the conference treasurer. All funds contributed to society expense shall be given promptly to the church treasurer, to be held in trust for the society.

The expense funds of the MV Society shall be disbursed by the church treasurer on the order of the society executive committee, sometimes called the MV Council. (See pp. 156, 157.) Expense funds of the Junior society shall be disbursed on the order of the Junior society superintendent.

**Local Church Funds.**—Local church funds include such funds as church expense, church building and repair funds, and the church fund for the needy. These funds belong to the local church and are disbursed by the treasurer only by authorization of the church board or church business meeting. However, the church treasurer shall pay from the church expense funds all bills for local church expense authorized by the church board, such as rentals, janitor, water, light, fuel, insurance, paving assessments, et cetera. He should be careful to secure receipts for all bills paid.

**Funds of Auxiliary Organizations.**—Auxiliary organization funds include such funds as church missionary, welfare, MV, Dorcas Society, Sabbath school expense, and that portion of the temperance funds belonging to the church, and may include church

school funds. All moneys received by and for these organizations are turned over promptly to the church treasurer by the secretary of the organization, or by the deacons. These funds belong to the auxiliary organizations of the church. They may be disbursed only by order of the auxiliary organization to which they belong. The Dorcas Society fund, for example, is held in trust for the Dorcas Society and is to be drawn upon only for Dorcas work by order of the society. The MV Council authorizes disbursement from the MV fund. The Lay Activities Council authorizes disbursement from the church missionary fund and the welfare fund. The Sabbath School Council authorizes the disbursement of the Sabbath school expense fund, and the church school board authorizes the disbursement of the church school fund.

The treasurer shall give receipts for all funds received including those deposited with him by any of the subsidiary organizations of the church. On receiving moneys from the church treasurer, the secretary of such organization shall sign a proper receipt for the treasurer.

*Safeguarding the Purpose of Funds.*—When an offering is taken for worldwide missions or for any general or local enterprise, all moneys placed in the offering plate (unless otherwise indicated by the donor) shall be counted as part of that particular offering. It is of the utmost importance that all offerings and gifts contributed by individuals to the church for a specific fund or purpose be used for that purpose. Neither the church treasurer nor the church board has the authority to divert any funds

from the objective for which they were given.

The funds of auxiliary organizations, a considerable proportion of which often represents donations given for specific purposes, are raised for that special part of the church's work for which the auxiliary organization is established. Such funds are held in trust by the church treasurer and they too may not be borrowed or in any way diverted by the treasurer or the church board from the objective for which they were raised.

When an auxiliary organization is discontinued the church in regular business session may take action indicating the disposition of any remaining balance of funds in the account of such auxiliary organization.

*Money for Personal Literature Orders.*—Moneys for personal orders of literature, books, pamphlets, magazines, and subscriptions for periodicals should be placed in an envelope, with the order properly filled out, and handed to the lay activities secretary. He then remits both order and payment for all such literature to the Adventist Book Center or, where there is no Adventist Book Center, to the publishing house. At the close of each quarter the lay activities secretary will make a report to the church at its quarterly business meeting, of the standing of its account with the Adventist Book Center, and shall provide a copy for the church treasurer. (See also pp. 141-144.)

*Proper Method for Payment of Money by Members.*—The treasurer should urge that all money paid in by church members other than the regular church

collection be placed in the tithe and offering envelopes, instructing each member to list the various items and amounts on the envelope as indicated, and to make sure that the money enclosed equals the total shown. The member should sign his name and give his address, and place the envelope on the offering plate or hand it to the treasurer, who should preserve such envelopes to serve as vouchers until his accounts are checked by the conference auditor.

The members who pay their tithes and offerings by check or postal notes should, wherever legally possible, make such checks or notes payable to the church, rather than to any individual.

***Receipts to Church Members.***—Receipts should be issued promptly for all moneys received, no matter how small the amount, and a strict account of all receipts and payments should be kept by the church treasurer. All general offerings not in envelopes should be counted by the treasurer in the presence of another church officer, preferably a deacon, and a receipt given to such officer.

***Proper Method of Remitting Funds to the Conference.***—In sending remittances to the conference or local field treasurer, all checks, bank drafts, or money orders should be made payable to the organization wherever legally possible and not to any individual. The duplicate sheet from the church treasurer's book should be enclosed with the remittance. Remittance blanks are furnished by the conference. (See also pp. 214, 215.)

***Preserving Vouchers.***—Vouchers or receipted bills should be secured for all moneys disbursed. A serv-

iceable way of preserving such vouchers is to paste them on the back of the original sheet in the treasurer's book, opposite the page on which the entry is made. For example, if the entry is made on page 16, paste the voucher on the back of page 15. There will usually be ample space for these vouchers if they are lapped one over the other. This method is safer and more convenient for the auditor than keeping them on a spike file, in a pigeonhole, in a desk, or in an envelope, even though properly marked.

*Books Should Be Audited.*—The conference or local field treasurer, or some other individual appointed by the conference or local field committee, audits the church treasurer's books, usually each year. The books and other records relating to the work of the treasurer may be called for and inspected at any time by the conference auditor or by the pastor, district leader, leading church elder, or by any others authorized by the church board, but should not be made available to unauthorized persons. (See also p. 215.)

Reports of all funds received and disbursed should be presented at the regular business meetings of the church. A copy of these reports should be given to the leading church officers.

When the number of tithepayers in the church is reported, the wife and minor children who are non-wage earners but are members of the church should be counted as tithepayers, in addition to the head of the family when he is known to be faithful in this respect.

*Relations With Members Confidential.*—The treasurer should always remember that his relations with individual members are strictly confidential. He should be careful never to comment on the tithe paid by any member or upon his income or anything concerning it, except to those who share the responsibility of the work with him. Great harm may be caused by failure to observe this rule.

### The Church Board

In each church a church board should be elected annually and should include the following: elder or elders, head deacon, head deaconess, treasurer, clerk, lay activities leader, lay activities secretary, Sabbath school superintendent, interest coordinator, Dorcas Welfare Society leader, communication secretary or communication committee chairman, health secretary, Home and School Fellowship leader, MV Society leader, Pathfinder director, stewardship secretary, temperance secretary, trust services secretary, and such other individuals as may be deemed advisable.

*Auxiliary Committees.*—The church may elect, or the church board may appoint with the approval of the church, auxiliary committees to care for specific matters of church business, such as finance or building projects. Terms of reference for such auxiliary committees should be clearly defined. These committees should be given power to act within the limits set by the church or by the church board, but should keep the church board informed by periodical progress reports.

Where there is a pastor appointed by the local

field he is a member of the church board and serves as its chairman; or if he prefers not to act as chairman, he may arrange for the elder to preside. (See also pp. 85, 183, 184.)



## THE SERVICES AND MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

*Spiritual Worship.*—"Although God dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people. He has promised that when they come together to seek Him, to acknowledge their sins, and to pray for one another, He will meet with them by His Spirit. But those who assemble to worship Him should put away every evil thing. Unless they worship Him in spirit and truth and in the beauty of holiness, their coming together will be of no avail. Of such the Lord declares: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me." Those who worship God must worship Him 'in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.'"—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 50.

*Reverence for the House of Worship.*—"To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth.

"From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with

His people. . . . God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature.

“The house is the sanctuary for the family, and the closet or the grove the most retired place for individual worship; but the church is the sanctuary for the congregation. There should be rules in regard to the time, the place, and the manner of worshiping. Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness or indifference. In order that men may do their best work in showing forth the praises of God, their associations must be such as will keep the sacred distinct from the common, in their minds. Those who have broad ideas, noble thoughts and aspirations, are those who have associations that strengthen all thoughts of divine things. Happy are those who have a sanctuary, be it high or low, in the city or among the rugged mountain caves, in the lowly cabin or in the wilderness. If it is the best they can secure for the Master, He will hallow the place with His presence, and it will be holy unto the Lord of hosts.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 491, 492.

*Children to Be Taught Reverence.*—“Parents, elevate the standard of Christianity in the minds of your children; help them to weave Jesus into their experience; teach them to have the highest reverence for the house of God and to understand that when they enter the Lord’s house it should be with hearts that are softened and subdued by such thoughts as these: ‘God is here; this is His house. I must have pure thoughts and the holiest motives. I must have no pride, envy, jealousy, evil surmising,

hatred, or deception in my heart, for I am coming into the presence of the holy God. This is the place where God meets with and blesses His people. The high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity looks upon me, searches my heart, and reads the most secret thoughts and acts of my life.'—*Ibid.*, p. 494.

*Decorum and Quietness in the Place of Worship.*

—“When the worshippers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. . . . Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshippers.

“If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness, by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer. The spiritual condition needs to be often reviewed and the mind and heart drawn toward the Sun of Righteousness.

“If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord, and bear in mind that they are in His presence, *there will be a sweet eloquence in silence.* The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find no sanction in the house where God is wor-

shipped. The mind should be prepared to hear the word of God, that it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart."—*Ibid.*, p. 492.

**Arrangements for Church Meetings.**—Each church should arrange its services and meetings as seems necessary. Those most essential to the worship, study, and activity of the church are the Sabbath worship service, the communion service, the prayer meeting, the Sabbath school, the young people's meeting, and the church missionary meeting. Sessions for proper attention to the business affairs of the church are also essential.

**Hospitality.**—A spirit of hospitality should be cultivated in every church. Nothing is so deadening to the spiritual life of a church as a cold, formal atmosphere that drives out hospitality and Christian fellowship. Members should cultivate this essential element of Christian life and experience. Especially should this be so in connection with the worship of God. Every visitor who worships with us should be cordially received and made to feel welcome. It is the duty of the church officers to arrange for someone to give special attention to welcoming the visitors who attend the services of the church. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).

**Unauthorized Speakers in Our Churches.**—Under no circumstances should a minister, elder, or other church officer invite strangers or any unauthorized persons to conduct services in our churches. Men who have been dropped from the ministry, or who have been dismissed from church fellowship in other

places, or designing persons who have no authority from the church, should not be permitted with plausible words to gain admittance to our pulpits. Great care should be exercised to prevent this. Each one worthy of the confidence of our churches will be able to identify himself by producing proper credentials. There may be times when it is proper for our congregations to be addressed by government officials or by civic leaders. All others should be excluded from the pulpit unless permission be granted from the conference or local mission office. It is the duty of every elder, minister, and conference president to see that this rule is carried out. (See also pp. 184, 187, 274.)

### The Sabbath Worship Service

The Sabbath worship service is the most important of all the meetings of the church. Here the members gather week by week to unite in worshipping God in a spirit of praise and thanksgiving, to hear the Word of God, to gather strength and grace to fight the battles of life, and to learn God's will for them in soul-winning service. Reverence, simplicity, and promptness should characterize the whole service.

*The Form of Service.*—We do not prescribe a set form or order for public worship. A short order of service is usually better suited to the real spirit of worship. Long preliminaries should be avoided. The opening exercises should not, under any circumstances, consume time required for worship and for the preaching of the Word of God.

Following are two suggested forms of service:

## Longer Order of Worship

Organ Prelude  
Announcements  
Choir and Ministers Enter  
Doxology  
Invocation  
Scripture Reading  
Hymn of Praise  
Prayer  
Anthem or Special Music  
Offering  
Hymn of Consecration  
Sermon  
Hymn  
Benediction  
Congregation Standing or Seated for a Few Moments  
of Silent Prayer  
Organ Postlude

## Shorter Order of Worship

Announcements  
Hymn  
Prayer  
Offering  
Hymn or Special Music  
Sermon  
Hymn  
Benediction  
Congregation Standing or Seated for Silent Prayer

*Announcements.*—Thoughtful consideration should be given to the length and character of the announcements during the Sabbath service. If they deal with matters not specifically related to Sabbath worship or the work of the church, ministers and church officers should be careful to exclude them, maintaining even in this respect a proper spirit of worship and Sabbath observance. Many of our larger churches issue printed bulletins giving the order of service and also the announcements for the week. Where this is done, there is little or no need for oral announcements. Where no such printed provision is made, many churches find it desirable to make the announcements before the actual service begins, as is indicated in the preceding orders of service.

Proper consideration must also be given to the various departments of the church for the promotion of the interests for which they are responsible, but great care should be exercised when making appointments for their presentations, to safeguard the time needed for preaching the message from the Word of God.

*Sacredness of the Sabbath Worship Hour.*—The worship of God is the highest, holiest experience possible to men, and the greatest care should be exercised in planning for this service.

“Is it not your duty to put some skill and study and planning into the matter of conducting religious meetings—how they shall be conducted so as to do the greatest amount of good, and leave the very best impression upon all who attend?”—E. G. WHITE in *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1885, p. 225.

"Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. . . .

"Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. . . .

"As we express our gratitude, we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth' God. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with 'thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.'"—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 103, 104.

*The Sabbath Morning Service.*—As the ministers come to the rostrum and kneel, the congregation also should, with bowed heads, implore the presence and blessing of God. A worshipful hush prepares the way for the opening hymn and the exercises which follow.

There are two main divisions of the worship service:

1. The congregational response in praise and adoration, expressed in song, prayer, and gifts.

2. The message from the Word of God. He who brings the message and breaks the bread of life should fully sense the sacredness of this work. He should be thoroughly prepared. Then, too, the one leading the worshipers into the presence of God through the medium of the pastoral prayer is performing perhaps the holiest exercise of the whole service, and he, with a sense of awe, should humbly realize its importance. He should kneel, facing the congregation, and the



congregation in turn should face the rostrum and, as far as practicable, kneel. The prayer should be brief but should include adoration, thanks, and mention of the personal needs of the worshipers, as well as of the great world field.

Special music or a devotional hymn is appropriate immediately before the sermon. Then comes what should be one of the most important parts of the worship hour—the spiritual feeding of the flock of God. Blessed results to the glory of God always follow when a congregation is truly fed and feels that “God has visited His people.”

The offering is a vital part of the worship hour. While we are counseled to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” we are also exhorted to “bring an offering, and come into his courts” (Ps. 96:9, 8). So the presentation of our gifts to God quite naturally finds its place as a part of the worship service.

The elder, particularly if he is a licensed minister, collaborates with the regular pastor in planning the order of the service. If the church has no regular pastor, the elder is in charge of the service and should either conduct it or arrange for someone to do so. If an ordained minister is present, the elder naturally will defer to him and invite him to take the service. From time to time a meeting for testimony and praise may be conducted, or the time given to certain members to relate their experiences in missionary work.

**Public Prayer.**—“Christ impressed upon His disciples the idea that their prayers should be short, expressing just what they wanted, and no more. . . . One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary

prayer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 581.

“When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 201.

“Let those who pray and those who speak pronounce their words properly and speak in clear, distinct, even tones. Prayer, if properly offered, is a power for good. It is one of the means used by the Lord to communicate to the people the precious treasures of truth. But prayer is not what it should be, because of the defective voices of those who utter it. Satan rejoices when the prayers offered to God are almost inaudible. Let God’s people learn how to speak and pray in a way that will properly represent the great truths they possess. Let the testimonies borne and the prayers offered be clear and distinct. Thus God will be glorified.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 382.

The following commendable custom prevails in many of our churches: As the members of the congregation come into the church auditorium before the opening of the service, they quietly take their places in the pews, and bow their heads for a moment in silent prayer. They then sit in quiet meditation, or read the Word of God until the service begins. After the benediction the members of the congregation remain standing or resume their seats for a few moments of silent prayer, the organ meanwhile being played very softly. During this time the speaker and those who have been on the rostrum with him quietly walk to the church entrance, where they will be ready to greet the people. At a given signal from the organist all pass out of the house of worship without staying to talk. Some churches ar-

range for deacons or ushers to dismiss the congregation by rows. Visiting in the sanctuary is thus avoided.

### The Communion Service

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter. The service includes the ordinance of foot washing and the Lord's Supper. It should be a most sacred occasion to the congregation, as well as to the minister or elder. Conducting the communion service is undoubtedly one of the most sacred duties that a minister or elder is called upon to perform. Jesus, the great Redeemer of this world, is holy. The angels declare: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Therefore, since Jesus is holy, the symbols that represent His body and His blood are also holy.

The service of the Lord's Supper is just as holy today as it was when instituted by Jesus Christ. Jesus is still present when this sacred ordinance is celebrated. We read, "It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

*Announcing the Communion Service.*—In most churches this service is conducted on the next to the last Sabbath of the quarter. The ordinances of the Lord's house should be announced at least one week before the time of the service. The church clerk, deacons, and deaconesses should note the names of those not present when the announcement is made, and invite them by a personal visit during the week, or the clerk may notify them of the ap-

pointment and urge them to be present.

In some churches, on the Sabbath preceding the communion service, mention is made of the importance of the forthcoming Communion. All members are urged to prepare their hearts and to make sure that matters are right with one another. Then when they come to the table of the Lord the following week, the service can be of greater blessing to them.

*Conducting the Communion Service.*—On the occasion of the Lord's Supper the minister or elder should appear before the waiting congregation with a truly spiritual message, centering on Christ's redemptive acts and the Christian's response. The sermon should be short but to the point. If time permits, about ten minutes should be spent in a testimony meeting at the close of the sermon. A general expression of the people should then be taken, the congregation rising in consecration to the Lord, while the minister or elder offers a brief prayer. The congregation then participates in the ordinance of foot washing, men and women separately.

In churches where there is just the auditorium, with no auxiliary rooms, a curtain can be used to divide the auditorium, and thus provide one section for the use of the brethren and the other for the sisters. The basins, towels, and water should be provided beforehand by the deacons and deaconesses. In cold weather the water should be warmed. Those officiating should see that no one is overlooked.

After the ordinance of foot washing the brethren and sisters reassemble for the Lord's Supper. The

emblems should be arranged on the communion table by the deaconesses before the divine worship service begins. The minister (s) and the elder (s) take their places by the table on which the bread and wine have been placed. After the singing of a hymn the minister or officiating elder removes the white linen covering from the bread, then reads 1 Corinthians 11:23, 24, or a suitable passage from the Gospels, after which the blessing of God is asked on the emblems.

Wherever possible the whole congregation kneels while the blessing is asked upon the bread. While breaking the bread the officiating minister or elder makes some timely remarks or repeats suitable Scripture texts; or the congregation may sing a stanza of a suitable hymn, or the organist may softly play suitable religious music, and continue during the distribution of the emblems.

The minister(s) and elder(s) hand to the deacons the plates containing the bread: the deacons serve the congregation, enabling each Communion participant to take a portion of the broken bread. When the deacons return from serving the congregation the minister or officiating elder serves them; then one of the deacons, taking the plate, serves the minister or the officiating elder. Each person should retain his portion of the bread until the officiating minister or elder has been served, so that all partake together. If two ordained men (ordained as minister or as elder) are officiating, they serve each other. All should be seated and offer silent prayer while the bread is eaten.

The minister then rises, places the linen cover over the bread, uncovers the wine, and reads 1 Corinthians 11:25, 26, or a suitable passage from the

Gospels. The congregation should, wherever possible, kneel again while the blessing is asked on the wine. After being served, all participants should engage in silent prayer. When the officiating ministers or elders have been served, the remaining emblems are covered with a linen cloth.

*Who May Participate.*—"When believers assemble to celebrate the ordinances, there are present messengers unseen by human eyes. There may be a Judas in the company, and if so, messengers from the prince of darkness are there, for they attend all who refuse to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Heavenly angels also are present. These unseen visitants are present on every such occasion."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

"Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's Supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgment. God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions. For who can read the heart? Who can distinguish the tares from the wheat? 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' For 'whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' . . .

"There may come into the company persons who are not in heart servants of truth and holiness, but who may wish to take part in the service. They

should not be forbidden. There are witnesses present who were present when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and of Judas. More than human eyes beheld the scene."—*Ibid.*

*Every Member Should Attend.*—"None should exclude themselves from the Communion because some who are unworthy may be present. Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour. It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to His children. All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, 'Ye are not all clean.'"—*Ibid.*

*Unleavened Bread and Unfermented Wine.*—"Christ is still at the table on which the paschal supper has been spread. The unleavened cakes used at the Passover season are before Him. The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 653.

*A Memorial of the Crucifixion.*—"By partaking of the Lord's supper, the broken bread and the fruit of the vine, we show forth the Lord's death until He comes. The scenes of His sufferings and death

are thus brought fresh to our minds.”—*Early Writings*, p. 217.

“As we receive the bread and wine symbolizing Christ’s broken body and spilled blood, we in imagination join in the scene of Communion in the upper chamber. We seem to be passing through the garden consecrated by the agony of Him who bore the sins of the world. We witness the struggle by which our reconciliation with God was obtained. Christ is set forth crucified among us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 661.

*Ordinance of Foot Washing.*—“Now, having washed the disciples’ feet, He said, ‘I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.’ In these words Christ was not merely enjoining the practice of hospitality. More was meant than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of travel. Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 650.

*Suggested Order for the Communion Service.*—Before the time for the service, all arrangements should



be completed. The deaconesses should prepare the bread and wine, provide clean linen, and set the communion table. The deacons should prepare for the ordinance of foot washing.

The following order may be observed:

Separate for Ordinance of Foot Washing

Reassemble for Lord's Supper

Hymn (if desired)

Blessing Asked Upon the Bread

Bread Broken by Ministers or Elders

Passed to the Deacons and by Them Served to the  
People

Blessing Asked Upon the Wine

Passed to the Deacons and by Them Served to the  
People

Hymn

Dismissal

After the service the deaconesses clear the table and the deacons dispose of any of the bread or wine left over, by burning the bread and pouring out the wine.

*Who May Conduct Communion Service.*—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained minister or a church elder. Deacons, although ordained, cannot conduct the service, but they can assist by passing the bread and wine to the members.

*Communion for the Sick.*—If any members are ill or cannot for any other reason leave the home to attend the communion service in the house of worship, a special service in the home may be held for them. This service can be conducted only by an ordained minister or a church elder. He may be ac-

accompanied by deacons or deaconesses, who assist in the regular service.

### The Prayer Meeting

"The prayer meetings should be the most interesting gatherings that are held, but these are frequently poorly managed. Many attend preaching, but neglect the prayer meeting. Here, again, thought is required. Wisdom should be sought of God, and plans should be laid to conduct the meetings so that they will be interesting and attractive. The people hunger for the bread of life. If they find it at the prayer meeting they will go there to receive it.

"Long, prosy talks and prayers are out of place anywhere, and especially in the social meeting. Those who are forward and ever ready to speak are allowed to crowd out the testimony of the timid and retiring. Those who are most superficial generally have the most to say. Their prayers are long and mechanical. They weary the angels and the people who listen to them. Our prayers should be short and right to the point. Let the long, tiresome petitions be left for the closet, if any have such to offer. Let the Spirit of God into your hearts, and it will sweep away all dry formality."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 70, 71.

The weekly prayer meeting is of so great importance that more than ordinary efforts should be made to assure its success. The meetings should begin on time, even though but two or three persons are present. There should be a short Scripture study or presentation from the *Testimonies*. Fifteen or

twenty minutes are sufficient. Then give the members time for prayer and testimony. Vary the plan of the service from week to week. Have a season of prayer following the study one time; the next time, follow the study by testimonies, closing with a season of prayer and a song.

If the members are unable to assemble at the usual place for prayer meeting, cottage meetings can be conducted with great benefit to all who attend.

### **The Sabbath School**

The Sabbath school has rightly been called "the church at study." It is one of the most important services held in connection with our church work. Sabbath by Sabbath the greater part of our membership and thousands of interested friends meet in Sabbath school to study God's Word systematically. The Sabbath school should be attended by every member of the church, young and old, ministers, church officers, and laymen. The usual length of time for holding this service is one hour and ten minutes. This, however, does not prevent any local field from adopting a longer or shorter period if it is so desired. In arranging the program, care should be taken to provide at least thirty minutes for the study of the lesson.

*The Sabbath School Teachers' Meeting.*—Every Sabbath school should have a weekly teachers' meeting. The superintendent should have charge, although someone else may be appointed to conduct the survey of the next Sabbath's lesson. The best results are obtained when the teachers' meeting is held prior to the Sabbath, as this provides opportu-

nity for private study both before and after the meeting; it is also likely to be less hurried than if held on Sabbath morning. A minimum of forty-five minutes should be allowed for teachers' meeting, and at least three things should be accomplished: a profitable survey of the next Sabbath's lesson, a brief consideration of one or more Sabbath school goals, and of any general problem requiring attention.

### **Missionary Volunteer Society**

The Missionary Volunteer Society is a training center for our youth. As we look to them to be the future workers in the cause, those who can give the Advent message to the world, it is well that they acquire experience in praying together, in studying together, and in developing their talents in the Master's service in working together in bands and in carrying out well-made plans. The time when MV meetings should be held must be arranged locally in each church. Friday evening or Sabbath afternoons is usually considered the most favorable time. Plans and studies for the MV Society meeting each week are usually provided by the conference or local field office.

No MV Society will be a success which has for its main object merely the giving of entertaining programs. Every society, except the very small ones, should be made up of working bands. Each band does a definite kind of missionary work, and in this way the society can usually do more thorough work in the community and at the same time give each member a better training. In some societies the bands meet immediately following the program, whereas others arrange for a different hour. In order to tie in the work of the

bands with the society meetings, it would be well to provide time at the weekly society meetings for the bands to make oral reports of their experiences in service.

### Junior Missionary Volunteer Society

The purpose of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society is similar to that of the organization of the older youth—to build character and to develop capacity for Christian service. Because the Junior society is often organized within the church school, its meetings are usually conducted at a set hour one morning during the week. Where there is no church school the church should set an hour for the Junior society meeting. Outlines for these meetings are usually provided by the conference or local field office.

### Church Missionary Meetings

The Saviour's commission lays upon the church the task of heralding the gospel to all the world. This places also upon each individual member the responsibility of giving the message of salvation to as many others as possible. The Saviour "gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work." He appointed a meeting with His eleven disciples after His resurrection for the purpose of giving them counsel and encouragement, and at that time He gave the gospel commission to the disciples and to the assembled church, numbering more than five hundred brethren. That was the first missionary meeting of the Christian church; it was certainly not to be the last.

As a permanent and definite part of the services of the Christian church, the missionary meeting bears the divine endorsement for all time. Through the Spirit of Prophecy we are told: "God has committed to our hands a most sacred work, and *we need to meet together* to receive instruction, that we may be fitted to perform this work."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 32. (Italics supplied.)

*Times of Meetings.*—The first Sabbath of the month is generally recognized as Church Missionary Sabbath. The worship service of this Sabbath is focused on lay evangelism, but other departments besides the lay activities department may also have opportunity on these special days to present their interests. This will be done, however, by careful counsel with the departments concerned.

In order to strengthen and develop the missionary spirit among our members, auxiliary missionary meetings might be conducted in one or more of the following ways:

1. The ten-minute weekly missionary meeting held each Sabbath immediately following the close of the Sabbath school and just preceding the preaching service.

2. A midweek meeting combined with the weekly prayer meeting. On this occasion, the first part of the service may be given to a devotional message, followed by a season of prayer, remembering that worship is vital in spiritual growth and preparation for service. The remainder of the meeting time may then be devoted to a training period for lay evangelistic service. Instruction in soul-winning methods is presented and the members are given opportu-

nity to present for general discussion problems they have met in lay evangelism.

3. Church missionary meetings at various times, as best suited to local conditions. The Lay Activities Council should carefully plan to make the missionary services of the church occasions for spiritual revival and practical training, and see that they are conducted with the same regularity and continuity as other meetings of the church.

*Supplying Literature on the Sabbath.*—It is generally recognized that the Sabbath affords the most opportune time for the lay activities secretary to place literature in the hands of the members. In all his work on the Sabbath he should avoid any methods that are objectionable and that would tend to divert the attention of the congregation from true worship and reverence. This phase of his work can be helped by the use of the "Order Envelope" plan. Envelopes are provided on which the members can designate the literature they wish to obtain, the quantity, the language, binding, et cetera. The amount covering the cost of such literature can be put into the envelope during the week and placed in the offering plate when the regular offering is received on Sabbath. At the close of the service the envelopes are passed to the lay activities secretary, who in turn gives the orders prompt attention when the Sabbath is past. (See also pp. 104, 141, 142.)

### **Church Board Meetings**

A meeting of the church board should be held at least once each month. In large churches such meetings may be needed more often. Meetings of the

church board should, whenever possible, be announced at the time of the regular Sabbath worship service. Great care should be taken to see that as large a representation as possible is present.

*Work of the Church Board.*—Many problems arise that require immediate consideration. Also there are requests for church letters and requests for admission to the church to be considered and recommendation made to the church. (See also pp. 64, 68, 98.)

The details of church business should be considered in these meetings. The treasurer should report the state of church finance. The other officers should report concerning the work for which they are responsible. The church roll should be studied. Inquiry should be made into the spiritual standing of all the members, and plans laid for visiting the sick, the discouraged, and any backslidden member. Arrangements should be considered for enlisting all in active missionary service.

The church board is responsible for coordinating all departments of the church. The Lay Activities Council plans and promotes the missionary activities of the local church. The church should elect an interest coordinator who will assist the pastor in coordinating plans that will unite all departments in a lay evangelism program for the year. These coordinated plans should be approved by the church board.

Thus the church board functions as the governing committee for the church, dealing with all questions of activities and business matters that normally face a church. It should be recognized, however, that many of its actions will be recommendatory in view of the



counsel provided on other pages of this manual. See pages 64, 68, 89, et cetera, for certain matters that come before the church board.

**Quorum of the Church Board.**—Each church should determine at one of its duly called business meetings the number that shall constitute the quorum of its church board.

### School Board Meetings

In churches which have a church school the work is usually supervised by a church school board. A chairman is elected who presides over the meetings of this board. A secretary is chosen to keep the records of board meetings and actions. This board should hold its meetings at regular times. Special meetings may be called by the chairman when the need arises. Some churches prefer to have the church board, or a subcommittee of the church board, serve also as the school board.

### Parents' Meetings

The education of parents for their responsibilities is a prime duty of the church. Mrs. White writes that the work of parents "underlies every other," and that parents must receive a training for their "sacred responsibilities." Such a training should be received by young men and women before ever the obligations of parenthood are assumed; but as this is too seldom the case, those who are already parents should exert themselves to remedy the lack.

A course of training for parents is provided by the Department of Education of the General Conference and is conducted by the Home and School

Fellowship organized in the local church, all lessons being made available through the Adventist Book Centers.

The local Home and School Fellowship is organized very simply, with a leader and secretary-treasurer, and assistants if necessary. Meeting once or twice a month, this fellowship carries on the study under the direction and with the aid of the Department of Education. Since "the success of the church depends upon home influences," every church should ensure the formation and maintenance of these parents' fellowships.

### **Business Meetings**

Church business meetings duly called by the pastor may be held monthly or quarterly, according to the needs of the church. We recognize as a duly called business meeting of the church, a meeting which has been called at the regular Sabbath worship service, together with proper announcements as to the time and place of such meeting. At such meetings, at which the pastor will preside (or will arrange for the local elder to preside in his absence), full information should be given to the congregation regarding the work of the church; and at the close of the year, reports should be rendered covering the activities of the church for the entire year. When possible, reports should be presented in writing and should comprise the following activities:

1. A report from the 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 num-

ber but not necessarily the names, of those who may have had to be dropped 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.

2. A report from the lay activities leader, giving a statement of missionary activities, including Community Services activities, together with any plans for future work. This should be followed by a report from the lay activities secretary, who should also present a statement of the church's account with the Adventist Book Center.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. A report from the secretary of the young people's society outlining the activities in missionary and other lines by the youth of the church.

6. A report from the Sabbath school secretary, giving the membership and other matters pertaining to the Sabbath school.

7. A report from the treasurer as to the financial status of the church school, with details as to its need in equipment and other matters.

8. A report from the principal or teacher of the church school, covering such matters as enrollment,

the educational progress of the school, baptisms among the school children, and the results of the children's efforts in denominational endeavors.

9. A report from the Home and School Fellowship leader, covering the activities and needs of that organization.

10. A report from the communication secretary covering press, radio, television, and other related activities involving church and community.

### Music

*Place of Music in Divine Service.*—"Music can be a great power for good, yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 71.

*Sing With the Spirit and the Understanding.*—"In their efforts to reach the people, the Lord's messengers are not to follow the ways of the world. In the meetings that are held, they are not to depend on worldly singers and theatrical display to awaken an interest. How can those who have no interest in the word of God, who have never read His word with a sincere desire to understand its truths, be expected to sing with the spirit and the understanding? How can their hearts be in harmony with the words of

sacred song? How can the heavenly choir join in music that is only a form? . . .

"In the meetings held let a number be chosen to take part in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted, for it is the praise of God in song. The singing is not always to be done by a few. As often as possible, let the entire congregation join."—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 143, 144.

*Selecting Choir Leaders.*—Great care should be used in selecting the choir leaders or those who have charge of the music in the services of the church. Only those who are known to be thoroughly consecrated should be chosen for this part of the church work. Untold harm may be done by selecting unconsecrated leaders. Those lacking in judgment as to the selection of proper and appropriate music for divine worship should not be chosen. Secular music or that of a doubtful or questionable nature should never be introduced into our services.

Choir leaders should work in close collaboration with the minister or church elder in order that the special musical selections harmonize with the theme of the sermon. The choir leader is under the direction of the pastor or elders of the church, and does not work independently of them. He should counsel with them, not only as to the music to be rendered, but also concerning the selection of singers and musicians. The choir leader is not an ex-officio member of the church board.

*Membership of Church Choirs.*—Sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church needs to exercise care in the selecting of choir members who will rightly represent the principles of the church. Choir members occupy a conspicuous place in the services of the church. Their ability as singers is only part of the qualifications they should have. They should be members of the church, of the Sabbath school, or of the Missionary Volunteer Society who, in their personal appearance and manner of dress, conform to the standards of the church, setting an example in modesty and decorum. People of uncertain consecration or questionable character, or those not appropriately dressed, should not be permitted to participate in the musical features of the services. Any plan concerning the wearing of the choir robes is optional on the part of the church.

## CHAPTER 8

### AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH AND THEIR OFFICERS

The over-all responsibilities of the pastor or district leader in the church program require that he take an active and personal interest in the various activities carried on by the church, serving as a close counselor to the committees of all auxiliary organizations. In case of emergency, or where circumstances require such action, the pastor may call a meeting of any committee or organization of the church to conduct necessary business in the interest of the church.

#### The Department of Lay Activities

This missionary organization embraces the entire church membership. Its purpose is to provide and assign to each member a definite line of missionary service. It is directed by the Church Evangelism Council.

*Lay Evangelism Council.*—The function of this council is to sponsor and coordinate all missionary programs within the local church and also to serve as the council for the lay activities department of the church. A designated elder and the lay activities leader are to be the chairman and secretary respectively of this council. This council shall consist of the following: lay activities leader, the pastor, an elder, lay activities secretary, church treasurer, Dorcas Wel-

fare leader, Dorcas Welfare secretary, interest coordinator, Adventist Men's leader, youth leaders, director of Community Services center, health secretary, communication secretary, Sabbath school superintendent, and temperance secretary.

The duties of this council as it relates to the Department of Lay Activities shall be the following:

1. To arrange for the missionary meetings of the church, to study its field of missionary activity, to counsel with the church board concerning the missionary program of the church, and to enlist every church member in some definite line of service.

2. To direct the laymen in the following of specific areas of missionary service and to lead them into the campaigns sponsored by the Lay Activities Department:

- a. Literature distribution and circulation of missionary periodicals.
  - b. Bible course enrollments.
  - c. Community Services (medical missionary work).
  - d. Bible evangelism, including Bible evangelism crusades (Bible studies, cottage meetings, community Bible schools, lay preaching, street or plaza meetings).
  - e. Ingathering.
3. To train members in missionary techniques by:
- a. Conducting classes in how to give Bible studies and classes in other areas of missionary work.
  - b. Demonstrating how this work is done.
  - c. Leading the members in active missionary service.
4. To encourage reporting through the lay activi-



ties secretary and band leaders.

5. To supervise the Community Services of the church and serve in collaboration with the church board as the governing committee of the church's Community Services center.

6. To cooperate with the lay activities department of the local field in carrying out its program.

7. To disburse the local church missionary funds.

8. To plan for and conduct the weekly and monthly missionary meetings as called for in the church calendar.

*Lay Activities Leader.*—At the time of the annual election of church officers a lay activities leader should be chosen. This person should be considered as one carrying heavy responsibilities, since he must play an important part in training and leading the church into active missionary service. He is secretary of the Lay Activities Council, which meets each month. This council sponsors and coordinates all missionary programs within the local church and serves as the council for the Department of Lay Activities. Some of its specific functions for the Department of Lay Activities are to plan the Sabbath missionary meetings, lay evangelism, Community Services work, literature and visitation program, and the Ingathering crusade. It is also the duty of the lay activities leader to present to the church, in the monthly Sabbath missionary service and in church business meetings, a report on the total missionary activities of the church (see p. 135).

*Lay Activities Secretary.*—The lay activities secretary elected by the church serves as the representative of the Adventist Book Center for all depart-

ments of the church. When cooperating closely with the lay activities leader, the secretary is able to render valuable service in the conduct and development of the missionary work of the church. The duties involved in this important office may be outlined as follows:

1. To assist in the direction of the missionary activities of the church; to be present at all missionary meetings, keeping the minutes and endeavoring in every way to cooperate with the lay activities leader in fostering missionary activity.

2. To conduct the transactions of the church in all relations with the Adventist Book Center, such as the ordering of supplies, keeping accounts, and making collections. He is to see that the receipts from all sources are sufficient to pay for that which is ordered. (See also pp. 104, 131.)

3. To provide himself with a duplicate order book. This is necessary, that he may have a copy of the order so as to be able to check the Adventist Book Center invoices. Orders should never be written in letters; they are likely to be overlooked. Care should be taken to write the orders clearly, with correct names and addresses, stating how the supplies are to be sent and giving other necessary instruction.

4. To order at the proper time from the Adventist Book Center all supplies such as missionary tracts, Sabbath school lesson pamphlets, Christian Home Calendars, Morning Watch Calendars, et cetera.

5. To arrange for offerings to be taken at suitable times to provide missionary supplies for the members. A church missionary offering for this purpose is received usually on the first Sabbath of the month.

If this offering does not provide sufficient funds, collections may be taken at the weekly missionary meeting. The disposition of such church missionary funds shall be made by action of the Church Evangelism Council.

6. To see that the receipts from all sources are sufficient to pay for that which is ordered, and to make certain that the account with the Adventist Book Center is settled each month.

7. To act as secretary of the Church Evangelism Council, keeping the minutes of this council and taking an active part in carrying into effect the plans developed by this council.

8. To keep record of the reports of work done by church members, to keep proper records of each missionary service, and be prompt in sending a summary to the lay activities secretary of the conference or field at the appointed time.

9. To call the attention of the church to literature which is available for use.

10. To maintain close touch with the conference or field lay activities secretary and to keep him informed with regard to the progress of the work. The lay activities secretary may do this by writing on the reverse side of his quarterly report blank such information as the following:

*a.* A report of the condition and progress of the missionary organization.

*b.* Any outstanding experiences the members may have had during the month.

*c.* Interesting statistics concerning any missionary campaign the church may be conducting, such as Ingathering, et cetera.

11. To present a statement of the church account with the Adventist Book Center at church business meetings.

*Interest Coordinator.*—It is important that the many interests developed through the church missionary outreach be cared for rapidly. To this end, an interest coordinator should be elected at the time of the annual election of church officers. This person is a member of the Lay Activities Council and works directly with the pastor and chairman of that council. To avoid multiplicity of officers it is recommended that wherever feasible this interest coordinator be an elder assigned to this responsibility. The duties involved in this office include:

1. To keep an organized list of all interests received by the church from every source such as Community Services, Ingathering, public evangelism, Bible studies, lay preaching and Witnessing for Christ contacts, missionary magazines, Sabbath school evangelism, literature evangelism, temperance and health evangelism, radio-TV, and church missionary literature. Interest record file cards provide space for the origin of contact, the name of the interested, the date visited, and a brief evaluation and action taken concerning the interest.

2. To render to the Lay Activities Council a monthly report on the total number of interests received and the number followed up. When an interest is sufficiently developed, it should be shared with the pastor.

3. To assist the pastor and chairman of the Lay Activities Council in the enlistment and recruitment of qualified laymen for follow-up service.

### Dorcas Welfare Society

The Dorcas Welfare Society is an important feature of the lay activities of the church. The leader of this society, and assistant leader if needed, together with the secretary-treasurer, are elected at the regular church election. This society is composed usually of the women of the church, who, banded together in this way, devote their time and talents to the gathering and preparing of clothing and supplies for the poor, needy, and unfortunate. This organization works in close cooperation with the deacons and deaconesses of the church. Their ministry, however, includes more than the giving of material aid; it encompasses also adult education, visiting, home-making, home nursing, and other services. The church lay activities department and the Dorcas Welfare Society have primary responsibility also for community welfare services. Referring to the work of Dorcas and other noble characters of the Bible, we read: "Such patient, prayerful, and persevering fidelity as was possessed by these saints of God is rare; yet the church cannot prosper without it."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 304.

### Community Services Center

Where a church operates a Community Services center, the Lay Activities Council is the governing committee of the center. The director of the center is appointed by the Lay Activities Council, and is a member of the council.

Where a number of churches within a single dis-

district operate a Community Services center jointly, a governing committee for the center should be appointed by the supporting churches of the district, with representatives from each church, the district leader serving as the chairman.

Where a center is operated by two or more districts of churches within a conference, the center governing committee should be composed of representatives of the supporting churches, with additional representatives appointed by the conference committee. They elect their own chairman.

### The Sabbath School

"The Sabbath school work is important, and all who are interested in the truth should endeavor to make it prosperous."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 9.

"The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God's great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth."—*Ibid.*, p. 115.

The officers, teachers, and entire membership should cooperate with the other departments of the church in all missionary work and soul-saving activities, as well as energetically carrying on Sabbath school evangelism by means of the regular Sabbath school classes, Decision Days, pastors' special Bible classes, Visitors' Days, Vacation Bible Schools, and branch Sabbath schools, including Sunday schools. Likewise, all departments of the church should work together with the Sabbath school to build up the Sabbath school and make the entire church work as effective as possible.

The officers of the Sabbath school should be members of the church. They are elected for one year and in the same manner and at the same time as the officers of the church. The list of Sabbath school officers and their assistants is as follows: superintendent, with one or more assistants; secretary, with one or more assistants; chorister or song leader; organist or pianist; division leaders and assistants as required; an extension division secretary or secretaries; a Vacation Bible School director; and an Investment secretary or secretaries.

***The Sabbath School Council.***—The Sabbath School Council is composed of the superintendent (chairman), assistant superintendents, secretary, assistant secretaries, division leaders, and a church elder. A meeting of the council should be held at least once each month. As soon as possible after being elected it should make arrangements for any further helpers needed in the divisions of the Sabbath school. It should also appoint the teachers of the classes of the various divisions. The Sabbath School Council is responsible for the successful operation of the Sabbath school through the leadership of its chairman, the superintendent.

Nothing should be left to chance or to hasty decision at the first session of the Sabbath school in the new year. Each one who is to take part in the Sabbath school exercises should be notified a week or more before, that adequate preparation might be made. In larger schools more than one assistant superintendent may be needed. If more are required and elected, each should be given specific duties in the school. Ushers are usually appointed in large

schools. These should be chosen by the council.

*The Superintendent.*—The Sabbath school superintendent is the leading officer of the Sabbath school. As soon as elected he should begin planning for the smooth and effective operation of the school. The superintendent should acquaint himself with the plans of the Sabbath School Department of the General Conference. He is expected to abide by the decisions of the Sabbath School Council concerning the operation of the Sabbath school.

The superintendent is in charge of all departments of the Sabbath school. Each leader of a division should submit all suggested changes in the operation of his division to the superintendent to be presented to the Sabbath School Council.

Sabbath school teachers are usually appointed for the calendar year but are subject to change at the discretion of the Sabbath School Council. A number of substitute teachers sufficient for each division should be appointed by the Sabbath School Council when the regular teachers are appointed. These may be called upon by the superintendent to fill such vacancies as may occur from time to time in the division for which they are chosen.

If a vacancy occurs in any appointed office, or if a teacher leaves at any time, it is the superintendent's duty to convene the Sabbath School Council and fill such vacancy.

The superintendent should have general charge of the teachers' meeting. While others may have duties in particular lines, such as the lesson study, he with his assistant should take the lead and seek to make the teachers' meeting a vital part of the Sabbath



school work and through it endeavor to build up a strong, spiritual teaching force.

He should take an interest in Sabbath school music, choosing spiritual and uplifting hymns that will fit the study of the day. He should enlist the help of the music director and organist or pianist in making this a spiritual part of the program.

The Sabbath school carries a substantial part of the financial support of the worldwide program of Seventh-day Adventists. The major percentage of the offerings given in some countries for the advancement of the gospel in the world field is given by the Sabbath schools. It is one of the responsibilities of every Sabbath school superintendent to make himself conversant with the promotion plans of the mission program and to learn how to present effectively the needs of the mission fields. He should seek to lead his school in such sacrificial giving as will enlist their wholehearted support of our world mission and thus meet the financial goals of the Sabbath school.

*The Assistant Superintendent.*—One or more assistant superintendents should be elected to assist the general superintendent or to take charge of the Sabbath school in his absence. Assistant superintendents may be called upon occasionally to lead in Sabbath school sessions. It must be remembered that as a general rule this responsibility rests upon the superintendent. Specific duties in the school may be assigned to the assistants: following up missing members, caring for visitors, providing for the missions exercise, seeing that substitute teachers are provided when vacancies occur in classes, sponsoring branch

Sabbath schools, and any other responsibilities in which the superintendent needs assistance in carrying out the Sabbath school program promptly and efficiently.

*The Secretary.*—There is perhaps no office in the Sabbath school where faithfulness, accuracy, and Christian courtesy are more necessary than in the work of the secretary. Next to that of the superintendent, no position in the Sabbath school offers a greater variety of opportunities for useful service. The secretary becomes one of the superintendent's chief helpers.

By faithfulness and careful attention to details he enables the superintendent to keep his finger on the pulse of the entire school.

The secretary's duties may be summarized as follows:

1. To bring before the Sabbath school appropriate reports of Sabbath school work.

2. To distribute supplies to the teachers and gather their class records and offerings.

3. To mark the officers' class record and receive their offerings.

4. To keep a record of the weekly Sabbath school offerings, Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings, Birthday-Thank Offerings, Investment funds, and expense money, if the latter is not included in the budget of church expense.

5. To pass on to the church treasurer all Sabbath school moneys for missions, also all expense money received in the Sabbath school.

6. To order through the lay activities secretary the Sabbath school supplies and special helps agreed

upon by the Sabbath school officers.

7. To keep the minutes of meetings of the Sabbath School Council.

8. To keep all records called for by the Sabbath school secretary's Record Book, making sure that all financial records agree with those of the church treasurer. It is important that the report rendered by the church treasurer to the conference treasurer and the report of the Sabbath school secretary shall agree.

In case of unavoidable absence the secretary shall always place the prepared report and necessary supplies in the hands of an assistant secretary, in order that the exercises of the Sabbath school may proceed as usual in his absence.

*Assistant Secretaries.*—If the secretary is absent, an assistant secretary acts in his place. The assistant secretaries should be present at each Sabbath school service, ready to assist by doing whatever the superintendent or the secretary may require. An assistant secretary should occasionally be requested to prepare and present the report.

If desired, the assistant may act as secretary of the teachers' meeting and report to the secretary any business that should be recorded.

*The Chorister or Song Leader.*—In our larger Sabbath schools a chorister or song leader is usually elected whose duty it is to lead the music of the school. He plans with the superintendent for the presentation of this phase of worship each Sabbath. In some of the larger schools an assistant chorister or song leader is also selected.

Only such special music should be provided as will glorify God. Singers should be as carefully selected as are the workers for other parts of the Sabbath school service, and should be measured by the same standards.

**The Organist.**—Great care should be exercised in the selection of the Sabbath school organist or pianist, his musical ability, standards of character, dress and deportment being taken into consideration.

**Sabbath School Offerings.**—All Sabbath school offerings are to be handed to the church treasurer by the secretary. A careful record of all offerings received should be kept by the secretary.

These funds should be passed to the church treasurer at the earliest moment. This ensures against accidental loss. When the extension division envelopes come in at the end of the quarter, the offerings should be added to those already received from the school. Care should be taken in counting the offerings for the thirteenth Sabbath to see that they are kept separate from the offerings of the twelve Sabbaths. Birthday-Thank Offerings and Investment funds should be carefully recorded separate from all other offerings.

**Expense Money.**—Many schools take offerings at stated periods for Sabbath school expense. All such money should be reported in the minutes, kept separate from the offerings for missions, and used only for paying Sabbath school expense as authorized by the Sabbath School Council. It is passed on to the church treasurer to be kept separately by him. In some churches Sabbath school expenses are included

in the church budget, the amount expended for supplies being authorized by the Sabbath School Council.

*The Quarterly Report.*—This report should be made out immediately after the last Sabbath of the quarter and mailed as soon as possible to the conference Sabbath school secretary. It may be read before the school the first Sabbath of the new quarter; it should be read at the quarterly business meeting of the church. The secretary should make this report in quadruplicate—the original for the conference Sabbath school secretary, and a copy for the Sabbath school superintendent and the pastor, and one for the secretary's permanent file. This file should be complete and up to date, ready for comparisons between quarters.

### The Missionary Volunteer Society

The Missionary Volunteer Society is a department of the church through which the church works for and through her youth.

"We have an army of youth to-day who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged."—E. G. WHITE, quoted in *General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, Jan. 29, 30, p. 24.

"There must be more study given to the problem of how to deal with the youth, more earnest prayer for the wisdom that is needed in dealing with minds."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 208.

"When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord's work, and led to see that

He expects them to do something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help. Thus they will learn to work for God."—*Ibid.*, p. 210.

"Will the young men and young women who really love Jesus organize themselves as workers, not only for those who profess to be Sabbathkeepers, but for those who are not of our faith?"—ELLEN G. WHITE, in *Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1893, p. 455.

**Objectives.**—The Youth Department was organized in response to these inspired directives. Conference youth departments operate a training and evangelistic program involving young people in a wide range of Share Your Faith activity. This has called for the organization of the young people in the churches into MV Societies. The objectives set forth by the Spirit of Prophecy may be summed up as follows: (1) To work for other youth; (2) to help the church and "those who profess to be Sabbathkeepers"; (3) to work "for those who are not of our faith."

In seeking to reach these objectives the youth are (1) to pray together, (2) to study together "to develop tact and skill and talent in the Master's service," (3) to plan together, (4) to act together in groups in carrying out well-laid plans.

The aim of this organization is:

"The Advent Message to All the World in This Generation."

The motto is:

"The Love of Christ Constraineth Us."

A brief outline of both the MV and the JMV organizations is given here as a guide to church officers in fostering this work.

*Membership in the MV Society.*—The requirements for regular membership in the MV Society are:

1. Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. Between sixteen and thirty years of age.

3. Willingness to subscribe to the MV Pledge.

Officers for the society, however, may be chosen from those who are older, and if so chosen, they become regular members of the society, irrespective of requirement number 2.

*Membership Pledge.*—The following is the MV Pledge, which members take on joining the society:

"Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the work of the Young People's Missionary Volunteer Society, doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world."

*Associate Member.*—In some churches there are young people with Christian ideals who, although not church members, are interested in missionary work and desire to help. Such young people may be accepted into the society as associate members by signing the Associate MV Pledge, which reads as follows:

"Desiring to obtain the benefit of Christian asso-

ciation and to cooperate in the work of the Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers, I promise, as an Associate Member, to assist in the society work as far as my ability and experience will permit."

Associate members may not hold office but they should be received cordially into all the society work and into the bands and be encouraged to become regular members as soon as possible.

***The Officers of the MV Society.***—One of the chief factors in the success of the MV Society is its leadership. When the officers are earnest and active Christians, with initiative and ability to organize and inspire others, the work will go forward, young people will be saved and trained in God's service, and the whole church will be encouraged.

The officers of an MV Society are leader, associate leader, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, servicemen's secretary, music director, pianist or organist, sponsor, devotional secretary, educational secretary, fellowship or social secretary, librarian, publicity secretary, and band leaders. The leader, associate leader, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, servicemen's secretary, sponsor, music director, and pianist or organist are elected by the church for a period of one year. All other officers and assistants are appointed by the society to serve for the same period. In smaller societies one person may be appointed to carry several responsibilities.

***The MV Society Executive Committee (or MV Council).***—The MV Society Executive Committee is composed of those who are chiefly responsible for the welfare of the society, and includes the officers listed



above, the JMV superintendent (see p. 163), the lay activities leader, and the pastor or an elder. This committee, with the society leader as chairman and the society secretary as secretary, directs the society in all its activities.

This committee should meet regularly to pray, study, and plan for the salvation of the young people of the church and the success of the society. There should be a free discussion of all the problems connected with the work, so that the decisions may represent the combined judgment of all. As the officers' prayer and personal workers' band, this committee should carry a very definite burden for the spiritual welfare of all the young people connected with the families of the church. Each MV officer should endeavor to be a personal worker, searching out the discouraged, and the unconverted. The executive committee is responsible for the society meetings and should seek to make them a strong factor in accomplishing the purposes of the society. The spirit, consecration, wisdom, and enthusiasm of this committee will permeate the society. The MV sponsor (see p. 159) is an important member of the executive committee.

**Leader and Associate Leader.**—First in importance among the qualifications of the MV leader is a genuine Christian experience. He should have a burden for souls, and his enthusiasm in service will be contagious. In addition to spirituality he should possess good sense, tact, and persistence. He should be a capable organizer, and should study carefully the duties of all officers and be able to instruct and lead them.

He should study the needs of the young people of his church, both society members and those who are not, and plan ways to set the Christian young people to work and to help those who are not enjoying a Christian experience. He should also study the spiritual needs of the community and the possibilities for missionary endeavor.

The leader should keep in close touch with the pastor or elder of the church as well as with the young people's sponsor, and with the conference youth director, that he may lead the society into a cooperative relationship with the church and the conference.

When the leader is absent, or when it is otherwise arranged, the associate leader should perform the duties of the leader. The associate leader must therefore be thoroughly acquainted with the duties of the leader and with the plans laid by the society executive committee. He should, of course, attend all meetings of the executive committee, and, with the leader, should be considered a member of all the bands *ex officio*.

*Secretary-Treasurer and Assistant.*—As in the case of the leader and other officers, the secretary-treasurer's first qualification is spirituality. He should know the Lord and be able to speak from personal experience. He should have a burden for souls that will make him an earnest personal worker.

The secretary-treasurer keeps the minutes of all meetings of the society executive committee. He should secure for the members their certificates of membership and keep a list of the society members and their addresses.

An important duty of the secretary-treasurer is to encourage the missionary activities of the society members and secure their weekly missionary reports. When the society is well organized into bands the reports may be gathered by the secretaries of the bands. Once a month the report of the society missionary work should be prepared by the society secretary and forwarded to the conference youth director and a copy also given to the lay activities secretary.

The secretary-treasurer shall keep an accurate record of the receipts and disbursements of all funds of the MV Society. All moneys for world missions and for the church shall be handed to the church treasurer as soon as possible after they are collected. Local society expense funds shall also be given to the church treasurer to be held in trust, until such times as their disbursement is ordered by the executive committee of the society. The financial records of the society shall be reviewed by the executive committee at least once each quarter, and audited once each year by the church treasurer.

The secretary-treasurer keeps all other records required in the work of the society. The report of all society activities is to be sent to the conference youth director each month. The assistant secretary-treasurer assists with the secretary-treasurer's work as may be mutually arranged and acts in the absence of the secretary-treasurer.

**The MV Sponsor.**—An elder or another qualified person on the church board, one who understands thoroughly the objectives of the MV Society and who is sympathetic with the youth and their problems, should be elected to serve as MV sponsor.

He will serve as guide and counselor to the MV officers and be one to whom the young people of the church can look for counsel. As a member of the church board he will join with the MV leaders in bringing to the church board from time to time information regarding the needs, the interests, and the progress of the MV Society.

He serves also as a member of the society executive committee and will keep the conference youth director informed regarding any changes in officer personnel and other matters relating to the young people's society.

**MV Features.**—Distinctive features developed by the Youth Department to help young people acquire right attitudes, right knowledge, and necessary skills, if they are to grow in grace and Christian service, may include the following:

1. Devotional and Educational—Morning Watch, Bible-reading plans, Character Classics, Prayer Band, MV Week of Prayer, Youth Bible Conference, Leadership Course, Pathfinder Course, MV Book Club, Master Guide Class, MV Honors, outdoor club, hobby club.

2. Share Your Faith—MV Voice of Youth, Friendship Teams, Operation Fireside, MV branch Sabbath school, MV congress, MV rally, Sunshine Band, Literature and Correspondence Band, MV Community Service, and disaster aid.

3. Fellowship—Society social gatherings, MV camps, society-sponsored hikes, camping, music festivals, nature exploration, other recreation provided by MV Honors.

***MV Bands.***—All societies except the very small ones should be divided into working bands. Each band should have a leader and secretary elected to serve one year.

### **The Junior Missionary Volunteer Society**

***Objective.***—The objectives of the JMV Society are to help train and direct our boys and girls in Christian service, employing in this effort the natural and proper impulses of the child. The society seeks to cooperate with and reinforce the efforts of the home, the school, and the church in the development of the child.

***The Work of the JMV Society.***—The activities of the JMV Society may be grouped under four heads: religious, intellectual, social, and physical. They include systematic Bible study, good reading, promotion of good music and other arts, home and community service, mission offerings, social gatherings, training in industries in the home, on the farm, in the shop, and in various forms of field craft and recreation.

By all these means the society aims at the creation and maintenance of the highest ideals of Christian manhood and womanhood in the lives of the boys and girls.

***Pathfinder Clubs.***—In a church-centered program the Pathfinder Club provides for the spirit of adventure, exploration, and construction that is found in every boy and girl. This includes more activity in outdoor living, nature exploration, and crafts than is possible in the average JMV Society. In this setting

spiritual emphasis is well received, and the Pathfinder Club has well demonstrated its soul-winning influence.

**Membership.**—Children old enough to understand the purposes of the JMV Society and who meet the approval of the local JMV superintendent may become preparatory members. In Seventh-day Adventist church schools all pupils in the first four grades are considered preparatory members. They are given a Preparatory Membership Certificate. When, in the judgment of the JMV superintendent, preparatory members are able to comprehend the ideals of the JMV Society, they should be carefully instructed in the Aim, the Motto, and the JMV Pledge and Law.

Preparatory members who have reached the age of ten years or the fifth grade, and in the judgment of the JMV superintendent have a comprehensive knowledge of the ideals of the JMV Society and have declared their allegiance to the JMV Pledge and Law, may become regular JMV members.

### **The Junior Missionary Volunteer Pledge**

By the grace of God—

I will be pure and kind and true,

I will keep the JMV Law,

I will be a servant of God and a friend to man.

### **The Junior Missionary Volunteer Law**

The JMV Law is for me to—

1. Keep the Morning Watch.
2. Do my honest part.
3. Care for my body.

4. Keep a level eye.
5. Be courteous and obedient.
6. Walk softly in the sanctuary.
7. Keep a song in my heart.
8. Go on God's errands.

*JMV Classes.*—Four personal development classes are offered junior youth. These are Friend, Companion, Explorer, and Guide. An insigne is awarded to those who qualify in each class.

*MV Classes.*—Two personal development classes are offered for senior youth. These are Guide and Master Guide. An insigne is awarded to those who qualify in each class.

*MV Honors.*—The wide range of MV honors in arts and crafts, household arts, mechanics, missionary endeavor, nature, outdoor industries, and recreational pursuits includes levels of achievement in all of these for both junior-age and senior-age youth.

*Officers of the JMV Society.*—Success with JMV's depends on proper and efficient leadership. Persons who are given this responsibility should be sincere Christians with hearts full of love for boys and girls. The Master Guide Class offers special training in leadership. Every worker for JMV's will find his efficiency greatly increased and his leadership strengthened by becoming a Master Guide.

The officers of the JMV Society are superintendent, assistant superintendents, leader, secretary-treasurer, pianist or organist.

The superintendent of the JMV Society is the church school teacher. Where there is no church school, a superintendent should be elected by the

church. The leader, secretary-treasurer, and pianist or organist are elected by the society from its members. They are nominated by a committee appointed by and including the superintendent.

**The Executive Committee.**—The executive committee of the JMV Society consists of its officers who, under the direction of the JMV superintendent, prepare the programs and make decisions regarding the work. (See the *MV Handbook* for more complete information on the JMV Society and the Pathfinder Club.)

### Parents' Societies

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4:5, 6).

“The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are ‘the issues of life’; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 349.

“Never will education accomplish all that it might and should accomplish until the importance of the parents’ work is fully recognized, and they receive a training for its sacred responsibilities.”—*Education*, p. 276.



The church is deeply interested in the building up of the Christian home; therefore it has a responsibility for the training of parents, many of whom lacked such training before marriage, and all of whom might be benefited by further study and counsel. Parent education is conducted by the Department of Education of the General Conference through the Home and School Fellowship.

As the study and activities of these fellowships are of benefit to all parents, it is recommended that they solicit and receive non-Adventist as well as Adventist members, taking care at the same time that the plans and activities of the fellowship remain true to our ideals. Full information concerning organization and study may be obtained by addressing the Department of Education at General Conference headquarters or the division office.

### Home and School Fellowship

*Purpose.*—The purpose of the fellowship is two-fold: to provide parent education and to unite the home and the school in their endeavors to give an all-round Christian education to the children of the church. To these ends the fellowship shall devote itself—

a. To conduct at least one Home and Parent study group each year.

b. To maintain a good Home and Parent library.

c. To establish in the home the atmosphere of love and discipline, of Bible study, prayer, and family worship, and of systematic, progressive instruction to develop our children's whole beings—body, mind, and soul.

*d.* To cultivate the habit of being cheerful and courteous in the home.

*e.* To bring the church school ever more fully into harmony with the principles of Christian education in spirit, content, and methods.

*f.* To work to the end of securing the attendance of every child in our own church schools.

*g.* To assist as possible in providing the school with necessary equipment to enable it to meet the highest standards.

*h.* To furnish social and educational opportunities to the members of the church and the community through programs, social intercourse, and personal and group service.

*i.* To see that any orphans and handicapped children are cared for properly.

*j.* To provide work for the 12-15-year-olds during the summer.

**Objective.**—To provide an agency by which greater cooperation may exist between child day-care centers, kindergartens, church schools, and academies and the parents and guardians of the students in these institutions.

**Membership.**—The adult members of the church and patrons of the school are members of the fellowship. Mature youth who desire the benefits of study offered by the fellowship may also be admitted.

**Officers.**—The officers of this fellowship shall consist of a leader, an assistant leader, a secretary-treasurer, a librarian, and other officers as may be needed, all of whom shall be elected by the church.

**Leader and Assistant Leader.**—The leader of the Home and School Fellowship should be a parent with experience and success in training children, one whose mind is open to new ideas, who is apt to teach, and who believes thoroughly in the importance of parent education. It is the leader's duty to promote interest in the work of training parents and to lead in the studies outlined by the Parent and Home section of the Department of Education and in all the activities which the society may undertake.

It is well always to have an assistant leader selected, who should be given opportunity occasionally to carry the work of the leader, and who may be depended upon to carry on the work in case the leader becomes incapacitated.

**Secretary-Treasurer.**—The secretary-treasurer is to keep the records of the fellowship and to make the specified reports to the superintendent of education of the conference at the beginning and close of the year.

If the fellowship has any funds to handle, the secretary-treasurer shall hand them to the church treasurer as custodian. It is well to arrange for an assistant secretary-treasurer, who can act in case of need. The officers of the society should be elected by the church in the regular way.

### The Church School Board

**Membership.**—The administrative body of every elementary school and junior academy operated by a single church shall be a board elected by the church or a school committee appointed by the church

board. Hence, this body may be a separate school board, the church board, or a school committee of the church board appointed for this purpose.

Where two or more churches unite to operate a school the administrative body shall be a union school board.

Wherever a separate school board is desired it shall consist of from five to seven members where a single church operates the school, and seven or more members where two or more churches unite to operate the school.

Where two or more churches unite to operate a school a meeting of these churches should be arranged in counsel with the local conference president. At this meeting a plan should be adopted for the appointment of the union school board, including the number of members and the apportionment of the members among the several churches operating the school. The apportionment should be determined on the basis of the memberships of the sponsoring churches, the financial obligations to the school, and the number of pupils attending from each church.

One or more members of the school board may be chosen from among the members of the church board, so that the school board may be closely related to the church board.

The pastor of the church should be a member of the school board. Where the school is operated by more than one church, it is the general practice that the pastors of the churches concerned are members of the school board.

In junior academies, and in elementary schools

the principal or the head teacher of the school should be a member of the board.

Some members of the board may be parents of children attending the school, so that the board may profit from parental viewpoints and counsel which result from close-up observation and experience.

*Officers.*—The officers shall consist of a chairman and a secretary. In union school boards serving a school sponsored by two or more churches a treasurer, a vice-chairman, and an assistant secretary should also be appointed. Where the school is operated by one church, the chairman should be elected by the church; where the school is operated by two or more churches, the chairman should be elected by the board from among its own members at the first meeting after its election. The principal of the school is generally appointed as secretary of the board.

*Relation of Union School Boards to the Local Churches.*—Where two or more churches operate a union school, any action of the board which involves the churches in financial obligations must be submitted to the respective boards of the churches for approval.

*Term of Office.*—Where a separate school board is elected, one of two plans may be followed with reference to the time when its members are elected and the term of office: (1) All the members may be elected at the close of the calendar or fiscal year and function for one year; (2) the members of the first board may be chosen for terms of one, two, and three years respectively, the new members being chosen each succeeding year for a period of

three years. The purpose of this plan is to have a nucleus of experienced members on the board to ensure a continuity of successful educational policy.

Vacancies are filled in the same way as vacancies in any other church office, the one filling the vacancy to officiate for only the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Meetings.**—The school board or school committee should meet at a regular time and place at least once each month during the school year.

**Qualifications.**—The members of the school board shall be chosen for their consecration, their belief in and loyalty to the principles of Christian education, their good judgment and tact, their experience in school matters, and their financial judgment and ability. They should believe in, and have a willingness to follow, denominational educational policies and recommendations.

Because the elementary school and/or junior academy board is an important organization in the local church, the members of it should be chosen with great care. Persons who do not believe in Christian schools or are unsympathetic with their program should not be chosen as members of the school board. Conviction as to God-given plans, faith, courage, and understanding are essential for success in this as in other enterprises.

**Duties of the Officers.**—The chairman calls meetings, presides, and sees that the actions of the board are carried out. He also countersigns all financial orders issued by the secretary.

The chairman is a member *ex officio* of the elementary school and junior academy inspection com-

mittee. This committee has the responsibility of surveying and evaluating the elementary school and junior academy and their work.

The secretary keeps a record of each meeting in a permanent record book, issues orders for money in the payment of accounts or obligations, and carries on the necessary correspondence for the board.

Where a single church operates a school the work of the treasurer is usually carried by the church treasurer or an assistant church treasurer, who receives tuition and other moneys; pays out money on the order of the secretary, countersigned by the chairman; keeps a careful account of all money passing through his hands, making a permanent record of the same in a suitable record book; and at each monthly meeting renders a detailed report to the board. In a union board, where two or more churches are involved, a treasurer is appointed by the board to do this work.

*Functions.*—(See Education Manual, C-32, "The School Board of Seventh-day Adventist Elementary Schools.")

### Communication

*Importance of Effective Communication.*—Through the years divine instruction has come to the church concerning the importance of using modern media of communication in spreading the gospel. We have been counseled:

"We must take every justifiable means of bringing the light before the people. Let the press be utilized, and let every advertising agency be employed that will call attention to the work."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 36.

"Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past."—*Evangelism*, p. 105.

**The Organization.**—The organization of this work calls for the enlistment of support from every denominational worker, layman, and Seventh-day Adventist institution. The Department of Communication promotes the use of a sound program of public relations and all modern communication techniques and media in the promulgation of the everlasting gospel. It calls for the election of a communication secretary in every church and, where needed, a communication committee.

**The Communication Secretary and His Work.**—The church communication secretary is elected at the time of the annual election of officers. He is responsible for the gathering and dissemination of news. As opportunity presents, he will place on the air persons of interest in interview-type programs, and arrange for news features on such persons. He will make every effort to maintain a friendly, co-operative relationship with editors and other communications-media personnel.

The communication secretary will assist in organizing support for the denomination's broadcast and Bible correspondence school ministries. This may include the placement of announcements and advertisements for broadcast and Bible correspondence school courses, the promotion of the radio and television offerings, and participation in field days for the distribution of radio, television, and Bible correspondence school materials. He will cooperate with



the conference communication secretary in carrying out the plans of the conference and reporting as requested. He will also present periodic reports to the church business meeting.

***The Communication Committee.***—In a large church a communication committee may more adequately handle the many facets of the public relations and communication program of the church than can a secretary working alone. This committee, with the communication secretary as chairman, will be elected at the time of the general election of church officers. Individual members of the committee may be assigned specific communication responsibilities such as working with the press, with radio and television, with Bible correspondence school ministries, and with the internal media of the church. Where there is an institution in the area a member of its public relations staff should be invited to sit with the committee.

Other communication activities that fall within the sphere of interest of this committee include planning for special church events and ceremonies, the preparation of church exhibits and parade floats, placement of church advertising, providing public libraries and other information centers with information on the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The division of responsibilities will depend largely on the abilities of those comprising the committee. All activities of the committee will be coordinated by the chairman.

The pastor, who is primarily responsible for the communication program of his church, will work closely in an advisory capacity with the communica-

tion secretary and/or the communication committee.

**Relation to Other Departments of Church.**—To serve the church properly the communication secretary should be alerted regarding plans and scheduled events. Any auxiliary unit of the church organization may appoint an individual to furnish the communication secretary or communication committee with news of that particular department's activities.

**In Large Adventist Centers.**—If several churches in a city arrange for a central communication committee, each communication secretary should be a member and should work in harmony with any general plan that will better coordinate the handling of news and other media activities for the several churches. The establishment of this committee would be initiated by the conference communication director. Meetings of such a central committee would be called and presided over by a chairman selected by the group.

The General Conference Department of Communication and the division, union, and local conference communication departments provide detailed instruction for communication secretaries, and by their printed materials, correspondence, and other means give constant help and inspiration.

**Qualifications.** — The communication secretary should be carefully chosen for his (1) ability rightly to represent the church, (2) sound judgment, (3) organizational ability, (4) ability to put facts down on paper in attractive and persuasive grammatical form, (5) willingness to carry out an assignment, (6) ability to meet people.

### Department of Health

The church accepts its responsibility to make Christ known to men, and believes this includes a moral obligation to preserve man's dignity by enabling him to attain optimal levels of physical, mental, and spiritual health. In addition to ministering to those who are ill, this responsibility extends to the prevention of disease through effective health education and leadership in promoting abundant health.

The church has been given ample instruction in healthful living, which instruction it should share with the world. "We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work. . . . The members of the church are in need of an awakening, that they may realize their responsibility to impart these truths. . . . To hide our light at this time is to make a terrible mistake. The message to God's people today is, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Isaiah 60:1."—*Counsels on Health*, p. 425.

**Church Health Leader.**—For an efficient program to be implemented in the church it is necessary for the church to elect a health leader. He should be health-oriented and interested in promoting the church's standards in healthful living among the members and in the community through church-operated health programs. He should be able to screen programs and information that are representative of the ideals and philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and be able to integrate them into an effective spiritual-physical witness.

The health leader's duties should include the following:

1. To outline and plan, in consultation with the pastor and the Church Health Council or the church board, programs for the year that will emphasize total health for the church and the community.

2. To work closely with the conference health director for the effective presentation of the church's health message.

3. To maintain a directory of all health-care personnel within the church.

4. To foster good relationships with community health leaders and health personnel for mutual benefit.

5. To encourage, in collaboration with Spirit of Prophecy literature promotion, the study of *The Ministry of Healing*, *Counsels on Health*, *Medical Ministry*, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, *Temperance*, and *The Story of Our Health Message*, by members in their homes and in the church.

6. To encourage the application of the principles of healthful living.

7. To arrange for and promote the holding of health education programs for the church and the community it serves, in close cooperation with the conference health director.

8. To serve as chairman of the Church Health Council.

**Church Health Council.**—Where practicable, a Church Health Council may be selected. This council is designed to provide dedicated leadership to the church membership and to the community in the field of healthful living, and to assist in cooperative soul-saving activities through a viable program of health

and spiritual emphasis. Members should be selected by the church board, and might include:

1. The church health leader, as chairman of the council.

2. The Community Services leader.

3. The MV leader or two representatives from the youth group.

4. Three representatives from among the following: physician, dentist, dietitian, nurse, health educator, stewardship leader, or others interested in health activities.

5. The temperance leader.

The pastor shall be an ex officio member of the council.

The Church Health Council, in collaboration with the Lay Activities Council, will lead out in developing a schedule of health activities that will include programs such as cooking schools, health classes, and other related endeavors.

### **Department of Stewardship and Development**

The Department of Stewardship and Development was organized to assist in the implementation of God's plan of systematic benevolence throughout the church. Since man's stewardship responsibility includes the proper management of the entire life, stewardship concepts encourage the proper care and use of the body temple, time, abilities, and material possessions. The department gives assistance in the planning and organization of church resources for a completed work. Its spiritual and financial objectives are summarized in the following statement: "When they shall arouse and lay their prayers, their wealth, and all their ener-

gies and resources at the feet of Jesus, the cause of truth will triumph."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 475.

**Church Stewardship Secretary.**—The stewardship secretary, elected by the church, is chosen for his ability to implement the concepts and objectives outlined by the Department of Stewardship and Development. He should possess the following qualifications: (1) be a spiritual leader, (2) be one who practices the principles of Christian stewardship, (3) have an understanding of the spiritual and financial program of the church, (4) be willing to dedicate the necessary time to plan, organize, and lead out in his designated areas of responsibility in cooperation with the conference stewardship secretary, the pastor, and the church board.

The stewardship secretary acts in a liaison capacity between the conference stewardship department and the congregation. In fulfilling his educational responsibilities he will implement the general educational program of the Stewardship Department as it is presented and expanded periodically to meet a continuing need. This responsibility includes assisting the pastor in World Stewardship Day emphasis, conducting stewardship classes, tithe and offering education, and teaching the basic stewardship concepts during Sabbath services or on other occasions.

In fulfillment of his organizational responsibilities he will function as (1) a member of the church board, involved in and conversant with the spiritual and financial program of the church, (2) a member of the stewardship finance committee, and (3) an active assistant to the pastor in the annual Stewardship Guidance Program and in the follow-up throughout

the year as outlined in the *Stewardship Manual*.

### Temperance Department

Temperance is recognized by Seventh-day Adventists as a Bible doctrine and a spiritual ministry. It is important, therefore, that the local church organize a temperance society to implement temperance programs and activities.

The aim is to present to all the principles of temperance, clearly outlining the meaning of temperance as self-control through Jesus Christ. The object of the Temperance Department is to unfold the Bible plan for the development of physical, mental, social, and spiritual graces, to show "that temperance alone is the foundation of all the graces that come from God, the foundation of all victories to be gained."—*Temperance*, p. 201.

Those who adhere to the Christian principles and practices of Seventh-day Adventists will resist intemperance, abstaining from the beverage use of alcohol, the use of tobacco, the misuse of narcotics, or the misuse of any drug.

The call to the church is for involvement by each member. "Let those who have their Bibles and who believe the word of God become active temperance workers. Who will now seek to advance the work of our Redeemer? Let every church member work in right lines."—*Ibid.*, p. 236.

The church temperance program is directed by the temperance leader who is elected by the church, and is a member of the church board. He works in cooperation with the church pastor and the church board. The local church temperance organization is a unit

of the conference temperance society, and a part of the International Temperance Association. This organization also makes it possible for the church to secure the close support of those who adhere to temperance principles, but who are not yet members of the church.

The temperance community services of the Seventh-day Adventist Church include the Five-Day Plan to Stop Smoking, the Four-Dimensional Key to Better Living, and the Home Help Visitation Plan. There are also youth-for-better-living projects, the showing of temperance films, the distribution of temperance literature, and other programs as recommended by the temperance department of the church.

Legislative measures related to temperance are also to be supported through deputations and the awakening of public sentiment, for "while we are in no wise to become involved in political questions, yet it is our privilege to take our stand decidedly on all questions relating to temperance reform."—*Ibid.*, p. 253.

A World Temperance Sabbath is observed each year especially to proclaim the principles of temperance, to foster membership in the temperance organization, and to receive the World Temperance Offering. A financial goal is set by each division committee and is shared according to policy between the General Conference, division, union, conference/field, and local church.

The church thus organized for temperance witness will provide positive, practical, and effective alternatives to intemperance, offering something better to those with false dependencies, thus guiding many to a way of victory in Christ Jesus.



## CHAPTER 9

### MINISTERS AND WORKERS IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH

#### A Divinely Appointed Ministry

“God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. ‘And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. . . .’

“The Lord has His appointed agencies, and a church that has lived through persecution, conflict, and darkness. Jesus loved the church, and gave Himself for it, and He will replenish, refine, ennoble, and elevate it, so that it shall stand fast amid the corrupting influences of this world. Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 52, 53.

#### The Conference President

The president of the conference should be an ordained minister of experience and good report.

He stands at the head of the gospel ministry in his conference and is the chief elder, or overseer, of all the churches. He works for the spiritual welfare and upbuilding of the churches. He counsels them regarding their activities and plans. He has access to all the churches, church services, and business meetings, and may, by virtue of his office, preside over the sessions of any of the churches when such a course is necessary. He has access to all church records, report books, et cetera.

He will not set aside the duly elected officers of the church but work in cooperation with them. They in turn are bound, in recognition of the ties of conference fellowship, to counsel with him over all that pertains to the welfare of the church. They should not attempt to exclude him from a proper discharge of his duties.

### **Pastors and District Leaders Not Executives**

Ordained ministers appointed by the conference committee to act as pastors or district leaders do not take the place of the president in their respective fields; they are not charged with administrative powers as is the president, but they cooperate with him in carrying out the plans and policies of the conference.

### **President and Committee Direct Departmental Secretaries**

Departmental secretaries are employed by the conference to foster important lines of denominational work. In order successfully to carry on the work assigned to them, these workers must have access to

the churches. They should be given opportunity to present and develop their plans in the churches. It is expected that these workers will have sympathetic consideration for all church plans, even outside their respective departments. These secretaries work under the general direction of the conference committee in counsel with the conference president, who is the responsible head of all lines of the work.

### **Work of Departmental Secretaries Not Administrative**

Departmental secretaries are not vested with administrative or executive authority in conference or church work, but their relation to the field is an advisory one. Their work does not bear the same relationship to the churches as that of the conference committee or president. Their work, however, is primarily of a specific kind, and in the promotion of their lines of work they labor throughout the entire conference. It is not expected that they will counsel the churches regarding church elections and other administrative duties or any other line of service, unless especially requested by the conference president to do so.

### **Relation of Ordained Minister to Church Work**

On assignment to a local church as pastor, the ordained minister ranks above the local elder or elders; these serve as his assistants. By virtue of his ordination to the ministry he is qualified to function in all church rites and ceremonies. He should be the spiritual leader and adviser of the church. He should

instruct the church officers in their duties and plan with them for all lines of church work and activity. When a minister is appointed by the conference committee as pastor of the church, it is understood that he is a member of the church board and serves as its chairman. In a case where the pastor desires to be relieved of the responsibility of acting as chairman of a church board, a church elder serves as chairman. Between the pastor and the church elder there needs to be the closest cooperation. (See also pp. 84, 85, 107.)

The minister, with the assistance of the elders, is expected to plan for and lead out in all spiritual services of the church, such as Sabbath morning worship and prayer meeting, and should officiate at the communion service and baptism. He should not surround himself with any special body of counselors of his own choosing, but always work in cooperation with the duly elected officers of the church.

When an ordained minister of the conference, or one sent by the conference, visits a church, it is expected that the local elder will show him proper deference by inviting him to occupy the pulpit. This also applies to unordained workers sent by the conference or local field. (See also pp. 112, 187, 211.)

### **Churches Do Not Elect Pastor**

Pastors or assistant pastors are not nominated or elected to such positions by the church. Their connection with the church is by the appointment of the conference committee, and such appointments may be changed at any time. (See also pp. 84, 85.)

### Licensed Ministers

To give young men an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, prospective candidates are granted ministerial licenses by the conference. The granting of such licenses confers the right to develop the ministerial gift and to assist in the ordinances and services of the church such as the Lord's Supper, baptism, and the marriage ceremony. Where there is no local elder he may, when authorized by the conference or division committee, preside at business meetings of the church but not at business meetings when members are disciplined. A request should be made to the conference president for an ordained minister to preside at such a meeting. He is authorized to preach, assist in a spiritual way in any church activities, and lead out in missionary work, and especially to engage in evangelism.

He may be elected as a local elder of a particular church and ordained as such, provided arrangements have been made with the conference. In such a case he is vested with the authority of a local elder, but no more. His ordination as local elder qualifies him to serve only in such churches as have elected him as their local elder, and then only on the advice of the conference committee or president.

Conference committees do not have the right to authorize a licensed minister to go from church to church baptizing or performing other church rites pertaining to the functions of an ordained minister. A conference committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ministerial ordination. Assignment of such workers to district leadership

must not be made the occasion for unwarranted authorization in such matters.

### **Bible Instructors**

A very important line of service is that of the Bible instructor. This is recognized by our conferences in employing suitable persons to engage in this line of work. They may be changed from place to place as the work requires. They may be assigned to work in connection with an evangelistic effort, in which case they are under the immediate direction of the evangelist in charge of the effort, or they may be stationed in a city to labor in connection with a local church. In such a case they come under the immediate direction of the pastor of the church, but as already seen, are under the general direction of the conference. A conference Bible instructor should not, except by special arrangement with the conference, be asked to carry any church office, but should be left free to carry on personal soul-winning work.

### **Adventist Book Center Secretaries**

These are conference workers, and as such are under the direction of the conference committee and the president. While they are in a special way in close touch with our publishing houses, they are not chosen, elected, or directed by publishing house boards, but by the conference. In selecting such workers it is well to consider available men who have received a training in connection with our publishing houses.

### **The Pastor Should Assist the Evangelist**

When an evangelist is asked to conduct an evan-

gelistic effort in a locality or city in which there is a church with a pastor in charge, the pastor should be invited by the conference to assist the evangelist, thus giving the pastor an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the prospective members.

### **President and Committee Direct Conference Workers**

The conference president in counsel with the conference committee directs the workers of the conference in their varied activities. It is his duty to acquaint the workers with the plans and policies of the committee and to secure the cooperation of the workers in carrying them out. The president should take a special interest in fostering the evangelistic work of the conference, doing all he can to encourage a constant soul-winning endeavor on the part of all the workers. He should actively recruit and assist in training young men for the ministry. Departmental secretaries are employed by the conference to foster important lines of denominational work.

All conference workers—ministers, Bible instructors, departmental secretaries, et cetera—are under the direction of the conference committee. They receive their credentials from and are responsible to the conference, and not to any local church in the conference. Churches may request the services or help of conference workers, lodging such requests with the conference president, but the appointment in all cases rests with the conference committee. Workers may be appointed to labor with certain churches, and when in the judgment of the conference committee the appointment should be changed,

the committee is at liberty to do so. The worker or the church may appeal to the conference committee for a hearing on the decision to move the worker from his field of labor. This will be carefully considered in the light of the needs of the entire conference, and decision will be made accordingly. Should such a situation develop in which the worker refuses to cooperate with the committee and declines to work in harmony with its decisions, his conduct may be regarded as insubordination and be dealt with as such. In no case should he appeal to the church regarding such decisions. Any church supporting a worker in his stand under such circumstances becomes subject to the discipline of the conference.

### **Credentials and Licenses**

God's work is to be jealously safeguarded by the responsible leaders in every step of organization, from the local church to the General Conference. In order that enemies of the work may not gain access to our pulpits, it is most strongly urged that no one be allowed to speak to any congregation unless he presents valid and up-to-date denominational credentials. It is recognized, however, that there are times when it is proper for our congregations to be addressed by government officials or by civic leaders; but all unauthorized persons should be excluded from the pulpit. (See also pp. 112, 185, 211, 274.)

The churches in their collective capacity through the conferences confer upon certain men the authority to represent and speak for the church as ministers and gospel workers. This authority is represented by the granting of credentials, which are written



commissions, properly dated and signed by the officers of the conference. The authority thus conveyed is not personal or inherent in the individual holding the credentials, but is inherent in the body granting the credentials, and may be recalled at any time if sufficient cause exists. The credentials granted workers are never to be regarded as the personal property of the workers, but as belonging to the organization granting the same. The worker is in honor bound to return them upon the request of the organization.

Official credentials are issued to all authorized Seventh-day Adventist workers, and are granted by controlling committees for limited periods.

### **Expired Credentials**

Credentials are granted for the duration of the conference term, either annually, biennially, or quadrennially. The credentials are renewed by a vote of the conference in session. If for any reason it is deemed inadvisable to renew credentials to any minister, he ceases to function as a worker in the conference. The possession of out-of-date or expired credentials does not authorize him to function in any of the offices of a minister. In such a case he has no more authority or standing than any other lay member in the church.

### **Relieving a Minister of His Office**

A minister may be relieved of his office as a minister by conference committee action, without his standing as a church member being affected. When a minister is disfellowshipped from the church and subsequently restored to church membership, his of-

fice as a minister is not thereby restored. He re-enters the church simply as a lay member.

The same principle holds good regarding any church officer who may be disfellowshipped during his term of office. The action restoring him to membership does not restore him to his former office.

### **Sustentation Workers**

Throughout the various conferences are workers who, on account of age or condition of health, have retired from active service. As a class these workers are deserving of honor and consideration. In many cases they have spent long years in helping to build up the cause of God. Their presence is a blessing and help to our churches.

Sustentation workers usually hold their church membership in the church nearest their place of residence. They may be elected to any office in the church, in which case they function freely in all that pertains to the office in which they serve. They also may exercise their ministerial functions under the direction of the conference committee.

### **Ministers Without Credentials Serving in Our Churches**

There may be instances of men who years ago were ordained as ministers but who, for some valid reason, are not carrying credentials from the organization. They may be elected as elders of churches and, should their ordination not have been invalidated, such men need not be ordained as elders, but in their service they are limited to the work and prerogatives of a local elder.

## THE CHURCH ELECTION

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. This duty should be entered upon in a prayerful, well-ordered, and serious manner. Only such persons should be chosen who fully expect to fulfill the specific duties of the office for which they have been elected.

### Nominating Committee

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, officers are elected annually through an appointed nominating committee. This committee brings its report to the church, which then acts on the names presented. This procedure enables careful study to be given to each name prior to election, and avoids the public competitive element that may arise when nominations are made from the floor.

It is the rule that a nominating committee be appointed to give careful study to the needs of the church and to make careful inquiry into the fitness of members to serve in the different offices.

*How Nominating Committee Is Appointed.*— This committee should be appointed in the closing quarter of the church year, as decided by the church in consultation with the local conference/field, so that the church election may be held not later than the second Sabbath of the final month of the church

year. The minister or pastor in charge of the church, or in the absence of a minister, the church elder, should bring the matter to the attention of the church, with the church itself determining how the nominating committee is chosen. This manual does not determine the size of the nominating committee. It will range from five members in a small church to a larger number in a large church. The exact number to be chosen is left to the discretion of each church. This matter should be studied by the church board prior to presentation to the church. A suitable recommendation may then be brought to the church with a minimum of intrusion in the Sabbath worship hour. This special committee may be chosen in one of two ways:

1. By nominations from the floor. Should this method be followed, it must be understood that no member may nominate more than one individual. The effort of one individual or a small group to dictate to the entire membership of the church is disapproved. Everything of a political nature should be avoided.

2. By voting to authorize the church board, together with five to seven persons nominated from the floor, to recommend the personnel of the nominating committee. The nominating of officers from the floor or by general ballot is disapproved.

In any case the personnel of this special committee to nominate the nominating committee must be voted on by the church. It has not been elected nor can it function until this is done. Its report as to the membership of the nominating committee and its chairman must also be brought to the church for action.

*Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee.*—Only members who are in good 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. There are no ex-officio members of the nominating committee; however, in view of the general responsibility carried by the pastor or district leader in the church program, and inasmuch as his appointment to the church does not rest upon any action of the nominating committee, the general practice is that the pastor or district leader be chosen to serve as a member of the committee. In any event, he should sit with the nominating committee as counselor.

*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 chairman. 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. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor. These appointments are made by the executive committee of the conference.

The church nominating committee deals with the following:

Elder or elders

Deacon or deacons

Deaconess or deaconesses

Clerk

Treasurer

Assistant treasurer or treasurers  
Church chorister or song leader  
Church organist or pianist  
Lay activities leader  
Lay activities secretary  
Interest coordinator  
Community Services director  
Sabbath school superintendent  
Assistant Sabbath school superintendent  
Sabbath school secretary  
Assistant Sabbath school secretary  
Sabbath school extension division secretary  
Sabbath school division leaders  
Sabbath school chorister or song leader  
Sabbath school organist or pianist  
Sabbath school Vacation Bible School director  
Sabbath school Investment secretary  
Leader of Home and School Fellowship  
Assistant leader of Home and School Fellowship  
Secretary of Home and School Fellowship  
Assistant secretary of Home and School Fellowship  
Leader of Dorcas Welfare Society  
Dorcas Welfare Society secretary-treasurer  
Missionary Volunteer Society leader  
Associate MV leader  
MV sponsor  
Junior Missionary Volunteer superintendent  
Assistant JMV superintendent(s)  
MV Society secretary-treasurer  
Assistant MV secretary-treasurer  
MV music director  
MV pianist or organist  
Pathfinder Club Director

Pathfinder Club deputy director  
Religious Liberty secretary  
Temperance leader  
Communication secretary or Church Communication Committee  
Health secretary  
Stewardship secretary  
Church board  
Church school board  
Such other officers as the church may deem advisable

The size of the church will naturally determine the number of church officers to be nominated. If the church is small, many of the assistant leaders may be omitted. In a large church all the officers and leaders named in the foregoing list will be necessary.

*Nominating Committee to Interview Prospective Officers.*—Having nominated for the various offices persons who are faithful, loyal members of the church, the appropriate members of the nominating committee should inform them of their nomination to office and secure their consent to serve.

*Appearing Before the Nominating Committee.*—If any member of the church desires to appear before the committee during its sessions to make suggestions or objections, he should be given opportunity to do so. After he has retired from the committee room his suggestions or objections should be considered on their merits. When this has been done and everything is clear to the satisfaction of the committee, the committee is ready to report to the church.

***Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential.***—It is a violation of Christian ethics and the spirit of the golden rule for a member of a nominating committee to repeat outside of a committee session any report, discussion, or conversation regarding any member whose name may be under consideration for any office. To offend in this regard is ample reason for excluding such a member from participating in the work of a nominating committee. All inquiries and discussions regarding the fitness of members to hold church office should be confidential. Should the necessity arise for inquiries to be made outside the committee, the chairman of the committee should make them.

These principles apply to the work of all nominating committees, in both church and conference work.

***Reporting to the Church.***—This report is rendered to the church as a whole and not to the church board. The board has no jurisdiction in these matters. The report of this committee may be presented at the Sabbath service or at a specially called meeting of the church.

When it is known that the nominating committee is ready to render its report, the minister or elder should give the chairman of the nominating committee opportunity to make appropriate remarks to the church. The chairman should then announce that the secretary is ready to present the report. After the reading of the report the secretary should make a motion to adopt the same by considering each name separately. The secretary of the nominating committee then hands the report to the church clerk, who will read it to the church. There should



be a slight pause after the reading of each name; if the name is satisfactory to the church, the question may be called, and so on through the entire report, when action can be taken on the full report presented. If no objection is made, the election should proceed at once by the church's voting for those nominated. Every church member should vote for the election of church officers. In a church where a weekly bulletin is issued it is permissible to print the nominating committee's report in the bulletin, and thus obviate the second reading of the report to the church.

***Objecting to the Report of the Nominating Committee.***—It is the right of any member to raise an objection to the nominating committee's report. Instead of his objecting publicly, however, it is better that he move that the whole report be referred back to the committee for further consideration. If the motion carries, the chairman of the committee should then announce when and where the committee will be in session to hear the objections to any name. At that time the member making the objection, or any other member who desires to do so, should appear before the committee. If the election is deferred on the objection of any member, it would be a serious matter for him to fail to appear before the committee. Trivial or groundless objections should never be made to any name; but if there are serious reasons why any nomination should be changed, these reasons should be stated. The committee should give due consideration to the objections presented. If they are found to be justified, the committee will need to substitute another name for the one to which objec-

tion was made. If the objections are found to be groundless, or not of sufficient importance to exclude the member nominated from holding church office the committee again makes its original report to the church, following which the church proceeds to vote on the report of the committee. The election is by the majority vote of those present and voting.

*Vacancies.*—If an office of the church becomes vacant during the year because of death, removal, resignation, or for any other reason, the church board nominates a successor to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office and submits the nomination to the church for election.

### **Election of Delegates to Local Conference Session**

In local and union conference organizations all administrative authority springs from the constituency. The local churches in conference organizations elect delegates to the local conference session. These are duly authorized to represent the churches in the councils of the conference. The conference session elects officers, grants credentials and licenses, adopts or changes the constitution if such actions be necessary, and transacts other business. One of its most important acts is the election of the executive committee, whose duty it is to function for the constituency between sessions. In this committee is vested the delegated power and authority of all the churches within the conference.

*Choosing Delegates.*—“He [God] has so arranged matters that chosen men shall go as delegates to our conferences. These men are to be tried and proved.

They are to be trustworthy men. The choosing of delegates to attend our conferences is an important matter. These men are to lay the plans that shall be followed in the advancement of the work; and therefore they are to be men of understanding, able to reason from cause to effect."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 262.

The number of delegates from each church to a local conference session is determined by the provisions of the conference constitution. When the time comes to select delegates the officers of the church should bring the matter before the church. A committee may be appointed to nominate delegates or the church board may be asked to nominate them. Nothing of a political nature should be allowed to come into this work. Men and women of known piety and loyalty and who are able to attend the session should be nominated as delegates. (See also pp. 89, 99.)

When the committee or church board has completed its work it should report to the church, nominating as delegates the members it has agreed upon. The church then votes on these nominations. No church officer by virtue of his office is a delegate *ex officio*. After the election the clerk of the church will fill out the delegates' credential blanks, furnished for the purpose, and return them to the secretary of the conference. The chosen delegates become the representatives of the church, to unite with the delegates of other churches in the conference in the election of officers for the conference and for the transaction of all other conference business. The delegates to a union conference session are chosen by the local

conferences, not by the churches. The delegates to a General Conference session are chosen by the divisions and the union conferences. The respective terms of office for these organizations are determined by the terms of their respective constitutions.

**Duty of Delegates.**—A delegate to a conference session or constituency meeting is not chosen to represent merely the church or conference electing him. When he is seated he should view the work as a whole, remembering that he is responsible for the welfare of the work in every part of the field. It is not permissible for church or conference delegations to organize or attempt to direct their votes as a unit. Nor is it permissible for the delegates from a large church or conference to claim pre-eminence in directing affairs in a conference session. Each delegate should be susceptible to the direction of the Holy Spirit and cast his vote according to his personal convictions. Any church or conference officer or leader attempting to control the votes of a group of delegates would be considered disqualified for holding office.

### Responsibility of Conference Officers

The local church has no authority outside its own local body. It unites with other churches in the conference in delegating authority and responsibility to the conference officers and executive committee to carry on the work of the conference between sessions. These officers are answerable to the conference as a whole and not to any one local church.

### **Conference Committee Members to Represent the Entire Conference**

Conference committee members are elected to represent the work in the entire territory of the conference; they do not represent merely a local church, or district, or any particular institution in the conference. Each member should feel a definite responsibility to foster all interests of the work in all parts of the field. The decisions and votes of the committee are not to be controlled or influenced by any church, group, or individual. Decisions are reached after prayerful and careful study of all aspects of the matters that come before them pertaining to the administration of the work.

## GOSPEL FINANCE

The gospel plan for the support of the work of God in preaching the everlasting gospel among men is by the tithes and offerings of His people. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has followed this plan from its earliest days.

The Biblical basis for the paying of tithes and offerings will be found in the following references: Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 9:6-15. Observe also the following from the Spirit of Prophecy:

"The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 249.

"That which has been set apart according to the Scriptures as belonging to the Lord constitutes the revenue of the gospel and is no longer ours. It is no better than sacrilege for a man to take from God's treasury in order to serve himself or to serve others in their secular business."—*Ibid.*, pp. 246, 247.

"Every church member should be taught to be faithful in paying an honest tithe."—*Ibid.*, p. 251.

"This is not a request of man; it is one of God's ordinances, whereby His work may be sustained and carried on in the world. . . . No one can excuse himself from paying his tithes and offerings to the Lord."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 307.

“God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the gifts of His people. Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord’s work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion,—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 74.

### Stewardship

Christians are God’s stewards, entrusted with His goods, and the divine counsel is that “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). The question of stewardship in its fullest form covers many aspects of Christian life and experience, such as our time, our influence, our service, but there is no doubt that the stewardship of our means is a vitally important phase of this question. It is one which concerns every member of the church. It involves our recognition of the sovereignty of God, of His ownership of all things, and of the bestowal of His grace upon our hearts. As we grow in the understanding of these principles we shall be led into a fuller appreciation of the way God’s love operates in our lives.

While this aspect of Christian stewardship concerns our material possessions, it is, nevertheless, something which reacts very definitely upon our Christian experience. The Lord requires certain things of us, in order that He may do certain things for us. Our yielding obedience to what our heavenly Father requires places this phase of stewardship upon a high spiritual plane. Our God is not exacting. He does not arbitrarily demand either that we serve Him

or that we recognize Him with our gifts. But He has so arranged that when we work in harmony with Him in these things there will flow to our own hearts great spiritual blessings. If, on the other hand, we fail to cooperate with Him in carrying out His plans, we deprive ourselves of His richest blessings when we need them most.

“God desires all His stewards to be exact in following divine arrangements. They are not to offset the Lord’s plans by performing some deed of charity or giving some gift or some offering when or how they, the human agents, shall see fit. It is a very poor policy for men to seek to improve on God’s plan, and invent a makeshift, averaging up their good impulses on this and that occasion, and offsetting them against God’s requirements. God calls upon all to give their influence to His own arrangement. He has made His plan known, and all who would cooperate with Him must carry out this plan instead of daring to attempt an improvement on it.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 248.

### The Tithe

In recognition of the Bible plan and the solemn obligation that rests upon church members as children of God and members of His body, the church, all are encouraged to pay a faithful tithe (one tenth of all their increase) into the denomination’s treasury.

Policies have been developed for the gathering and disbursing of funds in all the world and for the conducting of the business affairs of the cause. The financial and business side of our denominational work is of great importance. It cannot be separated



from the proclamation of the message of salvation; it is indeed an integral part of it.

The tithe is not used or disbursed by the local church but is passed on to the conference treasurer. Thus the tithe from all the churches flows into the conference treasury, which in turn passes on one tenth of its total tithe income to the union. The union in turn passes on to the General Conference one tenth of its total tithe income. Thus the local conference, the union, and the General Conference are provided with funds with which to support the laborers employed and to meet the expense of conducting the work of God in their respective spheres of responsibility and activity.

It should be mentioned that many of our local conferences, in addition to paying to the union one tenth of their tithe income, pay also to the General Conference through the union an agreed percentage of their tithe for world mission work.

*Systematic Benevolence and Unity.*—The financial plan of the denomination serves a larger purpose than appears in our financial and statistical reports. The arrangement is more than a means for gathering and distributing funds. It is, under God, one of the great unifying factors of the Advent Movement. God's people are a united people. There is a remarkable unity of belief and purpose among the Advent people in all the world. We seek to conduct a world-wide work under unified administration. Our system of dividing the tithes between the conference and the union and between the union and the General Conference and of sharing the funds with the world fields has served a wonderful purpose in unifying the

work throughout the world.

**How the Tithe Is to Be Used.**—The tithe is to be held sacred for the work of the ministry and for Bible teaching, also for the carrying forward of conference administration in the care of the churches and of field missionary operations. The tithe is not to be spent on other work, on paying church or institutional debts, or on building operations.

“A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord’s arrangement. God will judge for these things.

“One reasons that the tithe may be applied to school purposes. Still others reason that canvassers and colporteurs should be supported from the tithe. But a great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers. There should be today in the field one hundred well qualified laborers where now there is but one.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 248, 249.

**How the Tithe Is Paid.**—The practice of the denomination is that the tithe be paid into the local church in which membership is held. Any deviation from this practice should be only by special arrangement effected by the conference or field concerned, and based on circumstances and conditions which would make such deviation from the general practice advisable.

**Conference Workers and Church Officers to Set Example in Tithing.**—Conference workers and church elders and other officers and institutional leaders are to recognize it as a principle of leadership in God's work, that a good example be set in the matter of tithing. No one is to continue as either a church officer or conference worker who does not conform to this standard of leadership.

**Tithing a Scriptural Obligation.**—Although tithing is not held as a test of fellowship it is recognized as a scriptural obligation that every believer owes to God, and as one of the spiritual exercises in which he should have part in claiming by faith the fullness of blessing in Christian life and experience.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

### Offerings

In addition to the tithe the Scriptures emphasize our obligation to bring offerings to the Lord. The withholding of offerings is classed with the withholding of the tithe and is called robbery (Mal. 3: 8). The Seventh-day Adventist Church has from its early days followed the practice of giving liberal offerings to the cause of God. Great prosperity and blessing have attended the work as a result. Men of wealth, professional men with larger incomes, farmers, laborers, ministers and workers, including the

converts in other lands where wages are small, have all united in generously supporting the cause by giving offerings in proportion to their incomes.

**Sabbath School Offerings.**—Our most widely used method of regular systematic giving is through our Sabbath schools. The Sabbath school offerings are devoted to our world mission work. Sabbath by Sabbath large sums come in through this channel.

**Other Offerings.**—Other offerings are taken from time to time for world mission work and for general and local enterprises. When any offering is taken for world mission work or for general or local enterprise, all moneys placed in the offering plate, unless otherwise indicated by the donor, shall be counted as part of that particular offering.

**Special Gifts to Fields.**—The financial support of the worldwide work of the church is based on the budget system. Appropriations are made to the various fields on the basis of budgeted needs. This is a fair and equitable method of distributing the funds. It ensures every field's receiving a just share. Where special gifts outside the regular budget plan are made to a particular field, a disparity is created to the disadvantage of all the other fields. If such gifts are given for the purpose of starting new work, the work thus started would languish when the special gift was used up, or it would have to be included in the budget for its future support. Thus other fields, with perhaps greater needs, but without the opportunity of making them known, would be deprived of their equitable part of general funds, which would be diverted to care for work started

by special gifts. The entire history of this cause has proved over and over again the wisdom of having our members generously and loyally give their offerings and gifts through the accepted channels, with the satisfaction of knowing that every field shares in the benefits of such giving.

*Assisting the Needy.*—Offerings for the poor and needy are taken to assist the members of the church who may require help. As far as possible a reserve should be kept in this fund for emergency cases. However, the church should take a benevolent attitude toward *all* in need, and the church board may make appropriations from the church fund for the needy to assist the health and welfare work carried on by the church for families in the community.

*Church Budget for Local Expenses.*—The most satisfactory method of providing for local church expenses is the budget plan. Before the beginning of the new year, the church board should prepare a carefully drawn-up budget of expenses for the maintenance of church activities through the next annual period. This budget should make provision for all repairs, heat, light, janitor service (if paid for), church school expense and teacher's salary, fund for the needy, et cetera. The budget should be presented to the church for its study and adoption, and for plans to assure that funds shall be provided to balance the budget during the coming year. Funds to meet the church expense budget may be raised by offerings and subscriptions. Every member in proportion to his financial circumstances should have a part in supporting the local church as well as the cause in general.

*Sample Budget.*—The following budget will serve as an example. It can be adapted to meet the needs of a church of any size.

### Church Budget

#### *Estimated Receipts*

Church Expense Collections	\$ 215.00
Church Fund for the Needy	375.00
Pledges on Church Expense	3300.00
Church School Tuition	500.00
Welfare Fund	300.00

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\$4,690.00

#### *Estimated Expenses*

Repairs and Painting Church Building	\$ 625.00
Fuel	350.00
Janitor and Supplies	525.00
Insurance on Building and Furnishings	250.00
Church Fund for the Needy	500.00
Sabbath School Supplies	250.00
Emergency Expense	330.00
Light	225.00
Water	60.00
Gas	45.00
Stationery and Supplies	50.00
Laundry	36.00
Church School Expense	1,144.00
Welfare Expense	300.00

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\$4,690.00

Provision should be made in each church's budget for all receipts and expenses, including those relating to the various departments.

### General Counsel

***On Solicitation of Funds.***—The matter of soliciting funds is covered in the following regulations:

1. No conference, church, or institution, without special counsel and arrangement, shall plan work requiring solicitation of funds from outside its own territory. Any solicitation within its own territory shall be in harmony with local, union, and General Conference policies.

2. For the protection of churches from unauthorized and fraudulent and undenominational solicitation, the following principles and methods are recognized:

*a.* Ministers and church officers shall not grant the privilege of the pulpit to persons for the raising of funds who have not recognition or recommendation from the conference authorities. (See also pp. 112, 188.)

*b.* No permission shall be granted to solicit funds either publicly or privately without such recognition.

*c.* Literature approved for solicitation purposes shall be provided only to responsible persons.

*d.* All funds contributed by our people for any cause in response to appeals shall be passed through the regular channels of the church.

*e.* No authority is granted denominational workers representing special interests in one part of the field to solicit help for that work in any other part of

the field or in any other conference, without arrangement with and written authorization from the conference officers.

f. Conference and church officers shall take such steps as may be necessary to prevent unauthorized or illegal public solicitation.

3. No campaign other than the Ingathering which involves using Ingathering literature and containers with Ingathering labels, shall be conducted for the solicitation of money for either home or overseas mission work. Union and local conferences should take such steps as may be necessary to prevent any violations of this regulation.

4. Overseas workers visiting the home churches or in touch with the home base by correspondence are asked to solicit funds only for enterprises included in the budget of appropriations, working in cooperation with churches and conferences to raise the funds required to meet the appropriations on which our world mission work depends. All such funds shall be passed through the regular channels.

***On Questionable Methods for Raising Church Funds.***—Seventh-day Adventists have always taken a strong stand against any and all methods of a questionable nature for raising money for local or general work.

“When money is raised for religious purposes, to what means do many churches resort? To bazaars, suppers, fancy fairs, even to lotteries and like devices. Often the place set apart for God’s worship is desecrated by feasting and drinking, buying, selling, and merrymaking. Respect for the house of God and reverence for His worship are lessened in



the minds of the youth. The barriers of self-restraint are weakened. Selfishness, appetite, the love of display, are appealed to, and they strengthen as they are indulged."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 91.

"As God's work extends, calls for help will come more and more frequently. That these calls may be answered, Christians should heed the command, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house.' If professing Christians would faithfully bring to God their tithes and offerings, His treasury would be full. There would then be no occasion to resort to fairs, lotteries, or parties of pleasure to secure funds for the support of the gospel."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 338.

***On Tithes and Offerings Not a Personal Trust Fund.***—Tithes and offerings paid to the church do not create a trust fund for the future benefit of the givers. These funds shall be used for the current purposes for which they are given.

***On Avoiding Debt.***—A church board should always counsel with its conference officers before incurring debt of any kind. Financial embarrassment has come to many churches through premature or improperly laid plans for the erection or purchase of church or school buildings. This may be avoided if a church seeks counsel before launching such an enterprise, and adheres to the denominational policy for the financing of such undertakings.

***On Financing Church Buildings.***—Churches contemplating either the purchase or the erection of church buildings are cautioned against undertaking

financial obligations which would be likely to embarrass the membership; and concerning such undertakings, local and union committees shall give careful counsel in each case, taking into consideration the size of the congregation, its financial strength, and the location of the building.

In the purchase or building of church properties, in no case shall commitments be made or building operations be begun until approval has been given by the local and union conference committees, after these have assured themselves that the financial arrangements are in line with established policies.

*On Handling and Accounting for Funds.*—The gathering and handling of funds for the Lord's work is a sacred responsibility. The proper channel through which these funds flow is first from the individual member to the local church. The church treasurer receives these funds. (See also pp. 100, 103.) The funds intended for local church purposes he disburses. Those intended for conference use or general purposes the church treasurer passes on to the conference treasurer. The conference treasurer in turn disburses the funds of the conference, but passes on to the union conference treasurer the funds intended for union conference use or for general purposes. The union conference treasurer disburses the funds intended for union conference use, but passes on to either the division or the General Conference treasurer all funds given for general purposes. All these treasurers, from the local church to the General Conference, work under the direction of either the church board or conference commit-

tees. They do not disburse funds independently of specific action by responsible committees.

*On Auditing.*—Every set of books, from those of the local church treasurer and the lay activities secretary to those of the General Conference treasurer, are subject to audit by auditors appointed for the purpose. This rule of auditing is also applied to the books of every denominationally operated institution. It provides the maximum of safety in the handling of funds. (See also p. 106.)

## CHAPTER 12

### STANDARDS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

#### The High Calling of God in Christ Jesus

The Christian's life is not a slight modification or improvement, but a complete transformation of his nature. This means a death to self and sin and a resurrection to a new life as a new man in Christ Jesus.

The heart of the Christian becomes the dwelling place of Christ by faith. This is brought about by "the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Saviour as our very best and honored friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him." Thus it is that Christians "have the companionship of the divine presence," and it is only as we realize that presence that "our thoughts are brought into captivity to Jesus Christ" and our habits of life made to conform to the divine standard (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 387, 388).

We should bear in mind that "as a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God's presence."—*Education*, p. 255.

A similar thought is expressed in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 217, 218: "If we were to cherish an habitual impression that God sees and hears all that

we do and say and keeps a faithful record of our words and actions, and that we must meet it all, we would fear to sin. Let the young ever remember that wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are in the presence of God. No part of our conduct escapes observation. We cannot hide our ways from the Most High. . . . Every act, every word, every thought, is as distinctly marked as though there were only one person in the whole world, and the attention of heaven were centered upon him."

God loves all men, and His children in particular. His ear is ever open to the appeals of His people, those who have turned from the world and given themselves to Him. Out of this sacred relationship grows a respect and a reverence which is manifested every day and everywhere. As Christians we are members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. Therefore, we should say no word, perform no act, that would bring dishonor upon "that worthy name by the which ye are called." In every phase of life we should "study carefully the divine-human character, and constantly inquire, 'What would Jesus do were He in my place?' This should be the measurement of our duty."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 491.

It is through the remnant church that God will make a final demonstration to the entire universe of the adequacy of the gospel completely to save men and women from the power of sin. There is need today that as members of that church we should emphasize again the great standards of Christian conduct, and that we renew our allegiance to these God-given principles. All should come up to the high

standards of the Christian life and be separated from the world. To this end we would emphasize the Lord's admonition: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

### Bible Study and Prayer

Spiritual life is maintained by spiritual food. The habit of devotional Bible study and prayer must be maintained if we are to perfect holiness. In a time when a great flood of reading matter pours forth from printing presses everywhere, when the very ether is filled with thousands of voices, pleading for a hearing, it is incumbent upon us to close our eyes and our ears to much of that which is seeking entrance to our minds, and devote ourselves to God's book—the Book of all books, the Book of Life. If we cease to be the people of the Book, we are lost, and our mission has failed. Only as we daily talk to God in prayer and listen to His voice speaking to us from the Bible, can we hope to live the life that is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3), or finish His work. "Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite," but "without unceasing prayer and diligent watching, we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 97, 95.

The home is the cornerstone of the church, and a Christian home is a house of prayer. "Fathers and mothers," says the Spirit of Prophecy, "however pressing your business, do not fail to gather your family around God's altar. . . . Those who would live

patient, loving, cheerful lives must pray.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 393.

### Community Relationships

While our “citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour” (Phil. 3:20, R.V.), we are yet in the world as an integral part of human society, and must share with our fellow men certain responsibilities in the common problems of life. In every community where they live Seventh-day Adventists, as children of God, should be recognized as outstanding citizens in their Christian integrity and in working for the common good of all. While our highest responsibility is to the church and its commission to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world, we should support by our service and our means, as far as possible and consistent, all proper efforts for social order and betterment. Even though we must stand apart from all political and social strife, we should always, quietly and firmly, maintain an uncompromising stand for justice and right in civic affairs, along with strict adherence to our religious convictions. It is our sacred responsibility to be loyal citizens of the governments to which we belong, rendering “unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21).

### Sabbathkeeping

The sacred institution of the Sabbath is a token of God’s love to man. It is a memorial of God’s power in the original creation and also a sign of His power to re-create and sanctify the life (Eze.

20:12), and its observance is an evidence of our loyalty to Him. The proper observance of the Sabbath is an evidence of our fidelity to our Creator and of fellowship with our Redeemer. In a special sense the observance of the Sabbath is a test of obedience. Unless we can pass that test as individuals, how can we adequately present the Sabbath message to the world?

The Sabbath hours belong to God, and are to be used for Him alone. Our own pleasure, our own words, our own business, our own thoughts, should find no place in the observance of the Lord's day (Isa. 58:13). Let us gather round the family circle at sunset and welcome the holy Sabbath with prayer and song, and let us close the day with prayer and expressions of gratitude for His wondrous love. The Sabbath is a special day for worship in the home and in the church, a day of joy to ourselves and our children, a day in which to learn more of God through the Bible and the great lesson book of nature. It is a time to visit the sick and to work for the salvation of souls. The ordinary affairs of the six working days should be laid aside. No unnecessary work should be performed. Secular reading or secular broadcasts should not occupy our time on God's holy day.

"The Sabbath is not intended to be a period of useless inactivity. The law forbids secular labor on the rest day of the Lord; the toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon that day; but as God ceased His labor of creating, and rested upon the Sabbath and blessed it, so man is to leave the occupations of his daily life, and devote those sacred hours to healthful rest, to



worship, and to holy deeds."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 207.

A rightly directed program of activities in harmony with the spirit of true Sabbathkeeping will make this blessed day the happiest and best of all the week, for ourselves and for our children—a veritable foretaste of our heavenly rest.

### Reverence for the Place of Worship

Christians who appreciate God's omnipotence, His holiness, and His love will always and under all circumstances manifest a spirit of deep reverence for God, His word, and His worship. "Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 252. They will recognize that "the hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 178. They will come to the house of worship, not carelessly, but in the spirit of meditation and prayer, and will avoid unnecessary conversation.

Parents should reverently instruct their children as to how they should behave in "the house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15). Faithful instruction and discipline in the home, Sabbath school, and church during the days of childhood and youth in regard to reverence for God and His worship will go far in holding their loyalty in after years.

The minister who senses the sacredness of God's service will, by his example, instruction, and conduct in the pulpit, foster reverence, simplicity, good order, and decorum in the church. "The Lord is in

his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20).

### Health and Temperance

Health reform and the teaching of health and temperance are inseparable parts of the Advent message. Instruction came to us through the Lord's chosen messenger "that those who are keeping His commandments must be brought into sacred relationship to Himself, and that by temperance in eating and drinking they must keep mind and body in the most favorable condition for service."—*Counsels on Health*, pp. 132, 133. Also, "it is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 259.

We belong to God, body, soul, and spirit. It is therefore our religious duty to observe the laws of health, both for our own well-being and happiness, and for more efficient service to God and our fellow men. The appetite must be kept under control. Health is promoted by an intelligent observance of the hygienic principles having to do with pure air, ventilation, suitable clothing, cleanliness, proper exercise and recreation, adequate sleep and rest, and an adequate, wholesome diet. God has furnished man with a liberal variety of foods sufficient to satisfy every dietary need. Fruits, grains, nuts, and vegetables prepared in simple ways "make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet."—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 47.

When the principles of healthful living are practiced the need for stimulants will not be felt. The

use of intoxicants and narcotics of any kind is forbidden by nature's law. From the early days of this movement abstinence from the use of liquor and tobacco has been a condition of membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (See also pp. 36, 37, 58, 62, 248.)

God has given us great light on the principles of health, and modern scientific research has abundantly verified these principles. These cannot be safely ignored, for we are told that those "who choose to follow their own preferences in this matter, eating and drinking as they please, will gradually grow careless of the instruction the Lord has given regarding other phases of the present truth and will lose their perception of what is truth."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 156, 157.

### Dress

As Seventh-day Adventists we have been called out from the world. We are reformers. True religion which enters into every phase of life must have a molding influence on all our activities. Our habits of life must stem from principle and not from the example of the world about us. Customs and fashions may change with the years, but principles of right conduct are always the same. Dress is an important factor in Christian character. Early in our history instruction was given as to the way Christians should dress, the purpose of which was "to protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health."—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 634. Truly a comprehensive purpose! There is no virtue in dressing differently from those

about us just to be different, but where the principles of refinement or morality are involved the conscientious Christian will be true to his convictions rather than follow the prevailing customs.

Christians should avoid gaudy display and "profuse ornamentation." Clothing should be, when possible "of good quality, of becoming colors, and suited for service. It should be chosen for durability rather than display." Our attire should be characterized by "beauty," "modest grace," and "appropriateness of natural simplicity" (*Messages to Young People*, pp. 351, 352). That it may not be conspicuous, it should follow the conservative and most sensible styles of the time.

The adoption of fads and extreme fashions in men's or women's dress indicates a lack of attention to serious matters. Regardless of how sensibly people generally may dress, there are always extremes in style that transgress the laws of modesty, and thus have a direct bearing on the prevalence of immoral conditions. Many who blindly follow the styles are at least partly unconscious of these effects, but the results are no less disastrous. The people of God should always be found among the conservatives in dress, and will not let "the dress question fill the mind."—*Evangelism*, p. 273. They will not be the first to adopt the new styles of dress or the last to lay the old aside.

"To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 366. It is clearly taught in the Scriptures that the wearing of jewelry is contrary to the will of God. "Not with

broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" is the admonition of the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 2:9). The wearing of ornaments of jewelry is a bid for attention which is not in keeping with Christian self-forgetfulness.

In some countries the custom of wearing the marriage ring is considered imperative, having become, in the minds of the people, a criterion of virtue, and hence it is not regarded as an ornament. Under such circumstances we have no disposition to condemn the practice.

Let us remember that it is not the "outward adorning" which expresses true Christian character, but "the hidden man of the heart . . . a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4). The use of cosmetics not in keeping with good taste and the principles of Christian modesty should be avoided. Cleanliness and Christlike deportment should be observed in the care and grooming of the individual who is seeking at all times to please and rightly represent Christ our Lord.

Christian parents should bring to bear the weight of their example, instruction, and authority to lead their sons and daughters to attire themselves modestly, and thus win the respect and confidence of those who know them. Let our people consider themselves well dressed only when the demands of modesty are met in the wearing of tasteful, conservative clothing.

### Simplicity

Simplicity has been a fundamental feature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from its foundation.

We must continue to be a plain people. Increase of pomp in religion always parallels a decline in spiritual power. As "the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast" to the display and ostentation of His time (*Education*, p. 77), so the simplicity and power of the Advent message must be in marked contrast to the worldly display of our day. The Lord condemns "needless, extravagant expenditure of money to gratify pride and love of display" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 179). In harmony with these principles, simplicity and economy should characterize our graduating exercises, the weddings in our churches, and all other church services.

### Reading

The mind is the measure of the man. Food for the mind is therefore of the utmost importance in developing character and in carrying out our life's purposes. For this reason our mental habits should be carefully checked. There is no better index to character than what we choose to read and hear. Books and other literature are among the most valuable means of education and culture, but these must be well chosen and rightly used. There is a wealth of good literature, both books and periodicals; but equally there is a flood of evil literature, often in most attractive guise but damaging to mind and morals. The tales of wild adventure and of moral laxness, whether fact or fiction, which are presented in many magazines and over the radio are unfit for the youth or adult.

"Those who indulge the habit of racing through an exciting story are simply crippling their mental

strength, and disqualifying their minds for vigorous thought and research."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 135.

Along with other evil results from the habit of reading fiction, we are told that "it unfits the soul to contemplate the great problems of duty and destiny," and "creates a distaste for life's practical duties" (*Ibid.*, p. 383).

### Radio and Television

Radio and television have changed the whole atmosphere of our modern world and have brought us within easy contact with the life, thought, and activities of the entire globe. Radio and television are great educational agencies. By these means we can greatly enlarge our knowledge of world events, and enjoy important discussions and the best in music.

Unfortunately, however, radio and television also bring to their audiences almost continuous theatrical performances and many influences that are neither wholesome nor uplifting. If we are not discriminating and decisive, radio and television will turn our homes into theaters and minstrel shows of a cheap and sordid kind. (See also pp. 60, 229.)

Safety for ourselves and our children is found in a determination, by God's help, to follow the admonition of the apostle Paul: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

### Recreation and Entertainment

Recreation is a purposeful refreshing of the powers of body and mind. A vigorous, wholesome mind will not require worldly amusement, but will find a renewal of strength in good recreation.

"Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle, and open the door to sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 459, 460. (See also p. 58.)

We earnestly warn against the subtle and sinister influence of the moving-picture theater, which is no place for the Christian. Dramatized films that graphically present by portrayal and by suggestion the sins and crimes of humanity—murder, adultery, robbery, and kindred evils—are in no small degree responsible for the present breakdown of morality. We appeal to parents, children, and youth to shun those places of amusement and those theatrical films that glorify professional acting and actors. If we will find delight in God's great world of nature and in the romance of human agencies and divine work-



ings, we shall not be attracted by the puerile portrayals of the theater.

Another form of amusement that has an evil influence is social dancing. "The amusement of dancing, as conducted at the present day, is a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 399. (See also p. 58.)

Let us not patronize commercialized amusements, joining with the worldly, careless, pleasure-loving multitudes who are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

Recreation is essential. We should endeavor to make the friendships and recreations of our people church centered. We recommend that in every home where there are children, materials be provided which will afford an outlet for the creative energies of youth. Wholesome association and recreation may be provided through music organizations, MV class projects, and missionary service bands.

### Music

"Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594. Jesus "held communion with heaven in song" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 73).

Music is one of the highest arts. Good music not only gives pleasure but elevates the mind and cultivates the finest qualities. Spiritual songs have often been used of God to touch the hearts of sinners and lead to repentance. Debased music, on the contrary,

destroys the rhythm of the soul and breaks down morality.

Great care should be exercised in the choice of music. Any melody partaking of the nature of jazz, rock, or related hybrid forms, or any language expressing foolish or trivial sentiments, will be shunned by persons of true culture. Let us use only good music in the home, in the social gathering, in the school, and in the church. (See also p. 136.)

### Social Relationships

The social instinct is given us of God, for our pleasure and benefit. "By mutual contact minds receive polish and refinement; by social intercourse, acquaintances are formed and friendships contracted which result in a unity of heart and an atmosphere of love which is pleasing in the sight of heaven."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 172. Proper association of the sexes is beneficial to both. Such associations should be conducted upon a high plane and with due regard to the conventions and restrictions which, for the protection of society and the individual, have been prescribed. It is the purpose of Satan, of course, to pervert every good thing; and the perversion of the best often leads to that which is worst. So it is highly important that Christians should adhere to very definite standards of social life.

Today the ideals which make this social intercourse safe and happy have been terribly broken down. Under the influence of passion unrestrained by moral and religious principle, the association of the sexes has to an alarming extent degenerated into freedom and license. Millions are bartering the

sweet and sacred experiences of parenthood for the bitter, remorseful fruits of lust.

It is incumbent upon the parents and the spiritual guides of the youth to face with no false modesty the facts of social conditions, to gain more fully a sympathetic understanding of the problems of this generation of young people, to seek most earnestly to provide for them the best environment, and to draw so near to them in spirit as to be able to impart the ideals of life and the inspiration and power of Christian religion, that they may be saved from the evil that is in the world through lust.

But to our young men and young women we say, The responsibility is yours. Whatever may be the mistakes of parents, it is your privilege to know and to hold the highest ideals of Christian manhood and womanhood. Reverent Bible study, a deep acquaintance with the works of nature, stern guarding of the sacred powers of the body, earnest purpose, constancy in prayer, and sincere, unselfish ministry to others' needs will build a character that is proof against evil and that will make you an uplifting influence in society.

Social gatherings for old and young should be made occasions, not for light and trifling amusement, but for happy fellowship and improvement of the powers of mind and soul. Good music, elevating conversation, good recitations, suitable still or motion pictures, games carefully selected for their educational value, and, above all, the making and using of plans for missionary effort can provide programs for social gatherings that will bless and strengthen the lives of all. The Missionary Volunteer

Department of the General Conference has published helpful information and practical suggestions for the conduct of social gatherings and for guidance in other social relations.

The homes of the church are by far the best places for social gatherings. In large centers where it is impossible to hold them there, and where there is no social center of our own, a proper place free from influences destructive to Christian standards should be secured rather than a place that is ordinarily used for commercial amusements and sports, such as social halls and skating rinks, which suggest an atmosphere contrary to Christian standards.

### Chaperonage

The happy and cordial association of those older in years with the young people is one of the most wholesome influences in the lives of children and youth. "There is danger that both parents and teachers . . . fail to come sufficiently into social relation with their children or scholars."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 76. It is the duty of our schools and other institutions to care for the morals and reputation of those placed in their charge. Chaperonage is an obligatory duty with them. It is equally the duty of the home. Parents should strongly sustain the regulations of the institutions in which their youth and children are placed, and should institute in their homes equal safeguards. To make this possible, it is their duty to learn how to be welcome companions of their children; but it rests chiefly upon the young people themselves to make of chaperonage not an irksome and repugnant as-

sociation but an honored and happy relationship.

### Courtship and Marriage

Courtship is recognized as a preparatory period during which a man and a woman, already mutually attracted, become more thoroughly acquainted, with each other in preparation for intended marriage. Christian marriage is a divinely sanctioned union between a believing man and a believing woman for the fulfillment of their mutual love, for mutual support, for shared happiness, and for the procreation and rearing of children who will in turn become Christians. According to God's design, this union lasts until dissolved by the death of one of the partners.

Marriage is the foundation of human society, and true affection between man and woman is ordained of God. "Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. Marriage affects the after life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 359.

The failure to follow these principles in Christian courtship may lead to tragedy. Unity of husband and wife in ideals and purposes is a requisite to a happy and successful home. The Scriptures counsel, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). Differences regarding religion are likely to mar the happiness of a home where partners hold

different beliefs and lead to confusion, perplexity, and failure in the rearing of children.

Differences concerning the worship of God, Sabbath-keeping, recreation, association, and training of children often lead to discouragement and finally to complete loss of Christian experience. Let us take heed to the following admonition: "Unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 440.

Marriage "was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities" (*Ibid.*, p. 434).

### Conclusion

Standing amid the perils of the last days, bearing the responsibility of speedily carrying the last offer of salvation to the world, and facing a judgment that will culminate in the establishment of universal righteousness, let us with true heart consecrate ourselves to God, body, soul, and spirit, determining to maintain the high standards of living that must characterize those who wait for the return of their Lord.

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

## General Principles

The attention of all our ministers, church officers, and members is called to the important quotations in this chapter from the Spirit of Prophecy. These statements are worthy of our careful and prayerful study; they set forth in clear, unmistakable language the solemn responsibility that rests upon the people of God in maintaining the purity, the integrity, and the spiritual fervor of the church. If members grow cold and indifferent, the church must seek to arouse them from their lethargy. Should some be drifting away from the truth, efforts must be made to bring them back into the narrow way.

*Dealing With Erring Members.*—"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."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 260.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say

unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18: 15-18).

"Human beings are Christ's property, purchased by Him at an infinite price, bound to Him by the love that He and His Father have manifested for them. How careful, then, we should be in our dealing with one another! Men have no right to surmise evil in regard to their fellow men. Church members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. Reports unfavorable to a brother or sister in the church are communicated from one to another of the church members. Mistakes are made and injustice is done because of an unwillingness on the part of some one to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus.

"'If thy brother shall trespass against thee,' Christ declared, 'go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.' Matt. 18:15. Do not tell others of the wrong. One person is told, then another, and still another; and continually the report grows, and the evil increases, till the whole church is made to suffer. Settle the matter 'between thee and him alone.' This is God's plan. 'Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another.' Prov. 25:8, 9. Do not suffer sin upon your brother; but do not expose



him, and thus increase the difficulty, making the reproof seem like a revenge. Correct him in the way outlined in the word of God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 260, 261.

**To Seek Reconciliation.**—"Do not suffer resentment to ripen into malice. Do not allow the wound to fester and break out in poisoned words, which taint the minds of those who hear. Do not allow bitter thoughts to continue to fill your mind and his. Go to your brother, and in humility and sincerity talk with him about the matter.

"Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ's love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him calmly and quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips. Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment. Remember the words: 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.' James 5:20.

"Take to your brother the remedy that will cure the disease of disaffection. Do your part to help him. For the sake of the peace and unity of the church, feel it a privilege as well as a duty to do this. If he will hear you, you have gained him as a friend.

"All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong,

asking forgiveness from God and from his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The controversy is ended; friendship and confidence are restored. The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong. The Spirit of God binds heart to heart, and there is music in heaven over the union brought about.

“As those thus united in Christian fellowship offer prayer to God and pledge themselves to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, great blessing comes to them. If they have wronged others they continue the work of repentance, confession, and restitution, fully set to do good to one another. This is the fulfilling of the law of Christ.

“‘But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ Matt. 18: 16. Take with you those who are spiritually minded, and talk with the one in error in regard to the wrong. He may yield to the united appeals of his brethren. As he sees their agreement in the matter his mind may be enlightened.

“‘And if he shall neglect to hear them,’ what then shall be done? Shall a few persons in a board meeting take upon themselves the responsibility of disfellowshipping the erring one? ‘If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.’ Matt. 18:17. Let the church take action in regard to its members.

“‘But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.’ Matt. 18:17. If he will not heed the voice of the church, if he refuses all the efforts made to reclaim him, upon the church rests the responsibility of separat-

ing him from fellowship. His name should then be stricken from the books.

*“No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrong doer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this instruction has been followed, the church has cleared herself before God. The evil must then be made to appear as it is, and must be removed, that it may not become more and more widespread. The health and purity of the church must be preserved, that she may stand before God unsullied, clad in the robes of Christ’s righteousness. . . .*

“‘Verily I say unto you,’ Christ continued, ‘whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ Verse 18.

“This statement holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ’s stead. It is God’s instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their un-Christlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God’s word will be ratified in heaven.

“Matters of grave import come up for settlement by the church. God’s ministers, ordained by Him as guides of His people, after doing their part are to

submit the whole matter to the church, that there may be unity in the decision made.

“The Lord desires His followers to exercise great care in dealing with one another. They are to lift up, to restore, to heal. But there is to be in the church no neglect of proper discipline. The members are to regard themselves as pupils in a school, learning how to form characters worthy of their high calling. In the church here below, God’s children are to be prepared for the great reunion in the church above. Those who here live in harmony with Christ may look forward to an endless life in the family of the redeemed.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 261-264. (Italics supplied.)

***The Authority of the Church.***—“The world’s Redeemer has invested great power with His church. He states the rules to be applied in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says: ‘Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [in church discipline] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ Thus even the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed.

“The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 428.

***Church Responsible for Dealing With Sin.***—“God

holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins."—*Ibid.*, p. 269.

"He would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him, and are not to be lightly regarded. He shows us that when His people are found in sin, they should at once take decided measures to put that sin from them, that His frown may not rest upon them all. But if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for those sins.

"In His dealings with His people in the past the Lord shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, they should seek God earnestly, in great humility and self-abasement, until the wrongs which grieve His Spirit are searched out and put away. . . .

"If wrongs are apparent among His people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty. In vision I have been pointed to many instances where the displeasure of God has been incurred by a neglect on the part of

His servants to deal with the wrongs and sins existing among them. Those who have excused these wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable and lovely in disposition, simply because they shunned to discharge a plain scriptural duty. The task was not agreeable to their feelings; therefore they avoided it."—*Ibid.*, pp. 265, 266.

***Unconsecrated Resist Church Discipline.***—"There are many who do not have the discretion of Joshua and who have no special duty to search out wrongs and to deal promptly with the sins existing among them. Let not such hinder those who have the burden of this work upon them; let them not stand in the way of those who have this duty to do. Some make it a point to question and doubt and find fault because others do the work that God has not laid upon them. These stand directly in the way to hinder those upon whom God has laid the burden of reproving and correcting prevailing sins in order that His frown may be turned away from His people. Should a case like Achan's be among us, there are many who would accuse those who might act the part of Joshua in searching out the wrong, of having a wicked, faultfinding spirit. God is not to be trifled with and His warnings disregarded with impunity by a perverse people.

"I was shown that the manner of Achan's confession was similar to the confessions that some among us have made and will make. They hide their wrongs and refuse to make a voluntary confession until God searches them out, and then they acknowledge their sins. A few persons pass on in a course of wrong until they become hardened. They may even

know that the church is burdened, as Achan knew that Israel were made weak before their enemies because of his guilt. Yet their consciences do not condemn them. They will not relieve the church by humbling their proud, rebellious hearts before God and putting away their wrongs. God's displeasure is upon His people, and He will not manifest His power in the midst of them while sins exist among them and are fostered by those in responsible positions.

"Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 270, 271.

**Rules and Regulations Necessary.**—"Brethren, never allow anyone's ideas to unsettle your faith in regard to the order and harmony which should exist in the church. . . . The God of heaven is a God of order, and He requires all His followers to have rules and regulations, and to preserve order."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 274.

**Self-appointed Organizations.**—The church in its organized capacity is God's instrumentality for preserving order and discipline among His people. Its God-given message is borne to the world not only by the personal testimony of the individual member but in the corporate witness of the church as the body of Christ. Such corporate witness requires the recognized administrative structure that has been established with all duly elected officers and all prop-

erly organized channels of work such as the Sabbath School, Lay Activities, Youth departments, et cetera. It also acknowledges such self-supporting institutions whose activities contribute to the attainment of the church's objectives. Therefore, although all members have equal rights within the church, no individual member or group of members should start a movement or form an organization or seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Such a course would result in the fostering of a factional and divisive spirit, in the fragmenting of the effort and witness of the church, and thus in hindering it in the discharge of its obligations to its Head and to the world.

### Administering Discipline

If a member falls into sin, sincere efforts must be made to reclaim him. "If the erring one repents and submits to Christ's discipline, he is to be given another trial. And even if he does not repent, even if he stands outside the church, God's servants still have a work to do for him. They are to seek earnestly to win him to repentance. And, however aggravated may have been his offense, if he yields to the striving of the Holy Spirit and, by confessing and forsaking his sin, gives evidence of repentance, he is to be forgiven and welcomed to the fold again. His brethren are to encourage him in the right way, treating him as they would wish to be treated were they in his place, considering themselves lest they



also be tempted.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 263.

“We are nearing the judgment, and those who bear the message of warning to the world must have clean hands and pure hearts. They must have a living connection with God. The thoughts must be pure and holy, the soul untainted, the body, soul, and spirit be a pure, clean offering to God, or He will not accept it.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 426.

“Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 147.

When grievous sins are involved disciplinary measures must be taken. There are two ways by which this may be done:

1. By a vote of censure.
2. By a vote to disfellowship.

There may be cases where the offense is not considered by the church to be so serious as to warrant the extreme course of disfellowshipping the offending member, yet it may be sufficiently serious to call for an expression of disapproval. Such disapproval may be expressed by a vote of censure.

Censure has a twofold purpose:

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

2. To impress the offending member with the need for amendment of life and reformation in his conduct; also to extend to him a period of grace and probation during which these steps might be taken.

### Censure Defined

An erring member may be placed under censure by a vote of the church at any duly called meeting of the church, provided the member concerned has been notified. He can, of course, be present if he so desires. A vote of censure is for a stated period of time, such as for one, three, six, or nine months; it automatically removes the erring one from any and all offices he may hold in the church and from 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 and can have no public part in the exercises thereof, such as teaching a Sabbath school class, et cetera. Neither may he transfer his membership to another church during the period of censure. He is not deprived, however, of the privilege of sharing the blessings of Sabbath school, church worship, or the ordinances of the Lord's house. A vote of censure must not carry any provision involving severance of church membership in case of failure to comply with any conditions imposed. Proper inquiry should be made at the expiration of the period of censure, to ascertain whether the member under discipline has changed his course. If his conduct is satisfactory, he may then be considered in good standing without further action. If he has not changed his course, his

case should again be considered and such discipline administered as the case requires.

### **Disfellowshipping Defined**

To disfellowship a member means to expel him from the membership. To cut off a member from fellowship with the church, the body of Christ, is always a serious matter; it is the ultimate in the discipline that the church can administer; it is the extreme measure that can be meted out by the church. *Only after the instruction given in this chapter has been followed, and after all possible efforts have been made to win an erring member from the evils of his ways and restore him to right paths,* should this kind of discipline be used. It would be advisable to secure counsel from the pastor of the church, or, if he is not available, from the conference or field president before any action is taken by the church, when such a step is contemplated.

### **Reasons for Which Members Shall Be Disciplined**

Among the grievous sins for which members shall be subject to church discipline are the following:

1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the cardinal doctrines of the church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.
2. Open violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, murder, adultery, fornication and various perversions, stealing, profanity, gambling, Sabbathbreaking, willful and habitual falsehood, and the remarriage of a divorced person, except of the innocent party in a divorce for adultery.
3. Fraud or willful misrepresentation in business.

4. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the cause.

5. Adhering to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization. (See pp. 243, 244, "Self-appointed Organizations.")

6. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.

7. Instigating or continuing legal action against the church or any of its organizations or institutions, contrary to Biblical and Ellen G. White counsels. (See pp. 244, 245.)\*

8. The use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages.

9. The use of tobacco or addiction to narcotic drugs.

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\* At the 52nd session of the General Conference in Vienna, Austria, when this section of the *Church Manual* was revised, the church was seeking to reaffirm its commitment to the desirability of the settlement of problems that might be taken to civil courts, within the guidelines given by Paul in 1 Cor. 6:1-7 and as appearing also in Spirit of Prophecy counsels. For this reason it was considered necessary by the session that this paragraph should stand as it appears here in this section on reasons for disciplining church members. However, it was also considered necessary that further study be given to the whole question of litigation between church members and between church members and the church and/or its organizations or institutions and vice versa. The session therefore took action asking the General Conference Committee to arrange for such study with a view to the inclusion in the *Church Manual* of a fuller statement on litigation. When adopted this statement will probably be included at a place other than this section on the reasons for disciplining church members.

It is considered that under these circumstances church boards considering discipline of members under paragraph 7 would be unwise not to seek the counsel of the conference/mission president before decisions for recommendation to the church business meeting are taken.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the need of exercising great care to protect the highest spiritual interests of its members, to ensure fair treatment, and to safeguard the fair name of the church.

In some cases of transgression of the commandments of God where there is deep repentance and full and free confession, giving evidence that genuine conversion has taken place, the church may administer discipline by placing the transgressor under censure for a stated period of time.

In cases of flagrant violation of the law of God, which have brought public reproach upon the cause, the church may deem it necessary, even though a sincere confession has been made, to disfellowship the member to protect its fair name and its Christian standards. Later, if his life has been consistent, the offender may be received back into the fold after rebaptism. The church cannot afford to deal lightly with such sins, nor permit personal considerations to affect its actions. It must register its decisive and emphatic disapproval of the sins of fornication, adultery, all acts of moral indiscretion, and other grievous sins; at the same time it must do everything to restore and reclaim the erring ones. As the world continually grows more lax in moral matters, the church must not lower the standards set by God, but must take prompt and decisive action where moral lapses have occurred.

### Caution in Disciplining Members

“Christ has plainly taught that those who persist in open sin must be separated from the church, but

He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time.

“There is in the Saviour’s words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. Were they to be separated from the church, others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 71, 72.

***Ministers or Churches Not to Establish Tests of Fellowship.***—A minister, an individual church, or a conference does not have the authority to set up or establish tests of fellowship for the denomination. This authority rests with the entire church body, and is exercised through the regularly constituted

organization of the church in the General Conference. Anyone seeking to apply tests other than those herein set forth does not, therefore, properly represent the church.

“God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading this people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 207.

***At a Duly Called Meeting.***—Members may be disciplined by the church for sufficient cause, but only at a duly called business meeting of the church, provided the meeting is presided over by an ordained minister or a local ordained elder of the church concerned.

***Majority Vote.***—Members may be disfellowshipped from the church or otherwise disciplined only by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting. “The majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 107.

***Church Board Cannot Disfellowship.***—The church board may recommend to the church the dropping of a member, but under no circumstances does a church board have the right to disfellowship a member. The clerk of the church can remove a name from the church rolls only on a vote of the church except in the case of the death of a member.

***Right of the Member to Be Heard in His Own Defense.***—It is a fundamental principle of justice that every member has the right to be heard in his own defense, and to introduce evidence and produce witnesses in his own behalf. No church should vote to disfellowship a member under circumstances that deprive him of this right, if he chooses to exercise it. Due notice should be given by the church to the member under discipline of intention to try his case, thus giving him opportunity to appear in his own behalf.

***Lawyers Not to Represent Members.***—The work of the church in its administration of order and discipline, is an ecclesiastical function, and in no sense has to do with civil or legal procedure; therefore, the church does not recognize the right of any member to bring a lawyer to represent him in any church meeting or council called to administer order or discipline, or for the transaction of any business relating to the church. Therefore, our members should be informed that they will not be given a hearing if they endeavor to bring a lawyer into the meeting for such a purpose. The church should also exclude all nonmembers from any church meeting or council called for the administration of church order or discipline, except as they may be called as witnesses.

***Members Not to Be Dropped for Nonattendance.***—It is a serious neglect for a church member to regard the obligation of church membership so lightly that he deliberately absents himself for indefinite periods and makes no report of his faith and hope to the church. If, because of age, infirmity, or other un-



avoidable cause, a member finds it impossible regularly to attend divine worship, he should consider it a duty to keep in close contact with the church leaders by letter or by other means. All absentees should be faithfully visited by the church leadership, and everyone who can possibly do so should be encouraged to renew his church attendance. As long, however, as such a person is loyal to the doctrines of the church, nonattendance at church services on his part shall not be considered sufficient cause for disfellowshipping him.

*Members Moving Away and Not Reporting.*—When a member moves away from the vicinity of his church, it is his duty to inform the church elder or clerk as to his new location and address. While he remains a member of that church he should recognize his responsibility of reporting regularly to the church and sending in his tithes and offerings. It is desirable for such a report to be sent at least once each quarter. If, however, such a member leaves no address behind, and if he makes no effort to reach his home church or send a report and it is found impossible to locate him, then, after an absence of two years, he may be dropped from the membership of the church by a vote of the church, provided the church officers can certify that they have faithfully endeavored to locate him but without success. The clerk should record in the proper column, "Whereabouts unknown. Voted to designate as missing."

*Members Not to Be Dropped for Pecuniary Reasons.*—A member should never be dropped from the

church rolls on account of his inability or failure to render financial help to any of the causes of the church. Church membership rests primarily on a spiritual basis, yet it is the duty of every member to support the work of the church in a financial way to the extent of his ability, but he should never be deprived of his membership simply through inability or failure to render financial help to any of the causes of the church.

***Dropping a Member on His Own Request.***—Great care should be exercised in dealing with a member who requests that his own name be dropped from membership. Although we recognize the right of an individual to decide whether or not he will belong to the church, ample time should be given such a member for sober thought and reflection, and every effort made to restore him to a satisfactory experience.

***Notification to Disfellowshipped Members.***—It is incumbent upon the church that disfellowships a member to notify the individual in writing of the action that was reluctantly taken with the assurance of enduring spiritual interest and personal concern. The erring member should also be assured that the church will always hope that reaffiliation will take place and that one day there will be eternal fellowship together in the kingdom of God.

***Reinstating Disfellowshipped Members.***—When a member has been disfellowshipped, the church should, if possible, keep in touch with him and manifest the spirit of friendship and love, endeavoring to win him back to the fold. A person disfellowshipped from the church may be received again into membership

when confession of wrongs committed is made and evidence is given of real repentance and amendment of life, and it is clear that the member will fully submit to church order and discipline. Such reinstatement should preferably be in the church from which the member was dismissed. This, however, is not always possible. No church should at any time receive into membership a person who is under the censure of another church. Such a course condones the offense for which another church has applied discipline, and is not in keeping with the spirit of the golden rule. In such cases of readmission to membership, rebaptism should precede reinstatement.

*Right of Appeal for Reinstatement.*—In a case where the church officers refuse to consider the application for reinstatement from an expelled member, such an individual has a right to appeal to the church for a hearing. The church should not neglect or refuse to grant such a hearing. If it does, the individual has the right to appeal for a hearing to the executive committee of the conference in which the church is located. If, after a full and impartial hearing, the conference committee is satisfied that an injustice is being inflicted by the church, the committee may recommend the reinstatement of the expelled member. But if he is still refused membership by that church, then the committee may recommend him to membership in some other church. On the other hand, if it finds good grounds for sustaining the church in refusing to reinstate the member, it will so record its decision.

## ORGANIZING, UNITING, AND DISBANDING CHURCHES

### Organization of a Church

Churches are organized by an ordained minister on the recommendation of the conference or field committee. Since so much is involved in the organization of a church, the local conference or field president should, whenever possible, be invited to be present.

When a company of baptized believers, fully instructed in the message, is prepared to assume the responsibilities of an organized church, the conference or field president should be taken into counsel, and a date should be agreed upon for the organization to take place.

The baptized believers being assembled, it is well to present a brief review of the leading principles of our faith, such as the personality of God, the deity and priesthood of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Sabbath, conversion, the new birth, the nature of man, the state of the dead, punishment of the wicked, the Second Advent, tithing, the communion service, baptism, *spiritual gifts, proper dress, and health and temperance*, and to give two or three texts in support of each point.

When this has been done a call should be made,

asking all who are in agreement with these principles and who desire to unite in church fellowship to come forward. The name of each person should be recorded. If one or more are already members of the conference church or any other church, the one officiating will already have ascertained this and will have had letters granted to them to join this new church. These will thus form a nucleus. If, however, there are none present who have such membership elsewhere, then three persons (preferably experienced Sabbathkeepers among those present) should be selected as a nucleus. The following questions might then be asked: Do you accept Christ as your personal Saviour? Are you in full harmony with the principles of faith that have just been presented? Have you been baptized by immersion? Are you in good fellowship and enjoying one another's confidence?

If these questions are answered in the affirmative, the three are declared to constitute the nucleus of the new church. Then one after another the names on the list are called, and the person, rising to his feet, is asked the foregoing questions, and a vote is taken among the nucleus to receive him into church fellowship. Each person thus received becomes a member of the church and is qualified to vote on the next name. Care should be taken to see that full fellowship and brotherly love exist among those received into membership. Should any difficulty arise in any case over a question either of doctrine or of fellowship, action in such cases should be deferred, unless the matter can be adjusted at the time kindly and tactfully.

When all have been received the church is a complete entity and ready for the election of officers. A nominating committee should be chosen, with the officiating minister as chairman. This committee shall bring in nominations to fill the various church offices. When these have been elected, the elders should be ordained. After a brief outline of an elder's duties and the mutual responsibilities of members, the elders should be called to the platform and invited to kneel while the officiating ministers pray and lay hands upon them to signify that the church sets them apart for this service. A similar but shorter dedication should take place for the ordination of the deacons. When this has been done the church is fully organized and ready for service.

Before such a meeting closes, an action should be taken requesting the local conference to receive the newly organized church into the sisterhood of churches at the time of the next local conference session.

Care should be taken to see that each officer is fully instructed concerning his duties. The church should have a communion set provided, also the materials needed for the ordinance of foot washing. The treasurer, the clerk, and the other officers should be furnished with the necessary record and receipt books. All such details should be given careful attention, for the future prosperity of the church depends in a large degree upon the care that is exercised in its organization and instruction. When it can be arranged the communion service should be celebrated at the time the church is organized.

### Uniting Churches

When it is advisable to unite two churches the conference committee should take action recommending such a course. In a duly called meeting, presided over by the conference president or the pastor or other ordained minister, each church should vote on the question of union. When favorable action has been taken by both churches a joint meeting of the two churches should be arranged with the conference president presiding, or in his absence an ordained minister appointed by the conference.

A carefully written statement of agreement should be prepared, setting forth the reasons for uniting and stating any special matters that may be involved, such as the disposal of property, the responsibility for financial obligations, et cetera. This statement should set forth the conditions of the agreement on which the union is made. It should provide for the new name of the united church and for the release from service of all officers of the two churches. The adoption of this agreement by the united body consummates the union of the two churches. Then a nominating committee should be chosen to nominate officers for the united church to serve for the remainder of the current year. A copy of the agreement should then be filed with the conference.

When such a step has been taken the entire membership of both churches unites in the new organization. It is not permissible under such circumstances to drop a member by failing to include him in the membership list at the time of uniting. The

united body becomes responsible for the order and discipline of all the members. If any member is unworthy and the subject of discipline, he should be dealt with as provided elsewhere in this manual.

The books and records of both churches become a part of the records of the united body. The local conference should be notified and suitable action taken at its next session.

### Disbanding Churches

“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . . For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:25-30).

This should ever be the attitude toward churches in the administering of discipline, either to the individual or to the church as a body—always to help and save for the cause of God. Conditions may make it necessary for a church to be disbanded. So many of the members may move away that the number remaining is not sufficient to support the organization. Occasionally difficulties arise that threaten the life of a church. Where the solution of these problems seems to require disciplinary action, it is advisable that a series of revival meetings be conducted. These meetings can be held with the idea to recover the church from its unfortunate state and



to help the members to renew their covenant with the Lord. This is better than taking measures that would mean a rupture in the church and possibly make it necessary to disband.

Churches may be disbanded, however, for the following reasons:

1. *Loss of Members.*—When the existence of a church is threatened through the loss of its members, the conference committee should take action recommending the disbanding of such a church. Before such action is taken, however, any remaining members may be transferred to other churches by the following methods:

a. If enough members remain for the calling of a meeting to be presided over by an ordained minister, they may vote letters of transfer to all remaining members who are in good and regular standing to unite with other churches.

b. If such a meeting cannot be held, the conference committee has the authority to recommend such members in good and regular standing to other churches or to the conference church.

On the disbanding of such a church all its books, records, and funds shall be turned over to the secretary and/or treasurer of the conference. If at the time of disbanding there are members who are under discipline, or cannot be granted letters saying they are in good and regular standing, a careful record should be made of such cases, and turned over to the secretary of the conference. Every effort will then be made to help such persons to a satisfactory Christian experience. If the effort is successful, letters should then be granted to them. If they cannot be helped

and reclaimed, they should be dropped by vote of the conference committee.

2. *Disciplinary Reasons.*—The occasions for disbanding churches for disciplinary reasons are so rare as to be almost negligible. Such a course should be resorted to only as an extreme measure. Such action should be taken only after careful study has been given to such a proposal by the conference committee. If in its judgment such action is warranted, there should be recorded in its minutes a properly prepared recommendation, together with a statement of the reasons for such action. This in turn should be presented to a full meeting of the union committee for its study and recommendation. After this, the matter is referred to the church in question, and its members are in turn to vote upon it. The action to disband should be by a majority vote of the church. The authority of the conference committee in such cases is limited to recommending that a church be disbanded; it has no authority to disband a church.

3. *Apostasy.*—In a case where an entire church or the majority of the members have apostatized, or are in rebellion, or refuse to submit to order and discipline, it is the duty of the conference committee to present a full statement of the facts at the ensuing session of the conference, after which, by a majority vote, the conference in session may expel the offending church from the sisterhood of churches.

If in the membership of a disbanded or expelled church there are loyal and worthy members who desire to remain with the body, they may be organized into a new church, or by vote of the conference

committee may be recommended for membership in another church.

*Conference or Field Session to Act in All Cases.*— In any case of disbanding a church, for whatever reason, a full statement of the facts shall be presented at the session of the conference or field, and action shall be taken, dropping the church from the list of constituent churches and a record of this shall be made in the minutes of the conference or field, giving the reasons for disbanding.

## CHAPTER 15

### DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

The problem of divorce and remarriage can be seen in its true light only as it is viewed from Heaven's viewpoint and against the background of the Garden of Eden. Central to God's holy plan for our world was the creation of beings made in His image who would multiply and replenish the earth, and live together in purity, harmony, and happiness. For the accomplishment of this most important part of His whole creative activity, He performed a miracle, brought forth Eve from the side of Adam, and gave her to Adam as his wife. Thus was marriage instituted—God the author of the institution, God the officiator at the first marriage. After the Lord had revealed to Adam the nature of the miracle performed upon him, that Eve was verily bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, there could never arise a doubt in his mind that they twain were one flesh. Nor could ever a doubt arise in the mind of either of the holy pair that God intended that their home should endure forever.

To this view of marriage and the home the church adheres without reservation, believing that any lowering of this high view is to that extent a lowering of the heavenly ideal. The belief that marriage is a divine institution rests upon the Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, all thinking and reasoning in the perplexing field of divorce and remarriage

must constantly be harmonized with that holy ideal revealed in Eden. Only thus can the church escape from error and from unscriptural laxness of standards.

Those who speak for the Advent Movement are not commissioned of God to frame resolutions that accord with the desires of the human heart, but only those that harmonize with the heavenly standards. The question of divorce and remarriage is one that has always troubled the church, and no easy solutions are possible to the fearful problems that men and women often create for themselves and the church by their departure from God's ideal. But spiritual problems that grow out of violated standards are never solved by lowering those standards.

The church believes in the law of God; it also believes in the forgiving mercy of God. It believes that victory and salvation can as surely be found by those who have transgressed in the matter of divorce and remarriage as by those who have failed in any other of God's holy standards. Nothing presented here is intended to minimize the mercy of God or the forgiveness of God. In the fear of the Lord, the church here sets forth the principles and rules that should apply in this matter of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

### **Our Position**

Though marriage was first performed by God alone, it is recognized that men now live under civil government on this earth. The first fact, therefore, that should be kept clearly in mind is that marriage has both a divine and a civil aspect. The

divine aspect is governed by the laws of God, the civil by the laws of the state.

In harmony with these principles the following statement sets forth the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the subject of divorce and re-marriage:

1. "In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 63. (Matt. 5:32; see also Matt. 19:9.)

When Jesus said, "Let not man put asunder," He established a rule of conduct for the church under the dispensation of grace which must transcend forever all civil enactments which would go beyond His interpretation of the divine law governing the marriage relation. He here gives a rule to His followers, who should adhere to it whether or not the state or prevailing custom allows larger liberty.

2. Even though the Scriptures allow divorce for "unfaithfulness to the marriage vow," earnest endeavors should be made by those concerned to effect a reconciliation urging the innocent spouse to forgive the guilty one and the latter to amend his or her conduct, so that the marriage union may be maintained.

3. In the event that reconciliation is not effected, the innocent spouse has the Biblical right to secure a divorce, and also to remarry.

4. A spouse found guilty of adultery by the church shall be subject to church discipline. Even though the transgressor may be genuinely repentant, he or

she shall be placed under censure for a stated period of time, in order to express the church's abhorrence of such evil. The transgressor who gives no evidence of full and sincere repentance shall be disfellowshipped. In case the violation has been so flagrant as to bring public reproach on the cause of God, the church, in order to maintain its high standards and good name, shall disfellowship the individual even though there is evidence of repentance.

5. A guilty spouse, who is divorced, has not the moral right to marry another while the innocent spouse still lives and remains unmarried and chaste. Should he or she do so, he or she, if a member, shall be disfellowshipped. The person whom he or she marries, if a member, shall also be disfellowshipped.

6. When a divorce is secured by either spouse, or when both mutually secure a divorce on any grounds other than that of "unfaithfulness to the marriage vow," the party or parties securing the divorce shall come under the censure of the church except as provided later in this paragraph. In the event that either spouse who is a church member remarries—unless in the meantime the other party has remarried, committed adultery or fornication, or died—the one remarrying shall be disfellowshipped from the church. The person whom he or she married, shall also be disfellowshipped. It is recognized, however, that sometimes there may be conditions that make it unsafe or impossible for husband and wife to continue to live together. In many such cases the custody of children, the adjustment of property rights, or even

personal protection may make necessary a change in marriage status. In such cases it may be permissible to secure what is known in some countries as a legal separation. However, in some civil jurisdictions such a separation can be secured only by divorce, which under these circumstances would not be condemned. But such a separation or divorce, in which "unfaithfulness to the marriage vow" is not involved, does not give either one the scriptural right to remarry unless in the meantime the other party has remarried, committed adultery or fornication, or been removed by death. Should a member who has been thus divorced remarry, he or she, if a member, shall be disfellowshipped; and the one whom he or she marries shall also be disfellowshipped from the church.

7. A guilty spouse who has violated his or her marriage vow and has been divorced and disfellowshipped and who has remarried, or a person who has been divorced on other than the grounds set forth in section 1 and has remarried, and who has been disfellowshipped from the church, shall be considered as standing under the disapproval of the church and thus ineligible for membership except as hereinafter provided.

8. The marriage contract is not only more sacred but also infinitely more complex than ordinary contracts in its possible involvements; for example, in the factor of the children who may be born. Hence, in a case where any endeavor by a genuinely repentant offender to bring his marital status into line with the divine ideal presents apparently insuperable problems, his or her plea for readmittance shall,



before final action is taken, be brought by the church through the pastor or district leader to the conference committee for counsel and recommendation as to any possible steps that the repentant one, or ones, may take to secure such readmittance.

9. Readmittance to membership of those who have been disfellowshipped for reasons given in the foregoing sections, shall be on the basis of rebaptism.

10. When a person who has been involved in divorce proceedings is finally readmitted to church membership, as provided in section 8, every care should be exercised to safeguard the unity and harmony of the church by not giving such a person responsibility as a leader; especially in an office which requires the rite of ordination, unless by very careful counsel.

11. No Seventh-day Adventist minister has the right to officiate at the remarriage of any person who, under the stipulation of the preceding paragraphs, has no scriptural right to remarry.

## CHAPTER 16

### THE PULPIT NOT A FORUM

No minister, church elder, or other person has the right to make the pulpit a forum for advocating disputed points of doctrine or procedure. The church does not confer upon any individual the right to exploit his personal views and opinions in such a manner.

If a brother thinks he has new light contrary to the established views of the church, he should seek counsel from responsible leaders.

"There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for 'in the multitude of counselors there is safety.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 293.

This plan was followed in the early church. When a difference of opinion arose at Antioch over an important question, the believers sent representatives to Jerusalem, where the question was submitted to the apostles and elders for consideration. The decision of this council was joyfully accepted by the believers in Antioch, and thus unity and brotherly love were preserved in the church.

The foregoing counsel from the Lord must not be regarded as in any way deterring one from pursuing a diligent study of the Scriptures, but rather as a protection against the infiltration of false theories and erroneous doctrines into the church. God wants His children faithfully to search His Word for light and truth, but He does not want them to be led astray by false teachings.

The Bible is a mine of truth. "The earth itself is not so interlaced with golden veins and filled with precious things as is the word of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 104. For this treasure we must seek diligently.

"Let none think that there is no more knowledge for them to gain. The depth of human intellect may be measured; the works of human authors may be mastered; but the highest, deepest, broadest flight of the imagination cannot find out God. There is infinity beyond all that we can comprehend. We have seen only the glimmering of divine glory and of the infinitude of knowledge and wisdom; we have, as it were, been working on the surface of the mine, when rich golden ore is beneath the surface, to reward the one who will dig for it. The shaft must be sunk deeper and yet deeper in the mine, and the result will be glorious treasure. Through a correct faith, divine knowledge will become human knowledge."—*Ibid.*, p. 113.

"New light will ever be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find

precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God. Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 34.

When new light shines forth from the sacred page to reward the earnest seeker after truth, it does not make void the old. Instead it merges with the old, causing it to grow brighter with added luster. Therefore, "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

Although the child of God must stand ready to accept advancing light, he must never give heed to any voice, however pious and plausible, that would lead him away from the fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

"We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of Scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories. This has been done over and over again during the past fifty years. And while the Scriptures are God's word, and are to be respected, the application of them, if such application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, is a great mistake. He who makes such an application knows not the wonderful demonstration of the Holy Spirit that gave power and force to the past messages that have come to the people of God."—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 32.

It is important that we keep "the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13); it is just as important that we

seek at all times to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (verse 3). Hence the need for caution and thorough investigation, also for counsel with the brethren.

"God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?

"Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are

teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit. . . .

“In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God 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.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 29-31.

In view of these considerations, it must be evident that the church cannot confer upon any individual the right to exploit his personal views and opinions from the pulpit. The sacred desk must be reserved for the preaching of the sacred truths of the Divine Word and the presentation of denominational plans and policies for the advancement of the work of God. (See also pp. 112, 113, 211.)

We should keep consecrated to the Lord day by day and seek Him for divine wisdom in the study of His Sacred Word. According to His own promise, the Holy Spirit will guide into all truth. The heart and mind should ever be kept open to the illumination of the Divine Spirit, that rays of heavenly light may shine across our pathway. Though we should take counsel with our brethren on matters that present problems to us, we should refrain from presenting publicly any questions that are not in full harmony with the views of the established body.

## CHAPTER 17

### NORTH AMERICAN SUPPLEMENT

#### Organizations for Holding Church Properties: Trust Services, Wills, and Annuities

*Legal Organizations Under the Law.*—The Seventh-day Adventist Church conducts its evangelistic work and performs its other religious functions as an unincorporated body. It is the general plan not to incorporate or register regular denominational organizations unless required by law. Corporate organizations are established pursuant to governing laws for the management of legal activity, and these operate under rules and bylaws as adopted by each organization. All organizations planning to form legal corporations for operations in North America shall first secure approval from the General Conference Committee. The delegates to the regular conference sessions constitute the delegates to the session of the legal organization.

*Title to Church Properties.*—In order to safeguard denominational property it is necessary to have the title vested in a corporation created by a conference organization according to the laws governing in the locality where the property is located. Title to all local church properties should be held by the conference corporations. When properties are acquired for the use of local churches or conference organizations, the titles should be held by the corporate organizations.

*Care of Legal Documents.*—All legal documents, in-

cluding insurance policies, church property deeds, abstracts, and trust agreements, should be filed for safekeeping in the office of the corporate organization.

**Church Repairs and Upkeep.**—The church, its related buildings, and their furnishings should always be kept in representative condition. Funds for this purpose should come from the church-expense budget or from special contributions. Under the direction of the church board, this work is generally supervised by the deacons.

**Insurance Policies.**—The church board, through the church treasurer, is under obligation to see that the properties of the denomination, such as the church building, school buildings, and equipment, are kept adequately covered by insurance. Provision for this expense should be made in the church budget. The following procedures are recommended:

1. The local church board, through the treasurer, and in consultation with the treasurer of the conference or corporation, shall be responsible for adequate insurance coverage of assets, including fire, theft, boiler, public liability, and workman's compensation insurance, in harmony with denominational policy.

2. All denominational assets shall be insured with companies of sound financial standing and A-grade general policyholders' rating. Reciprocals and assessable companies are not recommended. Whenever possible, insurance should be purchased through the General Conference Insurance and Risk Management Service.

3. The conference or corporation treasurer shall be responsible for holding and keeping a complete record of the insurance policies covering the property



and assets in the conference and its churches.

a. This record shall include the name and description of the property, the amount of insurance carried, the name of the company with which it is insured, the expiration date of the insurance policy, and other relevant details.

b. Negotiations for the renewal of insurance policies should begin at least 60 days before the expiration date, to avoid unintentional lapse of coverage.

4. It shall be the duty of the conference auditor to review the church, school, or other church property insurance program and report to the governing board or committee any inadequacies in insurance coverages not in harmony with *Working Policy* recommendations.

***Wills, Trusts, Annuities, and Life Income Agreements.***—The spirit of sacrifice and dedication is fundamental to Christian service. Moneys and property which are not given outright to the cause may still be contributed to the work of God through wills, trusts, annuities, and life income agreements.

***Laws Must Be Strictly Followed.***—Laws concerning the disposition of one's property, either before or after death, must be strictly followed. If conveyance of real estate is made by deed, the laws of the State or province where the land is located govern the requisites of the deed. Disposing of one's property, whether real or personal, to take effect after death, may be done by will, or the will may be supplemented by a trust agreement. Therefore, a will or a trust agreement is of utmost importance. Christian responsibility is demonstrated when one provides for the future security of one's dependent family, and for meeting

future needs of the church.

“Our brethren should feel that a responsibility rests upon them, as faithful servants in the cause of God, to exercise their intellect in regard to this matter, and secure to the Lord His own.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 479.

**Wills.**—The making of a will calls for good counsel. We are given definite instruction relative to securing proper counsel in the executing of wills, as follows:

“Many families have been dishonestly robbed of all their property and have been subjected to poverty because the work that might have been well done in an hour had been neglected. Those who make their wills should not spare pains or expense to obtain legal advice and to have them drawn up in a manner to stand the test.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 117.

It is essential that a will be executed in accordance with the statutory requirements of the State, province, or country where the will is made.

**Bequests to the Church Organization.**—Bequests should be made to the legal organization of the local, union, or General conference, or denominational institutions. In such cases, great care should be exercised to ensure the use of the correct legal title. Church officers should put their members in touch with the conference officers concerning potential bequests and subsequent procedures that the Lord's property, which He has entrusted to His people, may be secured for His work.

**Transferring Property Before Death.**—A donor's wishes for insuring that his money and property will accrue for the Lord's work, for family, or others, prior to his death, can be fulfilled through trusts, annuities,

and life income agreements.

More detailed information on the advantages of available plans may be obtained, in confidence and without obligation, by consulting with the officers of the legal association of the conference or institution.

### American Temperance Society

From its earliest days the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been in the forefront of the temperance movement. Specific counsels through the Spirit of Prophecy have guided and directed the church on this vital and important matter.

"God wants us to stand where we can warn the people. He desires us to take up the temperance question. By wrong habits of eating and drinking, men are destroying what power they have for thought and intelligence."—*Temperance*, p. 235.

"The subject of temperance, in all its bearings, has an important place in the working out of our salvation."—*Evangelism*, p. 265.

"In the family circle and in the church we should place Christian temperance on an elevated platform. It should be a living, working element, reforming habits, dispositions, and characters."—*Temperance*, p. 165.

"The advocates of temperance fail to do their whole duty unless they exert their influence by precept and example—by voice and pen and vote—in favor of prohibition and total abstinence. We need not expect that God will work a miracle to bring about this reform, and thus remove the necessity for our exertion. We ourselves must grapple with this giant foe, our motto, No compromise and no

cessation of our efforts till the victory is gained.'"  
—ELLEN G. WHITE, in *Review and Herald*, Oct. 15, 1914, p. 4.

**Organization.**—The American Temperance Society has been organized for the express purpose of informing the public, through continuous education, of facts concerning the benefits of temperance and better living and the evil effects of alcoholic beverages and narcotics, also to develop an intelligent public opinion which shall by voice, pen, and vote demand of lawmakers a complete eradication of the liquor traffic.

The organization of the society calls for the appointment of temperance directors in the General Conference, divisions, union conferences, local conferences/missions, and temperance leaders in the local churches. All conference leaders, workers, and church officers are expected to become familiar with the policies and plans of the organization and to foster its principles and activities.

**Duties of the Church Temperance Leader.**—The church temperance leader shall work in close cooperation with the pastor or district leader in carrying out the following plans:

To enlist every member of the church and every Adventist youth who may not as yet be baptized as an active member of the American Temperance Society.

To invite the church school teacher to enlist all the children of school age; the MV Society leader to enlist the youth; the Dorcas leader to enlist all the women of the church; and the leader of the men's organization to enlist all the men of the church.

To see that membership cards are issued to all members of the society.

To keep an accurate record of all members on the membership record cards prepared especially for this purpose.

To launch pledge-signing campaigns and membership drives.

To promote the circulation of *Listen* and *Winner* magazines and such other literature as will advance the cause of temperance.

To follow the instructions outlined in the statement of policy regarding the handling of membership dues, temperance offerings, and *Listen* magazine sales and subscriptions.

To encourage every member of voting age to be registered and qualified to vote on the temperance issue.

To carry on an intensive educational campaign in behalf of the temperance cause in the church school, the church, and the community.

To urge all members to take an active part in all local option campaigns that will restrict, control, and eradicate the traffic in liquor and narcotics.

To sponsor temperance forums, rallies, or mass meetings in his community each year.

To organize temperance teams that will carry the temperance message to churches, young people's societies, service clubs, schools, and other organizations.

To pass specific resolutions at each major mass meeting on such questions as liquor advertising, narcotics traffic, crime, drunken drivers, juvenile delinquency, law violation, grain preservation, et cetera,

and see that such actions are released to the press.

To cooperate with other temperance forces in strong educational campaigns conducted with a view to eliminate the liquor business and narcotics traffic in his town, city, district, county, or State.

To cooperate with the church pastor in the promotion and conducting of Five-Day Plans to Stop Smoking, Four-Dimensional Key programs for better living without alcohol, and the organization of the Home Help Visitation Plan.

*The Church Treasurer and Temperance Funds.*—Membership dues, temperance offerings, and such offerings as may be taken up especially for temperance should be handled in harmony with the general policies regarding membership dues and temperance offerings.

### Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty

The Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty is organized for the main purpose of maintaining liberty among men, with particular emphasis upon liberty of conscience. Within the North American Division special attention is given to the preservation of the liberties guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States and under the laws of Canada and of other political entities within the division.

As the surest way of securing full religious liberty, it is concerned with fostering the separation of church and state commended by our Lord when He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that

are God's" (Matt. 22:21). "The union of the church with the state, be the degree never so slight, while it may appear to bring the world nearer to the church, does in reality but bring the church nearer to the world."—*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, p. 297.

The state should never invade the distinct realm of the church to affect in any way the complete freedom of conscience or the right to profess, practice, and promulgate religious beliefs; and the church should never invade the distinctive realm of the state.

The Religious Liberty Department seeks to guard against intrusions upon religious liberty, especially in view of the persecutions prophesied in Revelation 13. "It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 452.

**Religious Liberty Associations.**—The Religious Liberty Department carries on many of its functions through the Religious Liberty Association of America and the International Religious Liberty Association, incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, and with branches throughout the denomination. The president or a vice-president of the General Conference is president of the International Religious Liberty Association, and the corresponding organization is carried down through the union and local conferences and missions.

**Religious Liberty Association in the Local Church.**—Each church is organized as a Religious Liberty Association, and every church member is a member of the association. The pastor or the local elder is the chairman of the association in each local church.

The religious liberty secretary shall be elected at the annual church election and shall work in close cooperation with the pastor or district leader in all phases of his work.

He should be of positive spiritual influence, able to meet the general public, interested in public affairs, apt at correspondence, and concerned with the preservation of the liberty of the people of God to do the Master's service. He will keep in touch with the religious liberty secretary of the conference and carry out the suggestions that come to him through proper channels; advise concerning matters affecting religious liberty in his area; promote the circulation of *Liberty: A Magazine of Religious Freedom*, and other religious liberty literature; and organize and stimulate religious liberty meetings, programs, and enterprises as circumstances require.

### Deacons and Ushers

In some churches in North America there has developed the practice of appointing a head usher and ushers who are specifically charged with the responsibility of caring for members and visitors at the principal church services. Ushers care for some duties that are elsewhere assigned to deacons: their services are therefore complementary to and not in conflict with those performed by deacons. The head usher is elected by the church, and additional ushers may be appointed by the church board.



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