

# CHURCH MANUAL



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## Preface

As the work of the church has grown and spread into many lands, it has become increasingly evident that a Manual on church government is needed to set forth and preserve our denominational practices and polity. An ever-increasing number of men are being called into positions of responsibility as ministers and church officers. To all these a work of this kind should prove helpful in the administration of church work.

Previous efforts have been made by different writers to meet the long-felt need by publishing books or pamphlets on the work of the church and the duties of church officers. These efforts have been helpful. Some of the material thus produced has been utilized in preparing this volume.

This Manual has been prepared at the request of the General Conference Committee by Elder J. L. McElhany, vice-president of the General Conference for North America. Over a period of several years, by extended correspondence, by attendance at scores of workers' and church officers' meetings, presidents' councils, and general meetings, he has gathered the material and put it into this form. This book has been carefully edited by a committee especially chosen for their fitness and experience in such matters.

Both the Bible and experience teach that order and system are necessary in carrying on the work of the church. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Cor. 14: 33. "Let all things be done decently and in order." Verse 40.

To this agree also the following quotations from the Spirit of prophecy:

"We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of regulation and order. In this way license shall not be given to disorderly elements to control the work at this time. We are living in a time when order, system, and unity of action are most essential."—*"Testimonies to Ministers,"* p. 228.

"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. Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline, and all subject one to another, esteeming others better than themselves. Union and confidence are essential to the prosperity of the church. If each member of the church feels at liberty to move independently of the others, taking his own peculiar course, how can the church be in any safety in the hour of danger and peril? The prosperity and very existence of a church depend upon the prompt, united action and mutual confidence of its members."—*"Testimonies for the Church,"* Vol. III, p. 445.

In the hope that this Manual will prove a blessing to all our churches, it is sent forth as a guide in matters of church administration.

GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE.

## Section I—Plan of Organization

“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.

“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.” 1 Cor. 12: 12.

“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.” Verses 27, 28.

*The Purpose of 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.”—“*Testimonies to Ministers*,” p. 26.

*Organization Cannot Be Dispensed With.*—“Let none entertain the thought that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study and many prayers for wisdom that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren

be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled."—*Id.*, pp. 27, 28.

*Five Steps in Our Organization.*—The church is an organization of individuals who hold the same faith and doctrines in common. If all such individuals lived in one locality, the form of organization would be simple, but being scattered in many lands, other steps in maintaining unity of faith and action are necessary.

Among Seventh-day Adventists there are five steps from the individual believer to the world-wide organization of the work of the church:

1. The Church, which is a united body of individual believers.

2. The Local Conference or local mission field, which is a united body of churches in a state, province, or local territory.

3. The Union Conference or union mission field, which is a united body of conferences or mission fields within a larger territory.

4. The Division, which is a division or section of the General Conference, embracing local or union conferences or mission fields in large sections of the world field.

5. The General Conference, which is the general body embracing the church in all parts of the world.

Thus beginning with the individual believer there runs through the church and local, union, and division conference organizations a relationship that unites the whole world-wide company of believers into one common body in the General Conference.

*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 earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered."—"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. III, p. 492.

*General Conference Action Regarding Relationship Between Organizations.*—"The General Conference is the highest organization in the administration of our world-wide work, oftentimes creating 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 in full council. During the interim between these sessions, the Minority Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop, whose decision shall control on such controverted points, but whose decision may be reviewed at a session of the General Conference or a full council of the Executive Committee."—"Constitution, By-Laws, and Working Policy of the General Conference." p. 21, 1930 edition.

*Four Forms of Church Government.*—There are four generally recognized forms of church government, which may be summarized briefly as follows:

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

2. Representative—a form of church government that recognizes the right of the people to participate, at the same time recognizing the authority of representative or delegated bodies in church government, thus emphasizing the unity of the entire church body, instead of individual or local churches. Also that recognizes the parity or equality of the entire ministry.

3. Prelacy—the episcopal form of church government by bishops, usually with three orders of ministers, as bishops, priests, and deacons.

4. Papal—the form of government of the Roman Catholic Church. The supreme authority is vested in the Roman Pontiff, and from him the church is governed by cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests. The local church or individual member has no voice in church administration or government.

*A Representative Form.*—The Seventh-day Adventist body is administered under the representative form of church government. Every church member in good standing votes for the election of church officers, and also votes on matters of church business, receiving and dismissing members, etc. The churches elect delegates to the sessions of the local conferences, and thereby delegate to them representative authority in the election of conference officers and the transaction of other conference business. This same plan is in turn followed by the local conferences in sending delegates to the union conference sessions, and by the union conferences and divisions in sending delegates to the General Conference sessions.



*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 for the Church," Vol. IX, p. 262.

"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 Conference. 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."—*Id.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 236, 237.

The number of delegates from each church to a local conference session may vary somewhat according to the constitutional provision of the conference. When the time comes to select these delegates, the officers of the church should bring the matter to the attention of the church. A committee may be appointed to nominate delegates, or the church board may be asked to nominate them. Nothing that savors of a political convention 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.

When the committee or church board has completed its work, it should report to the church, nominating the

members it has agreed upon. The church then votes on these nominations. Following 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 individuals chosen for this responsibility become the delegated representatives of the church, to unite with the delegates of other churches in the conference for the election of the officers of the conference, and for the transaction of all other conference business. Local conference terms are usually for two years. In some cases the term is for one year.

Union conference terms are usually for four years. The delegates to the sessions of the union conferences are chosen by the local conferences.

The division conferences are sections or divisions of the General Conference, and their officers are elected by the General Conference in session.

The General Conference term is for four years. The constitution of the General Conference, Article III, makes provision for representation at its sessions as follows:

“Section 1. The membership of this Conference shall consist of:

“a. Such union conferences and union missions as have been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in session.

“b. Such local conferences and properly organized missions not included in any union conference or in any union mission as have been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in session.

“Sec. 2. The voters of this Conference shall be designated as follows:

"a. Delegates at large.

"b. Regular delegates.

"Sec. 3. Delegates at large shall be:

"a. All members of the General Conference Executive Committee, and such members of the division committees as are not members of the General Conference Committee.

"b. Such representatives of missions of the General Conference and of general institutions and departments of work, and such general laborers and field secretaries as shall receive delegate's credentials from the Executive Committee of the General Conference, such credentials to be ratified by the General Conference in session. The number of these delegates thus seated shall not exceed 25 per cent of the total number of delegates in attendance otherwise provided for.

"Sec. 4. Regular delegates shall be such persons as are duly accredited by division committees and union conferences.

"Sec. 5. Each division shall be entitled to one delegate for each union mission organization within its territory, and one delegate for each one thousand members or fraction thereof within its union mission territories.

"Sec. 6. Each union conference shall be entitled to one delegate in addition to its president without regard to numbers, and an additional delegate for each local conference in its territory, and an additional delegate for each one thousand or fraction thereof of its membership. In the case of union conferences operating under division committees, these delegates shall be appointed in counsel with the division committees, and shall be seated as part of the division delegation."—"*Constitution, By-Laws, and Working Policy of the General Conference,*" pp. 3, 4, 1930 edition.

It is thus apparent that while the General Conference delegation is a limited one, it is representative of the entire world field. To the General Conference officers and committee is delegated the responsibility of directing the work of the church throughout the entire world.

*Duty of Delegates.*—Delegates to conference sessions or constituency meetings are not chosen to represent merely the churches or conferences electing them. When they are seated, they should have a view of the work as a whole, remembering that they are 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 whole. 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 held accountable to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and cast his vote in harmony with the best light he has. Any church or conference officer or leader attempting to control the votes of a group of delegates, would properly 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 between sessions of the conference. These officers are answerable to the conference as a whole, and not to any one local church.

*Duties of Conference Committees.*—Conference committees are elected by the conferences in session. The members hold office during the conference term. The

members of a conference committee are not elected to represent the churches to which they belong or some particular section of the conference territory; but each member of the committee, upon election, should feel a responsibility for fostering all interests of the work in every part of the field. Their decisions and votes are not to be controlled or influenced by any church, group, or individual. After prayerful and careful study of all matters pertaining to the administration of the work, committees are to reach their decisions. It is the duty of the officers of the conference to prepare the items of business, with all information pertaining thereto, that comes before the committee for its consideration.

*Self-appointed Organizations.*—Self-appointed organizations of any kind within the church are not countenanced or recognized. The church as an entity in its organized capacity, is the only recognized body. It makes provision for all its legitimate organizations, such as the Sabbath School, Home Missionary and Missionary Volunteer Societies, etc. The work of the church is carried on through its properly organized channels and elected officers. Every member has equal rights within the church body. No member or group of members has the right to foster or effect any self-appointed organization within the church designed to carry on or interfere with the work of the church or conference. Such a course would result in fostering a party spirit, and engendering a state of rivalry between contending factions in their efforts to control or direct in the affairs of the church. When church members persist in adhering to or taking part in such movements or organizations, they are subject to church discipline.

*Division Committees May Modify Plans to Meet Local Conditions.*—In mission lands it sometimes becomes advisable for certain modifications in general plans and methods of church work to be adopted to meet local conditions. Where this seems necessary, the division committee should pass upon such modifications, and recommend the same to their respective fields, so that in each division unit there may be uniformity of procedure.

## Section II—Duties and Responsibilities of the Officers of the Church and Plans for Auxiliary Organizations

CHOOSING officers for the church or conference is a very 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 for in those who are nominated for church office.

*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 behavior, given to hos-

pitality, 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, 13, 16.

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst 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 self-willed,



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 showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing 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 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.

*The Church Must Be Guarded.*—"From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." "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.

*Respect and Deference Due Ministers and Officers of the Church.*—"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor 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 honor, especially they who labor 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 for the Church,*” Vol. IV, 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.”—*Id.*, 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.”—*Id.*, Vol. V, p. 617.

*Those Who Are Opposed to Unity Not Suitable for Officers.*—“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.”—*Id.*, pp. 238, 239.

*Unsafe to Choose Men for Leaders Who Refuse to Yoke Up 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.

### Church Elder

*The Office of Elder an Important One.*—"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [elder], he desireth a good work." 1 Tim. 3:1. In the work and organization of the church, except where a local pastor has been provided by the conference, the office of elder stands out 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.

*The Elder a Religious Leader of the Church.*—The local church elder, in the absence of the pastor, is the religious leader of the church. By precept and example he must continually lead the church into a deeper and more consecrated spiritual life. He must not only be a man recognized by the church as being a religious and spiritual leader, but must have a good reputation with those of the world.

*Capable of Ministering the Word.*—The elder should be capable of conducting the services of the church. It is impossible for the conference to supply ministerial help constantly 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. If choice has to be made between men of fair speech without consecration and men of halting speech but with devoted lives, the choice should fall on the latter. All these conditions should be taken into consideration by nominating committees in preparing their reports for church elections.

*Elected for One Year.*—The elder, as are all other church officers, is elected for one year. His term of office is for one year only. 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 and ordination of a new elder, the former elder no longer functions as such. He may be elected as a deacon, Sabbath school superintendent, or to any other church office, but the newly elected elder takes the lead in the church in the absence of an ordained minister or pastor.

*Ordination of Local Elder.*—Election to the office of elder is not in itself a qualification to serve in all the functions of the office. Before entering upon the work of administering the church ordinances, the elder must be ordained. The ordination service is not performed by the retiring elder, but by an ordained minister who holds

credentials from the conference and who is in good and regular standing in the denomination. It is not customary or advisable for an ordained minister visiting from another conference or 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, it is not necessary for one to be ordained again upon re-election, or upon election as elder in some other church, provided that in the meantime the individual has maintained a good and regular standing in the church.

*Work of Church Elder Is Local.*—The work of a church elder is 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 the service 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. This authority is inherent in the church, and not in the conference committee. The only way men may be qualified for serving the church at large in the capacity of elder, is by ordination to the gospel ministry.

*The Church Elder Fosters All Lines of Work.*—In the absence of a pastor, the local elder is not only the spiritual leader of the church, but he is responsible for fostering and directing all branches and departments of the work. The Sabbath school work, the Missionary Volun-

teer work, the missionary activities of the church, the interests of the church school, and every other line should claim his attention and receive his advice and encouragement. He should sustain a helpful relationship to all other church officers.

*Relationship of Ordained Minister and Local Church Elder.*—In cases where the conference committee assigns an ordained minister to labor with a church, he should be considered as the ranking officer, and the local elder as his assistant. Their work is closely related, and they should therefore work together in harmony and co-operation. 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, usually acts as the chairman of the church board. There may be circumstances, however, under which 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, looking after and visiting the church members, ministering to the sick, and encouraging those who are disheartened. Too much emphasis cannot be put 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.

The minister is responsible to the conference committee, and serves the church as a conference worker. The elder is responsible to the church and the church board.

*Church Services.*—In the absence of a minister, the elder is responsible for conducting the services of the church. If it is impossible for him to conduct the serv-



ices himself, he should arrange for some one else to do so. An exception to this is the communion service. Where an ordained minister cannot be present, the elder should conduct this service himself. Only ordained ministers or ordained elders holding office are qualified to do this.

A person holding a ministerial license from the conference is not qualified thereby to conduct the communion services or to administer baptism, unless he is the regularly elected local elder of that particular church. The local elder, even though holding ministerial license from the conference, is not qualified to administer baptism or conduct the ordinances in any church other than the one in which he has regularly been elected as local elder.

*Baptism.*—In the absence of an ordained pastor, it is always customary, whenever possible, for the elder to arrange with the president of the conference or the superintendent of the mission field for the administration of the rite of baptism to those desiring to unite with his church.

*Marriage Ceremony.*—The local elder cannot perform the marriage ceremony. Only ordained ministers may do so. In some countries and States even ordained ministers cannot perform the marriage ceremony without being legally registered.

*Co-operation With the Conference.*—The pastor or elder and other officers of the church should co-operate fully with the conference officers and departmental secretaries in carrying out all local, union, and General Conference plans. He should inform the church of all regular and special offerings, and see that these are taken at the proper time. He should promote all the activities

of the church, such as the Big Week, Harvest Ingathering, Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, etc.

He should work very closely with the church treasurer, and see that all funds are remitted monthly 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 promptly sent 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. Instances are not lacking where churches have failed to elect delegates to conference sessions through the neglect of the elder to give proper attention to letters from the conference office. The elder should see that delegates are elected, and that the names of the 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 co-operating with the conference in carrying out all plans and policies and in seeing that all reports are accurately and promptly forwarded.

*Foster Foreign Mission Work.*—A very important feature of the elder's work is to foster our foreign mission work. This he can do by making a careful study of our world-wide work and presenting the needs of this to the church. He can talk with and encourage the church members to take a personal part in both giving to 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 membership, both in the regular church services and in the Sabbath school offerings.

*Foster Tithe Paying.*—The elder himself should be a tithe payer. A man who fails to set an example in this matter should not be elected to the position of elder. All church officers should be tithe payers. The elder can do much to encourage the church members to pay a full and faithful tithe. This can be done by a 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. Like the church treasurer, the elder's relations with the members in these matters should be confidential. He should not place in the hands of any unauthorized person information regarding the financial relationship to the church of any member.

*Distribute Responsibility.*—It is not advisable to elect the elder to other offices in the church, especially where there are others capable of sharing the responsibilities of church office. It is better to distribute these responsibilities than to burden a few beyond the limits of their time and strength. In cases where there are several elders, it may be necessary to ask them to carry other offices in connection with the Sabbath school or other departments of the church work.

*Seniority of Elders.*—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 the experience and ability of each. A successful plan is for each one to take turns in leading out for a month; thus the talents of all are utilized and

each gains an experience in leadership. By wise counsel and co-operation the elders can work together for the upbuilding of the church.

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

*Limitation of Authority.*—Elders do not have the authority to receive or dismiss church members by their own act. This is done only by a vote of the church. The elder or the church board may recommend that the church vote to receive or dismiss members.

### Deacons

“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.

The office of deacon is defined in the New Testament Scriptures. The particular responsibility of the deacon is made plain by the meaning of the word *diakonos*. Literally this signifies “servant,” although in some lexicons it is also defined as “minister,” “waiter,” “attendant.” In the feminine, it refers to the women who labored in the early church, as in Romans 16: 1.

In the account of the choosing of 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. “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."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 93.

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."—*Id.*, p. 89.

But the call to the office of deacon included more than looking after the business part of the fast-growing work. They were engaged in an important part of the Lord's work, demanding qualifications only 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."—*Id.*, p. 90. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and Philip, afterward called "the evangelist," were among the first seven deacons chosen in the Christian church.

The deacon is elected for one year. It is a wise plan to include one or more consecrated young men to serve with older men as deacons. A large church should have a sufficient number of deacons to care properly for their part of the work of the church. In a large church it is well to organize a board of deacons, with a chairman,

thus providing a well-ordered method for distributing the responsibilities.

*Must Be Ordained.*—If the newly elected deacon has never been ordained, he cannot fill the office until he has been so set apart by an ordained minister who holds credentials from the conference. Having been once ordained, it is not necessary for a deacon to be ordained again in order to serve any church as deacon; but he must be elected each year, and when the term expires, he may not serve until re-elected.

The deacons have the care of the church property. It is one of their duties 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 as attractive as possible. This includes doing the janitor work. 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. All bills for water, light, fuel, repairs, etc., are referred to the church treasurer for payment, he being the custodian of all church funds.

*Assist in Church Ordinances.*—The deacons assist in the celebration of the ordinances of the church. At the baptismal service they should be present to minister to the male candidates. They should do their part in making the necessary preparations for this service, whether it is to be held in the church or elsewhere, that there may be no confusion or delay.

At the celebration of the ordinance of humility, the deacons provide towels, basins, water (hot or cold, as the occasion may require), buckets, etc. After the serv-

ice, they should see that the vessels used are washed and returned to their proper place.

At the ordinance of the Lord's supper, the deacons should place the table in position after it has been spread by the deaconesses. They should then be seated on the front row of seats, facing the table where the emblems are spread. After the minister or elder has asked the blessing on the bread and has broken it, he will pass the plates to the deacons. When the plates have been received, the deacons will pass the emblem to the congregation. After serving the people, the deacons return the plates to the elder or minister, who serves first the deacons, one of whom in turn receives the plate from him and then serves the minister. The same procedure is to be followed in serving the wine. However, in most churches, it will be necessary for the deacons to take up the empty glasses before the singing of the hymn of dismissal.

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 qualified to act as the celebrant of any of the ordinances of the church, nor can he perform a marriage ceremony. He cannot officiate at the reception or dismissal of members, either by letter or by vote.

*Care of the Sick and the Poor.*—One of the chief responsibilities of deacons is the care of the sick, relieving the poor, and aiding the unfortunate. Funds should be provided in a church poor fund or otherwise, and should be disbursed by the church treasurer on the recommendation of the deacons or deaconesses on the order of the

church board. While this work is the particular charge of the deacons and the deaconesses, the church is to be acquainted with the work that needs to be done, and efforts are to be made to enlist the membership in the work as necessity may require.

### **Deaconesses**

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches. Rom. 16: 1, 2. Phebe was a servant—that is, a “deaconess”—of the church at Cenchrea. Other references indicate that women served the early churches as deaconesses. There is no record, however, that these women were ordained, hence the practice of ordaining deaconesses is not followed by our denomination.

Deaconesses are 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 just because her husband is a deacon. Deaconesses are to be chosen from the standpoint of consecration and other qualifications that fit them to discharge the duties of the office.

Deaconesses are to do their part in caring for the sick, the needy, and the unfortunate, co-operating 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 bread, and cover the table with the linen prepared for that purpose, etc. This should be done before the service begins.

The deaconesses also assist in the ordinance of humility, giving necessary aid to women newly come to the



truth. It is also the duty of the deaconesses to see that the table linen, towels, etc., used in the celebration of ordinances, are laundered and returned to their place.

Deaconesses should also assist at the baptismal services, giving such counsel and help as may be necessary regarding suitable garments for baptism. Where possible, robes of woolen material should be provided. Where robes are used, the deaconesses should see that they are laundered and returned to their place.

In the larger churches, a board of deaconesses should be formed, with chairman and secretary. In such churches, the deaconesses can render help at the regular Sabbath service by extending a welcome to the people, especially the strangers, as they enter the church. In such localities it has also been found helpful to district the membership of the church, assigning a deacon and a deaconess to each district, expecting that they will visit every home at least once a quarter, and once a month if possible.

### **The Church Clerk**

The clerk of the church has one of the most important of all the church offices. Few realize how much depends on the proper administration of the duties of this office.

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 meetings, 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 at-

tending, and a report of all actions taken. The clerk should also make a list of any committees appointed at such meetings, giving a copy to the chairman of each committee, together with an outline of the work they are to do. The Church Record book may be secured from the Book and Bible House.

This Church Record contains ample space for the records of a church. There is a place for the church membership list, giving the columns necessary to show how and when members were received or dismissed, and also for brief explanation where necessary. This list must be kept accurately and up to date. Thus it will show at all times the standing of the membership.

*No Names Added or Dropped Without Vote of the Church.*—The clerk has no authority to add or drop names from the church list without a vote of the church. Names are not to be added or dropped on the action of the church board alone. There must be a vote of the church to add or drop a name from the church membership roll.

*Transferring Members.*—The church clerk handles all correspondence between individual members and churches in the transferring of church membership.

*Corresponding With Members.*—The clerk should endeavor to keep in touch with absent members by correspondence. Pass on to them interesting items of church progress, encouraging them to report each quarter. To do this, it will be necessary for the clerk to write to them frequently.

The Church Record should contain a brief statement of special services, visits of ministers, etc. For example:

“Elder Blank, the president of our conference, spoke at the morning service, Sabbath, June 23, on ‘Our Glorious Reward.’ His visit greatly strengthened our church.”

The clerk must fill out the credentials for all delegates elected to represent the church at the sessions of the local conference, and send them promptly to the conference secretary. These blanks, and all the report blanks, church letter blanks, etc., are provided by the conference.

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

Every item of information called for in the blanks should be supplied. Especial 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 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 all the details specified in the report blanks greatly assists in keeping an accurate record of our world-wide work.

*Church Records.*—The church clerk is the keeper of the church records. These records should be carefully

preserved. At the expiration of the term of office, all these records are to be turned over to the newly elected clerk. All records and account books of the various church officers are the property of the church, and are to be surrendered at the expiration of the term of office or at any time during the term at the request of the church.

### The Church Treasurer

“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 intrusted 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.

*A Sacred Work.*—The treasurer is elected to a very sacred task. He is the custodian of sacred money, such as tithe, foreign mission offerings, and other church funds. His books at the close of each year should show the total amount of all funds raised by the church. The tithe and the various funds for missions or other general work, should be remitted each month to the conference treasurer. No part of these funds should be held over from one month to another, but all should be promptly sent on to the conference office, to provide the necessary means for carrying forward the Lord’s work in local, union, and General Conference.

*Proper Method of Remitting Funds.*—In sending the remittance to the conference treasurer, make all checks, bank drafts, or money orders payable to the conference; for example, “\_\_\_\_\_ Conference of Seventh-day Ad-

ventists." These should not be made payable to the individual who may be serving as conference treasurer. Remittance blanks are furnished free by the conference.

The members of the church should be instructed to make checks payable to "Treasurer of ——— S. D. A. Church." This avoids much difficulty in case of sickness, death, or removal of a treasurer. If possible, a bank account should be opened for the church. Treasurers should not keep the church funds in connection with their personal bank accounts. An entirely separate account for the church should be kept. A receipt should be issued for all money received, no matter how small the amount. A strict account of all money received and paid out should be kept in the church treasurer's book. Full instruction for using the book appears on the front pages of the same.

The treasurer is the custodian of all church funds. He should take charge of all collections and offerings, including church, Sabbath school, home missionary, and other departments of the church. Funds intended for local use will be disbursed only on the order of the deacons or church board. He will pay all church expenses, as for water, light, fuel, and repairs, from the church expense funds.

The generally accepted plan is for the church treasurer to handle all church school funds. He receives these and disburses them on the order of the church school board.

Vouchers should be secured for all money disbursed. A good way to preserve these expense vouchers is to paste them on the back of the duplicate sheets in the treasurer's book. If one is lapped over another, there will be ample room for all of them. This is a safer method than trying

to keep them on a spike, in a pigeonhole in a desk, or even in an envelope properly marked, and they are handy for the auditor.

The treasurer should insist on having all money that is paid in by the church members placed in the usual tithe envelopes. Have each set down the various items and amounts, making sure that the money inclosed equals the total specified on the envelope. Then he should sign his name and give his address, and place the envelope on the offering plate or hand it to the treasurer. Envelopes, which should be preserved for a time, will serve as vouchers as to the amount, etc. They are also useful to the auditor in checking over the items entered in the book.

*Books Should Be Audited.*—The conference treasurer audits the books once each year. The books and other records having to do with the work of the treasurer may be called for and inspected by the elder, district leader, or by any others authorized by them, at any time.

Reports of all funds received and disbursed must be presented at the regular business meetings of the church. A copy of these reports should be given to the church officers. Reports should be sent to the conference office when requested.

In reporting the number of tithe payers in the church, the wife and minor children who are members of the church, should be counted as tithe payers, in addition to the head of the family, when he is known to be faithful in this respect.

The treasurer can greatly encourage faithfulness in the payment of tithe, and deepen the spirit of liberality on the part of 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 stress.

*Relations With Members Confidential.*—The treasurer should always remember that his relations with individual church members are strictly confidential. He should be careful never to comment on the tithe paid by any member, or his income or anything concerning it, except to those who share the responsibility of the work with him. No member except a leading officer has a right to demand access to the treasurer's accounts of financial relations with other members. Great harm may be caused by failure to observe this rule.

### **The Church Missionary Organization**

The missionary organization of the church embraces the entire church membership, and the purpose of this organization is to provide and assign a definite place of service to every church member. This organization is directed by a missionary committee elected by the church in harmony with the following General Conference recommendation:

*"We recommend, That the church board constitute the missionary committee; provided, however, that in churches where it is necessary, the church board appoint a subcommittee to lay definite plans for the missionary work of the whole church, this subcommittee to consist of the missionary leader, the church missionary secretary, Missionary Volunteer leader, Junior Missionary Volunteer superintendent, and any other members of the church board thought best."*—*General Conference Action; Review and Herald, June 19, 1930, p. 235.*

*Church Missionary Leader.*—At the time of the annual election of church officers, a missionary leader should be chosen. In many instances it has been found advisable for the elder to be chosen to fill this office. It is permissible, however, for some one other than the elder to be selected for this position if for any reason the elder is unable or is not qualified to discharge the duties of the missionary leader. This office should be considered as one that is attended by heavy responsibilities, since the missionary leader must play an important part in training and leading the church into active missionary service. The duties of the church missionary leader may be listed as follows:

1. To act as chairman of missionary meetings and of the missionary committee. To give careful study to the missionary field of the church, in order to counsel most effectively with the church board concerning the missionary program, and enlist every member of the church in service.

2. To educate members,

- a. By providing classes in "how to give Bible readings" and other lines of work.

- b. By practical demonstrations of how to do the work outlined.

- c. By encouraging members in definite lines of work.

3. To help promote all soul-winning campaigns, such as Literature, Big Week, *Signs of the Times*, *Review and Herald*, Harvest Ingathering, etc.

4. To promote reporting, through public effort and through the church missionary secretary and band leaders.

5. To co-operate with the conference home missionary secretary in carrying out the plans of the conference for the missionary work of the churches.



*Missionary Secretary.*—The church missionary secretary holds a very important office, and when closely co-operating with the missionary leader, is able to render valuable service in the development of the missionary work of the church. The duties involved in this secretaryship may be briefly outlined as follows:

1. To assist in the direction of the missionary activities of the church, being present at all missionary meetings, keeping the minutes of these services, and endeavoring in every consistent way to co-operate with the missionary leader in stimulating missionary activity.

2. To conduct the business transactions of the church along missionary lines, such as ordering supplies of literature, etc., keeping accounts, and making collections.

3. To provide himself with a duplicate order book. This is necessary that he may have a copy of the order by which to check the Book and Bible House bills. Orders should never be written in letters. Such orders are liable 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 instructions.

4. To order all regular supplies, such as Sabbath School Lesson pamphlets, Home Missionary Workers' Calendars, Morning Watch Calendars, etc., at the proper time.

5. Offerings should be taken at suitable times to provide tracts and other missionary supplies for the members. A collection for this purpose is usually taken on the first Sabbath. If this offering does not bring in enough to pay for the needed tracts, etc., collections may be taken at the weekly missionary meetings.

6. To see that the receipts from all sources are suffi-

cient to pay for everything that is ordered. The Book and Bible House account should be paid each month.

7. To act as secretary of the missionary committee, keeping a record of the minutes of this committee, and taking an active part in carrying into effect the plans for the church developed by this committee.

8. To collect regularly reports of work done by church members, to keep the proper record, and to be prompt in sending a summary to the conference home missionary secretary at the appointed time.

9. To keep before the attention of the church, missionary literature which is available for use.

It is the duty of the missionary secretary to keep in close touch with the conference home missionary secretary, and to keep him informed in regard to the progress of the work. A monthly letter containing items of the following nature is very helpful to the church and conference missionary secretary:

- a. A brief report of the condition and progress of the missionary organization.
- b. Any good experiences the members may have had during the month.
- c. Interesting statistics concerning any campaign the church may be conducting, such as Harvest Ingathering, etc.
- d. Any questions covering problems the church is facing in the development of its missionary work.

### **Sabbath School Officers and Their Responsibilities**

“There is a *most precious* missionary field in the Sabbath school.”—“*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*,” p. 29. “The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one

of God's great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth."—*Id.*, p. 18. The officers, teachers, and entire membership should, therefore, co-operate with the other departments of the church in all phases of missionary work and soul-saving activities. 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, and are elected for one year, and in the same manner and at the same time as the officers of the church are selected. The list of Sabbath school officers and their assistants consists of the following:

Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent

Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Division Leaders, as needed

Chorister, and assistant (if needed)

Organist, and assistant (if needed)

These officers and assistants, with the church pastor or elder, are a committee of council concerning the plans and problems of the Sabbath school, and should meet once a month where this is possible, to study and plan for the successful working of the Sabbath school.

*The Superintendent.*—The Sabbath school superintendent is the superior officer of the church. He should, as soon as elected, begin to plan for the smooth and effective operation of his school. The council committee should meet and plan their Sabbath school organization. Particular duties should be assigned to the assistant superintendent and assistant secretary. The teachers for

all divisions should be chosen by the Sabbath school council, which includes the division leaders. Nothing should be left to chance or to snap decisions at the first session of the Sabbath school in the new year. Every one who is to bear responsibility in the school should be notified a week or more before the first Sabbath, that all may make ample provision for their work. 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, too, should be chosen by the council committee under the leadership of the superintendent.

Every 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 council committee relating to the details of his local school operation.

The superintendent is in charge of all departments of the Sabbath school, and leaders of divisions should seek to co-operate with him by submitting all new plans that affect the program or operation of their part of the school, to the council committee, of which the superintendent is chairman.

Sabbath school teachers are appointed for the year, but are subject to change at the discretion of the council committee. One or more substitute teachers for each division, according to the need, should be chosen at the same time as the regular teachers. 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 a teacher

leaves at any time, it is the superintendent's duty to call together his council committee and fill such vacancy.

The superintendent should have general charge of teachers' meetings. While others may have duties on particular lines, as lesson study or training course study, he should take the lead, and make the teachers' meeting an actual part of the Sabbath school responsibility he carries.

He should take a definite interest in Sabbath school music, choosing hymns that will fit the study of the day, lend a spiritual and uplifting atmosphere to the session, and should enlist the active help of his chorister and organist in making this part of the program as spiritual as is the study of the Bible.

The Sabbath school carries a very heavy part of the missions program of the denomination. More than half the offerings given in some countries for the advancement of the gospel in mission lands is given by our Sabbath schools. It is one of the responsibilities of every Sabbath school superintendent to make himself conversant with the promotion plans of the missions program, to learn how to present effectively the mission fields and their needs, and to lead his school in such sacrifice and giving as will enlist their whole-hearted support of the missionary advance by meeting the financial goals of the Sabbath schools.

*The Assistant Superintendent.*—An assistant superintendent should be elected to assume charge of the Sabbath school in the superintendent's absence. At any time he may be called upon to plan for and lead in the Sabbath school sessions, but this should be done only very occasionally for the sake of experience and training, the main responsibility resting always upon the superin-

tendent. Specific duties in the school may, however, be assigned to the assistant, such as looking after visitors, providing for the missions exercise, seeing that substitute teachers are assigned duties in classes, and any other responsibilities in which the superintendent needs assistance to carry 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 the superintendent's chief helper. 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 report the sessions of the Sabbath school.
2. To distribute to the teachers their weekly supplies, and gather their class records and offerings.
3. To mark the officers' record card and receive their offering.
4. To keep a record of the weekly offerings to missions, the amount of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, the birthday offerings, the Investment Fund, and the expense money, if the Sabbath school expenses are not included in the budget of church expense.
5. To turn over to the church treasurer all Sabbath school money for missions, also all expense money taken up in the Sabbath school.
6. To order through the church missionary secretary the current supplies and special helps agreed upon by the Sabbath school officers.

7. To keep the minutes of any action agreed upon by the Sabbath school council committee.

8. To keep all records provided for by Sabbath school secretaries' Record Book, being sure that all financial records balance with those of the church treasurer, so that the report rendered by the church treasurer to the conference treasurer and the report of the church Sabbath school secretary to the conference Sabbath school secretary, shall agree.

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

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

The funds should be turned in to the church treasurer's hands at the earliest possible moment. This insures against accidental loss. When the home 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, keeping them separate from the offerings for the other twelve Sabbaths.

*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 officers. 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 officers of the school.

*The Assistant Secretary.*—If the secretary is absent, the assistant acts in his place. He should be present at Sabbath school, and ready to assist by doing whatever the superintendent or the secretary may request of him.

The assistant should occasionally be requested to take notes and to write the report. He should then read his own minutes the following Sabbath.

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

*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 should be read before the school the first Sabbath of the new quarter, and may also be read at the quarterly business meeting of the church, if desired. The secretary should make the report in duplicate, retaining a copy for future reference.

*The Chorister.*—In our larger Sabbath schools a chorister is usually appointed, whose duty it is to lead the music of the school. He plans with the superintendent for the skillful presentation of this phase of worship each Sabbath. In some of the largest schools an assistant is also selected.

Only such special music should be provided as will glorify God in the rendering. The choice of singers should be as carefully made as for other posts in the Sabbath school, and each should be measured by the same standards.



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

### The Senior Missionary Volunteer Society \*

“Very much has been lost to the cause of truth by a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the young.”—*“Gospel Workers,”* p. 207.

“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.”—*Id.*, 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.”—*Id.*, p. 210.

These earnest words from the Spirit of prophecy set forth the duty of the church to its young people, and point the way to success in training them in active serv-

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\* For a more detailed treatment of this subject, see “Missionary Volunteers and Their Work,” chapters 6, 7, and 13-16.

ice as soul winners. The young people have been exhorted in such words as these:

“Will the young men and young women who really love Jesus organize themselves as workers, not only for those who profess to be Sabbath keepers, but for those who are not of our faith?”—*Signs of the Times, May 29, 1893.*

*Objective.*—The great objective, then, of our Missionary Volunteer Department, is “to save from sin and guide in service” the thousands of young people who are connected with the church or the homes of church members. To this end the conferences carry forward active evangelistic and educational efforts and foster organized missionary endeavor in behalf of the young. This calls for the organization of the young people in the churches into Missionary Volunteer Societies. The aim set before our youth in this organization is:

“The Advent Message to All the  
World in This Generation.”

The inspiring motto of this “army of youth” is:

“The Love of Christ Constraineth Us.”

A brief outline of both the Senior and the Junior Missionary Volunteer organizations is given here as a guide to church officers in fostering this work.

*Membership in the Senior Missionary Volunteer Society.*—The conditions of regular membership in the Senior Missionary Volunteer Society are membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a willingness to engage in active service for Christ. The following is the Senior Membership 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.”

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 Membership Pledge, which reads as follows:

“Desiring to obtain the benefit of Christian association and to co-operate 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 by ability and experience will permit.”

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

*The Officers of the Senior Society.*—The chief factor in the success of the Missionary Volunteer Society is its leadership. If 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 a Senior Missionary Volunteer Society are:

Leader

Assistant Leader

Secretary-Treasurer

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Devotional Secretary

Educational Secretary

Organist

Band Leaders

The principal officers, who are the leader, assistant leader, secretary-treasurer, and assistant secretary-treasurer, are elected by the church for a period of one year. This length of term seems necessary to give continuity and strength to the work. The other officers, and the band leaders, are not elected by the church, but are nominated by the Missionary Volunteer executive committee and elected by the society. All the officers named may not be needed in a small society, and more may be needed in some large societies. Usually in the small societies, and sometimes in the average society, the four chief officers carry such responsibilities as are given to the devotional and educational secretaries, and such societies more often operate as a unit in missionary endeavor rather than divide into different working bands.

*The Executive Committee.*—This committee, with the society leader as chairman, directs the society in all its activities. It is composed of:

Society Officers

Band Leaders

Junior Superintendent

Church Missionary Leader or Secretary

Church Elder (or other church officer chosen by the church)

This committee, which is composed of those who are chiefly responsible for the welfare of the society, should meet regularly each week 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 made may represent the combined thought of all. The executive committee is responsible for the society programs, and should make them a powerful factor in accomplishing all the purposes of the society. The spirit, consecration, wisdom, and enthusiasm of this committee will permeate the whole society.

The church elder (or some other church officer appointed) is a very important member of the executive committee. He is there to advise and counsel. He should keep himself well informed on Missionary Volunteer matters by study, and by counseling with the conference Missionary Volunteer secretary, and thus help the executive committee to keep in close touch with the conference work and the work of the church in all lines.

*Leader and Assistant Leader.*—First in importance among the qualifications of the Missionary Volunteer leader is a genuine Christian experience. He should have a burden for souls, and an enthusiasm in service that will be contagious. In addition to spirituality, he should possess good sense, tact, and persistence. He should be a capable organizer. He should study carefully the duties of all the 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 of setting the Christian young people to work and of helping those who are not enjoying a Christian experience. He should also study the needs of the community in general and the possibilities for missionary endeavor.

The leader should keep in close touch with the pastor or elder of the church and with the conference Missionary Volunteer secretary, that he may know the relation

of his society to the plans of the church and of the conference, and be ready to co-operate with their plans.

When the leader is absent, or when otherwise arranged, the assistant leader should perform the duties of the leader. The assistant leader, therefore, must be thoroughly acquainted with those duties 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*.

(Detailed instructions to the society leader and assistant leader are given in the manual, "Missionary Volunteers and Their Work.")

*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 in prayer. He should have a burden for souls which will make him an earnest, personal worker.

The secretary-treasurer keeps the minutes of all meetings of the society, and 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. Sometimes, especially in small societies, the reports may be given orally and recorded by the secretary. In churches where the fifteen-minute service is adopted, the reports of Mis-

sionary Volunteers may be gathered in that service by the secretary of the Missionary Volunteer Society, if it is desired to do so. In any case, young people who may not be able to report in the Missionary Volunteer Society may report in the church missionary service, marking their report blank "M. V." or in the Missionary Volunteer column, such reports to be received by the secretary of the Missionary Volunteer Society. Once a month or once a quarter, according to the plan in the local conference, the report of the society missionary work should be prepared by the society secretary, and a copy given to the church missionary secretary.

The secretary-treasurer is the custodian of all the funds raised by the society. All money for foreign missions should be turned over to the church treasurer as soon as possible after it is collected. So also should money raised by the society for the church. Local society expense money is paid out only as authorized by the executive committee of the society. A careful record of all moneys received and transmitted or paid out should be kept by the secretary-treasurer, and this account should be reviewed at least once a quarter by the executive committee and audited at least once a 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 Missionary Volunteer secretary monthly or quarterly, according to the instructions of the conference Missionary Volunteer secretary.

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.

*Other Officers of the Society.*—The devotional secretary, educational secretary, leaders of missionary bands, organist, and chorister, and such other officers as may be needed in the society, are elected by the society.

*Missionary Volunteer Bands.*—For thoroughness in service and for efficiency in training, every Missionary Volunteer Society (except the very small ones) should be divided into working bands. Each band should have a leader and a secretary elected to serve for one year. The number of bands a society should have depends upon the size of the society, and upon the community surrounding it. The ordinary Missionary Volunteer Society should have at least three bands organized for regular group study and work:

The Prayer and Personal Workers' Band

The Christian Help and Gospel Meeting Band

The Literature and Correspondence Band

For the general church campaigns, such as Harvest Ingathering and Big Week, or for assisting with the distribution of literature for evangelistic efforts, etc., the Missionary Volunteer Society is formed into separate groups to cover the territory, working in close co-operation with older church members.

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

*Object.*—The object of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society is to help train and direct our boys and girls in Christian service, employing and directing in this effort the natural and proper impulses of the child. The society

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\* For fuller information in regard to the plans and work of our Junior Missionary Volunteer Society, see the *Junior Missionary Volunteer Workers' Manual* and the *Junior Missionary Volunteer Handbook*.



seeks to co-operate with and re-enforce the efforts of the home, the school, and the church in the development of the child.

The activities of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society may be grouped under four heads: Religious, Intellectual, Social, and Physical. They embrace systematic Bible study, reading courses, promotion of music and other arts, home and community service, giving to missions, social gatherings, training in industries in the home, on the farm, and in the shop, and in various forms of field craft and youthful 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.

*Membership.*—Children old enough to understand the purposes of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society, and who meet the approval of the local Junior superintendent, may become preparatory members. In Seventh-day Adventist church schools all pupils are considered preparatory members. They are given a simple Preparatory Membership Card as a certificate of membership. When, in the judgment of the Junior Missionary Volunteer superintendent, preparatory members are able to comprehend the ideals of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society, they will memorize and be carefully instructed in the Aim, the Motto, the Junior Pledge, and the Junior Law.

Preparatory members, and others who, in the judgment of the Junior Missionary Volunteer superintendent, have a comprehensive knowledge of the Junior Missionary Volunteer ideals, and have declared their allegiance to the Junior Pledge and the Junior Law, may become members.

## THE JUNIOR PLEDGE

By the grace of God,  
I will be pure and kind and true,  
I will keep the Junior Law,  
I will be a servant of God and a friend  
to man.

## THE JUNIOR LAW

The Junior Missionary Volunteer 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.

*Units.*—The society is divided into groups called “units,” consisting of from three to six members, one of whom is chosen as leader. Each unit is composed either wholly of boys or wholly of girls. The membership of the unit should be decided by the superintendent. There is always real pleasure in associating with others in study, work, and play, and the fellowship of the unit will prove a blessing and encouragement to the members.

*Progressive Classes.*—For the personal development of members, a series of three classes is offered, with religious, intellectual, social, and physical standards of admission. The classes are known as Friends, Companions, and Comrades. The requirements for one class must be completed before enrollment for the work leading to the next class. An insigne in the form of a pin or button is awarded to those who qualify for each class.

*Vocational Honors.*—In addition to the requirements for advancement in the Progressive Classes, there are offered certain optional courses in practical studies and work called Vocational Honors. These Vocational Honors offer definite work along the lines of the child's special interests, and encourage him to become proficient in some hobby, rather than dissipate his interests without really accomplishing anything. These Vocational Honors have great possibilities for character building as well as in sustaining the child's interest in achievement and in finding his capabilities for a vocation.

*Leadership.*—Even more than with Senior young people, perhaps, success with Juniors depends on proper leadership. The older persons who are given this responsibility should be deeply spiritual and have hearts full of love for boys and girls.

The officers of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society are:

Superintendent  
Assistant Superintendents  
Leader  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Organist  
Unit Leaders

The superintendent and assistant superintendents are elected by the church. In church school societies the teacher, by virtue of his office, is superintendent, and should be listed in the election. Two assistants should be chosen. The secretary-treasurer and the organist are elected by the society from its members. They are nominated by a committee appointed by the superintendent, of which he is one. A leader, from the children, is

also chosen in the same way, when the superintendent desires such an officer. The unit leaders are chosen by the unit members, in counsel with the superintendent.

*The Executive Committee.*—The executive committee consists of the officers of the Junior Missionary Volunteer Society, who, under the direction of the Junior superintendent, prepare the programs and make decisions regarding the work.

### 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.

“The child’s first teacher is the mother. During the period of greatest susceptibility and most rapid development his education is to a great degree in her hands. To her first is given opportunity to mold the character for good or for evil. She should understand the value of her opportunity, and, above every other teacher, should be qualified to use it to the best account. Yet there is no other to whose training so little thought is

given. The one whose influence in education is most potent and far-reaching is the one for whose assistance there is the least systematic effort. . . .

“Upon fathers as well as mothers rests a responsibility for the child’s earlier as well as its later training, and for both parents the demand for careful and thorough preparation is most urgent. . . .

“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*,” pp. 275, 276.

The church is deeply interested in the upbuilding of the Christian home, and therefore it has a great responsibility for the training of parents, many of whom lacked such training before marriage, and all of whom can be benefited by further study and counsel. Parent education is conducted by the Home Commission of the General Conference through two types of parents’ societies in the local church. One of these parents’ organizations is the Mothers’ Society, which, besides mothers, may admit other mature women as well; the second is the Parents’ Council, which includes both fathers and mothers. Either or both of these organizations may be formed in any locality, and their work should be fostered by the church.

As their study and activities will benefit all parents, it is to be 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 society shall remain true to our ideals. Full information concerning organization and study may be obtained by addressing the Home Commission, at General Conference headquarters.

*Leader and Assistant Leader.*—The leader of the Mothers' Society or of the Parents' Council 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 Home Commission 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. These two officers should be elected in the regular way by the church. All other officers may be chosen by the society.

*Secretary and Assistant Secretary.*—The secretary is to keep the records of the society, and to make the specified reports to the Home Commission at the beginning and the close of the year. If the society has any funds to handle, the secretary may also act as treasurer. An assistant is needed to substitute either temporarily or permanently if necessary.

### **Home and School Association**

*Purpose.*—"The purpose of the association shall be to study and work for the welfare of the children of the church:

"First, by a prayerful and systematic study of the instruction the Lord has given us regarding the education and training of our children.

"Second, by securing as far as possible the attendance of every child at one of our own schools.

“Third, by co-operating with the school board in providing the school with such library, teaching, and general equipment as will enable the school to meet the standards of the General Department.”—*School Manual*, p. 152.

*Membership.*—“Any adult member of the church or patron of the school who is willing to do what he can to advance the purpose of the association, may become a member.”—*Ibid.*

*Officers.*—“The officers of this association shall consist of a leader, an assistant leader, and a secretary-treasurer.”—*Ibid.*

*Elections.*—“The officers shall be elected by the church in June of each year, and shall enter upon their duties July 1 following.”—*Id.*, p. 153.

Or, if thought desirable, these officers may be elected at the close of the year in the same manner as other church officers are elected.

### The Dorcas Society

The Dorcas Society is an important feature of church work. The leader of this society is 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 preparation of clothing and supplies for the poor, needy, and unfortunate. This organization works in close co-operation with the deacons and deaconesses of the church. Speaking of the work of Dorcas and other noble characters of the Bible, the “Testimonies for the Church” say, “Such patient, prayerful, and persevering fidelity as was possessed by these saints of God is rare; yet the church cannot prosper without it.”—*Vol. V*, p. 304.

### Church Elections

A careful study of the instruction given to the church regarding the character and the responsibilities of church officers, will make clear to every one that electing church officers is an exceedingly important work. This work should be entered upon in a well-ordered and serious manner.

*Nominating Committee.*—It is not the practice in our churches to elect officers by nominating them from the floor or by ballot. 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. This committee should be appointed not later than the first Sabbath in December. 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, and determine how the church desires the committee to be appointed.

The church board is often authorized by vote of the church to nominate the nominating committee, such nominations to be voted on by the church. In other cases the nominating committee is selected by nominations from the floor, the church voting on the names proposed. If the latter method is followed, it should be a rule that no member is entitled to propose more than one name for this committee. Everything that savors of a political nature should be avoided. The efforts of one individual or a small group of individuals to dictate to the entire membership of the church, should be discouraged.



*Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee.*—Only members of the church who are in good standing should be chosen as members of this 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 a nominating committee. The minister in charge of the church may be chosen as a member of this committee, as his appointment to the church does not rest upon any action by the nominating committee. If not elected as a member, his counsel should be sought by the committee.

*Work of the Nominating Committee.*—Immediately following 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 should counsel with others who are well informed, particularly in the case of officers in auxiliary organizations, such as the Missionary Volunteer Society, the Mothers' Society, the Dorcas Society, etc. This committee does not nominate pastor or assistant pastor. These appointments are made by the executive committee of the conference. They do nominate the following:

- Elder or Elders
- Deacon or Deacons
- Deaconess or Deaconesses
- Clerk
- Treasurer
- Missionary Leader
- Missionary Secretary

Church Chorister  
 Church Organist  
 Sabbath School Superintendent  
 Assistant Sabbath School Superintendent  
 Sabbath School Secretary  
 Assistant Sabbath School Secretary  
 Sabbath School Division Leaders  
 Sabbath School Chorister (if needed)  
 Sabbath School Organist (if needed)  
 Leader of Mothers' Society or Parents' Council  
 Assistant Leader of Mothers' Society or Parents'  
 Council  
 Leader of Dorcas Society  
 Missionary Volunteer Society Leader  
 Assistant Missionary Volunteer Leader  
 Junior Missionary Volunteer Superintendent  
 Assistant Junior Missionary Volunteer Superin-  
 tendent  
 Missionary Volunteer Society Secretary-Treasurer  
 Assistant Missionary Volunteer Secretary-Treas-  
 urer  
 Missionary Volunteer Chorister (if needed)  
 Missionary Volunteer Organist (if needed)  
 Church School Board

After all these offices have been filled by suggesting the names of people who are faithful, loyal members of the church and who are known to have the ability to perform the work assigned to them, members of the nominating committee should visit all such, inform them of the committee's desire to nominate them for office, and secure their consent to serve. If any member of the church desires to appear before the committee during its sessions to make suggestions or objections, he should

be given every opportunity to do so. After he has retired from the committee room, his suggestions or objections should be considered on their merits. When all this has been done, the committee is ready to report to the church.

*Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential.*—Nothing could be a greater violation of Christian ethics and the spirit of the golden rule than 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. If it is necessary that inquiries be made outside the committee council, the chairman of the committee should make them.

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

*Reporting to the Church.*—The nominating committee renders its report to the church as a whole, and not to the church board. The church board has no jurisdiction in these matters. The report of this committee may be rendered at the Sabbath service or at an especially called meeting of the church.

Upon completion of its work, the chairman of the nominating committee should notify the pastor or church elder that he is ready to report. The election should be held by the second Sabbath before the close of the year. This will enable the newly elected officers to become familiar with their duties. At the time of the election the minister or elder informs the church that the nominating committee has a report ready for its

action. The report is then read to the church and a motion made for its adoption by considering each name separately. If no objection is made to the report, the election should proceed at once by the church voting for those nominated.

*Objecting to the Report of the Nominating Committee.*—It is the right of any member to raise an objection to any name presented in the nominating committee's report. Instead of objecting publicly to the name, it is better to request that the whole report be referred back to the committee for further consideration. The chairman of the committee should then announce when and where the committee will be in session to hear any one who has objections to any name. At that time the member making the objection, or any other member who desires to do so, may appear before the committee to state his objections to any name nominated by 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 should be stated. The committee should give due consideration to the objections presented. If they are found to be justified, the committee may need to substitute another name for the one objected to. 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 and all other church decisions are carried by a majority vote.

## Section III—Church Membership

*God's Purpose for His Church.*—"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. 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.

*The Church Is God's Fortress.*—"The church is God's fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people."—*Id.*, p. 11.

“Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts. . . . God’s church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts, and endowed with the Holy Spirit. The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless. Wonderful is the work which the Lord designs to accomplish through His church, that His name may be glorified.”—*Id.*, pp. 12, 13.

*Membership Rests 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 Christ’s body. Thorough instruction on all the great fundamental teachings of the church should be given every candidate for church membership before he is baptized and received. It is due every person seeking admittance to the church that he know the principles for which the church stands. Only those giving evidence of having experienced the new birth into a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus, are prepared for acceptance into church membership. Church membership is a spiritual relationship. It should be entered into only by those who are converted. In this way only can the purity and spiritual standing of the church be maintained. It is the duty of every minister so to instruct those who accept the principles of the church that prospective members will enter the church on that basis. “As ye have have therefore received Christ the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” Col. 2: 6, 7.

*Baptism a Gospel Requirement.*—"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 alway, 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.

*Preparation for Baptism.*—There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. 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 for the Church*,” Vol. VI, pp. 91, 92.

*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 in the presence of the church or before the church board, before they are baptized.

“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.”—*Id.*, pp. 95, 96.

“When they give evidence that they fully understand their position, they are to be accepted. But when they



show that they are following the customs and fashions and sentiments of the world, they are to be faithfully dealt with. If they feel no burden to change their course of action, they should not be retained as members of the church. The Lord wants those who compose His church to be true, faithful stewards of the grace of Christ."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 128.

*Ministers Should Thoroughly Instruct Candidates Previous to Baptism.*—A minister should not present any candidate for baptism and church membership until he can thoroughly satisfy the church by a public examination of the candidate that he has been well instructed and is ready for such a step. His work is not completed until he has so thoroughly instructed all the candidates that they are familiar with all points of the faith, and are 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. One of the best means of giving such instruction is to organize baptismal classes.

*Suggestive Outline for Examination.*—The following statement forms a suggestive outline of the principles to be understood and accepted by candidates for baptism. This is not in any sense intended to be a formation of a creed. Its purpose is solely to help workers and church officers in performing a necessary duty in the examination of candidates for baptism and church membership.

1. Do you believe in the existence of God as a personal being, who is our heavenly Father?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus as the eternal Son of God, and as the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind? Have you fully accepted Him as your per-

- sonal Saviour, and the salvation He offers through grace?
3. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and in His work in leading to repentance and obedience to all God's requirements?
  4. Do you accept the Bible as the inspired word of God, and will you study faithfully its teachings and by the grace of God practice them in your life?
  5. Do you believe in conversion as an experience spoken of by Christ as the new birth?
  6. Have you confessed your sins to God, as far as they have been made known to you; and have you on your part, as far as in you lies, tried to make wrongs right with your fellow men?
  7. Do you claim by faith in Christ that God for Christ's sake has forgiven your past sins, and that He is yours and you are His?
  8. So far as you have studied and investigated the doctrines as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, do you believe in and accept them?
  9. Do you believe in the second coming of Jesus, which is taught in the Scriptures as the blessed hope, and that this event is soon to take place, and that you should prepare for His coming by being purified from sin and evil?
  10. Recognizing obedience as the fruit of faithful love, do you believe that all ten of the commandments as spoken by the Lord are still binding, and by God's grace will you keep those commandments, the fourth with the rest, observing as sacred the seventh-day Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday?

11. Do you recognize the fact that God claims one tenth of all our substance as His for the support of His work in advancing the gospel of Christ; and will you faithfully render to Him His own—the tithe and offerings in the support of the world-wide work of the church?
12. Do you believe that man by nature is mortal, and that immortality and eternal life come only through the gospel and are bestowed as the free gift of God through Christ at His second coming?
13. Do you believe that we are living in the time of the investigative judgment, which began in 1844, and that Christ, as our High Priest, is closing His ministry in the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary in preparation for His coming?
14. Do you believe that the closing gospel message is now going to the world and will be finished in this generation; and will you use your means, as God impresses you, your time, and your talents, that others may be blessed with the light of truth that has brought blessing and light to you?\*
15. Will you seek to build up the interests of the church by attendance at its meetings and ordinances, and by adding your influence to extend its work while the church, on their part, exercise their watchcare over you?
16. Do you understand the principles of Christian temperance as taught by Seventh-day Adventists, and will you carry out those principles in your life, abstaining from the use of intoxicating

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\* Those conducting Bible classes should make sure that thorough instruction is given, not only in the points mentioned above, but in every other doctrine and phase of present truth.

- liquors, tobacco in all its forms, swine's flesh, and all other unclean foods and habit-forming drugs?\*
17. In matters of dress will you follow the Bible rule of plainness and simplicity, abstaining from the wearing of gold as ornaments and costly array, observing the principles of modesty and Christian dignity?
  18. Do you believe the Bible doctrine of "spiritual gifts" in the church, and do you believe in the gift of the Spirit of prophecy which has been manifested in the remnant church through the ministry and writings of Mrs. E. G. White?
  19. Do you believe in baptism by immersion, and is it your desire, by going forward in this ordinance, to manifest your faith in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?
  20. Do you, by going forward in baptism, thus declare that from henceforth you will have no part in such soul-destroying amusements as card playing, theater going, dancing, and all other entertainments and amusements which tend to deaden and destroy the spiritual life and perceptions?
  21. Will you submit to the decisions of the body of the church in matters of church discipline?

*Mode of Baptism.*—Seventh-day Adventists believe in baptism by immersion, and practice this mode only. When a person has reached a sufficient age to realize his lost state as a sinner, sincerely repents of his sins, and experiences conversion, he may, if otherwise in-

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\* In preparing candidates for baptism, instruction should be given as to the harmful effects of such condiments as tea, coffee, and other harmful beverages.

structed, as provided above, be considered a proper candidate for baptism.

*Baptismal Ceremony.*—At this ceremony the deacons should make the necessary preparation and assist the male candidates into and out of the baptismal pool or stream. The deaconesses should assist all female candidates. Care should be exercised in seeing that proper attire is provided for all candidates. Robes of heavy black or white material are preferable. If such are not available, the candidates should be instructed to dress in such a manner that they will be modestly attired.

*Receiving Members Who Are Unknown.*—The practice of baptizing converts at the close of an effort and passing a list of their names in to some church for admittance as members, is not in harmony with the approved usages of the church. In many cases such persons are absent, and do not even know they have been voted into church membership. Often when visited by the pastor or elders of the church, they are found to be uninstructed and entirely unprepared for church membership, and in some cases not in harmony with the principles of the church.

This practice leads to grave abuses, and cannot be sanctioned. The church should refuse to receive as new members any persons unknown to the church, or in the absence of the person applying for membership. A minister should not ask a church to receive members on his personal recommendation alone. In preparing for the baptism of his converts, a minister should, if he expects a church to receive these people as members, invite the pastor or elders to become acquainted with his converts, and to visit his baptismal classes and take part in the examination of the candidates. Thus they will be able to

certify to the church that the prospective members are ready to be received. This general procedure should not apply in the case of isolated believers who wish to unite with the conference church.

*Welcoming New Members.*—The practice of formally welcoming new members by extending the right hand of fellowship on the occasion of their admittance to the church, is to be highly commended. This should be done by the pastor or elder in behalf of the entire church.

*Transferring Church Membership.*—When a church member moves from one locality to another for a period of longer than six months, he should make immediate application for a letter of transfer to the church nearest his new place of residence. Such letters are valid for three months from date of issue, and unless acted upon within that time are void.

*Method of Granting Church Letters.*—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 that such letter be granted. The pastor or elder then brings the recommendation to the attention of the church, announcing that this is the first reading. Final action is then deferred one week, when the request is again presented to the church and a vote of the church is taken. The purpose of deferring action is to give any other member opportunity in the meantime to

object to the granting of the letter if he knows of any valid reason for withholding it. This objection should not ordinarily be publicly stated, but should 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 his objections. On the other hand, if they are based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the church board to institute such investigations as may be needed. In such a case the final action on granting the letter is deferred until the investigation has cleared up the matter.

If there are personal differences, 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. Final action in granting the letter should be taken when it can truly be certified that the applicant is in good and regular standing.

*Clerk to Make Out Letter.*—When the church has by vote 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 laid over for one week, and final action is then 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.

*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 certificate 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 an unwarranted proceeding that should never be countenanced under any circumstances. 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.

*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 to be dropped from the list of the granting church, and deducted from the next quarterly statistical report. The receiving church will place the name on their roll, and the member will be included in their next quarterly report.

*If Member Is Not Accepted.*—The church to whom the letter of transfer is addressed is under no obligation to receive the member if they know of any good and suffi-



cient reason why they should not extend the privilege of membership. In case they do 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 co-operate with the church in clearing up any questions that arise out of the other church's refusing 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 censure or the discipline of the church. To do so would be a violation of the spirit of the golden rule.

*Letters Only to Those in Good and Regular Standing.*—Church letters are granted only to those members who are in good and regular standing. All indorsements on church letters noting exceptions to this rule are out of order. Any church that votes a letter to a member, and then makes a notation on the letter calling attention to some point on which the member fails, thereby confesses its own weakness and slackness in properly looking after the spiritual welfare of its members, and in exercising proper discipline where a member is not living up to his membership vows. Proper labor should be bestowed on the member, thus helping him to the spiritual experience where the church can vote him a letter without any disqualifying notations.

*Voting Letters Without Member's Approval.*—In no case should a church vote a letter of transfer contrary to the desires or without the request of the member in question. Nor is any other church bound to accept into

membership any member by 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 anything that appears like an arbitrary action.

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 burdens incident to absentee members. It is his duty cheerfully and heartily to co-operate in every way to remove such burdens by requesting a letter of transfer in case of removal.

*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 accepting their letters. Their powers in this matter are limited to recommending to the church either the granting of letters or the receiving of the same from other churches. The clerk has no authority to drop or add names to the church roll, except following a vote of the church. In case of the death of a member, no action is necessary in dropping the name, the clerk simply recording the fact.

*Conference Church.*—Isolated members should unite with the conference 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 local church organizations should be members of the local church. It is the duty and responsibility of the local churches to minister to such people. They should not be transferred to the conference church, as it is not designed to function in the field occupied by the local churches.

The conference officers are the officers of the conference church, and the conference committee acts on all matters pertaining to receiving and dismissing 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. Without confessing their wrongs or making amends in any way, they thus find their way back into the church, and the whole intent and purpose of church discipline is outraged and set at naught.

When a person applies for membership on profession of faith, earnest inquiries should be made concerning his former experiences. 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, he should be counseled to seek reinstatement in membership with that church. After this has been done, he may, if now living a consistent Christian life, be granted a letter to unite with the church nearest his place of residence.

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 or conference committee where his membership is held are the proper ones to decide whether his past conduct has been such that he is entitled to a church letter and to church membership. Following such a course will result in a higher appreciation of the sacredness of church membership, and in wrongs being made right where called for.

*Establishing 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.

“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 for the Church*,” Vol. I, p. 207.

*No Retired Membership List.*—Experience has demonstrated the wisest course for all our churches to follow in recording their membership lists. There should be only one list. Under no circumstances should the practice of keeping a retired list be sanctioned or 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 following profession of faith or baptism or letter.

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, whose names should be dropped by the clerk recording the date of their death in the proper column in the church record.

*Rebaptizing Former Members.*—Where 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.

It is not the practice of the church to require baptism on the part of those coming to us from other churches who have already been baptized by immersion and who have lived consistent Christian lives in harmony with the light they then had, unless they should themselves desire to be rebaptized. However, it is recommended that in all cases rebaptism would be desirable.

## Section IV—Church Discipline

*Dealing With Erring Members.*—"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 a 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.

*Instruction on Administering Church Discipline.*—"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.

"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 strife, 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.

*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 neglects 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 a 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 separating 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.

“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.

“‘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.’ Matt. 18:18.

“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 for the Church*,” Vol. VII, pp. 260-264.

*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."—*Id.*, Vol. III, 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."—*Id.*, 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.”—*Id.*, p. 265.

“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.”—*Id.*, p. 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 themselves. These stand directly

in the way to hinder those upon whom God has laid the burden of reproving and correcting prevailing sins, 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."—*Id.*, pp. 270, 271.

*Rules and Regulations Necessary.*—"Brethren, never allow any one'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."—*Id.*, Vol. V, p. 274.

### Disfellowshipping Members

*At Properly Called Meetings.*—Members may be disfellowshipped from the church at any regular or properly called meeting of the church, provided such meeting is presided over by the local church elder, if ordained, or by an ordained minister.

*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, excepting in the case of the death of a member.

*Majority Vote.*—Members may be disfellowshipped from the church or otherwise disciplined by a majority vote of the members present at any regular or properly called meeting. "The majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members."—*Id.*, p. 107.

*Members Not to Be Conditionally Disfellowshipped.*—Discipline may be administered by a vote of censure and by disfellowshipping. A vote to censure a member should not carry any provision for severance of church relationship in case the member fails to comply with any conditions imposed. Proper inquiry should be made at the expiration of a period of censure, to ascertain whether the member under discipline has changed his course. If it becomes apparent that he has not, a new action to

disfellowship may then be taken. An action of this kind becomes effective when voted by the church without regard to time limits or conditions.

*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 a member of this right, if he chooses to exercise it. Due notice should be given by the church to members under discipline, of intention to try their cases, thus giving them opportunity to appear in their own behalf.

*Members Absent and Not Reporting.*—It is a serious thing for a church member to regard the obligations of church membership so lightly that he can absent himself for indefinite periods and make no report of his faith and hope to the church. After an absence of two years such a member may be dropped from the rolls of the church by a vote of the church, provided the church officers can certify that they have faithfully endeavored to locate and encourage the absent member, but without success. The clerk should record in the proper column, "Whereabouts Unknown. Dropped by Vote."

*Members Not to Be Dropped for Nonattendance on Account of Age or Infirmities.*—Under no circumstances does a church have a right to drop a member from the rolls of the church because of nonattendance on account of age or physical infirmities. Such members should receive the tender care and encouragement of the church by frequent visitation and such other help as is the duty of the church to render.

*Members Not to Be Dropped for Pecuniary Reasons.*—A member should never be dropped from the church rolls on account of his inability to render financial help to any of the causes of the church. Such a course makes church membership rest on a financial rather than a spiritual basis. It is the duty of every member to support the work of the church in a financial way to the very extent of his ability, but he should never be deprived of his membership simply through inability to contribute.

*Disfellowshipping Members on Their Own Request.*—Great care should be exercised in dealing with members who request that their own names be dropped from church membership. Ample time should be given such members for sober thought and reflection, and every effort made to restore them to a satisfactory experience.

*Reinstating Disfellowshipped Members.*—Persons disfellowshipped from the church should be received again into membership when confession of wrongs committed is made and evidence is given of real repentance, and it is clear that the member will fully submit to church order and discipline. Such reinstatement should be in the church from which the member was dismissed. No church should at any time receive into membership a person who is under the discipline of another church. Such a course condones the offense that another church has disciplined for, and is not in keeping with the spirit of the golden rule. If church vows have been broken by the member, rebaptism should precede reinstatement.

*Right of Appeal for Reinstatement.*—In cases where a church refuses to consider the application of an expelled member for reinstatement, 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 a right to appeal to the conference committee of the conference in which the church is located, for a hearing. If, after a full and impartial hearing, the conference committee is satisfied that an injustice is being done a person by the church, the committee may recommend his reinstatement in the church; and if he is refused membership, then the committee may recommend him to membership in some other church. On the other hand, if they find good grounds for sustaining the church in refusing to reinstate the member, they will so record in their decision. The case then rests with such a decision.

*Reasons for Which Members May Be Disfellowshipped.*—

To cut off a member from fellowship with the church, which is the body of Christ, is always a very serious matter. This is the extreme measure that can be meted out by the church. Only after all efforts have been made to turn an erring member from his evil ways, should this means of discipline be used. Members can be disfellowshipped only by a majority vote of those present and voting at any regular Sabbath morning service or any properly called business meeting of the church.

There are a number of reasons for which members may be disfellowshipped. These reasons may be summed up as follows:

1. Loss of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and the cardinal teachings of the church, or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.
2. Open violation of the law of God, such as worship of idols, adultery, fornication, stealing, swearing, Sabbath breaking, willful and habitual falsehood, fraud or

willful misrepresentation in business, disorderly conduct, which brings reproach upon the cause, and the remarriage of a divorced person, except the innocent party in a divorce for adultery.\*

3. Refusing to recognize church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church.

4. The use of alcoholic liquors, or aiding and abetting in their manufacture or sale, and the use of tobacco.

*Vote of Censure.*—In the administration of church discipline, it is sometimes necessary to deal with erring members whose conduct is such that they must be placed under the disapproval of the church. The offense may not be serious enough to merit the expulsion of the member from the fellowship of the church. Consequently a vote to place the member under censure may be taken. A vote of censure is usually for a stated time, as for one, three, or six months. At the expiration of the time specified, the experience of the member under discipline should be inquired into. If his conduct is satisfactory, he may then be considered as being in good standing without any further action. If he has not changed his course, his case should be again considered and such discipline administered as the case requires.

*Lawyers Representing 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

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\* In cases involving church discipline for remarriage of divorced members, great care should be exercised by church officers. In view of the fact that the denomination has not heretofore had a written statement regarding this matter, it is not expected that the application of this policy shall be made retroactive.

recognize the right of any member to bring into any church meeting or council called to administer order or discipline or for the transaction of any business relating to the church, a lawyer to represent him in such a meeting or council. The church may exclude from any of its meetings any lawyer appearing for such a purpose. The church may 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.

*Church Trials.*—It should always be borne in mind that the primary purpose of all church discipline is to bring about the spiritual restoration of the erring. Before a church trial is entered upon, every effort should be made to help the offending member to find his way back to a satisfactory experience. After all such efforts fail, the church should exercise its divinely appointed authority in the administration of discipline.

The proper method to be followed is for any one possessing facts concerning the case to lay these before the minister, if he is ordained or authorized by the conference committee to deal with such matters, or before the church elders. If the charge concerns a personal offense, the minister or elders should take no notice of the matter until the accuser gives satisfactory evidence that he has fully complied with the Master's instruction in Matthew 18: 15-17. The minister and elders should then endeavor to adjust the matters in controversy. After such efforts have failed, the offending member should be brought to trial. Counsel should be sought from conference officers as to the proper procedure in bringing about the church trial.

### Disbanding Churches

Churches may be disbanded for the following reasons:

*Defunct.*—Where a church becomes defunct through the loss of its members, the conference committee should take action recommending the disbanding of such a church. Any remaining members may be transferred to other churches by the following methods:

If enough members remain for the calling of a meeting, to be presided over by the local elder, if ordained, or 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.

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 disbanding a defunct church, all its books and records should be turned over to the secretary of the conference.

If there are members of defunct churches who at the time of disbanding are under discipline or cannot be granted letters as being in good and regular standing, a careful record should be made of such cases and turned over to the secretary of the conference, and every effort made to help such persons to a satisfactory Christian experience, whereupon letters should be granted them. If they cannot be helped and reclaimed, they should be dropped by vote of the conference committee.

*Uniting Churches.*—When it is advisable to unite two churches, the conference committee should take action recommending such a course. One or the other of the two organizations may, at a properly called meeting, pre-

sided over by the local elder, if ordained, or by an ordained minister, vote to disband and to unite with the other church. For such an action to carry there should be a majority vote. The other church should, also by a majority action, vote to receive the membership of the disbanding church. In such cases the entire membership is transferred. The united body becomes responsible for the order and discipline of all the members. It is not permissible under such circumstances to drop a member by failing to transfer him. If any member is unworthy and subject to discipline, he should be dealt with as provided for in such cases. The books and records of the disbanded church should be turned over to the proper officers of the united church, and become a part of the records of the united body.

*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 in extreme cases. Such action should be taken only after careful study has been given to such a proposal by the conference committee. If in their judgment such action is warranted, they should record in their 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 conference committee for their study and recommendation. Following this the matter is referred to the church in question, which votes 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.

In cases 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 to 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 making up the conference.

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 some other church.

*Conference Session to Act in All Cases.*—In all cases of disbanding churches for whatever reason, the ensuing conference session should take action dropping the church from the list of churches making up the conference, and record in their minutes the reasons for disbanding.

## Section V—Organizations for Holding Church Properties; Suggestions Regarding Wills, Annuities, Etc.

*Organizations Under the Law.*—From the early days of the organized existence of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, the plan has been followed of forming organizations under the law for the purpose of holding church properties belonging to the denomination. These incorporated organizations are formed by the conference organizations. The delegates to the regular conference sessions constitute the delegates to the sessions of the legal organization. The delegates elect a board of trustees, who carry on the business of the organization. Such corporations are formed under the laws of the states or countries in which our work is conducted. While these laws vary somewhat, the same general form of organization is followed.

*Title to Church Properties.*—All our church properties should be held by the conference corporations. This is the only means of insuring the continuous use of denominational property. This method prevents a few individuals who may become disaffected, from diverting from the Seventh-day Adventist body, property which belongs to the denomination. In the history of this movement no case is recorded of a property being wrongfully diverted where held by the conference corporation. In order to safeguard denominational property, whether real or personal, 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.

*Insurance.*—The church, through its officers, is under obligation to see that the properties of the denomination, such as the church building, the parsonage, and the church school buildings, are kept adequately covered by insurance in safe companies. An insurance agent, usually the treasurer of each union conference, has been appointed in practically every union field, and is always ready to give advice on insurance matters, and to secure policies in reputable companies for institutions and church properties. If the property is located in a section where tornadoes are liable to occur, insurance should include both fire and tornado. All insurance on church properties should be in the name of the corporation. Provision for this expense should be made in the church budget.

*Care of Legal Papers.*—All legal papers, including insurance policies, deeds, abstracts, and trust agreements, should be filed for safe-keeping in the conference office.

*Repairs and Upkeep.*—The house of God should always be kept in good repair. Foundations, roofing, and painting should receive attention so that all may be preserved in the best condition. This same care should be given to all properties and furnishings belonging to the denomination. Funds for this purpose should come from the church expense budget or from special subscriptions. Under the general direction of the church board, this work is generally supervised by the deacons.

*Wills, Testaments, Gifts Inter Vivos and Gifts Causa Mortis, Annuity Contracts, and Trust Agreements.*—The



love of God constrains all who look for His soon appearing to give of their substance to further His truth in the earth. The spirit of sacrifice is fundamental to Christian service. "God loveth a cheerful giver." Moneys which cannot be given outright to the cause may still be secured to the work of God, through wills, gifts *inter vivos* and gifts *causa mortis*, annuities, and trust agreements.

*Laws Must Be Strictly Followed.*—The law concerning the disposition of one's property, either before or after death, is one which must be strictly followed in accordance with the statutes of the state or country where the testator or donor may reside. There are various reasons which make a will of utmost importance. The statutes of descent and distribution may not make a satisfactory division of the inheritance. To dispose of one's property and to make preparations for one's future life, for the family and dependents, and for the church and the cause of God, is one of the most important and responsible acts of life. In "Testimonies for the Church," Volume IV, page 481, in reference to will making, it is said:

"Their will is a part of their preparation for death, and is prepared so that their possessions shall not disturb their dying hours."

Seventh-day Adventist ministers are given definite instruction concerning the responsibility resting upon them along these lines, for in "Testimonies for the Church," Volume IV, page 479, we find these words:

"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."

The responsibility herein referred to demands sound judgment and advice, for the law is not unmindful of the immense influence which may be exerted over aged and sick persons by clergymen. Statutes have therefore been enacted, invalidating deeds, wills, and other instruments drawn up by clergymen who were in a position to influence the grantor or testator. A statute forbidding a minister who has attended a deceased person to benefit under the deceased person's will, has been held not to be applicable to a clergyman who did not attend the deceased until after the will was executed. Great care should therefore be exercised by ministers in respect to the making or influencing of wills made by others. It is better to allow the person making the will to write the entire will himself (a holographic will), if it is possible for him to do so, or have some other person to do this for him. Then it should be executed in proper form.

The planning of the simplest will calls for good counsel, and no layman should attempt to draw his own will or that of another.

In "Testimonies for the Church," Vol. III, page 117, our people are given definite instruction relative to securing proper counsel in the executing of their 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 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."

*Who May Make Wills.*—The question regarding the right and capacity to make a will is generally under-

stood. In the majority of the States in the United States of America, every person, male or female, of the age of twenty-one years, if otherwise legally competent, may make a valid will. In some States, however, the privileges are extended to males at the age of twenty-one and females over eighteen. In a few States every married person may make a will without regard to age.

It is absolutely necessary that a will be executed in accordance with the statutory requirements, and all these requirements of the state, province, or country where the will is made, stand as of equal importance and must be observed. A will of real estate must be executed in accordance with the law where the property is situated.

*A Will Should Always Be Dated and Witnessed.*—A will should be dated the same as any other instrument. A will bearing the date of its execution is less liable to be contested on the ground of incompetency, because the competency of the testator is determined as of the date of the execution. Another requisite for a valid will is the witnessing of the instrument. In many countries, attesting witnesses cannot be beneficiaries under a will of which they themselves are witnesses. Nearly all states and countries require at least two, and some require three witnesses. Executors may be witnesses. The husband or wife of one making a will is not a competent witness, but a relative of the testator not named in the will as a beneficiary is not disqualified by such relationship.

The attestation of a will is one of the requisites which must be fully complied with in accordance with the

statutes of the state or country where the will is made. In nearly all cases, the witnesses are required to sign in the presence of the testator and in the presence of each other.

Great care should be exercised in the selection of witnesses. They should, if possible, be acquainted with the testator, and thoroughly understand his mental condition at the time he executes his will. Witnesses need not know the contents of a will. All the maker needs to say to the ones who are to witness his will is, "This is my will. I want you to witness my signing of it."

A will does not have to be recorded, but must be preserved in some safe place known to the executor, so that it may be presented for probate on the death of the maker.

When there are different parcels of real estate, each should be described as to its location. This pertains also to personal property.

*Making Changes in a Will.*—It often happens that circumstances arise in which the testator wishes to make alterations in his will. No change in a will should be made by erasing or marking out. Any additions to a will must be made by a codicil, which codicil must be executed with the same formalities as the will itself, and must include a statement that it is a part of the will. If it is necessary to make many changes in a will, it is always better to destroy the will and have a new one executed. As a will does not take effect until after the death of the maker, he is at liberty to dispose of his property during his life as if no will had been made by him.

In disposing of personal property by will, the execution of the instrument must conform to the law of the

domicile of the testator at the time of his death. Therefore, if a testator executes his will according to the law of the place of his residence, and afterward changes his residence to a place where the law in regard to executing wills differs, and dies without re-executing his will, it may be inoperative.

### **A Suggestive Form for a Simple Will**

"I, John Doe, of the city of ..... in the county of ..... and State of ....., being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do hereby make, publish, and declare this to be my last WILL and TESTAMENT, hereby revoking any and all former wills by me at any time heretofore made.

"First, It is my will and desire that all my just debts be paid.

"Second, I give, devise, and bequeath to .....  
 [*If this is to be a devise of real estate, it is better to describe it and state where said real estate is located; personal property should also be fully described so it may be easily identified.*]

"Third, I give, devise, and bequeath to the ..... Conference Corporation, with headquarters at .....  
 [*If the gift is to the General Conference Corporation, use the following language: "I give, devise, and bequeath to the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the United States of America relating to the District of Columbia, with headquarters at Washington, D. C."*] [*If the residue of an estate is to be given to the General Conference Corporation or any other conference corporation, use the following language: "I give, devise, and bequeath all the residue of my estate, real, personal, and mixed, that I may own or possess or be entitled to at the time of my decease."*]

[*The fourth paragraph may be used to defeat an attempt to contest a will.*]

"Fourth, I direct that should any one or more of the beneficiaries named in this will object to the distribution as made,

or shall enter upon any contest of this will upon any ground whatsoever, or attempt to defeat the provisions of this will, said person or persons shall receive the sum of One (\$1.00) Dollar each and no more, and any and all other provisions made herein for such contestants, other than the sum of One (\$1.00) Dollar as stated, shall be annulled and revoked.

"*Fifth*, I hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint .....  
....., Executor of this my LAST WILL and TES-  
TAMENT.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereby set my hand and seal this ..... day of ....., A. D. 19....."

.....  
"The foregoing instrument was subscribed, sealed, published and declared by John Doe as and for his LAST WILL and TESTAMENT, in our presence and in the presence of each of us, and we, at the same time, at his request and in his presence, and in the presence of each other, hereunto subscribe our names and residence as attesting witnesses."

..... of .....  
..... of .....  
..... of .....

*To Whom Wills Should Be Made.*—Wills should be made in favor of the local, union, or General Conference legal organization, using its legal name. Any of these conference or institutional corporations are also prepared to enter into annuity contracts with members who are desirous of safeguarding their money in the future for the cause of God. A grave responsibility rests upon every individual in this regard, as is shown by the following admonition:

"Christians who believe the present truth should manifest wisdom and foresight. They should not neglect the disposition of their means, expecting a favorable oppor-

tunity to adjust their business during a long illness. They should have their business in such a shape that, were they called at any hour to leave it, and should they have no voice in its arrangement, it might be settled as they would have had it were they alive.”—“*Testimonies for the Church,*” Vol. III, p. 117.

“God is displeased with the slack, loose manner in which many of His professed people conduct their worldly business. They seem to have lost all sense of the fact that the property they are using belongs to God, and that they must render to Him an account of their stewardship. Some leave their worldly business in a perfect confusion. Satan has his eye on it all, and he strikes at a favorable opportunity, and by his management takes much means out of the ranks of Sabbath keepers. And this means goes into his ranks. . . .

“I was shown the awful fact that Satan and his angels have had more to do with the management of the property of God’s professed people, than the Lord has. . . . Satan and his angels exult over their success in this matter. And those who should be wise heirs of salvation almost willingly let their Lord’s money slip out of their hands into the enemy’s ranks. In this way they strengthen Satan’s kingdom, and seem to feel very easy about it.”—*Id.*, Vol. I, pp. 199, 200.

“If you want your means to go to the cause, appropriate it, or all that you do not really need for a support, while you live. . . . Dying charity is a poor substitute for living benevolence.”—*Id.*, Vol. V, p. 155.

Church officers can assist their members in getting in touch with conference officers to make sure that the Lord’s money which He has intrusted to His church is made safe for His work.

*Transferring Property Before Death.*—As there are some who desire to make a transfer of their property before death, the law recognizes a distinct class of gifts, known as gifts *causa mortis* and gifts *inter vivos*.

A gift *causa mortis* is a gift of personal property made by the donor in contemplation of and immediately prior to his death, and consummated by delivery to the donee, subject only to the condition that if the donor does not die, the title shall revert to him.

A gift *inter vivos* is a gift between the living. It is a contract which takes place by the consent of the giver, who divests himself of the thing given in order to transmit the title of it to the donee, and the donee who accepts acquires the legal title to it. It operates, if at all, in the donor's lifetime, immediately and irrevocably; no further act of the parties, no contingency of death or otherwise, is needed to give it effect. To make such a gift valid, there must be a delivery.

It is not always easy to determine whether a transaction is a gift or is testamentary in character. It depends upon the intention of the donor. Where a gift is made effective in the lifetime of the decedent and he has divested himself of all power to recall it, such transaction is a gift *inter vivos*, and not testamentary in its nature. If the gift does not take effect as an executed and completed transfer to the donee, either legally or equitably, during the life of the donor, it is a testamentary disposition, good only when made by a valid will.

An agreement for future delivery of property is nothing more than a promise to make a gift. In order to constitute an effectual delivery of a gift, the donor must not only have parted with the possession of the property, but he must also have relinquished to the donee all present



and future dominion and control over it, beyond any power on his part to recall. There are instances where a person desires to make a gift of a promissory note, but instead of delivering the promissory note to the donee, he retains it and dies with it in his possession, expecting an understanding that it is to be delivered to the donee after the donor's death. Such transaction does not convey title to the donee; therefore the gift has failed.

*Bequests to Religious Institutions Limited.*—Some States have laws prohibiting one from devising or bequeathing more than one third of a person's property to a religious organization or to a charitable institution, and also that the will must be made at least thirty days prior to the death of the testator. The statutes of the State on these points should be examined before making a bequest to such institutions.

*Annuity Contracts.*—Another means of making gifts and parting with possession of property during the life of the donor, is by way of annuity contracts. An annuity is defined as a stated sum payable annually during the life of the annuitant. Such transfer of personal property requires a consideration to uphold it. Such contracts are also subject to the ordinary rules as to capacity of parties, undue influence, etc. Annuity contracts usually contain an agreement between the donor and the donee, whereby the donor makes a gift in money, for which he receives in turn during his life annuity payments on said sum, and upon the death of the donor the gift becomes absolute in the donee.

An annuity contract must be definite in its terms to be an executed gift, and the consideration or sum given, by the terms of the annuity contract, must become the

absolute property of the donee. If by the terms and conditions the gift is to take effect only upon the death of the donor, it is not such a *donatio*, but is void. (Copies of approved forms for annuity contracts can be secured from the General Conference of S. D. A., Takoma Park, Washington, D. C.)

*Annuity Payments.*—There is a distinction between an income and an annuity; the former embraces only the net profits after deducting all necessary expenses and charges, and may be uncertain in amount; the latter is a fixed amount directed to be paid absolutely, and generally without contingency. A simple gift of the interest upon a specific principal sum, although stipulated to be paid annually, is not an annuity, but merely a gift of income.

*Trust and Trust Agreements.*—It is not the intention of this topic to enter into detail regarding trusts and trust agreements, but merely to point out briefly some of the requisites of trust agreements that will show the necessity of securing counsel before the execution of such an instrument.

A trust may be defined as an obligation arising out of personal confidence reposed in one and voluntarily accepted by one for the benefit of another.

The usual purpose and object of a trust is to convey the property to a trustee, whose duty it is to receive the rents, issues, and profits under certain terms and conditions, and pay them over to some one else for a given period of time. It is generally understood that a trust in relation to real and personal property may be created for any purpose or purposes for which a contract may be made.

A testator in creating a trust by will must have the same capacity for execution as is required to execute a will, and the execution is governed by precisely the same rules.

A trust estate may be devised directly to the trustee, as, for example: "I hereby devise and bequeath to ..... to be held in trust for the use, etc." This method vests the legal title in the one named as trustee, and the beneficiaries have the equitable title. Where a trust estate is devised directly to the heirs, as, "I hereby devise and bequeath to my daughter ..... [naming the property], to be held in trust, however, for her." This vests the legal title in a beneficiary, and the trustee takes only such title as is necessary to execute the trust and no other; and at the expiration of the trust term a conveyance by the trustees is not necessary.

The conveyance of an estate in trust is to be favored in many cases. Where the estate is small, it should be carefully conserved, so that protection is thrown around those who may most need the protection. Where the estate is large, a greater reason exists. To safeguard properly one's interest and those whom he desires to benefit from his estate, he should consult legal counsel.

*Secure Counsel.*—There are many technical points in the law relating to trusts, wills, and executed contracts which make it unsafe for laymen to execute without proper counsel from those trained in the law. In "Testimonies for the Church," Volume III, page 117, and Volume IV, page 482, definite instructions are given relating to securing proper counsel in the execution 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.”

“Wills should be made in a manner to stand the test of the law.”

Some business transactions are fairly simple and follow customary forms which the parties themselves may be competent to prepare; but in all important matters, it is indeed hazardous to draft or execute contracts or conveyances of property without skilled legal counsel.

## Section VI—Gospel Finance

*Tithes and Offerings Belong to God.*—"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." Mal. 3: 8.

*Abraham Paid Tithe to Christ's Representative.*—"Blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." Gen. 14: 20.

"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises." Heb. 7: 2-6.

*God's Plan for the Support of His Work.*—The gospel plan for the support of God's work on the earth is that of tithes and offerings. From its early days the Seventh-day Adventist Church has followed this Scriptural method for

financing its work. The blessing of God has rested upon the work as a result. The following statement sets forth the Christian obligation of this plan upon all who confess Christ:

*Faithful Stewardship.*—"Every Christian is a steward of God, intrusted with His goods. Remember the words, 'Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.' 1 Cor. 4: 2. Let us be sure that we are not robbing God in any jots or tittles; for much is involved in this question. . . .

*The Support of the Gospel.*—"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. Some have been at fault in diverting from the altar of God that which has been especially dedicated to Him. All should regard this matter in the right light. Let no one, when brought into a strait place, take money consecrated to religious purposes, and use it for his advantage, soothing his conscience by saying that he will repay it at some future time. Far better cut down the expenses to correspond with the income, to restrict the wants, and live within the means, than to use the Lord's money for secular purposes.

*The Use of the Tithe.*—God has given special direction as to the use of the tithe. He does not design that His work shall be crippled for want of means. That there may be no haphazard work and no error, He has made our duty on these points very plain. The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted

to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, not to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work. . . .

"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 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 co-operate with Him must carry out this plan, instead of daring to attempt an improvement on it. . . .

"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.

*A Solemn Obligation.*—"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. For a long time the Lord has been robbed because there are those who do not realize that the tithe is God's reserved portion. . . .

"Read carefully the third chapter of Malachi, and see what God says about the tithe. If our churches will take their stand upon the Lord's word, and be faithful in paying their tithe into His treasury, more laborers will be encouraged to take up ministerial work. More men would give themselves to the ministry were they not told of the depleted treasury. There should be an abundant supply in the Lord's treasury, and there would be if selfish hearts and hands had not withheld the tithes, or made use of them to support other lines of work. . . .

"'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."—*"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. IX, pp. 246-251.*

*How the Tithe Is to Be Used.*—"The tithe is to be held sacred for the work of the ministry and Bible teaching, including the carrying forward of conference administration in the care of the churches and of field missionary operations. The tithe is not to be expended upon other lines of work or in church or institutional debt paying or building operations."—"Constitution, By-Laws, and Working Policy of the General Conference," p. 38, 1930 edition.



*Tithe Paying Recognized as a Scriptural Obligation.*—“While tithe paying is not held as a test of fellowship, it is recognized as a Scriptural obligation which every believer owes to God, and as an essential in claiming by faith the fullness of blessing in Christian life and experience.”—*Ibid.*

*Conference Workers and Church Officers to Set Example in Tithe Paying.*—“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 tithe paying, no one being continued as either a church officer or conference worker who does not measure up to this standard of leadership.”—*Id.*, pp. 38, 39.

*How the Tithe Is Paid.*—“The tithe is to be paid to the local church in which membership is held. This includes General and union workers, it being understood that the conference in which the church is located give due regard to adjustment of tithe funds in cases where union or General institutions bring together large groups of workers and believers making up any considerable portion of the membership of a local church.”—*Id.*, p. 39.

*Offerings.*—In addition to the tithe, the Scriptures teach the obligation of making 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 body has from the beginning of its existence 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 ample incomes, farmers, laborers, ministers, and workers, and the converts in

heathen 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 suitable and widely used method of regular systematic giving is through our Sabbath schools. The Sabbath school offerings are devoted to our foreign mission work. Sabbath by Sabbath large sums are contributed through this channel.

*Other Offerings.*—Other offerings are taken from time to time for foreign mission work and other general and local enterprises.

*Special Gifts to Fields.*—The financial support of the world-wide mission 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 insures every field's receiving a just share. Where special gifts 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 diverted to care for work started by special gifts. The entire history of this cause has over and over again proved the wisdom of having all generously and loyally give their offerings and gifts through the accepted channels, with the satisfaction of knowing

that every mission field shares in the benefits of such giving.

*Solicitation of Funds.*—The matter of soliciting funds is fully covered in the following statements:

“1. No conference, church, or institution, without special counsel and arrangement, is to plan work requiring solicitation of funds from outside its own territory, any solicitation within its own territory to be in harmony with local, union, and General policy.

“2. For the protection of churches from unauthorized teachers [individuals] and fraudulent and undenominational solicitation, it is recognized,

“*a.* That ministers and church officers should not grant the privilege of the pulpit to persons who have not recognition or recommendation from the conference authorities.

“*b.* That no permission be granted to solicit funds either publicly or privately without such recognition.

“*c.* That all funds contributed by our people for any cause in response to appeals, be passed through the regular channels of the church.

“*d.* That no authority is granted workers in the cause representing special interests in one part of the field, to solicit help for that work in any other conference without arrangement by the conference authorities, with written authorization therefor.

“3. Mission field workers visiting the home church 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 co-operation with churches and conferences to raise the funds required to meet the appropriations on which the missions depend.

“In harmony with this, the following was presented by

the missionaries and adopted at the 1926 General Conference session:

“The band of missionaries present at this Conference desire to place on record their deep appreciation of the loyal way in which our people throughout the homelands are giving of their means for the maintenance of the work being conducted in the great missionary divisions of the world field.

“And while placing on record appreciation of the loyalty of our people in supplying funds for the conduct of the work, we also place on record our appreciation of the way in which these funds are being disbursed. It has been a source of incalculable good to the missionary operations everywhere to have a regular annual budget, with its regular appropriation balanced by the consideration of all the needs as they are presented in the appeals from the various divisions; and we hereby express disapproval of any solicitation on the part of missionaries for objects outside of the budget, and pledge ourselves to turn the attention of our people, when we make appeals for funds, to their opportunity to render a special service to the cause of missions by making substantial and extra gifts to help swell the Sixty-cent-a-week Fund as the best means by which the work can be extended to the best advantage of each field and of the world generally that must be warned in finishing the work.”—*“Constitution, By-Laws, and Working Policy of the General Conference,” pp. 39, 40, 1930 edition.*

*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 are used for the current purposes for which given.

*Assisting the Needy.*—Offerings for the poor and needy are taken to assist the members of the church who may require assistance. The church should take a benevolent attitude toward worthy members who are in need, as well as assisting other charitable agencies in caring for the needy in their various communities.

*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 budget of expenses for maintaining the church activities through the next yearly period. This budget should make provision for all repairs, heat, light, janitor service (if paid for), church school expense and teacher's salary, worthy poor fund, etc. The budget should be presented to the church for its study and adoption, and for plans to assure that funds will 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 for any church. It can be adapted to meet the needs of a church of any size.

### **Church Budget**

Estimated Receipts:

Church Expense Collections.....	\$ 169.00
Poor Fund Offerings.....	300.00
Pledges of Members on Church Exp.	2,640.00
Church School Receipts on Tuitions	400.00
—————	\$3,509.00

## Estimated Expenses:

Repairs and Painting Church Bldg...	\$500.00
Fuel .....	280.00
Janitor and Supplies.....	420.00
Insurance on Bldg. and Furnishings	200.00
Poor Fund .....	400.00
Sabbath School Supplies.....	200.00
Emergency Expense .....	275.00
Light .....	180.00
Water .....	48.00
Gas .....	36.00
Stationery and Supplies.....	40.00
Laundry .....	30.00
Church School Expense .....	900.00
	————— \$3,509.00

*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. This stand is borne out by the Testimonies.

“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 for the Church*,” Vol. IX, 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.*

This instruction should be carefully adhered to, and any methods bordering on these lines discarded.

*Raising Money for Local Purposes.*—In our efforts to keep faith with the general public in the solicitation of local church funds, our churches are encouraged to refrain from the use of methods commonly used by us in soliciting mission gifts. The following action is to the point:

"WHEREAS, The General Conference Home Missionary Department promotes the official annual Harvest Ingathering campaign for missions, and there are instances of public solicitation for other purposes using Harvest Ingathering methods; therefore,

"We recommend, That no other campaign be conducted for the solicitation of money by Harvest Ingathering methods, . . . for either home or foreign missions, without the sanction of the union conference or union mission committee, and that local conferences take such steps as may be necessary to stop violations of this regulation."—*Autumn Council Actions, 1928, p. 20.*

*Avoiding Debt.*—Church boards should always counsel with their 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 by churches always seeking counsel before launching such enterprises, and by adhering to the denominational policy for financing such enterprises. The General Conference Policy is as follows:

*Financing Church Buildings and Other Enterprises.—*

“WHEREAS, Some of our churches have been brought into serious perplexity by heavy debts upon their church buildings, and thereby have been hindered in carrying out their regular program for home and foreign work; and,

“WHEREAS, We are told through the Spirit of prophecy that it is displeasing to God for our churches to be burdened with debt, with counsel given that wherever possible our churches be dedicated free of debt;

“*We recommend*, 1. That all our churches encumbered with debt make every sacrifice and effort possible to free themselves from all burden of debt as rapidly as they are able while carrying on the regular program of the church.

“2. That churches contemplating either purchasing or erecting church buildings, be cautioned not to undertake obligations which the church cannot easily carry, the local and union conference committees giving careful counsel after studying the size of the congregation, its financial strength, and the location of the church.

“3. That where conditions seem to make it imperative for congregations to assume obligations on their church properties, in no case should building operations be started until 75 per cent of the entire cost is in hand in cash; and that any help from the Church Extension Fund, where given, be a part of the remaining 25 per cent; and



further, where the church building project contemplates an expenditure of \$5,000, the plan adopted by the General Conference for building operations be carefully followed; and further, that a project contemplating the expenditure of \$25,000 or more be recognized as a special problem involving wider counsel with local, union, and General Conference Committees as to the percentage of funds above 75 per cent that should be in hand.

"4. That whenever possible, churches be not dedicated until they are free from indebtedness.

"5. That the foregoing apply particularly to North America, with a word of caution to other divisions in proceeding with plans for church obligations."—*Autumn Council Actions, 1928, pp. 15, 16.*

*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. Those 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, and 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, and passes on to either the division or General Conference treasurers 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 committees. They do not handle or disburse funds independently of counsel.

*Auditing.*—Every set of books, from the local church treasurer's to those of the General Conference treasurer, are subject to audit by auditors appointed for this purpose. This rule of auditing is also applied to the books of every denominationally operated institution. This practice provides the maximum of safety in the handling of funds.

## Section VII—Ministers and Gospel Workers

*A Divinely Appointed Ministry.*—"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God." Col. 1: 25. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Heb. 5: 4.

"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: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even 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 is the chief elder or overseer at large of all the churches in the conference. He works for the spiritual welfare and upbuilding of the churches. He counsels them regarding all 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, books, etc.

He will not set aside the duly elected officers of the church, but will work in co-operation 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 become intermediaries between the conference president and the churches. They do not take the place of the president in their respective fields, and are not charged with administrative powers, as is the president. They are to co-operate with him in carrying out all the plans and policies of the conference.

*President and Committee Direct the 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 co-operation of the workers in carrying them out. The president should take a special interest in directing the evangelistic work in 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.

*President and Committee Direct Departmental Secretaries.*—Departmental secretaries are employed by the conference to foster very important lines of denominational work. These departmental lines are usually listed as the Sabbath School, Home Missionary, Young People's Missionary Volunteer, Educational, Publishing, Medical, Religious Liberty, and Home Commission. In order successfully to carry on the work assigned to them, these workers must have access to the churches. They should be given opportunity properly 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.

*Co-operation Between Local, Union, and General Conference Departmental Secretaries.*—The fullest co-operation should exist between departmental secretaries and those who carry similar departmental lines of work in local, union, and General Conferences. But the responsibility for directing the labors of departmental secretaries in the conferences does not rest upon the secretaries of the higher organizations.

*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. Where ordained ministers are called to serve as departmental secretaries, they freely function in all ministerial lines in the celebration of all church rites and ceremonies. They may be directed by the conference committee or president to labor for any church in general ministerial lines. Their work, however, is primarily of a special 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, unless especially asked by the conference president to do this.

*Workers Under Conference Direction.*—All conference workers—ministers, Bible workers, departmental secretaries, etc.—are under the direction of the conference committee. These workers receive their credentials from the conference, 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 make it. The worker may appeal to the conference committee for a hearing on the committee's decision to remove him from a church or from his field of labor, but if he refuses to co-operate with the

committee and declines to work in harmony with it, his conduct may be regarded as insubordination, and be dealt with as such. In no case should he appeal to the church regarding decisions of the conference committee.

Any church supporting a worker in his stand under such circumstances becomes subject to the discipline of the conference.

*Relation of Ordained Minister to Church Work.*—On assignment to a local church as a worker or pastor, the ordained minister takes rank above the local elder or elders, and these latter serve as his assistants. By virtue of his ordination to the ministry he is qualified to function in all church rites and ceremonies, and should have charge of such services. He should be the spiritual leader and advisor of the church. He should instruct the church officers in their duties, and counsel them in carrying them out, and in helping them to plan for all lines of church work and activity. By virtue of his appointment as pastor he is a member of the church board, and serves as chairman. In cases where the pastor desires to be relieved of the responsibility of acting as chairman of the church board, the church elder serves as chairman. There should be the closest co-operation between the two.

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, prayer meeting, etc., and should officiate at the communion service, baptism, etc. He should not surround himself with any special body of counselors of his own choosing, but always work in co-operation with the duly elected officers of the church.

*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 canceled at any time.

*Licensed Preachers.*—To give young men an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, prospective candidates are granted ministerial licenses. The granting of such licenses by the conference confers no authority beyond the right to develop the ministerial gift. A licensed minister does not have authority to preside at any of the church ordinances or business sessions. He cannot administer baptism, the Lord's supper, or perform the marriage ceremony. He does not preside at sessions where members are received or dismissed from the church. 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 evangelistic efforts.

He may be elected as a local elder of a particular church and ordained as such, providing special arrangements have been made with the conference. In such a case he is vested with the authority of a local church elder, but no more. His ordination as such does not qualify him to serve in any other church in the conference except by vote of the church needing his services, and this on the advice of the conference committee or president.

Conference committees do not have the right to authorize a licensed preacher 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 ordination.



Assignment of such workers to district leadership must not be made the occasion for unwarranted authorization in such matters.

*Ordination to the Ministry.*—A ministerial license does not assure ordination to the ministry. Only after the holder has proved his gift is he entitled to ordination. The decision as to his fitness does not rest with the worker himself, nor upon the influence of his friends. Ordination should be carried out in harmony with the following plan:

“1. Inasmuch as the ordination to the ministry is the setting apart of the man to a sacred calling, not for one local field alone, but for the entire church, and therefore needs to be done with wide counsel, the following plan is the proper procedure, except in special cases where serious delay would result:

“a. The matter of ordination is first taken under careful consideration by the local conference committee.

“b. In case of approval, the local conference committee submits the names of the candidates with their findings and convictions to the union conference committee for counsel.

“c. The decisions of these two bodies are placed in the hands of the Committee on Credentials and Licenses [at the next session of the conference], on whose favorable report the conference makes final decision in the case.

“d. In case a licensed minister to be ordained is in the employ of the union or General Conference, the organization employing him would of course initiate the matter.

“2. In the event of its being desirable to have an ordination between sessions of conferences, this may be done in case the candidate has the approval for ordination of the union and local conference committees.

"3. Before any ordination is carried out, there shall be a very careful examination of the candidates as to their fitness for the work of the ministry. The examination should cover the great fundamental facts of the gospel, such as the following:

"a. The present, personal religious experience of the candidate.

"b. His belief in and knowledge of the Scriptures.

"c. His acquaintance with and full acceptance of the vital truths we believe we are called to proclaim to the world.

"d. The results of his previous work as a licensed preacher.

"4. The examination of candidates for ordination is conducted by ordained ministers only, and where there are present representatives of union, division, or General Conferences, they should be invited to assist in the examination.

"5. In the carrying out of the ordination, a special service, preferably on the Sabbath afternoon, should be conducted, that will exalt the office of the ministry in the eyes of the people and solemnize the call in the heart of the candidate."—*Constitution, By-Laws, and Working Policy of the General Conference,* pp. 71, 72, 1930 edition.

*Bible Workers.*—A very important line of service is that of the Bible worker. This is recognized by our conferences in employing suitable persons to engage in this line of work. Where such workers are employed by the conference, they are under conference direction, as are all other workers. They may be changed about from place to place as the work requires. They may be assigned to work in connection with some evangelistic ef-

fort, in which case they are under the immediate direction of the evangelist in charge of the effort, or they may be stationed in some city to labor in connection with some church. In such a case, they should be under the immediate direction of the minister or pastor of the church. A conference Bible worker should not, except by special arrangement with the conference, be asked to carry any church office, but should be left free to carry on her personal soul-winning work.

*Book and Bible House 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.

*Pastors Should Assist Evangelists.*—Where an evangelist is asked to conduct an evangelistic effort in some locality or city where a church in charge of a pastor is located, the pastor should be invited to assist the evangelist as a personal worker, thus giving the pastor an opportunity to become acquainted with the prospective members. They should counsel together as to the wisest and most tactful manner of working together in such efforts.

*Disputed Points of Doctrine and Procedure.*—No minister or church elder has the right to make any pulpit the forum for advocating disputed points of doctrine or procedure. The church does not confer the right upon any individual to exploit personal views or opinions in

such a manner. Where necessary, as in the case of the apostolic church, such matters should be settled by general church councils.

*Credentials.*—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 symbolized 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 nor inherent in the individual holding the credentials, but is inherent in the body granting the credentials, and may be recalled at any time where 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 such organization.

The following actions clearly set forth the denominational practice in granting credentials:

“Ministerial credentials and licenses and other papers are issued as follows:

“1. By the local conference to its laborers.

“2. By the union conference to union laborers, and workers entitled to papers in union institutions.

“3. Workers in general and inter-union institutions, as publishing houses, sanitariums, and colleges, receive their papers from the union in which the institution is located, except such persons in these institutions as are provided for under number 4, such persons receiving papers from union conferences being listed in the Year Book as institutional workers.

"4. By the General Conference to workers under General Conference direction, and to members of the General Conference Committee in North America, but not including union conference presidents.

"5. By the General Conference also to such pioneer workers and others of lifelong service to the denomination as may not be directly employed by a union or local conference, or as in the judgment of the committee should receive such credentials.

"6. By the General Conference to missionaries being sent to the field, to cover the period of their preparation and travel to the field; also to missionaries on furlough when the papers they hold shall expire during the furlough period.

"7. By the General Conference for one year to missionaries in good standing, who return permanently, and who have not been employed by any conference or institution, and whose papers from the organization of previous employment do not cover one year following their return.

"8. Missionaries, or those who have been in General Conference employ, and who, though in good standing, are without employment in denominational work for a period of one year from the time their employment ceased, shall be referred to the local conference in which they reside for honorary credentials, such papers to be renewed from time to time at the discretion of the conference.

"9. A laborer being a beneficiary of the Sustentation Fund, yet receiving subsidy from a local conference for service rendered, receives his papers from such local conference.

"10. All other laborers receiving funds from the Sustentation Fund, if entitled to credentials or other papers,

are to receive the same from the union conference in which they reside.

"11. Inasmuch as the union conference is held responsible with the local conferences in the safeguarding of the ministry for the service of the whole church, it follows that the union conference is charged with sharing the responsibility with the local conference for the standing of the ministry in all the local fields. The union conference is required by denominational action and practice to assure itself that credentials issued within the union territory shall indeed be certificates that the holders are in good and unquestioned standing, properly subject to invitation to any other field of service.

"12. In any case where the standing of any holder of credentials is brought into uncertainty, it is the duty of the union conference to join the local conference in conferring, with a purpose to clear away any uncertainty, in order that no reproach or shadow may be left to rest upon all the credentials held by the ministry. Where the matters involved are of such a character that the union and local conference committees are unable to resolve the difficulty and announce to all a clear record for the ministry, the matter must of necessity be appealed to the General Conference, by action of both local and union committees together, or by action of one body separately, inasmuch as any shadow of uncertainty in the matter of what ministerial credentials stand for in one field reflects a shadow upon all credentials, and is a matter of general denominational concern."—*Constitution, By-Laws, and Working Policy of the General Conference*, pp. 72-74, 1930 edition.

*Expired Credentials.*—Credentials are granted for the duration of the conference term, either annually, bien-

nially, 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 worker, 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. 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 without affecting his standing as a church member. In cases where a minister is disfellowshipped from the church and subsequently restored to church membership, his office 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 disciplined during his term of office. The action restoring him to membership does not restore him to his former office.

*Sustentation Workers.*—Scattered throughout the various conferences are workers who, on account of age or condition of health, are 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.

*Relationship of Sustentation Workers and the Local Church.*—Sustentation workers usually hold their church membership in the church nearest their place of residence. Their official relationship to such a church is the same as that of a lay member. They may be elected to any office in the church, in which case they freely function in all

that pertains to the office in which they serve. Inasmuch as sustentation workers draw their support from the cause, they should undertake such work only in counsel with and under the direction of the local conference committee. They are not independent of such counsel. The local conference committee is responsible for fostering the work in every church in its territory, especially as relates to the activities of all workers, whether on the active or sustentation list.

*Sustentation Workers May Be Asked to Perform Ministerial Service.*—Ministers on the sustentation list may be requested to perform ministerial service in the church to which they belong, or in any other churches in the conference, and also to engage in evangelistic work. For this service their sustentation allowance may be supplemented by the conference. In such a case they devote all the time their age or health will permit in regular conference work, under the direction of the conference committee and president. Where such workers are so employed, the conference grants them credentials. The fact that sustentation workers reside within the territory of a local conference does not impose any obligation on the conference to employ them, or to pay a supplementary wage or to grant them credentials. Such service may be terminated by the conference committee when deemed advisable.

Whether in church or conference work the sustentation worker sustains the same relationship to the counsel and direction of the local conference committee as any other worker or lay member.



## SECTION VIII—The Services of the Church

*Public Worship Should Not Be Neglected.*—"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10: 25.

"Some have made a serious mistake in neglecting to attend the public worship of God. The privileges of divine service will be as beneficial to them as to others, and are fully as essential. They may be unable to avail themselves of these privileges as often as do many others. Physicians will frequently be called, upon the Sabbath, to visit the sick, and may be obliged to make it a day of exhausting labor. Such labor to relieve the suffering, was pronounced by our Saviour a work of mercy, and no violation of the Sabbath. But those who regularly devote their Sabbaths to writing or labor, making no special change, harm their own souls, give to others an example that is not worthy of imitation, and do not honor God.

"Some have failed to see the real importance, not only of attending religious meetings, but also of bearing testimony for Christ and the truth. If these brethren do not obtain spiritual strength by the faithful performance of every Christian duty, thus coming into a closer and more sacred relation to their Redeemer, they will become weak in moral power. They will surely wither spiritually, unless they change their course in this respect."—"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. IV, pp. 539, 540.

*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.

"Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers, merely for the sake of occupying the time. All should be ready to act their part with promptness, and when their duty is done, the meeting should be closed. Thus the interest will be kept up to the last. This is offering to God acceptable worship. His service should be made interesting and attractive, and not be allowed to degenerate into a dry form. We must live for Christ minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day; then Christ will dwell in us, and when we meet together, His love will be in our hearts, welling up like a spring in the desert, refreshing all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the waters of life."—"*Testimonies for the Church,*" Vol. V, p. 609.

*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 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."—*Id.*, 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.'—*Id.*, p. 494.

*Decorum and Quietness in the Place of Meeting.*—“When the worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. If there is a stove in the room, it is not proper to crowd about it in an indolent, careless attitude. 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 worshipers.

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

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

*Sabbath Worship.*—The Sabbath service is held for worshipping the Lord. This service is usually and properly the occasion for preaching or Bible study. If an ordained minister of the conference in active service is present, the service is in his charge. If no minister is present, the elders have charge. They should lead the meeting or arrange for some one to do so. A social meeting for testimony and praise can be conducted, or the time given over to a relation by the members of their experience in missionary work.

It has never been our custom to 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. Thus more time can be given to the study of the word of God. Two suggestive forms are here given:

### **Order of Worship**

Organ Prelude

Doxology

Invocation  
 Announcements  
 Scripture Reading  
 Hymn  
 Prayer  
 Offertory  
 Hymn or Special Song  
 Sermon  
 Hymn  
 Benediction  
 Congregation Seated for a Few Moments of  
     Silent Prayer\*  
 Organ Postlude

#### **Shorter Order of Worship**

Hymn  
 Scripture Reading  
 Prayer  
 Offering and Announcements  
 Hymn or Special Song  
 Sermon  
 Hymn  
 Benediction  
 Congregation Seated for Silent Prayer\*

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\* 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 the head for a moment in silent prayer, after which they sit in quiet meditation or read the Word until the service begins.

After the benediction the congregation resume their seats, and remain for a few moments of silent prayer, while the organ is played very softly. During this time the minister walks quietly to the door, where he will be ready to greet the people, as, at a given signal from the organist, all arise and pass out of the house of worship. Visiting and talking in the church auditorium is thus avoided.

*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 our entire membership meet in Sabbath school to study systematically the truths of God’s word. The Sabbath school should be attended by every member of the church, old and young, ministers, church officers, and laymen. The length of time for holding this service is one hour and a quarter. The following program outline is suggested by the Sabbath School Department:

Opening Exercises.....	10 minutes
Secretary’s Report .....	3 minutes
Superintendent’s Remarks .....	3 minutes
Missions Exercise .....	10 minutes
Lesson Review .....	10 minutes
Class Record and Offerings.....	2 minutes
Lesson Recitation .....	30 minutes
Closing Exercises .....	5 minutes

*Sabbath School Teachers’ Meeting.*—Every Sabbath school should have a weekly teachers’ meeting. The superintendent should have charge, although some one else may be appointed to take charge of the lesson study. A Training Course leader should be provided also. Continuity of leadership should be sought for in both these lines of study. The best time for the teachers’ meeting is the middle of the week, as this permits the opportunity for private study both before and after the meeting, and it is also a less hurried time than Sabbath morning. An hour’s time should be allowed for this meeting in view of the fact that three things are to be accomplished,—study of the lesson for next Sabbath, study of the Train-

ing Course, and consideration of any general problems affecting the school.

*Senior Missionary Volunteer Society.*—The Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers is a training center for the youth in our churches who will be the future workers in giving this advent message to the world. The society is organized for the specific purpose of giving young people opportunity to learn how to witness for God, by taking small parts on the programs and in the missionary activities at first, and growing into greater responsibilities in the cause of God. The time for the Senior Missionary Volunteer meeting to be held must be arranged locally in each church. Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon usually is considered the most favorable time. Suggestive weekly programs are provided through the *Church Officers' Gazette*. The following is a general outline of a program:

Song Service

Opening Exercises (Song, Scripture, Prayer)

Secretary's Report, and Taking of Missionary Reports

Two or Three Five-minute Talks on the Week's Topic

Recitation (or a Special Exercise)

Round Table Discussion of the Topic Presented (or Testimony Service)

Offering for Missions

Closing Song and Prayer

No Missionary Volunteer Society will be a success which has for its main object merely the giving of programs. Every society (except the very small ones) should be divided into working bands. Each band does



a definite kind of missionary work, and in this way the society usually can 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, while others arrange for an entirely different hour to carry on those lines of work.

In churches where there are not enough young people to organize a society, a Missionary Volunteer band should be formed which will have a definite part in the missionary work of the church. This will develop greater interest and initiative among the youth.

*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 develop in Christian service. Because of the fact that the Junior Society is often organized within the church school, its meetings are usually conducted at an hour set aside on Wednesday morning. Where there is no church school, the church should set an hour for the Junior Society meeting.

*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 for the Church,*” Vol. IV, pp. 70, 71.

The weekly prayer meeting is the thermometer of the church’s spirituality. It is of so great importance that more than ordinary efforts should be put forth to assure its success. Meetings should begin on time, even though there are but two or three present. Have a short Scripture study. Ten or fifteen minutes is sufficient. Then give the people the 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.

*Church Missionary Meeting.*—The great commission lays upon the church the task of heralding the gospel to all the world. This places 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, but it was not to be the last.

As a permanent and definite part of the services of the Christian church, the missionary meeting bears the divine indorsement 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 for the Church*," Vol. VI, p. 32.

By action of the General Conference, the first Sabbath of each month is dedicated to the Home Missionary Service in all our churches. This official action is recorded as follows:

"WHEREAS, The successful development of missionary work on the part of all our church members requires a regular opportunity for the presentation of instruction and inspirational themes by our ministers and other church leaders, that our people may be enlisted as personal soul winners and be intelligent as to the work they are to do for God;

"*We recommend*, That the first Sabbath of each month be designated as Home Missionary Day, it being understood that the work of other departments will be presented on certain of these days, as heretofore. This plan does not contemplate additional programs."—*Autumn Council Actions, 1924*.

For still further strengthening and developing the missionary spirit among the church members, auxiliary missionary services should be conducted in one or more of the following ways:

1. The Fifteen-Minute Church Missionary Service, held each Sabbath, immediately following the close of the Sabbath school and just preceding the preaching service.

2. A mid-week missionary meeting, combined with the weekly prayer meeting, has been found to be a very effective method of conducting this service of the church. On this occasion the first half of the meeting is spent in wrapping and addressing missionary literature to be sent through the mails, and the latter part of the service is very appropriately spent in prayer and experience testimony by the missionary workers.

3. Missionary meetings at various times, as best suited to local conditions.

The church missionary committee should plan definitely and carefully 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 the other regular meetings of the church.

*Supplying Literature on the Sabbath.*—It is generally recognized that the Sabbath affords the most opportune time for the church missionary secretary to place literature in the hands of the members. However, in many places there has been serious objection to methods that have been followed, because of their effect upon the solemnity of the Sabbath services. In all his work on the Sabbath, the missionary secretary 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 our church missionary secretary's work can be wonderfully helped by the use of the "Order Envelope" plan. Envelopes are provided on which the members can designate the literature they

wish to secure, the quantity, the language, bindings, etc. The amount covering the cost of literature they are ordering can be put into the envelope during the week, and placed in the basket at the time the regular offering is received on Sabbath. At the close of the service, the envelopes are placed in the hands of the missionary secretary, who in turn gives the orders prompt attention after the Sabbath is past.

### **The Communion Service**

Among Seventh-day Adventists the communion is customarily celebrated once each quarter. It is a service of great solemnity and importance, and should be attended by all church members. The practice of some members in remaining away from this service is decidedly wrong. They deprive themselves of great spiritual blessing in so doing.

*None to Be Excluded.*—"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.

"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."—"*The Desire of Ages*," p. 656.

*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.*

*Unfermented Bread and 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.'"  
—*Id.*, 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 Humility a Preparation for Communion.*

—"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."—*Id.*, p. 650.

*Suggestive 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 humility.

The following order may be followed:

Song

Prayer

Song

Short Study on the Meaning of the Ordinances

Separate for Ordinance of Humility

Reassemble for Lord's Supper

Song (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  
 Song  
 Dismissal

Following the service, the deaconesses clear the table, carefully disposing of any of the bread or wine left over, by burning the bread and pouring out the wine. They should also wash the glasses and linen. The deacons likewise care for the articles used in the ordinance of humility.

*Who May Conduct Communion Service.*—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained minister or a church elder who has been ordained. Deacons, although ordained, cannot conduct the service. They may, if ordained, assist in the service by passing the bread and wine to the members.

*Communion for the Sick.*—If any members are ill or for any other reason are unable to attend the communion service in the house of worship, a special service may be held for them. This service can be conducted only by an ordained minister or a church elder. He may be accompanied by deacons or deaconesses, who assist as in the regular service.

*The Church Board.*—The church board consists of the pastor, the elder or elders; the deacons; the clerk; the treasurer; the missionary leader, if other than the elder; the church missionary secretary; the Sabbath school superintendent; and the Missionary Volunteer leader;



and where it seems advisable, two or three other members chosen by the church at the time of its annual election of officers. In some countries deaconesses also are included.

*Church Board Meetings.*—A meeting of the church board should be held at least once each month. In large churches, such meetings may have to be held even oftener than once each month. A weekly meeting is often advisable.

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.

The details of church business should be considered in these meetings. The treasurer should report the state of church finance, with cash on hand and paid out. Each of the other officers should give a report of the work for which he is responsible.

The church roll should be studied. Arrangements should be made for the sick, discouraged, or backslidden members to be visited. The spiritual standing of all the members should be inquired into. Plans should be considered for enlisting all in active missionary service.

*School Board Meetings.*—In some churches maintaining a church school this work is fostered by the election of a church school board. A chairman is selected, who presides over the meetings of this board. A secretary is selected to keep the records of board meetings and actions. This board should plan to 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 serve also as the school board.

*Parents' Meetings.*—An important work of the church is the education of parents for their duties and responsibilities. The Testimonies tell us 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 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 Home Commission of the General Conference, and is carried on through the Mothers' Society or the Parents' Council, organized in the local church.

The local Mothers' Society or Parents' Council is organized very simply, with a leader and a secretary, and if necessary assistants. Meeting usually twice a month, this society carries on the study under the direction and with the aid of the Home Commission. Since “the success of the church depends upon home influences,” every church should insure the formation and maintenance of one or both of these parents' societies.

*Business Meetings.*—Church business meetings may be held monthly, or quarterly, or yearly, according to the needs of each church. At this meeting full information should be given to the congregation regarding the workings of the church; and in the case of a yearly meeting, reports should be rendered covering the activities of the church for the year. Where possible, these reports should be presented in writing and should include the following:

1. A report from the clerk, showing the number of members received and dismissed during the year, the present membership of the church, and a brief statement

of those decisions arrived at by the officers in their meetings which it would be of interest and benefit for the church to know.

2. A report from the missionary secretary, giving a full statement of missionary activities, together with any plans for future work.

3. A report from the treasurer, showing the amount of tithe received and forwarded to the conference treasurer; also a full statement of missionary offerings received and forwarded; and a statement showing local church funds received and disbursed.

4. A report from the deacons concerning 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 young people of the church.

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

*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 for the Church*," Vol. IV, p. 71.

*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?

"The evil of formal worship cannot be too strongly depicted, but no words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship. When human beings sing with the spirit and the understanding, heavenly musicians take up the strain, and join in the song of thanksgiving. He who has bestowed upon us all the gifts that enable us to be workers together with God, expects His servants to cultivate their voices, so that they can speak and sing in a way that all can understand. It is not loud singing that is needed, but clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance. Let all take time to cultivate the voice, so that God's praise can be sung in clear, soft tones, not with harshness and shrillness that offend the ear. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His glory.

"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."—*"Testimonies for the Church," Vol. IX, pp. 143, 144.*

*Selecting Choir Leaders.*—Great care should be used in selecting choir leaders or those who are to 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 church services.

In arranging for special music, choir leaders should consult the speaker where possible, in order to select songs that 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 over the music to be rendered, but also over the selection of singers and musicians. The choir leader as such is not a member of the church board.

*Church Choirs.*—Sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church has as much need and right to select only those as choir members who rightly represent the principles of the church, as it does in the selection of its officers. 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, and of sober and dignified bearing. In their personal appearance and manner of dress they should fully conform to all the standards of the church, setting a good example in modesty and decorum to the other church members. People of uncertain consecration or questionable char-

acter, or those improperly dressed, should not be permitted to participate in the musical features of our services. The church officers are responsible for carrying out this rule.

*Unauthorized Speakers.*—Our churches have often been imposed upon by having unworthy persons invited to speak to them. Under no circumstances should a minister, elder, or other church officer invite strangers or any unauthorized persons to take any service, or to speak in or take part in a public way in any service or meeting of the church. Sometimes men who have been dropped from the ministry, or who have been dismissed from church fellowship in other places, or designing persons who have had no connection with the church, will appear and with plausible words gain admittance to our churches. Great care should be exercised to prevent this. Every one worthy of the confidence of our churches will be able to identify himself by producing proper credentials. All others should be excluded. No deviation from this rule should be permitted. It is the duty of every elder, minister, and conference president to see that this rule is carried out.

*Announcements.*—Thoughtful consideration should be given by those in charge of church services, both as to the length and the character of the announcements they make during the Sabbath service. Often announcements are handed in dealing with all kinds of secular matters that are in no way connected with the Sabbath worship or the work of the church. Ministers and church officers should be very careful to exclude all such announcements, maintaining even in this respect a proper spirit of Sabbath observance.

*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 all hospitality and Christian fellowship. Every member should cultivate this essential element of real Christian life and experience. Especially should this be so in connection with the worship of God. Every stranger who worships with us should be cordially welcomed and treated with respect. It is the duty of the church officers to arrange for some one to give special attention to welcoming the strangers who attend the services of the church. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Heb. 13: 2.

## Section IX—Sabbath Observance

*The Sabbath Made by Jesus.*—“He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” Mark 2: 27, 28.

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.” John 1: 3.

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” Eph. 3: 9.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Ex. 20: 8-11.

*Instruction in Sabbath Observance.*—“In establishing new churches, ministers should give careful instruction as to the proper observance of the Sabbath. We must be guarded, lest the lax practices that prevail among Sunday keepers shall be followed by those who profess to observe God’s holy rest day. The line of demarcation is to be made clear and distinct between those who bear the mark of God’s kingdom and those who bear the sign



of the kingdom of rebellion.”—“*Testimonies for the Church*,” Vol. VI, p. 353.

*Preparation for the Sabbath.*—“At the very beginning of the fourth commandment the Lord said, ‘Remember.’ He knew that amid the multitude of cares and perplexities man would be tempted to excuse himself from meeting the full requirement of the law, or would forget its sacred importance. Therefore He said, ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.’ Ex. 20: 8.

“All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind, and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ, and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.

“In all that pertains to the success of God’s work, the very first victories are to be won in the home life. Here the preparation for the Sabbath must begin. Throughout the week let parents remember that their home is to be a school in which their children shall be prepared for the courts above. Let their words be right words. No words which their children should not hear are to escape their lips. Let the spirit be kept free from irritation. Parents, during the week live as in the sight of a holy

God, who has given you children to train for Him. Train for Him the little church in your home, that on the Sabbath all may be prepared to worship in the Lord's sanctuary. Each morning and evening present your children to God as His blood-bought heritage. Teach them that it is their highest duty and privilege to love and serve God.

"Parents should be particular to make the worship of God an object lesson for their children. Passages of Scripture should be more often on their lips, especially those passages that prepare the heart for religious service. The precious words might well be often repeated, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.' Ps. 62:5.

"When the Sabbath is thus remembered, the temporal will not be allowed to encroach upon the spiritual. No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. During the week our energies will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed we shall be too weary to engage in His service."—*Id.*, pp. 353, 354.

## SECTION X—MARRIAGE

*Marriage a Sacred Relationship.*—"The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It 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."—"Ministry of Healing," pp. 356, 357.

*Unscriptural Marriage Forbidden.*—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and 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: 14-18.

"Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions. Take heed, lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal. Worldly associations tend to place obstructions in the way of your service to God, and many souls are ruined by unhappy unions, either business or matrimonial, with those who can never elevate or ennoble.

Never should God's people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 500.

"The Lord commanded Israel not to make marriages with the idolatrous nations around them. 'Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.' 'For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers.'

"Here are positive directions that reach down to our time. God is speaking to us in these last days, and He will be understood and obeyed."—*Testimonies for the Church,* Vol. V, p. 328.

*Ministers Should Not Perform Marriage Ceremony of Believers With Unbelievers.*—It is contrary to the practice and policy of the church for a minister to officiate at the marriage ceremony of a believer with an unbeliever. This is understood to apply equally to proposed marriages between members of the church and members or adherents of other faiths. A minister derives all his authority and powers from the church, and under no circumstances should he use these contrary to the usages and practices of the body granting his credentials.

*Ordained Ministers Only May Perform Marriage Ceremony.*—Under no circumstances does the church recognize the right of a local church elder, even though ordained to his office, or a licensed minister, to perform the marriage ceremony. Only ordained ministers holding credentials are authorized to perform such ceremonies.

*General Conference Action on Marriage.*—

“WHEREAS, Our experience has taught us that disregard of the plain counsel of the word of God respecting the marriage of our people with unbelievers or those not of our faith, often leads to sorrow, disappointment, and shipwreck of faith; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That we urge our workers of experience to give counsel and instruction on the subject of marriage to our young people at appropriate times and places, emphasizing the sacredness of the marriage covenant, and the need of divine guidance in taking any step vitally affecting their future happiness and usefulness, as well as warning against the danger of marriage with unbelievers or those of a different faith; and further,

“*Resolved*, That in the marriage ceremony, simplicity be observed, and that some such simple formula as that in the ‘Manual for Ministers’ be used; also that we look with disfavor upon the ring ceremony, and upon our ministers’ officiating at marriages of believers with unbelievers or with those not of our faith.”—*Autumn Council Actions, 1925, pp. 12, 13.*

### **Divorce**

*General Conference Action on Divorce.*—“In view of the alarming increase in the number of divorces in the world, and of the growing disregard for the sacred vows

of marriage, many seemingly considering marriage only a temporary social adventure, to be entered into lightly and abandoned at will; and,

“WHEREAS, There is constant danger that our people will be drawn away by the spirit of the times and look with complaisance upon that which the word of God condemns; therefore, be it—

“*Resolved*, That we greatly deplore the evil of divorce, and place our emphatic disapproval upon any legal action for the separation of those once married, on any ground other than that given in Matthew 5: 32.”—*Id.*, p. 13.

*Reconciliation Where Possible.*—The church should, in all cases where discord and unfaithfulness threaten to disrupt family ties, endeavor to help the affected parties to an experience in forgiveness and reconciliation that will preserve the home and restore the offending ones, and thus save them from having recourse to civil courts in divorce actions. However, sin must not be passed over or condoned. Through the properly constituted authority the church must administer discipline in the maintenance of a high standard of moral purity and integrity.

*Right of Minister to Officiate at the Remarriage of a Divorced Member.*—The church does not recognize the right of a minister to officiate at the remarriage of members who have been divorced, except on Scriptural grounds. For this reason no minister knowingly shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been or is the husband or wife of any person now living from whom he or she has been divorced for any cause arising after marriage, except on Scriptural grounds; nor shall any member continue in church fellowship who enters upon a marriage when either of the contracting parties is the

husband or the wife of any other living person from whom he or she has been divorced for any cause arising after marriage, except upon Scriptural grounds.

"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. 'Every one,' He said, 'that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress; and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.'"—*Mount of Blessing*, p. 99. Therefore this instruction does not apply to the innocent party in the divorce for adultery. The right, therefore, of the innocent party to a divorce secured on Scriptural grounds, to remarry, is recognized.

The right to remarry of the guilty party to a divorce secured on Scriptural grounds, is not recognized. The right of either party to a divorce secured on any other than Scriptural grounds, to remarry, is not recognized by the church.

In cases of divorced members claiming the right to remarry on Scriptural grounds, it is the duty of the officiating minister to investigate carefully all the circumstances, and make request of the applicants that they secure satisfactory evidence of the facts in the case, including a copy of the decree of the court and record, if practicable, with proof that the defendant was personally served or appeared in the action. If still in doubt, the officiating minister should seek counsel from the conference officers before proceeding with the ceremony.

*General Conference Action on Moral Standards.*—"We have reached the days of peril foretold by the Scriptures. Spiritual declension and moral degeneracy exist

on every side. The days typified by the times of Noah and Lot are here. Skepticism not only walks abroad in boastful arrogance, but masquerades under the guise of Christian names and ethics, and finds ready entrance to the hearts of many professed Christians. Moral impurity is threatening the lives of thousands. The marriage relation instituted by a wise Creator for the protection of the home, as a bulwark of society, and as a barrier against license, has become the target of special attack by the enemy of all righteousness. Divorce, often-times based upon the most trivial excuses, is alarmingly on the increase. . . . Worldly amusements, with their suggestive portrayal of sin and crime; pernicious literature, with its insinuating appeal to infidelity and impurity,—these unholy influences are honeycombing society, destroying the home, and weakening the state. The church of Christ, surrounded by these evil influences, must stand in the purity and integrity of her high and holy calling, loyal to the truth and to the principles of simplicity, modesty, and dignity which characterize the followers of the pure and holy Saviour.

“In view of these conditions, and the dangers which confront the church, we sound the following solemn warnings to our brethren and sisters throughout the world:

“Recognizing that the true objective of this movement is to prepare a people for translation into the presence of a pure and holy God, and that this calls for a ministry whose leadership is deeply spiritual and pure, and above every taint of the moral corruption prevailing in this evil age; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That this General Conference Council, speaking for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, hereby



declares in unqualified terms against everything that in thought, word, or act tends toward that which is immoral, and also places itself on record as requiring of all conference and institutional workers careful attention to those principles that make for clean thinking and living, in order that our church and institutions may be under the leadership of men whose lives are above reproach.

*"We also recommend,* 1. That as a means of maintaining the integrity of the ministry, where a conference committee is obliged to deal with a worker on account of improper conduct, a written statement of this be made to the officers of the union involved, and also to the General Conference officers.

"2. That our churches use great care in maintaining the highest standard of moral conduct in the lives of their members, giving attention to the proper instruction of our young people in an endeavor to shield them from the evil influences of this age.

"3. That diligence in church discipline be used in maintaining the highest moral standards in the church."

—*Autumn Council Actions, 1925, pp. 11, 12.*

## Section XI—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 New Testaments 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.

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; that 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, and should follow repentance and forgiveness of sins. By its observance faith is shown in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That the proper form of baptism is by immersion. 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; that 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 which 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. That one is 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

His blood 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 the believer into the new-covenant relationship, where the law of God is written on his heart, and through the enabling power of the indwelling Christ, his life is 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. Mortal man possesses a nature inherently sinful and dying. Immortality and eternal life come only through the gospel, and are bestowed as the free gift of God at the second advent of Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Tim. 6: 15, 16; 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

sinner. 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 Daniel 8: 14, terminated in 1844, and brought us to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary.

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; and that 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 judgment 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.

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.

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 secondly, 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 the believer should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore he should clothe that body in neat, modest, dignified apparel. Further, that in eating and drinking and in his entire course of conduct he should shape his life as becometh a follower of the meek and lowly Master. Thus the believer 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.

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, the work of the ministry, the

edifying of the body of Christ. Rev. 12: 17; 19: 10; 1 Cor. 1: 5-7.

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, 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 which 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. Revelation 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 will 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 honor and glory and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever 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.—*Seventh-day Adventist Year Book, 1931.*



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