

Church Manual



International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

CHURCH MANUAL

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Seventh-day Adventist Church
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PREFACE

The Church Manual of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, has existed since 1925, when the first version was included in the "Principles of Faith" booklet as Bylaws. This revised, expanded edition is the result of many years of intense research into the Bible and Spirit of prophecy, combined with the experience of church leaders worldwide. The Ministerial Research Institute, Division Committees, Executive Committees, and the General Conference Plenary Committee worked in harmony to revise, refine, and complete this Church Manual to provide guidelines for the organization of God's church.

We are not to honor human traditions. "But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:9, 13. There is a difference, however, between human traditions and divine order. God's word inspires church practices which are based on godly principles and result in heaven-sent blessings.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6.

It is our hope and prayer that the Church Manual will serve as a tool to guide and unify the practices, services, and order within God's church.

This Church Manual is subject to further development and/or revision as determined by the delegates in session of the World Assembly of the General Conference of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement.

*—Executive and General Conference Plenary Committees
Ministerial Research Institute
Field, Union, and Division Committees*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank those who have made this *Church Manual* a reality. This includes the past and present leaders of the General Conference Ministerial Department of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement.

We also thank the executive and plenary committees of the General Conference as well as the different fields, unions, and divisions for reviewing the contents and submitting their suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Jesus came to this sin-darkened world to reveal the character of God; to be man's Substitute, Sacrifice, Guarantor, Saviour, Model, and Example; and to triumph over evil and grant His disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. The written testimony of His life, from His baptism to His death, shows that He did good everywhere, attending to humanity's physical and spiritual needs. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." Acts 10:38.

Jesus' life was an example for all of His disciples until the end of time. He lived what He taught. The twelve disciples whom He ordained to lead realized, as we also must realize, that divine power is given only to those who are called, chosen, faithful, and closely connected to God.

"And He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Mark 3:13–15.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14.

In God's infinite wisdom and mercy, His people have inherited the pearl of great price in the great commission. Their work is to do as Jesus did and to surrender their will to the divine will so that the glorious light of the gospel may be visible in the world. Matthew 24:14; 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16; Revelation 14:6–14. Jesus' incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, heavenly service, second coming, and gift of grace, by which His people are saved through faith, are parts of the gospel which are to be preached in word and work.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Timothy 3:16.

The purpose of this publication is to present the organization's generally accepted ways of working so that the churches and their

leaders may be familiar with them and be helped to follow the example of Jesus. He showed that there is no substitute for prayer, Bible study, the testimony of Jesus, and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God's sacred word, the Testimonies of the Spirit of prophecy, and the resolutions of the delegates in session at the World Assemblies of this denomination are the foundation for this Church Manual. The apostle Paul declared: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

"... And went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." "... Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 12:17; 19:10.

"But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." "... Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Corinthians 11:16; 14:33, 40.

"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. When, at a critical time, one sounds the alarm of danger, there is need of prompt and active work, without stopping to question and canvass the whole subject from end to end, thus letting the enemy gain every advantage by delay, when united action might save many souls from perdition." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 445.

We implore the Lord who was, who is, and who will be the Head of His church to bless this work.

"And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18.

—*The brothers and sisters of the General Conference*

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CHAPTER I

ORDER AND ORGANIZATION: GOD'S PLAN

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

"Order is heaven's first law." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 200.

"God is a God of order. Everything connected with heaven is in perfect order; subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. Success can only attend order and harmonious action. God requires order and system in His work now no less than in the days of Israel. All who are working for Him are to labor intelligently, not in a careless, haphazard manner. He would have His work done with faith and exactness, that He may place the seal of His approval upon it." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 376.

"System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 26.

God's plan is for His people to accomplish the most noble endeavor (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)¹¹ by performing more work in a relatively shorter period of time, ensuring peace, united action, organization, and strict order.

The foundations of the organizational structure among God's people were provided in the holy Scriptures: "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: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace." Exodus 18:21-23; Deuteronomy 1:15; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27-28.

1.1. Purpose and objective of organization

"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 fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13.

"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." —*Counsels for the Church*, p. 242.

"In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 19.

"The Lord would have His people a bright, cheerful, glad-some people, light-bearers to the world. Light, precious light, represents the cheerfulness and happiness which should be reflected to the world." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 27.

"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.... God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

"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....

"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 and Gospel Workers*, pp. 26, 228.

1.2. Can organization be dispensed with?

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." Revelation 1:20.

"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 sacri-

fice 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." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 27.

"Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 258.

"We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to the Bible plan.... As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 27.

Elder James White wrote words of great wisdom in this regard. "What I understand is necessary to remedy all the defects on this matter is to organize ourselves in such a way that we can have the properties of the church legally. They can be legally registered under the name of the church. If it is wrong for us to protect the property of the church, why is it wrong for individuals to have their property legally? And if it's not bad to have farms and land in a legal way, it's also not bad to have church property legally in the same way. I think that the same principle applies to both." —*Review and Herald*, February 23, 1860.²

1.3. Beware of independence and disorder

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Romans 16:17.

Just as the apostles taught the doctrine, how the services were to be conducted, law, and prophets, and enjoined discipline, in following their example today, we hold that those who ignore, neglect, alter, or act contrary to the Bible and its teaching must be warned and admonished to submit to and respect the regulations, statutes, and ceremonies contained in this Church Manual or risk receiving church discipline, according to Matthew 18:15-18 (in cases of private problems) and 1 Timothy 5:20 (in public instances) in the spirit of Christ.

"But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." 1 Corinthians 11:16.

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." 3 John 9-10.

"In the conversion of Paul are given us important principles which we should ever bear in mind. The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church.

"Many have the idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His acknowledged followers in the world. But this is condemned by Jesus in His teachings and in the examples, the facts, which He has given for our instruction.... When he asks, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?' the Saviour does not tell him directly, but places him in connection with His church. They will tell thee what thou must do. Jesus is the sinner's Friend, His heart is ever open, ever touched with human woe; He has all power, both in heaven and upon earth; but He respects the means

which He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men. He directs Saul to the church, thus acknowledging the power that He has invested in it as a channel of light to the world. It is Christ's organized body upon the earth, and respect is required to be paid to His ordinances." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 394-395.

1.4. Legal issues

1.4.1. Issues between church members

In daily life, church members may face legal issues related to the enforcement of the law of the land; in these cases, we recommend that they follow the Biblical counsel: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." Matthew 5:25.

What if there are debates or disagreements among church members in which reconciliation and restoration would solve the problems? In that case, the church committee or the members gathered together as an assembly may recommend and adjudicate the cases. In some cases, legal advice from an attorney should be sought. The church may act by considering the light and principles established in the God's word, in accordance with the following Biblical counsel:

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." 1 Corinthians 6:1–6.

1.4.2. Issues between church members and the government

Suppose the law of God, as reflected in the law of the land, has been transgressed, and a person has been arrested and subjected to the judicial process. In such a case, his or her church office must be immediately suspended temporarily. Furthermore, the matter shall be subject to the field committee or the union to which the person belongs. For further information, see points 2.10 to 2.18. John 7:51; Daniel 5:27-28; 1 Samuel 15:26.

1.4.3. Church members and the courts

If church members are called as witnesses in court cases and religious proceedings, they should act honestly and truthfully. One must cooperate according to his knowledge to establish justice and submit to Biblical guidance. "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matthew 5:37.

1.4.4. Church and/or members with non-members

The officially registered church or members have every right to defend the church's properties, honor, and reputation by defending themselves through civil and judicial authorities, if necessary, after using all means and attempts to solve it.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1. However, according to the apostle Peter, we must maintain the position that God's law is superior in morality and ethics. "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29.

1.5. Structure of the organization

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and

I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." Numbers 11:16-17.

In accordance with the advice given to Moses by Jethro (Exodus 18:21-22) to have leaders of ten, of fifty, of hundreds, and of thousands (Deuteronomy 1:15), and then Moses with the seventy elders, there are five levels of church organization:

- Church
- District (if applicable)
- Field or mission field
- Union
- Division
- General Conference

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- 1 All Bible verses are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.
 - 2 *World Assembly Resolution* No. 95 of 5/7/2012 states: "It was approved to modify the Church Manual in the point of 'Church Discipline and Dis-fellowshipment,' since there is no clear statement that allows for different interpretations."

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH OF GOD

The word “church,” in its spiritual meaning, refers to the group of believers in Christ who profess and live the same faith and are united in one body. The Greek word *Ekklesia*¹ means “that which is called out,” “assembly,” or “congregation of citizens.” The apostle Paul used this in Ephesians 2:19-20: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.” The church on earth is part of the church in heaven. The servant of the Lord spoke of our individual responsibility as members of the visible church.² It includes all believers worldwide and is called the world church. In addition, a faithful “church” is defined as a congregation with pure principles. Biblical examples of the use of the term “church” include the following:

- **Matthew 16:18** “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”³
- **Matthew 18:17** “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”
- **Acts 2:47** “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”
- **2 Corinthians 11:2** “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

In the worldwide structure of the organization, the local church is the smallest cell. It is formed when the number of believers in an area is large enough to provide the individuals needed to fill the basic offices. Faithful elders are pillars of established churches.

Jesus declared: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20.

"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." — *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 444.

2.1. God's purpose for His church

In the light of Calvary, affiliation with the church of God is the highest privilege granted to man.

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Hebrews 11:25.

The Lord's purpose for His church is described in the following testimony: "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. Ephesians 3:10....

"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....

"Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard....

"The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 9, 11-12.

2.2. Church affiliation

As the church of God, we respect other denominations and support religious freedom, although we refrain from participating in ecumenical movements or affiliations.

A person may become a member of the visible church of God, the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, when he/she is willing to:

- Accept that he/she is a sinner.
- Confess all known sins to God and repent of them by renouncing the sinful life through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Believe in Christ as Saviour, Guarantor, Substitute, Lord, King, Model, and Example, and follow Him.
- Obey the Ten Commandments and live according to the present truth, which is summarized in the Principles of Faith of this denomination.
- Give a reason for his/her faith before the church. Be willing to testify of God's love.
- Make a covenant with the Lord through baptism by immersion.

Only when one has the deep conviction that it is a great privilege to be a member of the body of Christ and is converted will he/she be a faithful, grateful member.

"... They that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14.

2.3. Baptismal candidates

One who wishes to become a member of this denomination needs to be baptized after receiving the knowledge of present truth and giving testimony in his/her own life that he/she is living according to the principles of faith.

The apostles taught that acceptance into God's church is preceded by baptism. Jesus gave His disciples the following commission: "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." Matthew 28:19-20.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

"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.

In this regard, the Spirit of prophecy states: "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.' Jeremiah 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 Corinthians 6:17-18." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 389.

2.4. 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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 389; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 84; *Evangelism*, p. 308.

Baptism should be preceded not only by thorough instruction but also by an examination. Jesus commissioned: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:19.

The church needs to be informed in advance of the examination of baptismal candidates so that it can pray for them. Baptismal classes are taught by a baptized member, an ordained elder, or a minister, according to the instructions in the Ministerial Manual. Furthermore, if necessary, additional instruction should be provided to the candidates regarding local customs, practices, traditions, or other necessary requirements. (*Ministerial Manual*, pp. 136-138).

Depending on the circumstances, Bible studies may be given in person, by phone, and/or virtually.

An ordained elder or minister should examine the candidates for baptism as presented in the Ministerial Manual. The examination is first done before the church committee or two witnesses in a small circle before presenting the candidate to the church members. The questions can be simplified depending on literacy or other difficulties.

An ordained elder or minister presents the candidate to the church and conducts the service. The baptismal questions that appear in the Ministerial Manual are presented to the can-

didates before the church members during a public service. The candidate will answer yes or no to each point. The church members will then be asked to vote whether or not they accept each person as a candidate for baptism.

"This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." 2 Corinthians 13:1.

When the church has voted to accept the candidates, they may be baptized; if the baptism is to take place in a church other than where it was approved, the candidate must present a letter of approval.

If the request for baptism comes from someone who is not connected with a church, the conference committee will accept the request by a vote of the baptismal examination from the minister or ordained elder, preferably in the presence of two or three witnesses.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3:15, 21.

In this regard, the Spirit of prophecy states: "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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 393; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 127.

“When they [the candidates] 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 and Gospel Workers*, p. 128.⁶

2.5. Baptismal vows

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Revelation 12:11.

Before the baptism, the minister or ordained elder will ask the candidates questions that manifest the reason for their faith in front of the congregation.⁷

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16.

It is recommended that ordained elders and ministers see the list of questions in the Ministerial Manual, chapter VI.⁸

Listed below are some of the questions that may be presented to the candidate publicly:

- Do you believe in the existence of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit?
- Do you believe that the Bible is God's word that was given to man by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is the only rule of faith and practice?
- Do you believe that forgiveness is obtained only through the merits of Jesus Christ?
- Do you believe wholeheartedly that God forgives your sins through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and that He is your Mediator before the Father?
- Do you believe that the Ten Commandments, including the fourth, which commands that the seventh-day Sabbath be kept holy, are to be obeyed? Are you willing to do this with God's help?

- Do you believe that, according to God's will, marriage may take place only with a member of the God's church and that it is a covenant for life?
- Do you believe in the imminent, personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the redeemed with Him to heaven?
- Do you believe that the great commission that Jesus gave to His disciples applies to His church in spreading the gospel to the whole world, and are you willing to co-operate in preaching the three angels' messages?
- Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and is it your desire to abstain from all harmful practices and immodest dress?
- Do you believe that the tithe belongs to God and that it and offerings should be given to the church to carry out its mission, and do you desire to be faithful in this important responsibility?
- Do you believe that the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist, Reform Movement, is God's remnant church, and is it your desire to be a faithful member of it?
- Do you believe in baptism by immersion, and are you willing to receive this sacred rite to testify of your covenant with Jesus?

The whole congregation should say: "Amen!"

2.6. Form of baptism

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." Colossians 2:12.

Baptism by immersion is a sacred ordinance that must be carefully prepared and solemnly performed.

"The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 91.

As a church, we believe that heaven participates in this sacred rite. The minister or ordained elder who performs the

baptism should wear a dark robe, and the candidates for baptism should wear special robes made especially for this holy ordinance. The robe should be made of a fabric that does not become transparent or cling to the body when it gets wet. It should reach to the feet and have a weight placed in the hem to prevent it from floating when one enters the water. Great care should be taken in each local church to obtain a sufficient number of baptismal robes in different sizes.

Jesus, the Son of God, was baptized by John the Baptist, giving the example to be followed by every soul.

"But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him." Matthew 3:14-15.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:3-4.

In harmony with the holy Scriptures, we believe in baptism by immersion only and conduct it in this form.

"Whenever possible, let baptism be administered in a clear lake or running stream. And give to the occasion all the importance and solemnity that can be brought into it." —*Evangelism*, p. 313.

If no clean outdoor running water is available, other means of immersing the candidate completely may be used, such as a baptistry. "The baptistry is nicely arranged. Back of the pulpit the wall swings back on hinges and the baptistry is thus brought into full view of the audience. I cannot express my thankfulness that the Lord preserved this large meetinghouse through the earthquake and the fire. We appreciate it now very much." —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 322.

The deacons and deaconesses should cooperate in the carrying out of baptisms. Choir songs or special music may also enhance the holy ceremony.

2.7. Baptismal model

It is recommended that the form that appears in the *Ministerial Manual*, p. 147, be followed for the baptismal ceremony: "Dear brother (dear sister) ____, in accordance with the command of Jesus Christ and your confession of faith, I, as a minister of the gospel, ordained by the church of God, baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

2.8. Acceptance into the church

After the baptism, acceptance into the church takes place.

Every candidate who has received Christ as his/her personal Saviour and has died to the world is accepted as a son/daughter by the heavenly Father. Like baptism, acceptance into the body of Christ is a solemn act. Upon becoming a follower of Jesus, the person's name is recorded "in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27.

"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." Matthew 18:18.

"... Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20.

2.9. Acceptance form

After an introduction by the church leader, the minister or elder asks the congregation to rise and extends his right hand to the newly baptized soul and says: "Dear brother (dear sister) _____, I extend to you the right hand of fellowship in the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, and extend to you a hearty welcome into God's remnant people."¹

The minister who completes the acceptance may add whatever he considers fitting. Afterward, each new member is given a Bible text to serve as an inspiration for his/her life's journey. The text should be carefully chosen to fit the person's situation and future life.

The last step is to present the baptismal certificate to the new brother/sister. See X. FORMS for a sample baptismal certificate.

2.10. Purity of the church

According to the Bible and Testimonies, one of the first duties of God's church is to guard its purity and sacred reputation; this can be done only when the world and all its influences are kept out. God's servants must keep their eyes open and, when necessary, intervene by applying church order and discipline.

"And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity." Leviticus 5:1.

"... Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Leviticus 19:17.

Following are selected testimonies from the Spirit of prophecy concerning the importance of maintaining the church's purity.

"Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin and may prosper in purity, and that the name of God may be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 270.

"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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 203.

"Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 578.

2.11. Member 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 someone to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 200.

Following Jesus' advice in Matthew 18, two fundamental Biblical principles apply. The first is the principle of evidence. Never should a member of God's church be judged or accused without a proper investigation, because the enemy uses lies as his primary weapon to destroy the church and its members. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10.

Therefore, if there is no personal confession by the accused acknowledging his mistake, the accuser filing the complaint must have two or three witnesses to confirm the case. If the accuser and the witnesses are not members of God's church, must present their testimony in writing and/or evidence certified by a notary if possible. In the holy Scriptures there are clear guidelines concerning this. "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that

he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you." Deuteronomy 19:15-20.

"No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this 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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 202.

The second is the principle of spiritual restoration and repentance, if applicable. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20.

The Bible and the Spirit of prophecy are clear about the spirit that should prevail in dealing with one who has erred. "We should always strive for reconciliation. We should constantly be concerned that no feelings of bitterness arise. Let us speak to the brother concerned or offended with love, humility, and sincerity.

"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....

"'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.' Matthew 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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 202.

When the sins of church members become evident, this damages the sacred reputation of God's church and places it in the wrong light; therefore, it must act as a body according to Biblical principles.

Certain transgressions, which are scandalous because they are so heavy, relate to Matthew 18. "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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 200. In cases such as murder and transgression of the seventh commandment, incest, and sexual abuse of minors, after making an investigation, if proven guilty, transgressors are to be brought to the church for disfellowshipment and are to be handled as presented in 1 Timothy 5:20 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-5.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world explained to His disciples how to deal with wandering or weak sinners.

For more information, see the following statements:

- 1 Timothy 5:20; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 15.
- James 5:19-20. "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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 201.

- "My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of personal trespass, and could not be applied in the case of this sister. She had not trespassed against Sister White. But that which had been reproved publicly was public wrongs which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause. Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case: 1 Timothy 5:20: 'Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.'" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 15.
- James 5:19-20.
- "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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 200.
- "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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 200.

Church discipline can be implemented for three, six, or twelve months. This gives the sinner time to take a close look at his actions and to return to his first love. Revelation 2:4-5. It is a period of reflection, retraining, remorse, and a new search for the Lord.

TABLE 1
EXAMPLES THAT REQUIRE CHURCH DISCIPLINE
AND FOLLOWING MATTHEW 18:15-20²

The following is not a complete list but applies to similar transgressions, even if they are not mentioned.

Sins requiring discipline		Bible and Spirit of prophecy basis
1	Teaching or practicing things that are contrary to fundamental Bible truths and principles of faith.	Jeremiah 5:6; 8:5; Isaiah 8:20; Romans 16:17; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Peter 1:20. 2SM 394; CG 439.
2	Believing or practicing anything related to spiritualism, such as use of horoscopes, witchcraft, lighting candles to saints, idols or images, etc.	Deuteronomy 18:10; Galatians 5:20; Revelation 21:8; Exodus 20:3-5; 23:13, 24; Jeremiah 44:18, 25; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. PP 300, 618-623; AA 287; 2TT 34; MYP 274; PP 618; GC 53, 62.
3	Ownership, production, business, or consumption of addictive products, such as alcohol, tobacco, coffee, coca, hot chili peppers, or other similar products and narcotics. ³	Proverbs 23:20, 29-35; Romans 13:13; Isaiah 5:11-22; Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 10:23, 31, 33; Matthew 15:13. GW 229; 3SM 287, 273; CT 343; CD 243, 427; CE 16; 1MCP 143; 2SM 446; CCh 105, 158.
4	Consumption of flesh meat or products containing flesh.	Proverbs 23:20; Romans 14:21; James 4:17; Isaiah 22:13-14; 1 Corinthians 8:12-13. CD 403, 387, 380-382, 430; CH 70.

Sins requiring discipline		Bible and Spirit of prophecy basis
5	Unchristian conduct and dissolute life. Examples: Dancing, going to a disco, cinema, theater, or opera; physical or verbal abuse with foul language and the like.	Exodus 32:18-19, 7; Mark 6:22, 24; Romans 13:12-14; 2 Samuel 16:5; Matthew 26:74; Ephesians 4:29; 5:11; 1 Peter 2:23; Revelation 14:5. 1MCP 313; PP 697; DA 221; MB 70; 3SM 239; COL 335; 2T 300-301, 314-315.
6	Participating in games of chance and sorcery (lottery, ⁴ gambling, fortune telling, and others).	Deuteronomy 18:10; 1 Timothy 6:10-11. 3TT 327.
7	Not giving tithes and first fruits to the Lord as represented by the church.	Malachi 3:8-9; Proverbs 3:9; Nehemiah 10:38.
8	Change of appearance or following extravagant, unchristian fashion, ⁵ such as a new tattoo; ⁶ piercing; use of jewelry, makeup; plucking the eyebrows; wearing a slit skirt, pants without a skirt, tight clothing, that which is worn by the opposite sex, transparent fabrics, or other sensual, immoral forms of dress. ^{7/8}	Zephaniah 1:8; Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 22:5; 2 Kings 9:30; Ezekiel 23:40; Proverbs 12:23; 1 Peter 3:3; 1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Corinthians 11:14-15; 2SM 488-489; 1TT 592-600; AH 459.
9	Hearing, watching, practicing, producing, obtaining, or distributing any immoral, unchristian audiovisual item, such as ungodly music, uploading indecent photos or videos on the Internet, pornography, secret vice, video game addiction, etc.	Exodus 32:17-18; Ecclesiastes 1:8; Philippians 4:8; Ezekiel 8:10; Matthew 5:28; Romans 13:12-13; Galatians 5:19-20; Jeremiah 9:21. MYP 295; CG 439; MB 60.

Sins requiring discipline		Bible and Spirit of prophecy basis
10	Falsely suing the church or members, whether an officer or a layman, without exhausting Biblical principles through established church channels to achieve reconciliation.	Matthew 27:12; Mark 15:3; Luke 23:1-2, 4, 10; 1 Corinthians 6:2-8; James 4:11-12; Romans 13:2-5. 4T 193-194; LHU 110.
11	Courtship of and/or engagement to a person who is not a member of this denomination.	Deuteronomy 7:3-5; Nehemiah 13:26; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15; 2 Corinthians 11:2. AH 61-68.
12	Bearing false witness; harming the reputation or integrity of another person or the church; or persistent use of foul language.	Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 20:19; Jeremiah 9:3; Exodus 20:15. 2T 180; 5T 94.
13	Repeatedly acting against the order and discipline of the church.	Song of Solomon 6:10; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 11:16; 14:33, 40; Ephesians 5:27. 2SM 42; 3T 444.

“But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” Hebrews 12:8-9.

Such souls should not only be prayed for, that they may obtain victory, but also personal prayer should be offered to them, pleading with God to be with them. It is essential to treat them kindly and to follow the example of Jesus, who treated wandering souls with great mercy, love, and understanding.

No minister or church can ever forbid or deny forgiveness to any such member, for forgiveness is possible through the blood of Jesus Christ alone. All souls under Christ's care, even if they are on church discipline or have been disfellowshipped, should be treated kindly, with consideration and respect.

It is the responsibility of the church leadership and of the church itself to do everything possible during a trial period to win the soul back to Christ and His eternal kingdom. James gave the following counsel: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that 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 5:19-20.

If a member who is under discipline earnestly repents of his sin, makes good progress, and is converted, then, after the disciplinary time has passed, his full rights and privileges as a member should be restored by vote of the church.

However, if he refuses to listen to the church and rejects all efforts made to help him, the church has the responsibility to separate him from its communion (disfellowshipment).

2.11.1. Procedure for church discipline

For most private sins, Matthew 18:15-20 must be followed; and for public sins, 1 Timothy 5:20 should be carried out appropriately.

In case of personal offenses, a solution should be sought between the two parties concerned, for the goal is complete forgiveness with peace being restored between fellow believers and with God, as shown in Matthew 18:15.

- **Investigation.** Before bringing any difficulty to the attention of the church, the one who is accused and the primary witnesses should be very carefully examined. Deuteronomy 19:15-20.
- **Defense of a defendant.** "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" John 7:51. Eventually he/she will have the opportunity to face his/her accusers. "It is ... the manner ... before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him." Acts 25:16. The church committee should be the first to hear the accused. A person being considered for discipline or disfellowshipment should be notified and invited to attend a meeting at which his case will be discussed. Proverbs 18:13.

- **Church committee.** If the one concerned does not accept the warning and repent (Matthew 18:16), he is to be summoned to meet with the church committee as well as the accuser and the witnesses, with the minister or ordained elder presiding over the meeting. The defendant should be informed of this meeting well in advance.^{9/10}
- **Meeting of local church members.** "And if he shall neglect to hear them [the committee or the witnesses], tell it unto the church." Matthew 18:17. But if he refuses to hear the church, let him be unto them as a heathen man and a publican. When the church meets with the minister or ordained elder, they will discuss the situation with the accused and the witnesses. A quorum must be present for this meeting.
- **Disciplinary period.** Depending on the vote of the church, a disciplinary period is given to the one who is accused, depending on the case and the need—perhaps three or six months, but no more than twelve months.
- **Privileges suspended.** Church discipline consists of suspension of the following privileges for a period of time:
 - He/she may not hold or exercise any office in the church or conduct meetings.
 - He/she may not preach or be a teacher in the Sabbath school, youth group, or any official church event.
 - He/she may not be elected as a delegate.
 - He/she may not take part or vote in church business meetings.¹¹
 - He/she must abstain from partaking of the Lord's supper. 1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 John 9.
 - He/she may not be married in the church during the period of church discipline.¹²

2.11.2. Rights of a member who is under discipline

See the list below for the restrictions and rights of one who is on church discipline; this is to encourage baptized members who are on discipline to seek the Lord and to remind them that they still have certain privileges:

- He has the right to attend meetings for worship.
- He may participate in and contribute with comments in the Sabbath school.
- He may join prayer services.
- He may give his testimony during prayer and youth services.
- He may sing in the congregation.
- He may continue to contribute his tithes and offerings.
- He may continue to participate in the church's missionary activities.

2.11.3. Requirements for restoration of membership

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 33:11.

One's readiness to be restored to membership will be evidenced by:

- Recognition of his transgression. Luke 15:17.
- Restoration of faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Luke 22:32.
- Joy in church fellowship. Hebrews 10:25.
- Delight in keeping and living the principles of faith. Ephesians 4:13.
- True repentance and turning away from evil. 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13.
- Joy in victory over sin. Psalm 32:1-2.
- Desire and commitment to Biblical restoration. Ezekiel 33:15.
- Upon completion of the disciplinary period, the church elder or minister should contact the church members and the brother being disciplined and decide whether he should be restored or disfellowshipped. If he has met the above points, he should be restored.

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that 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 5:19-20.

If the time of discipline has been served and the church votes for an extension so that complete restoration can take place, an extension of up to twelve months may proceed.

If no improvement is observed, then the member should be disfellowshipped. Every minister and church member should know that disfellowshipment should never be voted in haste, but every effort should be made to save the person.

If every effort has been made, according to the instructions of Matthew 18, to bring the unfaithful soul to conversion and change, but there has been no positive effect, disfellowshipment should be proposed. Only the church can disfellowship a member in a meeting led by an ordained minister or elder. (*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 186-192, 22-26).

Elderly members or those who, because of illness, are unable to attend church activities, even for an extended period, should not be disfellowshipped for such a reason.

2.12. Disfellowshipment of a member

Not all sins may be handled with church discipline. Some open sins that have harmed the church's reputation may require immediate disfellowshipment if a person has been found guilty of such through confession and/or investigation. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 15).

For example, if a person commits the sin of murder or sexual immorality (see Table 2) (1 Corinthians 5:13; *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, p. 279) in private and it has become public, the person must be disfellowshipped. However, the church may initiate this process only in the presence of a minister or ordained elder.

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." Deuteronomy 14:2.

"Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." Proverbs 17:5.

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be

dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Romans 7:2-3.

"That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." 1 Peter 2:9, 11-12.

If church discipline has been applied and there is no repentance on the part of the member through the process of restoration, the church, in the presence of a minister, may proceed to disfellowshipment in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17.

TABLE 2
EXAMPLES OF REQUIRED DISFELLOWSHIPMENT
FROM THE CHURCH

The following list of examples is not restricted to these but also applies to other similar transgressions.

Sins requiring disfellowshipment		Bible basis
1	Becoming a member of another faith or religious organization that is not connected to the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, General Conference.	Joshua 24:15; Ephesians 4:14; Deuteronomy 30:19; Matthew 6:24.

Sins requiring disfellowshipment		Bible basis
2	Sexual immorality: Fornication, adultery, remarriage, ¹¹ prostitution, perversities or paraphilia, such as pedophilia, incest, homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender activity, or other.	Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8; Romans 7:2-3; Leviticus 18:7-17, 20, 22,-30; Deuteronomy 27:20-23.
3	Violation of the sixth commandment, such as homicide, induced abortion, ¹² participation in or support of war, etc.	1 Samuel 30:24; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; Exodus 21:22-23.
4	Deliberate transgression of God's commandments, not included above, depending on the nature of the offense but in which the church or its members' reputation is harmed, judged by the church itself and a court, public media, or other legal institution. The guilty party may be disfellowshipped only after the church has applied the steps of Matthew 18:15-17.	1 Peter 4:15; Titus 3:2.
5	"The eighth commandment condemns man-stealing and slave-trading, ¹³ and forbids wars of conquest." — <i>Patriarchs and Prophets</i> , p. 281.	Exodus 20:13, 1 Timothy 1:9-10.
6	Being a witch, medium, or sorcerer, or communicating with such or other satanic agents.	Galatians 5:20; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Revelation 21:8.

If he will not hear them, then, and not till then, the matter is to be brought before the whole body of believers. Let the members of the church, as the representatives of Christ, unite in prayer and loving entreaty that the offender may be restored.

The Holy Spirit will speak through His servants, pleading with the wanderer to return to God. Paul the apostle, speaking by inspiration, says, "As though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20. He who rejects this united overture has broken the tie that binds him to Christ, and thus has severed himself from the fellowship of the church. Henceforth, said Jesus, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." But he is not to be regarded as cut off from the mercy of God. Let him not be despised or neglected by his former brethren, but be treated with tenderness and compassion, as one of the lost sheep that Christ is still seeking to bring to His fold." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 441.

The process of Matthew 18:15-17 is described in section 2.12. Disfellowshipment of a member:

- Research.
- Defense of the defendant.
- Church committee.

It should be applied when considering the disfellowshipment of a member.

During the disciplinary period, the erring soul should demonstrate to the church that he has forsaken sin and is willing, by God's Spirit and strength, to lead a new life according to the law and the testimony. The concerned member has the right to attend all services and to have the loving fellowship of the brethren but not to receive the privileges of a member in good standing, such as preaching, and participation in the Lord's supper and church business meetings.

2.13. Member resignation

In cases where members express their desire not to belong to the church, their written resignation should not be immediately accepted. Rather, such a member should be given time to solve his/her problems. At the same time, every effort should be made to help resolve the difficulties. If all efforts at restoration fail, then the church, in a meeting presided over by a minister or ordained elder, should proceed with the acceptance of the resignation.

2.14. Acceptance into the church without rebaptism

Most cases of disfellowshipment require rebaptism for a person to return and become a church member.

In some instances, an exception may be made, as follows:

- When the procedure or causes for disfellowshipment were incorrect and the higher level of the organization corrects the error, a member may be accepted again into membership by the raising of hands.⁷
- When members resign their membership because of personal conflicts, but there are no doctrinal or moral transgressions involved, if they do not join any other denomination and live according to the principles of faith of the church, they may be accepted by the raising of hands.

For cases of rebaptism, see section 2.15.

2.15. Basics of rebaptism¹⁴

Individuals who have been disfellowshipped from the church, or previous members of other denominations, having given evidence of positive change and genuine conversion and having expressed a desire to return to the church, may be rebaptized after the church has voted in favor of this.

Just as baptism is Biblical, so is rebaptism, for the Scriptures speak of the “doctrine of baptisms”—in the plural, Hebrews 6:2. In addition, see the text below of the example of the believers in Ephesus who did not know about the Holy Spirit and who were rebaptized after learning about the third Person of the Godhead.

“He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Acts 19:2-5.

Rebaptism may be requested if a previous baptism was performed with fullness knowledge, or a new experience in the truth has been received.

People from other denominations, including nominal Adventists and those from the 1951 Movement, need to be rebaptized if they have completed studies, have been voted to be a baptismal candidate in the church, and wish to be members of the IMS. "All nominal Adventists who wish to become members of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, must declare it by voluntary baptism and acceptance into the fellowship of believers as a confirmation."

In addition, adequate time for heartfelt repentance and change needs to be given, so at least six months to a year should pass between disfellowshipment and rebaptism.

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

2.16. Disciplinary process for ordained individual

If a brother who was ordained commits a transgression requiring church discipline or disfellowshipment, the process to be followed is contained in the resolutions of the World Assembly. Eyewitnesses to the sin should contact the field committee in which the accused brother is a member. If the case concerns a minister who receives compensation and credentials from a union, his case should be referred to that union. The management level (field, union, or division) must participate in the appropriate investigation and decision-making process. After the higher level has withdrawn the elder or minister's credential, the local church will be able to consider the brother's membership status, if necessary. 1 Timothy 5:19.

For more information, please review the Ministerial Manual.

2.17. Transfer of member and church letter

Every member is responsible for requesting his/her letter of transfer within thirty days of moving to a new area.

The church secretary from his/her previous church is responsible for sending the letter of transfer to the member's new church. In addition, the church secretary is responsible for communicating with any absent members to keep them up to date and remind them of their responsibilities to the church.

The transfer letter form is divided into two parts. The secretary of the church of origin fills out the first part of the form containing notes concerning the member's experience and positions he/she held in the church. It must be signed by the church leader and the secretary of the church of origin and sent to the destination church. The secretary of the receiving church informs the church leader of the letter's arrival. The leader informs the committee, and the new member is formally accepted at the next public meeting.

Only after being accepted is he/she added to the church membership list and made eligible to have a position in the new church according to his/her abilities.

After the transferring member is accepted in the destination church, the secretary completes the second part of the transfer letter²³ and sends it to the secretary of the originating church as soon as possible. Only after it is received by the leader of the originating church is the person's name removed from the membership list. Every individual's membership should be in the church nearest to his/her home and where he/she regularly attends and gives his/her tithes and offerings.

The secretary of the church of origin sends the letter of transfer.

If the member does not request the letter of transfer within thirty days, the secretary of the original church may proceed to send the letter of transfer to the destination church by following the above procedures.

If the destination church does not receive the church letter from the originating church after three months and if there is adequate evidence of fidelity to Biblical principles, the secretary of the destination church, after confirming the membership status by telephone or other means, may initiate an automatic transfer of membership to the destination church.

The secretary can then forward the second part of the transfer letter of transfer to the church of origin.

The church secretary should consider this transfer in his/her quarterly report. In addition, it should be kept in mind that members who are under church discipline or in a disciplinary process may not have their membership transferred until the situation is resolved.

See X. FORMS for sample Church Letter and Church Letter Reply.

2.18. Assistance to Members in Irregular Situations

A member who does not regularly attend religious services, does not participate in activities, and does not contribute funds or donations should be visited by a church leader in order to receive assistance.

If illness or other circumstances hinder the believer's involvement, church leaders should seek to provide the necessary help. The church clerk should contact the believer, keep him or her informed about church activities, and remind him or her of responsibilities. It is important for the minister to visit, share, and assist that person regularly.

In cases of discouragement or doctrinal difficulties, after providing ministerial help and observing no change, inactive members should be asked whether they wish to remain inactive. If no change occurs after these efforts, Matthew 18:15-17 should be applied. Proceed in accordance with section 2.11. Members Discipline, and section 2.12. Disfellowshipping of a Member.

1 *Strong's Concordance* Number 1577; *Young's Analytical Concordance Definition*, p. 166.

2 "We profess to be the depositaries of God's law; we claim to have greater light and to aim at a higher standard than any other people upon the earth; therefore we should show greater perfection of character and more earnest devotion. A most solemn message has been entrusted to those who have received the light of present truth. Our light should shine forth to brighten the pathway of those who are in darkness. As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church" – *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 263.

- 3 This quotation, in the 1926 Spanish edition, mentions mate, referring to
"yerba mate": "... But by refusing ... tea and coffee (and mate), they will
demonstrate faithfully and practically that they follow the health reform."
- 4 This does not refer to visa lotteries to immigrate to a country.
- 5 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 17 of 1960: "Whoever is car-
ried away by fashion in hair, dress, shoes, and jewelry and will not accept
warnings, should be placed on church discipline." (See *Testimonies for*
the Church, vol. 4, p. 647; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 600.)
- 6 According to *World Assembly Resolution* 1989, "We request that unani-
mous standards be applied about the following matters: dyeing and cut-
ting of women's hair in its various forms, high-heeled shoes, skirts with
slits, makeup, lipstick, and others, nail polish, etc."
- 7 Certain types of clothing may be used as an exception in situations where
professional uniforms, protective clothing, and patient clothing, which are
required by law, should be worn only in that activity performed. Addition-
ally, the dress style should reflect the dignity and modesty of the Christian
faith.
- 8 Two or three witnesses who saw the matter must do it. The accuser may
be one of the witnesses.
- 9 The procedure may be altered according to the country's laws, and care
should be taken to have it recorded to avoid lawsuits.
- 10 Quarterly or report meetings.
- 11 "The delegation agreed that the marriage of members under discipline
should not take place." —*World Assembly Resolution* No. 24 of 1997.
- 12 When the spouse is still alive.
- 13 Exceptions include miscarriage or a case of a deceased fetus (subject to
debate in the World Assembly).
- 14 Slavery or sex trafficking.
- 15 In the case of those disfellowshipped for the consummated transgression
of the seventh commandment, they must be rebaptized, according to
World Assembly Resolution No. 8 of 11/9/1966.
- 16 They will have to be given a certificate of ordination. See the form in Ap-
pendix C.
- 17 In the case of those disfellowshipped for the consummated transgression
of the seventh commandment, they must be rebaptized, according to
World Assembly Resolution No. 8 of 11/9/1966.
- 18 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 61 of 15/7/2002, an or-
dained deacon may not baptize.
- 19 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 14 of 1948: "The brother
should be recommended by the church and examined by the conference
president. The ordination, if possible, should be performed by two broth-
ers." For more information, see the Ministerial Manual.
- 20 If a brother was left by his wife, separated, or divorced after being or-
dained, his ordination will not be lost by such action.
- 21 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 80 of 4/7/2012. For more
information, see the Ministerial Manual.
- 22 All who are ordained belong to the order of Melchizedek.
- 23 The church leader may be a layperson, a Bible worker, an ordained elder, or
a minister.
- 24 It is advisable to speed up the process by using the Internet or another
means of communication.

CHAPTER III

WORSHIP

3.1. 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.’ Matthew 15:8–9. Those who worship God must worship Him ‘in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.’ John 4:23.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 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.” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 251.

3.2. Reverence in God's house

In this age of technology, it should be requested in the worship services that the believers turn off their cell phones or put them on vibrate. Furthermore, chatting or surfing the Internet during the service in God's house is not appropriate unless one is transmitting the message, interpreting for the deaf, or otherwise helping others to be blessed. Anyone who needs to communicate with someone or receive a call should quietly exit the sacred place of worship to use his/her phone.

With reference to taking pictures and filming church services, we recommend that only designated individuals and/or multimedia officers should take care of this, not all who are present. Afterward, the congregation may get the links to the material from those who are in charge. Let reverence always be maintained in God's house.¹

"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. People not dressed according to divine principles may not lead or present a church service. 1 Timothy 2:8-9.

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

"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 worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the word of God, that it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 193-194.

3.3. Teach children reverence

The child Samuel maintained great reverence and respect for God, as well as for the place of worship. "And the child

Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." 1 Samuel 3:1.

As a child, Jesus participated in the religious events in Israel. He was an example for today's children who participate in religious services. They should learn to listen and ask questions.

"Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it." "And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." Luke 2:41-43, 46.

"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.'" —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 196.

A Sabbath school class, or age-appropriate classes, should be conducted each Sabbath exclusively for the children; and during the second service there should be a story for them. Children's conferences and camps should be conducted.

3.4. Attendance at worship services is essential

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God... Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still prais-

ing Thee... For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Psalm 84:2, 4, 10.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1.

"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." Hebrews 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.²

"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. 4, p. 539.

3.5. Responsibilities of the pulpit assistant³

Every meeting should begin with a hymn, Scripture reading, and prayer. A meeting for administrative purposes should be conducted according to the bylaws of the church and the laws of the land. The speaker should be introduced in such a way that the listeners look forward to his presentation with great interest. The pulpit assistant should avoid every kind of irreverence.

Every meeting must be carried out in an appropriate order. It is our responsibility to become very familiar with the order in which the various services are conducted and to follow it consistently. When the presenters come forward and kneel in silent prayer at the beginning of the meeting, the believers should remain seated and bow their heads in prayer.⁴

The Sabbath program may be opened by the church leader, the minister who is present, or an ordained elder. The sermon during the main service should be given by the most senior ordained minister who is present, based on the levels of organization. If it is his desire, other ordained individuals or laypersons may present God's word to the congregation.

3.6. Church meetings

Each church is responsible to schedule its meetings according to the needs of the congregation.⁵ The most important meetings for worship, study, and activity are:

TABLE 3
CHURCH SERVICES

Description		Biblical basis
1	Main Sabbath service	Luke 4:16-17; Acts 15:21.
2	Sabbath school (Sabbath)	Luke 2:46.
3	Baptismal classes (Sabbath)	Acts 8:30-31.
4	Sabbath opening and close (Friday and Sabbath)	Acts 20:7-8.
5	Youth meeting (Sabbath afternoon)	2 Kings 2:7.
6	Prayer meeting (usually Wednesday or Sabbath)	Acts 16:13; 12:12.
7	Missionary meeting (Sabbath)	Acts 15:4.
8	Communion (Lord's supper)	1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 33.

Description		Biblical basis
9	Baptismal ceremony	Matthew 3:13-17.
10	Sabbath school teachers' meeting (Sabbath morning)	Nehemiah 8:3-5; Matthew 13:10-11; Mark 13:3.
11	Testimony and praise meeting	Ephesians 5:19.
12	Business meeting (committee and church)	Acts 1:23-25, 6:3-6.
13	Services on other days of the week	1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

It is advisable to notify the members of the dates of special meetings and business meetings one week in advance, or as needed.

Business meetings are primarily committee meetings. According to necessity, business meetings are held for the whole church; and as many members as possible should attend them.

3.7. Main Sabbath service

The main Sabbath service is for worship of God. Generally a sermon or Bible study will be presented in this meeting. If a minister is present, he will present that.

If several ministers or leaders are present, the one with the highest responsibility is generally asked to present the sermon.⁶ If a minister is present who comes rarely, he should be given the opportunity to speak to the church.

Church officers have no right to permit unauthorized persons to speak. It has happened in the past that men who were suspended as ministers or who came from other movements wished to speak to the church, but the church should be carefully protected from such people. A minister should be careful not to open the door for the wolf to enter the sheepfold.⁷

Men who claim to belong to the church but are unknown should not be given the pulpit unless they present written confirmation from the organizational leader.

The sermon time may also be used for sharing experiences, praise, and/or prayer; and opportunity may be given to share missionary experiences.

The following is an example of a Sabbath program. It may be opened by a minister or ordained elder, or, in his absence, by the church leader. After the opening hymn, Scripture reading, and prayer, he gives the leadership of the Sabbath school to the superintendent, who continues to lead until the Sabbath school is completed.

3.7.1. First part: opening and Sabbath school

- Instrumental prelude, organ or piano, if possible
- Silent prayer
- Opening of the service and welcome by the pastor, ordained elder, church leader, or his representative
- Congregational hymn
- Bible reading
- Prayer

Sabbath school

- The service is conducted by the Sabbath school superintendent
- Congregational hymn
- Reading of the Sabbath school report, optional
- Special song
- Missionary experiences
- Health minute, optional
- Day's lesson
- Collection of offering
- Closing hymn
- Prayer

3.7.2. Second part: main service

The entire congregation should prepare for the reception of God's message by meditating quietly before the program begins.

- Silent prayer
- Welcome

- Congregational hymn
- Scripture reading⁸
- Prayer
- Announcements
- Collection of tithes and offerings
- Children's story, optional
- Congregational or special hymn
- Sermon
- Congregational hymn
- Closing prayer
- Benediction hymn
- Benediction (pronounced by minister or ordained elder)
- Silent prayer
- Instrumental music: piano, organ, other instruments, as possible.

Every church member who enters the house of God or the meeting hall should take his place quietly and reverently and bow his head in silent prayer. If possible, he should sit in the front rows so that those who come afterward may easily find a place further back.

"When the minister enters,⁹ it should be with dignified, solemn mien. He should bow down in silent prayer as soon as he steps into the pulpit, and earnestly ask help of God. What an impression this will make! There will be solemnity and awe upon the people. Their minister is communing with God; he is committing himself to God before he dares to stand before the people. Solemnity rests upon all, and angels of God are brought very near. Every one of the congregation, also, who fears God should with bowed head unite in silent prayer with him that God may grace the meeting with His presence and give power to His truth proclaimed from human lips.

"When the meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in the presence of the Holy One, and every heart should ascend to God in silent devotion. The prayers of faithful worshipers will be heard, and the ministry of the word will prove effectual. The lifeless attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one great reason why the ministry is not more pro-

ductive of good. The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.

"When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most—the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths....

"When the benediction is pronounced, all should still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus blocking them up so that others cannot pass out. The precincts of the church should be invested with a sacred reverence. It should not be made a place to meet old friends and visit and introduce common thoughts and worldly business transactions. These should be left outside the church." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 195-196.

3.8. Youth meeting

The following order may serve as a guide:

- Silent prayer
- Congregational hymn
- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Secretary's report, optional
- Short presentations, quizzes, Bible or Testimony studies⁹
- Participation through poetry, special music, or Scripture memorization
- Participation through experiences
- Collection of offering for the youth missionary work

- Congregational hymn
- Prayer
- Silent prayer

The youth are the future of the church and, therefore, should be prepared for their future responsibilities. The Spirit of prophecy states in this regard: "In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 67.

The youth department works for the education of the youth in the church; they will be the future workers in proclaiming the Seventh-day Adventist message to the world. During the meetings, the youth should have the opportunity to learn how to become witnesses for God. The best time for youth meetings is Friday evening or Sabbath or Sunday afternoon.

Long speeches during the youth meeting are not the best and, indeed, rob the youth of the joy of participation. Games and activities that encourage irreverence and disorder should be avoided.¹⁰ Youth leaders need to plan lively, varied programs. They should be sacred and enjoyable, with different types of participation. Presentations should be simple and brief, and the participants should be dressed appropriately, according to Bible standards. Under no circumstances should drama be performed in the church.¹¹

In churches where there are not enough young people to form a youth department, a missionary group may be established to carry out missionary activities. The youth will thus be encouraged to participate and take the initiative.

"Carry light wherever you go; show that you have strength of purpose, that you are not a person of indecision, easily swayed by the persuasions of evil associates. Do not yield a

ready assent to the suggestions of those who dishonor God, but rather seek to reform, reclaim, and rescue souls from evil.”
—*Messages to Young People*, p. 23.

3.9. Prayer meeting

The following program may serve as a guide:

- Silent prayer
- Congregational hymn
- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Special music
- Study or preaching
- Prayer requests
- Prayer season or prayer groups
- Experiences or testimonies
- Collection of offering
- Congregational hymn
- Prayer
- Silent prayer

The weekly prayer meeting, which can be held on any day of the week, is the thermometer that measures the prevailing spirit in the church. It is important that special efforts be made to ensure its vitality and success.

The meeting should start on time, even if only two or three people are present. First, a brief Bible study may be given of perhaps 10-15 minutes in length. The remaining time may then be spent in prayer, testimonies, and the sharing of experiences.

The plan should be varied from week to week. Sometimes prayer can follow the Bible study and experiences can be told, concluding with a hymn and prayer.

“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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 456-457.

3.10. Missionary meeting

The missionary meeting is extremely important for the church. The Spirit of prophecy states, "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." —*Christian Service*, p. 194.

We are a missionary people, and we have been given a commission to carry to the world the last message of warning. The missionary departments in the churches, districts, mission fields, fields. and unions should have the objective of thoroughly teaching the members how to carry out the work of personal evangelism.

By missionary work we mean not only presenting publications house to house, but also teaching all of the members, especially the young people, how they can grow in their ability to win souls. This includes both brothers and sisters. Only when the believers have received full instruction and been entrusted with this important work will the church grow throughout the world and the number of souls increase to the joy of the entire body of Christ.

In meetings on Sabbath afternoon, Sunday, or during the week, the canvassers should be given an opportunity to share their experiences.¹²

In some countries, the missionary meeting is held on the first Sunday of the month, while in others it is held on the last

Sunday of the month, or on a special Sabbath. Activities for this meeting can include handing out flyers and literature, as well as visiting hospitals, homes for the elderly, orphanages, etc. It is always important to have a prayer before the meeting, but it is not necessary to have a complete worship service.

3.11. Who officiates at the feet washing and the Lord's supper?

The special service of the Lord's supper is led by a minister or ordained elder. Deacons are not authorized to conduct this service, although ordained deacons may assist in distributing the bread and grape juice.

A minister or ordained elder who serves the Lord's supper to anyone who is not a member of the church brings confusion and disobedience upon the Lord's flock and runs the risk of losing his credential.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me." 1 Corinthians 11:23-24.

"Having received their commission from God and having the approbation of the church, they went forth baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and administering the ordinances of the Lord's house, often waiting upon the saints by presenting them the emblems of the broken body and spilt blood of the crucified Saviour, to keep fresh in the memory of God's beloved children His sufferings and death." —*Early Writings*, p. 100.

3.12. Who may participate in the Lord's supper?

Every church member is entitled to participate in the Lord's supper¹³ unless he/she is on discipline (*"Discipline,"* see page 34). One who is not a member of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement may be present only as an observer.

"And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." Exodus 12:43-45.

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." 1 Corinthians 5:11.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Corinthians 11:26-29.

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, to whom the passover lamb pointed, instituted the Lord's supper in place of the passover. 1 Corinthians 5:7. He was about to give His body to be broken and His blood to be shed for a sinful world. He did not invite the multitude to this sacred service, but gathered the church that He founded for the last supper. This ordinance was continued among the disciples. It is a sacred ceremony within the church¹⁴ and should be shared with reverence and holiness.

"The ordinance of the Lord's supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ.... It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds....

"Christ's example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord's supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. 1 Corinthians 5:11. But beyond this none are to pass judgment. God has not left it with men to say who shall present themselves on these occasions....

"When believers assemble to celebrate the ordinances, there are present messengers unseen by human eyes. There may be a Judas in the company,... 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." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 656.

The above statement should be understood and applied to those who are church members (insiders), as the following inspired statement confirms: "The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 91.

3.13. Feet washing in preparation for the Lord's supper

By instituting the feet washing, Jesus gave His disciples and all of His followers to this day an example of humility and service.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13:14, 15. (See John 13:4-5; 1 Timothy 5:10; Exodus 30:20-21).

In these words, Christ was not just commanding the practice of hospitality. He wanted to teach more than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of the journey. He was instituting a sacred rite to be observed by the believers so that they would always remember 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.

"As they come to this ordinance, the children of God should bring to remembrance the words of the Lord of life and glory: 'Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I

have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650.

It is permitted to celebrate the feet washing between husband and wife in a modest manner.¹⁵

“And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the pass-over at thy house with My disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.” Matthew 26:18-20.

If possible, this service should be celebrated in private, away from unbelievers. “I also saw that Brother Bates erred in attending the washing of saints’ feet and the communion among unbelievers. It only caused reproach to come on the cause of God. I saw that the example of Jesus should be followed. He took His disciples away alone, separate from the wicked, and first washed their feet, and then gave them to eat of the broken bread to represent His broken body and gave them to drink of the juice of the vine to represent His spilled blood. I saw that the above-named errors of Brother Bates and others more dangerous brought confusion.... These wrongs I saw must be taken out of the way.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 247.

The deacons also prepare what is necessary for the washing of the feet.

- Basins
- Towels
- Water

In addition, after the feet washing, a towel and soap need to be made available to the minister.

Only members of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement, may participate in this rite. Exodus 12:48.¹⁶

3.13.1. Order of the feet washing

Prayer, hymns, Bible verses from John 13, reflection, prayer, and reconciliation all precede the feet washing. The men and

women then separate as groups and go to separate places for prayer, washing the feet and drying them with a towel.

3.14. Lord's supper

Christ Himself instituted the Lord's supper. Before taking the final steps on His path of suffering, He gave instructions concerning this ceremony: "And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22:15–20.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matthew 26:26–28.

The Lord's supper should be celebrated, if possible, every three months.¹⁷ This sacred service should be announced in advance so that the members may prepare spiritually and settle differences in the family and between members. It is the most solemn, important ceremony, and all of the church members should participate in it.

It is wrong for a member to be absent unless there are internal or external reasons that justify it; one who neglects this service deprives himself of the greatest spiritual blessing.

The only gospel workers who are authorized to distribute the Lord's supper are ministers and ordained elders.¹⁸ Ordained deacons may also be in attendance.¹⁹ If one or several ministers are present, they should be asked by the one in higher authority if they wish to participate in giving this rite. Several ministers may also officiate together.

The Spirit of prophecy states: "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.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 656.

3.14.1. Unleavened bread as a symbol of the Lord's body

"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me." 1 Corinthians 11:20-24.

"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.

"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.

Leaven cannot be part of the bread, because one of its symbols is sin, as the apostle Paul declared. 1 Corinthians 5:8. In the Old Testament it was forbidden to present offerings with leaven and honey. Leviticus 2:11.

"The Israelites obeyed the directions that God had given. Swiftly and secretly they made their preparations for departure. Their families were gathered, the paschal lamb slain, the flesh roasted with fire, the unleavened bread and bitter herbs prepared." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 279.

3.14.2. Recipe for the Lord's supper bread

Since the bread symbolizes the body of Christ, the instructions for its preparation need to be carefully followed.

Serves 15 people

Ingredients

- 2 cups wheat flour
- 3 fingers or a pinch of salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup virgin olive oil
- Sufficient filtered water to make a bread dough of the desired consistency
- NO YEAST IS USED

Directions

- Mix flour, oil, and salt, and then add a little cold water.
- Knead vigorously until the dough does not stick to your hands.
- Shape the dough ball into an oval or round shape that is 0.5-1 centimeter thick.
- It is advisable to make shallow creases in the bread with the back of a knife in small squares.
- Prick each square with a fork to avoid the formation of bubbles.
- Before putting the bread in the oven, let it rest for half an hour to avoid shrinkage.
- Bake at a temperature of 350 degrees F., or 180 degrees C.
- The unleavened bread will be slightly golden in color.
- Wrap in a clean white cotton cloth.
- Put on a plate.

- Put the plate on a tray.
- Cover with a white napkin, as possible.

Utensils

- Preferably wood or stainless steel tray
- Glass or porcelain dish
- Two white cotton napkins and a white tablecloth, as possible

When carrying the bread,²¹ the deacons or deaconesses should take care that it does not crack, for it should remain whole until the minister breaks it, according to Jesus' Biblical example.

3.14.3. Grape juice as a symbol of Jesus' shed blood

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." 1 Corinthians 11:25.

Just as the bread must be unleavened, so must the grape juice be unfermented. The unfermented juice obtained from red grapes symbolizes the blood shed by the innocent Lamb of God. Therefore, the grape juice of the Lord's supper should be prepared from black or red grapes. It should not be adulterated or fermented. No fermentation (wine) is proper.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." Genesis 14:18.

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Mark 14:23-25.

Serves 15 people

Ingredients

- 800 grams of red or black grapes²²

Directions

- After prayer, wash the grapes in pure water and remove the stems.
- Blend for 1 minute without water.
- Strain the grape juice.
- Store the juice in a glass pitcher or jar in a refrigerator, as possible.

Utensils

- Glass pitcher
- Large glass and/or several small glasses²³
- White tablecloth or cotton cloth, as possible

If pure grape juice is not available in stores, one should purchase red grapes, press them through a linen sieve, and pour the juice into a bottle. Heat the bottle with its contents to 75 degrees C. (167 degrees F.), and immediately cork it with a rubber stopper or cork. Grape juice prepared in this way can be kept for a year and used for the Lord's supper. When the next grape season arrives, several such bottles of grape juice should be prepared so as to have enough for each Lord's supper until the next grape harvest.

In countries where neither fresh grapes nor pure bottled grape juice are available, black raisins (dried grapes) may be placed in water and heated almost to the boiling point, then removed from the heat. Let the mixture cool, and then press the juice through a cloth. Another way is to liquefy the rehydrated raisins. The juice obtained in this way can be used for the Lord's supper.

The deacons should take responsibility for obtaining the grape juice, so that it is always available for this sacred use along with the holy utensils.

In churches with several deacons, the first deacon is in charge of the utensils for the Lord's supper. It is advisable that the cup be made of stainless steel, silver, glass, porcelain, stone, or other hygienic material.

The utensils for the Lord's supper, in addition to the above, include the following:

- Three white cloth napkins (cotton, linen or damask)
- Two cotton tablecloths, white if possible
- Basins
- Towels

3.14.4. Order of the Lord's supper service

All preparations for the sacred service should be completed ahead of time. The deacons should take care of the bread and grape juice and cover the Lord's supper table with a clean tablecloth. Place all of the utensils on it and cover them with another clean cloth, white if possible. Preparation for the feet washing should also be done. The service may be conducted in the following order.

- Silent prayer
- Congregational hymn
- Prayer (kneeling)
- Special song
- Short study on the meaning of the service
- Congregational hymn
- Prayer
- Washing of feet (brothers and sisters separately)²⁴
- The Lord's supper is served by a minister or ordained elder
- Prayer for the blessing of the bread, given by the one conducting the service (Matthew 26:26)
- Breaking of the bread by the minister or ordained elder ²⁵
- Distribution of the bread by the minister or ordained elder, with the possible assistance of an ordained deacon
- Prayer for blessing of the pure grape juice by the one conducting the service (Matthew 26:27)
- Distribution of the grape juice to the attendees by the minister, ordained elder, or ordained deacon²⁶
- Collection of the Lord's supper offering
- Congregational hymn (Matthew 26:30)
- Prayer Blessing

While the bread is being broken, distributed, and eaten, as well as during the distribution and acceptance of the grape

juice, the brethren receiving the Lord's supper should remain standing in reverent silence; and those who are seated as observers should likewise remain in reverent silence.

In the Old Testament, the Passover lamb was to be without blemish. This symbolized Christ, the Lamb of God, who was sinless and without blemish and gave Himself totally to save mankind from their sins and eternal death.

The bread of the Lord's supper and the grape juice are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; therefore, they must be completely consumed. The leftover bread may be distributed among the participants or burned. Exodus 12:10. Also, the remaining grape juice can be distributed among the participants or poured on the ground as an offering. 2 Samuel 23:16.

If the Lord's supper is celebrated during the main service on Sabbath morning,²⁷ the normal second offering is omitted and replaced by the one collected during the Lord's supper.

It is an offering of gratitude for the love that God has shed upon all who love Him. The offering should be used to cover the cost of utensils for the ceremony, which should be kept in the best condition. This offering remains in the local church; it is not sent to the conference or the union, but only the tithe.

The deacons or deaconesses are responsible for cleaning and storing the utensils. More importantly, they should seek out those who did not take part in this renewal and seek to encourage them in the love of Jesus.

3.14.5. Lord's supper for the sick

If a church member is ill or otherwise unable to attend the Lord's supper service, a special home service may be held, conducted by a minister or ordained elder. Ordained deacons may accompany him and assist him in the service.

In the case of a member who is bedridden and wishes to receive the Lord's supper, the holy emblems may be given to him/her without the washing of the feet.²⁸

3.15. Child dedication

"We reject every ceremony intended to serve as a substitute for infant baptism or communion. However, when parents

come with their children before the minister, then he should implore the blessing of Heaven upon them." —*World Assembly Resolution No. 11, 1960.*

A certificate may be provided at this dedication.²⁹

- **Biblical**

Jesus rebuked the disciples for not allowing the children to come to Him to be blessed. Mark 10:13-16. "He took the children in His arms, He laid His hands upon them, and gave them the blessing for which they came." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 511. The minister or ordained elder of the church may give the blessing and say the prayer.

- **For church member and non-church-member families**

The dedication may be performed for non-member families as well as for member families.

- **Meaning**

It is an opportunity to impress parents with the importance of God's blessing and their dependence on Him in raising their child. By presenting their child for a blessing, the parents are asking God's help in bringing him/her up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord and committing themselves to instruct him/her in what it means to live according to God's will in order to receive His blessing.

- **No defined age**

The dedication does not depend on age; it can be made at any time in a child's life.

- **Blessing is not a merit**

A prayer of dedication should not be considered as something meritorious or as a sacrament, because every blessing comes from the Father above. James 1:17.

- **Presentation of the baby Jesus**

"The child presented at the temple was taken in the arms of the priest, and held up before the altar." —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 18. Luke 2:27-28; 1 Samuel 1:28.³⁰

The parents and family should be told beforehand that they need to accompany the child to the front and to wear modest clothing, for the place where they stand is holy ground. In addition, the names of the parents and the child who is being dedicated should be obtained.³¹

Suggested order of service

- Song
- Parents or guardians come forward
- Reading of a Bible verse
- Brief explanation
- Questions to parents:
Is it your desire to teach your child the holy Scriptures and the stories of Jesus' life?
Is it your desire to teach your child to cherish and honor the Ten Commandments?
- Dedication of the child with prayer and blessing by the minister or ordained elder^{32, 33}
- Presentation of dedication certificate (if available)
- Congregational hymn (optional or special)

3.16. Anointing and prayer for the sick

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:14-16.

This anointing may be performed only by ordained gospel workers, such as elders or ministers.³⁴ In the above verses, the apostle James gave good counsel for caring for the sick. When someone is ill and others pray for him, he is encouraged and receives a new impetus to recover.

In case of physical weakness, pain, and constant suffering, prayer is an additional effort for those who are suffering. It is God's will that the believers—the whole church, moved by Christian love—pray for the sick one. The prayer of faith will help a sick person.

Sickness can have various causes—violation of natural laws, such as leading a dissolute life, or overloading the body with excessive work or too little sleep. It can also be caused by sin and mental anguish.

"To those who desire prayer for their restoration to health, it should be made plain that the violation of God's law, either natural or spiritual, is sin, and that in order for them to receive His blessing, sin must be confessed and forsaken." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 228.

"And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Matthew 9:2, 5-6.

Sickness may also be caused by hereditary factors or other reasons.

The faith and confidence of one who is sick can be strengthened by the following Bible verses that show how God forgives all past sins and heals every ailment: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18.

"Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled Me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 43:24-25; 44:22.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Psalm 51:1.

Generally, the anointing for the sick should be offered to one who obeys God's commandments. "You inquire if we should pray for none that are sick except those in the third angel's message, or pray for all that shall make application, etc. James 5 is our rule to follow. 'Is anyone sick among you? let him call,'

etc. It is those that are among us. God had shown me those who keep God's commandments are to have nothing to do [in anointing and special prayer] for the sick of those who are daily trampling them underfoot, unless it is in some special case where souls are convicted of the truth and are decided to move out upon it. The partition wall between commandment keepers and those who trample them underfoot should be kept." —*Letter 4*, 1857; *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 233.³⁵

"I saw that Brother Bates erred again in praying for the sick before unbelievers. I saw if any among us were sick and called for the elders of the church to pray over them, we should follow the example of Jesus. He went into an inner chamber, and we should go into a room by ourselves separate entirely from unbelievers, and then the atmosphere would not be polluted by them.... I saw that God's cause was dishonored and reproached in western New York at the general conference by praying for the sick in the midst of unbelievers." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 247.

"And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put them all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying." Mark 5:40. (See also Luke 8:51).

The anointing oil itself contains no healing power, but it is the prayer of faith, in the name of Jesus, that imparts health. The sick should not be encouraged to be anointed and attribute their health or recovery to the anointing but, instead, to have faith in the healing power of the blood of Christ and His mediatorial service in the most holy place.

James referred to Elijah when he said: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James 5:17-18.

In some circumstances, the anointing can have a depressing effect on the sick person, especially if he belonged to the

Catholic Church before accepting the truth in Jesus. The reason is that the anointing of the sick may remind such a person of the last rites that a Catholic priest recites before a person dies.

In Biblical times, anointing with oil was used as a health remedy. "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Mark 6:13.

In the ancient east and in the times of the Old Testament, anointing the sick with oil mixed with perfumed essences was practiced. (See also Exodus 30:22-25).

If a person who is sick expresses a specific desire to be anointed and is prayed for, the following counsel must be carefully considered. The anointing should not be performed in haste. Both the sick person and the minister or ordained elder should prepare spiritually (if necessary, with fasting and prayer) and carry out this service reverently, with true surrender and humility before God. What is especially important is that it be performed with genuine faith in the Lord's healing power.

The minister should assist the sick person in saying with all his heart, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done." Luke 22:42. (See also Mark 14:36).

We must never force anything when we pray for the sick but place him/her in God's hands so that His will may be done. A child of God will surrender everything into the Lord's hands, knowing that the best solution for a sick person is for God's will to be done in his/her life.

3.16.1. Anointing procedure

The minister or ordained elder who performs this sacred service must speak privately with the sick person before the anointing.

Counseling

- Explain the procedure.
- The minister or ordained elder should explain the symbolism of the oil, representing the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 4:2-3, 6.

- Conversion leads to life. James 5:19-20.
- Confession of sin. James 5:16.
- Reconciliation with God and one's fellow men. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20.

Procedure

- Only believers should be present. Mark 5:40; Luke 8:51.
- Olive oil is preferable for anointing. James 5:14.
- The minister or ordained elder will pray, placing his hands on the sick person, repeating the plea: "Lord, Thy will be done." James 5:15-16; Matthew 26:42; Acts 8:13, 17-18; *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 54.
- The sick person also prays.
- The oil is taken with the index finger and applied to the forehead, right earlobe, and right thumb of the sick person in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. James 5:14; Leviticus 14:17-18, 28; Mark 6:13.³⁶
- The blessing is pronounced. Numbers 6:24-26. When this service is complete, all who were present should kindly bid the sick person farewell and leave him alone with the Lord.

3.17. Funeral

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:26.

There is nothing so certain in a person's life as death. Sooner or later, whether young or old, one will be touched by death. The last hour is sacred for a person, and the apostle's statement must be kept in mind, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27.

Every gospel worker who is called to conduct a funeral service should first take time to familiarize himself with the habits and customs of the country. He should contact the family and the funeral home to determine the steps to be followed and note them carefully so he can refer to them as needed. Only those ceremonies that are in accordance with the Bible may be performed.

In a funeral attended by many people, the gospel worker or church elder should present a clear message that touches the hearts of the listeners. In cases where part of the service is held in a church, it is recommended that the worker coordinate with the family so that those who might speak against Biblical faith and doctrine, such as pastors of other religious organizations or family members, may be hindered from doing so.

Cremation of deceased brothers and sisters should be avoided, in accordance with Biblical examples. According to secular history, the pagans were the ones who practiced cremation. The children of God buried their dead. "Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime." Amos 2:1.

A funeral service provides a wonderful opportunity to speak about the fleeting days of life and the need to be constantly prepared. Furthermore, one should point with certainty to the glorious hope of the resurrection that Adventist believers carry in their hearts. We can say, as did the apostle Paul: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Gospel workers should wear a dark suit for such services, especially for the Lord's supper, a wedding, and a funeral service.

"Black or dark material is more becoming to a minister in the desk and will make a better impression upon the people than would be made by a combination of two or three different colors in his apparel." —*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 25.

A funeral may also be conducted by a brother who has not been ordained but who is in a position to present a message appropriate for the circumstances.

Suggested order of funeral service³⁷

- Silent prayer
- Words of welcome and thanks
- Congregational or special hymn (optional)
- Scripture reading
- Prayer (standing)
- Eulogy (summary of the deceased's life by one or more individuals)
- Special participation (poem, instrumental piece, special or congregational song, optional)
- Short sermon about life, death, the coming judgment, resurrection, and Jesus' second coming
- Prayer (standing)
- Benediction on the attendees
- Silent prayer

Suggested order of service at the graveside³⁸

- Silent prayer
- Thanks to those who came to be with the family
- Congregational or special hymn (optional)
- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Final words from a family member
- Short sermon
- Prayer/benediction
- Final placement of the coffin

1 In case of ordination, child dedication, or baptism, photos may be taken if there has been prior coordination with the respective officers and the utmost order and reverence are maintained.

2 *World Assembly Resolution* No. 9 of 8/17/1960: "Doctors, nurses, or personnel employed in a hospital of the world should have the Sabbath off. In cases of urgency, especially such as those which present themselves to midwives, we are bound before God and our fellow men to render aid. In our sanitariums the quotation from *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 130, applies. *World Assembly Resolution* No. 9 of 7/17/1978: "Brother Drofenik explained that these testimonies are to be applied in cases of emergency. People who work in the care of the sick should try by all means to get the Sabbath off." *World Assembly Resolution* No. 33 of 12/13/1989: "But the payment for such work should be given to the treasury of the Lord

- to be used for the benefit of the poor who need medical help but are not in a position to pay for it and deserve it.... Work on the Sabbath day should not be done routinely but only in cases of emergency."
- 3 *World Assembly Resolution No. 11 of 1948: "The principles were considered point by point, and a uniform order of worship was ratified: The elder opens the meeting; while praying, the congregation remains seated in silent prayer. They are not to stand during prayer."*
- 4 Sabbath school and the main service, as well as the Lord's supper, are necessary.
- 5 A Christian spirit must be followed. Hebrews 7:7; Luke 14:10. The leader of a department with world authority or division leaders continue with the preference, otherwise it will be resolved in the spirit of Christ.
- 6 It must be verified that the brother is a minister of the denomination and with current credentials. Ministers or members of other denominations may not preach.
- 7 The order of the program may vary according to circumstances.
- 8 Bible reading may also be responsive.
- 9 The minister may go up alone or accompanied by the church leader or other ordained officers.
- 10 The proposed activities may vary.
- 11 There should be no talk of prices or fees for the youth conference on the Sabbath day.
- 12 See *Evangelism*, pp. 106, 154.
- 13 If such meetings are held on Sabbath evening, there should be no sales, book orders, or dealing with business and prices. Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:20-21.
- 14 According to *World Assembly Resolution No. 48 of 1989: "... Only those who have become members of this denomination through baptism or acceptance may participate in such a ceremony."*
- 15 International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement.
- 16 According to *World Assembly Resolution No. 16 of 1934: "It is certainly permissible for the husband and wife in a family to wash each other's feet at the celebration of the Lord's supper."*
- 17 Members of the nominal Seventh-day Adventist Church, grassroots or independent groups, and the '51 Movement may not participate; they may only observe. Exodus 12:45, 48; Colossians 2:11-12.
- 18 "In this vision the Lord gave concerning certain delicate details, clarifications which were to guide and guard the infant church.... As to the frequency with which the rites of humility and the Lord's supper should be observed, some insisted that once a year was sufficient, but instructions were given that the Lord's supper should be observed more frequently. Today the church follows the plan of observing the rites four times a year." —*Early Writings*, p. 303.
- 19 According to *World Assembly Resolution No. 13 of 1948: "Only ordained brothers may pray for the blessing upon the cup and the bread."*
- 20 According to the former Church Manual, approved by the 1997 World Assembly, 1999 edition, p. 112: "Deacons do not have the right to conduct such a service, although those who have been ordained may cooperate in distributing the bread and grape juice to the brethren."
- 21 According to *World Assembly Resolution No. 13 of 1948: "Bread shall be made only with the best flour...." From a nutritional point of view, the best flour is from whole grains.*

- 22 In the case of large churches, more than one flat bread may be made.
- 23 Red or black grapes can also be used.
- 24 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 7 of 1993: "Because of concerns regarding the danger of contracting the AIDS virus, the church is free to use individual cups." And *World Assembly Resolution* No. 21 of 1997: "If members of local churches choose to serve wine in a cup, they are authorized to do so. Those who choose or wish to use individual cups in the service of the Lord's supper are free to do so."
- 25 In some churches, it is customary to ask forgiveness before the washing of the feet, and in others after; but it should always be before the Lord's supper and the offering. Matthew 5:24.
- 26 While the minister or elder who is distributing the bread and wine recites Bible verses, the congregation should remain silent and reverent, with an attitude of joy for the forgiveness received, communion with God, and the hope of Jesus' second coming: "The communion service was not to be an occasion of sadness.... They are not to remain in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light. They are to open their souls to the shining rays of the sun of righteousness. With hearts purified by the most precious blood of Christ, in full consciousness of His presence, though invisible, they are to hear His words: 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 613.
- 27 At the passover, several cups were distributed. Luke 22:17, 20.
- 28 In some places it is wise to celebrate it in the afternoon or evening to avoid discouraging visitors. It can be celebrated any day of the week, but we are in favor of the Sabbath.
- 29 From the ceremony performed in the church, a portion of bread and wine may be reserved to offer the Lord's supper to those who are sick; and since it has already been prayed over and blessed, this does not need to be done again.
- 30 See form in X. FORMS.
- 31 *World Assembly Resolution* No. 82 of 2012.
- 32 If the parents or a parent is not present, the grandparents or other relatives or guardians may be present.
- 33 During the prayer of blessing, the congregation remains standing.
- 34 For more information, see the Ministerial Manual.
- 35 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 20 of 1951: "Ordained workers may perform the anointing. It should be done with great circumspection and attention...." According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 34 of 1989: "With regard to the anointing of non-members it was stated that these cases should be treated individually. The sick person should be instructed that he should confess to God all his sins and sincerely ask for forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ...."
- 36 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 34 of 1989: "With regard to the anointing of non-members it was stated that these cases should be treated individually. The sick person should be instructed that he should confess to God all his sins and sincerely ask for forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ."
- 37 It could change according to circumstances.
- 38 For service at the graveside, please refer to the Ministerial Manual.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITUAL OFFICERS —ATTRIBUTES AND CONDITIONS

4.1. Attributes and conditions of church officers

For the entire structure to be healthy, God's church has a responsibility to help each member have a deep conviction of the truth and be ready to put it into action. John 8:32.

The wellbeing of the local churches depends on the work of the ministers. 2 Corinthians 11:28. Their responsibilities are managed by the conference, mission field, union, division, or General Conference; and while each minister is a member of a local church, his authority and duties extend to all active and isolated members within his designated jurisdiction. "The apostle felt that he was to a large extent responsible for the spiritual welfare of those converted under his labors." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 262.

Those who are called to be church officers will have certain characteristics:

- Faithfulness. Matthew 25:21, 23.
- Willingness to sacrifice. Romans 12:1.
- Ability. Exodus 18:21.
- Good testimony from others. Acts 22:12.
- Firmness in doctrine. 2 John 9.
- Honesty. 1 Timothy 2:2.
- Love. Hebrews 13:1.

Jethro's advice to Moses is carried out by local churches today when they choose "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." Exodus 18:21.

The responsibilities for the flock that are entrusted to church officers must be constantly kept in the forefront. Every church leader must remember that “the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8. Therefore, the apostle Paul’s advice is appropriate: “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.” Acts 20:28.

The Spirit of prophecy declares: “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. 4, p. 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 ... busy-bodies.’ 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*, p. 261.

As historically held in Adventism, “A person holding any of the higher offices is qualified to officiate in any of the lower ones; and in performing such duties, he is [often] called [in the Scriptures] by the title that applies....”

The leader motivates and supervises all of the elected officers who serve in the church. It is also important that one offi-

cer does not interfere with the responsibilities of other officers but works in harmony with the established activities and plans for the advancement of the church and for the Lord's glory.

In other words, "no person by virtue of a lower office can occupy a higher one; but anyone who holds a higher office may, by virtue of that office, act in any of the lower ones. Therefore, a deacon cannot by virtue of his diaconate act as an elder, nor can an elder act as ... an ordained minister; but an ordained minister may act as ... an elder, or a deacon." Ministers and ordained elders are the "only officers qualified to organize churches."¹

In the event of an emergency or danger, officers at the highest level of the organization may intervene at subordinate levels of the work as necessary. Such officers give counsel, and their voices must be respected.

"Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus they were authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 160.

4.1.1. Respect for church office

To ensure peace and harmonious cooperation in the church of God, which is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14), "let each esteem other better than themselves." Philippians 2:3.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Bible and the Testimonies, each member must be taught that every position in the church organization must be regarded with respect and care; and all instructions given in the course of the organization's activities must be carried out with humility and obedience.

We read the following in God's word: "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." "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." Hebrews 13:7; 1 Timothy 5:17, 19.

Ministers, workers, and church leaders are undershepherds of Jesus Christ. "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 5:4, 2-3.

The term of a church office is specified by the church members at the beginning of church elections, with the option of one or two years. This decision was made at a World Assembly.²

4.1.2. No one should be given a position too quickly

"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.... And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." 1 Timothy 3:6, 10.

"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." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 406.

To avoid difficulties in God's work, the election and preparation of the leader at the local church, district, field, mission field, union, division, or General Conference committee (World Assembly) level must be carried out with great care. Choices or decisions made under duress can seriously affect the church. Isaiah 28:16, last part.

4.1.3. Those who oppose brotherly cooperation should not be placed in positions of responsibility

"Let brotherly love continue." Hebrews 13:1. See Philippians 1:27-28; 2 John 9-11. Confirmation of the subtitle appears in the following testimonies:

"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." — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 238, 239.

"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.

All who are considered for, elected, and appointed to office must cooperate with their brethren and leaders in a spirit of humility, meekness, patience, and love. Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 8:2. Thus, they must follow the example of Christ. "... Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart:..." Matthew 11:29.

4.2. Local church officers

All who are called to serve in a church office must be humble, peaceable, just, free from greed, kind, and diligent, possessing a spirit of conscience, sobriety, and hospitality. Romans 12:9-13.

Generally, church officers include:

- Church elder
- Church leader
- Assistant church leader
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Deacon/deaconess
- Sabbath school superintendent
- Sabbath school secretary
- Sabbath school teacher(s)
- Children's Sabbath school teacher(s)
- Missionary leader
- Children's leader
- Youth leader
- Family leader
- Education leader
- Health leader
- Dorcas, Good Samaritan or poor department leader
- Music leader
- Multimedia leader
- Delegate(s) to the next higher level of the organization

If necessary, other officers may be elected.

The church committee is composed of the church leader, secretary, treasurer, and other trusted members.

The election of officers is very important, since the well-being and progress of God's work depend primarily on the leaders. Therefore, great care must be taken in calling men and women to serve in the Lord's church.

"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." "Moreover he must have a

good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:7.

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." Titus 1:5-11; 2:1, 7-8.

"Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, 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 Timothy 3:8-13.

4.3. Church elections

"God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of

leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men....

"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." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 236.

New officers assume their responsibilities after being legally elected by the congregation of members or delegates in session.

Each level of the organization must coordinate with the next higher level to plan, report, and conduct elections.

At least fifty percent plus one of the members or delegates must be present at a meeting to have a quorum and hold a legal election.

A new meeting must be called if the members or delegates present are not the majority of the total members or delegates. If a quorum is not present at the time of the second meeting, most members or delegates will proceed to the elections by the registered Articles of the field.

All delegates or members must be present in person to comply with the Biblical principle. Online or telephone participation will not be permitted in the election process.

Each level of the organization, in coordination with the next higher level, must set dates for elections before its administrative term ends. After receiving this date from the secretaries or the president, the leader will provide this information to the entire level of the organization.

The meeting for elections can begin only if there is a representative present from a higher level. The leader begins the meeting with praise, prayer, and a short reflection or brief words. The secretary is asked to read the minutes of the previous business meeting in which elections were held.

All elected officials of the outgoing administration must give written and oral reports in the presence of church members or delegates. The order of reports begins with the leader.

Once all reports are given and questions are clarified, the outgoing officials lay down their offices. The outgoing leader then invites the visiting representative from the higher level of the organization to take the lead and conduct the new elections.

After giving a brief introduction, the visiting representative or his substitute elects a temporary secretary before electing the nominating committee. If necessary, a second temporary chairman may be elected to work with the delegates in the absence of the nominating committee. It is recommended that the transfer of responsibilities be carried out for a period of no more than one month.

4.3.1. Nominating committee

The purpose of the nominating committee is to facilitate the elections by discussing, choosing, and proposing names of candidates for the different positions.

It is customary in the church for officers to be nominated by a nominating committee chosen by members or delegates, by individual nominations submitted by members, or by secret ballot. Depending on the size of the church or the number of delegates, the nominating committee needs to be composed of an odd number of members, as voted by the church. The nominating committee is responsible for considering the church's needs and proposing as officers those members who are deemed competent to serve in each position. The organization's senior-level visiting representative chairs the nominating committee.

Only faithful members of good judgment should be elected as nominating committee members. If necessary, the visiting representative can recommend that former officers be selected for the nominating committee. Only spiritual, fair-minded brothers and sisters who are able to propose new officers impartially should serve on the nominating committee.

The church minister, if not elected to the nominating committee, may be invited to participate as a non-voting advisor to the committee. It must impartially propose for positions brothers and sisters who will result in the blessing and progress of God's work.

The deliberations of the nominating committee are strictly confidential. There is nothing more offensive to Christian ethics than for a member of the nominating committee to speak outside of it regarding the deliberations concerning a member whose name is proposed for office. Such a violation of trust is sufficient to exclude him/her from continued participation in the committee. This principle is true for the nominating committees at every level of the organization. The nominating committee is dissolved once the new officers are elected.

4.3.2. Election of church officers

After the nominating committee has prepared a list of recommendations, the church members are called to hear the nominations. After they are read to the church, the majority can accept, reject, or modify them. The church has the authority to vote on candidates for each office.

If possible, the nominating committee should recommend two or more candidates for each position, especially the most important ones, so that the church can choose more easily. Even if only one candidate is presented, the church still has the right to elect or reject him/her. If a person declines to accept a position, the church must be allowed to seek another candidate, ensuring that manipulation of the election is avoided.

After the nominating committee has recommended candidates for the position of leader and one of those is elected, it is advantageous for the newly elected leader to join the nominating committee as they consider candidates for the remaining offices so that he can give his opinion and advise the committee regarding other positions to be filled.

Voting for officers and making essential decisions needs to be done by secret ballot. Voting for routine matters may be done by the show of hands. All votes in favor and against, as

well as abstentions, are counted and recorded. In case of a tie, a second vote can be done by secret ballot; if a tie still remains, a third vote can be sought to obtain a simple majority, or the presiding officer can make the decision.

After all of the offices have been filled, the church committee is formed. It is composed of three, five, seven, or nine members, according to the size and needs of the church, and includes the leader, assistant leader, secretary, treasurer and additional individuals as decided by the members.

After the election of officers has been completed, the committee has been formed, the delegates to the Field have been chosen, and any other matters have been deliberated and decided, the presiding officer or his authorized representative congratulates the leader and his fellow officers on their election and wishes wishing them many blessings and success. Then he hands over the leadership of the meeting to the newly elected church leader.

The church leader will express his gratitude for the trust placed in him and ask the church for its support in carrying out his responsibilities. He will close the meeting with a hymn and prayer.

See X. FORMS for the Election of Church Officers form, three copies of which must be made after the church elections. One copy will be sent to the field to which the church belongs, and the church secretary will keep the others in the church files.³

4.3.3. Vacant position

If an officer does not fulfill his responsibilities and is not an example to the believers, the church committee must remove him from office. If this occurs, or in the event of the resignation of an officer, at the next regular committee meeting (or an extraordinary church business meeting), the committee may select a replacement in the presence of the president of the next higher level of the organization or his authorized representative; this procedure applies to all levels of the organization. If this happens at the General Conference level, it must be handled by the full committee. The replacement church officer

who is recommended by the committee will be presented for a vote at the next quarterly business meeting of the church.

4.4. Opening a branch

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." Isaiah 54:2.

"Trees that are planted too thickly do not flourish. They are transplanted by the gardener, that they may have room to grow and not become dwarfed and sickly. The same rule would work well for our large churches. Many of the members are dying spiritually for want of this very work. They are becoming sickly and inefficient. Transplanted, they would have room to grow strong and vigorous." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 248.

"In places where the truth is not known, brethren who are adapted to the work, might hire a hall, or some other suitable place to assemble, and gather together all who will come. Then let them instruct the people in the truth. They need not sermonize, but take the Bible, and let God speak directly out of His word. If there is only a small number present, they can read a 'Thus saith the Lord,' without a great parade or excitement; just read and explain the simple gospel truth, and sing and pray with them." —*Review and Herald*, September 29, 1891.

Local churches that have grown to a good number of believers should open branches to extend the Lord's work. If a branch Sabbath school can be established in the same city, town, or village, it must be done with the consent and approval of the original church committee. Disagreement among brethren should never be the motive for opening such a branch, but rather the burning desire for the progress of God's cause. The missionary department must be involved in forming and supporting this new branch until it can become a new church. The original church should, as much as possible, support the new branch with preachers and teachers. The tithes and offerings received in the branch Sabbath school are transferred once a month to the original church, which, in turn, provides whatever is necessary for the branch's operation.

4.5. Opening a new church

"In many churches there are families well instructed in the truths of God's word, who might widen the sphere of their influence by moving to places in need of the ministry they are capable of giving." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 172.

"The plan of colonizing, or moving from different localities where there is but little strength or influence, and concentrating the influence of many in one locality, is removing the light from places where God would have it shine." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 633.

"The lay members of our churches can accomplish a work which, as yet, they have scarcely begun. None should move into new places merely for the sake of worldly advantage; but where there is an opening to obtain a livelihood, let families that are well grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries. They should feel a love for souls, a burden of labor for them, and should make it a study how to bring them into the truth. They can distribute our publications, hold meetings in their homes, become acquainted with their neighbors, and invite them to come to these meetings. Thus they can let their light shine in good works." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 245.

The field officers should work to establish new churches by shining the light of truth into new areas. Disagreement among brethren should never be the motive for opening a new church. "Paul urges the Ephesians to preserve unity and love: 'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.' Ephesians 4:1-6." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 80.

Whenever possible and when a minimum number of believers in a particular area is ready, a new church should be planned and established with the support of the field. Interest-

ed families should pray about this and present a project first to the nearest local church. If the church agrees to cooperate in this endeavor, it must contact the field so the president or his representative can become acquainted with the details and conduct elections for the new church. When members involved in this work withdraw from their previous church to join the newly established one, they must do so in peace and harmony with all their brethren. It is advisable to hold a meeting for this purpose. Once the new church is established, their names will be removed from their former church's membership list.

If there is no church close enough to carry out the plan for the new church, the district or the field will need to organize the new church or group as appropriate.

"At first we assembled for worship, and presented the truth to those who would come to hear, in private houses, in large kitchens, in barns, in groves, and in schoolhouses; but it was not long before we were able to build humble houses of worship.

"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 and Gospel Workers*, p. 26.

4.6. Dissolution of a church

If, because of the death or transfer of some members, it becomes necessary to dissolve a church, it may be done by the official action of the field committee.

If there is infidelity, apostasy, or rebellion, the following action needs to be taken: The president of the field will consult with the field committee. The dissolution of the church will occur if, after all efforts to restore peace and harmony have been exhausted, the congregation continues to rebel against the divinely established order.

In such a case, the members of the church will be requested, in writing, to attend an extraordinary business meeting. A final attempt must be made to convince the members of their wrong course of action. If this fails, the church will be dissolved by the president of the field or his authorized representative.

Before a church is dissolved, the conference committee must provide a report, with sufficient advance notice, to the supervising union, or to the General Conference if the field is not part of a union, so that the matter may be carefully handled and investigated.

Members who remain faithful will be called to take their stand before the Lord and will then be properly reorganized.

Members who disagree with such an organization will be considered isolated under church discipline. The responsible committee will work with them individually until harmony can be restored or disfellowshipment takes place.

In a case of rebellion or apostasy, the leader of the next higher level within the organization carries the responsibility to dissolve the one that is below it.

4.7. Church property

The church belongs to God, and its officers are His stewards. Any material possession that is the church's property belongs to the Lord and His people. All property must be obtained and held in the name of the organization, not of individuals.

Every member of the Lord's church should know that everything that belongs to God must be managed with great care so that nothing is lost.

If, for any reason, a church is dissolved, then all of that church's property will pass into the hands of the union, field, or mission field to which the church belonged.

The same principles and procedures apply to the dissolution of a field. In this case, all the properties of the field pass to the union to which it belonged. If a union is dissolved, all of its property is transferred to the General Conference.

4.8. Transfer of responsibilities

Outgoing officers must transfer their responsibilities in an organized manner to the incoming officers. In the presence of witnesses, all books, inventories, and documents or money related to one's office must be transferred from the outgoing officer to the newly elected officer. A transfer document must be written and signed by the outgoing and incoming officers. This procedure applies to all levels within the organization.

4.9. Ordained ministers

4.9.1. Messengers in Christ's stead

"But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." Isaiah 61:6.

God set Aaron's family and descendants apart in the Jewish dispensation to serve as priests. The common people and other leaders in the government were not authorized to perform sacrifices or religious services. (Exodus 29:7; Leviticus 8:12-15; 2 Chronicles 26:18-21). Priests were anointed to their holy office in public and given authority to teach the precepts of the Lord, to decide on spiritual matters, to conduct worship services, to offer sacrifices on the altar, to present children to the Lord, to anoint kings and rulers, to consecrate places of worship, to act as public health officers, to perform the rite of circumcision, and to intercede with God on behalf of His people.

Many priestly functions were continued in the Christian dispensation and transformed in the New Testament. The order of Melchizedek and Jesus Christ as the great High Priest replaced the Aaronic priesthood, and circumcision was changed to baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Hebrews 7:11-17; Colossians 2:11-12; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:4-6). Christ became the antitype of all of the sacrifices under the ceremonial law, and the earthly sanctuary was no longer needed as He took up His High Priestly office in the great original sanctuary in heaven. Hebrews 9:13-14.

Christ commanded His ministers to serve as shepherds in the church for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ, to maintain the unity of the faith, to teach the knowledge of the Son of God, to protect the flock from every wind of doctrine, and to speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:11-15.

The Greek word for shepherd is *poimen*,⁴ meaning shepherd of the sheep.

Metaphorically, ministers are the overseers who feed God's church. (Acts 20:28). This involves tender care and vigilant supervision of the churches.⁵ Jesus identified Himself as the Good Shepherd, and Peter considered him the Chief Shepherd. John 10:11; 1 Peter 5:4.

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:19-20.

Being a messenger in Christ's place is a very great privilege. All who are called to the sacred office of the ministry have a message of reconciliation to give to a world that is at enmity with God. Therefore, the apostle Paul wrote: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." 1 Timothy 3:1.

"In every period of this earth's history, God has had His men of opportunity, to whom He has said, 'Ye are My witnesses.' In every age there have been devout men, who gathered up the rays of light as they flashed upon their pathway, and who spoke to the people the words of God. Enoch, Noah, Moses, Daniel, and the long roll of patriarchs and prophets—these were ministers of righteousness. They were not infallible; they were weak, erring men; but the Lord wrought through them as they gave themselves to His service.

"Since His ascension, Christ, the great Head of the church, has carried forward His work in the world by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men and

ministers to their needs. The position of those who have been called of God to labor in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church, is one of grave responsibility. In Christ's stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God; and they can fulfill their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 13.

4.9.2. The ministry—ordained by God

God has a church, and He has an ordained ministry. "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God." Colossians 1:25.

"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 fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13.

"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 and Gospel Workers*, p. 52.

4.9.3. Ordination to the ministry

"There were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen,... and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Acts 13:1-2. Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were solemnly dedi-

cated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus, they were authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority....

"Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one's authority in that office. By it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 160-161.

Before a brother can be ordained to the spiritual office of minister, he must have given unequivocal evidence of fulfilling the conditions of 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9.

- Reputation without reproach, from both outside and inside the church.
- God's call to this position, as shown by the fruit of his labors.
- Leadership skill.⁶
- Humility of heart.
- Faithfulness and sobriety.
- His wife being a faithful member of the church.
- Wise guidance of his house.
- Faithfulness to the Principles of Faith and Church Manual.
- Legal residence in the country.
- No legal charges against his character.

After thoroughly examining the candidate, the field committee makes a recommendation that a particular person be ordained to the ministry and submits it in writing to the union, or to the division or the General Conference if the field is not under a union. Ordination may occur only when the committee (union with the consent of the division or the General Conference) has approved it.

Only ordained ministers may review the recommendation of a candidate. Union and division or General Conference representatives are to be invited to the ordination service.

To show sacred regard for the significance of the ministerial office, the service must be solemnly performed. A conference is an appropriate occasion for such an ordination. At the appointed time, the leader calls all of the leaders and ordained ministers to take their places at the podium. After an opening hymn and prayer, the event should be beautified by hymns or special music. The highest-ranking officer at the conference leads the service.

The candidate's wife and children should be present and seated in the front row of the hall so that the leader asking the questions of the one to be ordained can also direct specific questions to the wife and children.

After the questions are asked and answered, the candidate stands in front of the congregation. The congregation stands, and those at the podium kneel with the candidate, placing their hands on his head while the ordination prayer is offered. If several ministers are present, they form a semicircle around the candidate and place only their right hands on his head for the ordination, while the two performing the ordination place both hands on his head. After the prayer, the ministers and the new minister rise, and the president of the field or the one who has been chosen in advance welcomes the new minister to the ranks of the ministry. All of the ministers present wish him God's blessings.

At the end of this service, it is appropriate to sing another hymn or have a special musical piece, depending on what has been prepared. The new minister is then given time to express his gratitude to the Lord and the church for their trust. The ceremony ends with a closing hymn and prayer.

4.9.4. Guidelines and territory of a minister

An ordained minister is called an apostle in the Scriptures. He is not limited to service in a local church. Nevertheless, he is under the supervision of the field or the union and must carefully observe the guidelines of the organization and cooperate in carrying them out. His primary responsibilities include spreading the gospel, winning new souls, and spiritually caring for the flock of Jesus Christ.

The minister is expected to be conscientious, faithful, and obedient in discharging all of his responsibilities for the honor of God and the blessing of the church in harmony with the Bible and the Testimonies.

Furthermore, the Spirit of prophecy says: "Gospel ministers are to keep their office free from all things secular or political, employing all their time and talents in lines of Christian effort." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 252.

4.9.5. Suspension of a minister

In case of a severe offense (teaching against the Principles of Faith, not observing the Ten Commandments, or open rebellion) against existing church order, a minister must be relieved of his position. (This should not be for more than two years, according to World Assembly Resolutions, p. 146: "Consecration as a pastor or elder of the church may be suspended for some time. Suspension may be administered for a minimum of six months, but not more than two years, assuming that the brother committed no open transgression of the sixth or seventh commandment, in which cases his credentials should be automatically revoked.") His release from the ministry does not mean that he is disfellowshipped. He is once again simply a church member. Only a union or field committee can remove a minister from the ministry.

4.10. Church elder

"... 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." Titus 1:5-6.

The Greek word for elder is *presbuteros*.⁷ In the Jewish dispensation, it was a term for members or elders of the Sanhedrin. (Numbers 11:16-17). In the early Christian church, the elders cooperated with the apostles and were present at the council in Jerusalem. (Acts 15:2). In the order of Melchizedek, the ordained elder typifies the heavenly elders who assist Jesus as High Priest in heaven. (Revelation 4:4; 5:11). Likewise, those who are ordained support the ministers in saving souls and guiding churches.

It is a Biblical mandate that qualified church leaders should be ordained as church elders. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:6.

If, during a church business meeting, the members propose and agree that the church leader should be ordained as an elder, a request must be drafted and signed by the church committee and sent to the field. If the field is part of a union, it will first counsel with the union to obtain approval of the candidate; only after receiving this may the ordination service be scheduled. Under the field's leadership, the responsibility for a church may be entrusted only to one who is faithful and conscientious and has the mind of Jesus Christ. Above all, the church elder takes responsibility for the flock that has been entrusted to him in this spiritual office.

The church elder must also be a burden bearer, since the souls who are entrusted to him are God's property, which he carries on his shoulders and in his heart.

The apostle Paul wrote: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." 1 Timothy 3:1.

4.10.1. Ordination of a church elder

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Titus 1:5.

The progress and growth of the church depend on a good leader and his co-workers. The position of church leader is very important in the work and organization of the church.

When a church leader has proven himself to have single-minded judgment, a sense of order, a gift of organization, and a missionary spirit, the church should recommend him for ordination after he has served for at least one year. As a matter of morality, if he is rebaptized, he cannot be ordained as an elder.

Ordination can occur only when all of the prerequisites have been met. If, during a church business meeting, it is proposed and accepted that the church leader should be ordained, a request must be drafted and signed by the church committee and be sent to the field or conference. After the field has given its consent, the ordination service can take place.

The ordination of a brother in the faith to the office of church elder is a sacred matter. The service must be well prepared and well organized. Ordination can be carried out only by ordained ministers. It must be performed by two ministers; if this is not possible due to external circumstances, it may be performed by one minister who has received a letter authorizing him to conduct the ordination in the presence of the president of the field or his representative.

The ordination should take place during a field conference or at least at a district conference. Furthermore, it is recommended that the candidate's wife and children should be present for the ordination.

It is suggested that two or more ordained ministers who have been authorized in advance to do so perform the ordination.

4.10.2. Limits and term of office of a church elder

The church elects the elder, and his work is limited to the local church. He may serve in other churches as well if a neighboring church makes a request for such assistance and the president of the field gives his approval.

According to divine order, a field committee cannot, by itself, grant a church elder authority. If a church wishes to be served by an ordained elder from a neighboring congregation, that elder must also be chosen by the church in question. However, he may serve individual members under the direction of the president of the field.

The ordained church elder may conduct baptisms and the Lord's supper with permission from the supervising minister or the field president. If the Lord's supper is scheduled or souls are ready for baptism, the church elder must inform the president of the field and wait for his instructions. The president of the field will decide whether he will be present at this ceremony to which he has been invited or will ask another minister to be present. He may also commission the ordained elder of the church to perform these services.

The president of the union may authorize ordained elders to carry out the following functions in their local churches or

within the field if authorized to do so by the delegates of the field:

- Perform baptism.
- Extend the hand of fellowship.
- Conduct the Lord's supper.
- Preside over meetings dealing with church discipline or disfellowshipment of a member.⁸
- Anoint the sick.
- Bless and pray for babies and children.⁹
- Dedicate houses of worship.
- Pronounce the benediction.
- Conduct elections in the churches.
- Hold a position within the district, mission field, field, union, division, or General Conference.

An elder of the church is not authorized to:

- Perform a wedding.¹⁰
- Ordain elders, deacons, or ministers.
- Serve as president of a union, division, or the General Conference.
- Conduct elections in a field, union, or the General Conference.

As with all other church officers, the ordained elder is elected for one term and must be elected or re-elected by the church, district, mission field, or field every time he is required to serve. If the ordained elder of the church is not re-elected, he may, by approval of the church, continue to conduct the sacred ordinances. Otherwise, he may not. If he is re-elected after a certain time or is chosen to lead another church, he may conduct the ordinances again. The election of another elder or church leader does not annul his ordination. The church elder is recommended to serve as a church leader, but this is not mandatory; and the church must re-elect him to serve as one of its elders. More than one elder may be ordained in a local church.^{11/12}

The elder of the church is not a delegate by virtue of his office but may be elected as such.

4.11. Bible worker or missionary

"Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." Matthew 10:10.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.

The Bible worker is responsible to the president of the field. If the district leader needs such services, he must make a request to the field president.

"The Lord has need of all kinds of skillful workmen. '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.' Ephesians 4:11-12. Each worker in every branch of work in the Lord's vineyard must have a head and a heart sanctified through the truth to enable him to see not merely the part of the work which is under his supervision, but its relation to the great whole. When the workers are consecrated to God, they will reveal the love of God for their brethren who work under the unseen, divine Master Worker. 'We are labourers together with God.' 1 Corinthians 3:9." —*That I May Know Him*, p. 323.

"Every Christian is bound to be a Bible worker, to do something in imparting to others the great present truth for this time. Communicate what you do know. Tell it, sing it, pray it. Work while it is day; for the night cometh, in which no man can work. God help you, is my most earnest prayer." —*General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899.

The president of the field and the president of the union should call men and women to enter the work as Bible workers.

The requirements of a Bible worker are:

- Preferably, have completed missionary school or canvassing for a certain time.¹³
- Be a member of the church who has not fallen into fornication or adultery after baptism and is the husband of one wife unless widowed.¹⁴
- Be apt to teach, preach, give health advice, and teach Sabbath school lessons.

- Speak the language of the country.
- Have up-to-date legal status and papers in the country.
- Be approved by the committee of the field or union that hires him and will pay his salary.
- Be converted.

"God can make humble men mighty in His service. Those who obediently respond to the call of duty, improving their abilities to the very utmost, may be sure of receiving divine assistance. Angels will come as messengers of light to the help of those who will do all that they can on their part, and then trust in God to cooperate with their efforts. It should be impressed on all who have decided to become workers for God, that they must give evidence that they are converted men. A young man without a sound, virtuous character will be no honor to the truth. Every worker should be pure in heart; in his mouth should be found no guile. He should bear in mind that, to be successful, he must have Christ by his side, and that every sinful practice, however secret, is open to the view of Him with whom we have to do. The true toilers in the Lord's vineyard will be men of prayer, of faith, of self-denial—men who hold in restraint the natural appetites and passions. These will in their own lives give evidence of the power of the truth which they present to others; and their labors will not be without effect." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 79-80.

4.11.1. Responsibilities

When first hired, a Bible worker is on probation for six months to one year. After this period has passed, he/she must comply with the following work requirements, cited as suggestions, but which must be upheld by the field or union committee:

- Work 40 hours per week (160 hours per month).
- Give at least 10 Bible studies and make missionary visits every week.
- Submit a monthly work report to the field secretary, treasurer, and president. The president will evaluate the Bible worker's activity report.

- Visit people in prisons, hospitals, orphanages, nursing homes, etc.
- Perform a few hours (10 suggested) of community service each week. For example, give a talk at a school, take a sick person to the hospital or a clinic, chop firewood for a widow, etc., as service to others without profit.
- Use approximately 10 hours per week to prepare services, sermons, Bible studies, articles for a newsletter, or other presentations.
- Be faithful in paying the tithe and offerings.
- Be loyal to and believe the Bible, Testimonies, Principles of Faith, Church Manual, and World Assembly resolutions.
- First of all, win souls for Christ.¹⁵

A Bible worker in a local church must respect the decisions of the church leader and the church committee. He/she has the right to hold a position in the local church if he/she is proposed and elected by the members.

Furthermore, he/she may be a leader or hold any other position at the request of the local church.

4.12. Colporteur

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:5-6.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isaiah 52:7.

"Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come." Luke 9:1-2; 10:1.

As demonstrated in the New Testament, the Lord designated that His colporteurs go two by two to villages, towns, and cities to preach the gospel and heal the souls, minds, bodies, and spirits of the people.

The work of the colporteur is to open doors and water the seed of truth with literature and Bible truth.

There are three types of colporteurs:

- Occasional
- Half time
- Full time

"God has ordained the canvassing work as a means of presenting before the people the light contained in our books, and canvassers should be impressed with the importance of bringing before the world as fast as possible the books necessary for their spiritual education and enlightenment. This is the very work the Lord would have His people do at this time. All who consecrate themselves to God to work as canvassers are assisting to give the last message of warning to the world. We cannot too highly estimate this work; for were it not for the efforts of the canvasser, many would never hear the warning." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 313.

No other work prepares the soul in the school of humility to be a Bible worker and eventually a minister as does that of the colporteur, although there are people who are Bible workers and ministers without having gone through training as a colporteur. "Canvassing Work Is Not for Everybody—Let us consider the proposition presented at the Minneapolis meeting. Some who did not receive their counsel from God prepared a resolution, which was carried, that no one should labor as a minister unless he first made a success in the canvassing field. The Spirit of the Lord did not indite that resolution. It was born of minds that were taking a narrow view of God's vineyard and His workmen." —*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 260.

A part-time or full-time colporteur connects interested souls to a Bible worker or minister for Bible studies.

"Canvassers should improve every opportunity granted them to learn how to treat disease." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 249.

4.13. Church leader

The church leader is responsible before God and the church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, exercise leadership skills, and participate in the activities of the members and visitors to meet the needs of each person in the church and in the community.

The church leader must be a church member in good standing with leadership ability, but he does not need to be an ordained elder or ordained minister. He needs to “rule with diligence,” be prudent, and take his responsibilities seriously. Romans 12:8.

Church leaders must have the gift of “government.” 1 Corinthians 12:28.

The responsibility of the church leader is to carry out the working plan of the field or union in the territory that has been entrusted to him. He needs to coordinate the church's plans with those of the department leaders and the local members. Every officer needs to have a working plan.

The duties of a church leader are to:

- Conduct the opening of the Sabbath school, divine service, and other religious services. An ordained elder or minister who is present should be invited to conduct the main Sabbath service.
- Lead the church leadership team (church committee) in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and evaluating the church program.
- Schedule and lead regular church business meetings and planning sessions.
- Support and supervise the working plan for all activities and services of the church.
- Help the department leaders and church staff in executing plans and activities.
- Lead missionary activities aimed at advancing the church and other missionary efforts to reach the community. Ephesians 4:12.
- Coordinate the acceptance of new members into the church.

- Only an ordained church elder or minister may extend the hand of fellowship to a new or transferring member.
- Represent the church, with the consent of the church committee and the field leader, in community or legal matters.

The church leader (if not ordained) is not authorized to perform religious services, such as the Lord's supper, baptism, blessing, child dedication, disfellowshipment of members,¹⁶ or anointing the sick, but must request that the minister or the ordained elder perform such functions.

In teaching and example, he must constantly seek to lead the church into a deeper experience with God. The church leader must be able to conduct the worship service and serve the church with the word. However, he should be elected not only for his speaking ability but also for his pious life and leadership abilities.

The church leader is also responsible for seeing that all of the local church functions are carried out by supervising and advising the church secretary and treasurer, as well as the Sabbath school and the youth, missionary, health, family, Good Samaritan or Dorcas, education, music, and multimedia departments, deacons, etc. He must be able and prepared to support and serve everyone.

The following is a suggested order for a church business meeting:

- Silent prayer
- Hymn
- Prayer
- Scripture reading
- Roll call to confirm a quorum
- Reading and modifying the agenda
- Reading of the last minutes by the secretary
- Pending business from the previous meeting
- New business (ideas to consider)
- Missionary plans
- Lord's supper schedule
- Sermon schedule

- Member transfer
- Candidate(s) for baptism
- Revival meeting schedule
- Church elections schedule
- Closing prayer

4.13.1. Reports

The church leader is responsible for following up to be sure that the church secretary submits the church quarterly report to the district, field, or conference and the union secretary (if applicable) within one week after the end of the quarter. After the annual or biennial church business meeting, which generally occurs at the end of the year or in the first days of the new year and includes the election of church officers, a membership list with statistics is completed in January as well as in July of each year. The church secretary and church leader must complete, sign, and send the reports to the field secretary or to the General Conference secretary if the field is not under a union.

4.14. Assistant church leader

The assistant church leader supports the church leader in organizing and carrying out his responsibilities. In the event of the latter's absence, the assistant church leader carries the responsibilities for the church. If the leader resigns, the assistant leader will automatically step into the position of church leader.

4.15. Church secretary

In the Jewish dispensation, God commanded that His people keep a strict record of their numbers and names. This is one of the responsibilities carried out by the scribes who recorded the priests and kings' decisions. 2 Samuel 8:17; 20:24-25. "... Joah the son of Asaph the recorder." 2 Kings 18:18, 37. They were called recorders or scribes. 1 Chronicles 18:16. The scribes kept the archives of special events. Ezra 6:1. They included a chronicle of events, a census record of the congregation, archives for future reference, and written letters with a transcript for the ar-

chives. In the time of the New Testament, those who were baptized were added to the church. Acts 2:47. Letters of transfer were written. Romans 16:1-2. They wrote letters of recommendation at the church council in Jerusalem. Acts 15:23-29.

Because of the importance of this position, the church secretary is the right-hand person of the church leader. He/she is responsible for keeping the church records and list of assets up to date. The secretary is in charge of writing the minutes of all church business meetings. The records of decisions that are made in the church are entered into the church minute books along with the date and place of the meetings and the number of members present. 1 Kings 4:3; Matthew 13:52.

Additionally, special meetings, such as a visit from the conference or union president, and special events should be recorded in the event log of all church activities. The secretary reports these matters at the quarterly and annual church business meetings.

If a secretary is not elected in the missionary department, any activity related to the missionary department must be recorded by the church secretary in the record of events and reported to the church at the quarterly church business meeting.

The term "secretary," like other positions that are expressed in the masculine gender, means both men and women and includes all of the different activities of the local church except for ordaining deacons, elders, or ministers.

The secretary is the leader's right-hand person and the local church's official spokesperson. The main responsibilities of the secretary are to:

- Maintain minutes of all church business meetings.
- Send, receive, and process official correspondence for the church.
- Record all major events that take place in the local church.
- Attend and participate by voting in all church business meetings and church committee meeting.
- Write, submit to the conference and the union, and keep updated all reports regarding church membership.

- Maintain in the files the titles to all church properties, including all legal documents.
- Maintain a list of all church furniture, books, and other tangible property.
- Keep the registration updated if the local church is registered with the government.
- Keep all membership records updated.

4.15.1. Records

The following church records are kept in the church archives, which may be a binder and/or a digital (computer) file.

- **Membership list and transfer letters**
(Ezra 2:62; Revelation 3:5)

The membership file contains personal information about each member of the church. If church discipline, disfellowshipment, or a transfer takes place, it must be recorded in the membership file. All church letters for transferred members are maintained in the membership file. A physical copy or digital backup must be kept in a secure location.

- **Book of events or memories** (Malachi 3:16)

The record of events or memorable activities contains information about events that occurred in the church throughout the year: conferences, seminars, camp meetings, ordinations, baptisms, marriages, funerals, dedications of children, the Lord's supper, disfellowshipments, transfers of members, unique visits by officers of the conference, union, division or the General Conference, and visits by government officials or other special guests, etc.

From the church event log, the secretary presents a report at the church's annual business meeting of the events that took place over the course of the previous year, including church business meetings and a summary report of all activities.

- **Minutes of meetings and church meeting book**
(board or committee) (Acts 15:19-20)¹⁸

This is a written record of all church committee meetings. It is an internal document but essential for the church's affairs. It contains the recorded decisions of the committee, especially

those concerning church expenses. A physical copy should be kept in a secure location.

- **List of assets and legal documents**

(Ezra 8:25-27; 6:1-2)

This file contains an list of all furniture and items owned by the church. The secretary must know where these items are located and how they are maintained. If certain items need regular maintenance or service, this is also recorded in the file. A physical copy should be kept in a secure location.

In addition to the list of assets, all legal documents related to the church should be kept in a safe place, including the constitution, bylaws, registration certificates, and all correspondence between the church and governmental authorities, such as public deeds, property titles, and letters of transfer (for the applicable level of the organization—field, union, and General Conference). Also kept in this file are all “transfer certificates” confirming the proper transfer of all records to the next elected secretary. A physical copy should be maintained in a secure location.

- **Correspondence file (Acts 15:23)**

This file contains all incoming and outgoing correspondence between the conference, union, division, and the General Conference, and members or non-members of the church. A physical copy should be maintained in a secure location.

The secretary is responsible for processing letters for member transfers. See section 2.17, transfer of member and church letter.

4.15.2. Reports

- **Quarterly church report**

The church secretary is also responsible for promptly submitting the quarterly report, officers' election report, and membership list to the secretary of the conference, union, division, or General Conference, if applicable. Malachi 3:17; Revelation 3:5; 13:8.

The information required to compile the quarterly church report must be received in time from the different church officers (treasurer, missionary leader, youth leader, etc.). When information is submitted to the church secretary in writing,

it must be accompanied by a copy of the report form mailed to the conference secretary. All blanks must be completed carefully, especially the membership report, for it shows the incoming and outgoing members and indicates the church's current status. The church leader and church secretary sign the form. This report must be submitted within one week after the close of each quarter.

- **Church officers' election report**

After the annual or biennial church business meeting, which generally occurs at the end of the previous year or on the first days of the new year, the report of the election of church officers is sent.

- **Membership list**

This report includes information for each member and must be submitted in January and July of each year.

The conference secretary accepts the quarterly reports from the churches as well as the election reports of the officers of the various churches, compiles the information, prepares the secretarial six-month report (mission field or field), and sends it to the union if it is under such every half year; but if it is not under a union, it is sent to the General Conference with a copy to the division immediately after delegates' meetings. The same thing happens at the union level. When the union secretary receives all of the reports from the fields, he/she compiles them in the six-month secretary's report and sends it to the General Conference.

See X. FORMS for suggested standard report forms: church membership list,¹⁹ membership record,²⁰ quarterly church report,²¹ secretary's six-month report (mission field or field),²² secretary's six-month report (from union to the General Conference).²³

Each church must have its own seal to be used on official documents, such as those listed above.

4.15.3. Transfer

After new elections, if a change has been made in the person holding the position of church secretary, all of the records and forms must be handed over to the new secretary within no more than 30 days.

The church leader and outgoing and incoming secretaries must be present during this transfer. In addition to transferring all records, the outgoing secretary will provide complete information and instructions on how the work has been performed and what needs to be done about any outstanding matters. To ensure no loss of information, documents, or property, the church leader, outgoing secretary, and incoming secretary must take an inventory and sign a document validating that all information, documents, and property are accounted for and that the transfer was made. The outgoing secretary must keep a copy of this document for his/her personal records.

4.16. Church treasurer

"And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mat-taniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren." "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Nehemiah 13:13; 1 Corinthians 4:2.

The treasurer's primary responsibilities are as follows:

- Receive from the deacons the tithes, first fruits, and offerings for each church service.
- Record and maintain proper double-entry accounting of church funds.
- Make bank deposits.
- Make bank transfers or send checks with the monthly treasurer's report to the proper field or union treasurer.
- Pay all expenses of the local church.
- Attend all committee and church business meetings and participate with the right to vote.
- Prepare quarterly financial reports for church business meetings and statement of assets and liabilities for annual church elections.
- Keep the leader, elder, and/or minister informed of the faithfulness of local church members in paying the tithes.

The office of treasurer is a sacred responsibility, as he/she helps to manage God's property by faithfully keeping records of all tithes, offerings, and expenses. Luke 16:10-12. Since he/she is responsible for all church funds, a qualified and honest church member should be elected for this position; he/she must have the utmost integrity as a steward of God's funds and be able to "give an account" whenever necessary. Luke 16:2.

4.16.1. Funds

- **Funds designated for the local church**

Funds designated for the local church are those collected during the main Sabbath service, local mission offerings, youth offerings, Lord's supper offerings, local poor offerings, local church expense fund, and designated income for the local church.

The tithe of the above offerings is sent to the treasurer of the conference or union.

- Funds designated for the field and union.
- Funds designated for the division and the General Conference.
- Offerings from other services.
- Money designated for the conference and union, such as tithes, first fruits, Sabbath school offerings, conference missionary offerings, and tithes of local church offerings must be transferred monthly to the treasurer of the field or the treasurer of the union. See X. FORMS for the monthly church treasurer's report.²⁴

The third category of funds includes the offerings designated for the General Conference, such as the special Sabbath school and Week of Prayer offerings, and for the Division the Revival Week offering. These funds are also sent to the conference or the union, which then sends them on to the division and the General Conference.

Every movement of money must be confirmed by receipts. 2 Kings 12:10-11.

The minister, treasurer, or any church officer receiving funds/donations for the Lord's treasury must give the donor a written, dated receipt.

"Then, without waiting to be tempted by financial pressure, to use this means for himself, let him deposit it, where, when called for, every penny will be forthcoming, to be used where it was designed." —*Review and Herald*, May 23, 1893.

"Every soul who is honored in being a steward of God is to carefully guard the tithe money. This is sacred means. The Lord will not sanction your borrowing this money for any other work. It will create evils you cannot now discern. It is not to be meddled with by the ____ church." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 185.

The tithes and offerings under the treasurer's stewardship belong to the Lord, and no one has a right to divert this money. Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23.

"The Lord has given His people a message for this time. It is presented in the third chapter of Malachi. How could the Lord give His requirements more clearly or forcefully than He has done in this chapter?...

"This work involves solemn and eternal results, and it is too sacred to be left to human impulse. We should not feel free to deal with this matter as we choose. In answer to the claims of God, regular reserves should be set apart as sacred to His work." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 384. 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 9:6.

The treasurer is responsible for encouraging the members to be faithful to God and reminding unfaithful members of their vows. Unfaithfulness in tithing is often related to other spiritual problems and should therefore be brought to the attention of the church leader, church elder, or minister.

The treasurer is one who has a sacred trust. It is not permissible for him/her to talk about the tithes paid by the members, their income, or anything related to this, except with people who share the responsibility with him/her. The treasurer must maintain complete confidentiality. However, the church leader, church elder or minister, and the auditor are to review the treasury books.

The original purchase price of a local church's property plus remodeling costs must be included in the church's total assets and appear as part of its financial statement. The sale of

property can occur only after the church committee has made an appropriate decision and approval has been given by the higher body. Books must be kept orderly, up to date, correct, and ready for examination. Once they are closed, they must be stored safely. Physical copies of records should be kept in a secure location.

4.16.2. Records

The treasurer's records include all books and documents necessary for proper accounting and bookkeeping.

The books include:

Cash book, petty cash book, accounting book, receipt books, payment vouchers, bank checks, and all financial documents, such as payment receipts, bank statements, auditor's reports, and correspondence file.

Also, a file containing the financial statements includes the balance sheet (assets and liabilities) and income and expense statement.

- **Cash book**

This book contains all cash transactions. It shows the cash balance at the beginning of the year. It also shows the increase in cash on the "debit" side of the book and, on the "credit" side, all the payments (decrease) made during the year. Balancing the two parts (debits and credits) will automatically show the closing cash balance at the end of the year. If the cash book postings are correct, the cash balance will match with the physical cash count (cash in the bank and what is in the treasurer's hands).

- **Petty cash book**

This book is for disbursements of small amounts, so a set amount of cash is kept in the office for that purpose. Recording of transactions in this book is carried out in the same way as the previous cash book. The treasurer withdrew from the bank a certain amount approved as a "fund kept by the treasurer in the office" that he/she uses to make such small payments. This amount is replenished by a check written on the bank account as needed, at which time all expenses paid from petty cash are totaled for each category and posted.

- **Accounting book**

The general ledger contains the various accounts (rent, utilities, etc.). All accounts are maintained by a double entry system, showing the debit and credit for each transaction. At the end of the year, the two sides of the debit are balanced to obtain the balance that will form part of the final accounts on the statement of income and expenses, and then the balance sheet.

All entries must include the date and additional information linked to the funds. A physical copy of the related invoices should be kept in a safe place. Digital backups should be performed routinely.

- **Archive of receipts, payment vouchers, and checks**

This file contains physical proof of all funds transfers. Each donor receives a receipt for his/her donations. A copy is numbered, recorded in the ledger, and kept in the file. Checks and receipts should be organized according to date and be easily accessible to auditors. Additionally, insurance and other important documents are saved in this file. Digital copies should be backed up frequently, and physical copies should be stored securely.

- **File of bank statements**

This file contains all of the bank statements from the bank account opening to its closing. Copies of each bank statement are numbered and carefully stored in the file. Digital copies should be backed up frequently, and physical copies should be kept securely.

- **File of auditor's reports**

This file contains the auditor's reports and all transfer documents.

- **Correspondence files**

This file contains the outgoing and incoming correspondence to and from the church, conference, union, division, General Conference, members, and non-members of the church. A physical copy or digital backup should be kept in a secure location.

4.16.3. Reports

The treasurer must promptly submit all financial reports and funds to the next level. These local reports form the basis for accurately describing funds received for the General Conference, conference, union, and division. See X. FORMS for the quarterly church treasurer's report.²⁵

The treasurer also reports to the church at quarterly and annual business meetings. This report must contain the following elements:

- Fund balances at the beginning and end of the reporting period
- Income from tithes and offerings
- Tithes and offerings sent to the conference, union, division, and General Conference (where applicable)
- Expenses paid from local church funds
- Cash balance
- Bank reconciliation and current bank statement
- Current balance sheet (assets and liabilities)
- Other information as appropriate.

In short, the financial statements show the assets, liabilities, and equity (balance sheet), income and outgoes (income and expense statement), and the balance in each fund.

4.16.4. Transfer of treasury books

It is not advisable to change the treasurer often. Nevertheless, each time new elections are held, if there is more than one candidate who is qualified to manage God's property, the church may elect a new treasurer, and all existing books will then be transferred to him/her. When the transfer is made, no more than 30 days later, it must be in the presence of witnesses, such as the church leader, elder, or minister. After examining the books and finding everything in order, the following note will be entered:

"Transferred in good order" and "Received in good order."

The outgoing and incoming treasurers both sign and date this document. Minutes of the meeting are written. A statement that all accounts are in good standing is provided to the outgoing treasurer for his/her personal records.

4.16.5. Audit of treasury books

The church leader may at any time examine all of the books and reports kept by the church treasurer, as may the field auditors, supervising minister of the district, field treasurer, and field president.

If it is necessary for the treasurer and president of the union to be involved, coordination with the field is required; this is also applicable to other higher levels of the organization.

4.17. Deacon/deaconess

"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 Timothy 3:13. Jesus' promise applies especially to deacons. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.

The appointment of the seven deacons to manage special lines of work proved a great blessing to the early Christian 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 into a united whole the various interests of the church. Youth meetings, in-person and virtual seminars (especially group and personal seminars to prepare for courtship and marriage), practical classes for carrying out missionary work, youth talks, literature, choirs, orchestras, recreational, and social activities are all part of the church's mission to preach the gospel.

"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." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 89.

"Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor." —*Review and Herald*, July 9, 1895; *Daughters of God*, p. 102.

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." Romans 16:1.

The Greek word for "deacon" indicates a servant who selflessly serves his Saviour by helping His weak, sick, poor children. A deacon can be compared especially to a mother, who carries out numerous different responsibilities.

In a church that is composed of many members, several deacons should be elected. The first deacon should be a brother and can be ordained; he does not need to be ordained again if he is elected as a deacon in another church, although he must be elected again each time elections are held. If he is not elected again, his ordination remains suspended until he is again elected or he transfers to another church and is elected there.

Deacons assist with the sacred ordinances. Preparations for baptism or the Lord's supper need to be made well in advance. After those services, the deacons wash the robes and utensils and carefully put them away in a clean, safe place. An ordained deacon may assist the minister or ordained elder in distributing the bread and wine for the Lord's supper.

Deacons are also responsible for keeping the church clean and orderly. They minister to the poor and the sick, purchase utensils and food for the Lord's supper, and obtain baptismal robes whenever it is needed.

The deacons are responsible for preparing the bread and wine for the Lord's supper.

4.18. Sabbath school

"There is a most precious missionary field in the Sabbath school....

"The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God's great instrumentalities to bring souls to a knowledge of the truth." —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 9, 115.

Sabbath School officers must be church members and, with the other officers, are elected for a year or two.

The officers of the Sabbath school are:

- Superintendent
- Assistant superintendent
- Secretary
- Teacher(s)

- Youth teacher(s)
- Children's teacher(s)

4.18.1. Superintendent

Immediately following his/her election, the Sabbath school superintendent should study and make plans for how to conduct the Sabbath school successfully. Church and Sabbath school officers should all be dedicated to making sure that the school is instructive and a great blessing for the salvation of souls.

Any misunderstanding or confusion should be clarified ahead of time at the teachers' meeting, which the Sabbath school superintendent is in charge of.

The Sabbath school superintendent and teachers should strive to make the Sabbath School exciting and carefully handle controversial questions.

Any kind of conflict is inappropriate in the Sabbath school. "The Sabbath school should not be made a place for controversy; it is not the place to make differences of opinion manifested. Let all this kind of work be kept out of the school, and let harmony be maintained. If ideas are advanced that are questioned by members of the school, let not a combative spirit arise and discussion and controversy follow....

"It is not the best plan for teachers to do all the talking, but they should draw out the class to tell what they know. Then let the teacher, with a few brief, pointed remarks or illustrations, impress the lesson upon their minds." —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 117, 115.

If the church has many members, the congregation can be divided into smaller groups to encourage the participation of all who attend the Sabbath school.

Counsels on Sabbath School Work contains excellent information about the operation of the Sabbath school.

4.18.2. Secretary

The Sabbath school secretary is the superintendent's right hand. His/her faithfulness and careful attention to details allow the superintendent to handle the most important functions.

The secretary carries the following responsibilities:

- Write the minutes of the Sabbath school and read them to the congregation.
- Receive the Sabbath school offerings from the deacons, count them, and give them to the church treasurer.
- Coordinate with the secretary of the missionary department to decide how many copies of the Sabbath School Lessons to be ordered, along with other literature.
- Keep the minutes of the Sabbath school in an appropriate book and verify quarterly that the financial records match the treasurer's records.

4.18.3. Youth Sabbath school

The Sabbath school superintendent is responsible for the youth Sabbath school. Teachers are elected at the annual business meeting or appointed by the Sabbath school superintendent. The purpose of the Sabbath school is to educate young men and women for Christian service so that their God-given abilities are used carefully and well.

The youth Sabbath school teacher needs to focus his/her attention on nature, the practical spiritual problems of the youth, and the support of missionary outreach.

4.18.4. Children's Sabbath school

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52. "Our teachers need to be converted men and women, who know what it means to wrestle with God, who will not be at rest until the hearts of the children are turned to love, praise, and glorify God. Who will be earnest workers for souls in our Sabbath schools? Who will take the youth separately, and talk and pray with them, and make personal appeals to them, beseeching them to yield their heart to Jesus, that they may be as a sweet savor to Christ?" —*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 74.

The Sabbath school superintendent is responsible for the children's Sabbath school. The teachers are elected at the annu-

al or biennial business meeting or chosen by the Sabbath school superintendent. The purpose of the children's Sabbath school is to educate the boys and girls about Christian service by cultivating their natural abilities and leading them in correct paths.

The teachers should strive to educate the children in music, service at home, help to the neighborhood, and also how to be part of the church's missionary outreach.

The most crucial objective should be to lead children to the feet of Jesus and help them to understand the great truths of God.

4.19. Missionary leader

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matthew 28:19-20.

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

The leader of the missionary department has the privilege and duty of motivating the church members to be active, since it is through them that the message of salvation is given to humanity. All of the church members should participate in the church's missionary outreach. It is up to the missionary leader to make plans and develop activities that each church member will be glad to participate in. Therefore, he should ask God for special wisdom in the ways and methods by which he and the church can work successfully.

Responsibilities of the missionary leader include the following:

- Present a specific working plan to the church committee in coordination with the next higher organizational level.

- Instruct the members how to generate spiritual interest, give Bible studies, and become proficient in carrying out other missionary activities.
- Motivate the members to visit homes and sick people and to make use of the phone, letters, and multimedia.
- Purchase literature for distribution.
- Give practical demonstrations about how to present literature to people.
- Submit reports on time so that they can be sent to the next level of organization/supervision.
- Conduct regular missionary training meetings.
- Help each member with his/her area of missionary outreach and, if possible, create missionary groups.
- Present the missionary minute in the Sabbath school.
- Coordinate public missionary activities in the church through the distribution of literature, giving presentations, and displaying posters.
- Use the local media as much as possible.

"If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. He would do Christian missionary work."
—*Evangelism*, p. 381.

4.19.1. Secretary

The missionary secretary is elected as part of the outreach team. As in all church departments, he/she occupies an important position. By working closely with the church leader, he/she can contribute very much to missionary outreach.

The missionary secretary is responsible to:

- Support the missionary activities of the church, attend missionary meetings, and write the minutes.
- Support the missionary activities of the church by keeping records, ensuring that sufficient literature is available for distribution, arranging missionary meetings, etc.
- Maintain the files of circular letters, reports, forms, and working plans as well as a list of the names of interested souls.

- Place orders and arrange for payment of invoices for The Sabbath Watchmen, Sabbath School Lessons, calendars, Readings for the Week of Prayer, children's and youth literature, and new literature.
- Collect offerings to supply the church with flyers, Bible course pamphlets, and other missionary publications.
- Direct the believers' attention to available missionary materials.
- Call for weekly missionary reports from church members during the missionary minute in the Sabbath school.
- Prepare the quarterly missionary report of the church and give it to the missionary leader. This report is then presented to the church leader for his signature and given to the church secretary to prepare the church's quarterly report.

See X. FORMS for the church quarterly missionary report form.²⁶

4.20. Children's department leader²⁷

"And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." ... But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14.

The responsibilities of the children's department leader include the following:

- Conduct a children's Sabbath school class every Sabbath in the church or group.
- Organize special events for children, such as special Sabbaths, children's choir, children's orchestra, physical activities, retreats, and excursions.
- Present special programs for children at other times on the Sabbath.

4.21. Youth department leader

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...." Ecclesiastes 12:1.

"Very much has been lost to the cause of truth by a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the young....

"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....

"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." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 207-208, 210.

These fervent words of the Spirit of prophecy show that the church is responsible to educate the young people to be soul winners.

The responsibilities of the youth department leader are to:

- Come close to the young people and help them find Jesus as their personal Saviour (conversion).
- Engage the youth in activities that use and develop their talents to bless others and honor God.
- Educate the young people concerning the dangers and problems of this time.
- Find a way for the youth to be included in missionary activities and train them to do their part for the Master.
- Help the young people to develop their talents and prepare for their life's work.

Convicted, consecrated young people can give a helping hand to thousands of young people who are in the shadow of death and suffer under the slavery of sin.

The success of work for the young people depends on management and God's leading. If the youth department leader and his co-workers are earnest followers of Christ and pos-

sess courageous faith and organizational skills, God's cause will advance and the young people will be saved and educated for the service of God, thus strengthening the entire church.

The youth department leader needs to be a mature, experienced, merciful, kind person with good organizational and management skills. He should not be fickle but firm in character.

In churches with many members and many young people, the following support team should be elected:

- Youth leader
- Youth secretary
- Youth treasurer
- Advisor(s)
- The youth committee is made up of the youth leader, secretary, treasurer, and church leader as one of the advisors.

When the number of young people is small, the same person may occupy the position of secretary and treasurer. This person, as the leader's right hand, writes the reports and manages the money collected for the youth work.

Activities that can be planned:

- Sabbath afternoon youth meetings, which are open to people of all ages.
- Themed meetings that include Bible or Testimony studies on topics of particular interest to young people, music meetings, Bible games, nature studies, courtship and marriage seminars.
- Youth programs in which the young people practice presenting programs in the church, thus glorifying God before the congregation in song and word.
- Sabbath studies for young people.
- Special Sabbaths and weekend activities when young people can share their skills and enjoy nature and healthful Christian recreation.
- Evangelistic programs coordinated with the missionary leader.
- Annual Week of Prayer for young people.

- Musical instrument classes, choirs, and youth ensembles and orchestras.
- The youth secretary maintains a record of the names, addresses, dates of birth, telephone numbers, email addresses, marital status, baptismal status, talents, and interests of all of the young people.

The youth department of the local church is supported financially by:

- Offerings gathered at youth meetings.
- Donations from interested people.
- Part of the income from the sale of literature when young people join in the canvassing outreach.
- Other approved activities that generate funds.
- Special contributions from the field for specific projects.

4.22. Family department leader

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

"Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 340.

"When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

The family is the smallest unit of the church and society. Healthy families build healthy churches. Furthermore, God revealed Himself as part of the family. He is our Father. Symbolically Christ is the groom, and the church is His bride. The experiences made in the family influence its members' understanding of God and His supreme authority. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were

on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

The family department leader is responsible for the following activities:

- Family seminars based on deep subjects that teach members and non-members how to manage their families and avoid conflicts or separations, educate their children, balance discipline and love, and cope with other important matters.
- Public conferences presenting topics on family problems and solutions that benefit the church community.
- Presentations by experienced ministers or trained counselors who teach premarital classes, family counseling, and other subjects of importance in the family.
- Smaller group sessions addressing the difficulties faced by single mothers, single fathers, abandoned, separated, or divorced parents, and members.

If the family department leader is not experienced in any of these areas, he may coordinate with higher-level department leaders for counsel and to find guest presenters.

4.23. Education department leader

Education is the ongoing effort to develop the physical, intellectual, social, and moral faculties of every person so he/she can integrate well into society or a group; it is learning to live. The holy Scriptures emphasize the importance of education, as portrayed in Proverbs 22:6. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"We must preach the truth, pray the truth, and live the truth, bringing it with its gracious, health-giving influences within the reach of those who know it not." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 262.

"True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man." —*Education*, p. 13.

"It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school....

"Wherever there are a few Sabbathkeepers, the parents should unite in providing a place for a day school where their children and youth can be instructed." —*Child Guidance*, pp. 17, 307.

"In every place where there is a church, large or small, there a school should be established." —*Letter 108*, 1899.

The primary responsibilities of the education department leader are to:

- Promote spiritual and cultural development in the church through written and illustrated digital and audiovisual materials in cooperation with the field's education department.
- Promote educational activities in the spiritual realm.
- Establish a primary and/or secondary school.
- Present, share, and establish the truth among the church's members in a way that adapts to the ages, cultures, and responsibilities of the different families that make up the church to achieve the following divine goal: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job 28:28.
- Conduct vacation Bible schools.

"The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is the very highest education." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 37.

4.24. Health/medical department leader

Health is God's gift of grace and is best maintained by choosing the most healthful lifestyle possible, empowered by God's grace. "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Luke 10:9.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied Servant of man's necessity. He 'took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,' that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 17.

"The health reform is one branch of the great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel's message as the hand is with the body." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 320.

Considering the importance of health reform, a great work needs to be done for church members and non-members.

The leader of the health department is usually someone who works in some branch of the health field and has a broad knowledge of anatomy, physiology, preventive therapies, and natural remedies.

The primary responsibilities of the health department leader are to conduct:

- Seminars, symposiums, classes, and health workshops. He/she should expound on basic topics that teach members and non-members how to prevent diseases and improve their lifestyles.
- Health fairs should be organized where health examinations and advice can be freely given to visitors in compliance with local laws.
- Vegetarian cooking classes and demonstrations should be part of the church's missionary outreach.
- Health minutes can be shared during Sabbath services.
- Sabbath services dedicated to a particular health topic may also be presented.

Clinics, health centers, and vegetarian restaurants can be established in coordination with the next higher level of the organization. It is also recommended that the health department leader coordinate and invite speakers from the organization's other levels.

"We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work.

"The world is a lazar house filled with victims of both physical and spiritual disease. Everywhere people are perishing for lack of a knowledge of the truths that have been committed to us. The members of the church are in need of an awakening, that they may realize their responsibility to impart these truths. Those who have been enlightened by the truth are to

be light bearers to the world. To hide our light at this time is to make a terrible mistake. The message to God's people today is, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.'" —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 455.

4.25. Dorcas/Good Samaritan department leader

Christ gave everything for humanity, even His precious life. So, too, the church will have great love and sympathy for the persecuted, those seeking refuge, widows, orphans, and the hungry. Thus, the gospel will be proclaimed in words and deeds. Proverbs 24:11; Isaiah 16:3; Job 29:13, 15-16.

The Bible contains the following record: "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive." Acts 9:36-41.

"Dorcas had been of great service to the church, and God saw fit to bring her back from the land of the enemy, that her skill and energy might still be a blessing to others, and also that by this manifestation of His power the cause of Christ might be strengthened." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 132.

This disciple dedicated her life to working for widows, orphans, and the poor, sewing clothing for them and supplying them with what they needed in difficult times of persecution.

"Every extravagance should be cut out of our lives, for the time we have for work is short. All around us we see want and suffering. Families are in need of food; little ones are crying for bread. The houses of the poor lack proper furniture and bedding. Many live in mere hovels which are almost destitute of conveniences. The cry of the poor reaches to heaven. God sees; God hears. But many glorify themselves. While their fellow men are poor and hungry, suffering for want of food, they expend much on their tables and eat far more than they require. What an account men will by and by have to render for their selfish use of God's money! Those who disregard the provision God has made for the poor will find not only that they have robbed their fellow men, but that in robbing them they have robbed God and have embezzled His goods." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 36.

In the Christian church, an organization emerged whose purpose was to extend a helping hand to those who had fallen into poverty or need through no fault of their own. Thus, the Good Samaritan department holds a very honorable position in God's church.

Depending on the abilities of those with whom he/she works, the Good Samaritan leader may manage the work so that everyone is encouraged to do their best for the honor of God and the benefit of his/her neighbors.

Not only clothing but also food can be gathered to be distributed among believers who, due to natural disaster or other circumstances, have fallen into poverty; in this way, suffering can be alleviated. It is important for the church and field leaders to support the work of the Good Samaritan department.

The primary responsibilities of the leader of the Good Samaritan department are to:

- Provide help to widows, the poor, orphans, and others in need.
- Aid victims of natural disasters.
- Assist the elderly, sick, homeless, injured, refugees, and disabled.
- Collect and distribute clothing, food, natural medicines, and groceries to those in need.

- Establish scholarships for low-income children who attend the church's schools.
- Plan projects to raise funds to help those in need.

4.26. Music department leader

Every church should have a music department leader who works with a pianist, organist, and/or other musicians to play music as well as a person who can lead the congregation in singing. A choir should be organized, especially including youth and children. In some places, several brothers and sisters who play instruments can cooperate to form a small orchestra.

Sister White wrote about the importance and influence of music. "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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 457.

"As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer....

"It is not loud singing that is needed, but clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His glory." —*Messages to Young People*, pp. 292, 294.

The primary responsibilities of the music department leader are to:

- Organize a local choir and orchestra to the best of the believers' abilities.
- Organize and share in music conferences.
- Teach music classes.

- Organize and coordinate those who lead the congregational and special music.
- Encourage and teach the young people to play instruments.
- Teach the congregation to sing the hymns in the International Hymnal and other music books.
- Support the field's music projects.

4.27. Multimedia department leader

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever." "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Isaiah 30:8; Habakkuk 2:2.

The multimedia department was formed to take advantage of available means of communication to educate, inform, and connect with thousands of people with relatively small outlays of funds. John 21:6.

The responsibilities of the multimedia department leader are to:

- Develop a working plan.
- Create pages on social media to share live and recorded church services.
- Obtain, coordinate, and maintain multimedia equipment and links necessary to broadcast church services.
- Encourage the local church members and enlist the help of the young people in such endeavors.
- Provide multimedia support to other department leaders.

Multimedia recordings glorify God by supporting the different departments and especially missionary outreach.

Local churches are encouraged to invest in multimedia equipment—tripod(s), cell phone, projector, camera, sound equipment, computer, and other essential equipment. It is also recommended that high quality transmissions and recordings of important conferences and events be implemented.

4.28. Delegates

Annual church business meetings are generally held in advance of delegates' meetings. Any member in good standing may be elected as a delegate to different levels of the organization.

Every organized church has the right to be represented at the delegates' meetings of the field. Each field has the right to representation in the union delegates' meetings. Every field that is not under a union and all unions have the right to be represented at the delegates' meetings of the General Conference.

Countries where the work is new or has few members have the right to send one delegate to the General Conference if it has an organized church that is recognized by the division. In such a case, the field must cover the expenses of its representative.

Representation of church delegates to mission field and field delegates' meetings ²⁸	
Mission fields and fields with fewer than 50 members	All members are delegates
Fields with 50 to 250 members	1 delegate for every 10 members or part thereof
Mission fields and fields with 250 to 500 members	1 delegate for every 25 members or part thereof
Mission fields and fields with more than 500 members	1 delegate for every 50 members or part thereof

1 J.N. Loughborough, *The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline* (1906).

2 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 104 of 2017: "Individual churches are free to choose whether they will reorganize annually or biennially."

3 Form No. 12

4 *Strong's* G4166, "a Shepherd (literally or figuratively)."

5 W.E. Vine's *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing 1996, p. 462.

6 See page 100, quoted from *The Publishing Ministry*, p. 287.

7 *Strong's* G4245.

- 8 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 56 of 2002: Church Elder, Disfellowshipment. an "Ordained elder has the authority to preside over the disfellowshipment of a member."
- 9 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 82 of 2012: Children's dedication. A church elder may pronounce the blessing and offer prayer for the children.
- 10 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 55 of 2002: Marriage, elder of the church. Church elders may not conduct a wedding.
- 11 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 6 of 1997: Church Elder. If a church elder is not re-elected as church leader, he can still be confirmed to continue carrying out the duties.
- 12 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 60 of 2002: Church Elder, organization. "More than one church elder ... may be appointed in a local church."
- 13 See page 100, quoted from *The Publishing Ministry*, p. 287.
- 14 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 75 of 2017.
- 15 *Review and Herald*, October 25, 1881, par. 4.
- 16 After due process and a majority vote of the local church members. See the "Discipline" section.
- 17 *World Assembly Resolution* No. 104 of 2017.
- 18 Some governments require an official record book that bears the seal of the church and is signed by a witness and the secretary.
- 19 Form No. 1
- 20 Form No. 2
- 21 Form No. 3
- 22 Form No. 4
- 23 Form No. 5
- 24 Form No. 6
- 25 Form No. 7
- 26 Form No. 8
- 27 *World Assembly Resolution* No. 120 of 2012.
- 28 *World Assembly Resolution* No. 106 of 2012.

CHAPTER V

DISTRICT

5.1. Historical background

The concept of a "district" with leaders is in the description of Nehemiah's reform. The Hebrew word is Peleg, which means "circuit," "district," or "part."¹ Furthermore, the Spirit of prophecy refers to ministers who are in charge of districts under a field. "And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters." "But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem;..." "After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of David,..." "After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part." Nehemiah 3:12, 14, 16-17.

"The Lord has been pleased to give me light on this question. I have been shown that ministers should not be retained in the same district year after year, nor should the same man long preside over a conference. A change of gifts is for the good of our conferences and churches." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 420.²

"The plans which have been suggested by our brother, I believe to be sound; and if we practice something in this line in the several churches with which we are connected, we shall find that those churches that carry out a system of labor, educating and training all to do something for the Master, will be living churches; for a working church is a living church. But here it may be urged that there should be ability to educate properly, and to teach how the different members shall do their

part in the work. The one who is appointed as leader in the church, or the minister who has charge in the district, should consider it a part of his work to be overseer of the flock of God." —*Review and Herald*, June 11, 1888.

Since the previous Church Manual mentioned the "district" organizational structure, it is necessary for new guidelines to be given for the benefit of the church.

A district is composed of at least three churches in the same geographic area. The district officers include the leader, secretary, and members (church leaders), who are subject to the operations of the union or field. The ministers and ordained elders of the district are counselors to the district committee. The field committee selects these officers. The term of the leader and secretary depends on the field committee. The leader needs to be a minister or ordained elder, and the committee should ideally be composed of the workers and church leaders within that district. This committee will usually be composed of 3 to 5 members.

When a church leader is replaced by someone else, the new leader will represent that local church in the district. The district committee needs to meet at least once every three months and make plans for the progress of the work. These meetings can be in person, by phone, or virtual. Just as the division is an extension of the General Conference, the district is an extension of the field. All tithes and offerings must be sent to the highest organizational level in that country, which is responsible for paying the salaries of the employees. Any joint activities carried out by two churches within the district must be done in consultation with the district committee. Local church activities can be carried out without such consultation, since the churches are autonomous. For example, if a youth meeting is desired, that can go forward with the approval of the church committee. And the approval for baptism, local meetings, and other church activities depends on the local church's leadership, not that of the district. However, the local church committee can invite the district, and the church committee makes the decision to do so.

The district committee needs to let the local churches within its jurisdiction know that, having twelve members, they may gather as an official church to worship God. "In every place where churches are raised up, just such a work must be done. If there are twelve believers, there must be a house of worship where they can assemble for the service of God. This part of the work is a positive necessity. ... These three little meeting houses in New South Wales are the only ones we own in all Australia, one at Kellyville, eleven miles from Granville, one in Parramatta under a heavy debt, and one in process of building at Seven Hills, in a farming district. This church we will not dedicate until the last dollar is paid." —*The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters*, p. 135.

5.2. Functions

- Coordinate the advancement of missionary outreach within the district, such as doing evangelism, securing literature, operating the Good Samaritan department, conducting health meetings, etc. Brochures and literature may be distributed. Contact with the media, such as radio, Internet, television, etc., may go forward.
- Train and educate members concerning their duties and privileges, according to this Church Manual.
- Find meeting places.
- Promote the establishment of prayer groups and Sabbath schools.
- Conduct conferences or special meetings on the Sabbath.
- Hold district committee meetings.
- Report the district's progress bimonthly or quarterly to the field president and secretary.
- Facilitate the establishment of primary schools.
- Build or construct a facility when the district committee is sure that it will be able to cover the maintenance costs once the project is completed.
- Encourage young people and adults to enter the work, providing their names to the field leader.

- Coordinate different activities with the leaders and elders of the churches, such as the Lord's supper, conferences, seminars, presentations by and for children, baptisms, and others.
- Cooperate with the field leader as needed for the blessing of the churches in the district.
- Assist in solving difficulties between local churches. When there is a problem with a church in another district, the higher level of the organization is responsible to find a solution.
- Facilitate the flow of information concerning missionary activities from the treasurer and secretary to the field.
- Adhere to the plans of the next higher level.

1 *Strong's No. 6418.*

2 *Gospel Workers*, p. 420.

CHAPTER VI

MISSION FIELD

A mission field is made up of the churches and isolated members within its geographical territory. It differs from a field in that it is dependent on a higher-level body, such as a field, union, division, or the General Conference, for financial support. Three percent of the world missions fund is used to help new mission fields for up to ten years.

A mission field has less than 50 members. All of the members may serve as delegates to the mission field delegates' meetings.

There are some fields that had more than 50 members at one time but today have less than that, however, they remain as fields, because they are financially autonomous.

In some countries, the work remains small, so they are still missionary fields under the General Conference. However, they must be registered with the government as a field due to the terminology legally required by the country.

If a mission field is large and works under the supervision of a division, it is designated as a "mission field under a division." If it is under a union, the designation is "mission field under a union." And if it is under a Field, the designation is "missionary field under a field."

6.1. Delegates' meetings/officer elections

Members of a mission field must be notified in plenty of time of the place and date of the delegates' meetings and elections and be provided with an agenda. The elections are supervised by the representative of the next higher level; a quorum of the members of the mission field must be present for the meeting to be valid.

The suggested order of the delegates' meetings, according to Acts 15, is as follows:

- Verification of delegates.

- Reading of the minutes of the previous meetings.
- Reports.
- Laying down of all offices.
- Chairmanship assumed by the top-level officer.
- Election of a temporary secretary.²
- Proposals discussed and voted on.
- Nominating committee with an odd number of members elected. While that committee is in session, the other delegates develop a draft of a working plan that includes items that all of the delegates will vote on.
- Election of new officers.
- Authority transferred by the chairman to the newly elected mission field president and mission field committee.

On some occasions, the statutes may need to be revised. In some countries, it is necessary for organizations to hold annual business meetings. It is recommended to have such annual meetings, either in person or virtually, even in countries where the state does not have such a requirement, to evaluate the progress of the work in the mission field.

6.2. Officers

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • President | • Dorcas or Good Samaritan leader |
| • Vice president | • Publishing leader (optional) |
| • Secretary | • Music leader (optional) |
| • Treasurer | • Multimedia leader |
| • Missionary leader | • Auditor(s) |
| • Canvassing leader | • Literature committee |
| • Children's Leader (optional). | • Finance committee |
| • Youth Leader | • Executive committee |
| • Family Leader | • Mission field committee, composed of all elected officers and counselors |
| • Education Leader | |
| • Health leader | |

The number of officers will depend on the personnel available in the mission field. The responsibilities of the officers are the same as those of the field.

1 Unless it has an oppressive government.

2 According to *World Assembly Resolution No. 1 of 1989*.

CHAPTER VII

FIELD

"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." —*General Conference Bulletin*, January 29, 1893.

"Besides this, in each conference a fund should be raised to lend to worthy poor students who desire to give themselves to the missionary work; in some cases such students should even receive donations." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 69.

"As far as control is concerned, it is carried out in the following way: The churches will be monitored and supervised by the field; the fields in the same way on the part of the union, and these on the part of the division, as well as on the part of the General Conference as a higher organization." —*World Assembly Resolution No. 2 of 1989*.

7.1. Two types of fields

There are two types of fields. One is the field that is under the General Conference, and another is the field that is under a union. As a rule, they have the same officers, and the functions of the officers are similar. Where they differ is in the size of the territory for which they are responsible.

There is another fundamental difference, and that is the matter of finances. A field that is under the General Conference

receives all of the tithes and offerings from the local churches in the field. The funds do not go to the districts but directly to the field, which pays the employees. Six special offerings must be sent on time to the General Conference or the division to which the field belongs. Four of these offerings are for the General Conference, and two are for the division. Before making any other payments, the field must send 10 percent of its income to the General Conference. It must also send 1.5 percent of its income to the General Conference for the Foreign Missions Fund and 1.5 percent to the Division. Additionally, it sends to the General Conference the Special Sabbath School Offerings and the offerings gathered during the Week of Prayer. The other two offerings are for the division, amounting to 2 percent of all income before payments as well as 2 percent of the annual offering for the General Conference that is gathered during the Week of Prayer.

When a field is part of a union that includes several countries, there is a seventh contribution made to the union to which they belong. That is 10 percent of all income to help defray the union's operating expenses.

7.2. Formation of a field

Requirements:

- Composed of churches and isolated members.
- Has at least one minister or ordained elder, who is preferably ready to be ordained as a minister.
- Is financial self-sustaining.
- Must have legal status; this is when there is one field in one country.

7.3. Responsibilities

- Coordinate the advancement of missionary outreach within the field, including evangelism, literature, the Good Samaritan, and health campaigns. Pamphlets and literature should be distributed. Broadcast the gospel on radio, television, the Internet, and virtual media.
- Train and educate members concerning their responsibilities and privileges, in line with this Church Manual.
- Find and rent facilities for meetings.

- Promote the establishment of prayer groups, Sabbath schools, and the opening of new churches.
- Hold conferences, special Sabbaths, spiritual retreats, camps, etc.
- Hold field committee meetings.
- Watch over the souls, property, and records of the church.
- Send a report every six months to the president and secretary of the union or to the General Conference, with a copy to the division, about the progress being made in the field.
- Establish primary schools.
- Build or construct a church building when a church shows that it can cover the maintenance costs after the building is finished.
- Encourage young people and adults to enter God's work, forwarding their names to the president of the union under which the field operates.
- Prepare a working plan and schedule of activities.
- The field has several committees, such as the executive committee, made up of three or five people; the plenary committee, which includes the executive committee and other advisors, who are generally a few leaders of departments; the literature committee, which is usually made up of 3 to 5 people; and the finance committee, which also has 3 to 5 people.¹
- Support churches in local activities, such as the Lord's supper, conferences, seminars, presentations for children, and baptisms.
- Assist in resolving difficulties between local churches or districts.
- Send information about missionary activities, financial matters, and the field's wellbeing to the General Conference, with a copy to the division or the union if the field is under a union.
- Send delegates to the delegates' meetings of the next higher level of the organization.

7.4. Delegates' meetings/officer elections

Churches must be informed in sufficient time of the date and place of the field delegates' meetings as well as the agen-

da. A field representative oversees the delegates' meetings of the next lower level.

The suggested order of the field delegates' meetings, as shown in the first apostolic council in Jerusalem in Acts 15, is as follows:

- Verification of delegates.
- Reading of the minutes of the previous delegates' meetings.
- Reports.
- Laying down of all offices.
- The top-level representative continues to lead the meetings.
- Election of a temporary secretary.²
- Proposals discussed and voted on.
- A nominating committee elected with an odd number of members. While that committee is in session, the other delegates develop a draft of a working plan that includes items that all of the delegates will vote on.
- Vote for new officers.
- Authority transferred by the chairman to the newly elected president and field committee.

On some such occasions, the statutes may be revised. Some countries require registered organizations to hold formal delegates' meetings once a year. It is recommended to have annual assemblies, either in person or virtually, even if the government of the country does not require it, to evaluate the progress of the work.

Delegates' meetings with elections are held every two or three years. The meetings are coordinated with the next higher level—the union, division, or the General Conference. Usually, the division is responsible for conducting the elections for the fields that are under the General Conference, and the union is responsible for the fields under it. The date and location should be announced six months in advance. Delegates from the local churches to the field are elected during the annual or biennial church business meetings.

Where possible, it is recommended that retired ministers be invited to attend the field delegates' meetings as honorary

members without the right to vote.³ Higher-level officers may be advisors at other levels of the organization.

Fields directly under the division/General Conference send one delegate for every 500 members or fraction to the World Assembly, according to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 117 of 2012.

7.5. Delegates

In accordance with Acts 15, churches elect delegates to the field. The delegates must be spiritual people who have good judgment, are discreet and mature, and are filled with the Holy Spirit. They should not come to be discordant or cause confusion, because God's church is united. 1 Corinthians 11:16. It is essential that they be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." James 1:19. They must come with a spirit of humility and cooperation.

Those who are elected to be delegates must be faithful in paying the tithe. Malachi 3:10. When they arrive at the delegates' meetings, they must present their certification letters that attest that they are official delegates from their churches. They have a voice and a vote. The three purposes of the delegates' meetings are to (1) hear and approve reports, (2) elect officers, including the nominating committee, and (3) decide on proposals according to the feasibility of their implementation. They will also develop and vote on the working plan and create or revise bylaws, etc. Only delegates at the General Conference level can decide on doctrine.

Delegates can be elected to form temporary committees during the delegates' meetings, such as for nominations, book reviews, planning, etc.

The one who presides over the delegates' meetings is the leader of the next higher level, which may be the union if the field belongs to it or is under the division. Every delegate must respect the assigned time and limitations imposed by the presiding officer and the agenda. Delegates elected to the nominating committee must maintain strict confidentiality. They may not campaign for any candidate.

Ministers, ordained elders, ordained deacons, and Bible workers should have preference in being chosen as delegates, although lay people may also be delegates.

"And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." "And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present." Acts 15:6; 21:18.

The number of delegates elected to the nominating committee is generally 5, 7, or 9—always an odd number. Their responsibility is to consider the needs of the field and propose as officers those members who are most competent for each office. The nominating committee is led by the union leader or his representative. Past officers and ministers who have worked in churches, districts, mission fields, and fields may be members of the nominating committee only if they are delegates. If someone with good experience is not elected to the nominating committee, his counsel should also be sought.

The nominating committee must be impartial in proposing for office brothers and sisters who will be a blessing to God's work. The nominating committee's deliberations are strictly confidential. There is nothing more offensive to Christian ethics than for a member of the nominating committee to speak outside of the committee regarding the deliberations concerning a member whose name was proposed for office. Such action is sufficient to exclude him from future participation in the nominating committee. This principle is valid for nominating committees at every level of the organization. The nominating committee is disbanded once the new officers have been elected.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:31.

"And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them." Acts 15:3-4.

The foundation for governing the church is found in the Old Testament. The children of Israel were made up of tribes, and the tribes were made up of families, each of whom had their prescribed area. Joshua 15:1-2. In the same way today, a number of churches compose fields, and each field has its territory. Thus, fields can expand beyond those limits only with

the authorization of the committee of the neighboring field. Exodus 19:21-24.

The delegates elect the field officers, who will serve for the following two or three years. The officers are also responsible to inform the local churches in the field of the results of the elections and any other decisions made by the delegates. The newly elected field secretary is responsible for completing and sending the "Union/Field Officer Elections"⁴ form to the union, or to the General Conference secretary with a copy to the division secretary if the field is not part of a union.

Delegates continue to deliberate until all of the field officers are elected as registered with the government.⁵ In the case of legal issues, the consent of the General Conference committee must be obtained.

As for holding extraordinary delegates' meetings to revise the statutes before or after delegates' meetings, the same delegates must be present at both meetings. In all cases, field or union delegates who are under the General Conference are supervised by an authorized officer of the General Conference or division.

If necessary, special meetings may be called to address specific matters, without the need for elections, with an authorized person from the next higher level of the organization present (see *General Conference World Assembly Resolution* No. 43 of 1928, and No. 118 of 2012).

7.6. Isolated members of the field

Members who are not members of a local church are also part of the body of Christ. The field committee is responsible for all matters concerning accepting and disfellowshipping these isolated members.

To the extent that the financial situation permits, the president of the field may choose a central location where the isolated believers may come together and present their requests and proposals and discuss them with the officers of the field. At this meeting, the isolated members elect, in the presence of the representative of the field, their delegate(s) to the field delegates' meetings.

If, because of geographical or financial constraints, it is impossible to hold an annual meeting as indicated above, the isolated members should be requested to submit their requests and proposals in writing. The secretary of the field must not only inform them about this and the election of officers but must also, from time to time, inform them about what is happening in the field. In such a case, the field committee elects the delegates from among the isolated members to represent them at the field delegates' meetings.

7.7. Officers

The field officers are as follows:

- President
- Vice president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Missionary Department Leader
- Canvassing Department Leader
- Children's Department Leader (optional)
- Youth Department Leader
- Family Department Leader
- Education Department Leader
- Health Department Leader
- Dorcas or Good Samaritan Department Leader
- Publishing Department Leader
- Music Department Leader
- Multimedia Department Leader
- Auditor(s)
- Literature Committee
- Finance Committee
- Executive Committee
- The plenary committee of the field is composed of the field executive committee plus advisors, usually a few of the department leaders.

7.7.1. President

The primary responsibilities of the field president are to:

- **Educate the ministers within the field's territory**

"Conference presidents should educate ministers to educate members and together they can so educate the churches that it will not be necessary to call the ministers of the conference from the field to settle difficulties and dissensions in the church. If the officers in the conference will, as faithful servants, perform their Heaven-appointed duties, the work in our conferences will not be left to become entangled in such perplexities as heretofore. And in laboring thus, the workers will become solid, responsible men, who will not fail nor be discouraged in a hard place." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 419.

- **Teach the ministers and members that not giving a faithful, prompt tithe is robbing God**

"Many presidents of state conferences do not attend to that which is their work—to see that the elders and deacons of the churches do their work in the churches, by seeing that a faithful tithe is brought into the treasury. Malachi has specified that the condition of prosperity depends upon bringing to God's treasury that which is His own." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 305.

- **Choose workers who think differently than they and allow them to consider and improve their abilities and work**

"How my heart aches to see presidents of conferences taking the burden of selecting those whom they think they can mold to work with them in the field. They take those who will not differ with them, but will act like mere machines. No president has any right to do this. Leave others to plan; and if they fail in some things, do not take it as an evidence that they are unfitted to be thinkers." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 304.

- **Give equal importance and support to each department.**
Deuteronomy 25:13-15; Proverbs 20:10, 23

"The presidents of our conferences have a duty to do, our board of directors should have something to say in this matter, that the different branches of the work of God may receive equal attention." —*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 654.

- **Enter new areas**

"We now ask those who shall be chosen as presidents of our conferences to make a right beginning in places where nothing has been done." —*Evangelism*, p. 521.

- **Support medical missionary work**

"Recognize the medical missionary work as God's helping hand. As His appointed agency it is to have room and encouragement." —*Evangelism*, p. 521.

- **Manage with balance and equity without threats or a domineering spirit. 1 Peter 5:2-3**

"You should never usurp authority or sue or threaten to say, 'Unless you do what I say, you will not receive payment from the field.' The man who would speak such words should be removed from his place as president of the field." —*Christian Leadership*, p. 35, No. 2.⁶ This is applicable at every organizational level of the church.

"The spirit of domination is extending to the presidents of our conferences. If a man is sanguine of his own powers and seeks to exercise dominion over his brethren, feeling that he is invested with authority to make his will the ruling power, the best and only safe course is to remove him, lest great harm be done and he lose his own soul and imperil the souls of others." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 362.

- **Preside over field committee meetings and any field-level committee at which he is present**

The field president develops a working plan and a schedule of activities and visits to the churches with the field committee and officers. As necessary, at least twice a year, he calls the committee together to discuss necessary issues, establish new plans, and analyze and review goals and work methods.

- **Delegate specific responsibilities and functions to the vice president**

- **The president must report to the delegates during the midterm briefing and at the end of the term**

In addition, every six months, the field president sends a report of the status of the field to the president of the union if the field is under one, or to the president of the division if it is not. In addition, every month, he sends his work report to the secretary of the field with a copy to the secretary of the union or division.

- Be a signatory on all church bank accounts along with the treasurer. The president is to receive and review the financial reports of the field every quarter.
- Along with the secretary, safeguard all assets of the field, whether automobiles, parsonages, publishing houses, churches, schools, clinics, etc. Everything is to be done according to the Bible and Testimonies.
- Communicate with the employees, counsel with them, and supervise their work. Working with the committee, as necessary, the field president transfers and relocates personnel for the blessing of the field.
- As the legal representative of the field before the government, keep the government's legal requirements up to date, especially regarding the field's legal status.
- Ensure that the secretary and treasurer fulfill their responsibilities by sending the funds and corresponding reports on time.
- Fulfill other responsibilities as needed.

Included in the responsibilities of the field president and committee are not only the leadership and shepherding of the churches and individual members but also the planning, organization, supervision, and dissemination of the gospel through the word and publications in their jurisdiction; that is, managing the entire field.

Successful work depends on how well the president and his coworkers understand how to inspire the church members to be eager coworkers and engage them in the working and planning process. In their activities, the Bible workers conscientiously support and execute the instructions and tasks of the field president and the committee. The field president schedules delegates' meetings every two or three years.⁷ The time and location of these meetings should be announced one and a half years in advance.

7.7.2. Vice president

The field vice president assists the president in the organization and execution of his responsibilities. In case of his

absence, the vice president carries the president's responsibilities and functions. If the president resigns, the vice president will automatically assume the role of president.

7.7.3. Secretary

"Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder." "And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Shavsha was scribe." 1 Kings 4:3; 1 Chronicles 18:16.

The field secretary is responsible for maintaining all records and the inventory of the field.

"And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king." Jeremiah 36:20.

The field records include the following:

- **Field membership list**

Contains the names of the members of the Field—date of baptism, phone number, email address, and current position in the church.

- **List of employees, lay people, and field officers (ministers, Bible workers, ordained elders, ordained deacons, canvassers)**

The personnel list must contain, as applicable, the following data for the employees: names, telephone numbers, addresses, email addresses, dates of baptism, dates of ordination, and offices held in the field. The employee list should include active ministers, retired and lay ministers, ordained elders, ordained deacons, Bible workers, canvassers (fulltime, parttime, and occasional), and administrative staff. The secretary is also responsible for issuing credentials to the workers, signed by the president and secretary.

- **Minutes**

This is the record of administrative meetings.⁹ Generally, there are three minute books: Minutes of field delegates' meetings/elections, minutes of the plenary committee, and minutes of the executive committee. These are legal documents of great importance, not only for internal use but also for governmental authorities where the field is registered. A physical copy of all minute books should be kept in a secure location.

- **Record of assets**

Assets include properties, churches, cars, land, businesses, schools, facilities (e.g., health clinics), electronic equipment, libraries, etc. The record contains the list of all properties and items that belong to the field. It is assumed that the secretary will know where each item is located and maintained. If some items require regular maintenance, a record of that should be entered in the record of assets. A physical copy should be kept in a secure location.

- **Legal documents**

The legal documents file contains the constitution, bylaws, registration certificates, property titles, asset sales, powers of attorney, and all official documents from government authorities. Also kept in this file are all “transfer certificates” confirming the transfer of the records from one field secretary to the next. A physical copy should be kept in a secure location.

- **Correspondence**

There should be a correspondence file of both letters received and letters sent. This can be physical, digital, or both. The items may be organized chronologically or by sender or receiver.

- **Archives**

This contains all reports that are sent and received. After every half year, the field secretary sends the secretarial six-month report on time (in January and July) to the union or the General Conference with a copy to the division.¹⁰

7.7.4. Treasurer

“And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things.” 1 Chronicles 26:20.

“Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.” “And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily.” Ezra 1:8; 7:21.

The treasurer’s responsibilities include the following:

- Receive all contributions from the churches for the field.

- Make all field payments.
- Transfer the appropriate amounts to the union, division, and the General Conference, preferably every three months.
- Maintain confidentiality and integrity, according to the Bible and Testimonies.
- Maintain accounting books according to standard accounting procedures in the country.
- Submit a written and oral report to the president of the field once a month.
- Maintain the treasury files.
- Audit the churches in the field.
- Give accounting seminars for local church and district treasurers.
- Participate in field committee meetings.

The position of treasurer is sacred and responsible. He/she assists in managing God's property by faithfully keeping the accounting records, in which are recorded the tithes, offerings, and expenses. Since he/she is responsible for the field funds, an honest, proficient church member must be chosen for this office. His/her signature will be on all bank accounts of the field along with that of the president. He/she will participate in the field committee meetings and give a monthly report to the president and the committee of the field's financial operations, recording all entries, assets, and liabilities. He/she performs the accounting according to generally accepted accounting procedures, as accepted by the government.

The field treasurer is also responsible for the financial fidelity of the churches in the field. When the field is directly under the division/General Conference, he/she ensures that special offerings from the local churches are transferred in a timely manner to the division and the General Conference.

The treasurer is a person in whom a great trust is placed. It is a breach of this trust to discuss the amount of tithes paid by members, their income, or anything else related to it, to anyone except those who share the field responsibilities with the treasurer.

When a field is under a division/General Conference, it sends the following to the General Conference:

- Tithe of all regular income, including tithe (10 percent), first fruits, poor, Sabbath school, and other offerings. Additionally, 3 percent is sent to the World Missions Fund divided between the General Conference and the Division 1.5% respectively,¹¹ and 2 percent goes to the division for its costs of administration.

The treasurer receives from local churches, groups, and isolated members 100 percent of the tithes, first fruits, Sabbath school, and the tithe of all offerings.

One hundred percent of the following special offerings are sent to the General Conference:

- Special Sabbath school offerings.
- Week of Prayer offerings.
- Other donations for that level.

Additionally, the treasurer sends:

- 10 percent of all income to the General Conference.
- 3 percent of all income to the World Missions Fund divided between the General Conference and the Division 1.5% respectively.
- 2 percent of all revenues for the division and of the offerings that stay in the field:
 - Sabbath school offerings.
 - Missionary offerings.
 - Building fund offerings.
 - Offerings for the poor and the Good Samaritan.
 - Literature fund.
 - Other offerings that are kept in the field treasury.

In unions whose territory covers only one country and the union treasurer is responsible for paying the salaries of all of the workers, churches will send their tithes and offerings directly to the union treasurer, not to the field, after the end of each month.

However, if the field is a separate country and is a part of a union made up of several countries, the field treasurers keep the tithes and offerings and pay their workers. The treasurers of the churches send the tithes and offerings to the field treasurer, who must send 2 percent of all income to the division and 10 percent plus 3 percent directly to the General Conference after the end of each month divided between the General

Conference and the Division 1.5% respectively. Additionally, the field treasurer sends a specific percentage of the field income to the union to cover its administrative costs.

Tithes and first fruits are held in the field treasury when the field is not under a union. They are used for the salaries of ministers, elders, Bible workers, and other church employees. These funds cover expenses related to missionary work.

The field treasurer is responsible for encouraging the church treasurers to be faithful to God. He is responsible to instruct and supervise the church treasurers and must audit their books at least once a year.

The assets of a field must be included in the record of assets, equipment, automobiles, etc. The files must be in the secretary's office, but the data must be available to the treasurer for accounting purposes.

Property can be sold after an appropriate decision is made by the field committee. Accounting books must be kept orderly, clean, up to date, correct, and ready to be examined at all times. Once closed, they are stored in a safe place. The field treasurer's files include the following:

- **Accounting books**

The general ledger contains records of all day-to-day incoming and outgoing funds. The figures are recorded accurately. All entries must include the date and additional descriptive information related to the funds. A physical copy should be kept in a secure location. Digital backups should be made routinely.

- **Journal/accounting book**

Accounting is the systematic recording of all financial transactions. It ensures that the records are correct, current, and complete. The "double entry" system involves a debit entry (outflows or expenses) in one account and a credit entry (inflows or income) in another account. Each transaction has a number and is linked to evidence of the transaction: receipt, bank statement, committee decision, or other. The accounting balance must be closed monthly and be ready to be audited at any time. Physical and digital backups must be kept in a secure location.

- **Receipts/checks**

This file contains physical proof of all funds transfers. Every donor receives a receipt for his/her donations. A copy must be numbered, recorded in the general ledger and the accounting, and stored in the file. Checks and receipts should be organized by date and be easily accessible to auditors. Additionally, insurance and other important documents are kept in this file. Digital and physical copies should be backed up frequently and kept safe. The treasurer should never deliver money without signing a receipt. "The minister or the steward who receives the funds for the Lord's treasury should give the donor a written receipt for the same, with the date." —*Review and Herald*, May 23, 1893.

- **Bank statement file and bank reconciliations**

This file contains all bank statements from the opening of the account to its closure. Copies of each bank statement are numbered, carefully stored in the file, and recorded in the general ledger and accounting. Digital and physical copies should be backed up frequently and kept safe.

- **File containing the auditor's reports**

This file contains the reports of the auditor and all "Transfer Certificates." In addition, the committee's response to the auditors' recommendations must be kept as a list of the implementations of the recommendations, such as the rejection of specific recommendations and the reasons why.

- **Correspondence files**

All correspondence that has to do with the field treasury must be filed with a copy to the secretary.

- **Petty cash account**

An amount specified by the committee must be kept in cash, as a petty cash account. When cash is paid out, a receipt must support it, including the expense that it was for. When the petty cash is almost gone, the receipts are added up for each accounting category, and a check for the total expenses is written, to be cashed and placed in the petty cash box. The receipts plus the amount of cash in the box will always total the amount of the petty cash account.

Reports:

- When the field is not under a union, the field treasurer files reports with the division/General Conference from the churches, groups, and isolated members and transfers the appropriate funds.
- When the field is under a union, the treasurer sends a report to the Union treasurer with the appropriate funds. The treasurer must complete and submit Form 12 along with the funds. No delay is permitted in this matter, considering that the accurate accounting records of the division and the General Conference are dependent on the correct and timely reporting and transfers made by the conferences and unions.
- When the field is part of a union in a single country, the field is not required to keep complete accounting; it must only account for the funds that it manages.
- **Transfer between treasurers**

It is not advisable to change treasurers frequently. However, in the event of new elections in a field and more than one person is qualified for this responsibility, a new treasurer may be elected, and all books must be transferred within 30 days. The president must be present when the books and money are transferred. After the books are examined and everything is found to be in order, a note should be placed in the books that says, "Delivered correctly" and "Received correctly."

The outgoing and incoming treasurers sign this document to validate the entry and assign the correct date to the statement. When this occurs in the field, the president and the secretary must be present and draw up corresponding minutes to record the transfer. In the event of a change in the treasurer, the field president will supervise the transfer of all funds, accounts, and books.

7.7.5. Missionary department leader

"Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." Mark 5:19-20.

"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Matthew 9:35-38.

"There should be a well-organized plan for the employment of workers to go into all our churches, large and small, to instruct the members how to labor for the upbuilding of the church, and also for unbelievers. It is training, education, that is needed. Those who labor in visiting the churches should give the brethren and sisters instruction in practical methods of doing missionary work." —*Christian Service*, p. 58.

The field missionary department leader is responsible and privileged to motivate and coordinate evangelism projects with the churches' missionary leaders and the field's laymen.

The responsibilities of the missionary department leader are:

- Prepare and present a specific working plan to the field committee.¹³
- Instruct the missionary leaders and lay people in various missionary methods.
- Develop evangelism campaigns in the churches.
- Ensure that the churches have printed materials to carry out the missionary outreach.
- See that reports are submitted on time to be forwarded to the next higher level.
- Regularly hold missionary and training meetings.
- Encourage local church missionary leaders to give missionary minutes.
- Develop plans to establish churches in unreached areas.
- Promote the missionary activities of the field.

7.7.6. Canvassing department leader

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:5-6.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isaiah 52:7.

Canvassing is part of the training for Bible workers and ministers. "Some men whom God was calling to the work of the ministry have entered the field as canvassers." —*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 34.

The responsibilities of the canvassing department leader are to:

- Present a specific working plan to the field committee.
- Request literature from the publishing department.
- Regularly conduct canvassing seminars and training.
- Practically demonstrate how literature should be offered and sold to people.
- Carry out assignments in consultation with the president of the field.
- Ensure that invoices for the purchase of books are paid on time.
- Ensure that the canvassers systematically pay for the books that they sell and pay their tithe on the profit.
- Send a report to the field secretary and publishing department leader of the books sold and the interested souls won through the work of the department.
- Include church members and youth in missionary outreach through books.¹⁴

7.7.7. Children's department leader (optional)

"And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14.

The responsibilities of the children's department leader are the following:

- Provide and promote children's Sabbath school classes and lessons in all of the churches.
- Organize children's seminars and conferences.

- Organize camps and excursions for children.
- Sponsor vacation Bible schools for children.
- During public conferences, organize and conduct a children's conference.
- Organize training seminars for children's teachers in different churches.
- Prepare material for child evangelism.

At the World Assembly, it was agreed that the unions and fields (and mission fields) should create a children's department to educate the children.¹⁵ It was also agreed that the field children's department would be supervised by the education department and the ministerial department of the General Conference.¹⁶

7.7.8. Youth department leader

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness." "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." Ecclesiastes 12:1; Lamentations 3:23; 1 John 2:14.

"With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the world!" —*Messengers to Young People*, p. 196.

"There are many lines in which the youth can find opportunity for helpful effort. Companies should be organized and thoroughly educated to work as nurses, gospel visitors, and Bible readers, as canvassers, ministers, and medical missionary evangelists." —*Christian Service*, p. 3.

"Very much has been lost to the cause of truth by a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the young....

"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....

"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." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 207–208, 210.

These earnest words from the Spirit of prophecy show that the responsibility for the young people rests on the church, for it must educate them to become soul winners.

The responsibilities of the youth department leader are to:

- Organize a working plan, including seminars, youth conferences, camps, and spiritual retreats.
- Help the youth leaders at the local level in their roles, such as developing the youth program so that it is varied and spiritual.
- Schedule youth committee meetings in person or virtually to make plans and organize activities.
- Use digital, virtual, and physical media to communicate with the youth leaders.
- Give a quarterly report to the field president.
- Interact with young people to help them find Jesus as their personal Saviour (conversion), beginning at home and continuing through the church of God.
- Engage the young people in activities that use and develop their talents to help others and honor God.
- Educate young people regarding the unique dangers and problems of today.
- Enlist the help of the young people in missionary activities and train them to do their part in the Master's work.
- Coordinate missionary programs with the missionary leader.
- Coordinate the annual Week of Prayer for young people.
- Share responsibilities with the youth committee.
- Join and promote the youth activities of the union and the General Conference.

All of these activities are organized and carried out in coordination with the field president and the field committee. The youth secretary maintains a register with the names, addresses, dates of birth, marital and baptismal status, talents, and interests of the young people.

Donations from interested people support the field's youth department, along with approved activities that generate income, including special contributions from the field treasury for specific projects.

Convicted, consecrated young people can extend a helping hand to thousands of young people who are in the shadow of death and who suffer under the slavery of sin.

7.7.9. Family department leader

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15.

"At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people." Jeremiah 31:1.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Timothy 5:8.

"Our work for Christ is to begin with the family, in the home.... There is no missionary field more important than this....

"By many this home field has been shamefully neglected, and it is time that divine resources and remedies were presented, that this state of evil may be corrected." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 35.

"Explain how important it is for every family to understand the science of life. Direct their minds to Him who formed and who keeps in motion the wonderful machinery of the body. Tell

them that it is our part to cooperate with God, caring wisely for all our faculties and organs." —*Christian Service*, p. 152.

The family is the smallest unit of the church and society. Healthy families form healthy churches. Furthermore, God revealed Himself as part of the family. He is our Father, symbolically Christ is the Bridegroom, and the church is His bride. The experiences made by families shape the understanding of God and His supreme authority.

The responsibilities of the family department leader are as follows:

- Hold seminars, retreats, and family conferences that present topics for families and non-members in how to develop stable families and avoid conflict or separation, including how to educate their children, maintain discipline and love in balance, and other topics.
- Organize public conferences on how to deal with problems and solutions in the family environment for the blessing of the community and God's glory.
- Coordinate with experienced ministers or trained counselors to provide premarital counseling, marriage counseling, and other types of counseling.
- Address and present principles for resolving the difficulties faced by single mothers, single parents, and divorced members.
- Coordinate activities with the next higher-level family department leader.
- Include and promote in the field the activities of the union and General Conference family departments.

7.7.10. Education department leader

"Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish." Proverbs 12:1.

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Matthew 4:23.

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Ephesians 4:11.

The holy Scriptures emphasize the importance of education, as written in Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man." —*Education*, p. 13.

"In some countries parents are compelled by law to send their children to school. In these countries, in localities where there is a church, schools should be established, if there are no more than six children to attend." —*Child Guidance*, p. 308.

"Bring into service all the talent at command, and follow up the work with publications upon the subject. 'Educate, educate, educate,' is the message that has been impressed upon me." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 451.

"In localities where believers are few, let two or three churches unite in erecting a humble building for a church school." —*Child Guidance*, p. 307.

The responsibilities of the education department leader are to:

- Promote spiritual and cultural development in the field, churches, and secular life through written and illustrated materials and seminars.
- Promote educational activities in the spiritual area for primary and secondary schools.
- Establish and develop primary and secondary schools.
- Prepare materials containing present truth for the people that support the ages, cultures, and responsibilities of the different groups that make up the church.
- Include in your working plan and promote the union and General Conference educational materials (Sabbath School Lessons and Readings for the Week of Prayer).
- Put forth efforts to achieve the following divine goal:

"And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job 28:28.

"The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ expressed in character is the very highest education." —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 37.

7.7.11. Health department leader

"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." "A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health." "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." "Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health...." Exodus 15:26; Proverbs 13:17; Luke 10:9; Acts 27:34.

"How shall we reveal Christ? I know of no better way to reveal Him than to go forth as missionaries to our world. I know of no better way than to take hold of the medical missionary work in connection with the ministry." —*General Conference Bulletin*, April 23, 1901; *Medical Ministry*, p. 241.

"True medical missionary work is of heavenly origin. It was not originated by any person who lives. But in connection with this work we see so much which dishonors God that I am instructed to say, The medical missionary work is of divine origin, and has a most glorious mission to fulfill.... Those who are workers together with God will just as surely represent the character of Christ as Christ represented the character of His Father while in this world." —*Medical Ministry*, p. 24.

The responsibilities of the health department leader are to:

- Present concrete working plans to the committee for the health leaders of the different churches in the field.
- Conduct regular health training seminars, health fairs, medical activities, cooking classes, etc.
- Organize health conferences and invite health leaders and professionals.
- Organize a list of health professionals in the field who are church members and supporters.
- Develop materials in coordination with the field or union publishing department.
- Open health centers, health homes, clinics, sanitariums, and vegetarian restaurants in coordination with the field president and committee within the health laws established by the nation.

- Together with the canvassing leaders, promote health literature.
- Develop survey models to be distributed to local health leaders to be used by those who are interested in doing missionary outreach.
- Present conferences and health campaigns on the radio, in person, on television, and in various media where there is an opportunity to do so, as well as in schools, colleges, and universities.
- Submit his/her report to the field president and committee.
- Include and promote the health activities of the union and the General Conference in the working plan.

"The health department or medical missionary can use the International Health Organization with the acronym IHO." —1989 *World Assembly Resolution*.

"The cook in a sanitarium should be a well-trained medical missionary. He should be a capable person, able to experiment for himself. He should not confine himself to recipes." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 297.

"There should be some sort of hygienic restaurant established." —*Kress Collection*, p. 143.

"Our restaurants should not be opened on the Sabbath. Unless they are closed, and the Lord's day is honored, the blessing of God cannot be expected to rest upon this branch of His work." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 288.

"God's purpose in giving the third angel's message to the world is to prepare a people to stand true to Him during the investigative judgment. This is the purpose for which we establish and maintain our publishing houses, our schools, our sanitariums, hygienic restaurants, treatment rooms, and food factories. This is our purpose in carrying forward every line of work in the cause." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 228.

7.7.12. Dorcas/Good Samaritan department leader

"Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in

prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:37-40.

Christ gave everything for humanity, even His precious life. Likewise, His church will have a heart for the persecuted, those seeking refuge, the widows, the orphans, and the hungry. In this way, we proclaim the gospel in word and deed. Luke 10:30-35; Proverbs 24:11; Isaiah 16:3; Job 29:13, 15-16.

The department's organization originated with believers whose purpose was to extend a helping hand to those who have fallen into poverty or need through no fault of their own. The Good Samaritan leader must have a big heart to help those in need. What is collected by the leader must be used to support his neighbor, not himself.

The responsibilities of the Dorcas/Good Samaritan department leader are to:

- Collect donations from members and non-members and coordinate activities with the union or field committee.
- Create projects with leaders of other departments and the leaders of local churches to help those in need.
- If possible, have a secretary and treasurer who keeps the department's funds separate from those of the field. The department members should meet to determine the priorities of requests received from the churches, districts, mission fields, union, division, and the General Conference. Priority should be given to disasters in areas suffering from earthquakes, floods, cyclones, fires, and epidemics.
- Coordinate requests so they go through the proper channels, from the church to the field, the union, the division, and the General Conference.
- Distribute funds, food, medicine, or other aid depending on the department's priorities and financial condition. All of this should be done in consultation with the department members.
- Report to the field president and committee. He/she should communicate well with the General Conference Good Samaritan leader to avoid duplication and to work as a team.

7.7.13. Publishing department leader

“... They shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.” Isaiah 66:19.

“There are many places in which the voice of the minister cannot be heard, places which can be reached only by our publications—the books, papers, and tracts filled with the Bible truths that the people need.” —*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 4.

The responsibilities of the publishing department leader are to:

- Create (design, format) pamphlets, flyers, and other materials.
- Edit, publish, and sell existing inventory.
- Cooperate with the leaders of the other departments—canvassing, missionary, health, and everyone in general.
- Keep publishing operations accounting separate from all others.
- Reproduce and distribute church materials such as the Sabbath School Lessons, Readings for the Week of Prayer, Youth Readings, Family Readings, etc.

The publishing department is responsible for two types of publications—internal and external. The internal ones (primarily for members and interested souls) are the Sabbath School Lessons, Readings for the Week of Prayer, Division Revival Week, The Sabbath Watchman, and Newsletters. The external publications for the general public include doctrinal explanations, magazines, and books.

Neither the field publishing leader nor the field committee can alter the official publications produced by the General Conference and division, such as the Sabbath School Lessons, Readings for the Week of Prayer, and Revival Week. The literature committee reviews new publications; if any publication is to be sold outside the field’s territory, the publishing department leader must consult with the division or the General Conference to see if a review needs to be done by the Ministerial Research Institute.

7.7.14. Music department leader

“Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.” Psalm 150:6.

"And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." 1 Corinthians 14:7-8, 15.

In Israel, the Levites were organized as singers and members of choirs and orchestras. They composed hymns to be sung in the congregation and for worship services in the temple. We read that, in the time of Jesus and the apostles, they also sang hymns. Matthew 26:30.

Therefore, a music leader must be elected at the Field level.

The responsibilities of the music department leader are to:

- Organize choirs and orchestras.
- Conduct rehearsals, preferably before and during conferences.
- Plan music conferences.
- Support music leaders in the local churches by promoting choirs and orchestras in worship services.
- Organize music workshops.
- Encourage and instruct the young people to become proficient in playing instruments.
- Teach the congregations the hymns in the International Hymnal and youth hymnal.
- Support the music projects of the field and the union.

7.7.15. Multimedia Department Leader

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever." "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Isaiah 30:8; Habakkuk 2:2.

"As early as 1842 the direction given in this prophecy to 'write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it,' had suggested to Charles Fitch the preparation of a prophetic chart to illustrate the visions of Daniel and the Revelation. The publication of this chart was regarded as a fulfillment of the command given by Habakkuk." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 392.

The responsibilities of the multimedia department leader are to:

- Develop a working plan.
- Support all of the churches in obtaining equipment and links so that they can broadcast their services online.
- Give practical training seminars in filming, editing, and broadcasting sermons and programs.
- Support the local churches by including young people in multimedia outreach.
- Support every department and its leader.
- Develop websites, audio and video recordings, social media pages, and materials for the other departments, including missionary outreach.

It would be best to have a camera, microphone(s), computer, and other essential equipment in every local church, especially to be used to record and broadcast conferences and events.

7.7.16. Auditor(s)

“And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.” Luke 16:2.

To protect God's cause and encourage faithfulness, regular, systematic examination must take place at every level, from the local church to the General Conference. The auditor must verify the accuracy of the accounting records, prepare a report of the work performed, including deficiencies and recommendations, and deliver it to the respective committee after every audit. An audit should be conducted semiannually and right before new elections are held; the results of the latter will also be presented to the delegates.

The auditor¹⁸ must not be on the payroll, have another relevant position, or be related¹⁹ to the president, secretary, treasurer, or other member of the executive committee, and his/her report must be given to the delegates after that of the treasurer.²⁰

The auditor must be impartial before God and the organization. H/she cannot serve simultaneously as an auditor and a committee member. He/she is to be elected by the representatives of the organizational level to which he reports.

For this position, a brother or sister should be elected who has an excellent knowledge of accounting and is able to review the accounting and prepare the best report for the blessing of the organization.

7.7.17. Literature committee

"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Nehemiah 8:8.

The literature committee's primary purpose is to see that the field and its churches have books, pamphlets, and magazines that present the truth well. "Silent messengers" must be well designed so that people will gladly buy and study them.

The literature committee should be composed of brethren who possess valuable knowledge and deep spirituality to produce literature that is a great blessing to people. This committee is responsible for reviewing the materials printed by the field or used in its territory to avoid errors of both substance and style. The literature committee leader must be a member of the publishing department.

7.7.18. Finance committee

"And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mat-taniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren." Nehemiah 13:13.

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" Luke 14:28.

The finance committee is educationally qualified to advise, support, and assist with financial decision making (for example, in the remuneration of workers), as well as examine projects and advise the field committee concerning such matters through harmonious cooperation. Final decisions reside with the field or union committee. Not all fields need a finance committee, but it is necessary when the field is directly under the General Conference and pays its own employees.

The field treasurer is the leader of and is responsible for the finance committee. If the field president is present, he will preside over the finance committee meetings with the right to speak but not to vote.

The finance committee should give advice concerning the management of physical properties as well as the investment of funds entrusted to the field so that two become four and five become ten. This requires great wisdom and God's blessing so that the work always has a solid financial foundation. Matthew 25:20-23.

The finance committee is convened according to the needs of the field president and treasurer. It is not a review committee but is advisory. Thus, in addition to the treasurer, professionals should be elected who are educated in business, have a heart full of love for God's work, are experienced, and are financially successful.

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- 1 A further explanation will be given later.
 - 2 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 1 of 1989.
 - 3 According to the *World Assembly Resolution* of July 19, 1978.
 - 4 See form No. 9 in the Appendix.
 - 5 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 118 of 2012.
 - 6 Letter written to A.G. Daniells and W.C. White on 12/30/1907.
 - 7 According to the *World Assembly Resolution* of July 10, 2007.
 - 8 If the statutes of the field mention executive, directive, and plenary committees, they must do so.
 - 9 There are several types of minutes, depending on the laws and statutes in different countries. In some, there is a single book for assemblies and various committees; in others, there is one for the assemblies and another for the committee; and in still others, there is one for assemblies, another for the committee of three, another for the executive committee (called the directorate in several countries), which is generally composed of 5 to 7 members, and another for the plenary committee (the officers together with all the department leaders).
 - 10 See Appendix, Form No. 11.
 - 11 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 44 of 1983 (see page 83 of this *Church Manual*).
 - 12 Form No. 12
 - 13 "Let the working plan of the General Conference be drawn up among delegates, as presented in the quotation from *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 410, based on the priorities of the unions as a basis for their work projects" (*World Assembly Resolution* No. 98 of 2002).

- 14 "The work of canvassing is the most important. Without canvassing the
work is dead. Everywhere canvassing must be launched and encouraged"
(*World Assembly Resolution* No. 12 of 1951).
- 15 See *World Resolution* No. 120 of 2012.
- 16 See *World Resolution* No. 121 of 2012.
- 17 This committee can be elected at the assembly or selected by the Presi-
dent and approved by the committee.
- 18 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 44 of 1928.
- 19 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 22 of 2002.
- 20 According to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 3 of 2007.
- 21 The treasurer is often responsible for the publishing house. Therefore, he
gives two reports and then the auditor conducts the review of the books
and writes the two audit reports.

CHAPTER VIII

UNION

8.1. Requirements

- Have a minimum of 500 members.
- Be comprised of two or more fields and/or mission fields.
- Be financially self-sustaining.
- Have a sufficient number of ministers and ordained elders to lead in the fields, mission fields, and districts.
- Have a headquarters building.

The officers of the union are the following:

- President
- Vice president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Presidents of fields and/or mission fields
- Missionary department leader
- Canvassing department leader
- Children's department leader (optional)
- Youth department leader
- Family department leader
- Education department leader
- Health department leader
- Good Samaritan department leader
- Publishing department leader
- Music department leader
- Multimedia department leader
- Auditor(s)
- Literature committee

- Finance committee
- Executive committee
- Plenary (full) committee
- Delegates to the General Conference

The responsibilities of the union officers are similar to those of a field under the General Conference, except that the responsibilities and territory are much greater. To lead all the fields that make up the union so that they can progress consistently and successfully, excellent planning, thorough organization, good direction, careful supervision, and a lot of love for the work are necessary. To view information regarding field officers, please refer to chapter VII. Field.

The union supervises the mission fields and fields, provides them with literature, and supports the spread of the gospel throughout its territory. The union also puts forth efforts to enter new regions.

On the union plenary committee, of which the presidents of the fields are members, rests the responsibility of directing the flock entrusted to them and spreading the gospel to people who are unfamiliar with the truth.

By resolution of the General Conference, the union president, in coordination with the union committee, the division, and/or the General Conference, calls for delegates' meetings every two or three years. The date and place of those meetings and the accompanying conference should be announced approximately six months in advance. Delegates to the union are elected during biennial or triennial meetings in the fields.

8.2. Delegates and elections

"One delegate for every 500 members or fraction, and one extra delegate for each union going to the General Conference." —*World Assembly Resolution No. 117 of 2012.*

The delegates from the fields or mission fields elect the union officers, who will serve for the following two or three years. The newly elected union secretary is responsible for completing and submitting the field/union officers' elections report¹ (see X. FORMS) to the General Conference secretary

with a copy to the division. He/she must also send a circular letter to lower levels informing them of the election results and all essential resolutions. The secretary will additionally complete and submit the Composition of the Union report² (see X. FORMS).

The delegates continue to serve until all of the officers are elected and recognized by the government. According to *Resolution* No. 43 of 1928, if legal questions arise, the consent of the General Conference committee and/or division must be sought.

In cases of change of statutes before or after the elections, the same delegates must attend both sessions. In all cases, the delegates' meetings of a union under the General Conference will be supervised by an authorized representative of the General Conference or division.

"Extraordinary meetings were also allowed to discuss specific matters, without the need for elections, with the presence of an authorized person from the higher level of the organization." (See *General Conference Resolutions* No. 43 of 1928 and No.118 of 2012.) When required by the law of the land, delegates may meet if a representative of the General Conference is present.

The union executive committee, composed of three or five officers responsible for the entire union, have the same responsibilities as the officers of the field, except that they guide, train, and supervise the field officers who are under the union. Those fields, in turn, will do same with the leaders of the districts under their individual field. The union secretary will keep the minutes of the union in a secure place, along with the list of assets, legal documents, correspondence sent and received, and all other union matters.

8.3. Distribution of funds

If the fields and/or mission fields that comprise a union are in the same country, the tithes, first fruits, and offerings from the local churches, as appropriate, will go directly to the

union treasury. It will manage the funds; the payroll, rent, and everything else pertaining to the union will be paid by the union treasurer. The union committee must make the decision about what percentage of the income the union receives will be given to the fields and/or mission fields for the progress of the work.

Ten percent (tithe) of all receipts from the churches is sent by the union treasurer to the General Conference treasurer.

Three percent of all receipts from the churches is sent by the union treasurer to the General Conference treasurer for the World Missions Fund. In addition, the Special Sabbath School Offerings and the offerings gathered for the General Conference during the Week of Prayer are sent to the General Conference treasurer.

The funds gathered in the union during the division Revival Week plus two percent (2%) of all receipts received from the churches are sent to the division treasurer.

If the union encompasses several countries, the funds from the churches will be paid directly to the treasurers of the fields and/or mission fields, who will then pay their employees and other expenses. In that case, the fields and/or mission fields will pay a specific percentage of their income to the union for its costs of administration; at least ten percent and at most twenty percent is recommended. The contributions for the General Conference and the division mentioned above will then be sent by the fields and/or mission fields to the union for transfer.

1 Form No. 5

2 Form No. 6

CHAPTER IX

MEMORIALS FROM PARADISE

9.1. Sabbath

9.1.1. Sabbath as a sign and seal of God's law

"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Exodus 31:13-17.

"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples." "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:16, 20.

"And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." "Moreover also I gave them My sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them."

"And hallow My sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Ezekiel 9:4; 20:12, 20.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." Hebrews 8:10.

"There is to be a mark placed upon God's people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath. We are not to follow our own will and judgment; and flatter ourselves that God will come to our terms." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 183.

Concerning the close of probation, "The enemies of God's law, from the ministers down to the least among them, have a new conception of truth and duty. Too late they see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the seal of the living God. Too late they see the true nature of their spurious sabbath and the sandy foundation upon which they have been building." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 640.

9.1.2. The Sabbath was given by Jesus

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, 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 maid-servant, 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." Exodus 20:8-11.

"The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. 'The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' Exodus 31:12-13. Here the Sabbath is clearly designated as a sign between God and His people." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 232.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 66:22-23.

"How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day." Matthew 12:12; 24:20.

"And 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.

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days." "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 4:16, 31; 23:56.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." "If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?" John 1:3; 7:23.

"During His childhood and youth, Jesus had worshiped among His brethren in the synagogue at Nazareth. Since the opening of His ministry He had been absent from them, but they had not been ignorant of what had befallen Him. As He again appeared among them, their interest and expectation were excited to the highest pitch. Here were the familiar forms and faces of those whom He had known from infancy. Here were His mother, His brothers and sisters, and all eyes were turned upon Him as He entered the synagogue upon the Sabbath day, and took His place among the worshipers." — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 236.

"The Saviour kept the Sabbath, and taught His disciples to keep it. He knew how it should be kept, for He Himself had made it holy." —*The Story of Jesus*, p. 67.

9.1.3. The apostles and the Sabbath

"And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures." "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Acts 16:13; 17:2; 18:4.

"For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works." "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Hebrews 4:4, 9.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." Revelation 1:10.

"... 'Up to the time of Christ's death, no change had been made in the day;' and, 'so far as the record shows, they [the apostles] did not ... give any explicit command enjoining the abandonment of the seventh-day Sabbath, and its observance on the first day of the week.... Roman Catholics acknowledge that the change of the Sabbath was made by their church, and declare that Protestants by observing the Sunday are recognizing her power." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 447.

"When he [Paul] had finished, and the Jews had left the synagogue, the Gentiles still lingered, and entreated that the same words might be spoken unto them the next Sabbath day. The apostles created a great interest in the place, among both Jews and Gentiles. They encouraged the believers and converts to stand fast in their faith, and to continue in the grace of God. The interest to hear the words of the apostles was so great that the whole city came together on the next Sabbath day." —*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 49.

9.1.4. Instruction concerning 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 Sundaykeepers 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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 19.

"In order to keep the Sabbath holy, it is not necessary that we enclose ourselves in walls, shut away from the beautiful scenes of nature and from the free, invigorating air of heaven. We should in no case allow burdens and business transactions to divert our minds upon the Sabbath of the Lord, which He has sanctified. We should not allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character even. But the mind cannot be refreshed, enlivened, and elevated by being confined nearly all the Sabbath hours within walls, listening to long sermons and tedious, formal prayers. The Sabbath of the Lord is put to a wrong use if thus celebrated. The object for which it was instituted is not attained. The Sabbath was made for man, to be a blessing to him by calling his mind from secular labor to contemplate the goodness and glory of God." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 279.

"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.' Exodus 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.' Psalm 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." — *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, pp. 20-21.

"And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein." Exodus 16:23-24.

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13-14.

"On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 355.

"The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment. Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight....

"Before the setting of the sun let the members of the family assemble to read God's Word, to sing and pray.

"We should jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath. Remember that every moment is consecrated, holy time." —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 34.

"On the sixth day all needful preparation for the Sabbath is to be made. All purchases should be made and all our cooking should be done on Friday. Let baths be taken, shoes be blacked, and clothing be put in readiness." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 151.

"If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided. In harmony with the light which the Lord has given in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, we should be more careful about traveling on the boats or cars on this day. In these matters we should set a right example before our children and youth. In order to reach the churches that need our help, and to give them the message that God desires them to hear, it may be necessary for us to

travel on the Sabbath; but so far as possible we should secure our tickets and make all necessary arrangements on some other day. When starting on a journey we should make every possible effort to plan so as to avoid reaching our destination on the Sabbath. At all times and in all places, God requires us to prove our loyalty to Him by honoring the Sabbath." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 359-360.

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath." Nehemiah 13:15-18.

"Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers." Jeremiah 17:22.

"We believe, in accordance with the direction of the Spirit of God, that cooking on the Sabbath should be entirely avoided" (*World Resolution No. 17 of 1928*).

As for traveling on the Sabbath, we believe that there are plenty of explanations in the Testimonies about this. (*Testimony Treasures*, vol 3, pp. 25-26). In addition, it is recommended that one fill his car's tank before the Sabbath to avoid buying fuel on that day and to purchase public transportation tickets in advance.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Philippians 3:15-16.

"Shaving should not be carried out on the Sabbath. 'The violation of the fourth commandment is not limited to the preparation of food. Many carelessly postpone shining their shoes and shaving until after the beginning of the Sabbath; this should not be. If anyone is negligent in doing such a work on a day's work, he must then have sufficient respect for God's sacred time and let his beard remain unshaven, his shoes unpolished until the Sabbath is over. This may help his memory and make him more careful to perform his duties in the six days of work.'" —*Signs of the Times*, May 25, 1882; *World Assembly Resolution No. 22 of 1966*.

"A spirit of irreverence and carelessness in the observance of the Sabbath is liable to come into our sanitariums. Upon the men of responsibility in the medical missionary work rests the duty of giving instruction to physicians, nurses, and helpers in regard to the sanctity of God's holy day. Especially should every physician endeavor to set a right example. The nature of his duties naturally leads him to feel justified in doing on the Sabbath many things that he should refrain from doing. So far as possible, he should so plan his work that he can lay aside his ordinary duties." —*Counsels on Health*, p. 236.

"Doctors, nurses or staff employed in a hospital worldwide should have Sabbath off. In urgent cases, especially those presented to midwives, we are obligated to render aid before God and our neighbors. In our sanitariums, the quotation in *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 130, is valid." —*World Assembly Resolution No. 9 of 1960*.

"Doctors need to cultivate a spirit of selflessness and sacrifice. It may be necessary to dedicate even the hours of the holy Sabbath to the relief of suffering humanity. But the payment for such work should be delivered to the Lord's treasury to be used on behalf of the poor who need medical help but are not in a position to pay for it and deserve it.... It is understood that the service is performed out of love to one's fellow men.... The service on the Sabbath can only be an exception to the rule. The service on Sabbath should not be performed routinely but only in cases of urgency." —*World Assembly Resolution No. 33 of 1989*.

"If parents allow their children to receive an education with the world, and make the Sabbath a common day, then the seal of God cannot be placed upon them. They will be destroyed with the world; and will not their blood rest upon the parents?...

"Some of our brethren engaged in business have not kept the Sabbath according to the commandment. Some have been in partnership with unbelievers, and the influence of these Sabbathbreaking associates has had its effect upon them. Some have been so blinded that they could not discern the danger in such connections, but it is only the greater because unperceived. While one partner is professedly observing the Sabbath, the other, with the laborers employed, is carrying on the business of the firm. The Sabbathkeeper, though not outwardly engaged in labor, cannot keep his thoughts from business matters. While he may endeavor to keep the Sabbath, he does not keep it. The Lord looks upon him as a transgressor." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 184, 180.

9.2. Marriage

9.2.1. The marriage covenant

The same One who created man also created the holy marriage covenant. The Sabbath and marriage are monuments that came from paradise.

Marriage is between a man and a woman. The Bible and biology teach us that there are only two genders—male and female: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Genesis 1:27; 2:23.

As a denomination, in harmony with the Bible, we recognize no marriage except the one presented in the sacred Scriptures. There are two gifts. Some people have the gift of being single, and others have the gift of being married.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and

have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Genesis 1:28; 2:24.

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "But He said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Matthew 19:6, 11-12.

"For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well." 1 Corinthians 7:7, 36-37.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Ephesians 5:31-33.

"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." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 356.

"When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and

happiness of the race, it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 46.

We believe that marriage constitutes three covenants. Ecclesiastes 4:12.

- The first is with God. Proverbs 2:17.
- The second is between husband and wife. Malachi 2:14.
- The third is among brothers. Amos 1:9.

"The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together." —*Education*, p. 250.

"In the youthful mind marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which naught but the hand of death should sever. Every marriage engagement should be carefully considered, for marriage is a step taken for life. Both the man and the woman should carefully consider whether they can cleave to each other through the vicissitudes of life as long as they both shall live." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 340.

"Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 96.

"There were two institutions founded in Eden that were not lost in the fall—the Sabbath and the marriage relation. These were carried by man beyond the gates of paradise. He who loves and observes the Sabbath, and maintains the purity of the marriage institution, thereby proves himself the friend of man and the friend of God. He who by precept or example lessens the obligation of these sacred institutions is the enemy of both God and man, and is using his influence and his God-given talents to bring in a state of confusion and moral corruption." —*Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1884.

"Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall 'leave his father and his mother,

and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one,' He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 340.

"To gain a proper understanding of the marriage relation is the work of a lifetime. Those who marry enter a school from which they are never in this life to be graduated." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 45.

9.2.2. Courtship and commitment to unbelievers

Courtship precedes commitment and marriage, and it must be done in the faith with the consent of both sets of parents. It should take place solely among members of the church—International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement. Members of the nominal Adventist church, independent groups, and the 1951 movement are not considered of the same faith. "... Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them." Jeremiah 15:19.

We believe that believers wholeheartedly subscribe to and live all of the 37 principles of faith. Unbelievers, then, are those who do not uphold all or some of the 37 principles of faith.

"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1 Timothy 1:13.

"Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 121.

"And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with 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." Deuteronomy 7:2-4.

"Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" Judges 14:3.

"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh." "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 6:16; 7:39.

Courtship or a commitment should never begin with someone who is not a member of this denomination, even if the person promises the sister or brother in the faith that he/she will be baptized and practice the faith. This is based on 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, which says: "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?"

There are many cases in which believers, especially young people, have ignored this principle and suffered bitter disappointment, having their lives changed into a kind of slavery.

One who was an unbeliever or a member of another church needs to make his covenant with God through baptism and reveal his devotion to the truth through a faithful life before making a marriage commitment to a believer.

When a church member maintains a relationship with a person who is not a church member and, despite advice and warnings of his/her parents and the minister, becomes engaged to marry, and if he gets married, he must be disfellowshipped, according to *World Assembly Resolution* No. 39 of July 14, 2002.

9.2.3. Consecration of marriage

When a couple has decided to walk the same path and expresses the desire to marry, the minister should give them the opportunity to have a personal conversation and receive the church's blessing. After this, planning and organizing of the ceremony and reception can begin. Everything must be prepared carefully. The wedding should be a solemn, joyful event.

The preparations for this hour should be made by the bride and groom, their relatives, and the minister of the church. The couple will be blessed by receiving premarital counseling from the minister, in which they will be provided with the principles for success in the marital relationship.

The minister and church officers should do everything possible to make the wedding ceremony a blessing to the couple and to all who attend it.

The clothing of all of the participants must be in harmony with the principles of faith, without makeup, without jewelry, without pearls, and with modest dresses that are not low-cut, transparent, or tight fitting. The music must be sacred without any kind of drums. (*Maranatha*, p. 241).

It is desirable to have a rehearsal with all of the participants and to have a printed program. On the wedding day, the minister goes to the front of the chapel and waits for the couple. The organ, piano, or music plays as the bride enters the chapel, and the guests stand up. When the couple and guests have taken their places and are seated, a choir may sing a song or some other music can be presented.

For the wedding ceremony, the following order is suggested:

- The guests enter and sit down, and the minister enters; then a child enters carrying the Bible, the groom enters, the wedding party enters, and then the bride enters.
- Opening with an appropriate hymn.
- Prayer.
- Sermon (not very long).
- Special song.
- The couple stand and face each other, holding hands.
- The bride and groom each recite the solemn promise, one after the other, repeating the vows after the minister.
- The minister places his left hand on the bride and groom's hands and, raising his right hand, says the following:
- "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I pronounce you husband and wife, until death do you part. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

- The couple kneels as the minister prays.
- With his right hand on the man's head and his left hand on the woman's head, the minister pronounces the blessing.
- Presentation of the new spouses: "It is my pleasure to introduce you _____."
- The kiss is optional.
- The minister congratulates the new couple.
- Hymn and final prayer.

The minister should be informed about the country's customs to avoid surprises. Furthermore, he should be dressed appropriately for the ceremony. A black or dark suit is recommended, depending on the minister's position and the occasion.

9.2.3.1. Reception

"Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh." Proverbs 23:20.

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage." John 2:1-2.

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" 1 Corinthians 10:20-22.

It is important to pay close attention to this point. There are several aspects related to a wedding reception that must be planned and executed so that the time together creates beautiful memories for the newly married couple and the guests. Scriptural principles need to be followed so that God is honored and glorified. Music, entertainment, games, food, drinks, and the whole environment must represent the faith. A signed marriage certificate will be provided to the couple by the officiating minister.

9.2.3.2. Only ordained ministers may perform a wedding

Under no circumstances may a church elder, even if he is ordained, or a Bible worker perform a wedding. Only ordained ministers who possess the appropriate credentials are authorized to do this.

In some cultures, it is customary for a husband and wife to renew their vows after 25, 50, or 60 years of marriage.

9.2.4. Unauthorized marriages

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for ... what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14-15.

"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." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 436.

"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 an 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. 5, p. 328.

TABLE 4
MARRIAGES NOT AUTHORIZED BY GOD AND THE BIBLE

Marriage	Bible foundation
To an unbeliever	Deuteronomy 7:2-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39.
To a person of the same sex	Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13.
To a second person	Genesis 29:23, 30; Leviticus 18:18; 20:14.
To more than one person	Genesis 2:24; 2 Samuel 20:3; Matthew 19:4.
To one who is divorced	Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12.
To animals	Leviticus 18:23; 20:16.
To someone in his own family	Leviticus 18:6-17; Deuteronomy 27:22, 20.

Ministers may only officiate at the marriages of couples in which both parties are members of this denomination. The minister receives his authority and credentials from the church and is not permitted to misuse them, acting contrary to the abovementioned principle. The minister who violates this principle risks having his credentials removed.

There was a question "whether a pastor of our denomination may perform the wedding of those who are not members of our church. To answer this question, it was pointed out that it is first necessary for them to become members of our denomination through baptism. This response was accepted." —*World Assembly Resolution*, July 15, 2002.

9.2.5. Divorce

Divorce is not according to the will of God but is a fruit of sin. "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away...." Malachi 2:16.

"And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also." Jeremiah 3:8.

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Matthew 5:32; 19:6-8.

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

There are cases in which divorce is justifiable because of abandonment, sexual abuse, or violence in which one's life is at risk, as well as fornication or adultery.

"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." 1 Corinthians 7:15.

We must support with pastoral counseling those who come from the world and are divorced or who divorce while being members. It is the duty of the church, in every case where peace is shattered and infidelity threatens the marital ties, to do everything possible for forgiveness and reconciliation to take place so that the home is preserved. The spouses are protected when they do not go so far as to divorce. However, sin should not be excused or left without consequences.

God's ministers must work to reconcile discordant, separated, or divorced couples. Under no circumstances do ministers have the right encourage divorced members to form a new relationship.

"Why! oh, why! will men and women who might be respectable and good and reach heaven at last sell themselves to the devil so cheap, wound their bosom friends, disgrace their families, bring a reproach upon the cause, and go to hell at last? God have mercy! Why will not those who are overtaken in crime manifest repentance proportionate to the enormity of their crime and fly to Christ for mercy and heal, as far as possible, the wounds they have made?" —*The Adventist Home*, p. 346.

9.2.6. Remarriage

We believe that, in God's eyes, remarriage is lawful only for widows and widowers, and always in the Lord.

"And He saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Mark 10:11-12.

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Luke 16:18.

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Romans 7:2-3.

"For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 7:7-9, 39.

Jesus gave a different definition of adultery. To divorce and remarry is adultery. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Matthew 19:9.

The disciples understood that, although divorce was lawful for fornication, it did not justify remarriage; therefore, they said: "... If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." Matthew 19:10.

The apostle Paul also understood it this way: there was a right to separate, but no one had the right to remarry.

"But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." 1 Corinthians 7:11.

Furthermore, Jesus taught that divorce can predispose one who is guilty of fornication to commit adultery.

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Matthew 5:32.

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach." "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man." 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; 5:9.

"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." Titus 1:6.

9.2.7. Reconciliation

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18.

"But, if they will not do as they should, and if the innocent have forfeited the legal right to a divorce, by living with the guilty after his guilt is known, we do not see that sin rests upon the innocent in remaining, and her moral right in departing seems questionable, if her health and life be not greatly endangered in so remaining....

"As in the days of Noah, one of the signs of these times is a passion for injudicious and hasty marriages. Satan is in this. If Paul could remain single, and recommend the same to others, that he and they might be wholly the Lord's, why not those who would be wholly His, and wish to make a sure thing of avoiding the cares, trials, and bitter anguish, so frequent in the experiences of those who choose the married life, remain as he was? And more, if he chose to remain so, and could recommend it to others, eighteen centuries since, would not to remain as he was be a commendable course for those who are waiting for the coming of the Son of man, unless evidences were unquestionable that they were bettering their condition, and making heaven more sure by so doing? When so much is at stake, why not be on the sure side every time?" —*Review and Herald*, March 24, 1868 (article written by James and Ellen G. White).

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Romans 5:11.

The apostle Paul promoted the ministry of reconciliation that must begin within marriage since the spouse is the closest neighbor. 1 Corinthians 7:11; Ephesians 2:16. There must be love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins." Proverbs 10:12.

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Colossians 3:13.

9.2.8. Wedding ring

God's holy word is clear that Christians should not wear rings, including engagement and/or wedding rings. Wearing a ring is neither Biblical nor necessary. We live in the real day of day of atonement and so abjure the wearing of jewelry and pearls. On the day of atonement, it was forbidden to wear all ornamentation.

"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." Genesis 35:4.

"For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb." Exodus 33:5-6.

As part of afflicting their souls, the children of Israel abstained from wearing jewelry; it was part of the fast. This not only consisted of refraining from eating but also involved changes in the way they dressed.

"And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you." Leviticus 16:29.

"Jacob was humbled, and required his family to humble themselves, and to lay off all their ornaments, for he was to make an atonement for their sins, by offering a sacrifice unto God, that he might be entreated for them, and not leave them to be destroyed by other nations. God accepted the efforts of Jacob to remove the wrong from his family, and appeared unto him, and blessed him, and renewed the promise made to him, because His fear was before him. 'And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, even a pillar of stone.'" —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 137.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." 1 Timothy 2:9.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair." 1 Peter 3:3.

Regarding the wedding ring, the Spirit of prophecy counsels: "Some have had a burden in regard to the wearing of a marriage ring, feeling that the wives of our ministers should conform to this custom. All this is unnecessary. Let the ministers' wives have the golden link which binds their souls to Jesus Christ, a pure and holy character, the true love and meekness and godliness that are the fruit borne upon the Christian tree, and their influence will be secure anywhere. The fact that a disregard of the custom occasions remark is no good reason

for adopting it. Americans can make their position understood by plainly stating that the custom is not regarded as obligatory in our country. We need not wear the sign, for we are not untrue to our marriage vow, and the wearing of the ring would be no evidence that we were true. I feel deeply over this leavening process which seems to be going on among us, in the conformity to custom and fashion. Not one penny should be spent for a circlet of gold to testify that we are married." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 180. Ministers and Bible workers should clearly instruct God's people concerning this.

9.3. Health reform

In addition to the Sabbath and marriage, another significant gift from Eden is "health reform." This includes dietary reform, dress reform, and temperance in all things. Temperance is the abstinence from all that is evil and the moderation of all that is good. Temperance is a fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:23. The Greek word translated as temperance is *Igkratia*, which means self-control.

God took Israel out of Egypt to educate them in the desert, giving them His laws of health, diet, dress, and the like—the natural laws of their being. He promised them that if they obeyed Him, none of the diseases that fell on the Egyptians would come to them, because Jehovah God is "Jehovah Rophi," who is Jehovah, your Healer. Exodus 15:26. In the time of the Jewish dispensation, there were men and women who, like Daniel, determined in their hearts not to defile themselves with pagan food, drink, and customs. Daniel 1:8. In addition, others whom God called changed their ways of living, eating, and dressing, as did Elijah, who was translated to heaven without seeing death and represented the 144,000. 1 Kings 19:8.

In the Christian dispensation, God sent John the Baptist, who came in the spirit of Elijah, being vegetarian, dressing modestly, and promoting pure, sacred marriage. Matthew 3:4. Being a reformer, John the Baptist was a prototype of the last generation that proclaims the return of Christ, just as he declared His first advent. —*Maranatha*, p. 20.

The apostle Paul preached about justification, self-control or temperance, and the coming judgment. Acts 24:25. Therefore, temperance or self-control is a gift that God grants as part of that sanctification of the soul without which no one will see God. Hebrews 12:14.

Furthermore, the apostle Paul repeatedly taught that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20) and that all should glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31) in what they eat, drink, and do. Being a temple of God, all must present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy, pleasing to God, and not be conformed to the world. (Romans 12:1-2). The apostle John taught that God desires the believers' souls and health to prosper. (3 John 2). The beloved physician and companion of the apostle Paul repeated Christ's words to turn away from gluttony, drunkenness, and the cares of this life. (Luke 21:34). Guided by the Holy Spirit, each person is to be wholly sanctified, spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thessalonians 5:23). It is the Holy Spirit who helps God's children and gives them power, love, and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7). The apostle Peter wrote that, being foreigners and pilgrims, all must abstain from carnal desires and sinful passions that war against the soul, maintaining a principled way of living in the world. (1 Peter 2:11-12). Thus Christ's desire is fulfilled, for He came to give life abundantly. This enables each one to have life and prepares them for eternal life with Christ Jesus. John 10:10.

Health reform is the right arm of the three angels' messages and was given by God to sanctify and save His people. Revelation 14:12.

"The health reform, I was shown, is a part of the third angel's message, and is just as closely connected with it as are the arm and hand with the human body." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 74.

9.3.1. Dietary reform

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Genesis 1:29.

According to the teachings about the sanctuary, Jesus Christ serves as the great High Priest in heaven, having moved from the holy place to the most holy place, and has officiated before God by the ark of the covenant since 1844. (Hebrews 8:1; Daniel 8:14). It is significant that, on the day of atonement, all of the children of Israel abstained from consuming meat and alcohol and took off their jewelry as part of their afflicting their souls. In the same way, today, the remnant of spiritual Israel fast by abstaining from all stimulants that war against the soul. Inside the ark of the covenant was the pot containing the manna, which symbolized health reform. —*Medical Ministry*, p. 267.

Dietary reform leads to a lifestyle and diet known as vegetarianism.

“He is bringing them back to the diet originally given to man. Their diet is to consist of the foods made from the materials He has provided. The materials principally used in these foods will be fruits and grains and nuts, but various roots will also be used.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 81.

God created healthful, natural foods of plant origin as well as healthful fungi and bacteria to uplift man’s body, mind, and spirit. (Genesis 1:29; 3:18). The very best diet includes the following food groups:

- Grains
- Fruit
- Vegetables, sprouts, and roots, as well as marine vegetables
- Nuts and seeds
- Legumes (beans, such as fava beans, lentils, chickpeas, soybeans, etc.)
- Mushrooms
- Herbs
- Water

These foods contain the very best nutrients that help to preserve life, contribute to longevity, and reduce the incidence of disease and untimely death. Such a diet is critically important to have the spiritual strength that God desires for His people in the last days. In grains, fruits, vegetables, and nuts are to be found all the food elements that we need.

"Vegetables, fruits, and grains should compose our diet. Not an ounce of flesh meat should enter our stomachs. The eating of flesh is unnatural. We are to return to God's original purpose in the creation of man." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 380.

Furthermore, dietary reform considers stimulating foods and drinks as unhealthful and their consumption as contrary to the laws of health, hence, God's law. (James 4:17). Such things will not be part of the diet in heaven. Revelation 21:4, 27.

It is necessary to abstain from all stimulating foods. "The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 188.

TABLE 5
STIMULATING FOODS THAT CAUSE DEPENDENCE

Stimulating foods and substances	Bible foundation
1. Alcohol, fermented wine, spirits, beer, cider.	Deuteronomy 7:2-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39.
2. Tea (black, green, red), coffee, yerba mate, colas, and other beverages containing the drug caffeine and/or theophylline; chili pepper, or hot pepper containing the drug capsaicin.	Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13.
3. Meat from animals, such as pork, beef, chicken, turkey, fish, blood, animal fat.	Leviticus 3:17; Isaiah 22:13-14; Proverbs 23:20; Acts 15:28-29; Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 8:12-13.
4. Tobacco, marijuana, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, coca leaf.	Genesis 2:24; 2 Samuel 20:3; Matthew 19:4.
5. Illicit drugs, narcotics, narcotics such as cocaine, opium, amphetamines, morphine, etc.	Deuteronomy 29:18-21.

9.3.2. Dress reform

God's church upholds modesty in dress. When one follows the changing fashion and extravagance in dress, the laws of modesty are transgressed, and one directly contributes to the spread of immorality.

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (Genesis 2:25). When God created the first couple, He clothed them only in light; their innocence allowed that light to remain, so they felt completely covered.

But when they sinned, one of the first things that they experienced was shame at their nakedness. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (Genesis 3:7). They designed their own coverings, but after they sinned, God provided special clothing for them. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." (Genesis 3:21). It was modest clothing.

"After the transgression of Adam and Eve, they were naked, for the garment of light and security had departed from them." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 96.

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Revelation 16:15.

Since man sinned, his tendency has been to rebel against what God gave him for his good. A picture of that is seen in Isaiah 4:1: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."

One can see how the churches that claim to be Christian deny the principles of health reform in both food and dress. The idea that people will eat their own bread and wear their own clothing shows that they do not want to accept what God provided for man for his good.

TABLE 6
UNHEALTHFUL FASHIONS

Unhealthful, forbidden fashions	Bible foundation
1. Hair dyeing (artificial or natural). Short hair on women and long hair on men. Straightening or curling hair. Extravagant haircuts for men.	Leviticus 19:33; Isaiah 3:16-24; Matthew 5:33; 1 Corinthians 11:14-15; Revelation 9:8.
2. Makeup.	Isaiah 3:16-24.
3. Tattoos.	Leviticus 19:28.
4. Jewelry (piercing) and cosmetics. Nail polish, artificial nails, and false eyelashes. Hair pieces or wigs. Face lifts.	Genesis 35:4; Exodus 33:5-6; 2 Kings 9:30; Isaiah 3:16-24; Hosea 2:13.
5. Women's pants without a skirt or dress over them.	Genesis 35:2; Deuteronomy 22:5.
6. Short, low-cut, tight, or transparent apparel.	1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-5.
7. Extravagant fashions and colors.	Zephaniah 1:8.
8. High-heeled or platform shoes.	Isaiah 3:16.

If the people of God today are "... a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9), they will uphold the principles of dress that are seen in the Old Testament examples and apply them today. These include maintaining a difference between the sexes (Deuteronomy 22:5)—simplicity, modesty, and natural, normal hair, without adornment or luxury. 1 Timothy 2:9; Titus 2:3; 1 Peter 3:3.

Ancient Israel's clothing incorporated two things that identified the people as belonging to God. One was a blue stripe at the bottom or top of the garment. Numbers 15:38. Another was a fringe at the four corners of their cloak. Deuteronomy 22:12.

Each fringe was located in visible places on the cloak—at the bottom, top, and middle—and was visible from the front, back, and in profile. Thus, they identified, without a doubt, a child of God in any position and from any perspective.

"There should be no carelessness in dress. For Christ's sake, whose witnesses we are, we should seek to make the best of our appearance. In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus, we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolic. So the dress of Christ's followers should be symbolic. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 394.

"Those who are truly seeking to follow Christ will have conscientious scruples in regard to the dress they wear; they will strive to meet the requirements of this injunction so plainly given by the Lord. 1 Peter 3:3-5." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 345.

"God designed that there should be a plain distinction between the dress of men and women, and has considered the matter of sufficient importance to give explicit directions in regard to it; for the same dress worn by both sexes would cause confusion and great increase of crime." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 460.

"There is an increasing tendency to have women in their dress and appearance as near like the other sex as possible and to fashion their dress very much like that of men, but God pronounces it abomination....

"If we are Christians, we shall follow Christ, even though the path in which we are to walk cuts right across our natural inclinations. There is no use in telling you that you must not wear this or that, for if the love of these vain things is in your heart, your laying off your adornments will only be like cutting the foliage off a tree. The inclinations of the natural heart would again assert themselves. You must have a conscience of your

own. Human reasoning has ever sought to evade or set aside the simple, direct instructions of the Word of God. In every age a majority of the professed followers of Christ have disregarded those precepts which enjoin self-denial and humility, which require modesty and simplicity of conversation, deportment, and apparel. The result has ever been the same—departure from the teachings of the gospel leads to the adoption of the fashions, customs, and principles of the world. Vital godliness gives place to a dead formalism. The presence and power of God, withdrawn from those world-loving circles, are found with a class of humble worshipers, who are willing to obey the teachings of the Sacred Word." —*Child Guidance*, pp. 427, 429-430.

"All matters of dress should be strictly guarded, following closely the Bible rule. Fashion has been the goddess who has ruled the outside world, and she often insinuates herself into the church. The church should make the word of God her standard, and parents should think intelligently upon this subject. When they see their children inclined to follow worldly fashions, they should, like Abraham, resolutely command their households after them. Instead of uniting them with the world, connect them with God." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 202.

"To protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health, the dress reform was introduced among us. It was not intended to be a yoke of bondage, but a blessing, not to increase labor, but to save labor, not to add to the expense of dress, but to save expense. It would distinguish God's people from the world and thus serve as a barrier against its fashions and follies. He who knows the end from the beginning, who understands our nature and our needs—our compassionate Redeemer—saw our dangers and difficulties, and condescended to give us timely warning and instruction concerning our habits of life, even in the proper selection of food and clothing." —*Counsels on Health*, p. 598.

"There is still another style of dress which is adopted by a class of so-called dress reformers. They imitate the opposite sex as nearly as possible. They wear the cap, pants, vest, coat,

and boots, the last of which is the most sensible part of the costume. Those who adopt and advocate this style of dress carry the so-called dress reform to very objectionable lengths. Confusion will be the result. Some who adopt this costume may be correct in their general views upon the health question, but they would be instrumental in accomplishing vastly more good if they did not carry the matter of dress to such extremes.

“In this style of dress God’s order has been reversed and His special directions disregarded. Deuteronomy 22:5: ‘The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.’ God would not have His people adopt this style of dress. It is not modest apparel, and is not at all fitting for modest, humble women who profess to be Christ’s followers. God’s prohibitions are lightly regarded by all who advocate doing away with the distinction of dress between males and females. The extreme position taken by some dress reformers upon this subject cripples their influence.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 459.

“Evidence that the taste is converted will be seen in the dress of all who walk in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 523.

“Our words, our actions, and our dress are daily, living preachers, gathering with Christ or scattering abroad. This is no trivial matter to be passed off with a jest. The subject of dress demands serious reflection and much prayer. Many unbelievers have felt that they were not doing right in permitting themselves to be slaves of fashion; but when they see some, who make a high profession of godliness dressing as worldlings dress, enjoying frivolous society, they decide that there can be no wrong in such a course.” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 596.

“My sisters, your dress is telling either in favor of Christ and the sacred truth or in favor of the world. Which is it?” —*Review and Herald*, November 17, 1904.

A true child of God will honor his/her Saviour through his/her words, deeds, behavior, and clothing. A follower of Jesus Christ is always expected to dress in a clean, orderly, beautiful way.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

"The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress.

"There should be no carelessness in dress. For Christ's sake, whose witnesses we are, we should seek to make the best of our appearance. In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolic. So the dress of Christ's followers should be symbolic. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity. But the word of God gives no sanction to the making of changes in apparel merely for the sake of fashion, that we may appear like the world. Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments.

"The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. All who are in earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired by God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pp. 393-394.

"Demoralizing extravagance prevails everywhere, and souls are going to ruin because of their love of dress and display. The life of nine tenths of those who are devotees of fashion is a living lie. Deception, fraud, is their daily practice; for they wish to appear that which they are not.

"Nobility of soul, gentleness, generosity, are bartered away to gratify the lust after evil things. Thousands sell their virtue

that they may have means for following the fashions of the world. Such madness concerning the changing fashions of the world should call forth an army of reformers who would take their position for simple and plain attire. Satan is ever inventing fashions that cannot be followed except through the sacrifice of money, time, and health." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 359.

"There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door against the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 600.

9.3.3. Hairstyle

The apostle Paul wrote: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." 1 Corinthians 11:14-15.

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord." Leviticus 19:31. "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." Matthew 5:33.

"And they had hair as the hair of women...." Revelation 9:8.

"The hair is strained and forced into unnatural positions, and it is not possible for the heads of these fashionable ladies to be comfortable. The artificial hair and pads covering the base of the brain, heat and excite the spinal nerves centering in the brain. The head should ever be kept cool.

"The unnatural heat caused by these artificial deformities on the head induces blood to go to the brain, producing congestion, and causing hair loss, producing baldness; therefore, the natural is sacrificed for the artificial. Such slaves to fashion will continue to clothe their heads and suffer horrible disease and premature death rather than abandon fashion." —*The Health Reformer*, vol. 6, No. 4, October 1871, pp. 121-123.

"It is not our service to pray that colored hair shall become black, or that gray hair, which God pronounces honorable, shall become black. Those who set their minds laboring in this direction are not following on to know the Lord. They are starting in a course which will lead to the greatest, most God-dishonoring fanaticism." —*Letter 207, 1899.*

God gave women their hair as an adornment and covering. A woman dishonors the Lord, her Creator, when she imitates the man in his clothing and hairstyle. God is honored when one respects the order given in creation, including in this matter.

9.3.4. Jewelry

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands." 1 Peter 3:3-5.

"Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war." Isaiah 3:16-25.

9.3.5. Entertainment, dancing, and amusements

"Christians should be the most cheerful and happy people that live. They may have the consciousness that God is their Father and their everlasting Friend.... It is the privilege and duty of Christians to seek to refresh their spirits and invigorate their bodies by innocent recreation, with the purpose of using their physical and mental powers to the glory of God. Our recreations should not be scenes of senseless mirth, taking the form of the nonsensical. We can conduct them in such a manner as will benefit and elevate those with whom we associate, and better qualify us and them to more successfully attend to the duties devolving upon us as Christians.

"We cannot be excusable in the sight of God if we engage in amusements which have a tendency to unfit us for the faithful performance of the ordinary duties of life, and thus lessen our relish for the contemplation of God and heavenly things. The religion of Christ is cheering and elevating in its influence. It is above everything like foolish jesting and joking, vain and frivolous chit-chat....

"The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God. He will not be found at the theater, the billiard hall, or the bowling saloon. He will not unite with the gay waltzers, or indulge in any other bewitching pleasure that will banish Christ from the mind.

"To those who plead for these diversions, we answer, We cannot indulge in them in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The blessing of God would not be invoked upon the hour spent at the theater or in the dance. No Christian would wish to meet death in such a place. No one would wish to be found there when Christ shall come.

"When we come to the final hour, and stand face to face with the record of our lives, shall we regret that we have attended so few parties of pleasure? that we have participated in so few scenes of thoughtless mirth? Shall we not, rather, bitterly regret that so many precious hours have been wasted

in self-gratification—so many opportunities neglected, which, rightly improved, would have secured for us immortal treasures?" —*Messages to Young People*, pp. 363, 364, 398.

Dangerous forms of entertainment lessen one's interest in Bible reading and learning, cause addiction and self-dependence, steal time available for social service, and subsequently contribute to irritability, immorality, and violence. They train souls for inaction and daily work, and some produce hypnotic effects.

Uplifting recreation should be promoted in place of such entertainment, such as visits to nature (lakes, rivers, forests), healthful exercise, family exchange and communication, and public and community service activities that impart joy to the giver and the receiver. The rule to follow is whether one can take Jesus with him/her to the activity.

Personal vices and entertainment do not contribute to the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord; rather, they encourage vanity and worldliness. Many forms of entertainment from the past have changed over time and become even more dangerous because they are so hidden and subtle.

"All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." "Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us." Ecclesiastes 1:8, 10.

The apostle John saw the danger of the believers in God's church becoming increasingly conformed to the customs and practices of the world. Therefore, he gave the following counsel to all of the Saviour's followers: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:15-17.

TABLE 7
EXAMPLES OF DANGEROUS VICES AND ENTERTAINMENT

Dangerous vices and entertainment	Bible foundation
1. Dancing.	Daniel 5:1, 24-28; Amos 6:5; Mark 6:21-22.
2. Casinos, lotteries, games of chance.	1 Timothy 6:10-11.
3. Videos, online entertainment, video games.	Psalm 101:3; Jeremiah 9:21; 1 Corinthians 10:7.
4. Theater, opera, cinema, competitive sports.	Exodus 7:11; Psalms 119:39; Ecclesiastes 2:8, 10-11; Isaiah 47:9.
5. Unhealthful, worldly, drum-based music (including contemporary Christian music).	Exodus 32:18, 19; Romans 1:23; Colossians 3:5.
6. Pornography, brothels.	Job 31:1, 2, 7; Ezekiel 8:9-12; Matthew 5:28-29.
7. Pool rooms, bowling alleys.	2 Corinthians 6:14, 17.
8. Card games, chess, dice.	John 19:24.
9. Television programs, DVDs containing violence, spiritualism, blasphemy, pornography, and terror.	Deuteronomy 7:26; 18:10-12; Isaiah 33:15-17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Peter 2:11; 3:12.
10. Novels.	Acts 19:19; Romans 16:18; 1 Timothy 6:20; Titus 3:9.
11. Sexual promiscuity, fornication, adultery, solitary vice.	Matthew 12:39; Acts 15:29; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 13:4.
12. Satanic games: ouija, pendulum, others.	Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Isaiah 8:19; 1 Timothy 4:1.

9.3.6. Screens

Screens are connected not only to movie theaters and television sets but also are a major component of computers, smartphones, and tablets. Furthermore, radio broadcasts, cassettes, records, CDs, DVDs, videos, and the Internet all exert influence that can be good or evil, depending on their content and use.

Such devices would be valuable if they were used to benefit humanity and reach the people with the gospel. In using these means, all humanity could receive the last warning message and make a decision in a very short time.

"And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Habakkuk 2:2; Daniel 12:4.

Instead, current movies and television, streaming, social media, and viewer programming tend to target, satisfy and captivate the viewers' senses with the evil of people's natures, hindering them from becoming new creatures in Christ. Therefore, great caution is required in choosing what to watch on screens.

The church cannot recommend the immoral programming that appears on modern screens. It is not just the content that is dangerous. Electronic devices, apps, and games consume one's time, means, energy, and love for God and his/her fellow man. Social networks steal the time needed for communication with one's family, God, and others who need to hear Heaven's message.

"Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." Proverbs 4:24-27.

Through such means, the enemy has successfully injected cinema and theater into the home.

Two aspects must be differentiated in screens:

- The inventions themselves could be a great blessing to humanity rather than the curse and ruin caused by modern, seductive programming that drives people to sin.
- Enchanted programming corrupts the mind and leads to sin, brutality, and immorality, destroying the happiness of the family while imprinting on people's minds images of crime, immorality, spiritualism, and other vices.

Gospel workers should objectively, not subjectively, instruct householders, teachers, church officers, and especially the young people regarding the dangers of modern screens.

"Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence.

"Yet we have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 459, 460.

"Our only safety is to stand as God's peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 78.

9.3.7. Theatrics in the church

"The work in the large cities is to be done after Christ's order, not after the order of a theatrical performance. It is not a theatrical performance that glorifies God, but the presentation of the truth in the love of Christ." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 356.

"Not one jot or tittle of anything theatrical is to be brought into our work. God's cause is to have a sacred, heavenly mold. Let everything connected with the giving of the message for this

time bear the divine impress. Let nothing of a theatrical nature be permitted, for this would spoil the sacredness of the work....

"Satan's ruling passion is to pervert the intellect and cause men to long for shows and theatrical performances." —*Evangelism*, pp. 137, 266.

"The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God. He will not be found at the theater, the billiard hall, or the bowling saloon. He will not unite with the gay waltzers or indulge in any other bewitching pleasure that will banish Christ from the mind.

"To those who plead for these diversions we answer, We cannot indulge in them in the name of Jesus of Nazareth....

"Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school for morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements." —*The Adventist Home*, pp. 515-516.

"Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 459.

9.3.8. Raffles, lotteries, and similar activities

The quotations below are very clear and very important.

"We are handling subjects which involve eternal interests, and we are not to ape the world in any respect. We are to follow closely the footsteps of Christ. He is a satisfying portion and can meet all our wants and necessities....

"The plan of Moses in the wilderness to raise means was highly successful. There was no compulsion necessary. Moses

made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement. Neither did he institute lotteries or anything of this profane order to obtain means to erect the tabernacle of God in the wilderness....

"And this is as Satan would have it. Men are repeating the sin of Nadab and Abihu. They are using common instead of sacred fire in the service of God. The Lord accepts no such offerings." —*Evangelism*, pp. 139, 254.

"Some law seems to be required to break up the schools where gamblers are made. These are everywhere. Even the church (unwittingly, no doubt) is sometimes found doing the work of the devil. Gift concerts, gift enterprises and raffles, sometimes in aid of religious or charitable objects, but often for less worthy purposes, lotteries, prize packages, etc., are all devices to obtain money without value received. Nothing is so demoralizing or intoxicating, particularly to the young, as the acquisition of money or property without labor." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 387.

"Even the church, which should be the pillar and ground of the truth, is found encouraging a selfish love of pleasure. 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." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 328.

9.4. Systematic benevolence

9.4.1. First fruits

"Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors:..." Exodus 22:29.

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Proverbs 3:9-10.

In ancient Israel, the Lord required that the first fruits be given before the tithes. "Even before the tithe could be re-

served there had been an acknowledgment of the claims of God. The first that ripened of every product of the land was consecrated to Him. The first of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the grain when the wheat was threshed, the first of the oil and the wine, was set apart for God. So also were the first-born of all animals; and a redemption price was paid for the first-born son. The first fruits were to be presented before the Lord at the sanctuary, and were then devoted to the use of the priests." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 526.

By giving the first fruits, we recognize God as the owner of everything that He gives us to sustain our lives. The following testimony explains when and what we should give as first fruits to the Lord. "In the system of beneficence enjoined upon the Jews, they were required either to bring to the Lord the first fruits of all His gifts, whether in the increase of their flocks or herds, or in the produce of their fields, orchards, or vineyards, or they were to redeem it by substituting an equivalent. Yet our work needs tenfold more means now than was needed by the Jews." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 68.

The first fruits and tithes were presented to the Lord for every harvest. In the case of animal husbandry, only the first animal born was considered first. We retain that same principle today. For the money received, tithes and first fruits are to be given.

9.4.2. Tithes

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Leviticus 27:30, 32.

"Of the means entrusted to men, God claims a certain portion—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this. But when the heart is stirred by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vows has no longer any right to the consecrated portion. Promises of this kind made to men would be looked upon as binding; are those not more binding that are

made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements of men?" —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 318.

"Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year." Deuteronomy 14:22.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." Malachi 3:8.

"The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a great truth—that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man's gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525.

In ancient times, God's accusation against His people included two financial categories—"tithes" and "offerings." The tithe is ten percent or, in other words, one-tenth of a person's "profit." Malachi 3:7-10. God tells His people to decide about the amount they will give Him in offerings, while the tithe is a specific amount.

God instituted the tithe for the support of the gospel workers and the church's progress. The tithe demonstrates our loyalty to God, and our offerings prove our love for Him.

In the same way that the Lord placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in paradise to test the faithfulness of His children, so the divine institution of the tithe is a test. Through the prophet Malachi, the Lord clearly explained that His blessings depend on the faithfulness of His children in giving the tithes and offerings. Since the love of money is the root of all evil, it is precisely on this point that one's giving and love for the Lord's work are tested.

Generally one's tithe is paid to the local church where one is a member.

"The majority of professed Christians part with their means with great reluctance. Many of them do not give one twentieth of their income to God, and many give far less than that; while there is a large class who rob God of the little tithe, and others who will give only the tithe. If all the tithes of our people flowed into the treasury of the Lord as they should, such blessings

would be received that gifts and offerings for sacred purposes would be multiplied tenfold, and thus the channel between God and man would be kept open. The followers of Christ should not wait for thrilling missionary appeals to arouse them to action. If spiritually awake, they would hear in the income of every week, whether much or little, the voice of God and of conscience with authority demanding the tithes and offerings due the Lord." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 474.

9.4.2.1. How is the tithe calculated and administered?

The prophet presented the Lord's message clearly concerning the tithe in Malachi 3:10: "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."

"And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Genesis 28:22.

The word "everything" means that we do not deduct any personal expenses to set aside and then calculate the tithe from a diminished remainder. "Everything" means setting aside the tithe from what one receives. The tithe is paid on gross income, not net income. The Lord must be put first, and we will be blessed as we pay for all of our needs with the remaining nine-tenths. A person who does not work as an employee but has his own company (for example, an industrialist, merchant, or farmer) calculates the tithe on his company's profit.

"The tithing system reaches back beyond the days of Moses. Men were required to offer to God gifts for religious purposes before the definite system was given to Moses, even as far back as the days of Adam. In complying with God's requirements, they were to manifest in offerings their appreciation of His mercies and blessings to them. This was continued through successive generations....

"As to the amount required, God has specified one tenth of the increase....

"All that is withheld of that which God claims, the tenth of the increase, is recorded in the books of heaven against the withholders, as robbery....

"God gives man nine tenths, while He claims one tenth for sacred purposes, as He has given man six days for his own work and has reserved and set apart the seventh day to Himself. For, like the Sabbath, a tenth of the increase is sacred; God has reserved it for Himself. He will carry forward His work upon the earth with the increase of the means that He has entrusted to man....

"God in His wise plans has made the advancement of His cause dependent upon the personal efforts of His people and upon their freewill offerings. By accepting the cooperation of man in the great plan of redemption, He has placed a signal honor upon him." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 372-374, 542.

"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, nor 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." —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 224, 225.

"Let those who have become careless and indifferent, and are withholding their tithes and offerings, remember that they are blocking the way, so that the truth cannot go forth to the regions beyond. I am bidden to call upon the people of God to redeem their honor by rendering to God a faithful tithe." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 96.

9.4.2.2. The storehouse

Malachi quoted God, who instructed His people to bring all the tithes into the "storehouse." "'Bring ye all the tithes into the

storehouse' (Malachi 3:10), is God's command. No appeal is made to gratitude or to generosity. This is a matter of simple honesty. The tithe is the Lord's; and He bids us return to Him that which is His own." —*Education*, p. 138.

Ellen G. White wrote further 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." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 249.

Deuteronomy 12 is about the importance of worshiping God in His sanctuary, the place chosen by Him. The Israelites were expected to bring their sacrifices, offerings, and tithes to this place. Verses 6, 11. This is the "law of the central storehouse." God did not plan for everyone to do what was right in his own eyes. He had a plan, and He expected His people to follow it. What God means by supporting His work through His treasury is clearly shown in the Scriptures.

The primary responsibility of ministers and church leaders regarding tithes and offerings is explained as follows: "Let the church appoint pastors or elders who are devoted to the Lord Jesus, and let these men see that officers are chosen who will attend faithfully to the work of gathering in the tithe. If the pastors show that they are not fitted for their charge, if they fail to set before the church the importance of returning to God His own, if they do not see to it that the officers under them are faithful, and that the tithe is brought in, they are in peril. They are neglecting a matter which involves a blessing or a curse to the church. They should be relieved of their responsibility, and other men should be tested and tried." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 106.

Following the designated, systematic way of paying the tithes and offerings and directing them to the different levels of the church organization within the concept of "the Lord's treasury" and according to the resolutions of the General Conference delegates, is very important—a mandatory require-

ment given by God. No one should deviate from or neglect this orderly way of working. This applies to individuals, local churches, fields, and unions alike.

"Those who have made a wrong use of means dedicated to God will be required to give an account of their stewardship.... Unless there is a thorough transformation by the renewing of the mind, this class will find no place in heaven....

"God's cause and His treasury are no more sacred to them than common business or means devoted to worldly purposes." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 519.

"God has made His church on the earth a channel of light, and through it He communicates His purposes and His will. He does not give to one of His servants an experience independent of and contrary to the experience of the church itself. Neither does He give one man a knowledge of His will for the entire church, while the church—Christ's body—is left in darkness. In His providence, He places His servants in close connection with His church, in order that they may have less confidence in themselves, and greater confidence in others whom He is leading out to advance His work." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 163.

9.4.3. Offerings for the poor

Under both the old and the new covenants, the Lord made provision for those who were poor and sick.

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." Proverbs 3:27.

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Matthew 25:35-36.

These statements from the holy Scriptures makes the church responsible to help the poor and those in need. God's people are to be instructed not just to give to those in need from surplus funds but that all of the believers should provide offerings for the poor that come from genuine sacrifice. All who live in countries where they enjoy economic wellbeing should think about and help those of the same faith who are in need in distant regions.

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth Him hath mercy on the poor." Proverbs 19:17; 14:31.

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." "For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." Matthew 25:40; Deuteronomy 15:11.

9.4.4. Thank offerings

God is happy when His people give thank offerings for His marvelous working in some unique experience by providing protection and grace to them, or when they express special gratitude for the prayers offered by their fellow believers.

"'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.' Have any of us duly considered how much we have to be thankful for? Do we remember that the mercies of the Lord are new every morning and that His faithfulness faileth not? Do we acknowledge our dependence upon Him and express gratitude for all His favors? On the contrary, we too often forget that 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' James 1:17." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 108. Luke 17:12-19.

9.4.5. Special offerings

Heaven rejoices when we give special help in cases of catastrophe, illness, accident, or similar event.

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass." Exodus 35:5. See also Exodus 25:1-7.

A special offering is one that is collected for a specific purpose, such as building a house of worship, the acquisition of baptismal robes, aid in the event of a catastrophe, etc. These offerings must be used exclusively for the purpose that was

stated when the request was made, and separating the tithe from them is unnecessary. Any amount that remains after the objective has been accomplished is transferred as income to the offering fund of the field.

When collecting such offerings, the reason and objective must be clearly communicated. After the goal has been reached, a letter of gratitude is sent to those who gave for it, with an explanation of how the funds were used.

9.4.6. Special Sabbath school offerings

Special Sabbath school offerings are gathered in the Sabbath school once every two months. The Sabbath School Lessons contain a written appeal to be read on the Sabbath before each offering is gathered. These offerings are for specific purposes, such as developing the work in a particular country, region, or division to carry out special projects, such as the establishment of headquarters, health centers, education centers, schools, and training centers. The churches send the total of these offerings to their respective fields or unions, along with other contributions. The field or union treasurer then sends the General Conference the funds that were gathered for the project in the Sabbath school.

The General Conference executive committee manages the special Sabbath school offerings at every step, including the designation for each offering, a description of the use for which the offerings are planned, verification of disbursement, and a list of criteria to ensure that the offerings are kept safe and used for their intended purpose. There have been times when the General Conference has had to disburse more than the amount raised. This can occur when the government in a country has legal requirements that must be met (such as having a building) to register the organization or when the amount raised is not sufficient to carry out the project. In such a case, the General Conference may designate a second special Sabbath school offering for the same purpose. Even after repeated fundraising, the General Conference may still have to cover specific amounts from the general funds.

The generous offerings given by God's people for the special Sabbath school offerings need to be transferred to the General Conference in a timely manner, for the projects financed by these offerings are often fragile and very dependent on the Lord and His people.

9.4.7. Missionary offerings

Missionary offerings are freewill offerings given by the believers for the spread of the gospel. These offerings are part of the "Foreign Missions" funds and are sent directly to the General Conference by the treasurer of the mission field, field, or union for the work in foreign fields.

"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." 2 Corinthians 8:1-2.

9.4.8. Distribution

Tithes and offerings cannot be returned to the giver. Each believer has donated these offerings to the Lord and His church, so they belong to Him and His work.

According to the order established within the church, the treasurers send the donations collected to the other levels of the organization immediately after the end of each month.

In unions that are made up of several countries and in which each country is organized as a field with its own treasury, the field treasurer divides the funds into three parts:

- The tithe of the tithes and the offerings designated for the General Conference, such as the special Sabbath school offerings and offerings gathered during the Week of Prayer, are transferred to the General Conference after the end of each quarter. Likewise, the field treasurer sends three percent of all income for the foreign missions fund. In the same way, he sends two percent of all income to the corresponding division.
- The percentage that must be sent to the union, as previously decided by the Union Committee, will also be transferred after the end of each quarter.

- The remainder, which constitutes the majority, will be used by the treasurer to pay all normal obligations of the field (such as employee salaries, health and old-age insurance, workers' travel expenses, rent, electricity, water, and utilities, as well as maintenance, telephone, mail, and office expenses), while maintaining a reserve fund at a healthy level for extraordinary activities, emergencies, expansion, and special projects (such as delegates' meetings, conferences, and evangelistic campaigns).

Mission fields or fields that use a currency other than that of the union which they are under may send directly to the General Conference the contributions that are designated for it (as explained in the first item above) directly after each quarter or send the exact amount to their respective union after the end of each quarter, to be added to the tithe of the tithe and to the offerings for the General Conference. An approved, detailed report will be sent with all of these contributions.

In unions whose territory covers several fields in a single country and the union treasurer is responsible for paying the salaries of the workers, the churches send their tithes and offerings directly to the Union treasurer after the end of every month.

If a field is composed of one country which has its own treasury and pays its workers, the local church treasurers will transfer the tithes and offerings to the field treasurer, who will follow the procedures presented in the previous paragraph and, after the end of each quarter, send to the treasurers of the division and the General Conference the funds designated by the world assembly delegates.

9.4.9. Division and General Conference funds

In God's work, institutions that receive income, just as individual believers, pay the tithe.

Unions, as well as fields working in a currency other than that of their union, after the end of every quarter transfer to the General Conference and the division the tithe of the tithes, offerings, and other income, as well as offerings designated for the General Conference.

For the General Conference to have more resources so that it can support the preaching of the gospel in new fields, the delegates at the 1983 session of the General Conference determined that each union, each field, and each mission field (in addition to the tithes above), is to send 3 percent of the tithes and offerings for the creation of the foreign missions fund. Half of this amount is sent to the General Conference and the other half to the divisions, according to the resolution of the delegates at the 2023 session of the General Conference.

At the 2017 General Conference delegates' meetings, it was decided that unions, mission fields, and fields are to send 2 percent of their tithes and offerings to support the division which they are under.

At the General Conference Committee session in 1986, the need to expand the canvassing work was discussed. It was decided to establish a fund to which the publishing departments would contribute to promoting publishing work. The 1989 General Conference delegates agreed that this contribution would be 5 percent of each publishing department's profits.

New mission fields and fields and churches that are not yet organized and do not belong to a union are directly under the supervision of the General Conference. They send their tithe of the tithes and offerings and all offerings designated for the General Conference to the General Conference treasurer after the end of each quarter, along with the detailed report in the approved format, unless some other arrangement has been made with the General Conference treasurer.

Once a new field is established and organized with churches under it, if it still depends on the General Conference to meet its financial needs, such as assistance in paying workers' salaries or other expenses, it will be designated as a "mission field." However, after acquiring financial autonomy, it will be designated as a "field."

Fields and mission fields send to the General Conference the tithe of the tithe (10 percent) and offerings and other offerings designated for the General Conference. Additionally, they

send 3 percent of their income to the General Conference for the foreign missions fund. Also, 2 percent is sent to the division treasurer. This is done after the end of every quarter with an approved report in digital format.

At the world assembly in Huaral, Peru, in July 2023, the delegates in session approved the following resolution on how 3 percent of the world missions fund will be distributed (World Assembly resolution No. 106 of 2023). "It is approved by the majority that 1.5 percent (half) of the 3 percent of the foreign missions fund will be administered by the divisions."

Thus, the divisions will receive, in addition to 2 percent, an additional 1.5 percent—half of the 3 percent that is received for the foreign missions fund—for a total of 3.5 percent.

"The consecration to God of a tithe of all increase, whether of the orchard and harvest field, the flocks and herds, or the labor of brain or hand, the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all, and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings. It was a training adapted to kill out all narrowing selfishness, and to cultivate breadth and nobility of character." —*Education*, p. 44.

The field and union treasurers send the annual offerings collected during the Week of Prayer, the foreign missions fund offerings, and the special offerings (primarily the special Sabbath school offerings that are gathered every other month in the Sabbath school) along with the other tithes of the tithes and offerings after each quarter to the General Conference. Two percent must be sent to the division treasurer after the end of each quarter. Unions should give any surplus funds to the General Conference to promote the work in areas that need to be reached with the three angels' messages.

Every lower organizational level down to the members of the churches should consider that, through the offerings of the people, the division and the General Conference are thus assisted in rapidly developing new fields and saving souls.

CHAPTER X

FORMS

10.1. Church Letter



International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

CHURCH LETTER

To the church at _____

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Brother/Sister _____ Date of Baptism _____

Birthdate _____ Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed
Divorced

is a member of our local church. We recommend him/her for acceptance into fellowship and enclose a copy of his/her Member Record.

When acceptance into your local church has taken place, please advise us on the accompanying Church Letter Reply form. Then he/she will cease to be a member of our local congregation.

This letter is valid for three months from the date below.

Comments: _____

For the church at _____

Address _____

Elder/Leader _____ Name _____ Signature _____

Secretary _____ Name _____ Signature _____

Date _____



International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

CHURCH LETTER REPLY

To the church at _____

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Brother/Sister _____ Date of Baptism _____

Birthdate _____

whom you recommended to us in the Church Letter of _____ (date), was accepted
into fellowship in our local church on _____.

For the church at _____

Address _____

Elder/Leader _____ Name _____ Signature _____

Secretary _____ Name _____ Signature _____

Date _____

FF01 - FORM 1

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP LIST
(SENT TO FIELD IN JANUARY AND JULY OF EACH YEAR)

Local Church of _____ Date _____

No.	Name/Address/Phone	Date of Birth	Date of:	Date Accepted in Local Church	Date Left Local Church
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
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			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death
			☐ Baptism ☐ Acceptance		☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death

Total Membership

Page of

Church Secretary's Name _____

Signature _____

10.3. Member Record



International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

MEMBER RECORD (KEPT IN LOCAL CHURCH)

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname _____ Given Name(s) _____
 Maiden Name _____ Place of Birth _____
 Date of Birth _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced
 Occupation _____ Education _____

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP/OFFICES

Prior _____ Church _____ Affiliation _____
 Date of Baptism _____ Baptized by _____
 Date of Acceptance _____ Date Accepted in Local Church _____
 Date Left Local Church _____ ☐ Transfer ☐ Disfellowship ☐ Resignation ☐ Death

Church Offices Held	Place	Date: From	To
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS

10.4. Quarterly Church Report



International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

QUARTERLY CHURCH REPORT (SENT TO FIELD AFTER EACH QUARTER)

Local Church of _____

Reporting Period: Year _____

- ☐ January 1-March 31
☐ April 1-June 30
☐ July 1-September 30
☐ October 1-December 31

MEMBERSHIP

(Insert negative numbers)

Membership per Last Report	INCREASE			DECREASE				Current Membership	Interested Souls
	Baptism	Acceptance	Transfer in	Death	Resignation	Disfellow- shipment	Transfer out		

ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED BY LAY MEMBERS

Bible Studies	Missionary Visits	Public Lectures	Seminars	Con- ferences	External Distribution			Internal Distribution		
					Books	Magazines	Leaflets	S.S. Lessons	Sabbath Watchman	Youth Anchor

ESTIMATED INTERESTED SOULS AND YOUTH MEMBERS YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Interested Souls (per age group)			Members		Youth Meetings	Youth Sabbaths	Youth Weekends	Youth Seminars	Youth Conferences
0-12	13-19	20-30	Up to 19	20-30					

SPECIAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Date(s)	Check box if on-goin	Description
	☐	
	☐	
	☐	
	☐	
	☐	
	☐	
	☐	
	☐	

QUARTERLY CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT

- ☐ Is attached
☐ Will be sent by the treasurer as soon as possible

Church Elder/Leader's Name _____

Signature _____

Church Secretary's Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

FF04 - FORM 4

10.5. Monthly Church Treasure’s Report



International Missionary Society
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

MONTHLY CHURCH TREASURER’S REPORT

To the _____ ☐ Field ☐ Union
From the Local Church of _____
For the Month of _____

AMOUNT

FOR THE FIELD/UNION:

Tithe	_____
First Fruits	_____
Literature	_____
Missionary	_____
Poor	_____
Building	_____
Sabbath School	_____
Youth	_____
10% of Local Church Offerings	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____

FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE:

Foreign Missions	_____
Special Sabbath School Offering for _____	_____
Week of Prayer	_____
"Highways"	_____
Good Samaritan	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

TOTAL TRANSFERRED _____

WAY OF TRANSFER

Church Treasurer’s Name Signature

Date

10.6. Quarterly Church Treasurer's Report



International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

QUARTERLY CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT (DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL CHURCH, WITH COPY TO FIELD)

Local church of _____

Reporting Period: Year _____
☐ January 1 - March 31
☐ April 1 - June 30
☐ July 1 - September 30
☐ October 1 - December 31

FIELD AND GENERAL CONFERENCE INCOME AND TRANSFERS

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Total for Quarter
FOR THE FIELD:				
Tithe	_____	_____	_____	_____
First Fruits	_____	_____	_____	_____
Literature	_____	_____	_____	_____
Missionary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Poor	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sabbath School	_____	_____	_____	_____
Youth	_____	_____	_____	_____
10% of local church income (below)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
FOR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE:				
Foreign Missions	_____	_____	_____	_____
Special Sabbath School Offering	_____	_____	_____	_____
for _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Week of Prayer	_____	_____	_____	_____
"Highways"	_____	_____	_____	_____
Good Samaritan	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL TRANSFERRED TO FIELD	=====	=====	=====	=====
DATE TRANSFERRED	_____	_____	_____	

LOCAL CHURCH INCOME, EXPENDITURES AND FUNDS BALANCES

	Beginning Balance	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Total for Quarter
INCOME FOR QUARTER					
Church Expense	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Poor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Literature	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL LOCAL INCOME	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Expenditures for quarter (Insert negative numbers)					
Rent	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Utilities (Electricity, phone, water, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Maintenance and repairs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Help for the poor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Missionary literature	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10% tithe of local income to the field	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL LOCAL EXPENDITURES	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
Ending Balance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Church Elder/Leader's Name _____ Signature _____ Church Treasurer's Name _____ Signature _____

Date _____

FF06 - FORM 6

QUARTERLY CHURCH MISSIONARY REPORT
(GIVEN TO CHURCH SECRETARY WITH COPY TO FIELD)

Reporting Period: Year _____

☐ January 1-March 31

☐ April 1-June 30

☐ July 1-September 30

☐ October 1-December 31

[illegible]

Date _____

10.8. Church Officers' Elections



International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

CHURCH OFFICERS' ELECTIONS (SENT TO THE FIELD)

Local Church of _____ For the Year _____

ELDER/LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

SECRETARY _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

TREASURER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

DEACON _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

SABBATH SCHOOL LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

MISSIONARY LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

YOUTH LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include area code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

CHURCH COMMITTEE

1. _____ 5. _____

2. _____ 6. _____

3. _____ 7. _____

4. _____

ADDITIONAL OFFICERS (Add additional sheets as needed)

Office

Name

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Church Elder/Leader's Signature _____

Church Secretary's Signature _____

Date _____

10.9. Field/Union Officers' Elections



International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

FIELD/UNION OFFICERS' ELECTIONS (SENT TO THE UNION OR THE GENERAL CONFERENCE)

☐ Union ☐ Field Name _____ For 2-Year Term from _____ to _____

HEADQUARTERS

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

ELECTION STATISTICS

Date of previous elections _____ Total membership at that time _____

Date of current elections _____ ☐ Regular Session ☐ Extraordinary Session

Election supervisor _____

Number of delegates entitled to vote _____ Total membership at this time _____

COMPOSITION OF UNION

The Union is composed of the following fields: _____

_____ (See also Composition of the Union form)

OFFICERS ELECTED

PRESIDENT _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

VICE PRESIDENT _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

SECRETARY _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

TREASURER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

LITERATURE EVANGELISM LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

MISSIONARY LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

YOUTH LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

PUBLISHING LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Publishing House Name _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

DEACON/DORCAS LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

HEALTH LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

EDUCATION LEADER _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

AUDITOR 1 _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

AUDITOR 2 _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

COMMITTEES

FIELD/UNION COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | |

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

FINANCE COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

HEALTH COMMITTEE

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

PLEASE NOTIFY THE UNION/GENERAL CONFERENCE WHENEVER CHANGES OCCUR

DELEGATES

TO: ☐ Union ☐ General Conference

1. _____	21. _____
2. _____	22. _____
3. _____	23. _____
4. _____	24. _____
5. _____	25. _____
6. _____	26. _____
7. _____	27. _____
8. _____	28. _____
9. _____	29. _____
10. _____	30. _____
11. _____	31. _____
12. _____	32. _____
13. _____	33. _____
14. _____	34. _____
15. _____	35. _____
16. _____	36. _____
17. _____	37. _____
18. _____	38. _____
19. _____	39. _____
20. _____	40. _____

ALTERNATE DELEGATES

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

COMMENTS

Election Location _____ Date _____

President's Signature Secretary's Signature Election Supervisor's Signature

10.10. Composition of the Union



International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement

COMPOSITION OF THE UNION

(SENT TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE WITH FIELD/UNION OFFICERS' ELECTIONS FORM)

UNION HEADQUARTERS

Union Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

THE UNION IS COMPOSED OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS

(List Field names in alphabetical order)

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

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Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

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Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

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Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Field Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (include country code) _____ FAX _____ eMail _____

Field President _____ Date of Birth _____

Election Location _____ Date _____

Union President's Name _____ Signature _____ Union Secretary's Name _____ Signature _____

SECRETARIAL SIX-MONTH REPORT (FIELD OR MISSION FIELD)

☐ Jan. 1 - June 30
☐ July 1 - Dec. 31

(Insert negative numbers)

Use additional sheets as necessary

[illegible][illegible]

*Include only those not listed in districts

IV. ESTIMATED INTERESTED SOULS AND YOUTH MEMBERS

District Name	Interested Souls (per age group)			Members	
	0-12	13-19	20-30	Up to 19	20-30
Total					

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Y h Meetings	Y h Sabbaths	Y h Weekends	Y h Seminars	Y h Conferences

V. BUILDINGS

District Name	Churches	Offices	Houses	Apartments	Schools	Health Centers	Publishing Houses
Field Headquarters*							
Total							

*Include only those not listed in districts

VI. INSTITUTIONS

Institution Name	District	Description (e.g. school, health center, publishing house, printing facility, etc.)

VII. OTHER

Property	District	Number	Description
Vacant Land			
Vehicles			

Place and Date _____ Field President's Name _____ Signature _____ Field Secretary's Name _____ Signature _____

SECRETARIAL SIX-MONTH REPORT (UNION TO GENERAL CONFERENCE)

YEAR _____
☐ Jan. 1 - June 30
☐ July 1 - Dec. 31

(Insert negative numbers)

Use additional sheets as necessary

[illegible][illegible]

*Include only those not listed in fields

IV. ESTIMATED INTERESTED SOULS AND YOUTH MEMBERS

Field Name	Interested Souls (per age group)			Members	
	0-12	13-19	20-30	Up to 19	20-30
Total					

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Y h Meetings	Y h Sabbaths	Y h Weekends	Y h Seminars	Y h Conferences

V. BUILDINGS

Field Name	Churches	Offices	Houses	Apartments	Schools	Health Centers	Publishing Houses
Union Headquarters*							
Total							

*Include only those not listed in fields

VI. INSTITUTIONS

Institution Name	Field	Description (e.g. school, health center, publishing house, printing facility, etc.)

VII. OTHER

Property	Field	Number	Description
Vacant Land			
Vehicles			

Place and Date _____ Union President's Name _____ Signature _____ Union Secretary's Name _____ Signature _____

We are not to honor human traditions.

**"But in vain they do worship Me,
teaching for doctrines the commandments of
men." Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:9, 13.**

**There is a difference, however, between human
traditions and divine order. God's word inspires
church practices which are based on godly
principles and result in heaven-sent blessings.**

**"Therefore, brethren, stand fast,
and hold the traditions which ye have been
taught, whether by word, or our epistle."**

**"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of
our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves
from every brother that walketh disorderly,
and not after the tradition which he received of
us." 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6.**

