

May 13, 2023

Dear _____ Church Family:

A group of 17 men representing the spectrum of our church have met many times and spent many hours producing a document designed to help us move forward together. This document outlines our path to selecting a new leadership team.

The next step is to present this document to the entire church at a Church Business Meeting which is scheduled for next Sunday morning, May 21, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the Church Fellowship Hall. We will be having a Business Meeting instead of a Powwow Meeting at this time. I ask that you start now bathing that meeting in much prayer.

The document we will be voting on in the Business Meeting is enclosed with this letter. If the document passes with a 2/3's majority we will proceed with the nominating committee selection process, and we will nominate the selection committee on Sabbath, June 10.

If the document fails, the conference will share the next steps in detail at that time. But let me say this, if the conference has to step in, I can guarantee that there will be major negative consequences to our church and to our witness in the community.

Also enclosed with this letter are two chapters that the group of 17 men have read and are encouraging every member to prayerfully read before the Business Meeting. Those chapters are as follows:

- Ministry of Healing, pp. 483-496 "In Contact with Others"
- Testimonies, Vol. 8. pp. 239-243 "One with Christ in God"

The 2023 Church Budget will also be presented for vote at this Business Meeting on May 21. The Agape Feast and Communion Service will be announced at a later time. Keep praying that God will work His miracle of reconciliation among us as church family.

God bless you!

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor _____

_____ SDA Church Path to Leadership Selection

As member and leaders within the _____ Church, we recognize that recent events have caused deep pain and division within our church family. Healing the hurt and distrust will take time and godly leadership. As we work toward that goal, church life has continued and distrust has continued to build. This document is intended to outline a path toward selecting a mutually agreed upon slate of new leaders who can work with a new pastor and the conference to help us restore trust in one another.

Reasons for this document include the following:

- All the conflict and pastoral change has led to a lot of confusion and this document will help clarify next steps.
- Many have lost trust with one another and need something in writing to describe how we will act toward each other.
- Previous attempts to form a leadership team have been painful and stated guardrails will provide security.
- There is a lot of past hurt and pain that can't all be resolved before necessity has forced us to move ahead with establishing new leadership. This document acknowledges the need for addressing that hurt in the future while helping us take the necessary steps right now.

Points of Agreement:

- A. Recognizing that we have caused hurt and pain to others in the past, we will attempt to personally acknowledge those mistakes and seek forgiveness from each other privately. When new issues may arise we will extend grace and mercy instead of judgment and criticism, using the "I" message instead of the "You" message.
- B. We will strive to eliminate "them and us" labels on the issues already discussed, and put them to rest!
- C. All members should be seeking truth through the study and application of Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy truths. Members should be able to dialogue with and learn from each other in a non- divisive manner without losing relationships and may not always agree on all points. However, elected church leaders speak and act on behalf of the whole congregation and represent the world church in the local church. As such, elected leaders should be comfortable supporting the Fundamental Beliefs publicly and should be willing to lay aside private interpretations for the unity of the body. Unity in the church must be maintained in answer to Christ's prayer in John 17.
- D. We agree that the current Fundamental Beliefs of the church are a description of what the Seventh- day Adventist church currently teaches. Our 28 Fundamental Beliefs are not a creed, but serve as boundaries against every wind of doctrine, and are known as our current expression of what Seventh-day Adventists believe. The Bible is our only creed, and the Bible along with the Spirit of Prophecy are God's inspired messages to guide us and keep us united in these last days. Our Church leadership should be comfortable with supporting those beliefs in their life and teaching.
- E. "Through the years, Seventh-day Adventists have been reluctant to formalize a creed, in the usual sense of that term. However, from time to time, for practical purposes, we have found it necessary to summarize our beliefs in an organized structure....Even in publishing that 1980 summary, the church took steps to assure that it would not come to be viewed as an unchangeable creed." *Some have struggled with the meaning and intent of FB#2. Some may or may not like the way it is worded presently (that is not within our scope of responsibility at the local church level to change).
- F. The new nominating committee will be encouraged to begin its work by reviewing and considering the recent nominating committee's recommendations.

- G. All business in the _____ Seventh-day Adventist church will be conducted in accordance with the policies and practices in the Church Manual. If questions or dispute arises about how to proceed on a certain matter, church leadership will seek the counsel of the conferences to interpret the manual and resolve the dispute.
- H. No one should feel like they are being muzzled, or forced. That is not the way God works. So, if you do not agree with the Fundamental Beliefs, and you feel you can keep your disagreements out of the public arena at the local church level, then you are welcome as a member of the _____ SDA Church, but will not accept being an officially elected leader. Members who cannot stop divisively agitating on points of doctrine may be subject to church discipline for disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the church, adherence to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization, or persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority or to submit to the order and discipline of the church. (See the Church Manual)
- I. If renewed concerns arise among us on this or any other issue, then we will follow the Matthew 18:15-17 process in dealing with them. That process is as follows:
1. One-on-one
 2. Take 1 or 2 with you
 3. Take it to the church body which should usually follow the following process:
 - a. Take it to the board of elders
 - b. Then to the church board
 - c. Then to the church business meeting

Conclusion: All of this involves trust and risk. Trust has been damaged, and risk creates fear. The best way to get past these barriers is to put our trust in God, who is forever trustworthy and able to quiet our fears. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

* Seventh-day Adventists Believe,
An exposition of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,
Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2018 Third Edition, p. v