



GOSPEL
S O U N D E R S
Rekindling Reformation

CHURCH ORGANIZATION



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Gospel Order



- Satan was determined to keep his hold on the land of Canaan, and when it was made the habitation of the children of Israel, and the law of God was made the law of the land, he hated Israel with a cruel and malignant hatred and plotted their destruction. Through the agency of evil spirits strange gods were introduced; and because of transgression, the chosen people were finally scattered from the Land of Promise. This history Satan is striving to repeat in our day. God is leading His people out from the abominations of the world, that they may keep His law; and because of this, the rage of "the accuser of our brethren" knows no bounds. "The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:10, 12. The antitypical land of promise is just before us, and Satan is determined to destroy the people of God and cut them off from their inheritance. The admonition, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38), was never more needed than now. {PP 688.3}

Gospel Order



- What is Gospel Order?
- First we will seek to figure out the meaning of order.
- Order suggests a regular disposition or methodical arrangement of things; Established mode of proceeding.
- However, order without the gospel is not in accordance with God's plan.

Establish Churches



- The Christian world have trodden underfoot the Sabbath of the Lord and observe a sabbath instituted by the enemy. But God has a people who are loyal to Him. His work is to be carried forward in right lines. **The people who bear His sign are to establish churches and institutions as memorials to Him.** These memorials, however humble in appearance, will constantly bear witness against the false sabbath instituted by Satan, and in favor of the Sabbath instituted by the Lord in Eden, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. {CH 235.2}

Establish Churches



- "Let the minister request all those who propose to enter into church order, to stand upon their feet, till it is ascertained whether perfect fellowship exists among them. 1 If it does not, let those between whom the difficulty lies, immediately retire and confer together in order to an understanding. If this can not be arrived at, we know of no other way, but that the accused should remain outside, until the church is prepared to take action in his or her case. It having been ascertained who are prepared to enter into church fellowship, let their names be attached to the following:- {1907 JNL, COOD 126.4}
- Church Covenant
- "We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ. {1907 JNL, COOD 127.1}
- Church Officers
- "The members being thus enrolled, they are prepared for the election of church officers. The following classes of rulers and officers of the Christian church are brought to view in the New Testament: apostles, evangelists, elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons. These we would divide into two great classes: those who hold their office by virtue of an especial call from God, and those selected by the Church: the former embracing apostles and evangelists; and the latter, elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons. {1907 JNL, COOD 127.2}

Establish Churches



- 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. {TM 489.3}

Establish Churches



- An army in battle would become confused and weakened unless all worked in concert. If the soldiers should act out their own impulsive ideas, without reference to each other's positions and work, they would be a collection of independent atoms; they could not do the work of an organized body. So the soldiers of Christ must act in harmony. They alone must not be cherished. If they do this, the Lord's people in the place of being in perfect harmony, of one mind, one purpose, and consecrated to one grand object, will find efforts fruitless, their time and capabilities wasted. Union is strength. A few converted souls acting in harmony, acting for one grand purpose, under one head, will achieve victories at every encounter. {SpM 121.1}

Establish Churches



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Establish Churches



- The Lord has shown that gospel order has been too much feared and neglected. Formality should be shunned; but, in so doing, order should not be neglected. There is order in heaven. There was order in the church when Christ was upon the earth, and after His departure order was strictly observed among His apostles. And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as God unites His children, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to prevent this unity and to destroy it. Therefore men are hurried into the field who lack wisdom and judgment, perhaps not ruling well their own house, and not having order or government over the few that God has given them charge of at home; yet they feel capable of having charge of the flock. They make many wrong moves, and those unacquainted with our faith judge all the messengers to be like these self-sent men. Thus the cause of God is reproached, and the truth shunned by many unbelievers who would otherwise be candid and anxiously inquire, Are these things so? {EW 97.1}

Establish Churches



- GOSPEL ORDER CLOSES THE DOOR OF PERPLEXITY, CONFUSION AND FALSE TEACHERS
- I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He said, "The church must flee to God's Word and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected." This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith. I saw that in the apostles' day the church was in danger of being deceived and imposed upon by false teachers. Therefore the brethren chose men who had given good evidence that they were capable of ruling well their own house and preserving order in their own families, and who could enlighten those who were in darkness. Inquiry was made of God concerning these, and then, according to the mind of the church and the Holy Ghost, they were set apart by the laying on of hands. 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.. EW 100.2 - EW 101.1

Establish Churches



- The following was published in 1858: "God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals, here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading this people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead. . . . But some restless spirits do not more than half do up their work. As the angel leads them, they get in haste for something new, and rush on without divine guidance, and thus bring confusion and discord into the ranks. They do not speak or act in harmony with the body." - Testimonies., Vol. III, pages 207. {1907 JNL, COOD 115.2}

Establish Churches



- The hierarchal and episcopal forms of church governance were wholly unacceptable to the early believers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They naturally had an inclination toward the congregational form of church governance. These pioneers were usually very independent people who had been persecuted by the various churches from which they came. They wanted as much freedom as possible to exercise their religious convictions. **However, God did not choose the congregational form of church governance but rather the representative form of church governance for His remnant people.** Like Adam and the 24 elders coming before God at an appointed time to represent unfallen worlds. Is this not the form of organizational structure in heaven in Zion and should pass to the church?!

Establish Churches



- There was division of the field, like, the European field came to be regarded as a self-sufficient continental unit, and it was called the "General Conference in Europe," while the organization in the land of origin was called the "General Conference in America." And there was beside, the Australasian Union Conference [*The Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, Volume 3, p, 348]. As other areas of organization developed, first the local conferences, then the General Conference, much later the unions, and finally the divisions of the General Conference, each one was delegated responsibility. Every level was designated to serve the needs of the level whose representatives had elected its leaders. But ultimately all the levels received their authority from the local churches and served the needs and interests of these rapidly expanding local church communities. The conferences were not only established to serve the needs of the local churches but also, more importantly, to plan and organize the expansion of the work into areas, towns, and cities where there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence. Thus developed the representative form of church governance that God had ordained for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Paul can be seen working on this basis of structure and supplying the churches in need from other churches. Even churches who were poor like Macedonian church yet so generous contributed for church in Corinth and Achaia

Establish Churches



- Noting the normal organizational pattern seen in worldly corporations, it was naturally thought that the General Conference should have authority over the whole of the work of God around the world. However, God is a decentralist; thus the whole issue of decentralization becomes pivotal to the counsel received by Sister White and transmitted to the delegates at the 1901 General Conference Session.

Establish Churches



- We want to understand that there are no gods in our conference. There are to be no kings here, and no kings in any conference that is formed, "All ye are brethren."
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- *The Lord God of Israel will link us all together. The organizing of new conferences is not to separate us. It is to bind us together. The conferences that are formed are to cling mightily to the Lord, so that through them He can reveal His power.....Remember that God can give wisdom to those who handle His work. It is not necessary to send thousands of miles to for advice, and then have to before an answer can be received. Those who are right on the ground are to decide what shall be done. You know what you have to wrestle with, but those who are thousands of miles away do not know. [General Conference Bulletin, 1901, p. 69, 70]*
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- God has warned that great difficulties would result and dangers occur if we place such kingly authority in the hands of men, but the people love the way of the world rather than the way of God.
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- *The heavenly Teacher inquired; "What stronger delusion can beguile the mind than the pretense that you are building on the right foundation and that God accepts your works, when in reality you are working out many things according to worldly policy and are sinning against Jehovah?" [Testimonies for the Church, Volume 8, p. 249]*

Establish Churches



- Since 1903 the "upright triangle" of the hierarchical form of organization has been given great impetus while the "inverted triangle" of representationalism has greatly been weakened.
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- The time has come for the members of God's church to re-examine the true principles of church organization at the General Conference level and at all other levels of God's work. We have the right doctrines and message, but these alone are not sufficient. We must also have the right way to implement them. The apostasy and rivalry within the church and independent ministries today is as much a result of abandoning the counsel of the Lord in organization as of rejecting the message of Christ our Righteousness.
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- It has ever been the object of Satan to induce men to look to other men rather than to God for their leadership. There seem to be, in every organization, those who are anxious to submit unwaveringly to those who have authority and power. Knowing that these two groups complement one another, Satan continually seeks to effect an allegiance that will cause men entrusted with leadership responsibilities to believe that autocratic power is vested in them by God, and others to believe that such power is God-ordained. The latter, with great reverence and respect, believe that God requires them to be unwaveringly loyal to such individuals. Too often, they equate loyalty to God with loyalty to leaders. Quoted to support such a dangerous belief is the response of David when urged by his men to kill King Saul.

Establish Churches



- *Catholic viewpoint, and the term "hierarchy" was used in a pejorative sense to refer to the papal form of the church governance, that attitude on the church's part was nothing more than a manifestation of widespread anti-papery among conservative Protestant denominations in the early part of this century, and the latter part of the last, which has now been consigned to the historical trash heap as far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned. Sworn affidavit of Neal C. Wilson, vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in The problem is that a hierarchical system suggests a ladder of importance from GC down to local church. It implies that transferring from church pastor to an administrative position is "a move up the ladder," while this vice versa is a "demotion." And a hierarchal system also makes it easier for a lot of attention to focus on the president of that system. But even this is not necessarily a problem.*
- *However, it does raise questions of perspective when the General Conference president is repeatedly referred to as "President Folkenberg." And when an Adventist refers to Mrs. Folkenberg as the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "FIRST LADY," it makes you wonder. It probably has the same effect on Mrs. Folkenberg, who appears to be a particularly self-effacing, humble woman. [South Pacific Record, August 4, 1990, p. 2]*

Establish Churches



- The hierarchal form of church governance is built upon an individual or a small committee, who is/are responsible for making the major, momentous decisions of the church. The Roman Catholic Church is the archetype of hierarchal church governance. At the head of this church its leader, the pope, when speaking *ex cathedra* (from the throne), has absolute authority. Whether by a papal bull or by a papal encyclical, the pope's directives are expected to be accepted without modifications, additions, or deletions. Enforcing this expectation has not always been easy for the Roman Catholic Church. This was especially true during the nineteenth century, when the papal influence reached an unprecedented low. To help strengthen papal authority, the longest-reigning pope in history, Pius IX, put forward the doctrine of papal infallibility. That doctrine was meant to add the weight of divine authority to the pontifical pronouncements. This doctrine of infallibility was not accepted without considerable opposition, but its proponents eventually prevailed.

Establish Churches



- In the hierarchal system the leader makes the decisions. These directives are expected to pass down through the archdiocese (archbishopric) to the diocese (bishopric) to the local parish congregations without modification or change of any kind. The dictates of the leader are binding upon all members of the church. We live in an age where not a few are challenging such absolute authority; nevertheless, most Roman Catholics around the world accept the edicts of the pope as final and non-negotiable. This is the most subtle of all church structure. The people at the top have no advisor but themselves, not subordinate to anyone but their beliefs and others have to role-play active part in running affairs.
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- The episcopal form of governance was also known at the time of the commencement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Anglican Church in England developed this form, and the Episcopal Church of America carried it on after the Declaration of American Independence. Such a system has no supreme pontiff; the authority resides at the level of the bishop.

Establish Churches



- In England, for example, there are well over 500 such bishops, but only two archbishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York. While the Archbishop of Canterbury is called the primate of Great Britain, the reigning monarch is the leader of the Anglican Church; decision-making authority is vested at the level of the diocese in the hands of the bishops. The episcopal form of church governance has some of the elements of the hierarchal system, but is less centralized. Each bishop is almost a law unto himself in terms of his authority. Naturally, some bishops exercise more autocratic authority than do others, but the running of the dioceses are largely in their hands. Anything that is half Rome is Rome indeed and soon what would follow?! In recent years, the Anglican Church has felt a deep frustration with this form of governance. Indeed, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie, urged the Anglican Church to reunite with the Church of Rome under a reformed Papacy. In a sense, the Anglican Church structure is readily adaptable to this reunion for it already possesses a modified hierarchal structure.

Establish Churches



- The third form of church governance known to the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the congregational form. Here every church had its own autonomy. One can see this kind of governance best in the Congregational Church, the Baptist Church, the Church of Christ, and similar churches. While a loose organization exists among these churches, nevertheless, each church has its own autonomy. For example, the church congregation has the right to hire or fire its own pastor. The church handles its own finances and accepts special missionary projects. It is not uncommon for a church to sponsor a missionary family overseas and guarantee its financial needs.

Establish Churches



- The hierarchal and episcopal forms of church governance were wholly unacceptable to the early believers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They naturally had an inclination toward the congregational form of church governance. These pioneers were usually very independent people who had been persecuted by the various churches from which they came. They wanted as much freedom as possible to exercise their religious convictions. However, God did not choose the congregational form of church governance but rather the representative form of church governance for His remnant people. Like Adam and the 24 elders coming before God at an appointed time to represent unfallen worlds. Is this not the form of organizational structure in heaven in Zion and should pass to the church?!

Establish Churches



- There was division of the field, like, the European field came to be regarded as a self-sufficient continental unit, and it was called the "General Conference in Europe," while the organization in the land of origin was called the "General Conference in America." And there was beside, the Australasian Union Conference [*The Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, Volume 3, p, 348]. As other areas of organization developed, first the local conferences, then the General Conference, much later the unions, and finally the divisions of the General Conference, each one was delegated responsibility. Every level was designated to serve the needs of the level whose representatives had elected its leaders. But ultimately all the levels received their authority from the local churches and served the needs and interests of these rapidly expanding local church communities. The conferences were not only established to serve the needs of the local churches but also, more importantly, to plan and organize the expansion of the work into areas, towns, and cities where there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence. Thus developed the representative form of church governance that God had ordained for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Paul can be seen working on this basis of structure and supplying the churches in need from other churches. Even churches who were poor like Macedonian church yet so generous contributed for church in Corinth and Achaia

Establish Churches



- In this form of church governance, the emerging structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had most of its authority placed in the hands of the local churches. The churches had the responsibility to accept new members. Once they became the members of the local church community they were members of the church at large, or what later became the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. The local churches alone had the responsibility to discipline unfaithful members. The local church was specifically responsible for the missionary endeavors within the region of its locality, whether it be a rural region or a town or city. Indeed, the whole authority of the church had its base in the local church community, as will be seen in subsequent chapters of this book.

Establish Churches



- As other areas of organization developed, first the local conferences, then the General Conference, much later the unions, and finally the divisions of the General Conference, each one was delegated responsibility. Every level was designated to serve the needs of the level whose representatives had elected its leaders. But ultimately all the levels received their authority from the local churches and served the needs and interests of these rapidly expanding local church communities. The conferences were not only established to serve the needs of the local churches but also, more importantly, to plan and organize the expansion of the work into areas, towns, and cities where there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence. Thus developed the representative form of church governance that God had ordained for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
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- In so ordaining, God gave a form of governance that allowed for checks and balances, and which was meant to decentralize the levels of authority. While today we still have the vestiges of the representative form of church governance, alas, in reality we have shifted alarmingly toward the hierarchal form. In so doing, we wittingly or unwittingly rebel against God.

Establish Churches



- The Development of Structure In the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- After the Great Disappointment of 1844, individuals, families, and in some cases small groups of Adventists were scattered around the United States, especially in the New England area and upstate New York. However, these Adventists fragmented from each other very quickly. They divided into Sabbathkeeping and Sunday-keeping groups. Later, the issue of the Spirit of Prophecy caused other schisms to take place. Those who did remain true to the revelations of the Advent Message became fervent in missionary work. However, so few and so scattered were these early Adventist groups that they are often referred to by Sister White as the "little flock" or the "scattered flock." As more joined the ranks of God's remnant church, little church buildings began to materialize—some of them not larger than sufficient to contain a congregation of thirty to sixty and there is a reason why thirty was a good number. Usually, they were little weatherboard churches, but the Holy Spirit was unquestionably manifest in a mighty way in those churches. Each of those churches became a light to spread the truth in its immediate region.

Establish Churches



- It soon became obvious, however, that though this helped, there needed to be an organized structure that could plan more directly to expand the message of salvation into regions where no Seventh-day Adventist presence existed. Thus, in 1861, the first state conference was established, the Michigan Conference. It is of no little interest that a chairman rather than a president was chosen for the Michigan Conference. Joseph Bates was the chosen chairman of the conference. This was in line with the desire to avoid any semblance of a papal form of governance. The people did not want a "king" to rule over them. They considered that concept to be wholly out of harmony with the governance that God had ordained.
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- Now the work of God could be planned better in order to send workers into unentered towns, cities, and counties. In this way, God's workers hoped to establish new church communities all around the conferences. This plan worked very effectively, and soon they organized quite a number of other conferences, among them Ohio, Iowa, and Kansas. This broader base of organization made it possible for the work of God to expand quite quickly.

Establish Churches



- However, even that did not provide planning for states where an Adventist presence had not already been established. Conferences had been established only in states where a number of strong, viable churches already existed. As the population of the United States rapidly moved westward into the frontier territories, God's people saw that such conferences obviously did nothing to accommodate the new emerging populations in the West. They needed an organization to foster the message in unentered regions. The issue of the Civil War also proved a factor. During this war, government authorities gave Adventist young men a very difficult time because of their determination not to participate. Thus, they realized a need to establish a General Conference which would plan the work with a broad base and be able to foster the development of new missionary effort in other parts of the United States. A General Conference would also give our young men a legal basis for their conscientious stand against participation in war. A third factor influencing the need for a General Conference was the need for a legal body to hold title to certain church properties such as the conference offices and the publishing houses.

Establish Churches



- It will be recalled that the establishment of the General Conference took place long before the sending out of the first missionary beyond the shores of North America. Indeed, it was formed before there was an Adventist presence of any significance in most of the United States.
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- As the mission efforts of the 1870s and 1880s brought a worldwide presence to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it was clear that even the organizations of local churches, local conferences, and the General Conference did not give adequate opportunity for expansion and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At one stage in the 1880s, loose districts were established in the United States which covered large regions of the country.

Establish Churches



- Thus, the early Seventh-day Adventist church began to develop district pastors. These were not district pastors as we understand them today—pastors in charge of two or more churches—but rather pastors who were each appointed to an area in which to conduct evangelistic meetings. It became common for the conferences to divide their territories up into districts and to appoint a pastor to proclaim the Word in each district.
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- We had the privilege to grow up, until the age of about fourteen, while this system was still employed in the work of God in Australia. (This system apparently changed earlier in the United States than in Australia.) We were also privileged to have for our father the "young" elder of the Hamilton Church in the city of Newcastle, Australia. This permitted us as lads to gain an understanding of the function of the pastor and of the officers of the church in such an organizational pattern.

Establish Churches



- A pastor would be appointed to a district. If it was in a city, it would be a city district. Our city of Newcastle at that time had a population of about a quarter of a million people, and so was considered one district. In the more rural areas, a pastor would be appointed to a district which might contain three or four sizeable towns. The major function of the pastor was that of proclaiming the Word of God to those not of our faith. The pastor would locate within the district. If assigned to a rural district, he would conduct a five- to six-months crusade in one town, usually holding meetings two nights a week and spending the rest of the time in visitation, presentation of Bible studies, and other soul-winning activities. He would then likely hold a crusade in a different town in his rural district each succeeding year until being transferred to another district. The evangelist appointed to a city district might also hold a crusade for five or six months of each year, but in varying suburbs instead of towns. After three or four years, the pastor in either type of district was usually transferred to another district. It was usual for the pastor and his family to become members of one of the churches within the district.

Establish Churches



- One of the jobs of the minister is to train the member as he is raising up the church so that when he leaves it in the hands of an elder it is a strong functioning church so this work should be mostly accomplished before an elder is put in place this does not negate the fact that ministers will still stop in occasionally to give messages and counsel as well they need a place to worship on Sabbath after all. Hovering takes place after the church has been raised up and organized and the pastor continues to put most of his time in that church as its easy lazy work. The ministers of such time as this have to move in the fields rather baby-sitting adults who can feed themselves.

Establish Churches



- ***Simple Organization and Gospel Order - A Governing Body?!***
- Before pressing forward into new territory, Paul and his companions visited the churches that had been established in Pisidia and the regions round about. "As they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." {AA 205.4}

Establish Churches



- *[FE 253] Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment.*
- *What is the purpose of church organization?*
- *[6T 29] The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor, may hear the message of truth.*
- *[6T 116] We fully believe in church organization; but this is not to prescribe the exact way in which we should work, for not all minds are to be reached by the same methods.*

Establish Churches



- What kind of organization is being referred to by these statements?
- *[SDA Encyclopedia 1043] A strong plea for gospel order (that is, church organization based on New Testament models) was made by Ellen G. White in the fall of 1853 (published in 1854; see EW 97-101) after she and her husband, James White, attended conferences in New York state and New England where they encountered strife and disunion.*
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- *[Loma Linda Messages, p. 816 (p. 464 in CD edition)] Simple organization and church order are set forth in the New Testament Scriptures, and the Lord has ordained these for the unity and perfection of the church.*

Establish Churches



- What is congregationalism? Congregationalism is a form of church governance where a local congregation is completely autonomous, that is, it is ruled 100% by the local congregation via a Pastor or church board/elders. These churches may be loosely affiliated with other congregational churches. In this form of organization, unity and organization is said to be “in Christ”, not in manmade structure, thus no attempt is made for an organized structure. This form of governance allows for a lot of independence and freedom of choice. It is extremely appealing to those who have come out of a corrupt hierarchal government where they were suppressed.

Establish Churches



- How does congregationalism function? Essentially it begins with someone who feels called/lead by God and starts up a ministry. He obtains followers who agree with him on his views and mission and in return they fund the ministry through tithes and offering. However, when people decide they no longer agree with the views taught or other aspects of the ministry, they split off and go form a new congregation. This process repeats itself. The fact that this happens continually in congregationalism, displays the disunity and failure of this type of structure. There is very little if any accountability in congregationalism and every “man does what’s right in his own eyes”. The Pastor may lead in a very loose way, allowing lots of freedom to his followers or he may control and rule with a rod of iron.

Establish Churches



- What are the fallacies of congregationalism? A major issue, if not the main, is tithing. The more followers gained, the more money flows in. This tends to and has led to a watered-down message regarding sin, the law, prophecies, and anything that may upset or offend people. This may not be true in every case as some pastors can be content with a following who are likeminded in all details, though their congregation doesn't grow. Other Pastors are sincere and are truly trying to follow God to the best they know how.

Establish Churches



- The second issue seen is that congregational ministers are almost always “hovering pastors”; that is, they remain stagnant over their congregation believing it is their task to feed the congregation continually. People in general love to have it this way just as Israel wanted a king to reign over them. Having a “hovering pastor” tends to make people weak spiritually where they do not learn to study and feed themselves. It also tends to lack in evangelism efforts by both the Pastor and congregation. Smaller churches may not be able to support a pastor thus areas of less population or poor areas tend to get neglected in evangelism efforts.

Establish Churches



- Modern independent ministries within the Father and Son/One true God movement have adapted to the benefits of technology. Today a minister does not even have to have a local congregation, but rather an expanded following via the internet and camp meetings. This allows the minister to reach a much larger and broader audience and instead of hovering at a local congregation, he hovers over camp meetings and live streaming/videos via internet. The more ecumenical or soft his message is, the more of a following he typically might obtain. A cheap grace model of salvation is a perfect fit to congregationalism and why most of the protestant churches are Congregationalists. As stated previously, not all pastors will have this weakened watered down message but it is the tendency in congregationalism over the long term. A cheap grace model of salvation allows for important truths to be set aside in order for us all to get along and stop dividing. The watered down messages are the antidote to the natural process of divisions in the congregational model. Of course, it will be claimed that we have unity in Christ as the primary cry to the people in order to keep the system functioning and from splitting further. Anyone serious about truth in whole should see that congregationalism is not the way for them as there will never be popularity in presenting the whole truth. You're going to need a true organized body in order to accomplish a work that is not possible in the congregational model.

Establish Churches



- **Representative Form of Church Governance:**
- The truth about church organization is no different of a study than any other doctrine out there, something is right and many other ideas are wrong. With the issue of organization being agitated, ignorance will no longer be an excuse for us and people are going to have to choose which direction they are going. It should be noted the whore of Revelation 17 being the Papacy is a hierarchal model of church government while most of her daughters are Congregationalists yet all are Babylon

Establish Churches



- Notice what our pioneers faced from the pen of Mrs. White:
- *“August 3, 1861, I was shown that some have feared that our churches would become Babylon if they should organize; but those in central New York **have been perfect Babylon, confusion.** And now unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future; they must scatter into fragments. {1T 270.2}*
- History is repeating today as congregationalism is the error standing in the way of true organization just as it was in their day but these Congregationalists “*have nothing to hope for in the future; they must scatter into fragments.*” The above statement has just as much weight today as it did in Sister White’s day. There is a blessing promised to us in following order and having a proper structure. One of the pinnacle lies that is going to be spread concerning proper organization is that it is “kingly power”, but this is not so for the RCG is setup in contrast to that type of system. Notice the following quote from SOP:
- *“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.** {8T 236.3}*

Establish Churches



- So how does the RCG structure work? It begins with having a group of people who are likeminded in their mission and core fundamental beliefs, where it is agreed upon that no one moves ahead of the body to push or promote what they believe is new light on major issues (more on this later). On the local level they will elect and setup a board and church officers to run the local church if the church has people qualified for those offices. Other local churches which are of the same mind will do likewise and will elect representatives to represent them in a Conference. In the above quote by Mrs. White we have a few levels of Conferences: States, Unions, and GC. Today the GCSDA has “divisions” in their system as well, yet certain things have turned the system into a hierarchal government which people look at and become prejudiced against organizing into Conferences but this is based on ignorance

Establish Churches



- What does a basic Conference look like? Once members are elected to a Conference they are members of that Conference board or committee though they remain members of their home local church (for those who are alone having no congregation to fellowship with other ideas such as an internet fellowship can be started until a local congregation can be established). The members of the conference would elect a chairman from among them to help facilitate meetings but has no special authority over the rest of the board. This board would elect either from itself or from the churches below officers such as treasurer and secretary or other needed offices which have the potential to be full time jobs, or we may have the local churches elect these officers. They should elect at least one to two assistant treasurer positions so that multiple people have a knowledge of the storehouse funds as this will prevent the chances of fraud or stealing in the event that a Judas was elected to the position. The most basic duties of the Conference would be the hiring and firing of ministers and Bible workers under the tithe payroll and establishing wages. They are essentially doing the business aspect of the church. We will look at the use of the tithe later as this is extremely important. The Conference also looks for opportunities in the field to plan and carry out evangelism work and aid the local churches in their work. Great caution should be taken in the level of authority the Conference may have over ministers and Bible workers and the local churches. The Conference should plan and provide ideas and visions concerning evangelism, tent meetings, etc. but the ministers and laity should first and foremost look for direction from God.

Establish Churches



- *"Where bodies of believers are brought out on the truth in new places, we would not recommend the immediate formation of a church. In such cases let a leader be appointed (this can perhaps best be done by the evangelist when he raises up the church), and let social meetings be continued till such time as the individuals become thoroughly acquainted with each other, and ascertain with whom they can have fellowship, and who are qualified for the important duties of officers of the church. As to the particular manner of organizing a church, when the proper time comes, we shall be allowed to avail ourselves of the experience of several ministers who have already adopted the following plan, and testify that it works well. {1907 JNL, COOD 126.3}"*

Establish Churches



- *"Let the minister request all those who propose to enter into church order, to stand upon their feet, till it is ascertained whether perfect fellowship exists among them. 1 If it does not, let those between whom the difficulty lies, immediately retire and confer together in order to an understanding. If this can not be arrived at, we know of no other way, but that the accused should remain outside, until the church is prepared to take action in his or her case. It having been ascertained who are prepared to enter into church fellowship, let their names be attached to the following:- {1907 JNL, COOD 126.4}*
- *Church Covenant*
- *"We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together as a church, taking the name Seventh-day Adventists, covenanting to keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus Christ. {1907 JNL, COOD 127.1}*

Establish Churches



- *Reception of Members*
- *"Let all candidates for admission to the church after its organization, be received by unanimous vote of the church, unless the opposition to their admission comes from those who are at the time subjects of labor or under the censure of the church. {1907 JNL, COOD 132.2}"*

Establish Churches



- *Church Officers*

- *"The members being thus enrolled, they are prepared for the election of church officers. The following classes of rulers and officers of the Christian church are brought to view in the New Testament: apostles, evangelists, elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons. These we would divide into two great classes: those who hold their office by virtue of an especial call from God, and those selected by the Church: the former embracing apostles and evangelists; and the latter, elders, bishops, pastors, and deacons. {1907 JNL, COOD 127.2}*

Establish Churches



- *Organized Standing in 1904*
- *The following, from the General Conference Year-Book of 1904 gives some interesting statistical facts up to Jan. 1, 1903:- {1907 JNL, COOD 158.3}*
- *"At that time our organized work consisted of two general conferences, composed of fourteen union conferences, seventy-two local conferences, and forty-two missions. These are distributed as follows: Local conferences in North America, forty-nine; outside of North America, twenty-three. Union conferences in America, eight; in other countries, six. Mission fields in America, including Alaska, and Hawaii, and Newfoundland, five; missions outside of America, thirty-seven. located as follows: Twelve in Europe, four in Africa, three in Asia, two in South America, two in South Africa, and the remainder in Central America, Mexico, West Indies, and the Pacific Islands. Connected with these missions are sixty-seven ordained and licensed ministers, and one hundred and thirty-one churches." {1907 JNL, COOD 158.4}*
- *From the Year-Book of 1906 we learn that eighteen new missions were opened in different parts of the world by this people during the year 1905, and that sixty missionaries were sent to the different mission fields. {1907 JNL, COOD 159.1}*

Establish Churches



- *Combining Institutions*
- *The year in which this Testimony was given, some members of the General Conference Committee were studying a scheme by which to bring all the institutions connected with this cause under the controlling head of the General Conference. These various institutions were to be represented as departments with a general head or manager, something on the plan of the Cabinet of the United States. In a special Testimony to the Battle Creek church, August, 1896, page 21, this plan is referred to in these words: "The scheme for consolidation is detrimental to the cause of present truth. Battle Creek has all the power she should have. Some in that place have advanced selfish plans, and if any branch of the work promises a measure of success, they have not exercised the spirit which lets well enough alone, but have made an effort to attach these interests to the great whole. They have striven to embrace altogether too much, and yet they are eager to get more. When they can show that they have made these plans under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then confidence in them may be restored." {1907 JNL, COOD 155.1}*

Safeguards of Gospel Order



- “As an important factor in the spiritual growth of the new converts the apostles were careful to surround them with **the safeguards of gospel order**. Churches were duly organized in all places in Lycaonia and Pisidia where there were believers. **Officers were appointed in each church, and proper order and system were established for the conduct of all the affairs pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the believers.** {AA 185.2}

Safeguards of Gospel Order



- “This was in harmony with the gospel plan of **uniting in one body all believers in Christ**, and this plan Paul was careful to follow throughout his ministry. Those who in any place were by his labor led to accept Christ as the Saviour were at the proper time organized into a church. **Even when the believers were but few in number, this was done.** The Christians were thus taught to help one another, remembering the promise, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20. {AA 185.3}

Church Authority to Be Recognized



- **“ . . . The world’s Redeemer has invested His church with great power.** He states the rules to be carried in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says, “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever (in church discipline) ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 8:18). **Thus the highest authority, even the heavenly, ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members *when the Bible rule has been followed.*** {15MR 130.1}

Study God's Methods



- As a people we should study God's plans for conducting His work. Wherever He has given directions in regard to any point, we should carefully consider how to regard His expressed will. This work should have special attention. It is not wise to choose one man as president of the General Conference. The work of the General Conference has extended, and some things have been made unnecessarily complicated. A want of discernment has been shown. There should be a division of the field, or some other plan should be devised to change the present order of things. . . . {TM 342.1}

Perfecting Gospel Order



- There was necessity for a further distribution of the responsibilities which had been borne so faithfully by a few during the earlier days of the church. The apostles must now take an important step in the perfecting of gospel order in the church by laying upon others some of the burdens thus far borne by themselves. {AA 88.2}

Jerusalem A Model



- Later in the history of the early church, when in various parts of the world many groups of believers had been formed into churches, the organization of the church was further perfected, so that order and harmonious action might be maintained. Every member was exhorted to act well his part. Each was to make a wise use of the talents entrusted to him. Some were endowed by the Holy Spirit with special gifts--"first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:28. But all these classes of workers were to labor in harmony. {AA 91.2}

“The Church of Christ.” *The Medical Missionary* 15, ns, 25 , pp. 202, 203
A.T. Jones



- The believers at Jerusalem composed “the church” at Jerusalem. The believers at Ephesus were the Church at Ephesus. The believers at Cenchrea were “the church which is at Cenchrea;” “the church of the Thessalonians,” “the Church of God which is at Corinth,” etc. The believers of the house of Aquila and Priscilla were “the church in their house.” The believers of the house of Nymphas were “the church which is in his house;” and those of the house of Philemon were “the church in thy house.”

“The Church of Christ.” *The Medical Missionary* 15, ns, 25 , pp. 202, 203
A.T. Jones



- The companies of believers of a certain region or country were “the churches” in or of that country or region; as “the churches of Galatia,” “the churches of Asia;” or collectively “the churches of the Gentiles,” “the churches of Christ,” “the churches of God,” etc.

Men Qualified to be Missionaries



- “... "The church must flee to God's Word and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected." **This is indispensably necessary in order to bring the church into the unity of the faith.** I saw that in the apostles' day the church was in danger of being deceived and imposed upon by false teachers. Therefore the brethren chose men who had given good evidence that they were capable of **ruling well their own house and preserving order in their own families, and who could enlighten those who were in darkness.** - EW 100

Men Qualified to be Missionaries



- “Inquiry was made of God concerning these, and then, according to the mind of the church and the Holy Ghost, **they were set apart by the laying on of hands. 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.” {EW 100.2}

Establish Churches



- I am thankful that there is to be a time when the mists will be cleared away. I hope that this time has begun here. We want the mists here to be cleared away. I want to say that from the light given to me by God, there should have been years ago organizations such as are now proposed. When we first met in Conference, it was thought that the General Conference should extend over the whole world. But this is not in God's order. Conferences must be organized in different localities, and it will be for the health of the different Conferences to have it thus. This does not mean that we are to cut ourselves apart from one another, and be as separate atoms. Every Conference is to touch every other Conference, and be in harmony with every other Conference. God wants us to talk for this, and he wants us to act for this. We are the people of God, who are to be separate from the world. We are to stand as representatives of sacred truth. {GCB, April 5, 1901 par. 3}