

This document was originally taken from the following website: <http://webelievesda.org/wp/> (a front for Jeff Pippenger's 2520 movement) and subsequently removed. It also appeared on the following website: <http://ourlivingfoundations.com/Blog/?p=354>

From: pastors-bounces@asia.gccsda.com <<mailto:pastors-bounces@asia.gccsda.com>> [<mailto:pastors-bounces@asia.gccsda.com>] On Behalf Of Harold Cunningham

Sent: Sunday, April 08, 2012 6:34 PM

To: Pastors

Subject: [Pastors] Dealing with dissident individuals/groups

Dear GCC Pastors,

Many of you are aware of, or have personal experience with, the heartaches and headaches of dealing with dissident individuals/groups of one form or another in your local church. GCC Churches have recently been affected by the proponents of anti-trinitarian teachings, the 2520 time period, Shepherd's Rod, and others. It is an impossible task to keep up with every individual/group intent upon introducing aberrant theology. However, to provide you with some practical help in addressing these concerns, I am sending this email.

I. What our department and some of your fellow pastors have learned that may help you:

- Sabbath School classes and independent study groups within the church are vulnerable to proponents of dissident theology or an unhealthy focus. As a movement of people which value a progressively deeper and clearer understanding of the Word, we do not want to discourage exploration of the Bible and testing "new light" with the Holy Scriptures. This is a point of strength in Adventism, but it can be exploited by those looking for opportunity to infuse teachings that are not in harmony with the church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs. Know what's being taught in your church's Sabbath School classes, small groups, etc. DO NOT be intimidated by the need to be aware of such. It's your prerogative and responsibility to know what's being taught to your members.

- Permitting the protagonist(s) of dissident teachings to remain present on the condition that they remain silent, is hypocritical and naive. A person who is under conviction that their perspective is founded on Biblical truth, should not be expected to keep that knowledge to themselves. As Adventists believers, we would not ask someone to go against their conscience and convictions. That would be hypocritical, as we could not do such ourselves. It is also naive, for permission to remain present is interpreted as an opportunity to proselytize.
- Theological “debates” with the primary proponents/leaders of dissident beliefs does not change their minds, generally speaking. Those who have become persuaded of their perspective to the point where they are under conviction to make disciples of that perspective, more often than not, view anyone countering their perspective as heretical themselves and outside of God’s will. Judge carefully. If a person truly has an open heart and mind to time-tested Adventist beliefs, then do what you can for them. However, in all likelihood, they know those Adventist beliefs very well, Time spent trying to convince a proponent against his/her will, is not time well spent, and may actually be counter-productive.
- More often than not, the real issue evolves into, and revolves around, the unity and harmony of the Body of Christ. Simply put, any action or attitude that threatens or damages the unity of the Body, is outside of God’s will. No one who is a part of the Body and wishes to remain in God’s will would want to hold on to actions or attitudes that knowingly threaten the church’s unity and peace. Those who do insist on asserting their agenda to the detriment of the Body’s unity and peace, cannot be ignored.
- Be courageous, confront, and take action with the support of your elders and church board. Yes, this may push you out of your administrative comfort zone, but it’s what courageous spiritual leaders do. Note: Efforts by pastors and church leaders to apply the principles outlined in Matt. 18 to counsel with such dissidents is a misapplication of the text; this passage relates to resolving interpersonal conflicts.

II. Regarding the 2520 time period:

- GCC's ADCOM recently took an action to be shared with all GCC pastors. It states: "Randy Moeller, a member at Knoxville First Church, has been studying and teaching a 2,520-year period with connection to events of 9/11 and beyond. These views are not in harmony with proven hermeneutical principles. After careful review, we have concluded that it is not in the best interest of our mission or unity to provide Randy Moeller with opportunity to share his teachings within the sisterhood of churches in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Additional documentation can be provided upon request.
- Rick Greve recently organized a meeting for GCC Northern Region Pastors (30 attended), in which Dr. Jud Lake, Professor – SAU School of Religion, made a presentation regarding "2520". Click to view: Dr. Lake's PowerPoint presentation on "2520" to the GCC Northern Region pastors <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZvIs6NKYhrGLZuXqIgz2_EITFqg4bd5bbk9UyYlfswE/edit>

See also this Informative website on the 2520 topic: <http://www.weaffirmsda.com/>

III. Regarding Shepherd's Rod, etc.

Dr. Neil Reid recently organized a meeting with Dr. Jud Lake, Dr. Stephen Bauer, Pastor Gary Rustad, and Pastor David Melton for the purpose of addressing concerns regarding Shepherd's Rod proponents. The following is a portion of Neil's report on that meeting:

Proponents of SR visit our churches and present themselves as "Seventh-day Adventists." Within a brief period of time, they often win the confidence of leaders and members by their willingness to participate in Sabbath School and other church activities. They soon begin to insert their teachings and plant doubts in the minds of their sympathizers regarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its doctrines.

Generally, SR proponents are not earnest seekers of truth but hard core aggressors against the church seeking to draw disciples after themselves. Praying and studying with them will only serve to create an atmosphere for their movement to take hold and thrive in the church. Efforts by pastors and church leaders to apply the principles outlined in Matt. 18 to counsel with SR adherents is a misapplication of the text; this passage relates to resolving interpersonal conflicts. The

intent of the SR organization is to infiltrate the Seventh-day Adventist Church and destroy it from within much like what cancer cells do to the human body. Pastors should be mindful of Paul's warning about such individuals:

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Act 20:28-30

2. Resources:

- Pastor Gary Rustad (Calhoun SDA Church) and Pastor David Melton (Cartersville and Adairsville SDA Churches)
- Dr. Jud Lake and Dr. Steven Bauer, both professors at SAU's School of Religion.
- Elder Kenneth Mittleider: Elder Mittleider served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in various leadership capacities for many years in North America and Africa, retiring from ministry as vicepresident of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. A member at the Calhoun SDA Church, Elder Mittleider has helped both the Calhoun and Adairsville churches deal with Shepherd's Rod proponents.
- BRI document: <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/Independent%20Ministries/branchdavidians.htm>
- Ishmael Rodriguez: Ismael who had for years been a Seventh-Day Adventist, became entangled with Shepherd's Rod theology, eventually becoming involved in leadership in the Davidian organization. Because he is fluently bi-lingual he was asked to translate the writings of Victor Houteff into Spanish. As he embarked on this process the Lord performed a miracle he loves to share. He returned to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and is now a devout member in good standing of his local congregation. He has committed his life to a ministry of unmasking the Shepherd's Rod deception.

Ismael Rodriguez currently travels extensively, providing spiritual support through both pen and voice to individuals and churches that are being challenged and threatened by the false teachings of Davidian believers. He has committed his life to a ministry of unmasking the Shepherd's Rod deception. To contact Ismael Rodriguez regarding a seminar in your local church, please call (787) 538-8026 , or email ismael@unveilingtheshepherdsrod.com<<mailto:ismael@unveilingtheshepherdsrod.com>> . Website: <http://unveilingtheshepherdsrod.com/Book.php>

- Letter Reviewed by Risk Management to be sent to individuals participating in the Shepherd's Rod Movement

[Date]

[Name and address of SR proponent]

Dear _____:

This letter is to inform you of an action taken by the ___[name of church]___ on ___[date of action]___, which authorizes this letter.

The Church Board formally and respectfully demands you immediately cease and refrain from coming onto the property, attending any function or service conducted at ___[address of church]___ or elsewhere.

It has been brought to the church board's attention, that you have chosen to associate yourself with and to teach and advance the mission of the Davidian-Shepherd's Rod organization which stands in direct opposition to the mission, theology and teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In spite of our attempts to work with you on this, you have refused to abandon attempts to undermine the Seventh-day Adventist faith. That refusal has led to the Church Board action.

We trust that you will respect our right to prohibit you from contact with the ___[name of church]___ and follow the dictates of our conscience which has led the Church Board to this decision. This decision is not open to discussion or negotiation. We do this, not out of malice or spite, but because your behavior undermines our religion and our ability to maintain church unity.

We are praying for you that God will lead you in your spiritual journey and into a closer walk with Him. Nevertheless, that walk will not be done at the expense of the unity of the _____ [name of church] _____. In the event that you wish to reject the Davidian-Shepherd's Rod teachings, there are leaders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who can help you in the process, but it cannot and will not be through this congregation.

Please honor this demand.

Sincerely,

[minister], Pastor

CC: President
Secretary
Ministerial VP
Ministerial Director
Church Clerk

IV. Regarding Anti-Trinitarian theology (from the Adventist Biblical Research Institute)

- * The Trinity in SDA History by Merlin Bert (EG White Estate): <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/Trinity%20in%20SDA%20History.pdf>
- * Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity by Raoul Dederen: <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/Doctrine%20of%20the%20Trinity.pdf>
- * The Trinity in Scripture by Gerhard Pfandl: <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/trinscript.pdf>
- * The Doctrine of the Trinity Among Adventists by Gerhard Pfandl: <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents/trinitydoc%20among%20sda.pdf>

Feel free to utilize this information in consultation with your elders, church boards, and your regional Ministerial Directors.

Very sincerely,

Harold Cunningham – VP for Pastoral Ministries & Evangelism Growing Disciples Through Shared Leadership: Love. Learn. Live. Lead.

Website: Georgia-Cumberland Conference <<http://www.gccsda.com/>>