

Elder César De León, Ministerial Director
North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
5709 N 20th St,
Ridgefield, WA 98642

May 19, 2023

Dear Elder *De León*,

We are appealing to you to intervene in order to keep our ministerial director, Eric Brown, from dividing our local church, the Chewelah Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is supporting a document that requires the Trinity doctrine to be affirmed in order to serve as a leader in our church. He wants the church to vote on this document this coming Sunday. This document promotes the Bible being replaced as our denomination's only creed by elevating the 28 Fundamental Beliefs to a creedal position. This is contrary to the official published statement of our North American Division presented in the book, *Issues*:

If Adventism is to meet the needs of all people around the world, the landmarks must remain simple and straightforward. The Bible will be our only creed. **Complex theological definitions, the Trinity, for example**, may serve the church well in general but **cannot be imposed as a test** for all Adventists everywhere. Adventism can expect fresh insights into truth, "present truth" that will enhance the appreciation of old landmarks. Such an expectation has always been a part of historic Adventism and is reaffirmed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted in 1980. When "present truth" is of a complex nature, however, it may be more helpful for some in the church than for others. In such a case it cannot be imposed on the church as a whole. Remembering our non-Trinitarian past as well as the simplicity of our landmarks should encourage a certain humility in the church and lead us to resist any attempt by one segment of the church to impose its views on the rest. (*Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*, Authors: North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Officers and Union Presidents, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, page 50)

Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and *let each one form his conceptions of God from His inspired Word.* (Ellen G. White, Letter 214, 1903, Oct. 9, to P. T. Magan and E. A. Sutherland)

This statement from the Spirit of Prophecy along with this official statement from our denominational leaders provides religious liberty in regards to the doctrine of God to all Seventh-day Adventists—church officers, church employees, or simply members of the church. Each member has the freedom of conscience to either believe in the one God of the Bible as expressed in the current 28 Fundamental Beliefs or as expressed by our denomination prior to 1980 such as we find in the following statements:

That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139:7. {FP1872 4.2}

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist . . . See Leviticus 16; Hebrews 8:4, 5; 9:6, 7; etc. {FP1872 4.3}

Here is how it was expressed in in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* up until the year 2010:

1. The true and living God, the first person of the Godhead, is our heavenly Father, and He, by His Son, Christ Jesus, created all things. (Matt. 28:18, 19; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6; Eph. 3:9; Jer. 10:10-12; Heb. 1:1-3; Acts 17:22-29; Col. 1:16-18.)
2. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, and the eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour from sin; and man's salvation is by grace through faith in Him. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 3:16; Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:21; 2:5, 6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11, 12; Eph. 1:9-15; 2:4-8; Rom. 3:23-26.)
3. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is Christ's representative on earth, and leads sinners to repentance and to obedience of all God's requirements. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:1-10; Eph. 4:30.) (*Church Manual*, 17th Edition, Revised 2005, p. 219)

If you could influence Eric Brown to abide by the NAD's statement, which is in agreement with the Spirit of Prophecy, this might prevent him from bringing the attached document to a vote which will only divide our church.

Val Ramos
Eiji Minami, MD

CC: Eric Brown, Ministerial Director, Upper Columbia Conference
Wayne Kablanow, Pastor, Chewelah Seventh-day Adventist Church
Chewelah Seventh-day Adventist Church Members

P.S. Also attached is a letter that we sent to our church members.

From: César De León
Date: 5/22/23 11:41 AM (GMT-08:00)
To: Val Ramos
Cc: Eric Brown; Wayne Kablanow; Bill McClendon
Subject: RE: Chewelah Church Business Meeting

Hello Val,

Thank you for your message and the documents attached reflecting the processes and events that have transpired in the Chewelah Church in regard to the Fundamental Believe # 2.

I understand the NPUC VP for Administration, elder Bill McClendon has been working closely with the Upper Columbia Conference. Unfortunately this situation is completely out of my hands, but you are welcome to approach the officers of our union and seek council from them.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will lead every individual that has the potential to make a difference in the outcome of this unfortunate situation.

Blessings and Victories in Jesus,

César De León

Bill McClendon, *Vice* President for Administration
North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
5709 N 20th St,
Ridgefield, WA 98642

May 24, 2023

Dear Elder McClendon,

We believe that the following motion put forth by the Upper Columbia Conference is faulty:

“Whereas the Chewelah Church has been unsuccessful in resolving the divisive doctrinal differences in our congregation and have been unable to elect a nominating committee that supports the teachings and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church, we vote to accept Upper Columbia Conference counsel to disband our church with the request that the conference make every effort to reorganize the church as soon as possible.”

There is not a single member in our church who does not fully support the teachings and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as presented in our only creed, the Bible. Yes,

there are some members who have chosen to affirm the following pre-1980 official statement on the doctrine of God, as it was expressed in in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* up until the year 2010:

1. The true and living God, the first person of the Godhead, is our heavenly Father, and He, by His Son, Christ Jesus, created all things. (Matt. 28:18, 19; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6; Eph. 3:9; Jer. 10:10-12; Heb. 1:1-3; Acts 17:22-29; Col. 1:16-18.)
2. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godhead, and the eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour from sin; and man's salvation is by grace through faith in Him. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 3:16; Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:21; 2:5, 6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11, 12; Eph. 1:9-15; 2:4-8; Rom. 3:23-26.)
3. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, is Christ's representative on earth, and leads sinners to repentance and to obedience of all God's requirements. (Matt. 28:18, 19; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:1-10; Eph. 4:30.) (*Church Manual*, 17th Edition, Revised 2005, p. 219)

Affirming this statement on the doctrine of God that many affirmed when they were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not constitute these members as unfaithful to the teachings and mission of our church. This is a gross mischaracterization of our members. The following statement from the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists gives church leaders and members this right to thus believe:

If Adventism is to meet the needs of all people around the world, the landmarks must remain simple and straightforward. The Bible will be our only creed. Complex theological definitions, the Trinity, for example, may serve the church well in general but cannot be imposed as a test for all Adventists everywhere. Adventism can expect fresh insights into truth, “present truth” that will enhance the appreciation of old landmarks. Such an expectation has always been a part of historic Adventism and is reaffirmed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted in 1980. When “present truth” is of a complex nature, however, it may be more helpful for some in the church than for others. In such a case it cannot be imposed on the church as a whole. Remembering our non-Trinitarian past as well as the simplicity of our landmarks should encourage a certain humility in the church and lead us to resist any attempt by one segment of the church to impose its views on the rest. (*Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries*, Authors: North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Officers and Union Presidents, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, page 50)

In light of this statement from the NAD, we would like to see the following statement put on the agenda for a vote at our June 4 meeting:

“Whereas all members of the Chewelah SDA Church are faithful to the teachings and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and are valued and appreciated, none will be excluded

from holding any church office based on their belief related to a pre- or post-1980 statement on the doctrine of God, as allowed for in the NAD Issues statement. We will refrain from divisive speech to or about each other and will not put down any brother or sister because of their views on Fundamental Belief #2. We agree to extend to others the liberty of conscience that we desire for ourselves.”

Yesterday, this request was sent to David Jamieson. Could you speak with him about this issue for us?

Sincerely,

Val Ramos
Eiji Minami, MD

CC: David Jamieson, President, Upper Columbia Conference
Eric Brown, Ministerial Director, Upper Columbia Conference
Chewelah Seventh-day Adventist Church Members