

the one thing they have is
don't need anyone. We can
needing anyone for anything.
This is why a man was
notorious for this. I know how
thank you very much. They
pleasly lost will I pull your
wimp for doing it.

Jesus knew nothing of this. He
take on hypocrites and get a
hundred men of a hundred
wind and sea, lived in a
house you, the Son can do
what he sees the Father doing.
Father who sent me. The
Father who lives in me and
source of embarrassment is
about his relationship with
who will listen. The Father
14:10, 18:30-31

Why is this important
with a deep understanding
a 'second chance' to get
given, now they see it is
They're trying to think
low this closely now. So
that is passed from
things in the act. It is
is passed to us from God
deep and vital part of
he is a man's man. A
his relationship as God

Volunteer Lay Pastor Training Handbook



VOLUNTEER LAY PASTOR

Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
~Embracing Carolina with the Compassionate Call of Christ~

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Developing an Intentional Strategy for Volunteer Lay Pastors (VLPs)

Rationale:

The challenges that confront us today are impacting the church in various ways. Since the Carolina Conference has a vision for evangelism and church planting, finding ways to insure that new plants are healthy disciple-making centers for evangelism is imperative to the growth of God's kingdom. We must not allow the challenges to diminish the priority for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

Through our church planting vision we are establishing new congregations at a rapid pace and we should praise the Lord for His blessings. Our policy is that the new plants should be Lay led which brings into question the providing of pastoral care to the new congregants. The connection to a Mother Church and establishing a Pastor/Coach relationship with the local leader has proven to be beneficial but is dependent upon many variables and in many instances ineffective.

Where there is little or no involvement with the Mother Church or Coach the potential for, not understanding our purpose, no vision, lack of unity, division, independence and teachings that are not in harmony with the mainstream Seventh-day Adventist church increases greatly.

The need to increase the number of workers that will help with discipleship and congregational care in order to fulfill the mission Jesus has given to us, "to go and make disciples of all nations," is imperative. This will assist in helping every member experience the joy of being a fulfilled disciple of Jesus.

Given the fact that we now have 44 Groups, 26 Companies and a number of churches with their leadership having no formal pastoral training. In order to help offset these and other issues we propose the following:

- 1) Establish a formal Volunteer Lay Pastor program in which every Group, Company and Church with no direct pastoral leadership have a VLP assigned.
- 2) Create a curriculum that each VLP **must** complete in order to serve.
- 3) Provide 3 remote trainings and 1 weekend a year in which we train and equip the VLPs.



- 4) In consultation with treasury establish a reimbursement schedule for direct expenses.

Role of the Ministerial Council

- 1) Develop the curriculum
- 2) Select instructors
- 3) Give overall supervision to the program
- 4) Conduct the training event
- 5) Identify and develop resources
- 6) Create a Ministry Description

Counsel has been given to us. ***“Those who have the spiritual oversight of the church should devise ways and means by which an opportunity may be given to every member of the church to act some part in God's work. Too often in the past this has not been done. Plans have not been clearly laid and fully carried out whereby the talents of all might be employed in active service. There are but few who realize how much has been lost because of this.***

The leaders in God's cause, as wise generals, are to lay plans for advance moves all along the line. In their planning they are to give special study to the work that can be done by the laity for their friends and neighbors. The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.” 9T p. 11

Ministry Description

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. Paul describes the church as *“His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”* (Eph. 1:23).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing a saving relationship with Him and community with one another. The Holy Spirit convicts our minds, leads us to repentance, and plants us within the church. Thus, the church is a creation of the Spirit.

We experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world within your church, and the world experiences the living presence of Jesus Christ as it witnesses your church. When a local church serves the world, it is an expression of the love of Christ to the World. It is the body of Christ serving the world's needs and being used by the Spirit as an agency of salvation.

Thus, the church is a servant body. Created for service, it serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Eph. 2:10).

God calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is a kingdom of priests set free to minister effectively for Christ. Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. A volunteer lay pastor is a ministering servant of God, and, like every Christian, is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

God supplies each person in the church with the resources for ministry: scripture, spiritual power,



God's character, and spiritual gifts. A volunteer lay pastor is equipped for his or her ministry by the gifts received from the Holy Spirit.

Description of Volunteer Responsibilities

A Volunteer Lay Pastor is a lay leader (i) who volunteers to serve, (ii) who has been recommended by the sponsoring church board, (iii) who has completed certification by the Conference through training and demonstrations of fitness for ministry, and (iv) whose appointment has been approved by the Carolina Conference Administrative Committee (ADCOM). Annual recertification for Volunteer Lay Pastor status is contingent upon attending annual recertification training, an annual review, and recommendation of the sponsoring church board. Volunteer Lay Pastor status must be a result of a continuing training process for annual recertification. The Volunteer Lay Pastor must demonstrate character, leadership, spirituality, loyalty to church and theology, and a cooperative spirit.

Reporting Relationships

Volunteer Lay Pastors are responsible to the, Ministerial Committee, the Carolina Conference Executive and Administrative Committees (ADCOM).

Key Responsibilities

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a Volunteer Lay Pastor can best be described in the following ways:

1. Teamwork. Volunteer Lay Pastors work under the supervision of a senior pastor/coach, and they must work closely with the local church board and officers. A "lone ranger" style of leadership will only create problems and not build up the congregation. Volunteer Lay Pastors must arrange to meet on a regular basis (refer to the pastor/coach agreement). Only in this way will Volunteer Lay Pastors ensure that they are supporting one another and working together.

2. Preaching and Worship Leadership. A primary responsibility of the Volunteer Lay Pastor is to fill the pulpit or arrange for an acceptable substitute with final approval of speakers coming from the assigned pastor. This includes attention to the entire worship service, not just the sermon. The elders are the worship committee in small churches, and it is essential that Volunteer Lay Pastors work with them as co-leaders in worship. Any changes in the order of service need to be recommended by the elders and pastor and voted by the church board.

3. Visitation. Volunteer Lay Pastors cannot do an adequate job of preaching unless they have regular contact with the congregation in their homes and places of work. The Volunteer Lay Pastor is expected to systematically visit the church members, give Bible studies to interested persons, and make contact with all Sabbath visitors. Volunteer Lay Pastors need to clarify with the senior pastor/coach and the church board their expectations regarding visits to the sick, funerals, and referrals for pastoral counseling.

4. Chairing the Board. The Volunteer Lay Pastor can chair the church board. Volunteer Lay Pastors should clarify this responsibility with their pastor/coach.

5. Midweek Meetings. Volunteer Lay Pastors should conduct a prayer meeting, a Bible study group, a seminar, or a lay training class one evening a week, with the possible exception of the weeks the church board meets. This is a vital part of a healthy, growing church. In many churches, there is no longer one general midweek meeting but a number of Home Bible Fellowships and seminars offered on different days in various locations. This allows for maximum attendance and the meeting of a wider range of needs.

6. Planning. Every congregation needs to have a yearly plan for evangelism and church growth to ensure an ongoing, balanced program of outreach, soul-winning, and nurture. The process by which these plans are developed is as important as the actual plan. If the church leaders and members do not participate in planning, they



may not support the plans. This happens when the church board or Church Ministries Council has a planning council each year and then presents the plan to a general church business meeting along with the church budget. Volunteer Lay Pastors should determine whether it will be their responsibility to act as facilitator for this process or whether the pastor/coach will take this responsibility.

7. Training Programs. Volunteer Lay Pastors must cooperate and participate in Conference-scheduled programs and activities, including specified training programs, as directed by Conference officers. The Volunteer Lay Pastor must be involved in a continuing training process for certification as a lay pastor. Recertification for lay pastor status will be contingent upon attending annual recertification training. There will be two Continuing Education Retreats per year (Spring & Fall). All Volunteer Lay Pastors are required to attend both retreats in order to renew and retain credentials.

8. Ministry Coach. Having a mentor in pastoral ministry is one of the best prescriptions for healthy growth in competence and protection from vulnerabilities. Becoming a "loner" in pastoral ministry is not only lonely, it can be perilous. A Volunteer Lay Pastor must meet with a designated supervising pastor (in most cases, their local pastor) each month, either by phone or in person, to discuss professional effectiveness of active ministry, to strengthen their personal and spiritual health, and to affirm their gifts for ministry (see the Coaching Covenant).

9. Reports. Volunteer Lay Pastors must ensure that membership, baptisms, and financial reports are reported on a monthly basis by the church clerk, treasurer, or assistant treasurer.

10. Tithe and Offerings. It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Lay Pastor to see that all tithes and Conference offerings received by the mission group, the company, or the church where the Volunteer Lay Pastor is serving are sent to the sponsoring church or the Conference on a monthly basis as follows:

- a. All tithes and offerings from the **mission group** are to be sent to and receipted by the sponsoring church. Mission group funds will only be processed through the sponsoring church's bank accounts. The sponsoring church shall assume all administrative responsibilities for the mission group, and its board will exercise over the group the same authority that it has over its congregation.
- b. All tithes and offerings of a **company** are to be sent to the Conference, with the exception of the local expense offering which is to remain with the company. It is understood that a company has an acting board; however, the Conference Executive Committee serves as the official board.
- c. All tithes and offerings of a **church** are to be sent to the Conference, with the exception of the local expense offering which is to remain with the church.

Authorization to Conduct Certain Activities

Carolina Conference will authorize a credentialed Volunteer Lay Pastor to conduct all the functions of a local elder with the additional authorization to conduct baptisms within their assigned congregation with consultation of the local pastor.

Duration of Appointment

A Volunteer Lay Pastor is appointed for one year. Annual recertification is contingent upon attending recertification training four times each year, annual review by the Carolina Conference Pastoral Ministries Department, the recommendation of the sponsoring church, and approval by the Administrative Committee. Volunteer Lay Pastors may decide to discontinue their service at any time, without penalty.

No Compensation

The Volunteer Lay Pastor is a volunteer and *not* an employee of Carolina Conference. Volunteer Lay Pastors serve without compensation in any form. Volunteer Lay Pastors who lead a Conference-approved mission group, company or church may request reimbursement of designated, documented travel and ministry-related expenses from Carolina Conference, up to a maximum annual amount established by the Conference.



Training Curriculum

The Volunteer Lay Pastor Training Program is structured for and will be taught for Volunteer Lay Pastors appointed to mission groups and those who are already functioning as Volunteer Lay Pastors in the Carolinas. There will be 3 remote Continuing Education sessions and 1 in-person session in which seminars will be taught in different areas: theology, spiritual life, communication skills, church growth, and leadership.

This training curriculum consists of areas that are essential to pastoral success. The educational philosophy that guides this training includes three related principles:

1. Each Volunteer Lay Pastor in training already has certain elements of knowledge, experience, and natural skills that can be applied to ministry.
2. Each ministerial competency has basic foundational elements which, if taught and practiced, will guide a natural and personalized development in that competency.
3. These competencies are best developed through practice in a real ministry setting.

Volunteer Lay Pastor Training Program Objectives

1. Encouragement, care, and growth of churches in need of lay pastoral leadership through the provision of approved lay persons trained and equipped as Volunteer Lay Pastors, thereby strengthening the life of our church and advancing the Kingdom of God.
2. Continuing training and development of Volunteer Lay Pastors already involved in ministry.
3. Development of a clear biblical basis for Adventist doctrines explicitly based on the teachings of Scripture.
4. Development of a firm understanding of Adventist identity and church operations and procedures.

Curriculum*

There are five areas of training for the Volunteer Lay Pastor Training Program with the following designations:

1. Theology

We will address current theological challenges within Adventism with solid, biblical teaching and support from the Spirit of Prophecy. We will also attempt to strengthen the primary tenets of the Adventist faith and insure each VLP is solidly grounded in our fundamental beliefs. There will also be a regular emphasis on the theology of salvation so that Jesus remains the center and focus of all we do.

2. Spiritual Life

It is essential that all leaders for the Lord maintain a steady, connected relationship with Christ for themselves. If those called to lead do not remain connected to the Vine, then it is very unlikely they will have the spiritual strength to face the trials brought on by church leadership.

We want our VLPs to have a consistent devotional and prayer life. In so doing, we will have fresh manna to share with those we are called to oversee and serve. Otherwise our discourses will be dry and ineffective at best.

3. Communication Skills

Emotional Intelligence in Ministry: This area explores how to develop the people skills necessary to thrive in ministry. It identifies the often sensed but unnamed skills of ministers who win the heart of parishioners.

Pastoral Counseling: This area provides tools to meaningfully counsel those in spiritual crisis. Also, it helps Volunteer Lay Pastors know when to refer a person to a professional counselor or the district pastor. The VLP should also insure the pastor knows about any potential situations that might grow into something much worse.



Managing Conflict: This area teaches skills for defusing and resolving conflicts in the church. It provides principles and models for managing conflict.

4. Evangelism and Church Growth

Evangelistic Approaches: This area explores some of the most time-tested approaches to sharing the truths of Adventism, offering principles and tools for effective evangelism.

5. Team Building and Leadership

A Theology of Church: This area develops a biblical understanding of church function and structure, providing a framework for building the church into a biblical team.

Becoming a Ministry Mentor: This area presents methods for developing others into ministry. It gives principles of approach and suggests a process to be applied.

*Other curriculum items will be added in response to needs expressed.

Strategy for Lay-Led Congregations

Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

~Embracing Carolina with the Compassionate Call of Christ~

The Carolina Conference desires to promote intentional, vibrant, growing, and multiplying churches. The role of lay leadership in ministry cannot be underestimated. The Carolina Conference Church Planting & Church Growth Advisory Committees have adopted a lay-led model that helps VLPs/lay leaders and churches maximize their potential and succeed. The following outlines the nature of the pastoral relationship as well as the supportive role provided by the Carolina Conference Church Planting Department in the process:

1. The supervising pastor is provided with applicable training and resources.

2. Monthly coaching meeting between supervising pastor and VLP/lay leader.

Purpose: listening, prayer, reporting, visioning, accountability, development of long range planning.

The pastor helps the VLP/lay leader develop a Spirit-led plan for the next month.

Time: 1½-2 hours monthly. Interaction by phone or e-mail available as needed between meetings. **NOTE:** when pastors serve multiple groups and companies, network meetings are encouraged in lieu of separate meetings.

Location: Restaurant on most occasions. The Treasury Department will reimburse expenses to the pastor up to \$30.00 and the FULL current special travel mileage rate. These should be reported on the conference monthly expense report.

Who Initiates: Pastor

3. Interaction between supervising pastor and church congregation.

Purpose: a) **Attendance:** at the following: socials, board & business meetings, potlucks, vespers, youth events, etc.

b) **Evaluation:** administer NCD survey, process NCD results, affinity exercises, mystery guest, etc.

c) **Training:** in preaching, conducting Bible studies or small groups, S. S. teachers & greeters workshops, etc.

Time: As needed or otherwise directed by the VLP coordinator or administration.

Location: **Options** include church facilities, small group locations, outdoors for outside baptisms, etc. Pastor should plan to attend company and church organizations. **Note:** Sabbath morning preaching as needed or desired.



The Treasury Department will reimburse monthly mileage at the FULL current special travel mileage rate. These should be reported on the conference monthly expense report.

Who Initiates: Pastor determines based on scheduling what event he/she is able to attend. VLP/Lay leader communicates requests—emphasis on special events that are being planned.

4. Annual evangelistic reaping meeting initiated by the supervising pastor with church congregation.

Purpose: Growth of the church spiritually and numerically.

Time: 1 or 2-week meeting as pastor **NOTE:** only as reasonable when serving multiple groups & companies.

Location: Church or neutral location

Who Initiates: Pastor in consultation with VLP/lay leader and church. The speaker does not necessarily need to be the pastor though he will have an active role in the endeavor. **NOTE:** To apply for financial assistance, the pastor should submit a request to the Evangelism Department by October 30 of the preceding year.

5. Annual conference-wide church growth & church planting rally for all churches, all pastors, and all VLPs/lay leaders.

Purpose: Specialized training seminars on church growth, visioning, regarding strategy for entire area & inspiration.

Time: Designated weekend one time per year.

Location: Central to area and large enough to accommodate attendance.

Who Initiates: Conference coordinator.

6. Four annual Volunteer Lay Pastor/lay leader trainings.

Purpose: Inspiration, training, networking, providing resources for the upcoming year and expressing appreciation.

Time: Weekends every Spring and Fall of each year.

Location: Nosoca Pines Ranch, Carolina Conference Office, or via Zoom.

Who Initiates: Conference coordinator.



VLP Coaching Covenant

Name of Congregation: _____

Meeting Address: _____

Times of services: _____

VLP or Lay Leader: _____

VLP's/Leader's Address: _____

Contact Info: Phone #s: _____

E-mail: _____

District Pastor: _____

Address: _____

Contact Info: Phone #s: _____

E-mail: _____

Carolina Conference Eld. Darryl Bentley; (248) 767-2730;
VLP Coordinator: dbentley@carolinasda.org

Coaching covenant date: _____

VLP or Lay Leader

Pastor

VLP Coordinator

“Leaders who develop followers grow their organization only one person at a time. But leaders who develop leaders multiply their growth, because for every leader they develop, they also receive all of that leader’s followers. That’s why I say to add growth, lead followers, but to multiply growth, lead leaders.”

Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 208-209



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