

GUIDELINES FOR NEW CHURCH PLANTS

PREAMBLE:

Seventh-day Adventism, if it is to be meaningful, must be expressed and experienced in a variety of ways. Some members and prospective members prefer a formal and orthodox approach to life and religion while others are more comfortable with a flexible approach and tend not to be keen on ceremony.

The core beliefs and values of the church are non-negotiable. They are what unite us as a people and give us our essential identity. However, beliefs and values must not be confused with methods and traditions. For example, the Sabbath being a time of rest, worship and a memorial of creation is a core belief. However, commencing the worship service at 11:00 a.m. is a tradition. As in the case of other organisations that have been around for many years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed a number of traditions, most of which have served the church well.

Churches in the British Union should be united by our core beliefs and values. At the same time there must be room for a variety of approaches in worship, witness and fellowship. It is expected that new church plants will inevitably reflect, not only the ethos of the Adventist Church but also the mission approach of the core group and needs of the target group.

The following guidelines are intended to provide flexibility in the way that new church plants operate and at the same time ensure that they remain part of the Adventist community and are committed to upholding the values of the church and supporting its mission.

GUIDELINES:

New church plants will:

1. Be established for the proclamation of the gospel and the salvation of souls;
2. Accept the teachings and values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as expressed in its fundamental beliefs;
3. Ensure that their leadership team are faithful Seventh-day Adventists in regular standing;
4. Be affiliated with an established church or with the conference/mission church where necessary and seek recognition and support by the conference/mission as a church plant;
5. Consider themselves part of the Adventist community and fellowship;
6. Have the aim to become a Seventh-day Adventist Church;
7. Be supported by conference/mission leadership to operate in a traditional or non-traditional manner while upholding the core values and beliefs of the church;
8. Consult with the conference/mission president regarding any practice or operation that does not conform to church manual guidelines;

9. Return tithes to the conference/mission and be willing to have their accounts audited by the conference/mission, recognizing that one of our values is to support each other and demonstrate accountability in our stewardship;
10. Prepare an initial church planting proposal, which will be shared with the mother church where applicable, and with the conference/mission committee. The church plant will also be mutually responsible to the local church/conference/mission committee, with an ongoing report on the implementation of the proposal;
11. Be encouraged by the conference/mission to be supported with Global Mission funding if the purpose of the plant is to reach an unreached people group or an unreached/unentered area;
12. Consult with the conference/mission president regarding invitations to non-Adventist speakers or speakers from outside the BUC and be willing to follow the regular protocols for processing invitations to Adventist speakers.