



# SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

**CENTRAL PAPUA CONFERENCE**

**Personal Ministry | Sabbath**

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**TO:** All the District Directors, All the local church pastors &  
All the local churches of Central Papua Conference

**DATE:** October 10, 2017

Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

## **SABBATH SCHOOL TIMING AND SABBATH MORNING WORSHIP**

Greetings to you all from the Sabbath School Personal Ministries!

Early this year we started producing *Sabbath School Personal Ministries Bulletin* with the aim of reforming our Sabbath School and bringing it in line with the World Church Sabbath School aspirations, however, we could not continue with that excellent initiative because our designer and printer left the Conference to pursue employment opportunities outside of the church. This ended our much anticipated endeavors. However, we plan to pick up again in the New Year, 2018.

This memo addresses our Sabbath School timing and how it affects our Sabbath morning worship service. It is important that as church pastors and leaders you all need to read this and attempt drastic approaches to remedy some of these issues in regard to Sabbath School timing and preparation for higher worship or Divine Service.

1. **SABBATH SCHOOL TIMING.** The World Church of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Sabbath School manual stipulates that preliminary Sabbath School or first part of the Sabbath School be given 35 or 40 minutes. This means:
  - i. **Sabbath School Superintendent's Remarks**, Secretaries Sabbath School presentation, hymns, those leading out in first part Sabbath School must say and do everything within the given time frame of 35-40 minutes.
  - ii. **Making Your Sabbath School To Be Time Conscious.** That is, all your local church Sabbath School department officers must set example to the church of been time conscious, doing and saying things within the time and not dragging Sabbath School beyond the given time. It means that Sabbath School officers need to always remind groups/individuals participating in the first part Sabbath School to be time conscious. It also means that all Sabbath School officers must be the first to be in church on Sabbath mornings to give direction for the morning's Sabbath School. *It is demeaning to Sabbath School, when Sabbath School officers are turning up late in Sabbath Schools or absenting from Sabbath programs.*
  - iii. **First Part Sabbath School Is Not For the Benefit Of Those Participating** so they can disregard the time and do and say things at will because they are now in control.

- iv. **Time Has No Respect For Title Or Position.** Irrespective of whether you are a Mission president, CEO, senior elder or church pastor – you must abide within the 35-40 minutes time frame of Sabbath School. Many times Sabbath School superintendents have so much to say that they are indirectly killing the spirit of Sabbath School and Sabbath worship.
- 2. **SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY.** Bible Study is a very important segment of Sabbath School and it must be treated with high regard. The World Church of the Seventh-day Adventists Sabbath School manual allocates 40-45 minutes for Bible Study. This means:
  - i. **Sabbath School Roll Call Cards** must be call up quickly so it does not eat into Sabbath School Bible Study time. However, the leader must take note of class members' absences so the class can pay visits to those who are sick our unable to attend due to various reasons
  - ii. **Participation of Class Members In Bible Study** is of paramount importance. *Sabbath School Bible Study is not a pulpit for wannabe preachers or orators* but it is a class designed for learning by members through serious reading of the Bible, questions, and sharing of discoveries of new insights. Every member of the class has 100% right to discuss and contribute. It is always recommended that self or sharing of opinions are set aside and much more time given to supporting all our discussions with *“Thus says the Bible”*. *Many times, we hear of opinions and less of what the Bible says*. Also note; that the Sabbath School department discourages *“one-man”* show Bible Study method. *“One-Man”* is a pulpit style preaching method and it is strongly to be discouraged in Bible Study classes. Rather, group participation in which whole class participates and contributes are study methods that Sabbath School Bible Study classes must adopt.
- 3. **LEAD UP TO DIVINE SERVICE.** After Sabbath School, the church joins in lively Worship and Praise program in readiness for the special message from God through His appointed preacher. We want you to take these observations seriously and remedy them:
  - 1. **Promotions By Church Departments/Ministries** during Praise and Worship or while waiting for the pulpit party, is demeaning our higher worship programs. Promotions after promotions are sickening divine hour worship programs. Churches must do away with promotions or come up with other means to pass on information to church members. **Always remember that church is not a TV station to play commercials after commercials.** God's children do not come to church to hear messages of promotions BUT THEY COME TO WORSHIP THEIR CREATOR GOD so as a church we must prepare ourselves well through singing of hymns.
  - 2. **Long List of Announcements Are Time Consuming** and they take away meaning of our divine hour worship service. Announcements that concern the whole church family should be the ones entertained by communication secretaries for Sabbath announcements. Announcements that concern church departments or ministries must not be entertained as these departments can easily pass on their announcements within their cycle. For instance; *why make announcements that concern the Youths or Pathfinders, when Youths and Pathfinders are meeting every Sabbath afternoons?* They should organize themselves and make their own announcements during their meetings on Sabbath afternoons. Making of church department announcements that concerns that department only should not be entertained. Rather church department announcements

that concerns the whole church must be entertained. For instance; Adventist Community Services appealing to church members for support in cleaning of the public market place on Sundays.

**The point on announcements is that that we need to limit announcements to less than five announcements per Sabbath.**

- 3. Long Deacon Room Preparation By Pulpit Party** is truly a big concern in many of our churches. Instead of pray and heading up to the pulpit, the church family waits minutes and at times hours for pulpit party to show up at the pulpit. What happens in the deacon room is all to do with disorganization and disregard of the importance of Sabbath preparation by church elders and pastors. It is pleasing that the deacons and deaconesses do their part so well by preparing the church for Sabbath on Fridays, BUT SAD THAT ELDERS AND PASTORS WAIT FOR SABBATH MORNING TO PREPARE THEMSELVES. Who is doing prayers, Bible readings and hymns to be sung should all have been prepared before sunset on Fridays. Sabbath morning is NOT THE TIME to use our biros and pens to draw up Sabbath Divine Service programs. If we are doing this in our local churches then it is the reflection of our negligence of our sacred duties.
- 4. DIVINE WORSHIP TIMING.** The Holy Scripture does not give us time on when to start Divine Service and when to finish so we are to use God given reasoning to choose the best times for ourselves. **The best for divine service is starting at 11am. That is, the preacher must start preaching at 11am – 11am is not the time for pulpit party to take pulpit but the time for preacher to start the delivery of his/her message.**

As we choose time for our Divine Service programs, remember that in many big SDA churches around the world, there are two or three divine services on Sabbath day. Some divine services in big churches are conducted in the Sabbath mornings while others are conducted in the Sabbath afternoons, so every child of God who comes to church on Sabbath day does not miss out on listening to the Holy Word because of limited spacing in the church building. Creating space for everyone is important – that is why big churches hold more than two divine services on one Sabbath day.

In PNG, churches with high attendance should consider the option of two services for their members so members do not stay outside of the church building due to limitation of space. Two services on Sabbath day helps our members to choose their own timing further helps them to be responsible for themselves in terms of church attendance on Sabbath days.

May God bless and guide you always as you try to remedy issues raised in this memo.

God's blessings,



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