

APPENDIX D

Reorganization Proposal (1960)

(Comments in brackets [] are notations concerning how the specific item relates to current practice of the Advent Christian Church in 1990.)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES fundamental to a good and effective governmental structure:

1. Relations of Churches to the General Conference

a. The title to all property of the Churches, Societies, Institutions and other organizations forming a part of the Advent Christian Denomination shall be lodged in the Conferences, Regions, or in the General Conference. The title to the property held by such organizations shall revert to the appropriate body named above in the event that they shall cease to be affiliated with said body, or shall cease to carry on Advent Christian work in a manner appropriate to the organization. The deeds and constitutions of such organizations shall be so worded. [Not uniformly practiced]

b. Each Church shall be directly responsible to and under the governance of an Advent Christian Conference with the right of appeal to the Regional Association and the General Conference in the event of unresolved differences. [Not usually followed]

2. Relations of Ministers to the General Conference

All Ministers of the Denomination shall be responsible to the local Conference with the right of appeal to the Regional Association and the General Conference in the event of unresolved differences. The Churches and other organizations shall agree to recognize only ministerial and executive leadership approved by the Conference, Regional Association, or the General Conference at whichever level they are affiliated. [Not uniformly practiced]

II. PROPOSED DENOMINATIONAL STRUCTURE (Salient and new features only)

1. The Local Church

a. There shall be two types of local Churches recognized by the Conferences:

1. The Member Church with established organization and Pastor. This Church shall have full voting membership in the Conference.

2. The Mission Church, with subsidized program and organization in process of development. This Church may be represented in the Conference by a non-voting representative with the privileges of the floor.

[Not usually followed]

b. The Congregational Meeting shall be the basic

governing body of the local Church. It shall be presided over by a Moderator who shall be elected by the body. Participation in this body shall consist only of those persons who have the following qualifications:

1. They shall be of voting age.
2. They shall have witnessed to a true conversion to Jesus Christ by their testimony and baptism, and by subscribing to the Church Covenant.
3. They shall have subscribed to the Declaration of Principles of the Advent Christian Denomination.
4. They shall have expressed an agreement to abide by the established relations of the Church and its Conference, Regional and National government.

[Practices vary from church to church]

c. This congregational meeting may elect a Board of not less than five members presided over by the Moderator, to which it may delegate all or a portion of its functions during the year or between stated meetings of the Congregational body.

[Practices vary from church to church]

d. The local Church shall, in its constitution, agree to accept the authority of the Conference to which it is related with the privilege of appeal to the Regional Association and the General Conference in the event of unresolved differences. When

requested, it shall report its activities to the Conference on report forms provided by the Conference. [Practices vary from church to church]

e. The Local Church shall write into its constitution and the deeds to its property, standard clauses by which such properties shall become the properties of the Conference to which it is related in the event that the Church ceases to be affiliated with the Conference, or if, in the judgment of the Conference in consultation with the Regional Executive Board it is no longer effectively presenting the doctrines and message of the Advent Christian Denomination. [Not uniformly practiced]

2. The Ministerial Workers

a. Three classes of ministerial workers shall be recognized:

1. The Ordained Minister, who has satisfied the requirements of the Conference and has been formally ordained as a Minister of the Gospel with full privileges.

2. The Licensed Preacher, who is in the process of satisfactorily completing the full requirements for ordination with the intent of entering the full-time ministerial service, shall be given authority by the Conference to preach, and, in emergency may be granted special license to administer one or more of the ordinances of the Church on a temporary renewable basis.

3. The Christian Worker, who is recognized formally by the Conference as its agent in teaching, visitation, leadership, or other work of the Denomination and its Churches and organizations. [Generally followed, occasional exceptions possible]

b. Each Ministerial Worker shall put himself under the care of the Conference in which he works, or, in the case of a worker connected with a National Board or organization, or in a regional work with the Conference in which he holds his Church membership. Each worker shall report his work to the Conference yearly or on request on report forms provided by the Conference. He shall agree to accept the authority and discipline of the Conference with the privilege of appeal to the Regional Association and the General Conference in the event of unresolved differences. [Generally followed, occasional exceptions possible]

c. A Ministerial Worker shall hold his membership in the Conference in which he resides unless he receives special consent to work outside of its boundaries. He shall not work within the bounds of a conference other than that in which he holds membership without the consent of both Conferences, except in cases where his work is of a regional or national scope and related to a recognized organization of such character, or for such temporary or transient work as evangelism, Bible Conferences, or pulpit supply. [Generally followed, occasional exceptions possible]

3. The Conference

a. The Conference shall consist of all the ministers within its Jurisdiction, and the Moderator of each member Church (if he is a layman), or a duly elected lay delegate. In addition, each member Church shall be entitled to additional delegates according to the constitutional provisions of the Conference. [Not uniformly practiced]

b. The Conference shall elect a Ministerial Committee including lay representation. Normally, except in Conferences with few ministers, the members of this Committee shall be ineligible to serve more than three successive years. The Committee shall be the agency through which the Conference deals directly with the ordination, calling, installation, removal and judging of Ministerial Workers. It shall have the power to visit Churches to inquire into difficulties that may have developed within them. If requested to do so by the parties concerned, or, if so directed by the Conference it may act to correct difficulties or adjudicate differences with the full power of the Conference. Its decisions shall be subject to appeal to the Conference, the Regional Association and the General Conference. [Not uniformly practiced]

c. The Conference, by direct action or through its Ministerial Committee, shall examine candidates recommended by its member Churches for the Christian Ministry, and may ordain, license, or grant certificates to Christian Workers. [Depth of

examination varies from conference to conference]

d. The Ministerial Committee, or its delegates, shall sit in joint session with the elected committee of a local Church in selecting nominees to be presented to the Church for election as Pastor, Interim Pastor, or stated supply, and no such worker shall be called by a Church affiliated with the Conference unless approved by this Conference Committee. [No examples of practice known]

e. The Conference directly, or through its Ministerial Committee, shall install Ministers when they are called as Pastors of Churches in the Conference, and shall have the power to remove such Ministers when, in consultation with the Regional Executive Board, it judges that the welfare of Church or Pastor demands such action. When a Minister has been called to a Church, he shall immediately be provided with temporary credentials by the Conference and arrangements made to transfer his membership if he is then under the care of another Conference. [Generally practiced, occasional exceptions possible]

f. The Conference shall receive the request of a Pastor to resign and remove from his Church, or the request of a Church to be relieved of its Pastor, and, after investigation by its Ministerial Committee, may approve, disapprove, or adjudicate such requests. Its decisions are final subject to appeal to the Regional Association. A copy of such request shall be forwarded to the

Regional Superintendent for his information. [No examples of practice known]

g. The Conference may, on the request of a Ministerial worker, provide him with a certificate of dismissal and commendation to another Conference, and no ministerial worker wishing to transfer shall be received by a Conference unless he can present such a certificate. [Generally practiced, occasional exceptions possible]

h. A Conference, after due investigation by its Ministerial Committee, including an opportunity for a private hearing, and in consultation with the Regional Superintendent, may suspend the privileges and credentials of a Ministerial Worker, or remove his name from its rolls, subject to appeal to the Regional Association and the General Conference. [Generally practiced, occasional exceptions possible]

i. The Conference shall report its activities annually or on request to the Regional Association on forms provided by that Association. [Varies from conference to conference]

4. The Regional Association.

a. The Regional Association shall consist of:

1. The Pastor and Moderator (or Lay delegate if the Pastor serves as Moderator) of each member Church in good standing in the Conferences related

to the Region.

2. The President of each member Conference and one delegate from each Conference for each 100 Church members or major fraction thereof. At least half of these delegates shall be laymen.

3. The Chairman and the Executive of regional organizations, or their 4 elected delegates so that each organization shall have two representatives.

4. The members of the Regional Board.
[Varies from region to region]

b. The Region shall elect officers as at present.
[Generally practiced]

c. The Regional Association shall receive and correlate reports from member Conferences and Regional Organizations, and shall exercise general oversight and stimulate spiritual and material growth of the Denomination in its area.
[Generally practiced]

d. The Regional Executive or Field Worker shall keep in close touch with the spiritual developments of member Conferences, Churches and Organizations, and shall, in consultation with the Ministerial Committees of the Conferences, have the power to visit Churches and assist in the adjudication of difficulties there present.

e. The Regional Executive Board shall have the

power to visit Conferences or Regional organizations and inquire into difficulties and adjudicate inter-conference relations, rendering decisions that shall be final, subject to appeal to the General Conference.

[No example of practice known]

f. The Regional Executive Board shall receive and consider appeals from Churches, Ministers and organizations regarding the decisions of Conferences with respect to their problems, and shall render decisions that will be final subject to appeal to the General Conference.

[No example of practice known]

g. The Regional Association shall work together with the Director of Home Missions in developing the extension of the Denominational work in the Region in founding and assisting new Churches. It will cooperate with other National Executives and Directors in the development of the interests of their work in the Region.

h. No solicitation or itineration by a representative of any organization shall be made in any Region until it has been presented to and approved by the Regional Board or its Executive.

[Not usually followed]

5. The General Conference

a. The General conference shall be constituted approximately as at present with a larger

proportion of lay delegates.
[Generally practiced]

b. The relations of the Regions and affiliated organizations to the General Conference shall be approximately the same as those between the Regions and its Conferences, the Executive Committee having the power to visit a Region, Conference, Church or cooperating organization if in its judgment a problem is not being dealt with effectively by a lower adjudicating body and deal with the problem. Such action shall be taken through the regular channels of contact appropriate to the case.

[Out of date]