

COMMUNICATION

POLICY OF THE

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN ZAMBIA:
NORTHERN ZAMBIA UNION CONFERENCE AND
SOUTHERN ZAMBIA UNION CONFERENCE**

DECEMBER 2019



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Northern Zambia Union Conference and Southern Zambia Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were born from the former Zambia Union Conference which was re-aligned in 2015.

Northern Zambia Union Conference covers the following political provinces:

1. Copperbelt Province
2. Part of Central Province
3. Part of Lusaka Province
4. Part of Muchinga Province
5. Northern Province
6. Luapula Province
7. North Western Province

Northern Zambia Union Conference supervises seven entities under its jurisdiction. These are: Copperbelt Zambia Conference, Luapula Zambia Conference, Midlands East Zambia Conference, Midlands West Zambia Conference, North-Western Zambia Conference, North Zambia Field and the Adventist Book Centre.

Southern Zambia Union Conference covers the following political provinces:

1. Eastern Province
2. Part of Central Province
3. Part of Lusaka Province
4. Western Province
5. Southern Province
6. Part of Muchinga Province

Southern Zambia Union Conference supervises eleven entities under its jurisdiction. These are: East Zambia Field, Lusaka Conference, South Zambia Conference, West Zambia Field, Woodlands Conference, Adventist Book Centre, Lusaka Adventist Clinic, Lusaka Eye Hospital, Lusaka Adventist Dental Clinic, Mwami Hospital and Yuka Hospital,



On the other hand, the following institutions are co-owned by the two Unions: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Hope Channel Zambia Television (HCZ)/ Voice of Prophecy (VOP), Radio Maranatha, Rusangu University and Zambia Adventist Publishing House (ZAPH).

This Communication Policy is for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Zambia

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Date: 26th November, 2019

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Date: 2nd December, 2019



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This policy document was prepared by the Public Affairs Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Zambia. The committee was constituted with terms of reference through the actions of both the Northern Zambia Union Conference and Southern Zambia Union Conference Executive committees.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 According to the Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division (SID) of Seventh-day Adventists' Working Policy on communication FC 05, there are many forms of communicative media available to the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church today, and the Church's Communication Department is committed to using all of these means in sharing with the world the good news of salvation. Especially effective in accomplishing God's mission are media organizations and evangelistic ministries, working in cooperation with pastors and laypersons. Because communication of the gospel is the responsibility of the entire Church, the Communication Department is involved in all the programs of the Church; seeking to serve both administrators and departments with the skills it possesses to further these programs. The Communication Department assists administrators and other Church leaders in communicating organizational policies and initiatives both internally and to the external public. In addition, the department interprets to administration the attitudes of these publics toward the Church. The Department also provides crisis communication expertise and response systems. Close liaison between a Communication Director and administration may be accomplished by membership on administrative councils, meeting by invitation with the executive committee or board, or frequent consultation with and briefing by the executive officer. During these exchanges, Communication Department personnel are able to perform a valuable service by advising regarding the possible effects of plans and programs on the mission of the Church.

2.0 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Church's communication strategy is coordinated, consistent and responsive to the needs of the Church in maintaining a positive image with all its stakeholders. These include the Church members, government and the general public by maintaining excellent internal communication among its leadership, staff



and general membership through effective communication

2.0 VISION

- 2.1 To see the Seventh-day Adventist membership in Zambia become spiritually revived, inspired and fully equipped to support God's Mission and better prepared to meet Jesus Christ as He comes back the second time.

3.0 MISSION

- 3.1 The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced by the three angels' messages (Revelation 14:6-12), and to prepare the world for Christ's soon return within its territory and beyond.

4.0 VALUES STATEMENT

We espouse the following Values as we do ministry:

- (a) Commitment
- (b) Unity/Unity of purpose
- (c) Love
- (d) Transparency & Accountability (Integrity), and
- (e) Faithfulness

5.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

5.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- 5.1.1 The objective of this policy is to ensure that the Church's communication, internal and external, is accurate, timely, coordinated and responsive to the needs of all its members, both public and private institutions and the general public so as to enhance and maintain its public image.

5.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

5.2.1 The specific objectives of the Policy are to:

5.2.1.1 Provide the Church's principles and guidelines for its communication



- practices, both internally and externally;
- 5.2.1.2 Provide a clear position on the Church's communication strategy to avoid information gap or discrepancies;
 - 5.2.1.3 Enhance a positive representation of the Church's role in the eyes of its members and the community within which it operates;
 - 5.2.1.4 Minimize the risk of conflict that may arise from incoherent or contradictory communications within the Church;
 - 5.2.1.5 Provide guidance on how the Church, its workers and members should use/interact on social media platforms.

6.0 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

6.1 GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

- 6.1.1 The Church as an organization shall facilitate effective communication among its leadership, staff and membership in order to uphold a good working, social and personal environment, to promote efficiency, and to create a workforce that understands its mission, goals, as well as organizational values and procedures. For the avoidance of doubt, internal communication comprises the leadership of the Church, Church workers for different Church organizations and institutions and its members.
- 6.1.2 The Church will consistently promote the use of the most effective communication means, depending on context, while ensuring that the policy is implemented.

6.2 SPECIFIC POLICY GUIDELINES

- 6.2.1 The internal communication policy of the Church is to:
 - 6.2.1.1 Ensure that communication among those in leadership, members and staff is transparent, efficient and collaborative to achieve the Church's vision and mission;
 - 6.2.1.2 Keep members informed about priorities, changes or new initiatives affecting the Church;
 - 6.2.1.3 Personal and confidential information shall be protected. Those in leadership, Church workers and Church members in charge of any such information must exercise extreme care with the handling and transmission of this information with regard to how and to whom the



information is transmitted;

7.0 GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

- 7.1 In all its communication, the Church will uphold transparency, fairness, accountability, confidentiality, honesty, integrity, responsiveness as key principles guiding the way it communicates.

8.0 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

8.1 GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

- 8.1.1 The Church shall provide clear and relevant information to the general public on matters that affect its relationship, perception and its standing in society. In doing so, the Church shall endeavor to use different means of communicating to the public at its disposal.
- 8.1.2 External communication shall only be done by officially designated staff and this shall be done in a professional manner.

8.2 NATIONAL OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED COMMUNICATION AUTHORITIES

- 8.2.1 The Union Presidents are the chief spokespersons of the Church in their respective Unions. For joint union matters, however, the two Unions shall appoint/designate an official Spokesperson who shall communicate with Media, Government authorities and the public. The Spokesperson shall hold office for a period until a subsequent quinquennial session. In discharging his functions, the designated spokesperson shall liaise with the officers of the two Unions for purposes of consensus. In the absence of consensus on a particular matter, the EXCOMs or ADCOMs of both Unions shall take a vote to come up with a position on the matter.

8.3 CONFERENCE LEVEL COMMUNICATION

- 8.3.1 The Conference Presidents are the designated Spokesperson for their respective Conferences but shall do so in consultation with their respective Union Presidents.

9.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 9.1 Those in leadership shall identify and address any area of communication



needs and issues as they arise for consideration and action.

- 9.3 All leaders and church members shall have the responsibility to uphold the institutional communication standards prescribed by this policy and the church *Working Policy*.
- 9.3 All those in leadership, members of staff and Church members shall maintain confidentiality on all matters that are confidential.
- 9.4 Members of the Church and Church employees shall not at any time disseminate information to the public about the position of the Church on any issue relating to the Church unless with express permission of the authorized spokesperson.

10.0 USE OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND MEDIA FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- 10.1 All official correspondence on behalf of the Church shall be on official letterhead of the Church communication entity and shall be signed by the authorized office bearer of that particular entity.
- 10.2 The Receptionist shall have the responsibility to receive and record incoming/outgoing mails in the appropriate register.
- 10.3 The Receptionist shall from time to time check the registers to ensure that they are properly completed and maintained.
- 10.4 No private mail shall be opened by anyone except the addressee. A designated official such as the Secretary to the President shall open official mails and the Receptionist shall take responsibility for accepting and acknowledging receipt of mails on behalf of the organization.
- 10.5 Letters meant for other departments should be redirected to the relevant departments for response.

11.0 THE WEBSITE

- 11.1 Websites for the church institution or entity shall be used to promote the beliefs and practices of the church therefore no material that tends to bring disunity or confusion in the church shall be posted or published on those websites.



12.0 SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS (FACEBOOK, WHATSAPP, TWITTER AND ANY OTHER ONLINE PLATFORMS)

- 12.1 In line with the new General Conference policy, BA 72 20 recommendation for church organizations at all levels *to develop and implement guidelines regarding the use of social media and social networking that are in harmony with church policies* and are consistent with the laws of the land, social media will be used to promote church programs, edify church members and provide authenticated updates regarding church work. Social media and networking platforms will not be used for posting defamatory material, cybercrime, cyber bullying, social gossip, attacks on church leadership, fellow members and dissemination of unauthenticated information of any kind.
- 12.2 Online platforms will be used to disseminate and provide access to information viewed in the best and most positive light by Church employee and Church members.
- 12.3 Content posted or uploaded on these platforms must be accurate and in line with the Church doctrine.
- 12.4 Church members and Church employees shall not circulate official Church documents and information through any form of media without a written authority.
- 12.5 Church members and Church employees shall not post or publish defamatory material against the Church leadership, Church employees and fellow Church members.
- 12.6 Church members and Church employees shall not involve themselves in cyber-crime and cyber bullying.
- 12.7 Twitter will help conduct research on the Church brand and more. In addition, its app, Periscope, is a great way to live stream and connect with audiences.
- 12.8 Use of all social media platforms must be used within the confines of the laws of Zambia and the guidance from the Zambia Information and Communications Technologies Authority (ZICTA) in force from time to time. Members of the church, church employees and those in leadership



ought to familiarize themselves with the applicable laws and regulations.

- 12.9 Church workers or employees including those in Church institutions shall not be members of questionable social media groups such as Facebook, WhatsApp etc. (a questionable social media group refers to any chat platform that is in the habit of scandalizing the Church, any of its members and the leadership of the Church).
- 12.10 Church workers and Church members shall not post, comment and or willfully misrepresent the Church on social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp etc.
- 12.11 Church workers and Church members violating these policies will be given a verbal or written warning depending on the gravity and nature of the breach and the subject matter posted or commented on. Persistence or refusal to adhere to the warning will lead to necessary and applicable disciplinary action being taken against the worker or Church member by the relevant entity or body.
- 12.12 Any social media group that does not have a church administrator/ institutional head/ director or pastor as a group administrator should not be regarded as an official church group.
- 12.13 All social media groups formed for the purpose of preparations for certain events and for coordination in running those events should be closed soon after such events are over. Social media groups associated with the church should be formed for specific objectives and be used only for those stated purposes.

13.0 EVENTS, STAFF, MEDIA AND MEMBER COMMUNICATION

- 13.1 All official Church events must have a specific strategic objective, which should be clearly communicated. All events should carry a Church theme and objective.
- 13.2 Guest lists and delegate lists should reflect names of individuals that are relevant to the event's objective.
- 13.3 Appropriate communication channels and procedures should be followed. In the case of service requests, Church policy and procedure in force from time to time must be complied with. Therefore, members



will do well to familiarize themselves with these procedures. As regards invitations to signatories to officiate at any of the Church events, these should be done with express approval of all the relevant offices of the Church at various levels, namely local Church, Conference and ultimately, the Union Conference.

- 13.4 The Communication Director of each Union, Conference and local Church shall keep records of all events, workshops or conferences involving the Church and compile a report including the objectives, the list of attendees and the outcomes submitted to the Communications Department at least within a week of the event, workshop or conference. These officers shall be the custodians of this information.

14.0 PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- 14.1 A crisis in this policy implies a major occurrence in the operations of the Church that has the potential to disrupt and damage the Church's reputation in the eyes of the public and private authorities, Church members and members of the general public.
- 14.2 Crisis management in this policy refers to a set of procedures and steps applied in handling, containing and resolving a disturbance in a planned and coordinated manner.
- 14.3 The Public Affairs Committee whose responsibility it is to identify issues with the potential to damage the image and reputation of the Church, shall also serve as the crisis management committee. When sitting to address a crisis, the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of the two Unions shall attend the committee meetings on ex officio basis. The Organization/institutional head or Director in charge of a department affected by such crisis shall be part of the Committee.
- 14.4 The Committee shall be responsible, in consultation with any other relevant members of the Church, for managing such crisis and communication with Church workers, Church members and the general public. No other officer, employee or Church member shall issue media statements without authorization. Where necessary, the Committee may choose a Spokesperson for the purpose of that crisis.



15.0 PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTIONS

- 15.1 The Church at all its levels shall publish official magazines/newsletter for the Union, Conference and where possible, local Church which shall also be posted on the Church websites.
- 15.2 The magazine/newsletter shall have stories cutting across the Church and its structure shall have contributions of the team recognized in the “Acknowledgements” section of the relevant publication.
- 15.3 Credit for writing the report, support, editing, research, photograph, art and / or special contributions, whether internal or external, should consist of the individual’s name and/or organization, also in the “Acknowledgements” section, on the back page or inside cover.
- 15.4 With magazines and newsletters, team credits for writing, editing, research, photography, art and special contributions may be given in an editorial box toward/on the inside front cover or, in the case of photographs or illustrations, in an appropriate place next to the photograph/illustration.
- 15.5 To protect the integrity of the Church, approval should first be sought from Communications Director through a relevant Departmental section/heads before a story or article is written and published.

16.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

- 16.1 Conference Presidents, Departmental Directors, District Pastors and Church Elders will issue statements and inform Church members on matters relating to this policy and deal with the enforcement of this policy within the areas and levels of jurisdiction.
- 16.2 The above stated persons will issue a statement on the Church’s position to the media or general public on an issue that is within their jurisdiction or level of leadership with the authority of the Union and/or Conference President.
- 16.3 District Pastors and Elders will only answer questions on operational matters in their respective districts/Churches after consultation with their respective Union/Conference.
- 16.4 The Union Presidents shall be the Chief Spokespersons of the Church



in their respective Unions. In consultation with the Administrative Committee (ADCOM) or Executive Committee (EXCOM), they will appoint an official spokesperson to speak on their behalf and shall communicate on Church policy and Church beliefs.

- 16.5 The official spokesperson shall communicate with the media and public on all Church matters and in doing so shall consult relevant departments and institutions on information to be disseminated to public.
- 16.6 No Church Member should issue a press statement/give a media interview/ or post any statement on any form of public media without authorization from the officially designated spokesperson. If an officer or Church member has received a press query, that query should be referred to the official spokesperson or the Communications Department of that Church entity.
- 16.7 The sensitization of the policy shall be done during training of church workers and church members nominated into office.
- 16.8 The approved policy shall be uploaded on the websites and church workers and members shall be made aware of its existence through the bulletin, announcements and notice boards.
- 16.9 All departments shall be required to adhere to this policy guidelines and make deliberate efforts to ensure all staff are aware of the existing policy.

17.0 GENERAL

- 17.1 All queries from public authorities, Church members, the general public and especially the media shall be treated with utmost importance and priority by the responsible officers with continuous liaison with all involved until the matter is resolved.
- 17.2 The Letters/memoranda may be disseminated electronically, by hand, by post or by courier.
- 17.3 Issues communicated to employees and the media will be framed in the best possible light that advances the mission of the Church in a transparent manner.
- 17.4 The official spokesperson will strive to communicate with all key



stakeholders by e- mail, newsletter or by fax (if no e-mail) when necessary, and provide them with updates and information on the Church.

- 17.5 All queries from government departments must be recorded by receiving office at each level such as Receptionist, Office Secretary, local Church Clerk, etc. to ensure effective attention.
- 17.6 The official Church logo shall be used whenever possible on all church publications such as adverts, sign posts, etc.

18.0 MEDIA

- 18.1 Media Issues will be framed in the best possible light that advances the image and mission of the Church.
- 18.2 Messages to the media will be consistent with church's position on an issue or matter.
- 18.3 The office of the Union Presidents or Communications departments may initiate contact and liaison with the media regularly in order to promote and advance its strategic objectives.
- 18.4 All media queries should be returned and serviced within the journalist's deadline. If this is not possible, then the journalist must be contacted to inform him/her of the reasons why it is not possible to provide him/her with the necessary information/interview and an alternative suggestion made.
- 18.5 All media releases should conform to the Church's communication standards.
- 18.6 Every media query must be logged on a standard and separate Media Log Sheet, detailing the name, issues, contact details, deadline, and other details, and then referred to the official or consultant responsible for media liaison for follow-up. The official/consultant will then facilitate an appropriate response. The Media Log Sheet is to be saved on the Intranet in the appropriate directory.
- 18.7 All spokespersons should receive comprehensive media training to enhance their media competence and confidence.



- 18.8 As far as possible, spokespersons must be briefed and prepared sufficiently for a media interview.
- 18.9 Media liaisons are important in maximizing media focus on a particular issue or entity and should be held quarterly
- 18.10 Media information kits, consisting of relevant handout material, e.g. brochures, fact sheets and copies of news releases, should be distributed to the media during media events.
- 18.11 Always contact the media at least one day before the planned event to confirm attendance and to finalize preparation of nametags and catering numbers.
- 18.12 A media database containing names, positions, telephone numbers, fax numbers, cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses, as well as postal and physical addresses of all media contacts on a regular basis should be developed and maintained.
- 18.13 Any department requesting a media publication must do so by submitting the appropriate request to the Communications Director.

19.0 PRINT AND PUBLICATION MATERIALS

- 19.1 Messages must be consistent with the views and policies of the Church Messages must be clear, concise and accurate.
- 19.2 All publications will be proof read thoroughly to eliminate errors before publishing.
- 19.3 All materials will conform to conventional and appropriate levels of quality, produced and packaged in the most cost effective manner.
- 19.4 At least 2 to 3 potential printers must be briefed equally before a supplier is appointed to deliver service, which must be of high quality at the best possible cost that balances price with quality as per tender procedures.
- 19.5 Issues relating to copyright and royalties must be cleared fully before production begins, and must not be left to chance.
- 19.6 Videos and multimedia presentations will be conducted in strict adherence to honesty and professional integrity, and will not be used to misrepresent, distort or disfigure social reality.



- 19.7 The Communications Department will be involved in the production of all videos and multimedia productions created by and about the Church and its projects.
- 19.8 Characters and voices used in videos must appeal to the majority of viewers.

20.0 INVITATIONS TO EVENTS

- 20.1 Invitations to events must be sent out timely to allow for proper planning and ensure participation of high profile guests with busy diaries.
- 20.2 Spelling of names and titles on the database used for the guest list and name cards must be carefully cross-checked to avoid guest displeasure.
- 20.3 Where elected representatives and high government officials, including members of the diplomatic corps, participate in a Church event, table seating must be allocated according to the relevant national Table of Precedence, as determined by local protocol. The Table of Precedence is available from the Office of the President or from Cabinet Office.

21.0 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- 21.1 No communication shall be channeled to the general public before church members are informed.
- 21.2 The bulletin shall be used to inform church members on matters that may need to be communicated to the general public.

22.0 CONCLUSION

- 22.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all communications on behalf of the Church at all levels are well coordinated, effectively managed and is alive to the various information needs of its members, church workers and general public. Every member of the Church has a responsibility to support the policy and foster compliance. The guidelines and practices in this policy must be seen as an integral part of the Church's communication strategy, which must be upheld by all members of the church.



