

NEWSPOINTS

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NAD Leadership Provides Guidance on Government Funding Assistance Due to COVID-19 Crisis

COVID-19 has taken a huge emotional and economic toll upon the world over the past few months. The leadership of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (NAD) is deeply concerned about the impact of the pandemic upon

its members, churches, and other missional entities. It is the prayerful intent of the NAD to evaluate all options that may be available to sustain the mission of the church.

Recently the United States Congress passed two pieces of legislation intended to provide Americans with short term economic aid in the forms of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). These acts provide mandatory coverage for employees directly impacted by COVID-19 in the areas of paid sick leave and childcare, which the church fully supports.

Both of these pieces of legislation would also make funding available to assist with payroll expenses. This includes funding that could be utilized by employers with less than 500 employees to keep their operations functional. Religious institutions were recognized in this legislation as being eligible participants in these programs.

After passage of this legislation, questions quickly arose on possible implications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Would the acceptance of these funds serve to blur the historically-established line of separation between church and state? Would the participation in either CARES or FFCRA open the door for potential government intrusion into the mission and ministry of the church?

Great care has been taken by the Seventh-day Adventist Church's administrative, legal, and human resource functions to evaluate these available programs. The need to balance the potential needs of churches, schools, and administrative offices with that of long-standing counsel given to the church on church-state relations was carefully considered.

North American Division leadership, in consultation with the leaders of its nine union conferences, has recommended that church entities abstain from participation in portions of these programs providing direct financial assistance to the church. They are asking church leaders across the division to prayerfully consider both biblical prophecy and principles as well as the church's long-standing warnings on the intermingling of church and state prior to obtaining government assistance. A copy of the NAD guidance on this issue can be [read here](#).

This guidance should not discourage individual members from receiving government assistance in their personal or professional lives.

NAD leadership would like to encourage its members and fellow church leaders to remember that God is with the church during these trying times. They are committed to helping meet the needs of the local field so that the mission of spreading the Gospel to all people in the NAD territory will continue. “We will continue to evaluate the situation with COVID-19 and as the reality of the impact on the church becomes more evident, we will do everything we can to support the church financially,” said NAD treasurer Randy Robinson during the discussion with church leaders. “The church will be able to continue its mission.”

“By coming together in this time of need, the church will move forward in mission,” stated NAD president Daniel R. Jackson. “We are hearing stories of the amazing ways in which our members are pulling together to support the frontline work in the fight against COVID-19. The NAD leadership is in awe of the impact our members are having upon their local communities. We are also humbled by stories of our members finding creative ways to still financially support the mission of the church.”

Jackson added, “We want our members and fellow church leaders to know we will do everything in our power to support the church at every level, so we can all continue striving to fulfill the Gospel Commission, ‘Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway[s], even unto the end of the world. Amen’ (Matt. 28:19-20, KJV).”

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