

ABSTRACT

REGULARITY AND PROCEDURE IN MAFARA DISTRICT

BOARD MEETINGS, EAST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE

by

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ABSTRACT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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BOARD MEETINGS, EAST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE

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There has been lack of consistency and procedures in the conducting of board meetings in Mafara District Churches in East Zimbabwe Conference. In most cases meetings are convened to deal with problems as they arise and do not cater for forward thinking. Due to the growth of the church, fostering success in the programs, conducting meetings regularly and procedurally is critical.

Data was collected from church clerks, elders and board members using surveys, interviews and discussions. Literature was read and it helped to authenticate the practice. The Biblical and Spirit of Prophecy perspective motivated learning as it was interfaced with secular theories on leadership and meetings.

Five key focus areas that reflect job descriptions of both clerks and elders were identified. An evaluation instrument relevant to East Zimbabwe Conference, and Mafara District in particular, was designed, pretested and made ready for application.

Lastly an orientation and training process was recommended for the professional development of clerks, elders and board members at large in that they focus on procedures that are adhered to by professional officers as they conduct meetings.

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A project

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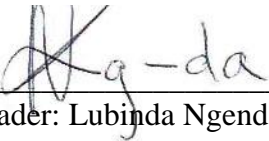
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vi
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
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Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Research.....	2
Significance of the Research.....	2
Limitations of the Study.....	3
Delimitation of the Study.....	3
Methodology.....	3
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
Biblical Views on Meetings.....	5
Ellen White’s Advice on Meetings	7
Views of Other Writers on Board Meetings	8
Techniques on Conducting of Meetings	10
The Church Clerk’s Duties at Board Meetings.....	12
Contents of Minutes	15
Importance of the minute book	15
Agenda preparation and presentation.....	18
Guidelines on Chairing of Board Meetings	21
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	24
Qualitative Research	24

Collection of Data	25
Questionnaire	25
Secondary Data	25
Population Sampling	26
Data Analysis	26
Samples	27
Analysis of Board Meetings Held in Churches.....	28
Suggested Solutions	31
 4. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	 32
Program Design	32
Program Implementation	32
Program Evaluation	35
 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	 36
Challenges for Regularity and Procedures.....	36
Recommendations for Board Meetings	36
 Appendices.....	 38
A. LETTERS	37
B. TABLES	39
C. QUESTIONNAIRES	41
D. SAMPLE MINUTES	44
E. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS	47
F. EVALUATION.....	50
G. MODEL INSTRUMENT.....	56
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 59
 VITA.....	 63

LIST OF TABLES

1. Frequency of agenda issues covered three years	29
2. Comparative frequency of board meetings.	29
3. Board meetings conducted	30
4. Training schedule for elders and clerks	33
5. Seminar for elders and clerks	34
6. Clerks interviews	40
7. Educational levels of elders and clerks	40
8. Educational levels of elders and clerks pretested	41

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the Seventh-day Adventist church, the importance of conducting board meetings among leaders and their subordinates cannot be overemphasized. With several programmes being run in the district, there is need for effective adherence to regularity and procedures if leaders are to execute their duties efficiently. It is through church board meetings that leaders and members at local churches execute their duties in a meaningful way. The Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Working Policy suggests that one of the duties of boards or councils is to hold meetings for transaction of the business of the institution.¹

Most leaders in Mafara District lack skills on how to conduct a meeting. Success of programs is hampered in the district if meetings are not done regularly. It is through meetings that leaders connect to other people in an organisation such as the church. To be skilled in conducting meetings is what makes the organisation function successfully.

Every leader needs to master the skill of chairing or conducting a meeting. Participants who leave a meeting chaired effectively have a sense of accomplishment and a clear understanding of the future directions and tasks. Meetings are an inevitable part of a leader's job. A lot of time can be spent in meetings. There is a lot that needs to

¹ Southern Africa Indian-Ocean Division Working Policy, (Centurion, 2010), 91.

be done to improve the effectiveness of meetings. Generally meetings are seen as a means of communicating views and information to interested parties. An individual has to develop a range of procedural skills. More meeting may fail partly because the leaders convening them may not be fully acquainted with the procedures involved in the conducting of meetings especially in the case of clerks and elders in a church organisation.

Statement of the Problem

Four newly established churches in Mafara District do not conduct regular church board meetings. The church clerks and elders are not acquainted with the Seventh - day Adventist procedural ways of conducting board meetings. In the four churches there is no regularity and procedure in conducting of board meetings. This has resulted in limited participation in programmes.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research is to assist clerks and elders in mastering and implementing the basic skills and procedures involved in the conducting of board meetings. A programme will be developed to train the leaders on procedures to be followed when chairing church board meetings. Ways and means of conducting meetings regularly, procedurally and professionally will be learnt.

Significance of the Research

This research will help clerks and elders in Mafara District discuss and implement procedures on conducting regular board meetings. A programme will be developed to train the leaders on how the meetings are done. It will promote a coordinated way of planning and discussing programs to be implemented. The programme will empower elders and clerks on ways of conducting board meetings effectively. This research may act as a basis for further study in this area.

Limitations of the Study

Mafara District of the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates and administers many churches in its territory. Among the churches in Mafara District only four churches are selected as the focus of the study. A major limitation of the study was the inability to use all the seven organised churches because of their location and transport problem thus resulting in selection of those that are more convenient for the researcher to reach.

Delimitation of the Study

This research project concerns itself with elders and clerks of four new churches in Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference namely: Mabvuku South, Circle, Support Unit and Chikurubi. The focus is not on individual decisions in meetings but procedure and regularity.

Methodology

This research is a programme development project. It first reviewed biblical passages on board meetings. Then it identified the challenges faced by the four churches on conducting meetings. A comparison of regularity or frequency of board meetings was done. Board members, particularly clerks and first elders were interviewed on their understanding of the importance of board meetings. Questionnaires were also administered to establish the benefits and effects of regularity and effectiveness in conducting board meetings in relation to implementation of programmes. An analysis of the effects of lack regularity in convening the meetings was carried out, afterwards programme was designed on how to conduct meetings procedurally and regularly. Seminars were done on preparation of an agenda, chairing of meetings and writing of minutes. Lastly an evaluation on the relevance of the programme in relation to the challenges previously met was done.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conducting of meetings effectively by a leader is a vital part of being a successful manager. Procedural conducting of board meetings is the lifeblood of our churches as organisations. Through meetings, information is handled and messages conveyed to improve relationships among church members. Effective chairing skills help first elders as chairpersons of meetings to understand and implement effectively the procedures involved. Heller summarises one of the tasks of leaders as conducting meetings as ensuring that the right message has been received and the right procedure taken.¹ Effective leaders follow procedures and make much better managers. If meetings are to be effective it all starts by getting to know how to conduct them. The more fully you understand the procedures the more effective the meetings become. Failure to grasp these procedures can be a major hindrance to the delivery of the message. A thorough mastery of procedures can also enhance performance by those in leadership positions such as clerks and elders.

Biblical Views on Meetings

The Bible talks about the fall of the devil in heaven before he came to planet earth. The Spirit of Prophecy augments the war that took place in heaven. God in turn decided to have a special meeting with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The

¹Robert Heller, *Effective Leadership* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1999), 33.

agenda was to warn them about this fallen being Lucifer. Ellen G. White highlights that the two angels spared their time to visit and have a special meeting with our parents.¹ From Adam through all patriarchs and prophets and down to this day God has been meeting His people.

At the foot of Mt Sinai, God's people had a meeting with Moses. The Israelites on their way to Canaan waited patiently as Moses the spiritual leader went up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God. Moses had a meeting with Jehovah and He communicated the laws to his people through Moses. It was an important and sacred meeting. God and Moses had a meeting at a specified time. The agenda of the meeting was to give the Law of God to Moses. This depicts what pastors do when they have meetings with the conference on the issues which the churches should know. After this meeting Moses was expected to have a meeting with the Israelites on the Law of God. In like manner the pastor conducts meetings with first line elders who will also in turn have meetings with their church board members. Furthermore in times when Jerusalem's walls had broken down, Nehemiah, assessed the degree of destruction and conducted meetings with leaders (Neh 2:17-20). At the meeting he convincingly informed them of the necessity to rebuild the broken walls.

This idea of running meetings continued in the Old Testament times through to New Testament times. A good example is the Jerusalem Council where a meeting to deliberate on issues that were to be of great concern to the church. From (Acts 15:16-18), it appears that at least four different meetings were involved in this strategic conference: a public meeting to welcome Paul and his associates, a private meeting of Paul and the key leaders (Gal 2:2), a second public meeting at which the Judaizers presented their case (Acts 15:5-6). In the Jerusalem Council four key leaders

¹Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, Electronic Version, 1947, 30.

presented the case for keeping the doors of grace open to the lost Gentiles. In a like manner the conferences, districts and churches also convene meetings to resolve issues. From Genesis to Revelation God communicated with his people at various times and occasions. The leaders who were chosen to represent him in the theocratic system of governance conducted numerous meetings cascading information from God to his people.

The God of Heaven, as depicted in the whole Bible, on various occasions and circumstances effectively communicated with his people through meetings. In the East Zimbabwe Conference and Mafara District problems may occur which call for the directors and pastor to conduct urgent meetings aimed at addressing the problems at hand.

In all the cases described including that of Nehemiah there were no options except to conduct meetings. The meetings produced lasting solutions to challenges encountered. Francis Nichol commenting on the meetings notes the final decisions were based on the agreement of all present¹. In cases where disorder was looming in the church God's people were brought together in faith. God moved upon his people to be in one doctrine and in spirit.

Ellen G. White's Advice on Meetings

Meetings are described as profitable for spiritual advancement.² Meetings need to be characterised by a deep searching of the heart. Each individual strives to know of Christ. If possible, meetings need to be prompt to the hour appointed. A major objective of a meeting is to inform God, edify one another through an interchange of thoughts and

¹Francis Nichol *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol 6, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 306.

²*Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 140.

feelings so as to gather or gain strength. It is through meetings that vigour is received from the source of our strength, God. The writings of Ellen White further advise that the Spirit of God should rest upon those conducting meetings. Feelings of jealous, accusation or criticism need to be avoided. Members in a meeting should be given ample opportunity to speak rather than being choked off.

Individuals conducting meetings have an opportunity to weigh both sides of a question. This ought to be done carefully without time being taken. In cases where an agreement cannot be reached, the chairperson or leader in a meeting need to ensure that other members make their suggestions until a compromise is reached. This leaves everyone satisfied. White describes it as an art of dividing the cake in such a way that everyone believes that he has gotten the biggest piece.¹ In all business meetings Jesus is needed by our side as a guide and counsellor.

Views of Other Authors on Board Meetings

This section basically deals with the views of other writers on the issue of board meetings. Further it will analyse the sources to establish principles and prepare the groundwork for programme design. Finally it will highlight the duties of elders and clerks such as chairing of meetings, agenda preparation, contents of the minute book and its importance.

Board meetings like any other meetings should begin on time. Hindle encourages leaders to have meetings which should start and finish on time.² Time keeping has a potential to answer many organizational problems. To improve the productivity, the managers or leaders should consider issues like to prepare and

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Seoul, South Korea: Everlasting Gospel), 278.

²Tim Hindle, *Managing Meetings* (Sydney: Dorling Kindersley, 1998), 18.

publish an agenda and restrict agenda items to fit time available for discussion. Further they may also make certain meetings follow agenda. Ask participants to prepare ahead of time and make sure the right persons are invited to the meetings.

It has been estimated that managers and executives spend as much as 70% of their time in meetings that can be classified into two categories. These meetings can range from extremely formal to extremely informal. Formal meetings provide an opportunity for face to face communication between two or more people guarded by a specific agenda. Further it facilitates dialogue and promotes nurturing of relationship and quality sharing of information though it can extend to conferences and committee meetings. Informal meetings will be discussions among fellow workers without a planned agenda for the purposes of sharing information. Cardy calls these informal meetings as grapevine.¹ Such meetings can be a source of creative ideas or destructive in nature since they have a tendency of attempting to formalise certain issues if it is allowed to go too far.

Basically in church settings it is more of formal meetings. The Seventh-day Adventist church emphasizes that every church must have a functioning board. Regularly this board is expected to hold meetings. The composition of the board comprises of elected members or leaders from different church departments. Its chief concern is organising and coming up with programs of the spiritual nurture for the church. Such programs are as follows evangelism, maintenance of doctrinal purity, upholding Christian standards, approval of church membership, church financial issues, caring of church property and linking of church departments.

¹Robert Cardy, *Management: People, Performance, Change* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008), 586.

Techniques on Conducting of Meetings

The chairperson of any organisation needs to be acquainted with how to conduct meetings professionally. How a meeting is conducted depends on the formality of the occasion. Meetings of such groups as formal committees, board of directors and professional organisations usually follow generally accepted rules of conduct called parliamentary procedure. Zander suggests that chairpersons who follow these procedures usually conduct very successful meetings.¹ The pastor appointed by the local conference or an elder appointed by the local church presides as chairperson at the meetings conducted. The chairperson is supposed to be acquainted with techniques on how to conduct meetings.

Planning thoroughly for a meeting is a key idea for the successful conducting of a meeting. One has to develop an agenda or a list of topics to be covered arranging items in a logical order. Items that explain other items should come before items they lead to. Good planning calls for the planners of the meeting to make the agenda available to all the people looking forward to attending the meeting. Lesikar proffers the view that such a planning process helps to eliminate items not worth discussing.² Upon commencement of the meeting, following the plan for the meeting item by item is an essential step. Sometimes discussion can go astray in the meeting and new ideas can come. This can be a common phenomenon in a meeting. The plan therefore serves as a guide. As the participants carry out discussions the leader or chairperson keeps them on track. It is anticipated that new ideas may arise. Lesikar propose that if new ideas arise

¹Alvin Zander, *Making Boards Effective* (San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 1993), 10.

²Reymond Lesikar, *Business Communication* (Boston, McGraw Hill, 2008), 444.

they should be postponed for a future meeting.¹

Mastery of the technique of moving a discussion is a necessary technique worth acquiring and implementing. The chairperson should control the agenda. After covering one item bring up the next. If a discussion has been exhausted the chairperson should move it before moving off to the next item. Proceed efficiently through items on the agenda. The chairperson has to make sure all important points on the discussion are made. The temptation to repeat ideas could be great. Avoid repetition, excessive detail and useless comments on other persons.

Participants in a meeting can be very talkative. Few people can dominate discussion in a meeting. It is the responsibility of a leader to control such people. When people stray, duplicate or bring in useless matter the chairperson has a right to intervene. Do it tactfully. Summarise the discussion and move on to the next topic. Unless this is done progress of the meeting is likely to be hindered.

As a chairperson it is quite imperative to set a precedent by starting a meeting on time and subsequently being able to control time. Olson, Elliot and Work advise that the meeting should be started on time and avoid interrupting it by attempting to brief latecomers on what they will have missed². When meeting time is limited you need to determine in advance how much time will be needed to cover each item. Appropriate the times you should end discussion of each item. You may announce the goals at the beginning of each meeting. A leader who is time conscious is more likely to earn respect from the participants. Some agenda items can take a little longer than others. Time budgeting is critical. It is important to end meetings on time and on a positive note.

¹Ibid., 445.

²Olson Ginny, Diane Elliot & Mike Work, *Youth Ministry Management Tools* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 78.

Summarising at appropriate time and place is an integral component of techniques of conducting a meeting. After a key item has been discussed the chairperson should summarise what the group has covered and concluded. If the group's decision is needed the group's vote will be the conclusion. Formally conclude each point and move on to the next one. Summarise progress made at end of the meeting. A review will help members understand their accomplishments. For some formal meetings minutes kept by the secretary provide a summary.

Church Clerk's Duties at Board Meetings

According to the Church Manual the church clerk is Secretary of the church and is one of the officers of the church (Pastor/Head Elder/Treasurer/Clerk). His or her duties among other duties include keeping of church records and serving as Secretary of all business meetings of the church. All church correspondences are done by the Church Clerk and he also deliberates on agenda items.

Like all other church officers the clerk is elected for a one-year term although it is encouraged that this person serves for more than one term.¹ According to the Church Manual a summarised list of some of the duties of a church clerk to include:

1. Collecting agenda items for board meetings.
 - a. Church boards – Recording secretary
 - b. Church business Meetings-Recording secretary
2. Preparing the place of meeting in liaison with the Chairperson, Elder or Pastor. The place of meeting should be conducive.

¹*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 17th Edition, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 59.

3. Keeping minutes during the above meetings and also Officers Meetings.

Ernest Martin concurs with the church manual on this duty as he says that the secretary should have clear ideas on how minutes are to be taken.¹ A proper record of a meeting will contain the following information.

▶ Statement of time, place and group. This information is usually given at the top of the page. It indicates what group met plus where and when they met.

▶ A list of members present. It is important to record the names of the members present (in very large gatherings just the number present will suffice) and who the presiding officer was. This helps in showing whether or not a quorum was present, thus validating or invalidating the meeting.

▶ An indication as to how the meeting began. Most Church Boards or business meetings begin with a prayer. The minutes often record the name of the person who prayed at the opening of the meeting.

▶ A listing of one of the actions or decisions made. The actions or decisions are preceded by the word "VOTED". The statement of the action is made briefly yet should contain information to answer the questions, who, how, where what and when. For easy reference the actions should be numbered, for example 24/36/96 means action number 24 on page 36 of the year 1996.

Closing with prayer just like opening with prayer is an important part of the meeting. Goldstein believes that no matter how well you know the bible, how much theology you understand how kind, loving, and giving you are, to have a new birth experience, you must by faith surrender your dreams, hopes, plans and goals in

¹Ernest Martins, *How to Take Minutes* (London: Sir Isaac Pittman & Sons, 2007), 1.

essence, the totality of your life to God.¹ Meetings are best ended courteously even if they have involved disagreement.

By policy every church must have a secretary usually called a clerk. The church clerk serves as the secretary of all business meetings of the church and keeps a record of all such meetings. This is a very important office. In the context of most churches the clerk is usually voluntary or not paid. The duties of the clerk include attending board meetings, taking minutes of their proceedings, writing up the minutes and afterwards reading them aloud for approval or correction or correction at a subsequent meeting. These minutes are important since they constitute the official record of what takes place when leaders meet together to deliberate upon the affairs of the church. It is therefore necessary that the clerk should have clear idea as to how minutes are to be taken, the essential facts to be preserved and the form in which they should be written up.

Officers at church level usually include the first elder, assistant elders, the clerk and a treasurer. The individual elected as a clerk usually possesses special ability, knowledge and enthusiasm. He is responsible for the carrying on of the church and the transaction of all its business. The arrangement of meetings, the issuing of notices, recording the minutes, preparation of the agenda, correspondence and reports come within his view.

The administration of the church is actual business and should therefore be conducted on business lines. From a business point of view minutes of church meetings are sometimes badly recorded and kept. One leader Ernest Martin laments that the taking and recording of minutes is often done in a haphazard and unmethodical

¹Clifford Goldstein, *Children of the Promise* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1997), 95.

manner.¹ They may be vague when they ought to be precise and often record a great deal that was not rightful place in the minute book.

It is chiefly with the object of assisting clerks and leaders who have no preliminary practice in the art of taking minutes that the observations and illustrations that are inserted in Appendices E and F were inserted. The samples in the appendices are for both a church board meeting and a church business meeting. The minutes are usually written in a summarised form.

Contents of Minutes

Why are minutes kept? The answer to this question will determine the answer to the further question, what should minutes contain? Which is the more important question from the point of view of the minute recorder? It will also determine the methods that the clerk shall adopt in order to enable him to make up his minutes in such a way that they shall never need correction afterwards.

The chief object of keeping minutes is to present a record of business transacted at board or committee meetings by those who are responsible for the management and control of the organisation of which they are officers. As a record of the determinations and resolutions of the officers and of the board members in reference to the business of the church, they need to be precise. They should in the case of board meetings, show specific course of action authorised by a resolution.

The minutes should show exactly what it is that was decided. Where and when necessary the minutes should set out all amounts of money quantities, and sums of money to which the resolutions passed date. Minutes are a record of business done with the exact wording of the resolutions passed and are not the same as a report. Owing to the manner in which resolution are sometimes tinkered with before being finally carried

¹Ibid., 1.

and to the irregular procedure which an immethodical chairman will sometimes permit the task of setting out their final and complete form the resolution actually carried is not always easy. Minutes must clearly show beyond any doubt what was done at the meeting; not what was said; nor were reasons urged for or against any particular course advocated but was formally proposed and what was ultimately decided upon. Only thus can the minutes save their purpose.

Unless the minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated to members as in the procedure they are read by the clerk at the next meeting. The chairman then asks the meeting or board members if he may sign them as a correct record of the proceedings. If that is agreed they are said to be confirmed. A better word is 'approved' or verified. No alternations should be made in the minutes except to correct minor errors of recording. Omissions and slight inaccuracies should be prevented. The clerk in his work should be as efficient as possible. Having the above stated procedures the minutes become a trustworthy account of the proceedings which they purport to record.

In order that any particular decision may be traced easily, the minute book should be kept well indexed. There are various methods of indexing. The minutes may be numbered consecutively throughout the book and indexed-subject, minute number or pages may be numbered and an alphabetical index written up.

Importance of the Minute Book

Sufficient notes of the proceedings must be taken by the clerk. The clerk's notes are a brief summary of the entire proceedings of the meeting. However Mike Bourne and Pippa Bourne advise secretaries that when recording minutes it is not important to know who said what and the minutes should be succinct and do not detract

from the record of what was agreed.¹ Note taking should be systematic and should be done in a note-book. Use of scraps of paper should be avoided since they are apt to get missed.

There are certain facts which minutes no matter how brief should never omit. The clerk should first of all record the date and the place of the meeting. Name of the Chairman should be stated next. The venue of the board meeting must also be shown. The presence of the date in the minutes will facilitate reference to the notes at any time afterwards. Next comes the name of the chairperson and that will be followed by names of other persons presents. A person asked to attend a meeting to give advice or to be consulted has his name included with a designation indicating the character in which they attend. For example J. Muchoko, janitor or R. Mawone, Lawyer. Robert Heller highlights that only relevant people should be asked to attend meetings to keep numbers down.²

The minute book is one of the compulsory books to be kept by a church. Each page should be numbered. Each minute should also be numbered and indexed. In some cases a file for minutes can be prepared. All proceedings at board meetings are to be entered in the minute book or typed and filed. Steps should be taken to prevent alternation, extraction of old leafs or insertion of new and unauthorised minutes.

Shorthand could be used to ensure the clerk's getting of every word he will require. Figures, names, dates and other details that call for vigilance should be recorded with uttermost accuracy. Modern gadgets can be used for recording the required information. Shorthand is always of value to the clerk. Note- taking therefore calls for discrimination and exercise of judgement. It may be helpful to give a few hints

¹Mike Bourne & Pippa Bourne, *Achieve High Performance* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 2009), 24.

²Ibid., 48.

as to the points to be attended to in the process of note taking and as to the kind of notes that is desirable to make.

Minutes of a meeting must be approved by the group members at a later meeting and this is usually the first item on the agenda-to approve minutes of the last meeting. In most cases after the minutes have been approved the Chairman then sign at a provided place to confirm the record as correct rendition of the previous meeting. The minutes are kept by the church clerk in a safe place. Minutes are not to be considered as the private property of the clerk. Any board member should have access to them. Whenever financially possible, board member should be furnished with copies of the minutes. As far as church business minutes are concerned, any church member should be given the privilege of checking through the minutes of church business meetings. At the close of term of service, the church clerk should give the incoming church clerk all the records that have been in her/his possession.

Agenda Preparation and Presentation

An agenda is a list of business items to be discussed by the meeting. The agenda normally takes two forms namely: the outline and the detailed forms. The outline form is just a list of items without any details and the detailed form contains additional information about the item under consideration. The Secretary or Church Clerk's office is like a funnel through which all items intended for the Church Board agenda flow from the departments and sub committees of the local church. All departments of the church and subcommittees submit to the office of the church clerk proposals and support materials that are intended for church board discussion. The church clerk then proceeds to discuss the submissions with the board chairman and thereby developing the agenda.

In preparing the agenda, the church clerk prepares a detailed agenda for himself and the chairman. He prepares the outline agenda for the rest of the members. The detailed agenda includes the actual proposal being made for that item. For example an item dealing with a request for the youth to travel to the neighbouring country for a Music gala may look like this on the two forms of the agenda as listed below:

Outline format

06-11-114 Youth trip to neighbour country.

Detailed format

06-11-114 Youth trip to neighbouring country. Whereas in the past many young people who went to the neighbouring country under the pretext of attending and participating in that country's Music gala have not returned. The board proposed to deny the request of the youth department to go to the neighbouring country to participate in the music gala as there are no guarantees that they will all come back.

Note that in detailed format the proposed action is included. This is very helpful to the church clerk in that in most cases the proposed action is voted as presented or with minor changes. The church clerk does not need to go home and struggle with formulating the action. A wise Church Clerk uses this method.

The church clerk reads out the agenda of the meeting to the participants. There are certain items that may require specialized presentation such as with financial items. In such cases the clerk requests the Church Treasurer to present such items for him. On presenting an item it is important for the clerk to first give a little background or explanation to the item before making a motion for the item to be considered by the

house. For an example the clerks may say that the church was on two occasions almost sued for negligence by angry parents of teenagers who went to the neighbouring country and did not return. Mr Chairman, since us as a church cannot guarantee that these young people will come back. The chairperson moves that the request of the young people to go to the neighbouring country for a music gala be turned down. It may not be necessary to present the items on their agenda according to sequence that is on the agenda sheet. Commenting on presenting of items on the agenda James O’rourke suggests that the most important items can be prioritized so that they can be discussed early on in the meeting.¹

Most board meetings deal with the difficult items first, while the minds of the members are still fresh, and then take the lighter ones at the end. The clerk usually comes to the meeting with some preliminary knowledge of the intended course of the proceedings. The agenda is not prepared alone, but it is usually prepared under the guidance of the chairman. It gives the items of the business to be brought forward.

In many instances the clerk reads correspondence to be laid before the meeting, is more familiar with transaction on which the members contemplate embarking. As a rule he possesses more knowledge concerning the subject matter of the meeting. As a result he is in a better position of note-taking.

The preparation of agenda requires considerable care. It comprises of a list of things to be done or a summary of the points to be considered at the meeting. The clerk and chairperson are further advised to go into a meeting with a plan of what you want accomplished. A true agenda is so worded that alteration of a few words to convert them into past tense will form the minutes. It may be written on foolscap paper or in a book specially kept for that purpose. The order in which the items appear on the

¹James O’Rourke, *Effective Communication* (Munich: Dorling Kindersley, 2009), 46.

agenda is generally the order in which the business is to be taken at the meeting. It is place routine business first on the agenda. This is not always imperative and the chairperson may use his or her discretion in the matter. Having dwelt on areas that are of great importance to a clerk as regards the success of meetings it is also of great necessity to focus our attention of how to chair meetings successfully.

Guidelines on Chairing of Meetings by Elders

Determine the meeting place. Tropman suggests that a convenient and familiar place should be chosen as the venue of meeting.¹ This could be a church. Sometimes non-church venues may be chosen. Participants may be asked to put their phones off or on silent to avoid any disturbances. Etiquette usually demands the offer of something to eat.

Ensure the room conditions are favourable.² Everyone ought to sit comfortably. Lighting and air conditions must be good. Provide abundant drinking water. Flowers maybe put on the table to add beauty. The agenda is an important communication device of the meeting. It puts the meetings purpose in focus. The one for the task at hand is set. The agenda then becomes the best tool for controlling the meetings progress provided it is short, simple and clear.³ Agenda can be one that sets out the meetings events as a work list and the more thoughtful agenda which organise the time. In the latter meetings are planned around the way groups make decisions.

Open and close with prayer, which is the most important part. Ellen G. White describes prayer as a heaven ordained means of success. Appeals, petitions, entreaties between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But

¹John Tropman, *Making Meetings Work* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 1.

²*Ibid.*, 1.

³*Ibid.*, 22.

prayer moves heavens. Some church board meetings attended by the researcher lacked the reading of minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes help members to reunify and re-establish the momentum formed at the earlier meeting. They are also important for records. In large churches more frequent meetings may be needed.

Most of the agenda is too long, and does not allow for announcements. The chairperson can affirm the committees for work done or for individual success. Open announcements build collegiality and motivation. Place easier items before more difficult ones. In Mafara District meetings conducted usually begin with difficult items. Little is accomplished because the group wastes time on the first agenda item.

The items are usually matters that ultimately need a decision but at a later meeting. It allows feelings to be aired without hasty, decisions. Church leaders can view the direction without taking a specific position. Members get more thinking time and praying time before deciding. Since the matter will be for discussion only. It is easy to manage time spent on it. In matters for decision only it is easy to keep the group working on higher general principles they want instead of focusing on details.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the setting of Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference in two major sections. The first section describes general historical and socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe and this district in particular. The second section presents an in-depth presentation of Mafara District using the quantitative and qualitative tools such as questionnaires and interviews.

History of Local Setting

The white settlers arrived in Zimbabwe the then Southern Rhodesia and later Rhodesia in 1890. Some of them settled in Harare the then Salisbury. They found a number of black Zimbabweans predominantly the Shona people staying in there. The early white settlers who were mainly farmers established a number of farms around the City of Salisbury, later called Harare. Sometimes the black people in the area were forced to find alternative settlements elsewhere. They were evicted from their ancestral settlements and had no options except to move away. The alternative settlements found were either fertile or not as good as the original ones.

The white people who evicted the local black people had to establish large farms where tobacco and other cash crops were grown. The black people who volunteered to remain provided labour for the white settler farmers in the area of Mafara. The years 1920 and beyond saw a massive movement of people from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia coming down to southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to provide labour in the farms and mines. With the subsequent growth of the then whites only low density

suburbs such as Greendale, Msasa, Highlands to name but a few some black people who had emigrated from Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) found employment as waiters and cooks for the white people.

The white people in the afore-stated low density suburbs built very small cottages for the workers only. The family of the workers including their children were not permitted to stay in the cottages despite their being small. The council negotiated with the white settler farmers who were occupying the Mabvuku and Tafara area and bought their farms now called Mafara District. This was done between the years 1952 and 1967 respectively. The area was under the Shawasha people, a Shona clan under the chieftaincy of Chinamora. The Shawasha people had no option except to move further east in search of new settlements. They were both hunters and subsistence farmers. The chief's home was situated at an area now called Hunter. This area has a cave where they used to stay as hunters. Some rock paintings depict their hunting scenes.

The district of Mafara has ten primary schools and six high schools which include two private colleges namely Hitmark and Herentals. The first primary school to be established was Donnybrook, named after a renowned international motor race course. From as early as 1940 students who completed primary education had to go out of Mafara in search of secondary or higher education. Chishawasha Mission established earlier by Catholic missionaries and about ten kilometres north east of Mabvuku provided higher education for the few students whose parents could afford the tuition since it is expensive. The first black only secondary school to be established in the area was Mabvuku High School in 1975 during the colonial era.

In the late 1990s up to early 2000 a high density residential area developed as part of Mafara District. It is called Circle Cement. It provides accommodation for the cement factory workers some of whom are Seventh-day Adventist church members.

Following an agreement between the Government of Zimbabwe and a farmer the Chikurubi area was acquired in the mid 70's and at the height of the liberation struggle. On this large piece of land one of the biggest prisons in Zimbabwe, Chikurubi Maximum was established including a large training camp for Zimbabwe Republic Police known as Support Unit. Two Seventh day Adventist churches namely Chikurubi Maximum Prison Church and Support Unit were organised between 2005 and 2009.

Mafara District has developed from a number of farms acquired by both the government and local government authorities. In the farms the majority of labourers, from as early 1930 up to 1970 were migrant workers from as far as Malawi and Zambia. The Chewa and Nyanja people are some of the residents of Mafara District other than local Shona or Ndebele people. The Chewa language is also spoken in the street. It is against this background that the Seventh-day Adventist church has grown in Mafara District. Mabvuku Seventh-day Adventist Church was first to be organised in September 1972 under Pastor Munetsi. After Mabvuku Seventh-day Adventist church the organisation of Tafara, Old Mabvuku and Chikurubi churches took place. The recently organised churches are Mabvuku South, Support Unit and Circle Cement.

The church was established in Mafara District just before 1970. It currently faces the challenge of inability by some leaders to conduct board meetings regularly and procedurally. The security and peace experienced in Mafara District is partly attributed to the availability of a Zimbabwe Republic Police Station established during the Rhodesian regime. The church enjoys a good rapport with the police force. When conducting evening evangelistic campaigns in politically sensitive areas of the district police help to maintain peace and order.

Most of the ordinary people in Mafara District have a strong rural and farming background. As a result patches of land have small fields cultivated by local residents.

Maize, a crop used to make staple food is grown. Mafara is one of the districts in Harare best known for residents who practice urban farming. Households or individuals can harvest half up to one tonne of maize.

Qualitative Research

Most of data collected was qualitative in its nature and as a result the qualitative research methodology was used. The researcher chose to include the qualitative research method since it enables the capturing of people's subjective attitudes, feelings and experiences. Questionnaires and interviews were used. Statistical analysis then followed. The researcher was actively engaged in the area where the research took place.¹

Qualitative research engages in an interpretative approach to the environment which can be considered to be naturalistic in the sense that a number of research designs such as case study, ethnography, phenomenology and theory are engaged. Inclusive in Berg and Lune's description of qualitative research are reference to definitions, concepts, metaphors, characteristics description of things and symbolisms.² Using a number of techniques, data is gathered then assembled by triangulation. The data collected compliments each other. Because of its nature qualitative research may be inductive instead of being deductive in nature.³

This research employed the qualitative approach since most of the data collected was experiences, feelings and opinions of the respondents who were mainly elders, clerks and board members at large. Samples of sizeable group of people were

¹Norman Denzine & Y. Lincoln, *Doing Qualitative Research* (Denvil, OH: Southern Western Publishing, 1994), 203.

²Bruce Berg & Howard Lune, *Qualitative Research for Social Sciences* (Boston: Pearson Publisher, 2012), 579.

³*Ibid.*, 1998.

selected with the same churches in Mafara District in East Zimbabwe Conference facing challenges in conducting board meetings regularly and procedurally. The qualitative research approach seemed suitable.

Collection of Data

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to elders, clerks and board members who had been interviewed. The questions had to do with agenda preparation, procedures on chairing of board meetings, minute-taking and bad versus good meetings. These areas could have been exposed to leaders during their orientation period soon after election of officers.

Secondary Data

A number of documents such as minutes from the district churches in East Zimbabwe Conference, training handouts for elders and clerks and circulars and handouts from companies provided this study with secondary data. The researcher also collaborated with a large secular company; the Management Training Bureau of Zimbabwe enabled him to have a broader insight on how corporate companies conduct their meetings.

Population Sampling

Population sampling was done in the district of Chipinge in EZC as well as four churches in Mafara District, namely Chikurubi, Mabvuku South, Support Unit and Circle Cement. Population sampling may consume time and it may be costly to engage the whole population. The research had to choose cases that would best respond to the research questions. This case from which the sample is taken is a population. The selection criterion focused on the length of service as a board member, clerk or elder.

The targeted respondents were selected on the basis of having served in the church for five or more years, level of education and membership. A total sample of 120 leaders was selected out of a population of 200 leaders who are elders, clerks and board members.¹ Churches involved were Chikurubi, Support Unit, Circle Cement, and Mabvuku South. Sanders' studies affirm that the sample taken is a population.² The selection criterion focused on years which an individual served as a board member, clerk or elder.

Analysis of Data

Data from focus group questions, interviews, questionnaires and documents such as minute books or files were classified and analysed. A thematic approach was used to analyse and interpret the data. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences tables and charts were produced. Basic ethical considerations were observed in this research. Interviewees were first asked if they were willing to be interviewed. On filling questionnaires the respondents did not put names. A numbering system was used. Permission was sought from relevant authorities before collecting personal and confidential information on population targeted. The research methodology required the researcher to collect the information needed. The following chapter deals with the evaluation and analysis of the data and information gathered from the interviews and questionnaires. This led to the drafting and implementation of a training program to address the problem in Chapter 1.

Samples

Four churches were chosen out of the seven churches in Mafara District. During the year 2012 a total of twenty board meetings were conducted at the four

¹Churches involved were Chikurubi, Support Unit, Circle Cement & Mabvuku South.

²Mark Sanders, Phillip Lewis & Adrian Thorn Hill, *Business Research Methods* (London: McGraw Hill, 2008), 112.

churches namely Chikurubi, Support Unit, Circle Cement and Mabvuku South. This brings the average number of board meetings conducted in a quarter per church to two.

Analysis of Board Meetings Held in Churches

It was noted that the larger the membership of church the more the agenda issues the church had to deal with. In large churches such as Mabvuku South and Support Unit there was regularity in the conducting of board meetings. This regularity was due to an increase in the number of cases related to discipline and disputes among church members. Table 1 shows the frequency of agenda issues in the districts studied.

Table 1: Agenda items

Year	1				2				3				Totals
Church	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	
Planning	5	6	5	4	2	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	43
Discipline	6	5	6	6	2	2	1	3	1	2	3	1	38
Evangelism	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	4	3	28
Disputes	6	4	5	5	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	27
Marriages	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	21

The high prevalence of discipline and dispute issues on the agenda lists of the four churches meant that more time in the meetings was spent on these issues at the expense of planning and evangelism. There are numerous reasons as to why board meetings are conducted. An analysis of interviews held at the four churches revealed that holding a board meeting was closely associated with disciplinary issues. In fact, not all board meetings deal with disciplinary issues. Discipline is only one among many issues that call for the conducting of board meetings.

According to interviews held with sixteen elders of the four churches, half the number of churches does not hold regular board meetings.

The reasons cited were as follows;

1. Lack of time
2. Lack of knowledge on procedures on holding of meetings.
3. Conducting board meetings for disciplinary cases only.
4. Lack of strategic plans.

The frequency of board meetings was two or less per church in a quarter over a period of three years. Lack of knowledge on procedures on conducting meetings led the reasons for reduced board meetings with 72% followed by conducting meetings only when dealing with disciplinary cases with 10%. The rest of the other causes accounted for a total and low percentage frequency of 18%.

Table 2: Comparative frequency of board meetings held, 2010-2012

	Mabvuku	Circle	Chikurubi	Support	Totals
Planning & Reporting	12	10	12	9	43
Discipline	10	9	9	10	38
Evangelism	9	6	7	6	28
Disputes	7	8	6	7	28
Marriages	7	4	5	5	20

The year 2010 registered a relatively greater number of board meetings dealing with disciplinary issues as compared to the years 2011 and 2012. This could be attributed to Mega Evangelism programme which called for leaders to conduct more board meetings to plan ahead. Since the church was also affected by inflation many disputes and disciplinary cases arose.

According to Mafara District Board meetings Statistics for the quarter ending 31 March 2012 there are seven organised churches with a membership of 1785. Four churches were selected from the district (56.8% of all churches) and these have memberships of 600 which is 33.6% of the total membership.

Table 3: Board meetings (2010-2012)

Church	Board Meetings Held	Membership
Circle Cement	10	98
Chikurubi	12	122
Mabvuku South	20	220
Support Unit	18	160

In accordance with church policy each church is expected to conduct at least one board meeting per month bringing the total number of board meetings per year to twelve. For 3 years each of the four churches above could have conducted a total of at least 36 or more board meetings per church. Each of them failed to do so.

Suggested Solutions

The respondents suggested a number of solutions to lack of regularity on conducting board meetings as well as following of procedures when conducting meetings. These are:

1. Putting Board meetings on plans, 60% out of 120.
2. Identifying regular dates for board meetings, 20% out of 120.
3. Orienting leaders (Elders and Clerks) on board meetings, 20% out of 120.

The number 120 stands for the board members, clerks and elders inclusive who responded to the questionnaires. This suggests that Mafara District churches notably Circle Cement, Chikurubi, Mabvuku South and Support Unit need seminars if they are to improve on regularity and procedures on conducting board meetings.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter outlines specific strategies for East Zimbabwe Conference leadership based on the study of the Bible, Ellen G. White and other authors' ideas and principles to address the imbalances in regularities and procedures as relates to meetings. The strategy implemented took into account the suggestions and findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the situation of procedures and regularity on meetings conducted in Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference.

This chapter outlines the specific strategies the East Zimbabwe Conference leadership based on the study of the Bible, Ellen G, White writings and other authors' ideas and principles. Principles for innovative leaderships assisted elders to address the imbalances in regularity and procedures whenever board meetings are conducted. The strategies implemented took into account the suggestions and findings from both the qualitative and quantitative research analysis of the situation of procedures and regularity in board meetings conducted in Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference.

Programme Design and Implementation

To address the problem a programme was designed by the researcher. The training programme covered a period of four quarters from 1 January 2012 to 31 March 2013. Seminars were conducted as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Training schedule for elders and clerks

Quarter	Dates	Church	Topics Covered
1 st	28-29/1/12	Circle	Agenda Preparation and Minute Taking
		Circle	Chairing of Board Meetings
2 nd	21/04/12	Chikurubi	Agenda Preparation and Minute Taking
	19/05/12	Chikurubi	Chairing of Board Meetings
3 rd	28/7/12	Mabvuku South	Agenda Preparation and Minute Taking
	30/09/12	Mabvuku South	Chairing of Board Meetings
4 th	20/10/12	Support Unit	Agenda Preparation and Minute Taking
	24/11/12	Support Unit	Chairing of Board Meetings

The participants in the above training programmes were mainly clerks, elders and board members who are departmental leaders at church level.

The researcher invited the Harare based Management Training Bureau of Zimbabwe which specialises in personnel training to train clerks and elders. The skills development assistant conducted two seminars indicated in Table 5.

Table 5: Seminar for Elders and Clerks.

Dates	Course Title	Course Outline
November 2012 10-11	Minute Rapporteurs (Clerks)	Organising Meetings. The Agenda, Standard Format for Minutes, Recording Decisions and Resolutions Good and Bad Meetings, Making Meetings Work.
December 2012 1-2	Effective Meeting Chairing (Elders)	Bad versus Good Meetings. Procedures when holding a meeting, Types of meetings, Duties of the Chair. Chairing Skills. Recording minutes, Outcomes, Meeting checklist, Action plan.

From 1 October 2012 up to 31 March 2013 the researcher in his capacity as a pastor of Mafara District went to each of the four churches under study to attend board meetings chaired by elders. Minutes of the board meetings held were collected. Clerks and elders were assisted with procedures on conducting regular meetings. The monitoring was based on checking frequency of meetings and correct adherence to recording of minutes and proper procedures in chairing of meetings.

Program Evaluation

Seventh-day Adventist Churches should frequently hold meetings on grounds of evangelism. It was found that 25% of the leaders interviewed said that the level of education on how to conduct meetings procedurally had reduced by less than 50% in a year due to lack of training. If leaders adhere to policy as it is in the Church Manual the reduction in frequency can be reduced. Also 5% of the respondents felt that it was the pastor who caused so because he is supposed to have trained and encouraged the leaders. Pastors need to promote conducting of board meetings both regularly and procedurally. Elders, clerks and board members benefited from the training programs conducted. The researcher also had an opportunity to evaluate the questionnaires used.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research intended to achieve three objectives, which are; to assess the degree of lack of regularity in conducting of board meetings, to encourage the importance of adherence to the procedures during meetings and finally to suggest future recommendations for the enhancing of regularity and following of procedures in the convening of board meetings by clerks and elders. Chapter One gave a general introduction and background to the stated problem. Chapter two reviewed literature on meetings from the Bible, Ellen writings and other sources. The biblical study affirmed that several meetings were held regularly and procedurally as was the case with the Jerusalem Council. Chapter three described the geographical and historical setting of Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference. Finally Chapter four presented the methodology for investigation of the problem which included interviews and questionnaires. The questionnaires were tested for their validity and reliability. An analysis of data from questionnaires, related literature and interviews conducted by the researcher gave possible solutions the topic in question. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis was used. Out of 80 questionnaires 72 responded. The researcher employed commonly accepted tools for analysing data.

Challenge for Regularity and Procedures

At churches where planning is poor and no regular board meetings were conducted. A number of challenges were encountered. Conflicts are not resolved on time. Tension, jealous and suspicion existed among members and leaders. The situation created problems in the churches. God is a God of order.

Recommendations for Lack of Regularity and Procedures

There should be a link between old and new board members especially the clerk and chairperson. Experience can be tapped from those who were in leadership positions to assist or even train the newly elected officers. There is need to ensure the availability of church manuals which also have information on meetings.

The conducting of seminars in churches by Pastors covering agenda preparation, minute writing and procedures on chairing of meetings could be of great help. Pastors are to encourage the conducting of regular board meetings. They are also expected to attend the meetings and reduce delegation of the chairing of meetings to elders most of the time.

After a study of statistics it is embarrassing to realise that even churches in the city of Harare, which has clerks, elders and board members who are managers and chief executive officers meetings are still conducted ineffectively. With the increasing urban population, the need to have regular board meetings is very important. The training of all board members so that they are versatile in processes and procedures involved in conducting board meetings is needed. This should not be taken for granted because the churches are ever having new individuals elected into leadership positions every year. The increasingly complex world within which the church finds itself today demands effectiveness in conducting of board meetings. It can be inferred from this study that

reduced board meetings in Mafara District are usually caused by lack of management of time, poor planning and incompetency leading to poor administration of churches.

On the other hand facts obtained from the research showed lack of commitment, incompetency, poor management of time and lack of orientation or training as the leading causes of lack of effectiveness in the conducting of board meetings regularly and procedurally by clerks and elders in the church. The pastor's role is to train and educate the leaders. Our District Committee should conduct a serious study on this issue. On drafting of a strategic plan the inclusion of this challenge could help. Studies could be done to assess the extent of damage done by lack of frequent board meetings in some churches.

Furthermore, research can be done utilising these facts as a starting point to build future preventative measures on this problem.

APPENDIX A

LETTERS

The Seventh-day Adventist Church
1165 Chishawasha St
Mabvuku
Harare

1 January 2012

The Executive Committee
East Zimbabwe Conference
4 Thorn Road
Waterfalls
Harare

**Re: Permission to Conduct MA in Leadership Research Study in East Zimbabwe
Conference, Mafara District**

Permission is hereby being sought to conduct my research study in Master of Arts in Leadership with Adventist University of Africa on Regularity and Procedures on Conducting Board Meetings in Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference.

Thank You

Yours Sincerely

Kilson Muchoko
(AUA Student S2010)



EAST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE

P.O.BOX W19, Waterfalls, Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: (263 772)124 941-4 Fax: (263 772)124 945
Email: ezcsecretariat@gmail.com

Secretariat

6th May 2013

Pastor Kilson Muchoko
1165 Chishawasha Street
Mabvuku
HARARE

Dear Pastor Muchoko

RE: REQUEST TO DO REASEARCH PROJECT IN MAFARA DISTRICT

During the East Zimbabwe Conference Executive Committee which sat on 12th April 2013, the following action was taken:

VOTED to approve the request from Pastor Kilson Muchoko to carry out his MA Research Project in East Zimbabwe Conference. The Title of his project is "Lack of Regularity and Procedure on Conducting Board Meetings in Mafara District of East Zimbabwe Conference" effective June 1, 2012 to April 30, 2013.

Wish you God's blessings in your studies.

Yours in the Blessed Hope


pp: Dr Robert Muzira
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

RM/fc

cc: EZC Officers

"Then Jeremiah called Baruck the son of Neriah: and Baruck wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." Jeremiah 36:4

APPENDIX B

TABLES

Table B1. Data from church clerks

Clerks	Year in the Office	Years Served in Mafara District as Clerk	Years of Baptism
1	2010	4	10
2	2010	1	3
3	2012	2	6
4	2011	3	15
5	2013	4	20
6	2010	6	30
7	2012	2	12
8	2012	3	14
9	2011	4	10
10	2012	6	16
11	2012	3	11
12	2012	4	14

Table B2. Educational levels of clerks and elders.

Age	Educational Level	Evaluation
24	Diploma	No
40	Degree	No
31	Degree	Yes
25	Diploma	Yes
18	A' Level	Yes
15	Grade 7	No
49	Certificate	No
35	Certificate	No
42	Diploma	Yes
22	Diploma	Yes
24	Degree	Yes
20	Diploma	No

Table B3: Educational levels of elders and clerks pretested.

Clerk /Elder	Category	Church	District
A	Degree	Medium	Chipinge
B	Diploma	Nyanyadzi	Chimanimani
C	Certificate	Green side	Mutare North
D	Degree	Zimre	Chiremba East
E	Degree	Mabelreign North	Golden Stairs
F	A' Level	Harare	Harare
G	Diploma	Rwere	Guruve
H	Diploma	Tafara	Mafara
I	Degree	Nyazura	Nyazura
J	A' Level	Nyanga	Nyanga

Names not given in order to maintain confidentiality.

APPENDIX C

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

LEADERSHIP DEPARTMENT

SURVEY FOR BOARD MEETINGS RESEARCH

N.B Please do not write your name. Information will be considered confidential

Personal Information

Number of years in church.....

Number of cumulative years served as officer.....

EZC Conference Elders and Clerks

Please respond to each statement as per your meetings experience

1. Did you chair a meeting during your tenure in office?

YES/NO

2. Were you aware of your job description as an officer?

YES/NO

3. Do you have a current church manual?

YES/NO

4. Did you use a church manual to help you conduct meetings?

YES/NO

5. Who were chairing the board meeting?

- A. First Elders
 - B. Any other elder
 - C. Pastor
 - D. Other
6. Who helped prepare the agenda?
- A. Elders
 - B. All Board members
 - C. Heads of church departments
 - D. Officers
 - E. Pastor
 - F. Sub committees
7. Did board members get the agenda before the meeting?.....
8. How often were meetings held?.....
9. According to priority which area do you consider to be key areas in a clerk's preparation of meetings?
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
10. According to priority what do you consider to be the key areas elders should consider when chairing meetings.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
11. What do you think are the benefits of holding meetings regularly and procedurally by elders?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.

d.

e.

f.

12. What were the disadvantages of holding meetings irregularly?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

13. What are your comments in regard to adhering to procedures when conducting meetings by pastors at your present church?

.....

.....

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE MINUTES

**1. MINUTES OF MUSA MUTSA SDA CHURCH BOARD MEETING HELD
AT THE CHURCH ON THE 27TH JANUARY 1997**

Pastor Powerful Preacher, Elder, Church Clerk, Treasures, MEMBERS
PRESENT

Heads of Department, member.

Head Deaconess PRAYER

VOTED to approve the minutes of the 31st December 1996 PREVIOUS
MINUTES

Minutes as presented by the church clerk. 1

VOTED to accept resignation of J Hardworker as superintendent RESIGNATION
due to his moving to Harare effective December 4, 1996 SUPERINTENDENT

VOTED to recommend the approval of J Gumpo's request of

Membership transfer to Philisani Church. TRANSFERE

3

VOTED to recommend the election of Mrs Mphathi as SS MRS MPATHI

Superintended for the remainder of the year in the place of J SUPERINTEND

Hard worker who has Superintended moved to Harare 4

VOTED to conduct an evangelistic effort at New Place township EVANGELISTIC

during the month of May 1997. It is to be noted that the EFFORT

meeting will be held under the directive of the Pastor and the NEW

PLACE

T/SHIP

Lay Activities department. Up to \$4 000 from the LA fund be used 5

for the meetings.

VOTED to authorise T Shanda to attend the VBS Training Institute VBS TRAINING

To be held at the conference complex from March 4-11, 1997. INSTITUTE

Expenses fund 6

Prayer: F Deacon

Chairperson – Pastor P Preacher

Secretary- F Kunyora

**2. MINUTES OF THE MUSA MUTSA CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING
HELD AT THE CHURCH ON THE 23RD JANUARY 1997**

Two thousand members PRESENT

Prayer: D Munamati

VOTED to approve previous minutes as presented by the church PREVIOUS
MINUTES

Clerk. 1

VOTED to accept the annual transfers report as presented. TRANSFER
REPORT

VOTED to accept the SS superintendent's report as presented.
SUPERINTENDENT

3

Prayer L Director.

Chairman – Pastor P Preacher

Secretary – F. Kunyora

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP

Survey Instrument for board meetings research focus group discussion questions

1. What is the clerk/elder's job description? Answers from elders and clerks separately contrasted and discussed.
2. What are the basic facts of clerk/elders work?
3. What are the advantages of conducting regular meetings?
4. What are the disadvantages of conducting meetings irregularly?
5. What could be the key area in chairing of meetings by elders?
6. Since clerks and elders possess different spiritual gifts and talents what can be done to come up with successful meetings considering this disparity?
7. How do you prioritise the following roles of a church clerk?
 - Corresponding with members
 - Keeping records of meetings
 - Preparing reports
 - Preparing delegates credentials
 - Assisting church to vote, add or remove names
 - Responses from clerks, elders and lay people to be contrasted.

ELDERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR BOARD MEETINGS RESEARCH

1. What is your role in a church or congregation?
2. What are your talents and gifts?
3. How do you perceive as regularity and procedures in a meeting?
4. What could be advantages of adhering to procedures in a meeting?
5. What are your fears as regards conducting a meeting?
6. What are the disadvantages of conducting meetings irregularly?
7. Have you ever conducted a meeting? What was your experience?
8. What did you appreciate from the exercise?
9. What did you dislike from the exercise?
10. Did you get any comments on how you conducted the meeting? How did the comments help or affect you?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FORMER ELDERS AND CLERKS

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP

1. How many years did you serve as a clerk or elder in Mafara District?
2. What were some of your administrative joys and frustrations in working with board members?
3. How often did you convene board meetings?
4. Did you have any consistent or regular way or times of convening meetings?
5. What was the average number of people who conducted board meetings?
6. How were attendance notified and what was the period of notification?
7. When you look at today's church do you think the procedures still apply.
8. What would you consider revising or correcting looking at the procedures used?
9. How did the board members you led when chairing meetings respond, were they happy or unhappy?
10. What prompted their happiness or unhappiness?
11. What input would you give to our plan to orient and or train elders and clerks on conducting meetings?
12. What follow up could be done after the programme of orientation through seminars on meetings?

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRES ANSWERED BY BOARD MEMBERS IN EVALUATING THEIR CHAIR PERSON /FIRST ELDER

Church _____ First Elder _____

We invite your participation in a program to help your first elder to strengthen his/her effectiveness in conducting board meetings. Answer the question candidly and objectively. Circle the letter associated with your answer. Your answer will be shared with the elder in a composite report so as to maintain confidentiality. Please hand the filled form to your pastor.

1. What is your age group?
 - A. 16-24
 - B. 25-30
 - C. 31-40
 - D. 51-above
2. What is your educational level?
 - A. Diploma
 - B. Certificate
 - C. Advanced Level
 - D. Post graduate
3. What is your gender?
 - A. Female

- B. Male
4. How long have you been a member of Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- A. 0-5 years
 - B. 6-10 years
 - C. 11-20 years
 - D. 21-30 years
 - C. 31- above years
5. How many first elders have chaired you since you become a board member?
- A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4
 - E. More than 4
6. What office do you hold as a board member?
- A. Elder
 - B. Deacon
 - C. Clerk
 - D. Sabbath school superintendent
 - E. Other
7. How often do you attend your board meetings?
- A. Every meeting
 - B. Once in every 2 months
 - C. Twice a quarter
 - D. Rarely attends

- E. Once a quarter
8. My chairperson is strong in following procedures on convening a meeting?
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree
 - E. Strongly disagree
9. In terms of conducting meetings my elder is confident and effective?
- A. Excellent
 - B. Good
 - C. Average
 - D. Poor
 - E. Fair
10. My elder meets my expectations as far as conducting meetings procedurally is concerned.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree
 - E. Strongly disagree
11. My Elder regularly convenes meetings.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree

- E. Strongly disagree
12. My elder values other board member's opinions in meetings.
- A. All the time
 - B. Sometimes
 - C. Not at all
13. My elder promotes the Seventh-day Adventist ways of convening meetings.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree
 - E. Strongly disagree
14. My elder plans and leads well in meetings
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree
 - E. Strongly disagree
15. My elder is able to chair and handle board meetings well.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Strongly Disagree
16. My elder manages time well in a board meeting.
- A. At times

- B. All times
 - C. Rarely
 - D. Not at all
17. My elder prevents irrelevant debate
- A. At times
 - B. All times
 - C. Rarely
 - D. Not at all
18. My elder ensures any voting procedure is followed correctly.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree
 - E. Strongly disagree
19. My elder has a firm control of board meetings.
- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree
 - E. Strongly disagree
20. My elder summarises discussions and recap discussions in a board meeting.
- A. Strongly agree
 - B. Disagree
 - C. Unknown
 - D. Agree

E. Strongly disagree

Additional comments

21. What I like best about my elder is:

.....
.....
.....
.....

22. If I were going to change anything about my elder it would be:

.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX G

THE MODEL INSTRUMENT

CHAIRPERSON /ELDER EVALUATION FORM

EAST ZIMBABWE CONFERENCE OF SDA CHURCH, MAFARA DISTRICT.

Surname

First Name

Position

District

Church name

Instructions

The aim of this process is to provide the leader notably the chairperson with effective ways of conducting board meetings. The evaluation of the elder promotes a professional way of conducting board meetings.

Confidentiality- All data collected will be treated as confidential and will be utilised for professional growth of the elders and other officers. It will not be shared with any person outside the district and conference administering the evaluation instrument.

NB- DO NOT write your name. Be as honest as you can.

Scale Employed

Ratings for questions allow for the following options 1- Never; 2-occasionally; 3-frequently and 4 always.

I begin board meetings at scheduled start time 1,2,3,4

The chairperson ensures that participants understand the minutes of the previous meeting. 1,2,3,4

I follow the approved agenda for each meeting. 1,2,3,4

I explain the purpose of each meeting clearly to all participants. 1,2,3,4

I allow points of view to have a fair hearing. 1,2,3,4,

I ensure that all participants are fully involved in the meeting. 1,2,3,4

I make sure I thoroughly prepare for each meeting. 1,2,3,4

I refer to a meeting procedures guide before each board meeting. 1,2,3,4

I am aware of each participant's motives and hidden agendas. 1,2,3,4

I make sure that accurate minutes of each meeting are taken. 1,2,3,4

I ensure participants know what action to take before the next meeting. 1,2,3,4

I ensure the participant know the date and venue of the next meeting 1,2,3,4

Analysis

The scores are added and the corresponding evaluation is used to improve on chairing of board meetings.

12-24 your skills as a chairperson needs considerable improvements rethink your approach to the role and take action.

25-36 you have definite strengths but must concentrate on improving weak points

37-48 the meetings you chair should run smoothly but each meeting is different, so continue to prepare well.

Supervisor.....

Title.....

Date.....

Signature.....

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School Teacher, Ministry of Education.....1991-1999

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