

## A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT: YOUR TITHE DOLLARS AT WORK

**W**hen solidifying our church structure, Ellen White upheld the primary purpose of tithe funds to “be brought into His treasury ... to sustain gospel laborers in their work,” (CS 93.2) ... “The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women” (MS 149, 1899). We still model this today, as the largest allocation of tithe employs and equips our pastors, enabling them to directly empower us as disciples.

Our pastors are to be servant leaders and a direct link between us and the “storehouse,” or the governing body that manages our resources—whether human, information, or monetary.

### As tithe-paying members, then, what can we expect from our pastors?

Raewyn Orlich, senior pastor of the Victorville church, sees the pastoral role as a 4-fold ministry:

- **Administration:** Pastors are trained to care for practical needs of a church—communication and coordination with staff, members, meetings, major projects, and crucial decisions.
- **Preaching and Teaching:** We see our pastors up front on Sabbath, but we rarely see the preparation during the week—hours of study, planning, and prayer about how each biblical principle applies to our lives.

There are also baptismal studies,

Bible studies, and involvement with an area’s church school.

- **Pastoral Care:** When a church member struggles with illness or difficult life transitions, pastors are available for counsel and support. Pastors also equip their elders to respond in this manner.

- **Coaching:** Pastors are essentially coaches for their associates, elders, ministry leaders, and church members. Since it’s a pastor’s job to empower members for individual ministry, this mentorship role is crucial.

Additionally, Kelby McCottry, senior pastor of Valley Fellowship church in Rialto, likens the pastoral role to “jumper cables.”

“Pastors are a connector to the Ultimate Power Source when someone needs a jump. Through prayer, study, and personable outreach, we use our resources to provide that spark.”

To consistently provide this type of leadership, pastors participate in tithe-funded continuing education, workers’ meetings, counseling, and various training and support programs.

### Bearing One Another’s Burdens

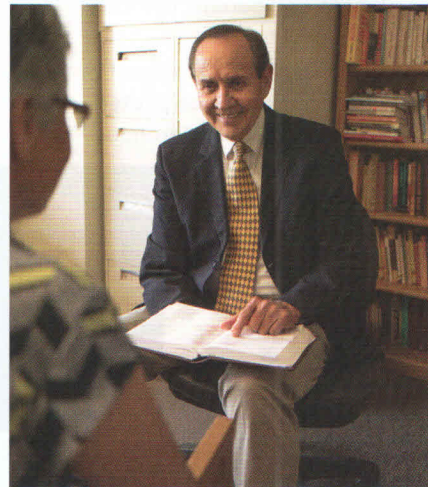
To strengthen all congregations in SECC this system of support extends even further, ensuring the same benefits of leadership are available to all.

“SECC has every type of Adventist church you can think of,” shares Ernest Furness, ministerial director. “Affluent to low-income, big to small, rural to urban, liberal to conservative, young to old—all working together for

the betterment of His kingdom. So we support one another through a shared fund, distributed evenly to pastors so they can serve in a variety of ways to directly meet the needs of their particular congregation.”

A pastor’s compensation is not figured by amount of tithe returned by the congregation. Pastors are paid based on experience and cost of living as part of a mutually supportive system, allowing churches with lower income or membership to receive the same caliber of pastoral leadership. Therefore a portion of tithe from higher-income churches helps provide for congregations unable to yield such numbers. Our individual returning of tithe helps all our churches shoulder the collective load of complete ministry.

By Amy Prindle



One of the pastor’s roles in the church includes helping a church member when they are going through a difficult situation in their life. If there is something you need advice about, you can talk to a pastor for counsel and support.

## SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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