

Brother (PC Conference Official),

We want you to know that we appreciate the work of the Potomac conference. The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a global movement. As such, we sincerely want to work together with the Potomac Conference, Columbia Union, North American Division and the General Conference. Division is not healthy for the church. We are saddened by the seeming misunderstanding of our reasons for desiring to have Pastor Bohr with us.

For the past 7 years, the Roanoke SDA church has seen value in offering an informal discussion 1-2 times a month about "end time events" for Sabbath vespers. We believe we are living in perilous end times, seeing prophecies being fulfilled almost daily, but yet encouraging times as well. We have appreciated the cooperation and in fact encouragement from our pastors during this time.

Some speakers are in great demand and difficult to book. Stephen Bohr is one of those. He has been on the schedule for about a year now and many in our church and sister churches are looking forward to him being here with us. Given Pastor Bohr's credentials and good standing within the Seventh-day Adventist church we have been surprised with the Potomac Conference's desire to silence him.

You asked with your last email why is it "imperative" he speak in Roanoke and how has this one man become so "myopic" for Roanoke?

The board of elders do not believe it is imperative that any one individual speak at the Roanoke SDA church. We do believe it is imperative that we do what is right, good, and true. This process has been uncomfortable and challenging. Again, we desire to work hand in hand with the conference. However, our greatest desire is to do God's will. Our desire is to go and make disciples. We are deeply seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we may hear His voice saying "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Is 30:21)

The second part of your question was how this one man has become so "myopic" for Roanoke. This clearly states that the Roanoke SDA church is too nearsighted to understand what is going on and what is "the way". It suggests that we are lacking in intellectual insight. It accuses the church board and board of elders of being unable to realize that our actions might have negative consequences. We find this accusation to be not only baseless, but condescending. It saddens us greatly to realize how the Potomac Conference views its churches (at least the Roanoke SDA church).

Throughout this process we have been accused of being myopic, of not being able to discern spiritual matters in regards to women's ordination and last generation theology, of being unethical, and of doing this in retribution. We've been threatened with censor and even with ending in some way our current relationship with the Potomac conference. We refer you to your last email stating: "Each side agrees to abide by certain rules and policies in order to make the relationship work. If one side or the other no longer wishes to abide by the rules that make the relationship work it can make for a very sad ending." With those kinds of statements against us we most certainly are not interested in being myopic or taking this situation lightly.

We would instead reverse the question and present it to you. Why is it "imperative" that he NOT speak in Roanoke and how has this one man become such a focus of the Potomac Conference?

We have encouraged conference leadership to act in the way of Matthew 18 and resolve this conflict with Stephen Bohr. However, this was not the direction the Potomac Conference wanted to manage this. Instead, the conference sent him a letter banning him from speaking at our church in Roanoke or any church in the Potomac Conference (this also without our consent). Now it feels as though our church is placed in the middle of a battle that is not ours. The accusations against Pastor Bohr and his ministry have been that he is divisive, has set dates for the second coming, is in

agreement with the General Conference in regards to women's ordination, is supportive of the belief that women should be oppressed/abused, and that he believes in last generation theology. You have encouraged us to look at the "fruits of his ministry." So we have done just that.

His ministry with Secrets Unsealed has been very supportive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He has spoken worldwide and through his ministry many have turned their lives over to Jesus and became baptized into the SDA church. Part of their mission states: "...Ever conscious of the sacredness of God's holy truth, We hold high and without apology or compromise all of the fundamental teachings of the Bible as well as the distinctive beliefs of our beloved Seventh-day Adventist Church." This does not strike this board of elders as someone interested in being divisive or leading people away from the SDA church. Sadly, it has appeared that the conference response is what has been divisive.

The accusations of Pastor Bohr setting dates and supporting a belief that ultimately results in women being oppressed/abused both appear to be without any backing. Once again, please provide us with your reasons for believing this about him. These are very serious allegations that certainly would affect our decision on him speaking from our pulpit. At this point, we see no evidence to support these claims. We also, in love, urge caution in making these types of statements against anybody (particularly leaders within the church) without having substantial evidence. If you do, none has been provided to us.

Another point of contention has been women's ordination. Frankly, this seems to be the primary driver for this conflict, but only the conference truly knows for sure. We are not interested in taking a stand for or against women's ordination. This has been a distraction for the church globally for some time now and continues to be a distraction in this current situation we find ourselves in. Pastor Bohr's position on women's ordination is in alignment with that of the vote of the world church and the general

conference. He has not spoken on this issue for years and has no plans to speak on this topic during his time at the Roanoke SDA Church.

Finally, the last concern given us has been that of last generation theology.

You stated that LGT has been a “scourge” in our church for many years. As with women’s ordination, it is not our intention to debate the pro’s and con’s of LGT. This seems to be a distraction from the greater issue. However, there are many solid Adventists who have written much in support of LGT. It is our understanding that the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) acknowledges there are 2 different (but accepted) views on this issue and Pastor Bohr’s view is one of them.

even amongst us here in Roanoke, we may differ on our views about women’s ordination or LGT but that’s not the point. Neither view should be “cancelled”. We need to respect each other’s view or opinion as long as it is not heresy or goes against our fundamental beliefs. As best we can tell, Pastor Bohr’s ministry is supportive of the mission of the Roanoke SDA Church and the greater mission of the global SDA movement. Stephen Bohr is but one man. The board of elders doesn’t have any allegiance to him or any other individual. The path of least resistance would be for us to simply do as the Potomac conference is demanding and move on. But once again, we are seeking the way, and to “walk ye in it.”

We are not reformers. We do not hold master degrees in religion. We are a group of individuals sincerely seeking to put Christ first and to move forward with sharing the gospel and the 3 angels message. Approximately 500 years ago church leadership told it’s subjects that they were unable to understand the matters of scripture. They were told that they were incapable of comprehending it’s words and message. They were told to leave it to the leaders of the church to teach them what is right and what is wrong. Fortunately, we had people like Luther, Zwingli, Huss, Jerome, and the like that took a stand for what is right rather than going the path of least resistance. You sent in

your last e-mail to us that "...unless there are informed and studied individuals on the matters of headship theology and last generation theology how will you be able to judge in these matters?"

This is why the matter of Stephen Bohr is of great concern to us. Not because of our allegiance to him. Not because of his stance on women's ordination. Not because of his stance on last generation theology. This matters, because the Potomac conference is telling us that there is only one way to view scripture within the Adventist church. The conference is looking to silence and cancel anybody that doesn't join them in their divisiveness. The conference is telling its members to trust them and not look to their own studies in scripture.

The Roanoke SDA Church is a part of this conference, union, division, and general conference. We will continue to be cautious in who speaks from our pulpit. It is our desire to remain in line with the 28 fundamental beliefs and the broader beliefs of the global SDA church. From all available evidence, Pastor Bohr is in line with this.

Having said all this, we can all make mistakes. We have all said things we shouldn't have said. We are human. We would like to put these misunderstandings behind us and move on. But we again ask you to prayerfully reconsider and partner with us. We honestly believe we can all receive a blessing.

Your brothers in Christ,
Roanoke SDA Elders

“The greatest want of the world is the want of men – men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”

- Education pg 57