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<b>Principal Contributor</b> . . . . .	Denis Fortin
<b>Editor</b> . . . . .	Soraya Homayouni
<b>Contributing Editor</b> . . . . .	Margie English
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<b>Pacific Press® Coordinator</b> . . . . .	Tricia Wegh
<b>E. G. White Estate Consultant</b> . . . . .	Dwain Esmond

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## Introduction



## Jesus Joins His People in One Heart and Mind

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**T**he church is God's family on earth. The members of God's church serve Him together. God's church studies and worships together too. The church looks to Jesus. He is its leader and Savior. God chose the church to take the Good News about Jesus to everyone on earth.

Let us look at Basic Belief Number 12 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: "The church is a community of believers. These believers accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Just as God chose Israel to be His people in Old Testament times, God also chose His church to be His special people in New Testament times. He separated His church from all other people groups on this earth. That is the reason why we join with each other in worship and in friendship. Because God chose us, we join with each other to study the Bible and to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Because we are God's church, we join with each other to serve the people on this earth and to share the Good News about Jesus worldwide."—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 2005), page 163, adapted.

But what does "church" mean to us as Seventh-day Adventists? Who belongs to the church? The answers to these questions depend on our meaning of the word "church."

Yes, a church is a local community of believers. They believe in Jesus. They obey His law. They worship and serve God together. A church can meet in people's homes or in larger meeting places (Romans 16:10, 11). By church, we also mean the building where Christians meet for worship. But there is much more to the meaning of the word "church." The church is about people, not just buildings.

In the New Testament, the church sometimes can be a group of believers who live in a certain area or part of a country. So, when Paul talks about the church in Galatia, he is really talking about many local church groups in towns and villages in that area (Galatians 1:2; read also 1 Peter 1:1). A church also can be the name we use for different Christian churches. The Lutheran Church is one example.

The church also is God's people from all over the earth. Jesus has loyal followers in different Christian churches. Many of these people will join with God's end-time people

(Revelation 18:1–4). This quarter we are going to study about our church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are going to study about our church and unity. Unity is our agreement in mind, spirit, and the truth. Jesus joins us in agreement with other believers. He helps our hearts and minds to become one. He joins us as one in the truth. We are going to look at what agreement in Jesus means to us as Seventh-day Adventists. Our church teachings are very important for our unity.

Basic Belief 14 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is named “Unity in the ‘Body [church]’ of Jesus.” Basic Belief 14 says: “The church is one body with many members. God chooses the members of His church from every country, language, and people. In Jesus we are made new. The things that separated us in the past must no longer separate us. Separations can happen between people who belong to different race groups and follow different ways of life. Separations also can happen between people because they have different educations or come from different countries. We must no longer be separate because some of us are male and some of us are female. Or because some of us are rich and some of us are poor. We are all one because of Jesus. With the Holy Spirit’s help, Jesus joins us in friendship with Himself and each other. So, we must serve other people, and other people must serve us too. We must not show favor to one person or group of people over another person or group. We share the same faith and hope. We learn about our faith from the Bible. Our faith teaches us that church members must join as one with each other and witness to everyone on earth. Our unity starts with God, who is Three Persons in One. He has adopted us as His children.”—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, page 201, adapted.

***The church is  
God’s family  
on earth.***

This quarter we will study what unity in the church means for us as Seventh-day Adventists. There will always be disagreements in the church about unity until the end of time. But the Bible shows us many truths about how we must live in agreement and peace with each other. This agreement is God’s gift to the church. This quarter, we will look at the Bible truths about this gift of unity.

*Denis Fortin is a Bible professor at Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA. Professor Fortin joined the Seminary as a teacher in 1994. He also was in charge of the Master of Divinity program from 1999–2001. He served as the associate dean from 2000–2004. In 2006, he was the Head of the Department of Theology and Christian Philosophy. He also was the dean of that department from 2006–2013.*