

Comparison

Adventist Conference and Mission Catalyst

	Adventist Conference	Mission Catalyst
Tithe	The local church is required to send 100% of tithe to the conference, who decides how it will be used. The conference uses tithe for every purpose (e.g., buildings, equipment, secretaries), but won't allow the local church to do the same.	The local church retains 90% of tithe and sends 10% to the MC support office for church planting (if funded by MC) or 5% (if self-funded).
Offering	The local church retains some offerings for building maintenance, outreach, church school, etc. Two offerings per month go to the conference for education, youth camp, etc.	The local church retains 90% of offerings and sends 10% to the MC support office for church planting (if funded by MC) or 5% (if self-funded) Note: The local church retains 100% of offerings designated for a building project.
Pastor's Employment	The local church pastor is an employee of the conference.	The local church employs its own pastoral staff. Mission Catalyst does not employ local church pastors.
Local Church Staffing	The local church sometimes has input in staffing decisions, but never has the final authority. Who the pastor is, how many are on staff, how long they stay, and when or if they are ordained are all conference decisions.	All staffing decisions are made at the local church. The local church also recognizes, approves, and implements the licensing and ordination of all pastoral staff.
Pastor's Schedule	The pastor's schedule is largely self determined, but is ultimately controlled by the conference. He is required to attend pastors' meetings, camp meeting, and takes vacation upon approval.	The pastor sets his own schedule within the parameters of local accountability.

Property	The local church pays the majority of the costs to obtain property and a building, yet they don't own the property. The conference retains the deed and ultimately controls the use and sale of the property.	The local church retains the title and control of all property under its own non-profit corporation. Mission Catalyst does not own or control local church property.
Governance and Ministry Structure	The local church governance and ministry structure are dictated by the conference, and must be in compliance with the <i>Church Manual</i> . Any exceptions must be approved by the conference which has the final authority.	Governance and ministry structure are determined by the local church. Mission Catalyst provides suggested bylaws and ministry structures which the local church is free to adopt, adapt, or ignore.
Change	A local church that wants to make substantive policy change must seek approval from the conference. However, the conference itself is not allowed to grant the approval. (For example, the local church cannot temporarily retain a portion of its tithe to fund some other cause.) Because of how the denomination is structured, substantive policy change is impossible.	Local churches are free to make changes in any area as needed in order to be more effective.
Training	Training by the conference for the local church varies widely from one conference to the next. All conferences hold pastors' meetings which all pastors are expected to attend. These meetings serve various purposes, one of which is training. Some conferences provide an education stipend for out-of-conference events.	Mission Catalyst offers a comprehensive coaching system (module material, coaching, and workshops) that takes a church planter from self-discovery through the first year of his church. MC offers regional training events throughout the year, maintains a substantial resource library, and offers on-demand, customized training.
Doctrinal Accountability	Conference leaders assume that their pastors believe and teach Adventist doctrines. Most of the time, pastors do. But when a pastor holds doctrinally inconsistent views, it almost always goes unnoticed and unchecked.	Mission Catalyst requires annual affirmation of its doctrinal summary.
Launch Funds	In some cases, a pastor is allowed to start a church, in which case his salary is covered, but that pastor is assigned to at least one other church.	Mission Catalyst provides launch funds to pastoral teams who are recommended by the planting team assessment process.

Missional Accountability	Conference pastors are encouraged to grow their churches, but that encouragement is generally verbal and vague. Participation in overseas missions is voluntary. Some local churches adopt a mission project, but growth in other countries is generally regarded as the domain of the denomination at large.	One of Mission Catalyst's measures for success is that each of its churches continually grows. This undergirds and permeates everything MC does. Also, each network church agrees to adopt and support a mission project at least 100 miles from its own community. This keeps the church from becoming inward-focused and aids in the spreading of the gospel all over the world.
Institutions	The Adventist denomination operates a number of excellent institutions, such as schools, hospitals, media, ministries, and youth camps.	In order to prioritize the evangelistic effectiveness of the local church, Mission Catalyst itself does not operate institutions. Network churches are free to operate schools, youth camps, or any other ministry that they decide will supplement their mission.
Hierarchy	The Adventist denomination is structured in five levels: general conference, divisions, unions, conferences, and local churches, with each entity accountable to the one above.	Mission Catalyst consists of local churches supported by the network office.
Ethnically Separated Structures	In many parts of the United States, conferences are aligned according to ethnicity, often resulting in the perception of non-equality.	Mission Catalyst has a single, unified structure.

The differences listed above are primarily structural and philosophical in nature. However, both organizations share the essence, or core, of Adventism:

1. Both the Adventist denomination and Mission Catalyst are part of the Advent movement, which began in the mid-1800s. We share the same doctrines. (Mission Catalyst has summarized the longer list into 11 points.) We are both worldwide organizations with a mission of preparing people for the second coming of Jesus.
2. Both organizations provide the benefits that come with belonging to a sisterhood of churches.