

1 **UNION OF CHURCHES**
2 **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRIES, SERVICES**
3 **AND STRUCTURES**

4 **Submitted by the Union of Churches sub-committee:**

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8

9 **INTRODUCTION**

10
11 The Commission has recommended a range of flexibility in denominational structure.
12 Several of the models described in the range can be implemented without additional
13 changes to policy. The Commission recognized that one of the models, the three
14 constituency based model, would require adjustments to present Working Policy.
15

16 Current General Conference Working Policy states that, “The Church does not encourage
17 the organizational arrangement termed union of churches; however, in special
18 circumstances seen as such by the divisions concerned and the General Conference, it
19 may seem to be desirable.” The sub-committee was assigned the responsibility of
20 studying this policy to position the union of churches structure as an acceptable model for
21 addressing issues of mission advance and effective use of resources.
22

23 **DEFINITION**

24
25 It is proposed that a union of churches be defined as a constituency-based organization
26 consisting of local churches, within a defined geographical area, that has been granted, by
27 a General Conference Session, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist union of
28 churches. It will inherit the combined functions of a local field and union. A union of
29 churches shall not have any subsidiary units that fulfill local conference administrative
30 functions.
31

32 A union of churches will therefore be the middle organization of a three tiered
33 constituency model- (1) local church, (2) union of churches and (3) General Conference
34 and its divisions.
35

36 A union of churches is not considered a component of the current four tiered constituency
37 model- (1) local church, (2) local conference/mission, (3) union conference/mission, (4)
38 General Conference and its divisions.
39

40 **PHILOSOPY**

41
42 There is little argument that we live in an ever changing and diverse world which
43 includes differing religious environments; faster and more effective means of
44 communication; an ability to provide centralized financial management to large
45 geographical areas; tighter immigration laws; multiple currencies and increasing

1 restriction on the international transfer of funds; an expansion of education in many
2 neglected countries; rapid church growth in some countries and limited growth in others;
3 conflicts within and between nations; and the ability to travel long distances quickly and
4 cheaply. Some of these factors prove to be a blessing to the church while others present
5 us with complex challenges.

6
7 In this setting the committee was asked to study the advantages and disadvantages of a
8 union of churches model as an alternative structural arrangement for the Seventh-day
9 Adventist Church. In order for a “union of churches” to be an acceptable model it must
10 respond to the realities of the world we live in and the needs of a church that is placed in
11 the twenty-first century.

12
13 There seems to be confusion in some areas of the world over the issue of church authority
14 and one of the most consistent perceptions expressed by church members is the statement
15 that the church is over governed. It needs to be determined first of all whether this
16 perception is valid, even if in some areas only, and if it is, it needs to find alternative
17 structural options for those areas. If it is true only in some areas it needs to decide
18 whether different structural forms will suit those areas. It needs to be asked whether
19 these new structures will threaten the unity of the church or whether they will enhance it.
20 It must also be determined how the constituency might be fairly represented in the
21 decision making process of the Church.

22
23 Local churches, conferences and missions sometimes complain that too much money is
24 being passed on to other administrative levels, so much so, that they are finding it
25 increasingly difficult to fund their own operations and assist their institutions. Most of
26 their funds are used for maintaining the program, leaving very little in the budget for
27 evangelism and mission. However, if the only reason for altering the structure of the
28 church is for the purpose of saving money it may not be reason enough.

29
30 Alternative models for structure must foster unity. We cannot afford to isolate any
31 segment of the church community. Improved communication, additional financial
32 resources and fairer representation are just some of the cures for isolation.

33
34 More and more churches are faced with the reality of functioning without a pastor or they
35 may have to share their pastor with numerous other churches. Many believe that this is
36 due to the fact that so many of the pastors are caught up in administration. A new
37 structure that releases personnel resources into the field will help to meet the needs of the
38 churches but more importantly ensure a greater focus on mission. On the other hand,
39 while there is a perceived need for more pastors on the frontline, this must be kept in
40 balance with the need for laity to be actively involved in the mission and management of
41 the Church. It is perceived by some that in specific areas of the world the Church
42 continues to grow at a more rapid rate where the lay people are responsible for mission
43 and church pastors are limited in number.

44
45 The church of the future, because of emerging laws and regulations, needs to be able to
46 respond more readily to new restrictions. If the church is structured parallel with

1 government boundaries it will be much easier to establish rapport with government
2 bodies. (In cases where there is more than one administrative unit of the church within a
3 particular government boundary it should be determined how the church will best be
4 represented to the government body within that territory.) Whether we like it or not the
5 church must work closely with legal entities to protect our members' liberties as well as
6 our property and our rights to share the gospel.

7
8 Some areas of the world may benefit from a structure that is flatter than at present, with
9 less administrative units and/or less levels. An organization is needed that will be
10 responsive to mission and unity while avoiding unnecessary organizational proliferation
11 of administrative structure.

12
13 The selection of any model needs to be based on how it facilitates mission effectively and
14 efficiently. In selected situations the union of churches model may serve to reduce the
15 number of administrative units and facilitate a more effective distribution of financial
16 resources.

17
18 The following proposals revise the role and relationships of a union of churches in
19 denominational life and structure. The proposals include;

- 20
21
- 22 1. Amendments to General Conference Constitution and Bylaws.
 - 23 2. Amendments to General Conference Working Policies in respect to
24 representation, finance, resource sharing, criteria and procedures for
25 establishing or discontinuing unions of churches.
 - 26 3. A model constitution for a constituency-based organization.
 - 27 4. A provision for unions of churches to have either mission or conference status.
- 28

1 **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

2
3 **Introduction: The following amendments to General Conference Constitution and**
4 **Bylaws serve to recognize the place and representation of unions of churches in**
5 **the world organization of the Church.**
6

7 **ARTICLE IV—MEMBERSHIP**

8 **Sec. 1.** The membership of the General Conference shall consist of:

9 a. All ~~union conferences and union missions~~ unions and unions of churches, that have
10 been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in
11 session.

12 b. All of the following entities that are directly attached to the General Conference or a
13 division:

14 1) ~~Union of churches~~ Unions and unions of churches.

15 2) Local Conferences

16 3) Local mission and functional equivalents thereof provided they have two or more
17 officers and an executive committee, observe a schedule of regular constituency meetings
18 and have been properly organized.

19
20 **ARTICLE V—General Conference SESSIONS**

21 **Sec. 5.** The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be
22 designated as follows:

23 a. Regular delegates.

24 b. Delegates at large.

25 c. In case of financial exigency or other major crisis within the Church or in the
26 international arena, the Executive Committee may take an action to reduce the maximum
27 number of delegates to a particular General Conference Session. Such reduction shall then
28 be applied to both regular delegates and delegates at large.

29 **Sec. 6.** Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's member union
30 conferences, union missions, unions of churches, member conferences, ~~and~~ missions, ~~and~~
31 ~~unions of churches~~ as defined in Article IV, as follows:

32 a. Delegates representing union conferences and unions of churches with conference status
33 having division affiliation shall be appointed by the respective ~~union conference~~ executive
34 committee.

35 b. Delegates representing union missions and unions of churches with mission status
36 having division affiliation shall be appointed by the respective division executive
37 committees in consultation with the organizations concerned.

38 c. Delegates representing conferences and missions having union conference affiliation
39 shall be appointed by the respective union conference executive committees in
40 consultation with the organizations concerned.

41 d. Delegates representing conferences and missions having union mission affiliation shall
42 be appointed by the respective division executive committees in consultation with the
43 organizations concerned.

- 1 e. Delegates representing conferences and missions directly attached to divisions, shall be
2 appointed by the respective division executive committees in consultation with the
3 organizations concerned.
- 4 f. Delegates representing division institutions, the number of whom shall correspond to
5 the number of division institutions within each division, shall be appointed by the
6 respective division executive committees in consultation with the organizations
7 concerned.
- 8 g. Delegates representing union conferences and unions of churches with conference status
9 directly attached to the General Conference shall be appointed by the executive
10 committees of the respective attached ~~union-conferences~~ entity.
- 11 h. Delegates representing union missions, conferences, and missions, and unions of
12 churches with mission status directly attached to the General Conference shall be
13 appointed by the General Conference Executive Committee in consultation with the
14 organizations concerned.
- 15 **Sec. 7.** Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following basis:
- 16 a. Each union conference shall be entitled to two delegates other than its president (who is
17 a delegate at large) without regard to membership size.
- 18 b. Each union mission shall be entitled to one delegate other than its president (who is a
19 delegate at large) without regard to membership size.
- 20 c. Each union of churches with conference status shall be entitled to one delegate other
21 than its president (who is a delegate at large) without regard to membership size.
- 22 d. Each union of churches with mission status is represented by its president who is a
23 delegate at large.
- 24 ~~e. e.~~ Each local conference shall be entitled to two delegates without regard to membership
25 size.
- 26 ~~f. f.~~ Each local mission* shall be entitled to one delegate without regard to membership
27 size.
- 28 ~~e. Each union of churches shall be entitled to two delegates without regard to membership~~
29 ~~size.~~
- 30 f. g. Each division shall be entitled to additional delegates based upon its membership as a
31 proportion of the world Church membership. The total number of delegates from all
32 divisions under this provision shall not exceed 400.
- 33 ~~g. h.~~ Delegates from each division, provided for under Sec. 7. f., shall be allotted to the
34 ~~union-conferences and union-missions~~ unions and unions of churches that are affiliated
35 with that division, based on each union's proportion of the division membership. Any
36 unallocated delegate entitlements under this process shall be allocated at the discretion of
37 the division executive committee.
- 38 ~~h. i.~~ Unused quotas of regular delegates allocated to unions and unions of churches may be
39 reallocated by the divisions.
- 40
- 41

1 **ARTICLE VIII—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

2 **Sec. 1.** The Executive Committee of the General Conference shall
3 consist of:

- 4 a. *Ex officio members*—1) Those elected as provided for in Article VI, Sec. 1. except the
5 director and associate directors of the General Conference Auditing Service and the
6 associate directors/secretaries of General Conference departments and associations.
7 2) Presidents of union conferences, presidents of union missions, presidents of unions of
8 churches, presidents of attached unions,

9
10 **ARTICLE VIII—AUDITING SERVICE AND AUDITS**

11 **Sec. 3.** The General Conference Auditing Service, ever sensitive to the country-specific
12 regulations governing the audits of denominational entities in a particular country, serves
13 as the denomination’s preferred provider of auditing services for world divisions; ~~union~~
14 ~~conferences; union missions~~ unions and unions of churches; conferences; missions; ~~unions~~
15 ~~of churches~~; affiliated services, organizations, and institutions of the General Conference
16 and every other administrative level; Adventist Development and Relief Agency country
17 and regional administrations and projects (not audited by external auditors); and special
18 funds. Exceptions to the above requirements shall be by specific action of the Executive
19 Committee.

20
21 **ARTICLE XVII—FUNDS**

22 **Sec. 1.** The funds of the General Conference shall be as follows:

- 23 a. A percentage of the tithe receipts of the local conference/mission/field shall be
24 forwarded through the union and division in accordance with the General Conference
25 *Working Policy*..
26 b. A percentage, of the tithe receipts of the union of churches shall be forwarded to
27 through the division in accordance with the General Conference *Working Policy*.
28 c. Regular mission offerings.
29 d. Special gifts. Proceeds from the maturities of planned giving designated for the General
30 Conference.

1 **POLICY AMENDMENTS**

2
3 **B ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION***

4 **B 05 Organizational and Operational Principles of Seventh-day Adventist**

5 **Church Structure**

6 Organizational life and procedures in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are based upon
7 the following principles:

8 1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a worldwide community of believers who
9 confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and who are united in mission, purpose, and
10 belief. The Church defines its internal governance as representative in form with
11 executive responsibility and authority assigned to a variety of entities and institutions and
12 their respective constituencies, boards, and officers through constitutions or articles of
13 incorporation, bylaws, and operating policies and guidelines.

14 2. Each level of denominational organization has a defined membership, also known as a
15 constituency. ~~These constituency-based levels are~~ The constituency based units are: local
16 church, local conference, union of churches with conference status, union conference and
17 General Conference. (Local missions, union of churches with mission status, and union
18 missions have several similarities to local and union conferences, however their operations
19 are defined by General Conference and division policies rather than by a constitution and
20 bylaws. Divisions are established as regional offices of the General Conference and are not
21 considered as constituency-based organizations. ~~Unions of churches, (see B-85) have been~~
22 ~~established in exceptional circumstances. However, this is not the standard pattern for~~
23 ~~denominational organization.~~ Institutions may also be described as constituency-based
24 but are not considered as a separate level of denominational organization.) Membership,
25 held in only one constituency at a time, carries the privilege of participation in the
26 deliberations and
27 decision-making of that particular constituency.

28
29 **B 10 Outline of Denominational Organization**

30 **B 10 05 Local Church**—A ~~specific~~ group of Seventh-day Adventist members in a
31 defined location that has been granted, by the constituency of a local conference/mission,
32 in session, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist church.

33 **B 10 10 Local Conference/Mission/Field**—A ~~specific~~ group of local churches, within a
34 defined geographic area, that has been granted, by the constituency of a union
35 conference/mission, in session, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist local
36 conference/mission/field.

37 **B 10 15 Union Conference/Mission**—A ~~specific~~ group of local
38 conferences/missions/fields, within a defined geographic area, that has been granted, by a
39 General Conference Session, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist union
40 conference/mission.

41 **B 10 20 Union of churches--A group of local churches, within a defined geographical**
42 **area, that has been granted, by a General Conference Session, official status as a Seventh-**
43 **day Adventist union of churches.**

1 **B 10 202 General Conference and Its Divisions**—1. *Divisions*—To facilitate its
2 worldwide activity, the General Conference has established regional offices,

3
4 **B 10 30 Variations in Administrative Relationships**— 1. For the purpose of fulfilling
5 the mission of the Church, division administrations are authorized to recommend
6 modified organizational structures and/or administrative relationships in situations which
7 do not involve the resizing of unions, as outlined below in paragraphs a. through c., or to
8 experiment with further modifications in territories where unusual economic, political,
9 geographic, religious, or demographic circumstances, or strategic purposes make normal
10 church organizational and administrative structures impractical or inefficient. In all cases
11 where alternative arrangements are implemented, the ~~four~~ interrelated constituent levels
12 of Church ~~organization~~ organization, as more fully described in this *Working Policy*, shall
13 be maintained, and the following fundamental principles for Seventh-day Adventist
14 organizational structure and relationships shall be preserved:.....

15
16 **B 40 20 Unions United in General Conference**—As the churches unite in the local,
17 mission, conference or union of churches (~~or mission/field~~) for mutual help and
18 cooperation in service, so the conferences/missions/fields grouped together unite in the
19 union conference or union mission. In like manner the unions, unions of churches and
20 entities directly attached to the General Conference ~~and attached fields (including unions~~
21 ~~of churches)~~ in all the world are united in the General Conference organization. For the
22 more efficient administration of the worldwide work, the organized unions, unions of
23 churches and any mission fields not included in the unions in great continental or
24 geographical sections are set apart by constitutional provision as divisions of the General
25 Conference.

26
27 **B 40 65 Attached Local Fields--**

28 ~~3. *Special Wage Scale Provision*—Because of the direct relationships between the~~
29 ~~division and attached local fields approved as unions of churches, and because the~~
30 ~~organizational responsibilities may be more involved than in a local~~
31 ~~conference/mission/field within a union, the percentage rates for officers and departmental~~
32 ~~directors of attached fields shall be approximately halfway between those of a local~~
33 ~~conference/mission/field and those of a union.~~

34
35 **B 60 05 Nomenclature and Status of Organizational Units**—.....

36
37 One of two classifications, mission status or conference status, may be granted to certain
38 levels of denominational organization. In denominational structure, the family of local
39 churches may be classified as a local mission, local conference or union of churches with
40 conference or mission status. In similar fashion, the family of local missions/conferences
41 may be classified as a union mission or a union conference. In some areas of the world,
42 terms such as “field” or “section” are used instead of the term “mission.” When such
43 terms are used, they refer to units having “mission” status.
44

1 **B 65 21 Organizing New Unions of churches**—1. If it is proposed to organize a new
2 union of churches, the proposal shall be considered by the respective division executive
3 committee at its midyear or yearend meeting, or at a division council. Proposals to
4 organize groups of churches or missions/conferences into new unions of churches, or to
5 reorganize a union mission or union conference into a union of churches, may be initiated
6 by a group of missions/conferences, a union conference or union mission, a division, or
7 by the General Conference.

8 2. When a group of conferences/missions initiates a proposal to organize a new union of
9 churches the officers of the division and union/s shall consult with the officers of the
10 organizations making the proposal.

11 3. When a union conference or union mission initiates a proposal to organize a new union
12 of churches the officers of the division and General Conference shall consult with the
13 officers making the proposal, including the officers of the conferences/missions.

14 4. If the division executive committee initiates and/or concurs with a proposal initiated
15 elsewhere, and the conferences/missions to be formed into a new union of churches are
16 part of an existing union conference, the division shall request the conferences involved
17 to convene constituency meetings to consider the proposal and if there is concurrence to
18 initiate appropriate dissolution procedures as per policy. In the event of a positive action
19 by the constituency, or where the organizations involved are a part of an existing union
20 mission, the division shall request the General Conference to appoint a survey team,
21 including General Conference and division representation, to consider the merits of the
22 proposal.

23 5. When the General Conference initiates a proposal to organize a new union of churches
24 it shall request the division to consider the matter and in the event of division
25 concurrence shall implement the processes outlined in 4. above.

26 6. Further consideration of a proposal to organize a union of churches will be discontinued
27 when the specific proposal is not approved by:

28 a. a constituency meeting action of any local or union conference involved in the
29 proposal;

30 b. an executive committee action of either the division concerned or of the
31 General Conference Executive Committee.

32 7. The survey team, after its investigation, shall report its findings to the General
33 Conference and division executive committees.

34 8. If, after considering the findings of the survey team, the division chooses to proceed
35 with organizing the new union of churches, it shall record an action to this effect at its
36 midyear, yearend meeting, division council or at a time when adequate representation is
37 available, and forward its recommendation to the General Conference Executive
38 Committee for consideration.

39 9. The General Conference Executive Committee shall consider the report of the survey
40 team and the recommendation of the division and shall take the appropriate action.

41 10. In any situation involving constituency meetings pertaining to the establishment of a
42 new union of churches the division shall oversee the process of constituency decisions,
43 dissolution of entities, reorganization, determination of organizational status, adoption of
44 constitution and bylaws/operating policies, clarification of operational obligations, and
45 the selection of leaders.

1 11. The new union of churches shall be presented at the next General Conference Session
2 for acceptance into the sisterhood of member units.

3
4 **B 65 25 Organizing New Union Conferences (See B 75 20)**—1. If it is proposed to
5 organize a new union conference from an existing union mission or from within the
6 territory of an existing union conference, or to organize a union of churches into a union
7 conference, the proposal shall be considered by the division executive committee at a
8 time when a full representation of the unions and institutions in the division is present.
9 Proposals to organize groups of conferences/missions into new union conferences may be
10 initiated by the union, by the executive committees or constituency sessions of a group of
11 conferences/missions, by the division, or by the General Conference.

12 2. If the division executive committee favors the proposal, it shall request the union
13 mission/conference/union of churches executive committee to consider the proposal if it
14 has not already done so. In the event of a positive action by the executive committee, the
15 division shall appoint a study committee (see B 65 05, paragraph 2. above) to assess the
16 readiness for conference status of organizations involved in the proposal.

17 3. The study committee, in addition to its assessment role, or a team appointed by the
18 division executive committee shall assist the administration of the
19 conferences/missions/unions of churches desiring to be part of the new union conference
20 in their program of moving toward union conference status. In areas where it is
21 considered helpful, a union conference status candidacy period may be required.

22 4. When the division is satisfied that the proposed organization is ready for union
23 conference status, the division executive committee shall call a constituency meeting of
24 the current union mission and/or union of churches to consider the report and
25 recommendations of the study committee. In the event of an action by the constituency in
26 favour of proceeding with the organization of a new union conference, the division shall
27 submit a request to the General Conference for an on-site evaluation of the proposed new
28 union conference.

29 5. A survey team appointed by the General Conference Executive Committee, comprised
30 of division and General Conference personnel, shall make an on-site evaluation. If the
31 survey team is satisfied that the request is appropriate, it shall recommend union
32 conference status for the new organization to the General Conference Executive
33 Committee. In the event the organization is not ready for union conference status at the
34 time of the General Conference's evaluation, recommendations will be made and, after
35 suitable passage of time, a further evaluation conducted.

36 6. Upon the recommendation of the survey team, the General Conference Executive
37 Committee at its annual meeting, or at a General Conference Session, shall determine
38 whether or not to grant union conference status.

39 7. Upon the approval of the General Conference Executive Committee, the division shall
40 call a constituency meeting of the new organization as soon as possible in order to
41 organize the union conference. At this meeting a union conference constitution and
42 bylaws, patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working
43 policies, shall be adopted. Officers, departmental directors/secretaries, and the members
44 of the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the newly adopted
45 constitution.

1 8. If organization of a new union conference is approved by the General Conference
2 Executive Committee, it shall be received into the sisterhood of unions at the next
3 General Conference Session.

4 9. If a new union conference is formed from a union of churches or entities that include a
5 union of churches, plans should include the establishment of local conferences/missions
6 in accordance with General Conference Working Policy. See B 65 10, "Organizing New
7 Local Missions," and B 65 15, "Organizing New Local Conferences."

8 **B 75 11 Criteria for Union of churches Status**

9 Careful study shall be given to the advisability and adoption of "union of churches" status
10 and the readiness of the respective administrative entity or entities which seek this status
11 or before organisations of groups are advised to move in this direction.

12 The following criteria must guide this evaluation:

13 1. Leaders, employees, and members of an organization(s) for which union of churches
14 status is contemplated shall give evidence of possessing a clear perception of the
15 denomination's primary objectives which are to supply the spiritual needs of the church
16 and obey the Lord's commission, "Go . . . and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15).

17 2. The membership, employees, and church leaders should give evidence that they
18 understand the worldwide character of the work and participate by assuming their share
19 of the financial responsibility.

20 3. The proposed union of churches must demonstrate that it is able to make budgetary
21 provision to adequately staff and care for the various lines of activity and, when
22 necessary, be ready to share its employees with other fields.

23 4. The union of churches shall demonstrate its ability to develop and administer a
24 balanced departmental and, where appropriate, a sound institutional program.

25 5. The union of churches shall demonstrate its ability to properly store the materials
26 specified in the records retention schedule as provided by the General Conference Office
27 of Archives and Statistics.

28 6. A spirit of unity shall prevail among the members, employees, and leaders of the field.
29 This unity shall be evident in the plans formulated and in the implementation of the same.
30 It shall be found between individual members and between the various organizations
31 within the proposed union of churches.

32 7. The membership, the ministry, and the leadership level shall give evidence of
33 understanding and accepting the established principles of denominational administration
34 and relationships between the various organizations. Leaders and committees shall
35 demonstrate a willingness to work in harmony with the working policies of the
36 denomination.

37 8. Confidence in, and loyalty to, the leadership of the denomination at all levels shall be
38 evident on the part of the membership. Employees and members shall respect the
39 decisions of responsible committees.

40 9. Administrative officers and committees shall demonstrate an ability to recognize
41 problems which affect the welfare of the work, and thus take steps which will resolve
42 these problems.

43 10. The major portion of the financial resources for the operating of organizations and
44 institutions shall be found within the territory of the proposed union of churches.

45 However, in locations where an institution and/or organization serves several unions of

1 churches, the major portion of the financial resources for operating the institution and/or
2 organization shall be provided within the territories of the entities served.

3 11. The proposed union of churches shall possess financial stability, having its operating
4 capital intact. It shall also have adequate resources to meet its financial obligations
5 promptly, including accounts payable to other denominational organizations.
6
7
8

9 **B 75 30 Process For Reviewing Status—.....**

10
11 2. When the entity under consideration is a union conference/mission or union of
12 churches the decision to adjust status shall be made, after appropriate consultation with
13 the entity concerned and the division executive committee, by the General Conference
14 Executive Committee at a Spring Meeting or Annual Council.....
15

16 **B 80 Adjustments in Territory Of Organizations**

17 B 80 05 Territorial Adjustments or Resizing of Territories—If it is proposed to make
18 territorial adjustments between local fields or between unions, or to resize the
19 territorial.....
20

21 3. If the territory of a conference, a union of churches with conference status, or union
22 conference is involved, the administration of the next higher organization shall use its
23 discretion to examine constitutions and legal requirements to determine whether a
24 constituency meeting should be called and, if so, at what point(s) in the procedure.
25
26

27 **B 85 Union of churches-Churches**

28 ~~**B 85 05 Application/Definition**—The Church does not encourage the organizational~~
29 ~~arrangement termed union of churches; however, in special circumstances seen as such~~
30 ~~by the divisions concerned and the General Conference, it may seem to be desirable. The~~
31 ~~designation, union of churches, may be applied in selected cases to describe a united~~
32 ~~organized body of local churches within a territory which would ordinarily be designated~~
33 ~~as an attached local conference/mission/field (see also B 40 70, paragraph 1.) but which~~
34 ~~operates under special conditions which are described in B 85 10, Criteria.~~

35 A union of churches is a constituency based organization consisting of a group of local
36 churches, within a defined geographical area, that has been granted, by the General
37 Conference, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist union of churches.

38 ~~**B 85 10 Criteria-Guidelines for establishing unions of churches**—1. If an~~
39 ~~organization, which would ordinarily be designated as a local conference/mission/field~~
40 ~~currently has union conference/mission status, the criteria for applying the designation,~~
41 ~~union of churches, and not continuing that of union conference/mission nor applying that~~
42 ~~of local conference/mission/field, or organizations wish to apply for the status of a union~~
43 ~~of churches A union of churches is the sole constituency-based administrative link~~
44 ~~between the local church and the General Conference/division. shall be the following:~~
45 ~~a. The organization has no subsidiary conference/mission/field organization.~~

1 ~~b. There is limited/no possibility that two or more viable subsidiary field organizations~~
2 ~~could be established within the organization's territory in the foreseeable future.~~
3 ~~e. There is no viable possibility of being incorporated into an existing or projected union~~
4 ~~organization in the foreseeable future.~~
5 2. ~~If an organization is currently a local conference/mission/field within a union, or if it is~~
6 ~~an attached local conference/mission/field, the criteria for being designated a union of~~
7 ~~churches shall include:~~
8 ~~a. All the points outlined in paragraph 1. above.~~
9 ~~b. Specific and demonstrable reasons for applying the~~
10 ~~designation, unions of churches, rather than continuing to be designated as~~
11 ~~a local conference/mission/field.~~
12 ~~e. Additional criteria as determined by the division and the~~
13 ~~General Conference.~~

14 Consideration regarding the establishment of unions of churches shall include the
15 following guidelines:

- 16
17 a. A clear demonstration that the new status will enhance the mission of the church in the
18 specific territory.
19 b. The establishment of a union of churches shall normally result in a reduction in the
20 number of organizational units, e.g. the combination of conferences/missions should
21 reduce the overall number of entities.
22 c. Its territory shall be made up of contiguous boundaries or be part of a single country.
23 d. The geographical boundaries shall not overlap another field or local
24 conference/mission or union conference, union of churches or union mission.
25 e. The population of the geographic area shall indicate a strong potential for growth of
26 membership together with an adequate number of churches to establish a new union of
27 churches.
28 f. While there should be a fair degree of flexibility in the way a union of churches is
29 organized there should be no sub-units with executive authority and/or treasury
30 accounting functions.
31 g. A union of churches may own and operate institutions.

32
33 **~~B 85 15 Authorization for Designation~~**—~~The designation, union of churches, shall be~~
34 ~~applied to an organization only by action of an Annual Council of the General~~
35 ~~Conference Executive Committee upon recommendation of the respective division~~
36 ~~committee. If organization of a new union of churches is approved by the General~~
37 ~~Conference Executive Committee, it shall be received into the sisterhood of member~~
38 ~~units at the next General Conference Session.~~

39 **~~B 85 20 Operating Provisions/Procedures Union of churches—Model Constitution~~**—
40 ~~An organization designated as a union of churches with conference status shall use the~~
41 ~~operating provisions/procedures applicable to attached local fields in the following areas:~~
42 ~~follow the union of churches model constitution contained in the General Conference~~
43 ~~Working Policy.~~

44 ~~1. Election of Officers~~—~~Officers and departmental directors of~~
45 ~~conferences/missions/fields attached directly to the division shall be elected in the same~~

1 way as for a local conference/mission/field, with the division organization taking the
2 place of the union organization in such elections.
3 ~~2. Representation on the Division Committee—The president of the attached~~
4 ~~conference/mission/field shall be a member of the Division Committee.~~
5 ~~3. Delegates to General Conference Sessions—Representation at General Conference~~
6 ~~Sessions for fields attached directly to the division shall be in harmony with the~~
7 ~~constitutional provision.~~
8 ~~4. Tithe Percentages—~~a. A local conference/mission/field passes on to the union
9 organization 10 percent of its tithe receipts, required tithe percentages/sharing, all
10 mission offerings, and such other funds as may be called for by the policies of the union
11 and division organizations, in harmony with this provision.
12 b. Conferences/Missions/Fields attached directly to a division shall follow the same plan
13 by passing on to the division organization 10 percent of their tithe receipts, required tithe
14 percentages/sharing, all mission offerings, and such other funds as may be called for by
15 the policies of the division organization.
16 ~~5. Special Wage Scale Provision—~~Because of the direct relationships between attached
17 fields and the division, and because the organizational responsibilities may be more
18 involved than in a local conference/mission within a union, the following special wage
19 scale provisions shall apply:
20 a. The percentage rates for officers and departmental directors of attached fields shall be
21 approximately halfway between those of a local conference/mission/field and those of a
22 union.
23 b. No incumbent's salary shall be reduced, but no new increases shall be given to such
24 individual until his/her salary is in harmony with the new percentage rate for his/her
25 office.
26 c. The salaries of new officers and departmental directors shall be audited according to
27 the new percentage rates.

30 FINANCIAL POLICIES:

31
32 There are a number of financial policies that need to be addressed, at the conclusion of
33 the work being undertaken by the Tithe Commission, particularly as it relates to the
34 percentage of tithe that should be remitted from one organizational entity to another.

35
36 **Unions of churches shall remit tithe percentages and retirement fund contributions**
37 **as determined by the division. The union of churches retains the funds that would**
38 **normally remain with a local conference/mission plus those that would remain in the**
39 **union conference/mission except for any additional percentage determined by the**
40 **division.**

41
42
43
44 **It is proposed to add the following sentence into the middle of the paragraph above:**
45

1 **In setting its percentages, the division needs to make sure that the tithing percentages**
2 **to the General Conference (8% from NAD and 2% from other divisions) are**
3 **included.**
4

1 **MODEL UNION OF CHURCHES CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

2
3 **D 11 Model Union of churches Constitution and Bylaws**

4
5 **D 11 05 Union of churches Constitution and Bylaws**¹—This model constitution shall
6 be followed by all unions of churches. Those sections of the model bylaws that appear in
7 bold print are essential to the unity of the Church worldwide, and shall be included in the
8 bylaws as adopted by each union of churches. Other sections of the model bylaws may be
9 modified as set out in Bylaw Article XII, provided they continue to be in full harmony
10 with the provisions of this model. Amendments to the Model Union of churches
11 Constitution and Bylaws shall be made by action of the Executive Committee of the
12 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at any Annual Council of that Committee.

13
14 **CONSTITUTION OF THE _____ UNION OF CHURCHES OF SEVENTH-**
15 **DAY ADVENTISTS**

16
17 **Article I—Name**

18 **The name of this organization shall be known as the _____ Union of churches**
19 **of Seventh-day Adventists, hereinafter referred to as the union.**

20
21 **Article II—Purpose**

22 **The purpose of this union is to facilitate the proclamation of the everlasting gospel**
23 **in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 to all peoples**
24 **within its territory, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and to unite**
25 **with His Church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return.**

26
27 **Article III—Relationships**

28 **The _____ Union of Seventh-day Adventists is part of the _____ Division**
29 **of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, a world Church organization;**
30 **and all purposes, policies, and procedures of this union shall be in harmony with the**
31 **working policies and procedures of the _____ Division and the General**
32 **Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This union shall pursue the mission of the**
33 **Church in harmony with the doctrines, programs, and initiatives adopted and**
34 **approved by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in its quinquennial**
35 **sessions.**

36
37 **Article IV—Territory**

38 **The territory of this union shall consist of _____.**

39
40 **Article V—Membership**

41 **The membership of this union shall consist of such local churches as have been or**
42 **shall be organized in any part of the geographic territory under its jurisdiction and**

¹ *It should be noted in this chapter that other terminology is used in some geographical areas for organizational units such as fields, sections, regions, or delegations.

1 have been accepted into the sisterhood of churches during a session of the
2 constituency.

3
4 **Article VI—Bylaws**

5 The constituency session of this union may enact bylaws, and/or repeal them, and
6 such bylaws may embrace any provision not inconsistent with the constitution.

7
8 **Article VII—Dissolution and Disposition of Assets**

9 This union may be dissolved only by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates
10 present and voting at any constituency meeting.

11 In the event of the dissolution of this union, all assets remaining after all claims have
12 been satisfied shall be transferred to a legal entity authorized by the _____
13 Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

14
15 **Article VIII—Amendments**

16 This constitution shall not be amended except to conform to the model union
17 constitution when it is amended by action of the General Conference Executive
18 Committee at an Annual Council.

19 This union shall amend its constitution from time to time at regularly called
20 constituency meetings, any such changes to conform to the model union constitution.

21 The executive committee of the union may recommend to the General Conference
22 through the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day
23 Adventists, amendments to the model constitution.

24
25 **BYLAWS OF THE _____ UNION OF CHURCHES OF SEVENTH-DAY**
26 **ADVENTISTS**

27
28 **Article I—Principal Office**

29 The principal office for the transaction of the business of the _____ Union of
30 Churches is fixed and located at _____, _____, herein after referred to as the
31 union. The executive committee may in an emergency change the location of the
32 principal office on a temporary basis.

33
34 **Article II—Constituency Meetings**

35 **Sec. 1. Regular Meeting: This union shall hold a regular quinquennial constituency**
36 **meeting at such time and place as the executive committee of the union shall**
37 **designate.**

38 Notice of the time and place of the meeting of the delegates representing the members
39 shall be given by

40 a. A notice printed in the official publication of the union at least four weeks
41 before the date of the session, or

42 b. A method approved by the _____ Union of churches Executive
43 Committee.

44
45 **Sec. 2. Special Meeting: a. The executive committee of this union shall call a special**
46 **constituency meeting at a time and place it deems proper when:**

- 1 1) **It is voted by the executive committee, or**
2 2) **It is voted by the delegates at any constituency meeting,**
3 **or**
4 3) **At least fifty percent of the constituent churches request it through**
5 **business meeting decisions of each church.**
6 4) **It is voted by the _____ Division Committee or the General**
7 **Conference Executive Committee.**

8
9 **b. The division committee or General Conference Executive Committee may call a**
10 **special constituency meeting of the union.**

11 c. The agenda for special constituency meetings shall be included in the notice of the
12 meeting.

13 d. The time and place of special constituency meetings shall be given in the same manner
14 as for regularly scheduled constituency meetings.

15
16 **Sec. 3. Quorum:** At least _____ percent of the delegates authorized hereinafter
17 under Section 1. of Article III must be present at the opening of any regular or special
18 constituency meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Once the
19 meeting is declared open, the delegates remaining present shall constitute a quorum.

20
21 **Sec. 4. Proxy Voting: All delegates must be present at any constituency meeting in**
22 **order to be eligible to vote. There shall be no voting by proxy.**

23
24 **Sec. 5. Voting Rights of the Delegates:** Each delegate appointed to act on behalf of the
25 members of this union shall be entitled to one vote on each proposed motion. The voting
26 rights of the individual delegates representing the members as hereinafter provided shall
27 be limited to the particular constituency meeting of the union .

28
29 **Sec. 6. Election/Appointment and Term of Office: All officers and members of the**
30 **executive committee who are not ex officio members shall be elected by the delegates**
31 **at the regular meeting of the union constituency and shall hold their offices until the**
32 **next regular meeting of the union constituency, unless they resign or are removed**
33 **from office, for cause, by the executive committee/a special constituency meeting.**
34 **The election/appointment of departmental directors, associate departmental**
35 **directors, associate secretaries, or associate treasurers, if not determined by the**
36 **delegates at the union constituency meeting, shall be referred to the executive**
37 **committee.**

38
39 **Article III—Representation**

40 **Sec. 1. Representation: a. Regular Delegates—Each local church shall be**
41 **represented at union constituency meetings by duly accredited delegates as follows:**

42 1) Each local church shall be entitled to one delegate without regard to membership and
43 one additional delegate for each _____ church members or major fraction thereof.

44 2) Such delegates shall be chosen by the local churches. This may take place during a
45 business meeting of the church where the proposal of a nominating committee is

1 considered and voted upon, of may be delegated by the business meeting to the church
2 board.

3
4 **b. Delegates at large—In addition, delegates at large shall participate in the union
5 constituency meetings as follows:**

- 6 1) The individual members of the executive committee of this union.
7 2) **Members of the General Conference and division executive committees, who may
8 be present at any constituency meeting of this union. The number of such delegates
9 shall not exceed ten percent of the total number of delegates otherwise provided for.**
10 3) Such other persons from the union staff, denominational entities owned and operated
11 by the union, as may be recommended by the union executive committee and accepted by
12 the delegates in session. The number of such delegates shall not exceed ten percent of the
13 total number of regular delegates provided for hereinabove.

14
15 **Sec. 2. Church Membership Requirement: All delegates appointed to represent the
16 members of this union at any constituency meeting shall be members in regular
17 standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.**

18
19 **Article IV—Committees**

20 **Sec. 1. Organizing Committee:** a. An organizing committee of at least -----
21 persons for each constituency meeting shall be appointed. It shall consist of
22 representatives from the member churches in the union. The selection method should
23 ensure that the members of this organizing committee represent various geographical
24 regions and, where relevant, the major cultural interests represented in the union. The
25 organizing committee will be chaired by the president of the _____ Division, or his
26 designee.

27
28 b. The members of the organizing committee shall be appointed as the first item of
29 business at each regularly scheduled constituency meeting.

30
31 c. The organizing committee shall nominate and **the constituency shall elect:**

- 32 1) **A nominating committee**
33 2) **A constitution and bylaws committee**
34 3) Other committees as may be necessary.

35
36 **Sec. 2. Nominating Committee: The nominating committee shall consist of at least
37 _____ and not more than _____ members, including the president of the
38 _____ Division, or his designee, who shall serve as chair.**

39
40 **Sec. 3. Standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee: The standing constitution and
41 bylaws committee shall include an officer of the _____ Division, and shall be
42 chaired by the secretary of the _____ Union, or his/her designee. This
43 committee shall function between the regularly scheduled sessions of the
44 constituency and shall submit its reports and detailed recommendations through the
45 executive committee to the next regular constituency meeting.**

1 **Article V—Executive Committee**

2 **Sec. 1. Membership of Executive Committee:** The executive committee of the
3 _____ Union of Seventh-day Adventists shall be elected at its regularly
4 scheduled constituency meeting and shall consist of not more than _____
5 members. The president, secretary, treasurer, vice president(s), and the chief
6 administrator of each union institution, shall be members ex officio of the executive
7 committee. The remaining membership shall include laypersons, departmental
8 directors, pastors, or other denominational employees. The officers of the
9 _____ Division and of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are
10 members ex officio of the union executive committee; however, their membership
11 shall be in addition to the number detailed above. Any such officers exercising their
12 voting rights at any one meeting shall not make up more than ten percent of the
13 committee membership present.

14
15 **Sec. 2. Delegated Authority:** The executive committee of this union is delegated the
16 authority to act on behalf of the constituents between regular sessions, including the
17 authority to elect or remove for cause, officers, directors of departments/services,
18 board and committee members.

19
20 **Sec. 3. Administrative Authority:** The executive committee shall have full
21 administrative authority:

22 a. To fill for the current term any vacancies that may occur by death, resignation or
23 otherwise, in its boards, committees, departments. **If a new president is to be elected,**
24 **the president of the _____ Division, or his designee, shall serve as chair of the**
25 **executive committee.**

26 b. To appoint committees, such as an administrative committee, with their terms of
27 reference.

28 c. To employ such personnel as may be necessary to execute its work effectively.

29 d. To grant and withdraw credentials and licenses. The withdrawal of credentials or the
30 removal of those named under Article V, Section 1. of these bylaws shall require the
31 consent of two-thirds of the members of the executive committee.

32 **Sec. 4. Regular Meetings:** The executive committee may schedule regular meetings at
33 such times and places as it may select.

34 **Sec. 5. Special Meetings:** Special meetings of the executive committee may be called at
35 any time or place by the president or, in his absence, by the secretary. In response to the
36 written request of a majority of the members of the executive committee a special
37 meeting shall also be called by the secretary.

38 **Sec. 6. Quorum:** _____ members of the executive committee shall constitute a
39 quorum.

40
41 **Article VI—Officers**

42 **Sec. 1. Executive Officers:** The executive officers of this union shall be a president, a
43 secretary, and a treasurer. The secretary and treasurer may be one individual known as
44 the secretary-treasurer.

45 **It is the duty of these officers, in consultation with one another, to carry forward the**
46 **work according to plans, policies, and programs voted by the constituency and/or**

1 the union executive committee. These plans, policies, and programs shall be in
2 harmony with the doctrines and actions adopted and approved by the General
3 Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in its quinquennial sessions.

4 a. **President:** The president, who shall be an ordained minister of experience, is the
5 first officer and shall report to the executive committee of the union in consultation
6 with the secretary and the treasurer. He shall act as chair of constituency meetings
7 and the executive committee and serve in the general interests of the union as the
8 constituency and the executive committee shall determine. In his leadership he shall
9 adhere to the policies of the _____ Division and of the General Conference of
10 Seventh-day Adventists, work in harmony with the _____ Division executive
11 committee, and in close counsel with the division officers.

12
13 b. **Secretary:** The secretary, associated with the president as an executive officer,
14 shall serve under the direction of the executive committee and shall act as vice-chair
15 of the executive committee. The secretary shall report to the executive committee of
16 the union after consultation with the president. It shall be the duty of the secretary
17 to keep the minutes of the union constituency meetings and of the executive
18 committee meetings; to furnish copies of these minutes to all members of the
19 executive committee and to the division officers. The secretary shall also be
20 responsible for providing information as may be requested by the president or by
21 the executive committee; and shall perform such other duties as usually pertain to
22 the office.

23
24 c. **Treasurer:** The treasurer, associated with the president as an executive officer,
25 shall serve under the direction of the executive committee. The treasurer shall
26 report to the executive committee of the union after consultation with the president.
27 The treasurer shall be responsible for providing financial leadership to the
28 organization which will include, but shall not be limited to, receiving, safeguarding,
29 and disbursing all funds in harmony with the actions of the executive committee,
30 for remitting all required funds to the division/General Conference in harmony with
31 the _____ Division policy, and for providing financial information to the
32 president and to the executive committee. The treasurer shall also be responsible for
33 furnishing copies of the financial statements to the _____ Division officers.

34
35 **Sec. 2. Other Officers:** Other individuals may serve as officers of the union, such as vice
36 president, associate secretary, and associate treasurer.

37
38 **Article VII—Directors of Departments/Associations/Services**

39 **Sec. 1. Advisory Role:** The directors of departments/associations/ services of this
40 union shall work under the direction of the executive committee and the president
41 and shall serve in an advisory relationship to the field.

42 **Sec. 2. Departments/Services Structure:** Departments/services of unions shall reflect the
43 needs of its territory and shall take into consideration such services that may be provided
44 by the division and the General Conference.

1 **Article VIII—Other Organizations**

2 **Sec. 1. Unincorporated Organizations:** The _____ Union may carry on its ministry
3 through unincorporated subsidiary organizations. Constituency meetings of such
4 organizations shall be held in conjunction with the regularly scheduled constituency
5 meetings of the union.

6 **Sec. 2. Corporations:** The _____ Union may form corporate bodies provided it
7 obtains prior approval of the _____ Division. Membership meetings and
8 elections of boards of directors shall be held as provided by articles and bylaws of
9 the corporations and in harmony with applicable laws.

10
11 **Article IX—Finance**

12 **Sec. 1. Tithes and Offerings:** The church funds managed by this union shall consist
13 of such tithe, including direct tithe, as it shall be assigned by policy and as received
14 from the local churches within its territory, and such gifts, legacies, bequests,
15 devises, appropriations, reverted funds, and other donations as may be made to it.

16 **Sec. 2. Policies:** The portion of the tithe which is reserved for this union, as specified
17 by policy, and all other funds shall be used in harmony with the financial policies of
18 the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; and
19 in the case of donations their use shall be in harmony with the specifications of
20 donors and in compliance with government regulations. Tithe is shared with the
21 division on fixed percentages as set by the division executive committee, and with
22 the General Conference on fixed percentages as set by the Annual Council of the
23 General Conference Executive Committee.

24 **Sec. 3. Bank Accounts:** The funds of this union shall be safeguarded in harmony
25 with the financial policies of the _____ Division of the General Conference of
26 Seventh-day Adventists.

27 Moneys shall be deposited in the name of the _____ Union of Seventh-day
28 Adventists in regular or special accounts in such banks or savings institutions as the
29 executive committee shall designate, and shall be withdrawn only by persons
30 authorized by resolution of the executive committee.

31 **Sec. 4. Financial Statements:** The _____ Union shall regularly prepare
32 statements of income and fund balances and shall be responsible for the filing of
33 copies of the annual financial statement with the _____ Division and the
34 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and, to the extent required by law,
35 with any branch of local or national government.

36
37 **Article X—Budget, Salary Review, and Audit**

38 **Sec. 1. Budget:** The _____ Union shall prepare an annual budget in harmony
39 with the policies of the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-
40 day Adventists.

41 **Sec. 2. Salary and Expense Review:** The executive committee shall constitute an
42 employee compensation remuneration review committee whose tasks are outlined in
43 General Conference Working Policy.

44 **Sec. 3. Independent Audit:** All accounting records of this union shall be audited at
45 least annually by an auditor chosen in harmony with General Conference Working

1 **Policy; and the records of this union or any of its subsidiaries, agencies, or**
2 **institutions shall at all times be open to said auditor.**

3
4 **Article XI—Indemnification**

5 **Sec. 1.** To the extent permitted by law, this union shall indemnify any person who was or
6 is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed
7 action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative,
8 because he/she is or was a member of the union executive committee or an officer,
9 employee, or agent of the union against expenses (including legal fees), judgments, fines,
10 and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection
11 with such action, suit, or proceeding if he/she acted in good faith and in a manner he/she
12 reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interest of the union, and, with
13 respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his/her
14 conduct was unlawful.

15 **Sec. 2.** This right of indemnification shall be in addition to, and not exclusive of, all other
16 rights to which such member of the executive committee, officer or department director
17 may be entitled.

18 (Note: This right of indemnification may be expanded or contracted as allowed under
19 local law and as adopted by the constituents.)
20

21 **Article XII—Amendments**

22 **Amendment, Revision and Repeal:** The bylaws of this union which are essential to
23 the unity of the Church worldwide, and are designated in bold print shall be
24 amended or revised from time to time in order to comply with changes to the Model
25 Union Constitution and Bylaws as voted by the General Conference Executive
26 Committee. Such amendments or revisions shall be approved by a simple majority
27 vote of the delegates present and voting at any duly called constituency meeting of
28 the union. Other sections of the bylaws may be amended, revised, or repealed, by a
29 two-thirds majority vote, provided such changes are in harmony with the spirit of
30 the Model Union of Churches Constitution and Bylaws, and have been processed
31 through the union executive committee. Notice of any proposed changes to the
32 Constitution and Bylaws of this union shall be given specifically in conjunction with
33 the publication of notice for the session.

34 The constituency or a union executive committee may recommend to the General
35 Conference through the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-
36 day Adventists amendments to the Model Union of churches Constitution and
37 Bylaws.
38
39
40

1 **RECOMMENDATION**

2

3 Recommended to approve the inclusion of unions of churches as acceptable structures in
4 denominational organization when it has been determined that they best serve the
5 interests of mission of the Church.

6

7

8