60TH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS

JULY 2-11, 2015

ALAMODOME
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
RECORDING NOTICE

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GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION 2015

Information for Your Safety and Security

Although it is unlikely that a major crisis would disrupt the General Conference Session, it is always a possibility when thousands of people are gathered together. We rely on God’s protective power, and prepare with the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Please note that the Alamodome will be referred to “Dome” and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center will be referred to as “CC” in this document.

EMERGENCIES: Dome: (210) 207-3680/Convention Center: (210) 207-7773

BUILDING EVACUATION PROCEDURES
Building management handles all evacuation procedures. Listen for public address announcements and follow the instructions given. Help others near you if they do not understand English.

LOST & FOUND
Lost & Found is located in Session Management (Dome: Meeting Room C/CC: Room 206).

MEETING POINT
Each family should determine a designated meeting point in the Dome and in the CC should they become separated.

PERSONAL SECURITY

- Please note that the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, General Conference Session Management, the Alamodome, and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center are not responsible for the safety of your family. Keep your children in your care at all times.
- Stay out of surrounding bodies of water found in fountains, ponds, and The River Walk. These bodies of water are not for recreational purposes and the River Walk water is deep. Additionally, there is a $500.00 fine for going into the water.
- Remove visible Session badges before traveling downtown, as the badge will signify that you are a tourist and are unfamiliar/uncertain with the area.
- As in any big city, use caution when walking alone at any time, day or night.
- When returning to your hotel at night, arrange to walk with someone.
- Use all the locking devices your hotel offers.
- Never open your hotel door to anyone until you identify him/her through the peephole. If someone at your door claims to be a hotel representative and you have not called for services, call the front desk to verify their credibility.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash or valuables.
- Do not give your hotel room number to strangers.
- If you need immediate medical attention, go to the nearest First Aid Station (Dome: Rooms 112 & 134/CC: Rooms 1109, H7, and 2089). GC employees injured on-the-job should seek immediate medical attention then contact Human Resources (Dome Meeting Room I, (210) 704-6903 immediately after receiving medical attention.)
• The Downtown Ambassador Force, a hospitality and public safety group, patrols downtown and assists visitors with helpful information about the city and provides emergency assistance. In easily recognizable yellow shirts, khaki slacks/shorts, and straw hats, they patrol on foot, Segways, and bicycles.

• Additional Safety & Security information is available on the General Conference Session phone app.

RED PHONES
In an emergency, use the nearest RED PHONE located throughout the Dome, or call Dispatch (Dome: (210) 207-3680/CC: (210) 207-7773).

SUSPICIOUS ARTICLES
Suspicious articles left lying in hallways or meeting rooms should be reported to Dispatch (Dome: (210) 207-3680/CC: (210) 207-7773. Do not leave delegate bags or personal items unattended as they may be removed and destroyed.

THEFT
If you are the victim of theft, report the incident immediately to Dispatch (Dome: (210) 207-3680/CC: (210) 207-7773 and Adventist Risk Management (210) 582-7010).

DISPATCH FOR ALL EMERGENCIES: Dome: (210) 207-3680/CC: (210) 207-7773
Dome SECURITY: (210) 704-6915
CC SECURITY: (210) 582-7014
Dome Session Management: (210) 704-6916, Meeting Room C
CC Session Management: (210) 582-7016, Room 206
911: Use in emergencies OUTSIDE of the Dome or Convention Center
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<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Actions Editor</th>
<th>Proceedings Editor</th>
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<td>G T Ng</td>
<td>M A Iseminger</td>
<td>Claude Sabot</td>
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<td>Gary D Krause</td>
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<td>Pardon K Mwansa</td>
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<td>Michael L Ryan</td>
<td>Karen J Porter</td>
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<td>Michael L Ryan</td>
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<td>Gary D Krause</td>
<td>M A Iseminger</td>
<td>Claude Sabot</td>
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GENERAL SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

George Egwakhe, Session Manager, Sheri Clemmer, Associate Session Manager,

Audiovisual Broadcast, Chair  Benjamin D Schoun

Business Center Director, Committee Room Scheduling, and Spot Announcements  Cheryl Show

Interpretation Service  Odette Ferreira

Delegate Bag Content  Agustin Galicia

Platform, Chair  Geoffrey G Mbwana

Program Coordinator  Ted N C Wilson

Registration, Director  Rosa T Banks
   Assistant Director  Jemima Orillosa
   Assistants  Rhea Joy Abalorio
                Tamara K Boward
                Lisa Colomb
                Eucaris Galicia
                Candace Iseminger
                Bettina Krause
                Michael Martell
                Liz Miranda-Charnichart
                Roslyn Morris
                Teen Nielsen
                Lissy Park
                Michael Porter
                Candace Renk
                Donna Rodill
                Winnie Sim
                Joanne Stango
                Stella Thomas
                Wendy B Trim

Seating, Ushering and Materials Distribution, Chair  G Thomas Evans

Secretariat Services and Material Approval, Chair  Myron A Iseminger
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Agenda Control Secretary
Assistant
Myron A Iseminger
Liz Miranda-Charnichart

Session Actions Editor
Recording Secretaries
Myron A Iseminger
Tamara K Boward
Wendy B Trim

Session Proceedings Editor
Assistant
Assistant Editors
Claude Sabot
Joanne Stango
Nilton Amorim
James Cavil
Robert Kloosterheis
Gary B Patterson
John H Thomas

Daily Bulletin, (Adventist Review) Editor
William M Knott

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Session Recording and Transcription Director, Controller of Minutes
Assistants
Karen J Porter
Lisa Colomb
Roslyn Morris

Material Distribution Director
Michael Porter

Projection Coordinator
Sherri Ingram-Hudgins
Explanation of Coding and Format

This explanation is to help you use the 2015 General Conference Session agenda and support material.

1. The agenda lists the items of business that are to be considered at the Business Meetings of the Session. Except for a few routine items, all have been considered previously at major meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee such as Annual Councils or Spring Meetings.

2. If an agenda item has support material, you will find a number at the end of the agenda title. That is the page number where the support material will be found.

3. Many agenda items have a code which precedes the agenda title. Each code has five digits followed by one, two or three, and occasionally, four letters. This is a computer identification code which is used to “keep track” of the item. You will find the same code on any corresponding support material.

4. The support material will have the title of the item just as it appears on the agenda list.

5. Just above the title of the item on the first page of the support material for each item you will find what is known as a reference line. This line identifies the source(s) and traces the history of the item and also shows its routing. (The glossary on pages E – G will identify for you the organizational units represented by the acronyms in the reference line, and will therefore help you discover which organizations and committees have given prior consideration to a particular item and where it will be considered next.) The series of acronyms to the left of the “to” traces the past history of the item. To the right, appear the initials of the General Conference Officer who is responsible for presenting the item. Occasionally, its future routing is suggested also.

6. If a computer identification code number appears in the reference line, it shows that the item has been considered during a previous administrative year. An administrative year extends from the close of one Annual Council to the close of the next Annual Council.
## GLOSSARY OF MOST FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

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<td>AC</td>
<td>Annual Council</td>
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<td>ACM</td>
<td>Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries</td>
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<td>ADCOM</td>
<td>Administrative Committee</td>
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<td>ADRA</td>
<td>Adventist Development and Relief Agency</td>
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<td>AIIAS</td>
<td>Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies</td>
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<td>AM</td>
<td>Adventist Mission</td>
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<td>AR</td>
<td>Adventist Review</td>
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<td>ARM</td>
<td>Adventist Risk Management</td>
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<td>ASTR</td>
<td>Archives, Statistics, and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>Andrews University</td>
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<td>AUA</td>
<td>Adventist University of Africa</td>
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<td>AVS</td>
<td>Adventist Volunteer Services</td>
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<td>AWR</td>
<td>Adventist World Radio</td>
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<td>BRI</td>
<td>Biblical Research Institute</td>
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<td>CHM</td>
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<td>ChMan</td>
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<td>ChManSub</td>
<td>Church Manual Subcommittee</td>
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<td>COM</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Inter-European Division</td>
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<td>Family Ministries</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
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<td>General Conference and Division Officers</td>
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<td>General Conference Session</td>
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<td>General Conference Greater Middle East Union Oversight Committee (now Middle East and North Africa Union Mission Oversight Committee)</td>
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<td>Health Ministries</td>
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<td>Human Resource Services</td>
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<td>Israel Field</td>
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<td>Inter-American Division</td>
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<td>IPRS</td>
<td>International Personnel Resources and Services</td>
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<td>IWM</td>
<td>Institute of World Mission</td>
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<td>LLU</td>
<td>Loma Linda University</td>
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<td>NAD</td>
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<td>NSD</td>
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<td>OU</td>
<td>Oakwood University</td>
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<td>Office of General Counsel</td>
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<td>PARL</td>
<td>Public Affairs and Religious Liberty</td>
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<td>PRE</td>
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<td>President’s Executive Administrative Council</td>
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<td>Philanthropic Service for Institutions</td>
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<td>RHPA</td>
<td>Review and Herald Publishing Association</td>
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<td>SAD</td>
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C. Prayer Session
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E. Synopsis of Positions Presented at the Theology of Ordination Study Committee

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303. Euro-Asia Division Elected Staff
304. Inter-American Division Elected Staff
305. Inter-European Division Elected Staff
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307. Northern Asia-Pacific Division Elected Staff
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309. South Pacific Division Elected Staff
310. Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division Elected Staff
311. Southern Asia Division Elected Staff
312. Southern Asia-Pacific Division Elected Staff
313. Trans-European Division Elected Staff
314. West-Central Africa Division Elected Staff
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## 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

**CHURCH MANUAL AGENDA**

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SATISFACTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In compliance with the General Conference Constitution, Article V, Sec. 1, the following notice was published in the *Adventist Review* on February 12, 19, and 26, 2015.

2015 General Conference Session
Official notice is hereby given that the sixtieth session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held July 2-11, 2015, in the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. The first meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m., July 2, 2015. All duly accredited delegates are urged to be present at that time.

Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference President
G. T. Ng, General Conference Secretary
MISSION STATEMENT
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Our Mission—The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to call all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting gospel embraced by the three angels’ messages (Revelation 14:6-12), and to prepare the world for Christ’s soon return.

Our Method—Guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, Seventh-day Adventists pursue this mission through Christ-like living, communicating, discipling, teaching, healing, and serving.

Our Vision—in harmony with Bible revelation, Seventh-day Adventists see as the climax of God’s plan the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness.
1 SEC/156-14GS/ADCOM/ADCOM to GTN-15GCS

2 141-15GS  STEERING COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE

3 SESSION - 2015

4

5 RECOMMENDED, To approve the 2015 General Conference Session Steering Committee, as
6 follows:

7

8 STEERING

9

10 Ted N C Wilson, Chair

11 Myron A Iseminger, Secretary

12

13 Members: Timothy H Aka, Delbert W Baker, Rosa T Banks, Guillermo E Biaggi, G Alexander
14 Bryant, Sheri Clemmer, Lowell C Cooper, Karnik Doukmetzian, George O Egwakhe, G Thomas
15 Evans, Mark A Finley, Agustin Galicia, Alberto C Gulfan Jr, Daniel R Jackson, Raafat A Kamal,
16 Ertorn C Kohler, Gary D Krause, Nancy A Lamoreaux, Jairyong Lee, Israel J Leito, Robert E
17 Lemon, Geoffrey G Mbwana, Armando Miranda, Pardon K Mwansa, G T Ng, Barry D Oliver,
18 Daisy J F Orion, Orville D Parchment, Karen J Porter, Juan R Prestol-Puesan, John Rathinaraj,
19 Paul S Ratsara, Blasiouis M Ruguri, Michael L Ryan, Roy E Ryan, Benjamin D Schoun, Ella S
20 Simmons, Artur A Stele, John H Thomas, Homer W Trecartin, Bruno R Vertallier, J Raymond
21 Wahlen II, Gilbert Wari, Harald Wollan.

SEC/157-14GS/ADCOM to GTN-15GCS

142-15GS STANDING COMMITTEES—GENERAL CONFERENCE
SESSION - 2015

RECOMMENDED, To approve standing committees for the 2015 General Conference Session, as follows:

CHURCH MANUAL

Armando Miranda, Chair
Geoffrey G Mbwana, Vice-chair
Harald Wollan, Secretary
Tamara K Boward, Recording Secretary


CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Ted N C Wilson, Chair
Geoffrey G Mbwana, Vice-chair
Myron A Iseminger, Secretary
Wendy Trim, Recording Secretary

1. To recognize and record union of churches conference status for the Finland Union Conference, effective October 1, 2014.
2. To accept the Finland Union of Churches Conference (TED) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1 GMEUOC/GCDO12AC/12AC/130-12GS/118-13GS/116-14GS to HW-15GCS
2
3 115-15GS MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA UNION MISSION—
4 NEW UNION MISSION
5
6 RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the organization of the Middle East and North
7 Africa Union Mission, effective October 9, 2011.
8
9 2. To accept the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission (GC) into the world
10 sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/12AC/122-12GS/114-13GS/114-14GS to RTB-15GCS

113-15GS  BURUNDI UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSION

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record union mission status for the Burundi Association, effective October 17, 2012.

2. To accept the Burundi Union Mission (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Kenya Union Mission into two union conferences known as the East Kenya Union Conference and the West Kenya Union Conference, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the East Kenya Union Conference (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the West Kenya Union Conference (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record union mission status for the North East Congo Attached Territory, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the North East Congo Union Mission (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Tanzania Union Mission into a union conference and a union mission known as the Northern Tanzania Union Conference and the Southern Tanzania Union Mission, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the Northern Tanzania Union Conference (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Southern Tanzania Union Mission (ECD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Botswana Union Mission, effective October 16, 2013.

2. To accept the Botswana Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/13AC/128-13GS/121-14GS to RTB-15GCS

120-15GS INDIAN OCEAN UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION CONFERENCE

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Indian Ocean Union Mission, effective October 16, 2013.

2. To accept the Indian Ocean Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/15SM to RTB-15GCS

149-15GS  MALAWI UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION
CONFERENCE

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Malawi Union Conference, effective June 1, 2015.

2. To accept the Malawi Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

107-15GS NORTH-EASTERN ANGOLA UNION MISSION AND
SOUTH-WESTERN ANGOLA UNION MISSION—NEW
UNION MISSIONS

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Angola Union Mission into two union missions known as the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission and the South-Western Angola Union Mission, effective in 2010.

2. To accept the North-Eastern Angola Union Mission (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the South-Western Angola Union Mission (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/15SM to RTB-15GCS

150-15GS NORTH ZAMBIA UNION CONFERENCE AND SOUTH ZAMBIA UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION CONFERENCES

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Zambia Union Conference into two union conferences known as the North Zambia Union Conference and the South Zambia Union Conference, effective June 1, 2015.

2. To accept the North Zambia Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the South Zambia Union Conference (SID) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Central African Union Mission into two union missions known as the and the Cameroon Union Mission and the Central African Union Mission, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the Cameroon Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Central African Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/GCDO13AC/13AC/138-13GS/129-14GS to RTB-15GCS

127-15GS  EASTERN NIGERIA UNION CONFERENCE—NEW
UNION CONFERENCE

RECOMMENDED,  1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Eastern Nigeria Union Mission, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the Eastern Nigeria Union Conference (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/13SM/124-13GS/120-14GS to RTB-15GCS

119-15GS EASTERN SAHEL UNION MISSION AND WESTERN SAHEL UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Sahel Union Mission into two union missions known as the Eastern Sahel Union Mission and the Western Sahel Union Mission, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the Eastern Sahel Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Western Sahel Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
RECOMMENDED,

1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Ghana Union Conference into a union conference and a union mission known as the Southern Ghana Union Conference and the Northern Ghana Union Mission, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the Southern Ghana Union Conference (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Northern Ghana Union Mission (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/13SM/13AC/123-13GS/119-14GS to RTB-15GCS

118-15GS WESTERN NIGERIA UNION CONFERENCE AND
NORTHERN NIGERIA UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION CONFERENCES

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former North-Western Nigeria Union Mission into two union conferences known as the Western Nigeria Union Conference and the Northern Nigeria Union Conference, effective December 31, 2013.

2. To accept the Western Nigeria Union Conference (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Northern Nigeria Union Conference (WAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Northeast Brazil Union Mission into two union missions known as the Northeast Brazil Union Mission and the East Brazil Union Mission, effective January 1, 2013.

2. To accept the East Brazil Union Mission (SAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/12SM/IAD/112-12GS/112-13GS/112-14GS/130-15GS to AG-15GCS

111-15GS CHIAPAS MEXICAN UNION CONFERENCE AND
SOUTHEAST MEXICAN UNION MISSION—NEW
UNION CONFERENCE AND NEW UNION MISSION

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former South Mexican Union Conference into a union conference and a union mission known as the Chiapas Mexican Union Conference and the Southeast Mexican Union Mission, effective August 12, 2012.

2. To accept the Chiapas Mexican Union Conference (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the Southeast Mexican Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Dominican Union Mission, effective September 16, 2012.

2. To accept the Dominican Union Conference (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1 ADCOM/ADCOM/15SM to AAS-15GCS
2 153-15GS DUTCH CARIBBEAN UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSION
3
4 RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record union mission status for the Dutch Caribbean Union Mission, effective June 1, 2015.
5
6 2. To accept the Dutch Caribbean Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former Mid-Central American Union Mission into two union missions known as the Honduras Union Mission and the El Salvador Union Mission, effective January 1, 2012.

2. To accept the Honduras Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the El Salvador Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
1 105-15GS  INTER-OCEANIC MEXICAN UNION CONFERENCE—
2 NEW UNION CONFERENCE
3
4 RECOMMENDED,  1. To recognize and record union conference status for the Inter-Oceanic
5 Mexican Union Mission, effective September 19, 2011.
6
7 2. To accept the Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Conference (IAD) into the world
8 sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/14AC/147-14GS to AG-15GCS

135-15GS PANAMA UNION MISSION AND SOUTH CENTRAL AMERICAN UNION MISSION—NEW UNION MISSIONS

RECOMMENDED,
1. To recognize and record the reorganization of the former South Central American Union Conference into two union missions known as the Panama Union Mission and the South Central American Union Mission, effective January 1, 2015.

2. To accept the Panama Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. To accept the South Central American Union Mission (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
ADCOM/ADCOM/14SM/135-14GS to AG-15GCS

131-15GS SOUTH COLOMBIAN UNION CONFERENCE—NEW UNION

CONFERENCE

RECOMMENDED, 1. To recognize and record union conference status for the South Colombian Union Mission, effective June 10, 2015.

2. To accept the South Colombian Union Conference (IAD) into the world sisterhood of unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Membership
The Seventh-day Adventist Church began with a handful of Millerite Christians trying to make sense of the Great Disappointment in 1844 when Jesus did not return as expected. This small band of faithful members refused to give up their faith. They shook off their despondency and resolutely obeyed the biblical injunction to prophesy “about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings” (Rev 10:11). From the ashes of history, an end time movement arose, and over the succeeding decades, this small Adventist group grew into a global, prophetic movement of more than 18 million members. They can be found in 216 out of the 237 countries and areas of the world recognized by the United Nations, and operate 148,023 congregations, 173 hospitals, 2,164 secondary and tertiary schools, 21 food industries, 15 media centers, and 63 publishing houses. From an unorganized group to a global church, the transformation is nothing short of a miracle!

At the first General Conference Session in 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan, 20 delegates representing 6 local conferences were in attendance. At that time, we had a membership of 3,500 in 125 churches with 22 ordained ministers and 8 licensed ministers. In contrast, the 60th General Conference Session in 2015, has 2,571 official delegates in attendance. They represent 18,479,257 Seventh-day Adventists from every continent. They come from 132 unions with 633 sections/missions/conferences. What God has wrought for the “little flock” has grown exponentially in 152 years!

In 2010, the world membership stood at 16,923,239. Three years later in 2013, Adventist membership hit a record 18 million mark for the first time in history. As of December 2014, there were 18,479,257 Seventh-day Adventists worldwide. Compared with the membership in 2010, we now have 1,556,018 more members than we had at the beginning of the quinquennium.

This membership number does not include unbaptized children, or the many others who also consider themselves as Seventh-day Adventists. In Papua New Guinea for instance, the membership on the books is around 250,000, but a recent government census revealed that close to a million people regard themselves as Seventh-day Adventists. Many who have left the church still consider themselves Adventists. In Jamaica, the books record 262,000 members; government census, however, reveals 323,000 people who claim to be Seventh-day Adventists. In Chiapas, Mexico, the situation is similar.

Historically, the year 1955 was significant because that year marked the first time in the denomination’s history that we reached a membership of one million believers. It took 92 years to go from a membership of 3,500 in 1863 to one million in 1955. The second million-member mark was realized in 15 years, the third in 8 years, the fourth in 5 years, and the fifth in 3 years. Thereafter, it took about two years to reach each additional one million believers. Praise be to God!
This remarkable church growth is especially significant given the prevailing membership decline among mainline Protestant denominations. According to a recent report in *Christianity Today*, the Adventist Church is now the “fifth-largest Christian communion worldwide, after Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, and the Assemblies of God” (*Christianity Today*, Feb 22, 2015).

Many church historians have observed that for the past 50 years, or so, the center of Christianity has shifted from North America and Europe (Global North) to Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Global South). The Christian heartlands of Europe are shrinking, and African, Asian, and Latin America are expanding with breakneck speed. The Global North is comprised of the industrialized, traditionally missionary-sending continents, while Global South is recognized as the mission fields.

This significant shift in membership from north to south has fundamentally changed the landscape of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well. In 1960, the Church in the Global South had a membership of 675,000 (54 percent of the world membership). Half a century later, its membership reached 16.9 million: 91.43 percent of the world membership. The Global North, on the other hand, had 570,000 members in 1960 and by 2014 had reached almost 1.6 million, or 8.5 percent of the world membership.

**Baptisms**

This dramatic redistribution of membership from the Global North to the Global South is also reflected in the baptismal statistics. In 1960, the baptisms in the Global North represented 31 percent, and in the Global South, 69 percent of world baptisms, respectively. By 2014, 97 percent of world baptisms came from the Global South and 3 percent from the Global North, an epochal development indicative of extraordinary church growth on the one hand and decline on the other.

Statistics from the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research indicate that in 2014, a record 1,167,796 people joined the worldwide Adventist faith community, exceeding the 1,091,222 in 2013, or the 1,050,785 in 2010. What is the significance of more than a million people joining the church? It means 3,199 new believers join the church every day, or 133 every hour, or 2.2 every minute.

The year 2004 was the first time in the history of the Adventist Church that more than a million were baptized in a single year. The momentum has kept up through the years; 2014 was the tenth consecutive year in which more than a million members joined the church. In this quinquennium alone, 6,618,689 people joined the worldwide Adventist faith community through baptism and profession of faith.

**Congregations**

Church planting is a priority in the mission endeavor of the church. The latest figures show that we had 78,810 churches and 69,213 companies in 2014. Compared with 2013, a record 2,446 new churches opened their doors to worshipers in a single year, or 6.7 new churches each day. Every 3.58 hours, a new church is planted. The previous record was
attained in 2002 with 2,416 new churches planted. The year 2014 goes down in history as the best church-planting year ever.

Last year was an exceptional year in the Church’s 152-year history. It was the year with the highest number of baptisms, and the highest number of churches planted. It was also the tenth consecutive year in which more than one million were baptized, as well as the twelfth consecutive year in which more than 2,000 new churches were organized in a single year.

Overall, the 148,023 churches and companies that the church had in 2014 represent an increase of 12,678 over the total five years ago. It is remarkable that on average, 2,536 new churches and companies were added each year since 2010.

**Growth Rate**
The average growth rate in 2014 was 1.85 percent worldwide. In 2006, the growth rate was almost 5 percent, making 2006 one of the best years in terms of membership growth. At a growth rate of 1.85 percent per annum, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is considered one of the fastest growing churches in the world.

Looking at this picture of growth is not complete, however, without reviewing attrition. In the five-year period 2010 through 2014, 6,212,919 people were added to the church. During the same period, 3,717,683 members left the church. Apart from those church members who fell asleep in Jesus, the net loss rate for the quinquennium is 60 lost per 100 converts.

This terribly high percentage is partly due to membership audits, a process that identifies and removes from membership totals people who have left the church over the years. Even looking at the past 15 years pre-dating the recent round of thorough audits, however, the equivalent losses are 48 per hundred gained. Whether those losses are individuals who have left in this quinquennium, or their absence was only acknowledged in this quinquennium, these are tragic figures that the church cannot afford.

Membership audits began in the previous quinquennium and have picked up speed during this quinquennium. The audit process has confirmed that honesty is still the best policy. A bloated membership is no longer acceptable in world statistics.

On a positive note, the Netherlands discovered to their joy during a recent membership audit, that they actually had more church members than they had thought.

**Mission Challenge**
We pride ourselves on being the most widespread church in the world, established in 91 percent of the countries and areas of the world recognized by the United Nations. We congratulate ourselves for having been true to our prophetic mandate of prophesying “about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings” (Rev 10:11). We have been rather successful in implementing the Great Commission to go and “make disciples of all the nations” (Matt 28:19 and Luke 24:47).
When we think of “nations,” most of us think of countries like Mali, Egypt, or Brazil. However, the words in Greek are “panta ta ethne” which goes beyond geo-political entities. They more realistically point to the ethno-linguistic people groups within every nation. Jesus was not saying the gospel must be proclaimed within the borders of every politically definable country, but rather in every cultural grouping within those countries. Jesus’ command was not merely a mission to enter as many countries as possible, or to reach as many people as possible, but to reach all the peoples of the world.

Given the enlightened understanding of “panta ta ethne,” we may deduce that the fulfillment of the Great Commission is not measured by the number of countries we enter, important though that may be, but by the extent we disciple all people groups and establish congregations in all nations.

Kenya is a case in point. Kenya has always been the backbone of our work in Eastern Africa. The country has a mammoth membership of more than 824,000 in two union conferences. Most of the members come from just 4 tribes, whereas there are altogether 42 tribes in the country. It is estimated that 70 percent of the Seventh-day Adventist membership in Kenya belong to two tribes, the Kisii and the Luo, and only about 25 percent belong to the four largest tribes (Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin, and Kamba). This situation clearly shows that the largest tribes in Kenya are the least reached despite the huge membership with almost 10,000 churches and companies.

Another example is the disparity between rural and urban mission. Many countries enjoy phenomenal growth in islands and villages. Tens of thousands are baptized annually. While we applaud the bountiful harvest in the countryside, we must be mindful of the teeming millions of city dwellers who need the Three Angels’ Messages as much as the rural folks. A better understanding of “panta ta ethne” should guide our mission strategy to encompass all people groups and not just certain segments of the population.

The phrase “panta ta ethne” also implies that the Great Commission is not limited to foreign mission. Foreign mission is certainly a critical component in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Four-fifths of the non-Christians in the world will never be reached unless we intentionally send them cross-cultural missionaries, but the Great Commission is not all about foreign mission. Each believer should have a “ta ethne” focus beyond his or her door to the community where they live. There are people groups of every kind who exist near us. They may live next door, down the street, or across town. Everyone has a part in the mission of the church. All God’s people may engage in mission.

“God expects personal service from every one to whom He has entrusted a knowledge of the truth for this time. Not all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, but all can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods.
Conclusion

The story of the Adventist Church in the past five years is one of relentless growth, from 14 million members in 2005, to 17 million in 2010, to 18.5 million in 2014. The onward progress of the Adventist Church would have been unimaginable to our pioneers in 1863 when the General Conference was organized with just 3,500 members.

Despite our successes, however, large swaths of the earth remain unreached. The 10/40 Window contains 60 percent of the world’s population, but only 10 percent of all Adventists. Of the 500 world cities with a population of more than 1 million, 236 are in the 10/40 Window. What are we to do?

Some of these challenges appear to be insurmountable from a human perspective, but God is able. His promises are sure. Ellen White’s assurance is unmistakable when she says, “When we think of the conflict before us and the great work that we must do, we tremble. But we may remember that our Helper is almighty. We may feel strong in His strength. We may unite our ignorance to His wisdom, our feebleness to His might, our weakness to His unfailing strength. Through Him we may be ‘more than conquerors.’”

Review and Herald, July 9, 1901.

We have the confidence to believe that even the least evangelized countries and peoples shall soon see the fulfillment of God’s promise through the prophet Habakkuk, “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14). This is our hope. This is our dream. Only the Sovereign God can quickly make it happen!

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ADCOM/ADCOM/PREXAD/GCDO13AC/13AC/133-13GS/BRI/ADCOM/ADCOM/PreC/
SecC/TreC/GCDO14AC/14AC/BRI/14AC/124-14GS to AAS-15GCS

123-15GS  FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS -
AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists, to read as follows:

Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church’s understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference Session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God’s Holy Word.

1.  The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the final, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. (Ps. 119:105; Prov 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4, 6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

Comment [TKB1]: Inclusive language
Comment [TKB2]: Inclusive language
Comment [TKB3]: This addition attempts to make explicit the principle of sola scriptura.
Comment [TKB4]: To avoid a repetitive use of “authoritative.” The word “definitive” establishes an understanding of the Bible as its own standard, without implying that we evaluate the Bible’s role relative to a human assessment of rationality.

2.  The Trinity

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4, 6; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4, 6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

Comment [TKB5]: There is no reference to divine love in this statement about the Godhead. The character of God is at the heart of the cosmic conflict and in the work of Christ.

3.  The Father

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28;
123-15GS FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS - AMENDMENT - 2

1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11.) Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 3:16, 7; John 14:9.

4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God’s power and was attested as God’s promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.) (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:13.)

5. The Holy Spirit

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf, He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9-18; 8:1, 2.) (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:13.)

6. Creation

God is the Creator of all things. He has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. In six days a recent six-day creation the Lord made “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” and rested on the seventh day. “The heaven and the earth” and all living things upon the earth, and rested on the seventh day of that first week. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His creative work. He performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very

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good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1-2; 5; 11; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isa. 45:12; Acts 17:24; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 10:6; 14:7.) (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Heb. 11:3.)

7. The Nature of Humanity

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps. 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer. 17:9; Acts 17:24-28; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Eph. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:4; 4:7, 8, 11, 20.) (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7; Ps. 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Gen. 3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-17; 2 Cor. 5:19, 20; Ps. 51:10; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 20; Gen. 2:15.)

8. The Great Controversy

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Gen. 3: 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9.) (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6:8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

9. The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ

In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God’s law and...
the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The bodily resurrection of Christ proclaims God’s triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1; Isa. 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.) (John 3:16; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)

10. The Experience of Salvation

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, as Substitute and Example. This saving faith—which receives salvation—comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God’s grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:1-4, 14-17; 5:6-10; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.) (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 3:16; Gal. 1:4; 4:7; Titus 3:3-7; John 16:8; Gal. 3:13, 14; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Rom. 10:17; Luke 17:5; Mark 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:5-10; Rom. 3:21-26; Col. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26; John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 8:7-12; Eze. 36:25-27; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:1-4; 5:6-10.)

11. Growing in Christ

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. We are also called to follow Christ’s example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of others. Through the grace of God we become loving, humble, holy, selfless, compassionate, long-suffering, patient, kind, and rejoicing. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Col. 2:15; Phil. 2:6-11.)
needs of humanity. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing
to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and
every task into a spiritual experience. (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12;
Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil. 3:7-14; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15;
1 Thess. 5:16-18, 23; Heb. 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.) (Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4;
77:11, 12; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess. 5:23;
2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Phil. 3:7-14; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Matt. 20:25-28; John 20:21;
Gal. 5:22-25; Rom. 8:38, 39; 1 John 4:4; Heb. 10:25.)

12. The Church

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world;
and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration
of the Lord’s Supper, for service to humanity, all mankind, and for the worldwide proclamation
of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in
the Scriptures, Word, and from the Scriptures, which are the written Word. The church is God’s
family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The
church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The
church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in
triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the
purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:1-3;
Exod. 19:3-7; Matt. 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:22, 23;
2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9.) (Gen. 12:3; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-15;

13. The Remnant and Its Mission

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a
time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God
and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims
salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is
symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in
heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have
a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12;
2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)
(Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14;
Rev. 21:1-14.)
14. Unity in the Body of Christ

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.) (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)

15. Baptism

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12, 13.) (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)

16. The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christlike humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (Matt. 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Rev. 3:20.) (1 Cor. 10:16, 17, 11:23-30; Matt. 6:17-30; Rev. 3:20; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17.)

17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts

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provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions.

According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy,
proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service
and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and
endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic,
and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the
church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When
members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God’s varied grace, the church is
protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God,
and is built up in faith and love. (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8,
11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.) (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16;
Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

18. The Gift of Prophecy

One [The Scriptures testify that one] of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is
an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of
Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her [Her writings speak with prophetic authority and]
provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. [are a continuing and]
authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and
correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and
experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21;
2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.) (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21;
Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)

19. The Law of God

The great principles of God’s law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and
exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God’s love, will, and purposes concerning human
conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the
basis of God’s covenant with His people and the standard in God’s judgment. Through the
agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation
is all of grace and not of works, but its fruition and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments.
This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is an
evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow humans. The
obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens
Christian witness. (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1-14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40;
John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3, 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12.)
(Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 40:7, 8; Matt. 22:36-40; Deut. 28:1-14; Matt. 5:17-20; Heb. 8:8-10;
John 15:7-10; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 John 5:3; Rom. 8:3, 4; Ps. 19:7-14.)

Comment [TKB28]: If this term is retained, it would need to be clearly defined or it could be misunderstood.

Comment [TKB29]: This addition makes clear that the Church has recognized the manifestation of the biblical gift of prophecy in the ministry of Ellen G White.

Comment [TKB30]: This addition makes clear that the church has recognized the manifestation of the biblical gift of prophecy in the ministry of Ellen G White.

Comment [TKB31]: The suggested changes seek to avoid giving the impression that Ellen G White and the Bible are equivalent sources of truth. It has also been indicated that the term “source” is difficult to translate into some languages without conveying that idea that her writings are like the Bible.

Comment [TKB32]: The preposition “but” could be understood as antithetical (as expressing an idea that is fundamentally the opposite of the previous one). The conjunction “and” indicates complementarity (obedience is the evidence/fruit of salvation).

Comment [TKB33]: Upgrading language

Comment [TKB34]: Archaic use of article

Comment [TKB35]: Inclusive language
20. The Sabbath

The beneficent gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God’s unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom. The Sabbath is God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God’s creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11; Lev. 23:32; Deut. 5:12-15; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Matt. 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Heb. 4:1-11.)

21. Stewardship

We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God’s ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Rom. 15:26, 27; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:7.)

22. Christian Behavior

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. We should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies,
23-15GS  FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS - AMENDMENT - 9

we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness.

Comment [TKB53]: The English term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB52]: The statement does not mention the typological significance of the work of the high priest in the holy and most holy places of the earthly sanctuary. These additions make the connections clear.

Comment [TKB51]: Inclusive language.

Comment [TKB50]: Editorial change based on English usage.

Comment [TKB49]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB48]: This addition acknowledges that single church members are part of the family of God and as valuable to the church as married couples.

Comment [TKB47]: The English term “disciplinarian” has undergone some change in meaning, giving to the sentence a negative tone. The additions aim at correcting this.

Comment [TKB46]: Used to be the last sentence.

Comment [TKB45]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB44]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB43]: The addition made in the previous sentence closes well the paragraph making it necessary to move the last sentence to lines 20 and 21, where it seems to fit better.

Comment [TKB42]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB41]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB40]: The phrase “through marriage” reintroduced the term “marriage” deleted from the previous line.

Comment [TKB41]: The English term “disciplinarian” has undergone some change in meaning, giving to the sentence a negative tone. The additions aim at correcting this.

Comment [TKB40]: Used to be the last sentence.

Comment [TKB41]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB40]: The phrase “through marriage” reintroduced the term “marriage” deleted from the previous line.

Comment [TKB40]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB40]: Used to be the last sentence.

Comment [TKB39]: The addition made in the previous sentence closes well the paragraph making it necessary to move the last sentence to lines 20 and 21, where it seems to fit better.

Comment [TKB38]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB37]: The English term “disciplinarian” has undergone some change in meaning, giving to the sentence a negative tone. The additions aim at correcting this.

Comment [TKB36]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB35]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB34]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB33]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB32]: The statement does not mention the typological significance of the work of the high priest in the holy and most holy places of the earthly sanctuary. These additions make the connections clear.

Comment [TKB31]: The English term “disciplinarian” has undergone some change in meaning, giving to the sentence a negative tone. The additions aim at correcting this.

Comment [TKB30]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB29]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB28]: The term “partners” and the phrase “marriage partners” could be misused by those promoting homosexuality. The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB27]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB26]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB25]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB24]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB23]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB22]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB21]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB20]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB19]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB18]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB17]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB16]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB15]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB14]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB13]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB12]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB11]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB10]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB9]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB8]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB7]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB6]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB5]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB4]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB3]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB2]: This addition makes the connections clear.

Comment [TKB1]: The revision removes any ambiguity.

Comment [TKB]: The revision removes any ambiguity.
sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the
blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the
blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead
are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first
resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the
commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation
into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who
believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the
kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation
before the Second Advent. (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27;
Heb. 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12;
22:11, 12.) (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9, 27; 8:13, 14;
9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Ezr. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

25.  The Second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the
gospel. The Saviour's coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns,
the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and
taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of
prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ's coming is near.
Christ's coming is imminent. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore
exhorted to be ready at all times. (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1
Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28;
Rev. 1:7; Matt. 24:13, 44; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Thess. 1:7, 10; 2:8;
Rev. 14:11-20; 19:11-21; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:1-6.)

26.  Death and Resurrection

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His
redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our
life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to
meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a
thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Dan. 12:2, 13; Isa. 25:8;
John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom. 6:23; 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-17;
1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 20:1-10.) (Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Eccl. 9:5, 6; Ps. 146:3, 4;
John 11:11-14; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:1-10.)
27. The Millennium and the End of Sin

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Jer. 4:23-26; Ezek. 28:18, 19; Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20:1-5.)

(Rev. 20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jer. 4:23-26; Rev. 21:1-5; Mal. 4:1; Eze. 28:18, 19.)

28. The New Earth

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.) (2 Peter 3:13; Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-7; 22:1-5; 11:15.)
VOTED, To receive and endorse the document, “Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination,” which reads as follows:

In a world alienated from God, the Church is composed of those whom God has reconciled to Himself and to each other. Through the saving work of Christ they are united to Him by faith through baptism (Eph 4:4-6), thus becoming a royal priesthood whose mission is to “proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9, NKJV). Believers are given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20), called and enabled through the power of the Spirit and the gifts He bestows on them to carry out the Gospel Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

While all believers are called to use their spiritual gifts for ministry, the Scriptures identify certain specific leadership positions that were accompanied by the Church’s public endorsement for persons who meet the biblical qualifications (Num 11:16-17; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3; 14:23; 1 Tim 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9). Several such endorsements are shown to involve “the laying on of hands.” English versions of the Scriptures use the word ordain to translate many different Greek and Hebrew words having the basic idea of select or appoint that describe the placement of these persons in their respective offices. Over the course of Christian history the term ordination has acquired meanings beyond what these words originally implied. Against such a backdrop, Seventh-day Adventists understand ordination, in a biblical sense, as the action of the Church in publicly recognizing those whom the Lord has called and equipped for local and global Church ministry.

Aside from the unique role of the apostles, the New Testament identifies the following categories of ordained leaders: the elder/supervising elder (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim 3:2-7; 4:14; 2 Tim 4:1-5; 1 Pet 5:1) and the deacon (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-10). While most elders and deacons ministered in local settings, some elders were itinerant and supervised greater territory with multiple congregations, which may reflect the ministry of individuals such as Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 1:3-4; Titus 1:5).

In the act of ordination, the Church confers representative authority upon individuals for the specific work of ministry to which they are appointed (Acts 6:1-3; 13:1-3; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 2:15). These may include representing the Church; proclaiming the gospel; administering the Lord’s Supper and baptism; planting and organizing churches; guiding and nurturing members; opposing false teachings; and providing general service to the congregation (cf. Acts 6:3; 20:28-29; 1 Tim 3:2, 4-5; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2; 4:5; Titus 1:5, 9). While ordination contributes to Church order, it neither conveys special qualities to the persons ordained nor introduces a kingly hierarchy within the faith community. The biblical examples of ordination include the giving of a charge, the laying on of hands, fasting and prayer, and committing those set apart to the grace of God (Deut 3:28; Acts 6:6; 14:26; 15:40).
Ordained individuals dedicate their talents to the Lord and to His Church for a lifetime of service. The foundational model of ordination is Jesus appointing the twelve apostles (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16), and the ultimate model of Christian ministry is the life and work of our Lord, who came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45; Luke 22:25-27; John 13:1-17).
THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF MINISTERIAL ORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the gospel commission is addressed to all followers of Jesus Christ. As an expression of discipleship and engagement in the gospel commission, men and women have held important leadership roles in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at all levels of denominational structure. Since the late 1960s, much attention has been focused on the role of women in leadership positions requiring ordination. Several General Conference-appointed commissions\(^1\) as well as individual authors have studied this question from the standpoint of theology, ecclesiology and mission.

The General Conference Executive Committee voted in 1973 that continued study be given to the “theological soundness of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination…and that in areas receptive to such action, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral-evangelistic work…”\(^2\) The 1974 Annual Council reaffirmed sections of the 1973 action and added its opinion that “…in the interest of world unity of the church, no move be made in the direction of ordaining women to the gospel ministry.”\(^3\)

General Conference Sessions have also expressed decisions regarding the role of women in church work. The 1985 Session urged that “‘affirmative action’ for the involvement of women in the work of the church be a priority…and to request leaders to use their executive influence to open to women all aspects of ministry in the church that do not require ordination.”\(^4\)

The 1990 Session, upon recommendation of the 1989 Annual Council, accepted a report and recommendations from the Role of Women Commission. In its report the Commission stated that it “does not have a consensus as to whether or not the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G. White explicitly advocate or deny the ordination of women to pastoral ministry… Further in view of the wide-spread lack of support for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry in the

\(^{1}\) Council on the Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Camp Mohaven, Danville, Ohio, September 16-19, 1973; Committee on Role of Women in the Church, Washington, DC, March 26-28, 1985; Commission on the Role of Women in the Church, Cohutta Springs, Georgia, July 12-18, 1989; Theology of Ordination Study Committee met four times in 2013-2014.

\(^{2}\) 1973 Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee

\(^{3}\) 1974 Annual Council of the General Conference Committee

\(^{4}\) “Session Actions”, Adventist Review, July 11, 1985, p.20

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world church, and in view of the possible risk of disunity, disension, and diversion from the mission of the church, we do not approve ordination of women to the gospel ministry.”

The 1995 Session denied a request from the North American Division that each division might be given “the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with established policies. In addition, where circumstances do not render it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender.”

During the 2010 General Conference Session a delegate requested an official Church study of ordination. In response to this request, General Conference administration informed the Session of its commitment “to establishing a process to review the subject of ordination and will report back to Annual Council during this quinquennium.”

Consequently the General Conference Administrative Committee suggested a process of study for the division Biblical Research Committees and appointed a Theology of Ordination Study Committee. Committee membership included more than 100 persons of both genders serving the Church as theologians, pastors, administrators and laypersons. As in previous commissions, the Theology of Ordination Study Committee did not arrive at a consensus regarding a biblical position or Ellen G White’s counsel on the matter of whether or not ministerial ordination should be gender inclusive. Diverse interpretations of Bible passages give rise to firm convictions in favor of or in opposition to the ordination of women to gospel ministry.

However, the commission did reach a high degree of accord concerning a biblical theology of ordination. This statement summarizes several important aspects of ordination as practiced in the early Church and recorded in the New Testament. Two foundational concepts in this Statement are: 1) that “Seventh-day Adventists understand ordination, in a biblical sense, as the action of the Church in publicly recognizing those whom the Lord has called and equipped for local and global Church ministry”, and 2) that “While ordination contributes to Church order, it neither conveys special qualities to the person nor introduces a kingly hierarchy within the faith community.”

The proceedings of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee and division-appointed Biblical Research Committees provided opportunity for a global conversation in the Church regarding its understanding and practice of ordination. The Theology of Ordination Study Committee’s report was presented to the General Conference Executive Committee at the 2014

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5 “Session Actions”, Adventist Review, July 13, 1990 p.15
7 In “Fourteenth Business Meeting” on July 2, 2010, Adventist Review, July 8-22, 2010 p.34
9 The Theology of Ordination Study Committee report is available at: www.adventistarchives.org/final-tosc-report.pdf

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Annual Council. This report included theological and hermeneutical rationales for conclusions on both sides of the question. The Committee suggested three ways forward but did not make a consensus recommendation concerning the practice of ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Differing interpretations of the Bible on this matter and conscientious convictions based on those interpretations may be found in virtually all areas of the world. As a result, the question becomes one of how Church members will live in harmony and unity while acknowledging the presence of differing views on a variety of issues.

Recognizing the importance of this question with respect to understanding the Bible, the multinational and multicultural nature of the Church and its mission, and the biblical example of addressing differences that do not directly involve fundamental beliefs, the General Conference Executive Committee chose to again call for guidance from the global Church. The decisions of the Church in a General Conference Session are recognized as the will of the Church. Ellen G White affirmed this view as follows: “I have been shown that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered.”

REQUEST TO THE 2015 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION

WHEREAS, The unity for which Jesus prayed is vitally important to the witness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and;

WHEREAS, The Seventh-day Adventist Church seeks to engage every member in its worldwide mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ among people from every nation, culture and ethnicity, and;

WHEREAS, Various groups appointed by the General Conference and its divisions have carefully studied the Bible and Ellen G White writings with respect to the ordination of women and have not arrived at consensus as to whether ministerial ordination for women is unilaterally affirmed or denied, and;

WHEREAS, The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms that “God has ordained that the representatives of His Church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference Session, shall have authority”.

10 See Acts chapter 15 on how the early church dealt with the tension regarding circumcision.
11 Ellen G White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol 3, p.492
12 Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 18th edition, p.18 quoting from Ellen G White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol 9, p. 261
THEREFORE, The General Conference Executive Committee requests delegates in their sacred responsibility to God at the 2015 General Conference Session to respond to the following question:

After your prayerful study on ordination from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G White, and the reports of the study commissions, and;

After your careful consideration of what is best for the Church and the fulfillment of its mission,

Is it acceptable for division executive committees, as they may deem it appropriate in their territories, to make provision for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry? Yes or No
As delegates to the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas, we reaffirm our commitment to the authority of the Bible as the infallible revelation of God and His will. In them, God revealed His plan to redeem the world through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and mediation of Jesus Christ. As a trustworthy record of God’s acts in history from creation to new creation and framed with doctrinal and ethical instructions, the Scriptures shape the intellectual and practical experience of believers.

We recognize that the Scriptures offer a divine perspective to evaluate the intellectual and ethical challenges of the contemporary world. Given current redefinitions of God-given institutions, such as marriage for example, commitment to God’s written revelation remains necessary more than ever. Only the biblical worldview of a loving God battling to redeem creation from sin and evil provides believers with a coherent framework to understand reality and obey God’s law.

We reaffirm that amidst the hopelessness and relativism of the contemporary world, the Bible presents a message of hope and certainty that transcends time and culture. The Bible gives certainty that in Jesus our sins have been forgiven and death has been defeated. The Scriptures also announce that He will soon return to put an end to sin and to recreate the world. While waiting for the consummation of all things, the Bible calls us to live a holy life and become heralds of the everlasting gospel, taking every opportunity and means to announce the good news by word and deed.

Given the importance of the Scriptures, the benefits of their study to the Church, and the challenges posed by the contemporary world, the delegates of the General Conference in Session appeal to all Seventh-day Adventist believers to read and study the Bible daily and prayerfully. Moreover, because of the special challenges faced by new converts and young people, we urge every believer to seek ways to share the Bible with these groups in a special way and foster their confidence in the authority of the Scriptures. We also urge pastors and preachers to base their sermons on the biblical text and to make of every sermon an occasion to uphold the authority and relevance of God’s word.

Let us show the beauty, love, and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the Scriptures. Let us think and act in accordance with the biblical hope of the soon return of Jesus, our Lord.
RECOMMENDED, To approve the Statement of Confidence in the Writings of Ellen G White, which reads as follows:

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

As delegates to the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas, we express our deep gratitude to God for the continuing presence of the various spiritual gifts among His people (1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:11-14), and particularly for the prophetic guidance we have received through the life and ministry of Ellen G White (1827-1915).

On the centennial of her death, we rejoice that her writings have been made available around the globe in many languages and in a variety of printed and electronic formats.

We reaffirm our conviction that her writings are divinely inspired, truly Christ-centered, and Bible-based. Rather than replacing the Bible, they uplift the normative character of Scripture and correct inaccurate interpretations of it derived from tradition, human reason, personal experience, and modern culture.

We commit ourselves to study the writings of Ellen G White prayerfully and with hearts willing to follow the counsels and instructions we find there. Whether individually, in the family, in small groups, in the classroom, or in the church, a combined study of the Bible and her writings provide a transforming and faith-uplifting experience.

We encourage the continued development of both worldwide and local strategies to foster the circulation of her writings inside and outside the church. The study of these writings is a powerful means to strengthen and prepare His people for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventism
60th General Conference Session
San Antonio, Texas, July 2015

In January 1966 a single volume *SDA Encyclopedia* was published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Here was its stated purpose: “The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* is a compendium of facts about Seventh-day Adventists—their work, beliefs, organization, methods, and philosophies. The work is intended to inform not only church members but non-SDAs as well who may be inquiring about the church’s work and beliefs.” In 1976, ten years after the appearance of the *SDA Encyclopedia*, a revised edition was published, and another twenty years on, in 1996, a second revised edition was published this time in two volumes.

Twenty years after the second revised edition of the *SDA Encyclopedia*, and nearly a half century after the publication of the first edition, world church leaders saw the need for a completely new encyclopedia of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the following reasons:

1. **Growth**: When the *SDA Encyclopedia* first appeared in 1966, there were a total of 441 organizational units, apart from the General Conference, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with a membership of 1.7 million. Today, there are 771 organizational units, and approximately 18.5 million members.

2. **Dynamics**: Although the 1976 and 1996 editions of the *SDA Encyclopedia* did include some alterations to the existing text, the great bulk of the original text has not been revised in the last fifty years. It has become apparent that the SDA Encyclopedia is not always reliable on key facts, such as the date work started in a country, the first church workers in a country, biographical details, and the foundation dates of organizational units. There is also the matter of innate biases that slant some of the articles; they reflect the nature of the Church in the 1960s, which was overwhelmingly Western; but these biases are frankly not acceptable today.

3. **Technology**: The truth is that although the 1996 *SDA Encyclopedia* sold fairly well, the vast majority of our membership has never seen it or read it. It is not available on the Internet, so the information is not accessible to our members or the general public. And so, when new members, or prospective members, try to find information on some aspect of the Adventist church, they are forced to fend for themselves on the Internet, ending up at sites that are often unreliable, or even highly distorted.

Taking all of this into account, on April 14, 2015, the General Conference Executive Committee at its Spring Meeting, approved a budget for the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventism*, a five-year global church initiative directed by and based at the GC Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.
The *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventism* will draw on the expertise of thousands of Adventist scholars worldwide, with each organizational unit of the church participating. It has six goals:

1. Supply reliable and authoritative information on Adventist history, crucial events and themes, organizations, entities, institutions, and people
2. Strengthen identity in a fast-growing worldwide movement, heightening awareness of distinctive doctrinal and prophetic beliefs
3. Provide a reference work for those new to our faith, mature in the faith, and not of our faith, to learn about all aspects of Adventism
4. Bring out the role of the denominational organization in fulfilling the church’s mission
5. Highlight the missional challenges still remaining in order to “reach the world” with the gospel and prophetic truth
6. Reflect the nature of the world church today, both in subject matter and in those who write articles for the encyclopedia.

The new encyclopedia will first and foremost be available as an online edition that is regularly updated, corrected and amplified. It will include web-only content, such as video and audio, and additional articles will be added as the denomination grows. This new facet of the encyclopedia will mean that, unlike its predecessors, no future major revision process will be required due to the continuous updating of its website. Thus, while the production of a new encyclopedia will be time-consuming and not cheap, it means a similar outlay of resources will never be necessary again. The website will be introduced to the public at the 2020 GC Session. It is expected that a print edition will also appear in 2020 but that this will be the last print edition.

The *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventism* is a World Church project. The support of every union, conference and mission, every institution, indeed all church members, is essential for this to be a success. Here is what we need you to do:

1. Realize that the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventism* is your project. Pray for it. Tell your constituents about it. Support it in your institutions, administrations, and churches.
2. Encourage educational institutions within your division’s territory to grant research time and assistance for faculty/staff who are assistant editors, consulting editors, and authors. In the next five years, they need to be the priority for institutions’ research funding.
3. Donate to it. The General Conference has approved a budget that will make this an *outstanding* resource, but your donations will make it a *superlative* resource. Monies are needed to establish additional editorial offices around the world so that every area is represented comprehensively.
4. If you know a person, institution, or theme that should be included in the *Encyclopedia*, don’t hesitate to contact the GC Archives (encyclopedia@gc.adventist.org)
5. If requested, please write an article for the *Encyclopedia*.
6. In 2020 when the *Encyclopedia* is published, tell others about it, promote it in print and online, offer your feedback, and purchase sets for your institutions, churches, administrative offices and libraries, and non-Adventists.
203-15GSE USE OF “ARCHIVES AND STATISTICS” - CONSTITUTION
AND BYLAWS EDITORIAL DIRECTIVE

RATIONALE: A research component has been added to the functions of the General Conference Office of Archives and Statistics, creating the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. The proposal changes the title wherever it is mentioned in the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws.

RECOMMENDED, To approve a directive to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws where appropriate, by replacing “Archives and Statistics” with “Archives, Statistics, and Research.”
RATIONALE: In some regions of the world the title “chief financial officer” is preferred over the title, “treasurer.” This proposal endorses the use of either title and inserts the dual language in the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws wherever the title, “treasurer” is mentioned reflecting the change that has already been made in General Conference Working Policy.

RECOMMENDED, To approve a directive to amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws where appropriate, by replacing “treasurer” with “treasurer/chief financial officer.”
RATIONAL: In April 2015, the *Adventist Review* went from a weekly to a monthly publication. Article V has been adjusted to tie publication of notices for General Conference Session to a time period rather than to specific issues of the *Adventist Review*. The new wording also allows for the notices to be placed in other publications if appropriate. Section 8. f. codifies the current practice that the General Conference Executive Committee may define the process and distribution for one general category of Session delegates at large that it appoints.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article V—General Conference Sessions, to read as follows:

**ARTICLE V—GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

Sec. 1. The General Conference shall hold quinquennial Sessions at such time and place as the General Conference Executive Committee shall designate and announce by a notice published in the *Adventist Review* and/or *Adventist World* or other publications voted by the General Conference Executive Committee in three consecutive issues months beginning at least four months before the date for the opening of the Session. In case special world conditions make it imperative to postpone the calling of the Session, the General Conference Executive Committee, in regular or special council, shall have authority to make such postponement, not to exceed two years, giving notice to all constituent organizations.

Sec. 2. The General Conference Executive Committee may call - No change

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter - No change

Sec. 4. The election of officers and the voting on all matters of business - No change

Sec. 5. The delegates to a General Conference Session shall be designated - No change

Sec. 6. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference’s - No change

Sec. 7. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following basis - No change

Sec. 8. Delegates at large shall represent the General Conference, its institutions, divisions of the General Conference, and division institutions and shall be appointed on the following basis:

a. All members of the General Conference Executive - No change

b. Associate directors/secretaries of General Conference - No change
c. Twenty delegates from General Conference appointed - No change

d. Twenty delegates for each division.

e. Each division shall be entitled to additional delegates - No change

f. Those representatives of the General Conference and division institutions and other entities, and those employees, field secretaries, laypersons, and pastors who are selected by the Executive Committees of the General Conference and its divisions, by a process and distribution as defined by the Executive Committee of the General Conference. The number of these delegates shall be 300.

Sec. 9. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure that - No change

Sec. 10. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference - No change

Sec. 11. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided for - No change
201-15GS GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE -
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: Two General Conference institutions, Oakwood University and Pacific Press Publishing Association, were transferred to the North American Division in 2014 so their presidents no longer qualify as ex officio members of the General Conference Executive Committee as these entities are no longer General Conference Institutions. The proposed change removes the leaders of those institutions, reorganizes the remaining positions into separate categories, and adds the provision that an organization must remain classified as a General Conference-sponsored entity in order for the president or executive director to qualify as an ex officio member of the General Conference Executive Committee.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article VIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

a. Ex Officio Members—1) Those elected as provided for - No change

2) Presidents of unions, past presidents of the General Conference holding credentials from the General Conference, Conference, the president executive director of Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, the president of Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, the editor of Adventist Review and Adventist World, the editor of Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, the president of Adventist Risk Management Incorporated, the president of Adventist University of Africa, the president-executive director of Adventist World Radio, the president of Andrews University, the director of Archives and Statistics, the director of Biblical Research Institute, the president of Christian Record Services Incorporated, the president and the board chair of Ellen G White Estate, the president of Hope Channel, the director of Geoscience Research Institute, the president of Griggs University and International Academy, the president of Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center, the editor of Ministry, the president of Oakwood University, the president of Pacific Press Publishing Association, and the president of Review and Herald Publishing Association.

3) The president-executive director of each of the following organizations provided the respective organization remains classified as a General Conference-sponsored entity: Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Adventist Risk Management, Adventist University of Africa, Adventist World Radio, Andrews University, Christian Record Services, Hope Channel, Loma Linda University Health, Review and Herald Publishing Association.
4) The editor of each of the following publications: *Adventist Review*, *Adventist World*, *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, *Ministry*.

5) The director of each of the following: Archives, Statistics, and Research, Biblical Research Institute, Geoscience Research Institute.

6) The president and board chair of Ellen G White Estate.

b. Elected Members—1) Three laypersons and one church - No change
2) No fewer than fifteen and no more than twenty - No change
3) No fewer than fifteen and no more than twenty - No change
RATIONALE: This proposal makes some editorial changes in wording and clarifies how the
term of office for division officers relates to mandatory retirement policies or legislation in their
division.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution,
Article X—Term of Office, to read as follows:

ARTICLE X—TERM OF OFFICE

Sec. 1. All officers of the General Conference and those whose election is provided for in
Article VI, Sec 1. shall hold office from the time they are elected and, except for resignation or
other termination, termination for other reasons, shall serve until the end of their term, their
reelection, or until their replacement is elected. A person who is not reelected elected to a new
term of office during a session does not thereby lose delegate status at the session. Unless other
arrangements are made in consultation with administration, such individuals will be expected to
fulfill during the session itself any session-related responsibilities which have been assigned to
them. In situations where official responsibilities cannot be immediately transferred transferred
immediately to a newly elected individual, the officer whose term has expired may be requested
by the newly elected officer, and approved by the General Conference Administrative
Committee, to carry limited responsibilities, for a defined period of time until transition
arrangements have been completed. Their term of office, The current term of office for those
elected under Article VI, Sec 1. or elected by the Executive Committee between General
Conference sessions to fill such office for the remainder of a term, unless government
requirements dictate otherwise, is not subject to division retirement policies, which may
determine specific ages for mandatory retirements. This provision does not override the service
credit limitations, if any, of a retirement plan in which the person participates. Those who have
passed the age of mandatory retirement, as determined by their division or legislation, shall not
be eligible for election to a new term of office for positions indicated in Article VI, Sec 1., in that
division.

Sec. 2. Members of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. Members of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 4. Those persons who, by virtue of holding elected position - No change

Sec. 5. All those who are appointed to serve the General Conference - No change

Sec. 6. Service as outlined in Sec. 1. to Sec. 5. above - No change
RATIONALE: This proposed wording reflects the name change of the Euro-Africa Division to the Inter-European Division after their territories in North Africa were assigned to the Middle East North Africa Union Mission.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article I—Territorial Administration, to read as follows:

ARTICLE I—TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 1. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, hereinafter - No change

Sec. 2. The duly organized divisions are: East-Central Africa Division, Euro-Africa Division, Euro-Asia Division, Inter-American Division, Inter-European Division, North American Division, Northern Asia-Pacific Division, South American Division, South Pacific Division, Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Southern Asia Division, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Trans-European Division, and West-Central Africa Division. The boundaries of these divisions shall be subject to adjustment at Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee.

Sec. 3. If a territorial adjustment is made at an Annual Council, it shall - No change

Sec. 4. Administrations of all organizations and institutions within - No change
RATIONALE: There has been some confusion at past Sessions whether certain delegates should caucus with a division or with the General Conference delegation. Additional wording is proposed in Article II clarifying that delegates appointed by the General Conference Administrative Committee should be assigned to the appropriate delegation at the time of their selection by the General Conference Administrative Committee.

RECOMMENDED. To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article II—Session Committees, to read as follows:

ARTICLE II—SESSION COMMITTEES

Sec. 1. At each regular Session of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 2. Church Manual Committee: The chair of the Church Manual - No change

Sec. 3. Constitution and Bylaws Committee: The chair of the Constitution - No change

Sec. 4. Nominating Committee: a. The membership of the Nominating Committee shall consist of the following:

1) Each division and each attached union shall be entitled to select for membership on the Nominating Committee ten percent of its delegation to the session, after excluding any delegates at large employed by the General Conference or its institutions, and any delegates selected by the General Conference Administrative Committee and assigned by the Administrative Committee to meet with the General Conference and institution delegation.

2) Delegates at large who are excluded under 1) above shall be entitled to representation on the Nominating Committee equal to eight percent of their total number.

b. The members of the Nominating Committee shall be chosen as follows:

1) Each division delegation and each delegation from a union attached to the General Conference shall act as a unit in selecting members to which it is entitled. Excluded from this process shall be any delegates at large currently employed by the General Conference or its institutions, and any delegates selected by the General Conference Administrative Committee and assigned by the Administrative Committee to meet with the General Conference and institution delegation.
2) The delegates at large currently employed by the General Conference or its institutions, along with any delegates selected by the General Conference Administrative Committee and assigned by the Administrative Committee to meet with the General Conference and institution delegation, shall act as a unit in selecting members to which they are entitled.

3) The election of the above representatives on the Nominating Committee shall be by the method of voting considered by each delegation to be most convenient and efficient, taking into consideration the size of the delegation and other circumstances.

c. Each group (named in Sec. 4. b. 1) and 2) above) - No change
d. Those chosen as members of the Nominating Committee - No change
e. Delegates holding elected positions under the provisions - No change
f. No delegate shall nominate more than one person for election - No change
g. The Nominating Committee shall elect its own chair - No change
h. The Nominating Committee shall limit its nominations - No change
i. In order to expedite the work of the Nominating - No change

Sec. 5. Steering Committee: The Steering Committee shall be chaired - No change
RATIONALE: The changes to this article more clearly specify that the references apply to a division secretary.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article VI—Division Secretaries, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VI—DIVISION SECRETARIES

Sec. 1. A secretary shall be elected for each division to be designated “division secretary.”

Sec. 2. Each division secretary shall work according to plans and programs voted by the General Conference in session and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the division executive committee. The division secretary shall serve as vice-chair of the executive committee, and shall report to the executive committee after consultation with the president. It shall be the duty of the division secretary to keep the minutes of the division executive committee meetings, to collect information and make such reports as may be required, and to do such other work as usually pertains to this office.

Sec. 3. Division executive committees may appoint - No change
RATIONALE: In some regions of the world the title “chief financial officer” is preferred over the title, “treasurer.” This proposal endorses use of either title and inserts the dual language where the title, “treasurer” is mentioned. The changes also more clearly specify that the references apply to a division treasurer.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article VI—Division Treasurers, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VII—DIVISION TREASURERS/CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS

Sec. 1. A treasurer shall be elected for each division to be designated “division treasurer,” “division treasurer/chief financial officer.”

Sec. 2. Each division treasurer division treasurer/chief financial officer shall work according to plans and programs voted by the General Conference in session and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the division executive committee and shall report to the executive committee after consultation with the president. The treasurer division treasurer/chief financial officer shall be responsible for providing financial leadership to the division which will include, but shall not be limited to, receiving, safeguarding, and disbursing all funds in harmony with the actions of the division executive committee, for remitting all required funds to the General Conference in harmony with General Conference policy, and for providing financial information to the president and to the executive committee. The treasurer division treasurer/chief financial officer shall also be responsible for furnishing copies of the financial statements to the General Conference officers.

Sec. 3. Division executive committees may appoint - No change
RATIONALE: The amendments to Article VIII are intended to incorporate 1) updated
terminology, 2) the new non-constituency-based entities now included in the General Conference
Working Policy, and 3) editorial wording changes relating to auditing services.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws,
Article VIII—Auditing Service and Audits, to read as follows:

ARTICLE VIII—AUDITING SERVICE AND AUDITS

Sec. 1. At each regular General Conference Session, the General Conference shall elect a
director of the General Conference Auditing Service, whose duties shall be to:

a. Administer a program to provide assurance and related services as part of
the worldwide financial oversight program for the Seventh-day Adventist Church; Administer
the conduct of audits that the General Conference Auditing Service performs for organizations of
the Church throughout the world.

b. Monitor the assurance and related services provided for the Seventh-day
Adventist Church including where such services are rendered by an external provider; Monitor
the overall audit program throughout the denomination.

c. Recommend to the General Conference Executive Committee or division
executive committee standards and/or guidelines for the endorsement and selection of external
auditors; and Recommend to the General Conference Administrative Committee or division
executive committee standards and/or guidelines for use by divisions in the endorsement of
external auditors that may be engaged within the division territory, and

d. Report to the General Conference Executive Committee, through the
General Conference Auditing Service Board, on the overall assurance and related services in the
Church and on current issues and emerging trends that appear in the global picture of financial
reporting and organizational policy compliance. Report to the General Conference Executive
Committee, through the General Conference Auditing Service Board, on the overall audit
program in the Church and the trends/issues that appear in the global picture of financial and
policy administration.

Associate directors shall also be elected at each regular General Conference Session. The
director and associate directors shall be recommended by the General Conference Auditing
Service Board to the Session Nominating Committee after consultation with the administrations
of the respective divisions.
References to service directors and associate service directors elsewhere in these Bylaws shall not apply to the director and associate directors of the General Conference Auditing Service, except as provided for in Article XIII, Sec. 1.c.

Sec. 2. a. At each regular General Conference Session - No change

b. A quorum of the General Conference Auditing Service Board - No change

Sec. 3. The General Conference Auditing Service, ever sensitive to the country-specific regulations governing the audits of denominational entities in a particular country, serves as the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s preferred provider of assurance and related services. The Client base includes all denominational organizations such as General Conference institutions, world divisions and their institutions, unions/conferences/missions/fields/regions/mission stations and their institutions, local conferences/missions and their educational institutions at the secondary level or higher, and Adventist Development and Relief Agency country offices and projects not audited by external auditors, denomination’s preferred provider of auditing services for world divisions; unions; conferences; missions; affiliated services, organizations, and institutions of the General Conference and every other administrative level; Adventist Development and Relief Agency country and regional administrations and projects (not audited by external auditors); and special funds. Exceptions to the above global requirements shall be by specific action of the General Conference Executive Committee.
RATIONALE: It is proposed that Article IX be broadened to include field secretaries that report to an officer other than the president. A distinction is also made between a “general field secretary” with general administrative responsibilities and a “field secretary” who has a specific responsibility normally tied to their leadership appointment by a subsidiary organization’s board (e.g. Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Adventist World Radio, Ellen G White Estate, Geoscience Research Institute, Hope Channel). A similar distinction was made for division field secretaries.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article IX—General and Division Field Secretaries, to read as follows:

ARTICLE IX—GENERAL CONFERENCE AND DIVISION FIELD SECRETARIES

Sec. 1. The term “general field secretary” shall be used to designate general field leaders elected to assist the officers in carrying the field responsibilities of the General Conference. The term “field secretary” shall be used to designate the role of persons elected/appointed to assist the officers of the General Conference or division in a range of general or specific responsibilities.

Sec. 2. The general field secretaries, A General Conference “general field secretary” shall work under the direction of the General Conference Executive Committee and the president, and be assigned either to field service or to special projects or responsibilities that are approved by the General Conference Executive Committee. General field secretaries shall be elected by the General Conference Session or by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 3. A General Conference “field secretary” ordinarily carries another portfolio of responsibility, the nature of which involves frequent interactions with global church leadership. In the role of field secretary this person works under the direction of the president or another designated officer. Field secretaries shall be elected by the General Conference Executive Committee after having been appointed by their respective boards or the General Conference Administrative Committee in the case of General Conference headquarters assignments. Their term of service as field secretaries is contingent on the term of service in the individual’s primary responsibility.

Sec. 3. Sec. 4. The term “division field secretary” shall be used to designate field leaders appointed by divisions, a division executive committee and assigned either to field service or to special projects or responsibilities. They may be appointed as necessary to serve in the divisions under the direction of the president and their respective division executive committees, or designee.
RATIONALE: Clarification in Section 1. f. that the reference is specifically referring to the General Conference Executive Committee. This change was requested by a division to avoid any confusion that it may be referring to a division executive committee when reproduced in the division working policy. It also provides consistency with the sections before and after Section 1. f.

RECOMMENDED. To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XIII—General Conference Executive Committee, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sec. 1. a. During the intervals between Sessions - No change

b. The General Conference Executive Committee - No change
c. The General Conference Executive Committee - No change
d. The General Conference Executive Committee - No change
e. The removal from office by the General Conference - No change

f. The General Conference Executive Committee shall have the power to remove, for cause, members from the Executive Committee or any committee for which it is responsible by a two thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any duly called meeting.

Sec. 2. a. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

b. A meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 3. A majority of the full membership of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 4. Any fifteen members of the General Conference - No change

Sec. 5. All meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 6. Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee - No change

Sec. 7. Local conference/mission/field presidents shall be invited - No change

Sec. 8. Notice as to time, place, and any other requirements - No change
RATIONALE: Two non-constituency-based administrative levels have been added to the General Conference Working Policy so these levels also need to be reflected in the Bylaws. In addition, flexibility is given in this amendment for funds to flow through whichever denominational channel is appropriate.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article XVII—Funds, to read as follows:

ARTICLE XVII—FUNDS

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

a. A percentage of the tithe receipts of the local conference/mission/field/region/field station shall be forwarded through the union and division denominational channels in accordance with the General Conference Working Policy.

b. A percentage of the tithe receipts of the union - No change

c. Regular mission offerings - No change

d. Special gifts. Proceeds from the maturities of planned - No change
The Seventh-day Adventist form of governance is representative, which recognizes that authority rests in the membership and is expressed through duly elected representatives at each level of organization, with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the Church at each separate level. The *Church Manual* applies this principle of representation to the operations of the local congregation. General Conference Working Policy addresses how this principle functions in the rest of denominational structure. This form of governance recognizes also that ordination to the ministry is recognized by the Church worldwide.

“Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference.”—8T 236, 237.

The present organizational system of the Church resulted from a developing theological understanding of the mission of the Church, membership growth, and the Church’s geographic spread. Representatives of conferences met in 1863 to organize the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

There are several organizational levels within the Church leading from the individual believer to the worldwide organization of the work. Membership units in each of these levels periodically convene formal business sessions known as constituency meetings or sessions. (The constituency meeting or session of a local church is generally referred to as a business meeting.) In Seventh-day Adventist Church structure, no organization determines its own status, nor does it function as if it had no obligations to the Church family beyond its boundaries.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 3, Organization and Authority, page 31, General Conference the Highest Authority, to read as follows:

**General Conference the Highest Authority**

In the Church today the General Conference Session, and the General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions, is the highest ecclesiastical authority in the administration of the Church. The General Conference Executive Committee is authorized by its Constitution to create subordinate organizations with authority to carry out their roles. Therefore all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the Church will recognize the General Conference Session, and the General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions, as the highest ecclesiastical authority, under God, among Seventh-day Adventists.

When differences arise in or between churches and conferences or institutions, appeal to the next higher constituent level is proper until it reaches an Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee or the General Conference Session. Between these meetings, the General Conference Executive Committee constitutes the body of final authority on all questions. The committee’s decision may be reviewed at a General Conference Session or an Annual Council. When differences arise in or between churches and conferences or institutions, it is proper to appeal to the next higher organization not directly involved in the matter. The decision of the organization to which the matter was referred shall be final unless that organization itself chooses to refer the matter with comment or recommendation to a division or General Conference Executive Committee/General Conference Session. During the interim between sessions, the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Council shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint has been referred. Its decisions shall control on controverted points, but at the request of the division executive committee concerned, such a decision may be reviewed at a General Conference Session. When organizations review decisions of other organizations, they do not assume responsibility for the liabilities of any other organization.

“I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. But when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.”— 9T 260.
LICENSED MINISTERS - CHURCH MANUAL

AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED. To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 4, Pastors and Other Church Employees, page 34, Licensed Ministers, to read as follows:

Licensed Ministers—To give men Licensed Pastors—to give individuals an opportunity to demonstrate their call to the ministry, especially in the area of soul winning, prospective candidates are granted ministerial pastoral licenses by the conference. The granting of such licenses confers the opportunity to develop the ministerial gift.

Licensed pastors ministers are authorized to preach, to engage in evangelism, to lead out in outreach (missionary) work, and to assist in all church activities.

There are circumstances, however, where it is necessary for the conference to appoint a licensed pastor minister to carry responsibility as a pastor or assistant pastor of a church or group of churches. In order to open the way for a licensed pastor minister to perform certain pastoral functions, the church or group of churches being served must elect the pastor as a local elder. Then, since the right to permit the extension of a licensed pastor’s minister’s authority rests first with the division executive committee, it must approve the extension by specifically and clearly defining the additional functions licensed pastors ministers may perform. The extended functions are limited only to the church or group of churches where the pastor is assigned and is an elder. After the division committee acts, the conference committee may act. (See p. 74.)

The conference committee shall not extend the functions of a licensed pastor minister beyond what has been authorized by the division committee. It also shall not authorize a licensed pastor minister to perform the extended functions in any church beyond where the licensed pastor minister is assigned and is an elder. A conference committee action cannot be substituted for church election or ordination to gospel ministry.
401-15GS CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES - CHURCH MANUAL

AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 4, Pastors and Other Church Employees, pages 35 and 36, Credentials and Licenses, to read as follows:

Credentials and Licenses

God’s work is to be jealously safeguarded by responsible leaders from the local church to the General Conference. Official credentials and licenses are issued to all authorized full-time Church employees and are granted by controlling committees for limited periods.

In a local conference, the committee confers authority upon individuals to represent the Church as pastors and gospel workers. This authority is represented by the granting of credentials and licenses, which are written commissions, properly dated and signed by the officers of the conference. The authority thus conveyed is not personal or inherent in the individual but is inherent in the granting body, which may recall the credentials for cause at any time. Credentials and licenses granted employees are not their personal property and must be returned when employment is terminated or at the request of the organization that issued them.

In order that enemies of the Church may not gain access to our pulpits, no one should be allowed to speak to any congregation unless he/she has been invited by the church in harmony with guidelines given by the conference, presents a current denominational credential or license. It is recognized, however, that there are times when congregations may be addressed by government officials or civic leaders; but all unauthorized persons should be excluded from shall not be given access to the pulpit. (See pp. 114-116.)

Expired Credentials and Licenses—Credentials and licenses are granted - No change

Retired Employees—Retired employees deserve honor and consideration - No change

Former Pastors Without Credentials—Individuals previously ordained as - No change
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Discipline, pages 61 and 62, Reasons for Discipline, to read as follows:

Reasons for Discipline

The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are:

1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the - No change
2. Violation of the law of God, such as worship of - No change
3. Violation of the commandment of the law of God, which reads, “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14, Matt. 5:28), as it relates to the marriage institution and the Christian home, biblical standards of moral conduct, and any act of sexual intimacy outside of a marriage relationship and/or non-consensual acts of sexual conduct within a marriage whether those acts are legal or illegal. Such acts include but are not limited to child sexual abuse, including abuse of the vulnerable. Marriage is defined as a public, lawfully binding, monogamous, heterosexual relationship between one man and one woman. *Violation of the seventh commandment of the law of God as it relates to the marriage institution, the Christian home, and biblical standards of moral conduct.*
4. Sexual abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, fornication, promiscuity, incest, homosexual practice, the production, use, or distribution of pornography, and other sexual perversions.
5. Remarriage of a divorced person, except the spouse who has - No change
6. Physical violence, including violence within the - No change
7. Fraud or willful misrepresentation in - No change
8. Disorderly conduct which brings reproach upon the - No change
9. *Adherence* to or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization. (See p. 59.)
10. Persistent refusal to recognize properly constituted church authority - No change
11. The use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic - No change
12. The use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms - No change
13. The use or manufacture of illicit drugs or the misuse - No change
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Discipline, pages 64 and 65, Fundamental Rights of the Members, Process of Discipline, to read as follows:

Fundamental Rights of the Members—Members have a fundamental right to prior notification of the disciplinary meeting and the right to be heard in their own defense, introduce evidence, and produce witnesses. No church should vote to remove discipline a member under circumstances that deprive the member of these rights. Written notice must be given at least two weeks before the meeting and include the reasons for the disciplinary hearing.
RECOMMENDED. To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Discipline, page 66, Removing Members at Their Request, Process of Discipline, to read as follows:

Removing Members at Their Request—Great care should be exercised in dealing with members who request to be removed from membership. Although the Church recognizes the right of members to decide whether to belong to the Church, ample time should be given such members for thought and reflection and every effort made to restore them to a satisfactory experience.

Letters of resignation should be presented to the board, which will forward them to a business meeting. Out of Christian consideration for the individuals involved, action shall be taken without public discussion.

The Church recognizes the right of the individual to withdraw membership. Letters of resignation should be presented to the board, where the resignation will be recorded with the effective date according to the resignation letter. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family.
SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/GCDO14AC/14AC/409-14GSb to AM-15GCS

407-15GSb  CHURCH BOARD CANNOT GRANT LETTERS -

CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 6, Membership, pages 54 and 55, Church Board Cannot Grant Letters, Transferring Members, to read as follows:

Church Board Cannot Grant Letters—A board has no authority to vote letters of transfer or to receive members by letter. The board’s authority is limited to making recommendations to the church. Action on all transfers of membership, favorable or otherwise, must be taken by the church. (See p. 52.) The clerk has no authority to remove names from or add names to the membership record except by vote of the church. When a member requests in writing to be removed from church membership, the church board must act on the request. Efforts should be made to restore the individual to the church family. When a member dies, the clerk records the date of death in the membership record, and no action by the church is necessary.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 80, No Names Added or Removed Without Vote, Clerk, to read as follows:

No Names Added or Removed Without Vote—The clerk has no authority to add names to or remove names from the membership record without a vote of the church, which must always vote to add or remove a name, except in the case of the death of a member, or when a member requests in writing to be removed from membership. When a member dies, the clerk will record the date of the death in the membership record. (See p. 55.)

When a member submits a written request to the church board to be removed from membership, the clerk will record the action of the board. (See p. 66.)
SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/GCDO14AC/14AC/410-14GS to AM-15GCS

408-15GS REINSTATING THOSE PREVIOUSLY REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 7, Discipline, pages 66 and 67, Process of Discipline, Reinstating Those Previously Removed From Membership, to read as follows:

Reinstating Those Previously Removed From Membership—When persons have been removed, removed for discipline, the church should, where possible, maintain contact and manifest the spirit of friendship and love, endeavoring to bring them back to the Lord.

Those previously removed may be received again into membership when the period assigned by the church in a business meeting is concluded, when confession of wrongs committed is made, evidence is given of real repentance and change of life, and the life is consistent with Church standards and it is clear that the member will fully submit to Church order and discipline. Such reinstatement should preferably be in the church from which the member was dismissed. However, when this is not possible, the church where the person is requesting reinstatement must seek information from the former church about the reasons for which the person was removed from membership.

When dealing with perpetrators of sexual abuse, it should be remembered that restoration to membership does not remove all consequences of such a serious violation. While attendance at church activities may be permissible with properly established guidelines, a person convicted or disciplined for sexual abuse should not be placed in a role which could put them in contact with children, youth, and other vulnerable individuals. Neither shall they be given any position which would encourage vulnerable individuals to trust them implicitly.

Because removal from membership is the most serious form of discipline, the period of time, determined by the church business meeting, before members may be reinstated should be sufficient to demonstrate that the issues which led to removal from membership have been resolved beyond reasonable doubt. It is expected that readmission to membership will be done in connection with rebaptism.
411-15GS WHO MAY CONDUCT THE COMMUNION SERVICE -

**CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT**

The inclusion of “commissioned” is done in order to be in harmony with page 73 of the *Church Manual*, which reads, “Communion services must always be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or local elder.”

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, page 122, Who May Conduct the Communion Service, Communion Service, to read as follows:

Who May Conduct the Communion Service—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained ordained/commissioned pastor or an ordained elder. Deacons, although ordained, cannot Deacons or deaconesses are not permitted to conduct the service.
Occasionally no one possesses the experience and qualifications to serve as an elder. Under such circumstances the church should elect a person to be known as “leader.” In the absence of the pastor or a conference-assigned pastor, the leader is responsible for the services of the church, including business meetings. The leader must either conduct these services or arrange for someone else to do so. If the church leader is unable to lead out in the business meeting, the conference should be contacted for assistance.

A leader, who is not an ordained elder, may not preside at any of the church ordinances, administer baptism, conduct the Lord’s Supper, perform the marriage ceremony, or preside at business meetings when members are disciplined. A request should be made to the conference president for an ordained pastor to preside at such meetings.
SEC/ChManSub/TED/ChManSub/ChManSub/ChMan/GCDO14AC/14AC/412-14GSa to AM-15GCS

410-15GCSa  DEACONS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 76 to 78, Deacons, to read as follows:

Deacons

The New Testament identifies the office of deacon with the Greek word *diakonos*, from which the English “deacon” is derived. The Greek word is variously interpreted as “servant, minister, writer, attendant” and in Christian circles has acquired the specialized meaning now attached to “deacon.”

The men who came to be known as the seven deacons of the apostolic church were chosen and ordained to attend to the business of the church. (See Acts 6:1-8.) Their qualifications, slightly less exacting than those of elders, are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

“The fact that these brethren had been ordained for the special work of looking after the needs of the poor did not exclude them from teaching the faith. On the contrary, they were fully qualified to instruct others in the truth, and they engaged in the work with great earnestness and success.”—AA 90.

“The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.”—AA 89.

Today appointment of deacons through election brings similar blessings in church administration by relieving pastors, elders, and other officers of duties that deacons may perform well.

“The time and strength of those who in the providence of God have been placed in leading positions of responsibility in the church should be spent in dealing with the weightier matters demanding special wisdom and largeness of heart. It is not in the order of God that such men should be appealed to for the adjustment of minor matters that others are well qualified to handle.”—AA 93.

The Ministerial Association of the conference, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deacons. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deacons. (See Notes, #3, p. 167)

Board of Deacons—Where a church has a number of deacons, it should - No change
Deacons Must Be Ordained—Newly elected deacons cannot fill their roles.

Deacons Not Authorized to Preside—Deacons are not authorized to preside at any of the ordinances of the church, including the Lord’s Supper, baptism, or business meetings and are not permitted to perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception or transfer of members.

If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, the church leader shall contact the conference for assistance.

Duties of Deacons—The work of deacons involves a wide range of services for the church, including:

1. Assistance at Services and Meetings—Deacons are usually
2. Visitation of Members—In many churches visitation is arranged
3. Preparation for Baptismal Services—Deacons make
4. Assistance at Communion Service—At the celebration of the ordinance of
   foot-washing, the deacons or deaconesses provide everything needed, such as towels, basins, water, and buckets. After the service they see that the utensils and linen are washed and properly stored.

Remaining bread and wine should not be consumed, but disposed of in a respectful manner by deacons and deaconesses following the Lord’s Supper.

5. Care of the Sick and Aiding the Poor and Unfortunate—Deacons
6. Care and Maintenance of Property—In churches where the

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RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 78 and 79, Deacons, to read as follows:

**Deaconesses**

Deaconesses were included in the official staff of the early Christian churches.

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church [deaconess] in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also” (Rom. 16:1, 2).

Deaconesses should be chosen for their consecration and other qualifications that fit them for the duties of the office.

The Ministerial Association of the conference, in connection with the departments, promotes the training and equipping of deaconesses. However, the pastor, in conjunction with the elder(s), has the primary responsibility for training the deaconesses. (See Notes, #3, p. 167)

Board of Deaconesses—If a church elects several deaconesses, it should - No change

Ordination Service for Deaconesses—Such a service, like the ordination of deacons, would be carried out by an ordained pastor currently credentialed by the conference. The ordination service should be characterized by simplicity and performed in the presence of the church.

If they retain church membership, deaconesses do not have to be ordained again if they move their memberships to other churches. When the term for which they were elected expires, they must be reelected if they are to continue to serve as deaconesses.

**Deaconesses Not Authorized to Preside**—Deaconesses are not authorized to preside at any of the ordinances of the church or business meetings and cannot perform the marriage ceremony or officiate at the reception or transfer of members.

If a church has no one authorized to perform such duties, it shall contact the conference for assistance.

Duties of Deaconesses—Deaconesses serve the church in a wide variety of activities, including:

1. Greeting and Visiting Guests and Members—In many - No change
2. Assistance at Baptisms—Deaconesses ensure that female candidates - No change

3. Arrangements for the Communion Service—Deaconesses and deacons arrange for everything needed for this service and see that everything used is cared for afterward. (See p. 121.)

Before the communion service begins, deaconesses make arrangements for set the communion table, including preparing the bread and wine, arranging the ordinance table, pouring the wine, placing the plates of unleavened bread, and covering the table with the linen provided for that purpose.

Deaconesses assist in the ordinance service of foot-washing, giving special aid to women visitors and new members.

4. The Care of the Sick and the Poor—Deaconesses assist deacons in - No change

5. Care and Maintenance of Property—In churches where the - No change
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 81 and 82, Funds of Auxiliary Organizations, to read as follows:

Funds of Auxiliary Organizations—Auxiliary organization funds include such funds as church outreach programs, family life, Adventist Youth Ministries, Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society, Sabbath school expense, and that portion of the health ministries funds belonging to the church, and may include church school funds. All money received by and for these organizations is turned over promptly to the church treasurer by the secretary of the organization, the deacons, or whoever has received the funds. These funds belong to the auxiliary organizations of the church. They may be disbursed only by order of the auxiliary organization to which they belong.

The treasurer shall give receipts for all funds received. On receiving money from the treasurer, the secretary of the auxiliary organization shall give a proper receipt to the treasurer.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 83, Receipts to Members, to read as follows:

Receipts to Members—Receipts should be issued promptly for all money received from members, no matter how small the amount, and a strict account of all receipts and payments should be kept by the treasurer. All general offerings not in envelopes should be counted by the treasurer in the presence of another officer, preferably a deacon or deaconess, and a receipt given to such officer.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 98, Community Services/Dorcas Leader, to read as follows:

Adventist Community Services Leader or Dorcas Society Leader—The church elects the Adventist Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader, assistant leaders (as needed), and secretary-treasurer of Adventist Community Services, which in some areas is known as the Dorcas Society. (See Notes, #14, p. 170.) This organization gathers and prepares clothing, food and other supplies for those in need and works closely with the Adventist Men, deacons, deaconesses, and other church departments in community outreach. Adventist Community Services or Dorcas Society ministry, however, includes more than giving material aid. It focuses on identifying needs and responding with services based on these specific needs. Examples are educational seminars, community development, visiting, counseling, and other services relevant to the community.

Community Services/Dorcas Society Leader—The church elects the Community Services/Dorcas Society leader, assistant leaders (as needed), and secretary-treasurer. This organization gathers and prepares clothing, food, and other supplies for those in need and works closely with the deacons and deaconesses. Community Services/Dorcas ministry, however, includes more than giving material aid. It encompasses adult education, visiting, homemaking, home nursing, counseling, and other services.

The Adventist Community Services Leader or Dorcas Society Leader is a member of the Personal Ministries Council and the church board. If the church operates a Community Services center, the personal ministries council is its governing committee. The council appoints the director of the center, who is a member of the council as well as the church board.
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Youth Ministries

The various youth organizations of the church should work closely with the youth ministries department of the conference.

Adventist Youth Society (AYS)—The Ministries (AYM)—The church works for and with its youth through the AYM, AYS. Under the AYM, AYS leader youth are to work together in cooperation with the wider church community, towards the development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church. The goal of AYM AYS should be to involve all youth in activities that will tie them closer to the church, lead them to active church membership and train them for Christian service.

AYM Mission—To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship.

AYM Motto—The love of Christ compels us.

AYM Aim—The Advent Message to all the world in my generation.

The youth ministries program of the church comprises three broad categories, namely:
Junior Youth (Adventurers: ages 6-9 and Pathfinders: ages 10-15), Senior Youth (Ambassadors: ages 16-21 and Young Adults: ages 22-30+), and Public Campus Students: ages 16-30+.

God said to Moses, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:6-9).

The apostle Paul added, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

“We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. . . . We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth.”—GCB, Jan. 29, 30, 1893, p. 24.
“When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord’s work, and led to see that He expects them to do something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help. Thus they will learn to work for God.”—GW 210.

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”—MYP 196.

While there is to be an active Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) AYS in every church, it is important that the youth program not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to their AYM AYS participation, youth should be integrated into responsible leadership and in all lines of church work. As young elders, deacons, and deaconesses, for example, they can work with and learn from experienced officers.

“In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men.”—GW 67.

Adventist Youth Ministries Committee—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee is the umbrella organization in the church for the general planning of the youth ministry program. (See pp. 127, 128.) It includes the elected officers of the Adventist Youth Society (AYS). The AYM Committee includes the following church-elected officers: Young Adults director, Public Campus Ministries director/coordinator, Ambassador director, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, plus the personal ministries leader, youth Sabbath School school division leader, children’s ministries leader, health ministries leader, principal of the school, the AYM sponsor, and the pastor. Ambassador Club director, Pathfinder Club director, Adventurer Club director, principal of the school, the sponsor, and the pastor. The AYS leader, who is a member of the board, chairs this committee. The committee should meet as necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful ministry. (See Notes, #16, p. 174.)
If there are no distinct Ambassador ministry or young adults ministries established in the church, or until such time as they are established, the AYM Committee will plan for the senior youth ministry to include both age groups.

In parts of the world where there is no Pathfinder or Adventurer ministry, or until such time as they are organized, the AYM Committee will plan for appropriate activities for the junior youth.

The AYM director (formerly known as the AYS director), who is a member of the board, chairs this committee. The committee should meet as necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful ministry. (See Notes, #16, p. 171.)

AYS Committee—The AYS committee is responsible for senior youth activities and works in coordination with the other youth entities through the Adventist youth ministries committee. If there is no Ambassador, Pathfinder, or Adventurer program, the AYS will include these younger members in a junior society.

AYS Officers—The Young Adults Committee—The Young Adults Committee is responsible for Young Adult activities and works in coordination with the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

The church elects the following Young Adults officers: director, associate director, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, and music director. These AYS officers: youth leader, associate youth leader, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, chorister, pianist or organist, and sponsor (who may be an elder). Since music plays an important role in the formation of youth character, musicians should be as carefully selected as the other AYS officers. (See pp. 92, 96.) This group forms the nucleus for the Young Adults Committee, which appoints other officers for the respective activities. AYS committee, which in counsel with the youth appoints other officers. In smaller churches one person may carry several responsibilities.

Public Campus Ministries—Strengthening the Youth Ministries of the church, Public Campus Ministries (PCM), in collaboration with the Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS), provides vision and strategic planning for ministry to and support for Seventh-day Adventist students (ages 16-30+) who attend public colleges, universities, and other tertiary educational institutions around the world.

Public Campus Ministries Director/Coordinator—The church may appoint a public campus ministries director/coordinator to develop an intentional ministry with the purpose of caring for the special needs of public college/university students, in consultation with and support of the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee.
Ambassador Ministry—The Ambassador Ministry provides a specialized program to meet the needs of youth, ages 16 to 21. It offers young people in this age group organization and structure, and promotes their active involvement in the church, locally and globally. The ministry is designed to strengthen the current senior youth ministry of the Church. It challenges them to experience and share a personal relationship with Christ, helps them develop a lifestyle that is consistent with the Seventh-day Adventist belief system, provides training in diverse vocational interests, and provides them with a safe environment for the wholesome development of lifelong friendships. Its activities are to be carried out in accordance with conference policies and in coordination with the AYM Committee of the local church.

Ambassador Committee—The Ambassador Committee is responsible for Ambassador activities and works in coordination with the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

The church elects the following Ambassador officers: director, associate director, secretary-treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the Ambassador Committee which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

Pathfinder Club—The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered outlet for the spirit of adventure and exploration, in the context of spiritual development and soul-winning, for ages 10 to 15. Activities are carefully tailored to include outdoor living, nature exploration, crafts, hobbies, or vocations.

Pathfinder Committee—The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by the church. (See pp. 105, 172.) If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one male and one female. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club secretary and treasurer. The director is a member of the board and the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of craft and nature classes and counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders.

Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Adventurer Club—The Adventurer Club provides home and church programs for parents with 6-to-9-year-old children. It is designed to stimulate the children’s curiosity and includes age-specific activities that involve both parents and child in recreational activities, simple crafts, appreciation of God’s creation, and other activities that are of interest to that age. All is carried out with a spiritual focus, setting the stage for participation in the church as a Pathfinder.

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Adventurer Committee—The church elects the club director and associates. (See pp. 104, 172.) Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club. The director is a member of the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

The AYS leader AYM Officers—The directors of the four youth ministry entities must exemplify Christlike graces and have a burden for soul winning and contagious enthusiasm. In helping motivate youth to work together and take responsibilities, the leader directors will be in the background—guiding, counseling, and encouraging youth, helping them gain experience and the joys of achievement. The leader directors should study the youth profile of the church and seek to involve every eligible youth in the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM), AYS.

The leader directors will keep in touch with the pastor, the sponsor, their respective sponsors, and the conference youth ministries director, taking advantage of opportunities for in-service training and leading the society their respective ministry into a cooperative relationship with the church and the conference.

The associate leader associate/deputy directors (if needed) will assist the leader directors and will chair the AYS committee and perform leadership duties when the leader directors are absent. The AYS committee respective committees may assign additional responsibilities to the associate directors, associate leader.

The secretary-treasurer secretary-treasurers will keep a record of AYS activities, the activities of their respective ministries, submit monthly reports on forms provided to the conference youth ministries director, and encourage youth to report their witnessing activities during the ten-minute personal ministries period.

The respective assistant secretary-treasurers (if needed) assist with the secretary-treasurers' secretary-treasurer (if needed) assists with the secretary-treasurer’s work as assigned.

AYS AYM Sponsor—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) AYS sponsor may be an elder or other person on the board who understands the objectives of the AYM, AYS, is sympathetic with youth and their involvement in the church’s ministries, and will serve as a valued counselor to the youth. The sponsor serves as a guide or counselor to AYM AYS officers
and joins them regularly in the AYM Committee AYS committee meetings. The sponsor will work with the AYM directors AYS leader to present the ministry’s society’s needs to the board.

The sponsor should become acquainted with the conference youth ministries director and keep the director informed of changes in officer personnel and other AYM AYS matters. Along with AYM directors, AYS officers, the sponsor should attend conference youth training institutes to keep informed about developments in youth ministry.

For the sake of continuity, the sponsor, if possible, should serve multiple terms.

Adventist Youth Features — To help youth grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, the youth ministries department arranges age-related programming that provides an environment for development of spiritual gifts.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Resources—For youth ministries resources, see Notes, #17, p. 171.

Adventist Junior Youth Society (AJY) — The objectives of AJY are the training of junior youth for Christian leadership and service and the development of members to their fullest potential.

In churches with schools the AJY is part of the curriculum and a teacher is AJY leader or sponsor. When the AJY is conducted in the school, each classroom is considered a society, with students in the lower elementary designated as preparatory members. Upper-elementary students are regular members.

Everyone involved in work with youth must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Ambassador Club — The Ambassador Club provides a specialized program to meet the needs of youth, ages 16 through 21. It offers young people in this age group organization and structure, and promotes their active involvement in the church, locally and globally. The club is designed to strengthen the current senior youth/young adult ministry of the Church. It challenges them to experience and share a personal relationship with Christ, helps them develop a lifestyle that fits their belief system and vocational interest, and provides them with a safe venue for wholesome development of lifelong friendships. Its activities are to be carried out in accordance
with conference policies and in coordination with other youth/young adult ministries of the local church. The Ambassador Club has a director and associate director(s). The associate director(s) may also serve as the secretary and treasurer. The director is a member of the Adventist Youth Society committee.

Pathfinder Club—The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered outlet for the spirit of adventure and exploration found in junior youth. This includes carefully tailored activities in outdoor living, nature exploration, crafts, hobbies, or vocations beyond the possibilities in an average AJY. In this setting spiritual emphasis is well received, and the Pathfinder Club has demonstrated its soul-winning influence. In many churches Pathfinder Clubs have replaced the traditional AJY. If there is a school, the Pathfinder Club should supplement the work of the AJY.

The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by the church. (See pp. 105, 172.) If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one of each gender. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club scribe and treasurer. The director is a member of the board and the Adventist youth ministries committee.

Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of craft and nature classes and counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders.

Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Adventurer Club—The Adventurer Club provides home and church programs for parents with 6- through 9-year-old children. It is designed to stimulate the children’s curiosity and includes age-specific activities that involve both parent and child in recreational activities, simple crafts, appreciation of God’s creation, and other activities that are of interest to that age. All is carried out with a spiritual focus, setting the stage for participation in the church as a Pathfinder.

The church elects the club director and associates. (See pp. 104, 172.) Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club. The director is a member of the Adventist youth ministries committee. Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should

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consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

Resources—For youth ministries resources, see Notes, #17, p. 171.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 9, Elections, page 109, Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee, to read as follows:

Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may object to the nominating committee’s report and should present their objections in person to the committee before the second reading of the report by making an appointment through the chairperson or pastor. Or, at the time of the second reading of the report, a member may request that the whole report be referred without discussion to the committee for further consideration. It is the usual procedure for the chairperson to accept the referral. However, if the request becomes a motion, it is nondebatable and is decided by majority vote.

The chairperson should announce when and where the committee will meet to hear objections. At that time members making objections, or any other member who desires to do so, should appear before the committee. If the election is deferred because of objections, it would be a serious matter for those raising objections to fail to appear before the committee.

The committee should give due consideration to the objections presented. If they are found to be justified, the committee should substitute new names for those to which objection was made. After giving due consideration to the objections presented, the committee will exercise its judgment as to whether or not any change is warranted in the committee’s recommendation to the church business meeting. When the report is again presented, the church proceeds to vote on the report of the committee.

Trivial or groundless objections to any name should never be made, but if there are serious reasons that any nomination should be changed, these reasons should be stated to the nominating committee.
Unauthorized Speakers—Under no circumstances should a pastor, elder, or other officer invite strangers or any unauthorized persons to conduct services. Individuals who have been removed from the ministry or who have been removed from membership in other places, or designing persons who have no authority from the church, should not be given access to the pulpit. Those worthy of confidence will be able to identify themselves by producing proper credentials.

Authorizing Speakers—Only speakers worthy of confidence will be invited to the pulpit by the church in harmony with guidelines given by the conference. Individuals who have been removed from membership or designing persons who have no authority from the church, should not be given access to the pulpit.

At times it is acceptable for government officials or civic leaders to address a congregation, but all others should be excluded from the pulpit unless permission is granted by the conference. Every pastor, elder, and conference president must enforce this rule. (See pp. 35, 114, 115.)
RECOMMENDED. To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 119 to 122, Communion Service, to read as follows:

Communion Service

The communion service customarily is celebrated once per quarter. The service includes the ordinance of foot-washing followed by the Lord’s Supper. It should be a most sacred and joyous occasion to the congregation, pastor, and elders. The service usually takes place during the worship service but may be scheduled at other times.

Ordinance of The Foot-Washing—“Now, having washed the disciples’ feet, He said, ‘I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.’ In these words Christ was not merely enjoining the practice of hospitality. More was meant than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of travel. Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this . . . ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

“This ordinance is Christ’s appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. We are not prepared to receive the communion of His body and His blood. Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.”—DA 650.

In the act of washing the disciples’ feet, Christ performed a deeper cleansing, that of washing from the heart the stain of sin. The communicants sense an unworthiness to accept the sacred emblems before experiencing the cleansing that makes them “completely clean” (John 13:10). Jesus desired to wash away “alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. . . . Pride and self-seeking create dissension and hatred, but all this Jesus washed away. . . . Looking upon them, Jesus could say, ‘Ye are clean.’ ”—DA 646.

The spiritual experience that lies at the heart of foot-washing lifts it from being a common custom to being a sacred ordinance. It conveys a message of forgiveness, acceptance, assurance, and solidarity, primarily from Christ to the believer, but also between the believers themselves. This message is expressed in an atmosphere of humility.

The Lord’s Supper—Angels declare that Jesus, the Redeemer of this world, is holy. Likewise, the symbols representing His body and His blood are holy. Since the Lord Himself selected the deeply meaningful symbols of the unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine and used the simplest of means for washing the disciples’ feet, there should be great reluctance to introduce alternative symbols and means, except under emergency conditions, lest the original significance of the service be lost. Likewise in the order of service and the traditional
roles played by the pastor, elders, deacons, and deaconesses, there should be caution lest substitution and innovation tend to make common that which is sacred.

The service of the Lord’s Supper is just as holy today as it was when instituted by Jesus Christ. Jesus is still present when this sacred service ordinance is celebrated. “It is at these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence.”—DA 656.

Unleavened Bread and Unfermented Wine (Grape Juice)—“Christ is still – No change
A Memorial of the Crucifixion—“As we receive the bread and wine - No change
A Proclamation of the Second Coming—“The Communion service - No change
Announcing the Communion Service—The communion service may - No change
Conducting the Communion Service—Length of Service—Time is - No change
Who May Participate—The Church practices open communion. All who - No change
Every Member Should Attend—“None should exclude themselves - No change
Who May Conduct the Communion Service—The communion service is to be conducted by an ordained/commissioned pastor or an ordained elder. Deacons, although ordained, cannot Deacons or deaconesses are not permitted to conduct the service.
Communion for Those Who Cannot Attend—If members are ill or - No change
SEC/ChManSub/ChManSub/ChMan/GCDO14AC/14AC/415-14GS to AM-15GCS

413-15GS BUSINESS MEETINGS - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 123 and 124, Business Meetings, to read as follows:

Business Meetings

The local church operates within defined roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the governing body constituency meeting of the local church. (See p. 29.) Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

Business meetings shall be held at least once a year. The pastor, or the board in consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting. Business meetings typically are announced a week or two in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service, with detail as to time and place. The pastor, an elder arranged by the pastor, or, in some cases, the conference president, serves as chairperson of the business meeting.

Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings. Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting. The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the Church Manual. (See pp. 124-127.)

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those reports, presentation of a proposed plan of action for the next year, including an annual budget, should be presented for approval. When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing. (See Notes, #7, pp. 176, 177.)

In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the church shall secure counsel from conference officers on all major matters.

Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or their designee may attend without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory. An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that congregation.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 124 and 125, Church Board and Its Meetings, to read as follows:

Church Board and Its Meetings

Definition and Function—Every church must have a functioning board whose members have been elected during a church business meeting. Its chief concern is having an active discipleship plan in place, which includes both the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism in all of its phases.

Included in church board responsibilities are:

1. An active discipleship plan.
2. Spiritual nurture and mentoring of members.
3. Evangelism in all of its phases.
5. Upholding of Christian standards.
6. Recommending changes in church membership.
7. Church Oversight of church finances.
8. Protection and care of church properties.
9. Coordination of church departments.

The gospel commission of Jesus makes evangelism, proclaiming the good news of the gospel, tells us that making disciples, which includes baptizing and teaching, is the primary function of the church (Matt. 28:18-20). It is, therefore, also the primary function of the board, which serves as the chief committee of the church. When the board devotes its first interests and highest energies to every-member evangelism, most problems are alleviated or prevented, and a strong, positive influence is felt in the spiritual life and growth of members.

The board is elected by the members at the time of the regular election of officers. (See pp. 70, 71.)
Spiritual Nurture—Christ’s love for the Church needs to be manifested within the Church by His followers. True discipleship entails not only Biblical teaching (Matt. 28:20), but also a passionate commitment to loving our fellow believers unconditionally. This was the heart of Christ’s message to His disciples as He faced the cross (John 15:9-13). Christ’s command to them applies to us: that we “love one another.” Ellen G White’s powerful insight into this historical scene is still vital for us: “This love is the evidence of their discipleship.”—DA 677, 678.

Therefore, it is one of the primary functions of the board to ensure that members are nurtured and mentored in a personal, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

Discipleship—The purpose of the Church as the body of Christ is to intentionally disciple members, so that they continue in an active and fruitful relationship with Christ and His Church.

Discipleship is based on an ongoing, lifelong relationship with Jesus. The believer commits to “abiding in Christ” (John 15:8), to being trained for fruitful discipleship by sharing Jesus with others, as well as to leading other members to also be faithful disciples.

The Church, individually and collectively, shares responsibility for ensuring that every church member remains part of the body of Christ.

Membership—In Membership—the board is elected by the members at the time of the regular election of officers. (See pp. 70, 71.) In addition to conference-appointed pastors, the church should elect a representative board that includes the following officers:

- Elders
- Head deacon
- Head deaconess
- Treasurer
- Clerk
- Interest coordinator
- Adventist Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader
- Adventist Men’s coordinator
- Adventist Youth Ministries director Society leader
- Adventurer Club director
- Ambassador Club director
- Bible school coordinator
- Children’s ministries leader
- Church music coordinator
- Communication committee chairperson or communication secretary
- Community Services and/or Dorcas Society leader
- Education secretary
Family ministries leader
Health ministries leader
Home and School Association leader
Pathfinder Club leader
Personal ministries leader and secretary
Public campus ministries director/coordinator
Publishing ministries coordinator
Religious liberty leader
Sabbath school superintendent
Stewardship ministries leader
Women’s ministries leader
Young adults leader

In some cases, depending on the size of the membership, the board may not include all of this list or may add additional members. The pastor appointed by the conference to serve the church always is a member of the board.

Officers—The chairperson of the board is the conference-appointed - No change
Meetings—Because the work of the board is vital to the - No change

Work of the Board

1. The most important item on the agenda should be planning the evangelization of the church.

2. Study membership lists and initiate plans for reconnecting (reclaiming) members who have separated from the church.

3. Train church leadership in how to encourage intentional spiritual growth in themselves and others.

4. Evangelize the outreach (missionary) territory of the church. In addition, once each quarter an entire meeting should be devoted to plans for evangelism. The board will study conference recommendations for evangelistic programs and methods and how they can be implemented locally. The pastor and the board will initiate and develop plans for public evangelistic meetings, campaigns.

2. 5. Coordinating outreach programs of departments. The church board is responsible for coordinating the work of all church departments. Each department develops its plans for outreach within its own sphere. To avoid conflict in timing and competition in securing volunteers, timing, competition in
securing volunteers, and to achieve maximum beneficial results, coordination is essential. Before completing and announcing plans for any program, each department should submit its plans to the board for approval. The departments also report to the board on the progress and results of their outreach programs. The board may suggest how departmental programs can contribute to the preparation, conduct, and follow-up of a public evangelistic campaign.

3. Encourage the personal ministries department to enlist all members and children in some form of personal outreach (missionary) service. Training classes should be conducted in various lines of outreach ministry.

4. Encourage the interest coordinator to ensure that every interest is personally and promptly followed up by an assigned layperson.

5. Encourage each department to report at least quarterly to the board and to members at business meetings or in Sabbath meetings in regards to spiritual nurture and evangelism.

6. Receive regular reports. The board should consider details of church business and receive regular reports of the treasurer on the church’s finances. The board should study the membership record and inquire into the spiritual standing of all members and provide for visits to sick, discouraged, or backslidden members. Other officers should periodically report.

Committees of the Board—The board should permit no other business - No change
RECOMMENDED, To add a new section, Finance Committee, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, following Church Board and Its Meetings, on page 127, to read as follows:

Finance Committee

Each church should have a mission-driven, broadly-based consultative financial planning and budgeting process with a committee structure that can give detailed review to the ongoing financial planning and budgeting. In some cases, this may take the form of a finance committee. In other cases, in smaller churches, this process may be handled directly by the church board. If the church establishes a separate committee for this purpose, the responsibilities should include reviewing budget requests and the review of the annual operating budget as well as a review of the financial position of the church as reflected in the financial statements. The approval of the budget and the review of the financial statement shall then be recommended to the church board and onward to the business meeting of the church for action.
RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 127 and 128, Youth Meetings, to read as follows:

Youth Meetings

Leaders of the church’s various youth groups should schedule regular meetings that involve the church’s young people in meaningful activities that will tie them closer to the church and train them for useful service. (See also pp.100-105.)

**Senior Youth Ministries Meetings (Ambassadors and Young Adults)—**Senior Youth Ministries meetings should convene on a regular schedule and focus on developing the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical characteristics of the church’s youth. Meetings also provide Christian social interaction and witnessing programs supporting the soul-winning plans of the church. For resources, see Notes #9, p. 177.

**Public Campus Ministries Meetings—**Where the church has appointed a Public Campus Ministries director/coordinator, meetings should be organized to care for the special needs of public college/university students in consultation with and support of the Adventist Youth Ministries Committee.

**Junior Youth Ministries Meetings (Adventurers and Pathfinders)—**Junior Youth Ministries meetings are similar in purpose to Senior Youth Ministries, but involve junior youth. Adventurer Club meetings provide specialized programs for primary/early school-age children designed to complement and strengthen parental involvement in early childhood development, while Pathfinder Club meetings provide specialized indoor and outdoor activities for the holistic development of children from 10 to 15 years old. Meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies as outlined in the club manuals and in coordination with other youth-related and family-related organizations of the church.

**Adventist Youth Society Meetings—**Adventist Youth Society meetings should meet on a regular schedule and focus on developing the spiritual, mental, and physical characteristics of the church’s youth. Meetings also provide Christian social interaction and witnessing programs supporting the soul-winning plans of the church. The Adventist youth ministries committee encourages and coordinates Adventist Youth Society activities and those of other youth organizations. (See p. 102.) For resources, see Notes, #9, p. 177.

**Adventist Junior Youth Society Meetings—**Adventist Junior Youth Society meetings are similar in purpose to Adventist Youth Society meetings but involve junior youth. If there is a church school, the Adventist Junior Youth Society is usually a part of the school’s spiritual curriculum. (See Notes, #10, p. 177.)
Ambassador Club Meetings—Ambassador Club meetings provide specialized programs to meet the needs of youth, ages 16 through 21, and promote their involvement in the Church. Its meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies and in coordination with other youth/young adult ministries of the local church.

Pathfinder Club Meetings—The Pathfinder Club meetings provide specialized programs for junior youth and in some areas have replaced the Adventist Junior Youth Society meetings. Churches where both function should coordinate their activities. Pathfinders will meet according to conference departmental policy.

Adventurer Club Meetings—Adventurer Club meetings provide specialized programs for primary/early school-age children designed to complement and strengthen parental involvement in early childhood development. Meetings and other activities are to be carried out according to conference policies as outlined in the club manuals and in coordination with other youth-related and family-related organizations of the church.
Revised 02-02-15tkb

SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/GCDO14AC/14AC/ChMan/14AC/416-14GS to AM-15GCS

414-15GS MARRIAGE - CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 13, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, pages 148 to 150, Marriage, to read as follows:

Marriage

Marriage is a divine institution established by God Himself before the Fall, when everything, including marriage, was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). “God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honorable’; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise.”—AH 25, 26.

God intended the marriage of Adam and Eve to be the pattern for all future marriages, and Christ endorsed this original concept: “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matt. 19:4-6). Marriage, thus instituted by God, is a monogamous, heterosexual relationship between one male and one female.

Marriage is a lifelong commitment of husband and wife. As such, marriage is a public, lawfully binding lifelong commitment of a man and a woman to each other and between the couple and God (Mark 10:2-9; Rom. 7:2). Paul indicates that the commitment that Christ has for the church is a model of the relationship between husband and wife (Eph. 5:31, 32). God intended marriage to be as permanent as Christ’s relationship with the church.

Sexual intimacy within marriage is a sacred gift from God to the human family. It is an integral part of marriage, reserved for marriage only (Gen. 2:24; Prov. 5:5-20). Such intimacy, designed to be shared exclusively between husband and wife, promotes ever-increasing closeness, happiness, and security, and provides for the perpetuation of the human race.

Unity in marriage is achieved by mutual respect and love. No one is superior (Eph. 5:21-28). “Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest toward each other.”—7T 46. God’s Word condemns violence in personal relationships (Gen. 6:11, 13; Ps. 11:5; Isa. 58:4, 5; Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:19-21). It is the spirit of Christ to love and accept, to seek to affirm and build others up, rather than to abuse or demean them (Rom. 12:10; 14:19; Eph. 4:26; 5:28, 29; Col. 3:8-14; 1 Thess. 5:11). There is no room among Christ’s followers for tyrannical control and the abuse of power (Matt. 20:25-28; Eph. 6:4). Violence in the setting of marriage and family is abhorrent (see AH 343).
“Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other.”—7T 47.

The entrance of sin adversely affected marriage. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the oneness that they had known with God and with each other (Gen. 3:6-24). Their relationship became marked with guilt, shame, blame, and pain. Wherever sin reigns, its sad effects on marriage include alienation, unfaithfulness, neglect, abuse, sexual perversion, domination of one partner by the other, violence, separation, desertion, and divorce.

Marriages involving more than one husband and one wife are also an expression of the effects of sin on the institution of marriage. Such marriages, though practiced in Old Testament times, are not in harmony with the divine design. God’s plan for marriage requires His people to transcend the mores of popular culture that conflict with the biblical view.

The Christian concept of marriage includes the following:

1. Divine Ideal to Be Restored in Christ—In redeeming the world from - No change
2. Oneness and Equality to Be Restored in Christ—The gospel - No change
3. Grace Available for All—God seeks to restore to wholeness - No change
4. Role of the Church—Moses in the Old Testament and Paul - No change
1 ARPubBd to TNCW-15GCS
2
3 158-15GS  ADVENTIST REVIEW—DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE
4
5 RECOMMENDED, To change the name of the Adventist Review department to Adventist
6 Review Ministries.