

MISSION STATEMENT of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

(As amended by the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States of America, on October 13, 2009.)

Our Mission—The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make disciples of all people, communicating the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and unite with His remnant Church, disciplining them to serve Him as Lord, and preparing them for His soon return.

Our Method—We pursue this mission under the guidance and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit through:

1. **Preaching**—Accepting Christ's commission (Matt 28:18-20), we proclaim to all the world in these last days the everlasting gospel of God's love, most fully revealed in His Son's life, ministry, atoning death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry. Recognizing the Bible to be God's infallible revelation of His will, we present its full message, including the second advent of Christ and the continuing authority of His Ten Commandment law with its reminder

of the seventh-day Sabbath.

2. **Teaching**—Acknowledging that development of mind and character is essential to God's redemptive plan, we promote the growth of a mature understanding of and relationship to God, His Word, and the created universe.

3. **Healing**—Affirming the biblical principles of the well-being of the whole person, we make the preservation of health and the healing of the sick a priority and through our ministry to the poor and oppressed, cooperate with the Creator in His compassionate work of restoration.

4. **Discipling**—Affirming the continued spiritual growth and development of all members, we nurture the newly converted, instruct them in righteous living, train them for effective witness, and encourage their responsive obedience to God's will.

Our Vision—In harmony with the great prophecies of the Scriptures, we see as the climax of God's plan the restoration of all His creation to full harmony with His perfect will and righteousness.

CONSTITUTION of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*

(As revised at the 59th Session held in Atlanta, United States of America, June 24 to July 3, 2010.)

ARTICLE I—NAME

This organization shall be known as the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

ARTICLE II—PURPOSE

The purpose of the General Conference is to teach all nations the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the commandments of God.

ARTICLE III—DIVISIONS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference conducts much of its work through its divisions, which in turn are comprised of unions in specific areas of the world. Each division of the General Conference is authorized to carry out responsibilities in the territory assigned to it. It shall act in full harmony with the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, the General Conference *Working Policy*, and actions of the Executive Committee.

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Conference *Working Policy*, and actions of the Executive Committee.

In order to carry the authority of the General Conference, the actions of division committees shall, of necessity, be in harmony with and complementary to the decisions of the General Conference in Session, and the actions of the General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions.

ARTICLE IV—MEMBERSHIP

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

a. All unions that have been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in Session.

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

1) Local conferences

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

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 *Adventist World* in three consecutive issues 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 special sessions of the General Conference at such time and place as it considers proper, by means of a notice as provided for in Sec. 1., and the transactions of such special sessions shall have the same force as those of the regular sessions.

Sec. 3. At least one-third of the total delegates authorized hereinafter under Sec. 5. of Article V, must be present at the

opening meeting of any regular or specially called General Conference Session to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Once the Session is declared open, the delegates remaining present shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 4. The election of officers and the voting on all matters of business shall be by viva-voce vote, or as designated by the Chair, unless otherwise requested by a majority of the delegates present.

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

a. Regular delegates.

b. Delegates at large.

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

Sec. 6. Regular delegates shall represent the General Conference's member units as defined in Article IV, as follows:

a. Delegates representing union conferences and union of churches conferences having division affiliation shall be appointed by the respective union executive committee.

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

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

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

e. Delegates representing conferences and missions directly attached to divisions shall be appointed by the respective division executive committees in consultation with the organizations concerned.

f. Delegates representing division institutions, the number of whom shall correspond to the number of division institutions within each division, shall be appointed by the respective division executive committees in consultation with the organizations concerned.

g. Delegates representing union conferences and union of churches conferences directly attached to the General Conference shall be appointed by the executive committee of the respective attached entity.

h. Delegates representing union missions, union of churches missions, and local conferences and missions directly attached to the General Conference shall be appointed by the General Conference Executive Committee in consultation with the organizations concerned.

Sec. 7. Regular delegates shall be allotted on the following basis:

a. Each union conference shall be entitled to two delegates other than its president (who is a delegate at large) without regard to membership size.

b. Each union mission shall be entitled to one delegate other than its president (who is a delegate at large) without regard to membership size.

c. Each union of churches conference shall be entitled to one delegate other than its president (who is a delegate at large) without regard to membership size.

d. Each union of churches mission is represented by its president (who is a delegate at large).

e. Each local conference shall be entitled to two delegates without regard to membership size.

f. Each local mission* shall be entitled to one delegate without regard to membership size.

g. Each division shall be entitled to additional delegates based upon its membership as a proportion of the world Church membership. The total number of delegates from all divisions under this provision shall not exceed 400. The resulting quota of division delegates under this provision shall be distributed first to the unions that are affiliated with that division, based on each union's proportion of the division membership. Any unallocated delegate entitlements under this process shall be allocated at the discretion of the division executive committee.

h. Unused quotas of regular delegates allocated to unions and unions of churches may be reallocated by the divisions.

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 Committee.

b. Associate directors/secretaries of General Conference departments and associations.

c. Twenty delegates from General Conference appointed staff. Such delegates shall be selected by the General Conference Executive Committee upon recommendation from the General Conference Administrative Committee.

d. Twenty delegates for each division.

e. Each division shall be entitled to additional delegates corresponding to the number of division institutions within its territory.

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. The number of these delegates shall be 300.

Sec. 9. Division administrations shall consult with unions to ensure that the entire division delegation shall be comprised of Seventh-day Adventists in regular standing, at least 50 percent of whom shall be laypersons, pastors, teachers, and nonadministrative employees, of both genders, and representing a range of age groups and nationalities. The majority of the above 50 percent shall be laypersons. Delegate selections from General Conference and division institutions, and those selected under Sec. 8.d. above, shall not be required to satisfy the quota for laity.

Sec. 10. Credentials to sessions shall be issued by the General Conference to those appointed in harmony with the provisions of this article.

Sec. 11. Calculations for all delegate allotments, as provided for in this article, shall be based upon:

a. The membership as of December 31 of the second year preceding the General Conference Session.

b. The number of denominational entities eligible for inclusion in determining quotas and which are in existence as of December 31 of the second year preceding the General Conference Session.

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

ARTICLE VI—ELECTION

Sec. 1. The following shall be elected at each regular session of the General Conference:

a. A president, vice presidents, a secretary, an undersecretary, associate secretaries, division secretaries, a treasurer, an undertreasurer, associate treasurers, division treasurers, general field secretaries, a director and associate directors of the General Conference Auditing Service, and a director/secretary and associate director/secretary (directors/secretaries) of each duly organized General Conference department and association as specified in Article X, Sec. 1. of the General Conference Bylaws.

b. A General Conference Auditing Service Board as provided for in the General Conference Bylaws, Article VIII, Sec. 2. a.

Sec. 2. The following shall be approved by vote of the Executive Committee at a subsequent meeting, following recommendations from the divisions:

Other persons to serve as members of the General Conference Executive Committee as provided for in Article VIII, Sec. 1. b.

ARTICLE VII—APPOINTMENT

The following shall be appointed at the first Annual Council of the Executive Committee following a regular session: a director of Archives and Statistics, a director and associate directors of the Biblical Research Institute, a director and research scientists of the Geoscience Research Institute, editors and associate editors for the principal denominational journals prepared at the General Conference, and any other non-departmental positions which have been established and

filled by General Conference Executive Committee appointment. This Annual Council shall also appoint the membership of standing committees and various operating boards which have been established and filled by General Conference Executive Committee appointment.

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 in Article VI, Sec. 1. except the director and associate directors of the General Conference Auditing Service and the associate directors/ secretaries of General Conference departments and associations.

2) Presidents of unions, past presidents of the General Conference holding credentials from the General 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.

b. *Elected Members*—1) Three laypersons and one church pastor from each division without regard to membership size up to 500,000 members. One additional church pastor or other frontline denominational employee for each additional 500,000 members or major portion thereof. The above laypersons, pastors, and other denominational employees shall be selected by each division executive committee from individuals recommended by the union executive committees and shall be Seventh-day Adventists in regular standing.

2) No fewer than fifteen and no more than twenty additional members selected by the General Conference Executive Committee from denominational retirees and current employees, including pastors, teachers, and other frontline employees.

3) No fewer than fifteen and no more than twenty members selected by the General Conference Executive Committee from laity including young adults.

ARTICLE IX—OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Sec. 1. The officers of the General Conference shall be a president, vice presidents, a secretary, an undersecretary, associate secretaries, a treasurer, an undertreasurer, and associate treasurers. It is the duty of these officers, in consultation with one another, to carry forward the work according to plans and programs voted by the General Conference in session and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the General Conference Executive Committee.

Sec. 2. *Executive Officers*: The president, secretary, and treasurer are the executive officers, and shall carry forward the work in consultation with one another.

Sec. 3. *President*: The president is the first officer of the General Conference and shall report to the General Conference Executive Committee in consultation with the secretary and the treasurer. He or his designee shall preside at the sessions of the General Conference, act as chair of the General Conference Executive Committee, serve in the general interests of the General Conference as the General Conference Executive Committee shall determine, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to such office. The General Conference president shall be an ordained minister of experience.

Sec. 4. *Vice Presidents*: Each vice president shall assist the president in the general administrative work of the General Conference or preside over a division territory.

Sec. 5. *Secretary, undersecretary, and associate secretaries*: The secretary, in the performance of the executive responsibilities,

shall report to the General Conference Executive Committee after consultation with the president. The secretary shall be responsible for keeping the minutes of the proceedings of the General Conference Sessions and meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee, for maintaining correspondence with church organizations, and for the performance of such other duties as usually pertain to such office. The undersecretary and associate secretaries shall assist the secretary in this work.

Sec. 6. *Treasurer, undertreasurer, and associate treasurers*: The treasurer, in the performance of the executive responsibilities, shall report to the General Conference Executive Committee after consultation with the president. The treasurer shall be responsible for providing financial leadership to the General Conference which will include, but not be limited to, receiving, safeguarding, and disbursing all funds in harmony with the actions of the General Conference Executive Committee, for providing financial information to the president and to the General Conference Executive Committee, and for the performance of such other duties as usually pertain to such office. The undertreasurer and associate treasurers shall assist the treasurer in this work.

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, shall serve until their reelection, or until their replacement is elected. A person who is not reelected 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 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, unless government requirements dictate otherwise, is not subject to division retirement policies, which may determine specific ages for mandatory retirements.

Sec. 2. *Members of the General Conference Executive Committee* provided for in Article VIII, Sec. 1. a. 2) shall serve for the period of time they hold the office that entitled them to membership on the General Conference Executive Committee.

Sec. 3. *Members of the General Conference Executive Committee* provided for in Article VIII, Sec. 1. b. shall serve, except for resignation or other termination, from the time of their selection until their replacements are selected by a division executive committee.

Sec. 4. Those persons who, by virtue of holding elected position, have been members of the General Conference Executive Committee at the beginning of the current session but who have not been reelected shall be entitled to voice and vote at any General Conference Executive Committee convened during the session.

Sec. 5. All those who are appointed to serve the General Conference as provided for in Article VII, or who are appointed by the General Conference Executive Committee during the quinquennium, shall serve from the time they take up their duties and, except for resignation or other termination, shall continue until their reelection/reappointment or the election/appointment of their replacement at the first Annual Council following the next regular session or until the position is terminated by action of the General Conference Executive Committee.

Sec. 6. Service as outlined in Sec. 1. to Sec. 5. above may be terminated as provided for in General Conference Bylaws, Article XIII, Sec. 1.

ARTICLE XI—CORPORATIONS

Sec. 1. The establishment of corporations to serve the General Conference shall be authorized by the General Conference Executive Committee.

Sec. 2. The General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists is a legal entity formed to serve the General Conference in carrying out its purposes.

Sec. 3. At each regular General Conference Session, the del-

legates shall elect the directors of the General Conference Corporation.

ARTICLE XII—BYLAWS

At any regular or special session of the General Conference, the delegates may enact, amend, or repeal Bylaws by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting. Such actions may embrace any provision not inconsistent with the Constitution.

ARTICLE XIII—DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of the General Conference, any funds or assets remaining after all claims have been satis-

fied shall be transferred to a Seventh-day Adventist tax-exempt religious entity recommended by the General Conference Executive Committee. The dissolution process shall be in harmony with the requirements of all applicable federal and state laws.

ARTICLE XIV—AMENDMENTS

This Constitution or its Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at any session provided that, if it is proposed to amend the Constitution at a special session of the General Conference, notice of such purpose shall be given in the call for that special session.

BYLAWS of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

ARTICLE I—TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 1. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, hereinafter referred to as the General Conference, normally shall conduct its worldwide work through its divisions, each division to operate within a specified territory in harmony with General Conference policies.

Sec. 2. The duly organized divisions are: East-Central Africa Division, Euro-Africa Division, Euro-Asia Division, Inter-American 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 be made only provided each division and other territory affected is represented at the council by at least one of its officers, or in the case of an unorganized territory, by a senior church leader from that territory. An exception to the requirement of such representation shall be made in a condition of emergency. In such a case, the General Conference Executive Committee shall make whatever adjustments are necessary for the conduct of the work in the territories affected.

Sec. 4. Administrations of all organizations and institutions within a division's territory shall be responsible to their respective executive committees/boards and operate in harmony with division and General Conference Executive Committee actions and policies. General Conference institutions and fields without divisional affiliation shall operate in harmony with the General Conference Executive Committee and its policies.

ARTICLE II—SESSION COMMITTEES

Sec. 1. At each regular Session of the General Conference, such committees as may be found necessary, including the following, shall be elected for the duration of the Session to consider items of business that may be referred to them and to bring their reports and recommendations to the Session:

- Session Church Manual Committee
- Session Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- Session Nominating Committee
- Session Steering Committee

Sec. 2. Church Manual Committee: The chair of the Church Manual Committee shall be an officer of the General Conference.

Sec. 3. Constitution and Bylaws Committee: The chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be an officer of the General Conference.

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.

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.

2) The delegates at large currently employed by the General Conference or its institutions 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) shall select its representatives on the Nominating Committee to represent, as far as possible, the various geographical areas, organizational segments, and types of activity of the territory.

d. Those chosen as members of the Nominating Committee must be duly accredited delegates in attendance at the General Conference Session.

e. Delegates holding elected positions under the provisions of Article VI, Sec. 1. of the Constitution shall not be members of the Nominating Committee.

f. No delegate shall nominate more than one person for election to the Nominating Committee.

g. The Nominating Committee shall elect its own chair and secretary under the temporary chair of the president of the General Conference whose term is expiring.

h. The Nominating Committee shall limit its nominations to those positions for which budgetary provision has been made.

i. In order to expedite the work of the Nominating Committee, the representatives from each division shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time to meet and consider the personnel needs of their respective divisions and to make recommendations to the full Nominating Committee. Decisions of these groups shall not be binding on the Nominating Committee as a whole, but shall be submitted as recommendations which will be considered.

Sec. 5. Steering Committee: The Steering Committee shall be chaired by the General Conference President or his designee. Membership of the Steering Committee shall be recommended to the Session by the General Conference Executive Committee. The Steering Committee shall meet as necessary to:

- Manage and monitor progress of the Session and its programs,
- Determine and amend, if necessary, the sequencing of the Session's business agenda,