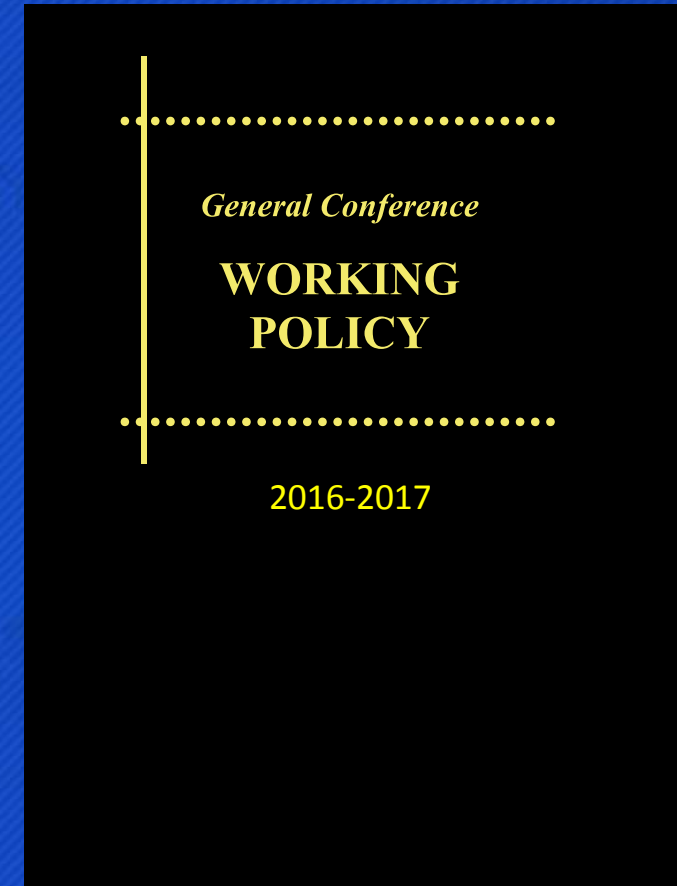


Purpose and History of GC Working Policy

Myron Iseminger, Undersecretary
Spring Meeting, 2017



**Policy allows us
to save time by
avoiding repeated
decision-making
on reoccurring
situations.**



The Purpose of Policy

- Ensures that the organization is administered consistently.
- Provides a framework for making sound decisions by the world leadership with respect to organizational procedures.

The Purpose of Policy

**“Where there is no counsel, the people fall;
But in the multitude of counselors there is
safety.”**

Proverbs 11:14 (NKJV)

The Purpose of Policy

- **Helps in the orientation and education of employees and volunteers.**
- **Protects the organization from autocratic and erratic leadership.**
- **Enables fair and equal treatment of people.**

The Purpose of Policy

- **Safeguards against fraud and other ethical failures by outlining appropriate procedures.**
- **Shields employees or volunteers from making serious mistakes.**
- **Protects an organization legally by demonstrating the proper intended practice.**

History of Working Policy

- **Votes and actions were recorded in official minutes.**
- **Limited review of previous minutes.**
- **Voted policies and standard Adventist practices were chiefly perpetuated in collective administrative memory.**

History of Working Policy

- **Memory no longer served effectively**
- **Diversity and inconsistency of practice crept in**
- **Need to collect, systematize and standardize the many policies and protocols voted by sessions and councils**

History of Working Policy

“It is essential for an efficient organization to have uniform regulations and a working policy for all its parts.”

Irwin H. Evans, “Important Resolutions for the Churches,” *The Church Officers’ Gazette*, March 1917, pg. 2.

History of Working Policy

“The union and local missions adopted a working policy in harmony with the General Conference constitution...This policy is a safeguard in mission fields where there is a continual agitation among some for independence of administration, and especially since many workers are young in experience or newly come into the faith.”

I. H. Evans, “The Far Eastern Division of the General Conference, *Review and Herald*, May 25, 1922, pg. 6

History of Working Policy

- **1922 GC Session:**
- **“Committee on Constitution and Working Policy”**
- **Made up of division officers and three world church administrators.**
- **The task proved greater than anticipated.**

History of Working Policy

“It was intended that this committee should function during the four years, and report its work at this session.” However, ‘under the pressure of business here at the General session, it has been found almost impossible to give that report concentrated study such as its importance demands. Therefore, it is recommended to refer the report to the Executive Committee, in which practically all these men who would be asked to give their concentrated study to such a document will be found.’

“Proceedings: Thirtieth Meeting,” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1926, pg. 2.

History of Working Policy

The intent of the process “is not to create new methods, but really to codify or gather together the actions we have taken regarding these things, and get them in workable form.”

“Proceedings: Thirtieth Meeting,” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1926, pg. 2.

History of Working Policy

Important actions are “scattered all through our minutes. The idea of a working policy is to collect these actions, state them briefly and concisely, and have them in a little pocket pamphlet, so that we can turn to it and see what the working policy is.”

“Proceedings: Thirtieth Meeting,” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1926, pg. 2.

History of Working Policy

- The 1926 GC Session voted to refer the responsibility of producing a working policy to the GC Executive Committee.
- That delegation of responsibility to the GC Executive Committee has continued over most of the policy's history.

History of Working Policy

“The General Conference officers, taking advantage of the presence of nearly all the division presidents, spent two days preceding the Council in a careful study of General Conference actions voted in former sessions and Councils...”

“Actions of the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee,” September 29-October 5, 1926, GC Archives, RG 1, LF 6375, pg. 20.

History of Working Policy

“A careful digest of these actions was prepared and will be brought out in a leaflet form for the use of executives and workers. This summary of General Conference actions will constitute a working policy, providing valuable information to our leaders in every part of the world field.”

“Actions of the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee,” September 29-October 5, 1926, GC Archives, RG 1, LF 6375, pg. 20.

History of Working Policy

- **First *Working Policy***
- **A 63-page digest of official actions taken by the General Conference Committee.**
- **Thereafter a revised, updated *Working Policy*, voted at Annual Council, was released once every two or three years, and from 1977 on, annually.**

History of Working Policy

“The operation of a well-defined working policy in harmony with organization has been one strong factor in binding and cementing the personnel of the body of Seventh-day Adventists together as one in purpose in Christ.”

H.W. Cottrell, “The Growth of Denominational Organizations,” *Review and Herald*, March 24, 1931, pg. 1

History of Working Policy

Publications:

Manual for Ministers (1925)

Working Policy (1926)

Church Manual (1932)

History of Working Policy

Policy Resources:

- bring unity to church practice around the world
- serve as an educational tool for new or inexperienced leaders
- contribute to efficiency by conveniently organizing best practice and committee actions
- maintain harmony across all levels of church structure

History of Working Policy

1926 Working Policy:

“Little pocket pamphlet” of 63 pages

2016-2017 GC Working Policy:

790 pages

Constitution, By-Laws
and Working Policy

Of the
General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists

Adopted 1996

General Conference
**WORKING
POLICY**

2017

History of Working Policy

Working Policy is not infallible. It can be changed. But it is a valuable tool based on biblical principles that in the hands of wise church leaders gives the church direction in its administrative decisions.

History of Working Policy

Policies have contributed to unity and effectiveness in our mission of sharing the Good News with the world in preparation for God's soon return.

History of Working Policy

Working Policy is one of the Holy Spirit's anchors that...

- **stabilizes church structure**
- **unifies action**
- **creates harmonious working relationships**
- **facilitates mission.**

