

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE WORKING POLICY



FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

OBJECTIVES OF THIS PRESENTATION

1. Help the participants appreciate the purpose of the General Conference Working Policy.
2. Help the participants appreciate the importance of the Model Constitutions and Operating Policies.

What is the GC Working Policy?

The General Conference Working Policy is the collection of the **Church's global leadership decisions** regarding how entities **live and work together**.



WHAT HOLDS OUR CHURCH TOGETHER?

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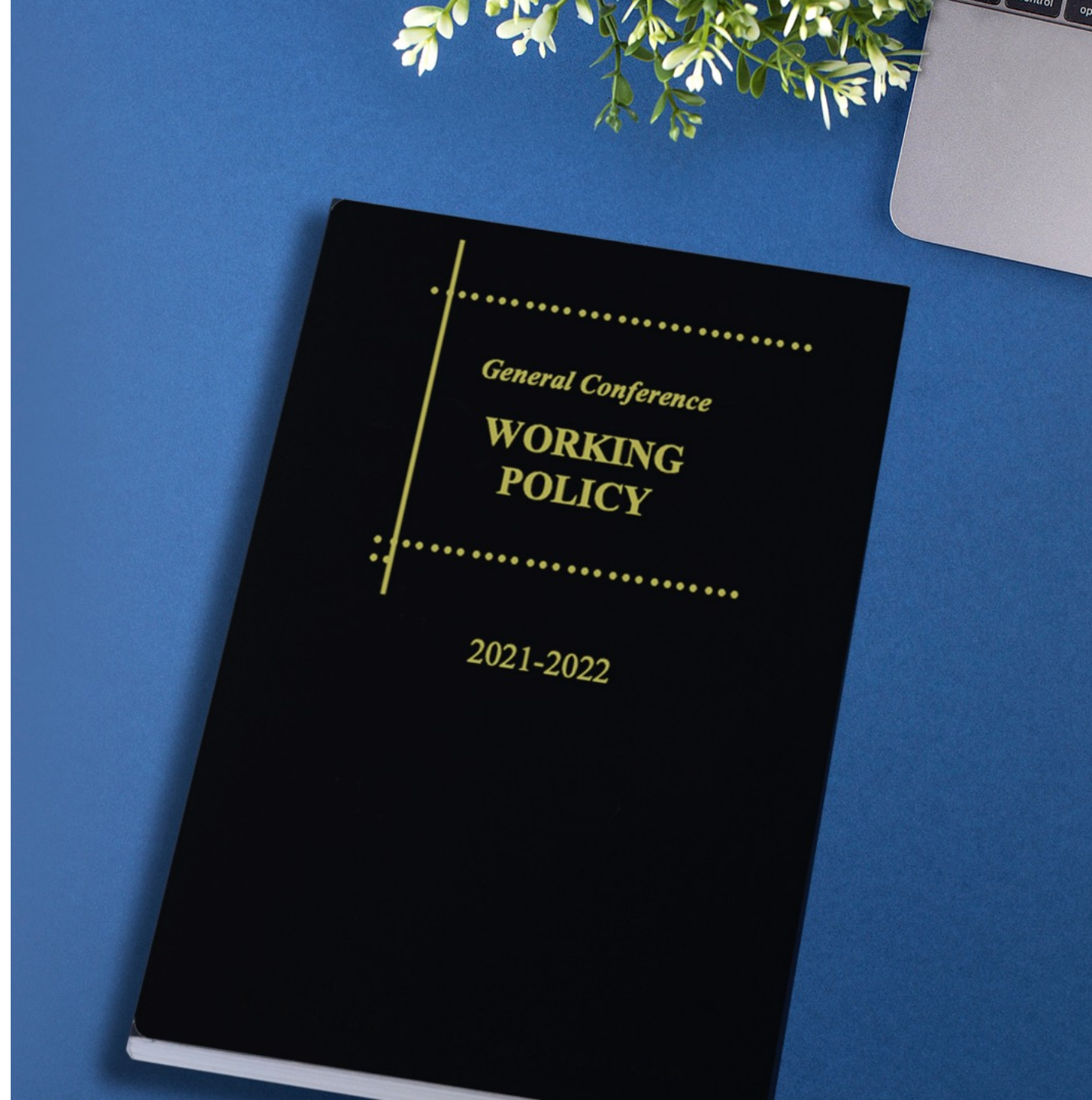
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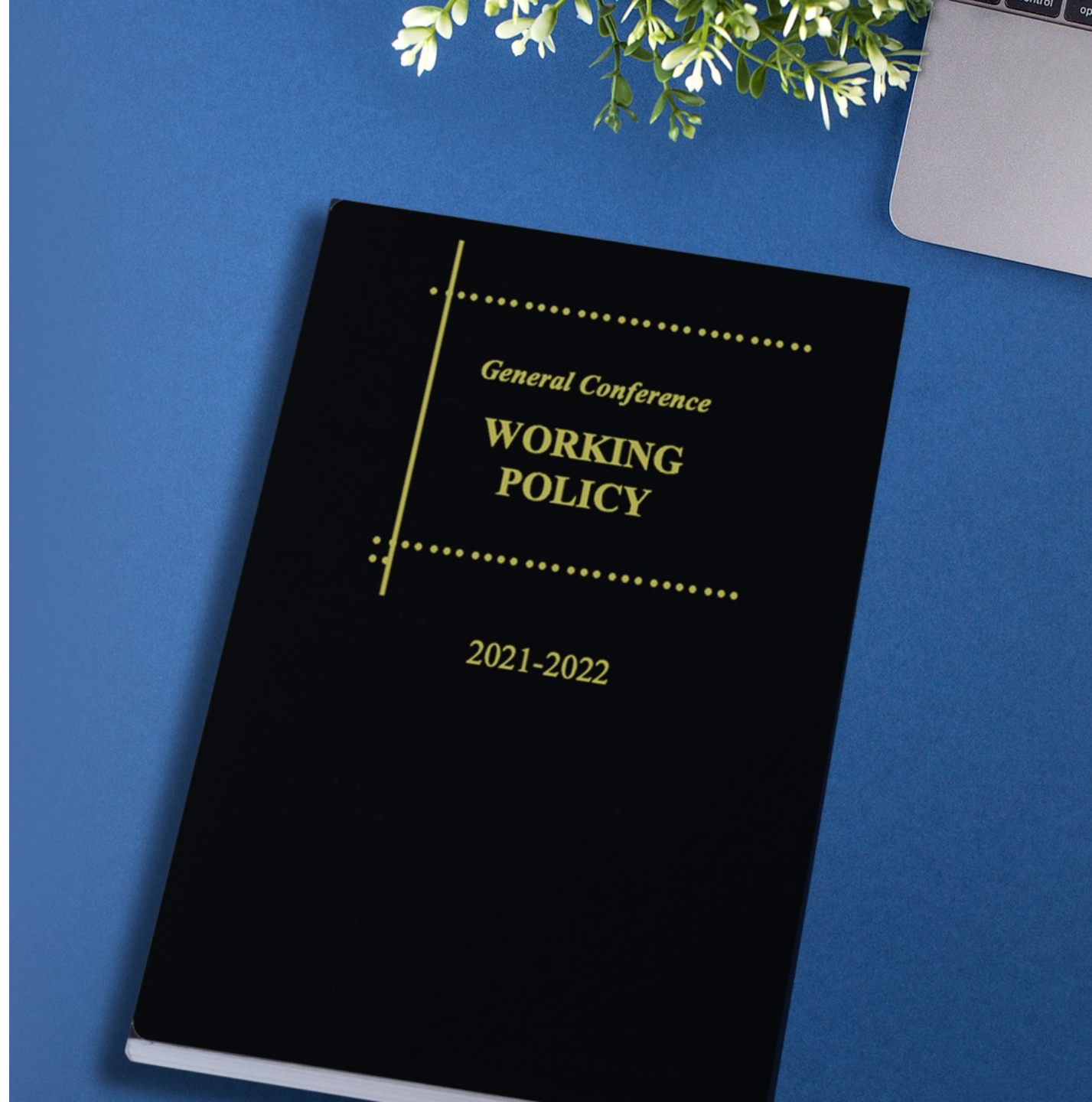


Policy is the **result** of unity, not the cause of it!

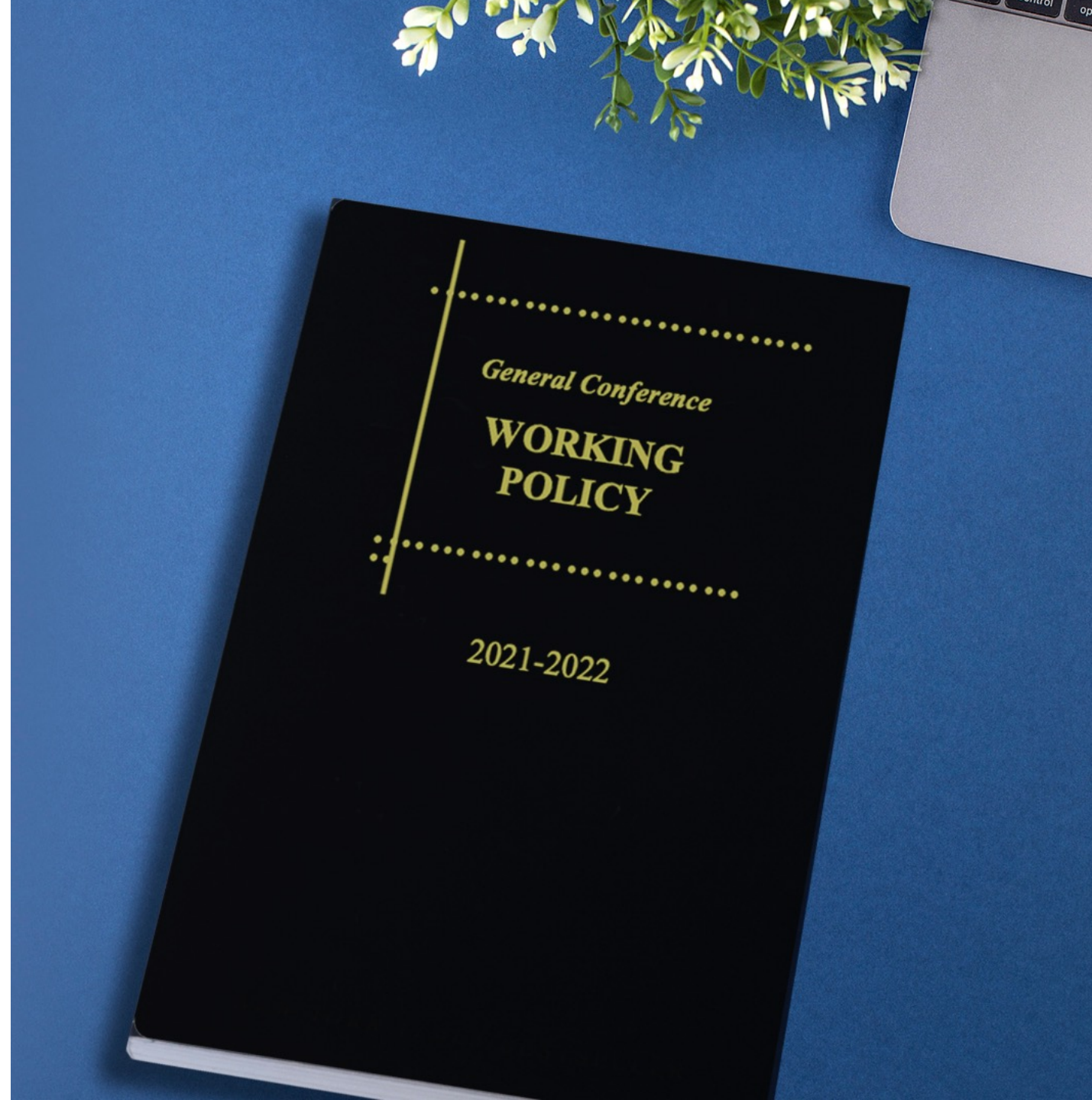
B 15 05 Authoritative Administrative Voice of the Church—The General Conference *Working Policy* contains the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference, the Mission Statement and the accumulated or revised policies adopted by General Conference Sessions and Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee. It is, therefore, the authoritative voice of the Church in all matters pertaining to the mission and to the administration of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in all parts of the world.



B 15 10 Adherence to Policy Required—1. The General Conference *Working Policy* shall be strictly adhered to by all organizations in every part of the world field. The work in every organization shall be administered in full harmony with the policies of the General Conference and of the divisions respectively. No departure from these policies shall be made without prior approval from the General Conference Executive Committee ...

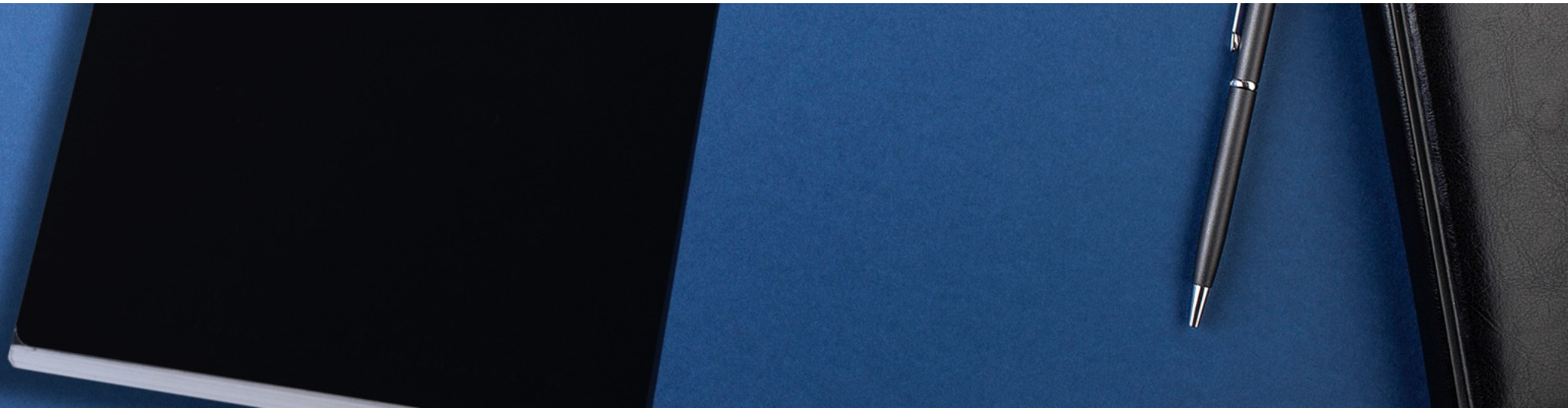


B 40 25 Unity Within Divisions—As the divisions seek to cooperate with one another by keeping in close contact with the General Conference, carrying out the General Conference policies agreed upon in council, so within the division all the organizations, union or local conference, should seek to maintain unity of action by keeping in close contact and counsel with the division office, carrying out policies agreed upon in division councils and executive committees.





The bottom line: Compliance with Working Policy is a standard of conduct for Seventh-day Adventist leaders and Seventh-day Adventist organizations.



GC WORKING POLICY SECTION D

Model Constitutions and
Operating Policies



MODEL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

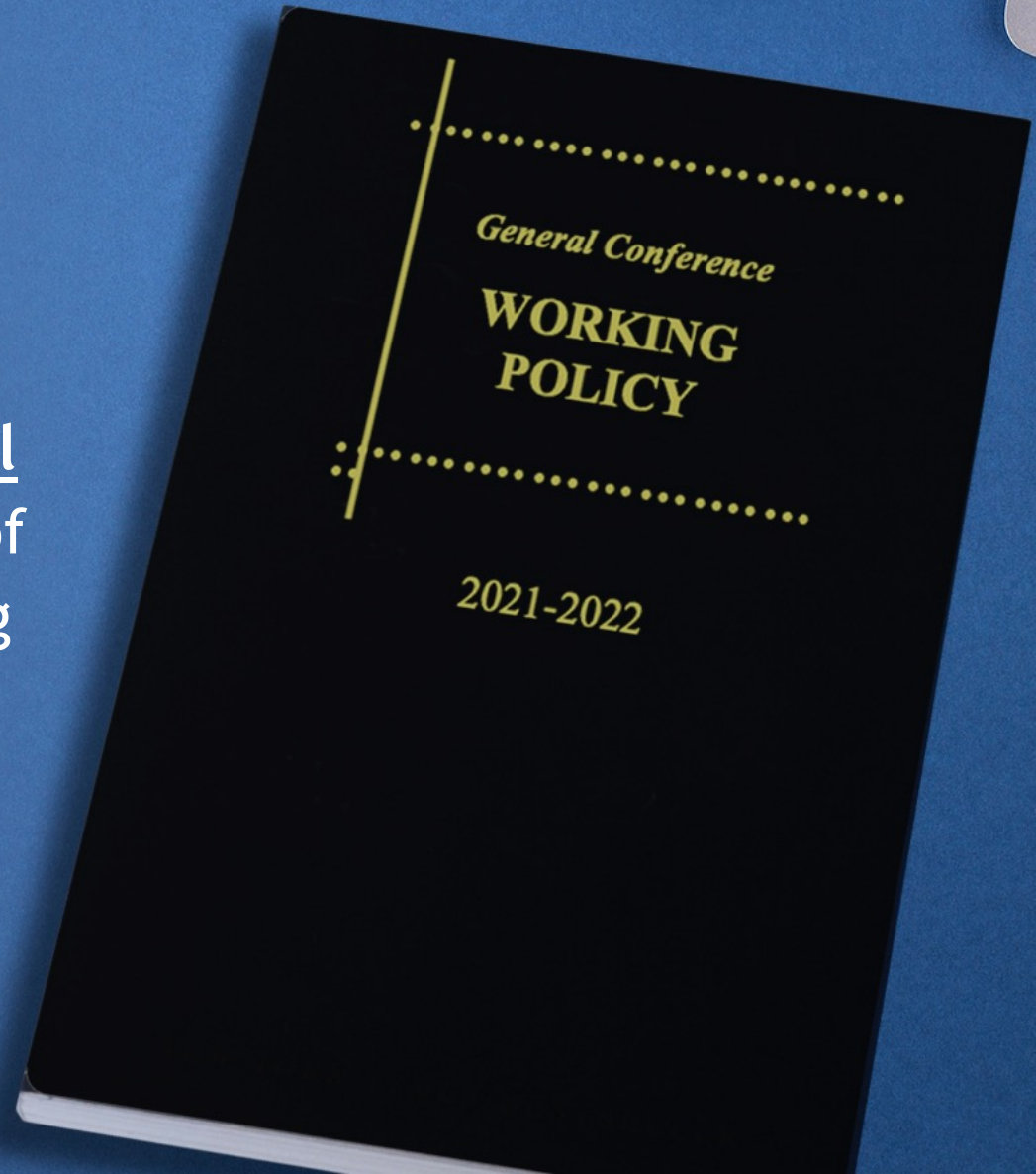
- Constitutions
- Bylaws
- Operating policies



BOLD PRINT and REGULAR PRINT

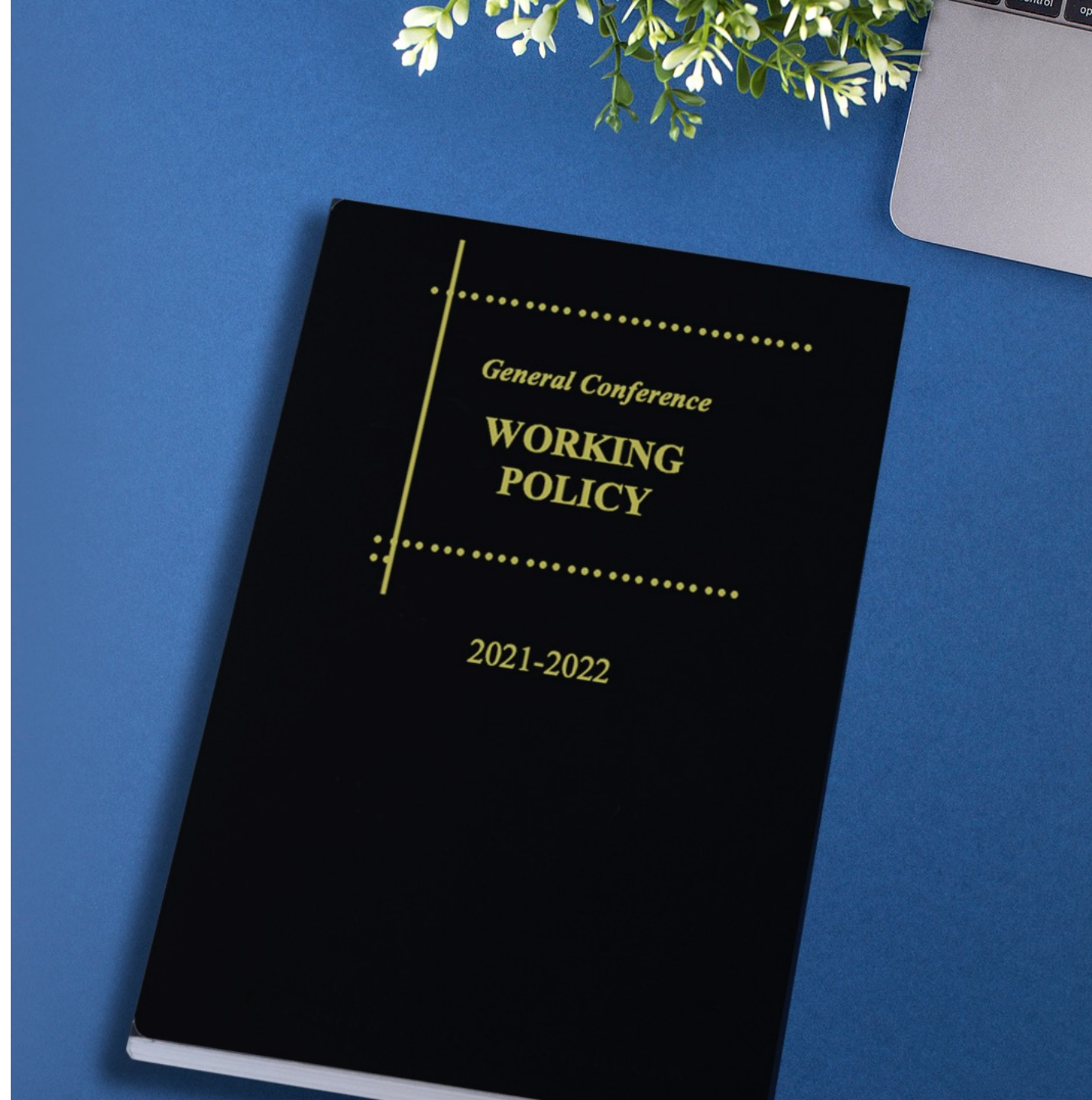
Sec. 1. Regular Meeting: This union conference shall hold a regular quinquennial constituency meeting at such time and place as the executive committee of the union conference shall designate. Notice of the time and place of the meeting of the delegates representing the members shall be given by

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

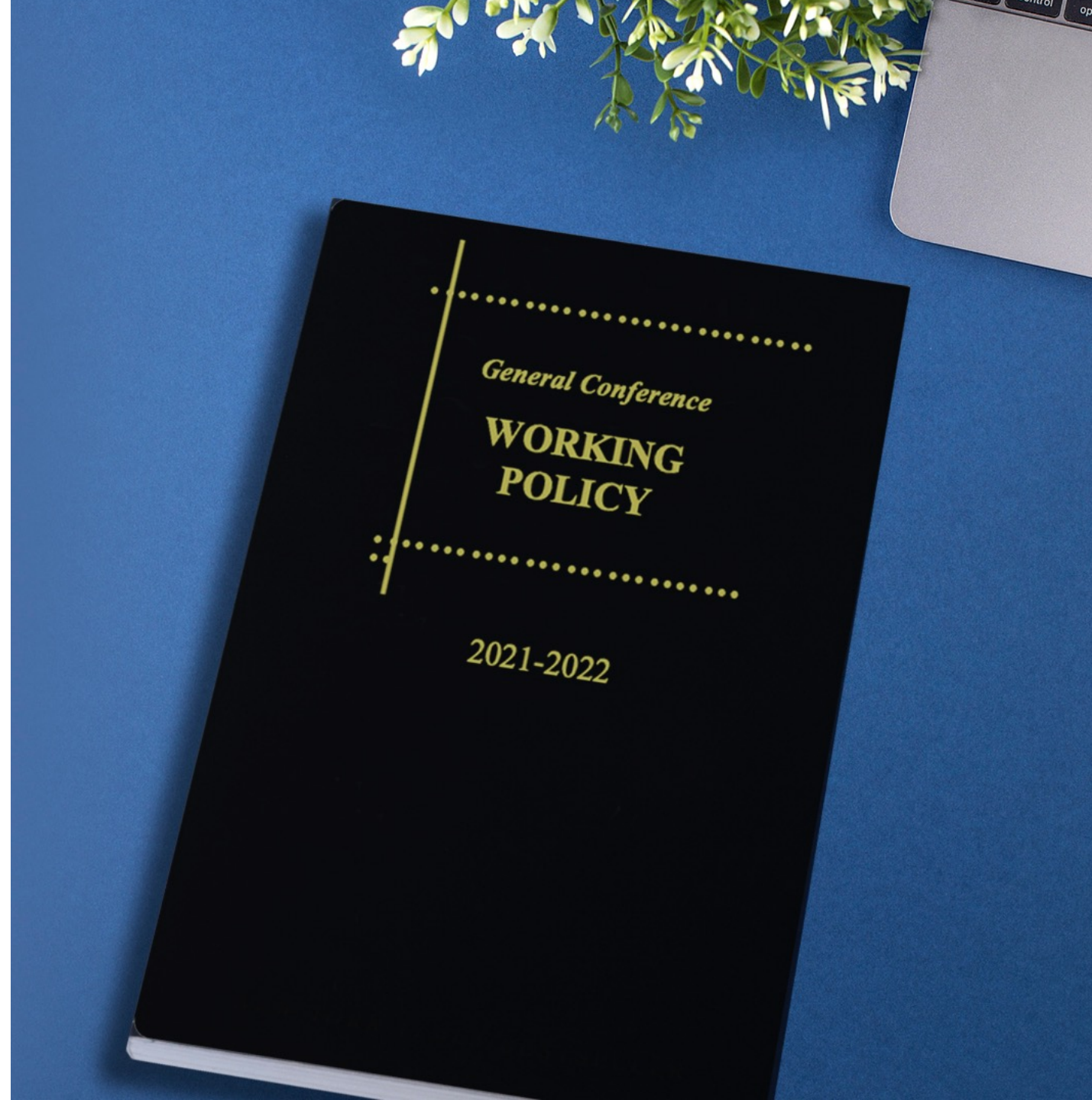


WHY SO MUCH BOLD PRINT?

Those sections of the model bylaws that appear in bold print are **essential to the unity of the Church** worldwide and **shall be included** in the bylaws as adopted by each union conference. Other sections of the model bylaws may be modified as set out in Bylaw Article XII, provided they continue to be in full harmony with the provisions of this model. (GCWP D 10 05)



Where specific cases require modification to the bold text, final approval for such modification shall be studied and approved by the GC Executive Committee after receiving recommendation from Division Executive Committee and ADCOM.
(GCWP D 10 05)



CONSTITUTION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

(As revised at the 60th Session held in San Antonio, Texas, United States of America,
July 2 to July 11, 2015)

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.

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.

WHY MODEL DOCUMENTS?

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- Constitution, bylaws and operating policies of all denominational organizations should be consistent with the Seventh-day Adventist concept of the church, its organization and governance.
- Constituency based system
- Recognition of the unity of entities based on mission, purpose and the belief that binds us together in a universal fellowship

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- Name
- Purpose
- Relationships
- Geographic territory
- Membership/Constituency
- Enactment of Bylaws*
- Dissolution/Disposition of Assets
- Amendments*

*These items not in “Operating Policy” for Missions

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(As revised
July 2 to July 11, 2015)

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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-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 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:

- a. Session Church Manual Committee
- b. Session Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- c. Session Nominating Committee
- d. Session Steering Committee

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- Principal Office
- Membership/Constituency Meetings
- Representation
- Constituency Meeting Committees
- Executive Committee
- Officers and Duties

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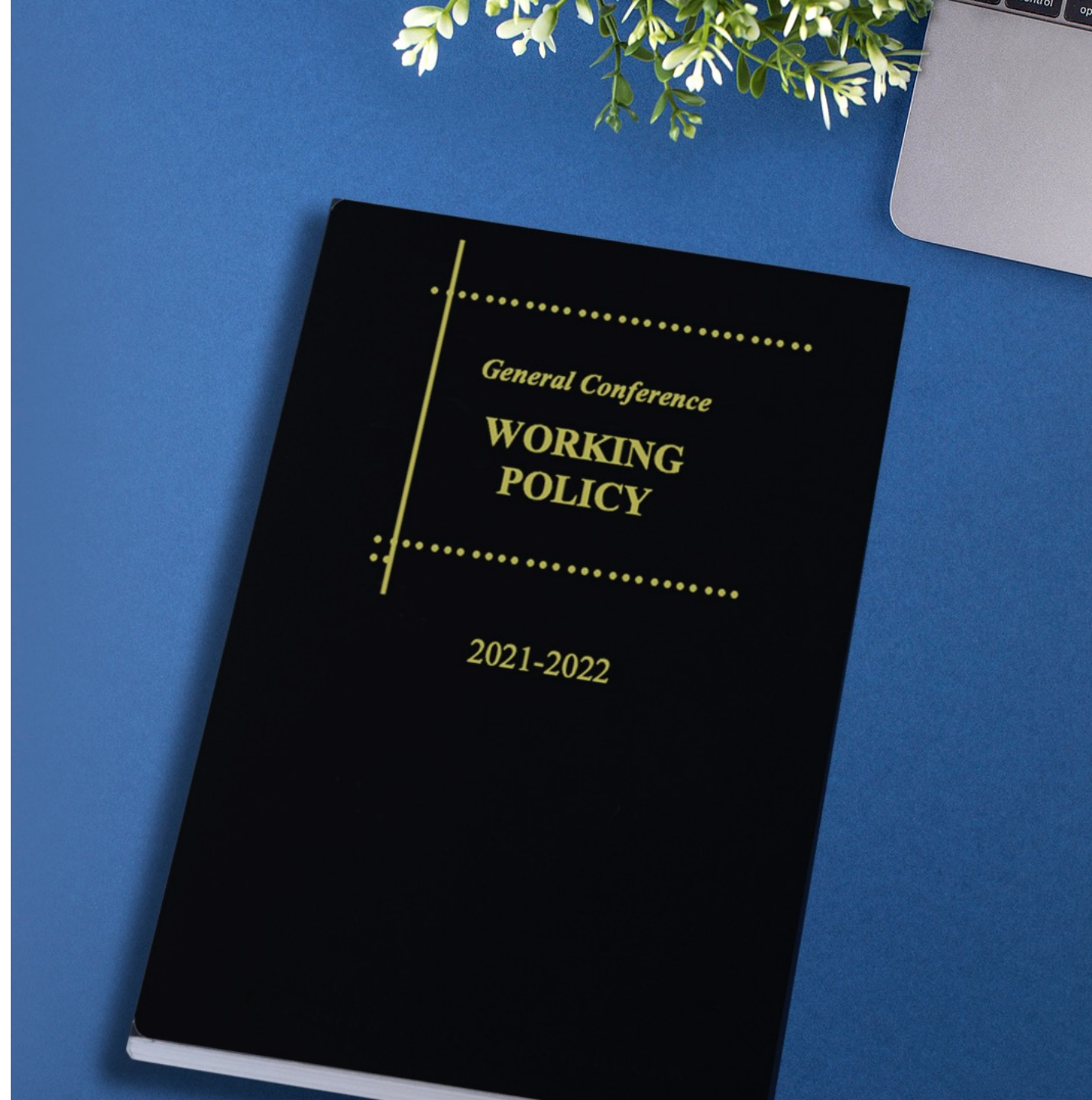
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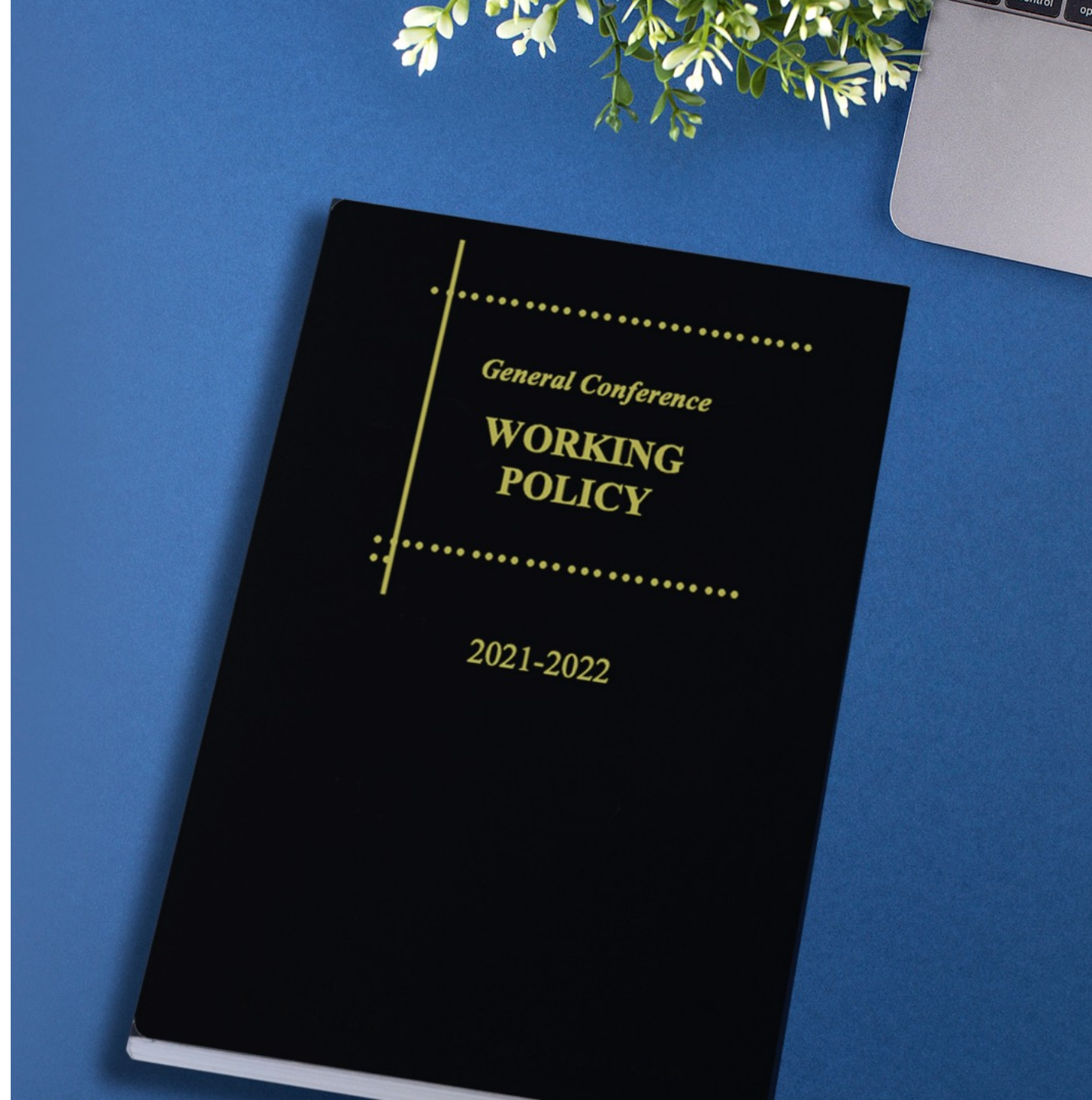
- Directors of Departments/Associations/Services
- Other Organizations
- Finance and Budget
- Board Committees including Employee Compensation Audit
- Indemnification
- Amendments

EXAMPLES OF **BOLD** SECTIONS

- Types of meetings (Regular and Special)
- Elections
- Delegates (elected and at large)
 - At large-Union-members of GC/Division Executive Committee
 - Conference-members of Union/Division Committee



- Constituency Meetings
 - Chair
 - Organizing Committee
 - Nominating Committee
- Voting
- Executive Committee
- Officers and their Duties
- Finances and Budget
- Process for Amendments to Bylaws



MODEL LANGUAGE

ARTICLE III—RELATIONSHIPS

The ____ Union Conference is a member unit of the global Seventh-day Adventist Church and is located in the territory of the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *The purposes, policies, and procedures of this union conference shall be in harmony with the working policies and procedures enacted by the executive committee of the _____ Division or the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This union conference shall pursue the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in harmony with the Fundamental Beliefs, programs, initiatives, and actions adopted and approved by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at its sessions.*

EXAMPLE

ARTICLE III—RELATIONSHIPS

The ____ Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is part of the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, a world Church organization. **In general**, the purposes, policies, and procedures of the Union shall be in harmony with the working policies and procedures enacted by the executive committee of the _____ Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, **to the extent that these are consistent with the articles of the Union's Constitution and Bylaws**. The Union shall pursue the mission of the Church within the **doctrinal** guidelines adopted and approved by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in its quinquennial sessions.

MODEL LANGUAGE

ARTICLE II

Sec. 2. Special Meeting: a. The executive committee of this union conference shall call a special constituency meeting when:

- 1) It is voted by the executive committee, or
- 2) It is voted by the delegates at any constituency meeting, or
- 3) It is requested by _____ percent of the executive committees of the conferences/missions within the union conference, or
- 4) It is voted by the _____ Division Executive Committee or the General Conference Executive Committee.

The date for such a meeting in response to paragraphs 3) and 4) above shall not be 1 more than 90 days from the date when the actions described in paragraphs 3) and 4) above 2 are communicated to the officers/executive committee of the union.

b. In the absence of a timely response by the union executive committee 5 to paragraphs 2) through 4) in Sec. 2. a. above, the Division Executive Committee or General Conference Executive Committee may call a special constituency meeting of the union conference and designate the time and place for such a meeting.

EXAMPLE 1

ARTICLE II

Section 2: Special Meeting

a. The Executive Committee of the Union shall call a special constituency meeting at such time and place as it deems proper, when:

- 1) Voted by the Executive Committee; or
- 2) Voted by a majority of delegates at any constituency meeting; or
- 3) Requested by four (4) or more local conferences following majority vote by their executive committees.

b. The agenda for special constituency meetings shall be included in the notice of the meeting, and business transacted must be limited to the agenda.

EXAMPLE 2

6. VOTING AT SESSIONS

1. Resolutions are to be decided on a show of hands unless a ballot is properly demanded.
2. Each Delegate to a Session may present in person or by proxy has one vote both on a show of hands and a ballot.

7. PROXIES

A Delegate may validly appoint a proxy by notice in writing which:

- a. states the name and address of the delegate appointing the proxy;
- b. identifies the person appointed to be that delegate's proxy and the Meeting in relation to which that person is appointed;
- c. is signed by or on behalf of the delegate appointing the proxy, or is authenticated in such manner as the Secretary may determine.
- d. A proxy need not be a Delegate of the Session.