

2024

ANNUAL COUNCIL

CHURCH MANUAL AGENDA

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1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 418-24GSa ORGANIZING A COMPANY - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 5, Organizing, Uniting, and
7 Dissolving Churches, pages 38-40, Organizing a Company, to read as follows:

8
9 Organizing a Company

10
11 Where a number of isolated believers reside near one another or where they belong to a
12 small group, house church, or church planting core group, they should consider forming a
13 company of believers for fellowship, worship, and mission with the objective of growing into an
14 organized church or multiplying house churches in that geographical area.

15
16 Company status is approved by vote of the conference executive committee, which,
17 should it become necessary, may subsequently dissolve the company. The division and/or
18 conference should have written guidelines for organizing companies and house churches within
19 its territory.

20
21 Church members who are part of small groups or house groups may form the nucleus of a
22 new company. Membership of all those who want to be part of a company should be held in
23 either the conference church or a local church (mother church). If membership for those who
24 want to be part of a company is to be held in the conference church, the conference executive
25 committee will vote their membership transfers to the conference church and indicate that they
26 are part of the new company.

27
28 When the conference executive committee approves establishment of a company, a
29 leadership team should be appointed, including a leader, a clerk, and a treasurer. The
30 appointment should be carried out by the district pastor, or other pastor appointed by the
31 conference executive committee, in counsel with the group being established as a company.

32
33 All other company appointments should be made by vote of those who are part of the
34 group that is forming the company. The district pastor or other person authorized by the
35 conference executive committee shall preside at such a meeting. Only members of the Seventh-
36 day Adventist Church in regular standing shall be appointed.

37
38 The leader of a company shall not be ordained to that office and does not have the
39 authority to perform those functions that are vested in an elder of a church. However, where
40 exceptional circumstances warrant, the conference executive committee may appoint a person of
41 church experience and leadership ability to serve as elder of the company.

42
43 Since ordination does not take place in companies, deacons and deaconesses should not
44 be elected, but men and women should be voted in the local congregation as “company
45 assistants.” Their duties will be similar to those performed by the deacons and deaconesses of
46 organized churches where activities do not require ordination. (See pp. 82-86.)

1
2 The clerk of the company shall keep record of all activities and meetings of the company
3 and shall send regular statistical reports to the mother church or the conference executive
4 secretary. These reports should include statistics on attendance and activities of the company,
5 including outreach ministries conducted during the week or on Sabbath.
6

7 The treasurer of the company shall keep record of all money received and disbursed and
8 shall send promptly, at the time established by the conference, all tithes and offerings, other than
9 funds collected for local purposes, to the conference treasurer, who also is treasurer of the
10 conference church.
11

12 If the members of an organized company are members of the conference church, the
13 company does not possess the right to administer discipline or transfer or receive members. All
14 such matters must be referred to the conference executive committee, which constitutes the board
15 of the conference church. The conference president is the elder of the conference church.
16

17 If the conference organizes a company through a neighboring mother church instead of
18 through the conference church, the functions listed above (such as reporting and membership)
19 would be cared for by/through the mother church.
20

21 Since a company should want to grow and eventually be recognized as a church, its
22 leadership should prepare members for church status by promoting all activities generally carried
23 on by a church.
24

25 House Churches—Early church history underscores the principle of growth and
26 multiplication, as seen in the book of Acts, where believers increased in number and new
27 congregations were established in homes. This model reflects a dynamic and adaptable approach
28 to mission, with small groups of believers meeting in house churches, fostering spiritual growth,
29 community, and outreach. In line with this biblical principle, the Church recognizes the value of
30 establishing house churches to spread the gospel, nurture disciples, and create a flexible,
31 mission-focused environment for new believers.
32

33 From New Testament times, Christians have gathered in house churches (Rom. 16:3,
34 5; 32 Col. 4:15; Phil. 1, 2; 1 Cor. 16:19). They were legitimate churches, not merely stepping-
35 stones or a temporary transition stage to what some may consider “real” churches. Today this
36 small-group, relational approach can still be an extremely effective means for building strong
37 disciples and reaching out to their communities. House churches will not only grow in number of
38 members, but they will also multiply new communities of believers to accomplish God’s mission
39 for the Church.
40

41 House churches are an extremely valuable model in closed countries, where open
42 worship is forbidden or difficult. But they have also proven effective in many other areas. In

1 secular and post-Christian contexts, for example, they can be less threatening to non-believers
2 than church buildings. The same principle applies when reaching out to adherents of other world
3 religions.

4
5 While house churches may not have all the ministries and offices of a typical church, they
6 will still work for growth and multiplication. Their structure should follow the same guidelines
7 applied to companies and receive pastoral supervision officially recognized by the local
8 conference or mission. Unions or divisions should provide guidance to formally recognize house
9 churches and ensure effective leadership.

10
11 Resources—For principles on establishing and operating house churches, see Notes, #1,
12 p. 179.

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC

2
3 418-24GNb HOUSE CHURCHES - *CHURCH MANUAL* NOTES
4 ADDITION

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To add a new section to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 5, Organizing,
7 Uniting, and Dissolving Churches, Notes, page 179, #1, to read as follows:
8

9 1. House Churches (see p. 40)—The following five principles are suggested to guide
10 church leaders in establishing and operating house churches in their territories:
11

12 a. Allow Flexibility—It is important to allow local leaders flexibility in
13 operating house churches within particular geographical and cultural contexts. For example, the
14 timing and location of weekly Sabbath worship can vary according to what will be most effective
15 for mission and outreach. Likewise, ministry roles in the house church should be chosen
16 according to the organizational and mission needs of the local setting. They may not need, for
17 example, to elect people to all the formal ministry categories listed in the *Church Manual*.
18

19 b. Empower Lay Leadership—House churches should be led by committed
20 and well-trained lay leaders. They are critical for helping maintain the theological identity and
21 mission focus of the church. Lay leaders should be empowered by (1) ongoing training and (2)
22 supervision and support from a senior district or network leader and, where possible, a
23 coordinator at conference departmental level. Ongoing mentorship/coaching provides essential
24 support for house church leaders.
25

26 c. Build Strong Connections with the Wider Seventh-day Adventist
27 Church—House churches need to be approved by and accountable to their conference and should
28 (1) plan periodic gatherings with other local churches for larger fellowship, celebrating
29 belonging to a bigger family, liaising for greater community impact; (2) find ways to connect
30 with other local churches and conference activities; (3) share stories and news about the mission
31 of the worldwide church; (4) promote a faithful return of tithe and giving of offerings using the
32 conference system; and (5) promote the study of the Adult Bible Study Guide and other Sabbath
33 School lesson curricula for other age groups.
34

35 d. Organize for Mission—Like all churches, there is a danger for house
36 churches to become inward looking, a fellowship group for Adventists, rather than a mission-
37 focused group. They can be built around comfort and convenience, rather than organized for
38 mission. They can even attract dissident individuals wishing to operate independently from the
39 conference. But these things undermine the true purpose of house churches.
40

41 It is important that any Adventists joining house churches actively support the message,
42 identity, and mission of the Church. Good leadership is vital to guarding that mission and
43 making sure it remains their foundation and purpose.
44

1 From the start, every house church should prepare to plant another group when it reaches
2 a critical membership size. The house church should not be an end in itself but serve as the seed
3 to plant more house churches.

4
5 e. Disciple Children and Young People—House churches should provide a
6 positive environment with programming and activities that are attractive and meaningful for
7 children and young people. They should involve them in all aspects of church life--worship,
8 fellowship, outreach, and community service—as they mature on their discipleship journey.

OGC/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

425GS DISSOLVING OR EXPELLING A CHURCH - *CHURCH*
MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 5, Organizing, Uniting, and Dissolving Churches, pages 40-42, Dissolving or Expelling a Church, to read as follows:

Dissolving or Expelling a Church

“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. . . . For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (Eph. 5:25-30).

This spirit should permeate all efforts to help an erring church and all aspects of any discipline that may be applied—always to help and save for the cause of God.

Church status is not necessarily perpetual. A church may be dissolved or expelled from the sisterhood of churches for the following reasons:

1. Loss of Members—Occasionally, despite efforts to preserve - No change

2. Discipline—Occasions for expelling a church for disciplinary reasons are rare because the mission of the church is to seek and to save. Where serious problems such as apostasy, refusal to operate in harmony with the *Church Manual*, or rebellion against the conference persist, earnest efforts should be made to avert the need for expulsion. The pastor should seek to deepen the spiritual life of the church through preaching and personal visitation ministries. The conference should encourage a series of revival meetings to lead the members to renew their covenant with their Lord. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the pastor, in cooperation with the conference executive committee, should counsel with the church and its leadership, seeking to bring healing and reconciliation and to preserve the church.

Such remedial measures are preferable to permitting the deterioration of relationships, which could lead to expulsion of the church.

However, if all efforts to preserve the church fail, the conference executive committee should give careful study to the question of expulsion. If such action is decided upon, the conference shall follow the following procedure:

a. The decision to recommend expulsion, with supporting - No change

b. If the church does not accept the recommendation, it may respond in one of the following ways:

- 1
2 1) Eliminating the causes for discipline and - No change
3
4 2) Appeal to the union executive committee, or to the division in case
5 of a union of churches, to ~~arbitrate~~ mediate on behalf of the church.
6
7 c. If the church remains in rebellion, the conference - No change
8
9 d. If the constituency takes action to expel, the conference - No change

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 409-24GSa TRANSFERRING MEMBERS - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Membership, pages 57-61,
7 Method of Granting Letters of Transfer, to read as follows:

8
9 Transferring Members

10
11 When members move to a different area, the clerk of the church holding their
12 membership records should write to the secretary of the relevant conference requesting that a
13 pastor in the new locality visit them and help facilitate their membership transfer to the new
14 congregation.

15
16 The clerk of the church holding the membership records also should notify the
17 transferring members of the intention to give their new addresses to the conference.
18 Members who move to another locality for longer than six months should make immediate
19 applications for letters of transfer. Members moving to an isolated area with no church within a
20 reasonable distance should apply to join the conference church.

21
22 Method of Granting Letters of ~~Transfer—Members~~ Transfer—The church clerk should
23 encourage those regularly attending his/her church to request a transfer of their membership.
24 Members should apply for their letters of transfer to the clerk of the church with which the
25 members desire to unite (the receiving church). That clerk sends the request to the clerk of the
26 church from which the members desire to transfer (the granting church). (For alternative method,
27 see p. 58.)

28
29 When the clerk of the granting church receives the request, the clerk brings it to the
30 pastor or elder, who in turn presents it to the board. Careful consideration should be given by the
31 granting church and the receiving church to ensure the members in the process of being
32 transferred are living in harmony with the fundamental teachings and related practices of the
33 church. After due consideration, the board votes to recommend, favorably or otherwise, to the
34 church. (See pp. 37-40, 41, 55-61, 71-73, 87.) The pastor or elder then brings the
35 recommendation to the attention of the church for a first reading. Final action is taken the
36 following week, when the request is presented to the church for a vote.

37
38 The purpose of the one-week interval is to give members an opportunity to object to the
39 granting of the letter. Objections ordinarily should not be publicly stated but be lodged with the
40 pastor or elder, who then refers them to the board for consideration. The board should give each
41 objector opportunity to appear to present his/her objection. If the objection is not based on valid
42 grounds, the person raising objection should be admonished to withdraw it. If the objection is
43 based on valid grounds, it is the duty of the board to investigate. Final action on granting the
44 letter is deferred until the matter has been satisfactorily settled.

1 If the objection involves personal relationships, every effort should be made to effect
2 reconciliation. If public offenses are involved, disciplinary measures may be called for. If there is
3 some spiritual lapse, efforts should be made to restore the member.
4

5 Clerk to Prepare Letter—When the church has granted the letter - No change
6

7 Letter Valid Six Months—A letter of transfer is valid for six months from - No change
8

9 Alternative Method for Membership Transfer—A division may approve - No change
10

11 Membership During Transfer—Under no circumstances shall the clerk - No change
12

13 Receiving Members Under Difficult Conditions—World conditions - No change
14

15 Counted in Statistical Reports—When quarterly and annual statistical - No change
16

17 If Member Is Not Accepted—The receiving church must receive the - No change
18

19 Letters Granted Only to Those in Regular Standing—Letters of transfer are granted only
20 to members in regular standing, never to a member under discipline. The pastor, the first elder,
21 and the church board should carefully consider changes to membership status (transfer, baptism,
22 and profession of faith). In the case that full consensus is not reached, the pastor, first elder, or
23 the board should request guidance from the conference. Qualifying statements are out of order
24 except when the pastor or board of the granting church has factual or proven knowledge that the
25 member has been involved as a perpetrator of child abuse. In that case, for the safety of children,
26 the pastor or elder should provide a confidential statement alerting the pastor or elder of the
27 congregation to which the member is transferring.
28

29 If a member who has moved to a new location has grown indifferent, the pastor or elder
30 of the granting church may, to be clear in the matter before the transfer is granted, take up the
31 question with the pastor or elder of the receiving church.
32

33 No Letter Without Member's Approval—In no case should a church vote - No change
34

35 Church Board Cannot Grant Letters—A board has no authority to vote - No change
36

37 ~~Membership in the Conference Church—Isolated members should unite with the~~
38 ~~conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would~~
39 ~~be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and~~
40 ~~conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local~~
41 ~~church, not the conference church.~~
42

1 ~~The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work~~
2 ~~normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and~~
3 ~~treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church~~
4 ~~board is conducted by the conference executive committee, which also appoints delegates from~~
5 ~~the conference church to the conference session.~~

6
7 ~~Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated~~
8 ~~membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at~~
9 ~~the member's request. (See p. 87.)~~

10
11 ~~Redemptive Membership Review—Membership records are kept up to date by the local~~
12 ~~church. They are subject to review by the next higher organization. This rule, which also applies~~
13 ~~to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal~~
14 ~~information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See pp. 87-88.)~~

15
16 ~~In the Bible we find the words, "[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as~~
17 ~~is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day~~
18 ~~approaching" (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G.~~
19 ~~White says, "If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And~~
20 ~~many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save" (COL 191). It is a most~~
21 ~~needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like~~
22 ~~redemptive way.~~

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 409-24GSb MEMBERS MOVING AWAY AND NOT REPORTING -
4 *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Discipline, pages 71-72,
7 Members Moving Away and Not Reporting, to read as follows:

8
9 Members Moving Away and Not Reporting—When members move, they should inform
10 the clerk or elder of their new address. While remaining members of that church, they should
11 report and send their tithe and offerings at least quarterly. If, however, members move without
12 leaving a forwarding address and make no effort to contact or report to the church, and the
13 church cannot locate them for at least two years, then the church may certify that it has tried
14 without success to locate the members and the members may be removed by a vote of the
15 church. The clerk should record in the membership record: “~~Whereabouts~~ Location unknown.
16 Voted to designate as missing.”

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 409-24GSc MEMBERSHIP RECORD - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 ADDITION

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To add a new section, Membership Record, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter
7 7, Membership, following Transferring Members, on page 61, to read as follows:

8
9 Membership Record

10
11 Membership Record—The church should have one current, regularly updated
12 membership record. Names are added or removed only on the vote of the church, at death, or at
13 the member's request. (See p. 87.) Membership records are subject to review by the conference
14 of which the local congregation is a constituent. This rule, which also applies to every entity or
15 level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal information and
16 shall comply with legal requirements. (See pp. 87-88.)

17
18 Multiple Membership Records—Where it emerges that a church member's membership
19 record is held at more than one church, the membership record at the local church where the
20 record is most recent will be regarded as the current membership, and any other membership
21 record of that church member will be removed by vote of the relevant church as an adjustment
22 out. This is only to deal with a situation where an additional membership record has
23 inadvertently been recorded; no member is to lose his or her current membership in this way. If a
24 person has been a member of their local church, but their membership record had inadvertently
25 not been recorded, that person can, by vote of the church, be registered as a member as an
26 adjustment in.

27
28 Membership in the Conference Church—Isolated members should unite with the
29 conference church, which is a body organized for the benefit of believers who otherwise would
30 be without church privileges. Aged and infirmed members who live near a church and
31 conference officers and other employees, including pastors, should be members of a local
32 church, not the conference church.

33
34 The conference president is the presiding elder of the conference church, and the work
35 normally carried by the clerk and the treasurer is handled by the conference secretary and
36 treasurer. Since the church has no board, all business normally conducted by a local church
37 board is conducted by the conference executive committee, which also appoints delegates from
38 the conference church to the conference session.

39
40 Redemptive Membership Review—Jesus called His Church to fulfill the Great
41 Commission to make disciples. With this goal in view, local churches should aim to create a
42 warm and caring environment for spiritual growth and to encourage all ministries of the church
43 to be united in making mature and faithful disciples.

44
45 A healthy church develops a nurturing plan that equips every member to be involved in
46 disciple-making using their talents and spiritual gifts. In addition, it should create a strategy to

1 retain and reclaim former and inactive members through (1) a regular redemptive membership
2 review process and (2) reclaiming ministries.

3
4 Redemptive membership review intends to improve pastoral care based on the foundation
5 of accurate membership records. Nevertheless, it must have a redemptive purpose of seeing
6 people rather than numbers. Updating the records should be motivated by the goal of being more
7 effective in pastoral care and reaching the lost.

8
9 In the Bible we find the words, “[N]ot forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as
10 is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day
11 approaching” (Heb. 10:25). There is great need to seek for those who are far away. Ellen G.
12 White says, “If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And
13 many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save” (COL 191). It is a most
14 needed ministry to review the membership records and to approach this exercise in a Christ-like
15 redemptive way.

16
17 In the unfortunate situation that members may still be missing after every effort has been
18 made to locate them and welcome them back into fellowship, the church may certify that it has
19 tried without success to locate the members and the members may be removed by a vote of the
20 church. The clerk should record in the membership record: “Location unknown. Voted to
21 designate as missing.” (See pp. 71-72.)

22
23 Resources—For a brief description of the redemptive membership review process, see
24 Notes, #1, p. 179.

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC

2
3 409-24Gnd REDEMPTIVE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW - *CHURCH*
4 *MANUAL* NOTES ADDITION

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To add a new section to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Membership
7 Records, Notes, page 179, #1, to read as follows:
8

9 1. Redemptive Membership Review (see p. 61)—This is a brief description of the
10 suggested redemptive membership review process at the local church:
11

12 a. A special revision committee can be a great help; it is a permanent
13 standing committee that works with the local church board to screen all names in the
14 membership records, classifying them in five categories (the classification can be done directly
15 in Adventist Church Management System [ACMS] if your church is part of the system):
16 frequently attending members (online attendance may be considered), non-frequently attending
17 members, attending another Seventh-day Adventist Church, location unknown, or members to
18 reclaim (try to reconnect through visitation plan, invitation for social gatherings, special events,
19 Reencounter or Reunion Project, etc.). The categories list should be regularly updated, and the
20 progress reported to the church board.
21

22 b. The church board should frequently examine the classification lists,
23 implementing strategies to involve each member in disciple-making of each category. The board
24 will assess the reports presented by the special revision committee; appoint a person responsible
25 to lead in working with each auxiliary list; follow the progress of each category by checking the
26 increase or decrease of members in each category; provide a separate list to the pastor/elder with
27 the names of the members who left the church for outreach by reclaiming ministries.
28

29 c. The church clerk's role is crucial in preparing the classification lists and
30 implementing membership reviews. The church clerk oversees the execution of the review
31 process. The church clerk will provide an updated membership list (from ACMS or another
32 electronic system); participate in the elaboration of the classification lists as a member of the
33 special revision committee; update each member's electronic record after the special revision
34 committee submits its report to the church board; update membership classification during the
35 period between the special revision committee meetings.
36

37 A report of the work done with the membership classification should be included on the
38 church board's agenda, once every three months, so that the board can monitor the progress of
39 the work done with the members in the classification lists.

1 SID/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 417-24GS SETTING TITHING EXAMPLE - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and
7 Organizations, page 77, Setting Tithing Example, to read as follows:

8
9 ~~Setting Tithing Example—All officers shall set an example in the matter of returning a~~
10 ~~faithful tithe to the Church.~~ Setting an Example in Tithe and Offerings—All officers shall set an
11 example in the matter of returning a faithful tithe and giving offerings to the Church. Anyone
12 who fails to set such an example shall not be elected to church office.

OGC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

415-24GS TO FOSTER TITHING (ELDERS) - *CHURCH MANUAL*
AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 80, To Foster Tithing (Elders), to read as follows:

To Foster Tithing—By faithfully returning tithe, elders do much to encourage other members to return a faithful tithe. (See pp. 142-143, 175.) Elders can foster tithing by public presentation of the scriptural privilege and responsibility of stewardship and by personal labor with members in a tactful and helpful manner. Elders should regard all personal giving information as strictly confidential.

~~Elders should regard all financial matters pertaining to members as confidential and shall not give such information to unauthorized persons.~~

YOU/BRI/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

416-24GS ADVENTIST YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL*
AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and Organizations, pages 110 to 115, Adventist Youth Ministries, to read as follows:

Adventist Youth Ministries

The various youth organizations of the church should work closely with the ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries department of the conference. The church works for and with its youth through Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM). Under the AYM, 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. In the quest for ~~discipleship~~, disciple-making, the goal of AYM should be to bring all youth to a saving relationship with Christ, build them up in His Word to reflect a Christ-like character, train them how to serve the ~~church~~ church, public campuses, and communities using their spiritual gifts, and send them out to reach the communities in the power of the Holy Spirit.

AYM Mission—To lead young people into ~~a~~ an authentic saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to disciple-making and mission involvement. ~~discipleship~~.

AYM Motto—The love of Christ compels me. ~~us~~.

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

AYM Pledge—Loving the Lord Jesus, I promise to take an active part in the youth ministry of the church, doing what I can to help others and to finish the work of the gospel in all the world.

The ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries program of the church comprises ~~three~~ two broad categories, namely: Junior Youth (Adventurers: ages 4-9 and Pathfinders: ages 10-15) and Senior Youth (Ambassadors: ages 16-21, Young Adults: ages 22-30, and Public Campus Students and Staff (PCM): ages 16-30+). Public Campus Ministry is a specialized Senior Youth Ministry because it caters for both Ambassadors and Young Adults on public campuses. ~~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).

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

3
4 ~~“We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and
5 encouraged. . . . We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-
6 organized plans for helping other youth.”—GCB, Jan. 29, 30, 1893, p. 24.~~

7
8 “We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and
9 encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We
10 want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that
11 they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and
12 honoring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor.”—GCB, Jan. 29, 30,
13 1893, p. 24.

14
15 “When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease.
16 They must be interested in the Lord’s work, and led to see that He expects them to do something
17 to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth
18 to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined,
19 drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending
20 way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be
21 systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help.
22 Thus they will learn to work for God.”—GW 210.

23
24 “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the
25 message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”—
26 MYP 196.

27
28 While there is to be an active Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) in every church, it is
29 important that the youth program not be isolated from the rest of the church. In addition to their
30 AYM participation, youth should be integrated into responsible leadership and in all lines of
31 church work. As young elders, deacons, and deaconesses, for example, they can work with and
32 learn from experienced officers.

33
34 “In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor,
35 zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with
36 clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men
37 and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their
38 powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to
39 their fellow men.”—GW 67.

40
41 Adventist Youth Ministries Committee—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)
42 Committee is the umbrella organization in the church for the general planning of the youth

1 ministry program. (See pp. 139-140.) The AYM Committee includes the following church-
2 elected officers: Young Adults leader, Public Campus Ministry ~~Ministries~~ leader/coordinator,
3 Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, plus the ~~personal ministries~~
4 Personal Ministries leader, youth Sabbath School division leader, ~~children's ministries~~
5 Children's Ministries leader, ~~health ministries~~ Health Ministries leader, principal of the school,
6 the AYM advisor, and the pastor. The Young Adults leader, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder
7 director, Adventurer director, and Public Campus Ministry ~~Ministries~~ leader are members of the
8 church board.

9
10 If there are no distinct Ambassador Ministry or Young Adults Ministry ~~ministry or young~~
11 ~~adults ministries~~ established in the church, or until such time as they are established, the AYM
12 Committee will plan for the senior youth ministry to include both age groups.

13
14 In parts of the world where there is no Pathfinder or Adventurer ministry, or until such
15 time as they are organized, the AYM Committee will plan for appropriate activities for the junior
16 youth.

17
18 The Young Adults leader may chair the AYM Committee. The committee should meet as
19 necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful ministry. (See Notes,
20 #19, p. 184.)

21
22 Young Adults Ministry ~~Ministries~~ Committee—The Young Adults Ministry ~~Ministries~~
23 Committee is responsible for Young Adult activities and works in coordination with the
24 Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.

25
26 The church elects the following Young Adults Ministries officers: leader, associate
27 leader, secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the nucleus for the Young
28 Adults Ministry ~~Ministries~~ Committee, which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

29
30 Local churches are encouraged to have Young Adult committees and to establish Senior
31 Youth Societies (SYS). Senior Youth Societies serve as forums where evangelistic plans and
32 senior youth issues are discussed. SYS will encompass the Ambassadors, Young Adults, and
33 Public Campus Students. In these SYS meetings, young professionals should mentor those who
34 are younger than them. The Young Adults Ministry Committee will manage the SYS.

35
36 Public Campus ~~Ministries—Strengthening~~ Ministry—Strengthening the Youth Ministries
37 of the church, Public Campus ~~Ministries~~ Ministry (PCM), in collaboration with the Adventist
38 Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS), provides vision and strategic planning
39 for ministry to and support for Seventh-day Adventist students (ages 16-30+) who attend college
40 or university institutions not operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1 Public Campus ~~Ministries~~ Ministry Leader/Coordinator—The church ~~may~~ should appoint
2 a Public Campus ~~Ministries~~ Ministry leader/coordinator to develop an intentional ministry with
3 the purpose of caring for the special needs of college or university students in nearby institutions
4 not operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and discipling them to fulfil the AYM goal,
5 mission, motto, and aim, in consultation with and support of the Adventist Youth Ministries
6 Committee. Each local church may adopt one or two public campuses to support Adventist
7 students and staff in executing their mission obligations and furthering their education or
8 professional lives.

9
10 Ambassador Ministry—The Ambassador Ministry provides - No change

11
12 Ambassador Committee—The Ambassador Committee is responsible for Ambassador
13 activities and works in coordination with the Adventist Youth ~~Ministry~~ Ministries (AYM)
14 Committee.

15
16 The church elects the following Ambassador officers: leader, associate leader, secretary
17 treasurer, assistant secretary-treasurer, and music director. This group forms the Ambassador
18 Committee which appoints other officers for the respective activities.

19
20 Pathfinder Club—The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered outlet for the spirit of
21 adventure and exploration, in the context of spiritual development and soul-winning, for ages 10
22 to 15. Activities are carefully tailored to ~~include~~ include, but not limited to, spiritual growth,
23 leadership skills, witnessing opportunities, disciple-making, outdoor living, nature exploration,
24 crafts, hobbies, or vocations.

25
26 Pathfinder Committee—The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by
27 the church. (See pp. 111-112, 184-185.) If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one
28 male and one female. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club secretary and treasurer.

29
30 Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of ~~craft and nature~~ honor classes and
31 counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders.

32
33 Resource materials are available from the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries
34 director.

35
36 Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards
37 and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should
38 consult with the ~~conference,~~ conference AYM, which will ascertain and advise as to what
39 background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 180-181.)

40
41 Adventurer Club—The Adventurer Club provides home and church - No change

1 Adventurer Committee—The church elects the club director and associates. (See pp. 111-
2 112, 184-185.) Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club.
3 Resource materials are available from the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director.
4 Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards and
5 requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should consult
6 with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and
7 certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 180-181.)
8

9 AYM Officers—The leaders/directors of the five youth ministry entities must exemplify
10 Christlike graces and have a burden for soul ~~winning~~ winning and nurturing, and display
11 contagious enthusiasm. The five leaders/directors are members of the church board. In helping
12 motivate youth to work together and take responsibilities, the leaders/directors will be in the
13 background— guiding, counseling, and encouraging youth, helping them gain experience and the
14 joys of achievement. The leaders/directors should study the youth profile of the church and seek
15 to involve every eligible youth in the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM).
16

17 The leaders/directors will keep in touch with the pastor, advisor, and the conference
18 ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries director, taking advantage of opportunities for in-service
19 training and leading their respective ministry into a cooperative relationship with the church and
20 the conference.
21

22 The associate leaders/deputy directors (if needed) will assist the leaders/directors and
23 perform leadership duties when the leaders/directors are absent. The respective committees may
24 assign additional responsibilities to the associate leaders/directors.
25

26 The secretary-treasurers will keep a record of the activities of their respective ministries,
27 submit monthly reports on forms provided to the conference ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries
28 director, and encourage youth to report their witnessing activities during the ten-minute personal
29 ministries period.
30

31 The respective assistant secretary-treasurers (if needed) assist with the secretary-
32 treasurers' work as assigned.
33

34 AYM Advisor—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) advisor may be an elder or other
35 person on the board who understands the objectives of the AYM, is sympathetic with youth and
36 their involvement in the church's ministries, and will serve as a valued counselor to the youth.
37 The advisor serves as a guide or counselor to AYM officers and joins them regularly in AYM
38 Committee meetings.
39

40 The ministry leader should become acquainted with the conference ~~youth ministries~~
41 Youth Ministries director and keep the director informed of changes in officer personnel and

1 other AYM matters. Along with AYM leaders, the advisor should attend conference youth
2 training institutes to keep informed about developments in youth ministry.

3
4 For the sake of continuity, the advisor, if possible, should serve multiple terms.

5
6 Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards
7 and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should
8 consult with the ~~conference~~, conference AYM, which will ascertain and advise as to what
9 background checks and certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 180-181.)

10
11 Resources—For ~~youth ministries~~ Youth Ministries resources, see Notes, #20, p. 184.

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 408-24GS NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION
4 PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Elections, pages 116-120,
7 Nominating Committee and the Election Process, to read as follows:

8
9 Nominating Committee and the Election Process

10
11 Officers are elected every one or two years (See p. 77.) through an appointed nominating
12 committee. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of
13 office may be extended an additional year. This committee brings its report to the church, which
14 then votes on the names presented. This procedure enables the church to give careful study to
15 each name prior to election and avoids the competitive element that may arise when nominations
16 are made from the floor.

17
18 The nominating committee shall study the needs of the church and inquire into the fitness
19 of members to serve in the different offices. This is another reason officers shall not be
20 nominated from the floor or by general ballot.

21
22 The church may decide based on its needs that it would be best served with a standing
23 nominating committee. As such, it may appoint such a committee which would function year-
24 round to ~~make nominations for~~ recommend to the church names to fill vacancies or to fill regular
25 positions identified in the *Church Manual*.

26
27 The size of the nominating committee will range from five members in a small church to
28 a larger number in a large church. The number to be chosen is left to the discretion of each
29 church and should be studied by the board. A suitable recommendation then will be brought to
30 the church, using a minimum of time in the Sabbath worship hour.

31
32 Quorum—The quorum for the nominating committee may be determined - No change

33
34 When and How the Nominating Committee Is Appointed—The nominating - No change

35
36 How the Process Works—The steps of the nominating process - No change

37
38 Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee—Only members - No change

39
40 Work of the Nominating Committee—The chairperson should call a meeting of the
41 committee as soon as possible after its election. With earnest prayer the committee should begin
42 preparing a list of nominees for all offices. Nominees must be members in regular standing of the
43 church making the appointments. The returning of a faithful tithe is a prerequisite for holding
44 church office. The pastor or chair of the nominating committee shall work with the treasurer to
45 develop a process by which only members eligible to hold office are nominated. This should be
46 done in such a way that maintains as much confidentiality as possible. The list of nominees will

1 ~~be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially called business meeting. In~~
2 ~~making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who are well informed. This~~
3 ~~committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor(s), who are appointed by~~
4 ~~the conference.~~

5
6 The list of nominees will be presented to the church at a Sabbath service or at a specially
7 called business meeting. In making their selections, the committee may counsel with others who
8 are well informed. This committee does not nominate either the pastor or the assistant pastor(s),
9 who are appointed by the conference.

10
11 The list of officers to be considered by the nominating committee may vary with size of
12 membership. A larger church may determine it needs more officers. A smaller church may have
13 fewer. The committee deals with all leadership positions except Sabbath School teachers, who
14 are recommended by the Sabbath School council and approved by the board. See Notes, #1, pp.
15 184-185, for a list of possible officers.

16
17 Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers—Having - No change

18
19 Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee—Members - No change

20
21 Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential—All inquiries - No change

22
23 Reporting to the Church—The nominating committee's report is presented - No change

24
25 Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may - No change

26
27 Filling Vacancies Between Elections—If an office of the church becomes - No change

1 PRE/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 414-24GS BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings,
7 page 134, Business Meetings, to read as follows:

8
9 Business Meetings

10
11 The local church operates within defined roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church
12 structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the constituency meeting of
13 the local church. (See pp. 28-29.) Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are
14 entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

15
16 Business meetings shall be held at least once a year. The pastor, or the board in
17 consultation with and support of the pastor, calls the meeting. Business meetings should be
18 announced a week or two in advance at the regular Sabbath worship service, with detail as to
19 time and place. The pastor, an elder chosen by the pastor, or, in some cases, the conference
20 president, or his designee, serves as chairperson of the business meeting.

21
22 Each church decides what the quorum will be for future meetings.

23
24 Where allowed by local law, and approved by the church board, members may participate
25 in business meetings by means of an electronic conference or similar communication by which
26 all persons participating can communicate with each other at the same time, and participation by
27 such means shall constitute presence in person at such a meeting. Votes by proxy or letter are not
28 permitted.

29
30 Major items should be decided at a regular or specially called business meeting.

31
32 The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to
33 the board in addition to those already assigned by the Church Manual. (See pp. 134-138.)

34
35 The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At
36 least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those
37 reports, a proposed plan of action for the next year, including an annual budget, should be
38 presented for approval. When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in
39 writing. (See Notes, #7, pp. 189-190.)

40
41 In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the
42 church shall secure counsel from conference officers on all major matters.
43 Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or their designee may attend
44 without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory.
45 An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that
46 congregation.

SSPM/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

413-24GS CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS - *CHURCH*
MANUAL AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings, pages 134 to 138, 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 and comprehensive plan to fulfill its mission of making disciples, which includes evangelism, outreach to the community, and the spiritual nurture and training of the church. ~~discipleship plan in place, which includes both the spiritual nurture of the church and the work of planning and fostering evangelism.~~

Included in church board responsibilities are:

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

In addition to this overarching plan, the church board is to maintain doctrinal purity and uphold Christian standards in the church, recommend changes in church membership, oversee church finances, ensure the protection and care of church attendees and properties, and coordinate the work of the various departments of the church.

The gospel commission of Jesus 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 involving every member in proclaiming

1 the good news and making disciples, most problems are alleviated or prevented, and a strong,
2 positive influence is felt in the spiritual life and growth of members.

3
4 ~~Spiritual Nurture—Christ’s love for the Church needs to be manifested within the Church~~
5 ~~by His followers. True discipleship entails not only Biblical teaching (Matt. 28:20), but also a~~
6 ~~passionate commitment to loving our fellow believers unconditionally. This was the heart of~~
7 ~~Christ’s message to His disciples as He faced the cross (John 15:9-13). Christ’s command to~~
8 ~~them applies to us: that we “love one another.” Ellen G. White’s powerful insight into this~~
9 ~~historical scene is still vital for us: “This love is the evidence of their discipleship.” DA 677,~~
10 ~~678.~~

11
12 ~~Therefore, it is one of the primary functions of the board to ensure that members are~~
13 ~~nurtured and mentored in a personal, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.~~

14
15 Making Disciples—The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, who
16 live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three
17 Angels’ Messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Rev. 14:6-12).
18 The purpose of the Church as the body of Christ is to intentionally make disciples so that they
19 continue in an active and fruitful relationship with Christ and His Church.

20
21 Disciple-making is based on an ongoing, lifelong relationship with Jesus. The believer
22 commits to “abiding in Christ” (John 15:8), to being trained for fruitful ~~discipleship~~ disciple-
23 making by sharing Jesus with others, as well as to leading other members to also be faithful
24 disciples.

25
26 The Church, individually and collectively, shares responsibility for ensuring that every
27 church member remains part of the body of Christ.

28
29 Membership—The board is elected by the members at the time - No changes

30
31 Officers—The chairperson of the board is the conference-appointed - No change

32
33 Meetings—Because the work of the board is vital to the - No change

34
35 Work of the Board—The board is responsible to: 1. Develop and oversee an active,
36 ongoing disciple-making plan which includes both spiritual nurture and evangelistic outreach.
37 This plan is the most important item for the board’s attention. ~~Ensure that there is an active,~~
38 ~~ongoing discipleship plan in place, which includes both spiritual nurture and outreach ministries.~~
39 ~~This is the most important item for the board’s attention.~~

40
41 2. ~~Study membership lists and initiate plans for reconnecting (reclaiming) members~~
42 ~~who have separated from the church.~~

1
2 3. 2. Educate and nurture all members into a personal and dynamic relationship with
3 Jesus Christ; one that includes prayer, Bible study, attending Sabbath School, witnessing, and
4 intentional spiritual growth. Train local church leadership in how to encourage intentional
5 spiritual growth in themselves and others.
6

7 4. 3. Evangelize the outreach (missionary) territory of the church. Once each quarter an
8 entire meeting should be devoted to plans for evangelism. The board will study conference
9 recommendations for evangelistic programs and methods and how they can be implemented
10 locally. The pastor and the board will initiate and develop plans for public evangelistic meetings.
11

12 5. 4. Coordinate outreach programs for all church departments, although each
13 department develops its plans for outreach within its own sphere. To avoid conflict in timing,
14 competition in securing volunteers, and to achieve maximum beneficial results, coordination is
15 essential. Before completing and announcing plans for any program, each department should
16 submit its plans to the board for approval. The departments also report to the board on the
17 progress and results of their outreach programs. The board may suggest how departmental
18 programs can contribute to the preparation, conduct, and follow-up of a public evangelistic
19 campaign.
20

21 6. 5. Encourage the personal ministries department to enlist all members and children
22 in some form of personal outreach (missionary) service. Training classes should be conducted in
23 various lines of outreach ministry.
24

25 7. 6. Encourage the interest coordinator to ensure that every interest is personally and
26 promptly followed up by assigned laypersons.
27

28 7. Study the membership list and initiate plans for reconnecting with (reclaiming)
29 members who have separated from the church. A healthy church develops a nurturing plan that
30 equips every member to be involved in disciple-making using their talents and spiritual gifts. In
31 addition, it should create a strategy to retain and reclaim former and inactive members through
32 (1) a regular redemptive membership review process and (2) reclaiming ministries. (See p. 61.)
33

34 8. Encourage each department to report at least quarterly to the board and to
35 members at business meetings or in Sabbath meetings in regards to spiritual nurture and
36 evangelism.
37

38 9. Receive regular reports. The board should consider details of church business and
39 receive regular reports of the treasurer on the church's finances. ~~The board should study the~~
40 ~~membership record and inquire into the spiritual standing of all members and provide for visits~~
41 ~~to sick, discouraged, or backslidden members.~~ Other officers should periodically report.
42

1 10. Promote Adventist education.

2

3 Committees of the Board—The board should permit no other business - No change

1 STW/SPD/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 411-24GSa FINANCE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

4
5 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 12, Finance, pages 141-147, to read
6 as follows:

7
8 Finance

9
10 The biblical plan for the support of the work of God is by the tithes and offerings of His
11 people. The Lord says, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My
12 house” (Mal. 3:10). The Church has followed this plan from its earliest days.

13
14 The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy present a beautiful picture of giving as a part of
15 worship. “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for
16 God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you,
17 always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work” (2 Cor.
18 9:7-8).

19
20 “The system of tithes and offerings was intended to impress the minds of men with a
21 great truth—that God is the source of every blessing to His creatures, and that to Him man’s
22 gratitude is due for the good gifts of His providence.”—PP 525.

23
24 “Tithes and offerings for God are an acknowledgment of His claim on us by creation, and
25 they are also an acknowledgment of His claim by redemption. Because all our power is derived
26 from Christ, these offerings are to flow from us to God. They are to keep ever before us the
27 claim of redemption, the greatest of all claims, and the one that involves every other.”—6T 479.
28 “The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used
29 to sustain the gospel laborers in their work.”—9T 249.

30
31 “He has given His people a plan for raising sums sufficient to make the enterprise self-
32 sustaining. God’s plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality. All may
33 take hold of it in faith and courage, for it is divine in its origin. In it are combined simplicity and
34 utility. . . . Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord and may be an
35 agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle: ‘Let every one of you lay by him
36 in store, as God hath prospered him.’ ”—3T 388, 389.

37
38 ~~“God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the gifts of~~
39 ~~His people. Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord’s work. Of the~~
40 ~~means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—the tenth. He leaves all free to say~~
41 ~~whether or not they will give more than this.”—AA 74.~~

42
43 “Besides the tithe the Lord demands the first fruits of all our increase. These He has
44 reserved in order that His work in the earth may be amply sustained. . . . If all would pay a
45 faithful tithe and devote to the Lord the first fruits of their increase, there would be a full supply
46 of funds for His work.”—6T 384.

1
2 “This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instructions in
3 regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He
4 desires us to give regularly and systematically. . . . After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and
5 offerings be apportioned, ‘as God hath prospered you.’”—RH, May 9, 1893.
6

7 “God has given special direction as to the use of the tithe. He does not design that His
8 work shall be crippled for want of means. . . . The portion that God has reserved for Himself is
9 not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty
10 to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves
11 in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord’s
12 work.”—9T 247.
13

14 “If we love Jesus, we shall love to live for Him, to present our thank offerings to Him, to
15 labor for Him.”—COL 49.
16

17 “Our heavenly Father did not originate the plan of systematic benevolence to enrich
18 Himself, but to be a great blessing to man. He saw that this system of beneficence was just what
19 man needed.”—3T 405.
20

21 Stewardship 22

23 Christians are God’s stewards, entrusted with His ~~goods~~ blessings and, as His partners,
24 responsible to manage them in harmony with His guidelines and principles. The divine counsel is
25 that as His stewards, we are to “be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2) and live according to His will as
26 we worship Him with our whole lives (Rom. 12:1-3, Gen. 12:2-3). Stewardship covers every
27 aspect of Christian life and experience, including the stewardship of our means. (1 Cor. 4:2).
28 ~~Though the question of stewardship covers many aspects of Christian life and experience,~~
29 ~~without doubt the stewardship of our means is vitally important.~~ It concerns the entire Church
30 family and involves our recognition of the sovereignty of God, His ownership of all things, and
31 the bestowal of His grace upon our hearts.
32

33 While this aspect of Christian stewardship concerns our material possessions, it
34 nevertheless ~~reacts upon~~ defines our Christian experience. The Lord requires certain things of us,
35 in order that He may do certain things for us. ~~Our yielding obedience to what our heavenly~~
36 ~~Father requires places this phase of stewardship upon a high spiritual plane. He does not~~
37 ~~arbitrarily demand either that we serve Him or that we recognize Him with our gifts. But He~~ In
38 all areas of our lives, God invites us to obey His word and then trust His promises. Our
39 conscientious stewardship of God’s blessings helps to build our faith. God has so arranged that
40 when we work in harmony with Him in these things there will flow great spiritual blessings to
41 us. to our own hearts great spiritual blessings.
42

1 “God desires all His stewards to be exact in following divine arrangements. They are not
2 to offset the Lord’s plans by performing some deed of charity or giving some gift or some
3 offering when or how they, the human agents, shall see fit. It is a very poor policy for men to
4 seek to improve on God’s plan, and invent a makeshift, averaging up their good impulses on this
5 and that occasion, and offsetting them against God’s requirements. God calls upon all to give
6 their influence to His own arrangement.”—9T 248.

7 8 Tithe 9

10 In recognition of the biblical plan ~~and the believer’s experience of salvation, and the~~
11 ~~solemn privilege and responsibility that rest upon members as children of God and members of~~
12 ~~His body, the Church,~~ all are encouraged to faithfully return a tithe, one tenth of their increase or
13 personal income, into the denomination’s treasury.
14

15 Tithe shall not be used in any way by the local church, but held in trust and remitted to
16 the conference treasurer. Thus tithe from all the churches flows into the conference treasury, and
17 percentages are forwarded to the next level in accordance with General Conference and division
18 working policies. This allows the Church to be a disciple-making movement in its regions,
19 actively fulfilling its mission of sharing the everlasting gospel to the whole world in preparation
20 for Christ’s soon return. ~~next higher level in accordance with General Conference and division~~
21 ~~working policies to meet the expenses of conducting the work of God in their respective spheres~~
22 ~~of responsibility and activity.~~
23

24 These policies have been developed for the gathering and disbursing of funds in all the
25 world ~~and for the conducting of the business affairs of the cause. The financial and business~~
26 ~~aspects of the~~ for funding mission and evangelistic initiatives, and for conducting the business
27 affairs of the Church. The financial and business aspects of this work are of great importance.
28 They cannot be separated from the proclamation of the message of salvation. They are indeed an
29 integral part of it.
30

31 Systematic Benevolence and ~~Unity—The~~ Unity—God’s word invites all believers to be
32 faithful and systematic in their returning of tithe and giving offerings. The financial plan of the
33 Church serves a larger purpose than appears in its financial and statistical reports. The system of
34 sharing the funds with the world fields, as outlined by General Conference *Working Policy*,
35 serves a wonderful purpose of unifying the Church’s spiritual work throughout the world.
36

37 How Tithe Is to Be Used—Tithe is held sacred for the work of the ministry, for Bible
38 teaching, and for the support of conference administration in the care of the churches and of field
39 outreach (missionary) endeavors. Tithe shall not be spent on other work, on paying church or
40 institutional debts, or on building programs, except as approved under General Conference
41 Working Policy. For more information on the use of tithe, review Stewardship Ministries
42 Resources, see Notes, #1, p. 190-191.
43

1 “A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell
2 them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good
3 in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied.
4 Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord’s arrangement. God will judge
5 for these things.”—9T 248.

6
7 How Tithe Is Handled—Tithe is the Lord’s and is to be brought as an act of worship to
8 the conference treasury through the church in which the person’s membership is held. Where
9 unusual circumstances exist, members should consult with conference officers.

10
11 Church and Conference Officers to Set Example—Elders and other officers, as well as
12 the pastor and conference and institutional employees, are expected to set good leadership
13 examples by returning tithe. No one shall be continued as either a church officer or conference
14 employee who does not conform to this standard of leadership.

15 Offerings

16
17
18 In addition to the tithe, Scripture emphasizes our privilege and responsibility to bring
19 offerings to the Lord. We are encouraged to give offerings cheerfully and systematically as an
20 act of worship for all that God has blessed us with, both great and small. Giving offerings is an
21 act of loving sacrifice and a response of gratitude as we follow the Holy Spirit’s promptings.
22 Malachi 3:8-12 warns about withholding offerings and tithe and encourages us with the promise
23 of God’s blessing that will be poured out in abundance. Since the Church’s earliest days,
24 believers have given liberal offerings that have blessed and prospered God’s work. obligation to
25 bring offerings to the Lord. The withholding of offerings is classed with withholding tithe and is
26 called robbery (Mal. 3:8). Since the Church’s earliest days, members have given liberal offerings
27 that have blessed and prospered God’s work.

28
29 ~~In addition to the traditional calendar of offerings program, where each offering taken is~~
30 ~~for a specific purpose, the General Conference has approved the combined offering system and~~
31 ~~the personal giving plan. The Church has three offering plans: the Combined Offering Plan, and~~
32 ~~two other plans, the Calendar of Offerings and the Personal Giving Offering Plan. The Combined~~
33 Offering Plan is preferred and is used by the highest percentage of divisions. Each division
34 executive committee is authorized to determine which plan(s) will be used in its territory.

35
36 Regular and Systematic Offerings—Regular and systematic offerings are given after any
37 income or increase in assets (Proverbs 3:9) as an act of worship, in recognition of God’s
38 blessings. They represent a worshiper’s chosen proportion of any income or increase in assets
39 (Deut. 16:17; 1 Cor. 16:2). One’s expression of worship through financial stewardship begins
40 with tithing and the support of the Church through regular and systematic offerings. Worshipers
41 should be encouraged to distribute their regular and systematic offerings to equitably cover all
42 the mission needs of the Church, locally, regionally, and internationally (Acts 1:8).

1 Where the Combined Offering Plan is practiced, worshipers are encouraged to give their
2 regular and systematic offerings as unassigned offerings, that will be equitably distributed by the
3 church according to a pre-arranged formula, covering all the mission needs of the Church,
4 locally, regionally, and internationally (Acts 1:8). All loose offerings, collected at any time or
5 mode, including during Sabbath School, will be distributed according to this same formula. (See
6 p. 89.)

7
8 “Those churches who are the most systematic and liberal in sustaining the cause of God
9 are the most prosperous spiritually.”—3T 405.

10
11 “If the plan of systematic benevolence were adopted by every individual and fully carried
12 out, there would be a constant supply in the treasury. The income would flow in like a steady
13 stream constantly supplied by overflowing springs of benevolence.”—3T 389.

14
15 ~~Sabbath School Offerings—The Church’s most widely used and successful method of~~
16 ~~regular systematic giving is through Sabbath School offerings, which are devoted to world~~
17 ~~mission work.~~

18
19 Other Offerings—Other offerings may be necessary from time to time for world mission
20 work and for local projects. However, such offerings should be limited so as not to detract from
21 the purpose and benefit of promoting regular and systematic giving. When such offerings are
22 collected, they are to be used for the specific purpose for which it has been given. Those
23 offerings should be promoted and given above and beyond regular return of tithe and systematic
24 offerings through the local church. (For information regarding offerings collected during Sabbath
25 School, see p. 88.) are taken from time to time for world mission work and for general and local
26 projects. When any offering is taken, all money collected, unless otherwise indicated by the
27 donor, shall be counted as part of that particular offering.

28
29 Special Gifts to Fields—The financial support of the worldwide work of the Church is
30 based on the budget system. Appropriations are made to the various fields on the basis of
31 budgeted needs. This is a fair and equitable method of distributing the funds.

32
33 Where special gifts outside the regular budget plan are made to a particular field, a
34 disparity is created to the disadvantage of other fields. If such gifts are given for the purpose of
35 starting new work, the work thus started may languish when the special gift is used up, or it may
36 have to be included in the budget for its future support. Thus other fields, with perhaps greater
37 needs but without the opportunity of making them known, would be deprived of their equitable
38 part of general funds that would be diverted to the work started by special gifts.

39
40 History has proved the wisdom of having members generously and loyally give their
41 offerings and gifts through the accepted channels and knowing that every field shares in the
42 benefits of their giving.

Assisting the Poor and Needy—Offerings for the poor and needy ~~are~~ may be taken to assist the members who require help. A reserve fund should be kept for such emergency cases. In addition, the church should take a benevolent attitude toward all in need, and the board may make appropriations from this fund to assist the church's health and welfare work for families in the community.

Church Budget for Local Expenses—The most satisfactory method of providing for church expenses is the budget plan. Before the beginning of the new budget year, the board should prepare a budget of expenses for church activities during the next year. The budget should include all income and expenses, including those related to all departments. It should provide for such projected costs as utilities, insurance, maintenance, janitor service, funds for the poor and needy, and church school expense. (See Notes, #2, p. 191, for sample budget.)

The budget should be presented to the church for its study and adoption, and for plans to assure that funds shall be provided to balance the budget during the coming year. Funds to meet the church expense budget may be raised by offerings or subscriptions. Members should be urged to support their local church in proportion to their financial circumstances.

Announcing Tithe and Offerings—Returning tithe and giving offerings is an essential part of the worship service. Great care should be given to announcing the tithe and offering collection during Sabbath School, Sabbath worship service, and, where possible, via church bulletins and other church communications. The announcement should promote biblical stewardship principles, including giving as an act of worship, the clear connection that exists between giving and mission, the value of regular and systematic giving, and the wonderful blessings that result from faithfulness. Resources are available through the offices of Adventist Mission and Stewardship Ministries of the local conference.

General Financial Counsel

Regulation of Soliciting Funds—The following are regulations for soliciting funds:

1. No conference, church, or institution, without special counsel and arrangement, shall plan work requiring solicitation of funds from outside its territory. Any solicitation within its territory shall be in harmony with local, union, division, and General Conference policies. No authority is granted to denominational employees representing special interests in one part of the field to solicit help in any other part of the field or in any other conference without arrangement with and written authorization from conference officers where the fund-raising would take place.

2. The following principles protect churches from unauthorized, fraudulent, and undenominational solicitation:

a. Pastors and officers shall not grant the privilege of the pulpit to persons for fund-raising who have not been recognized or recommended by the conference. (See pp. 126-

1 127.) No permission shall be granted to solicit funds either publicly or privately without such
2 recognition.

3
4 b. All funds contributed for any cause in response to appeals shall be passed
5 through regular church channels.

6
7 c. Conference and church officers shall take such steps as may be necessary
8 to prevent unauthorized or illegal public solicitation.

9
10 3. No campaign other than the Annual Appeal (Ingathering or equivalent appeal),
11 which involves using Appeal literature and containers with authorized Appeal labels, shall be
12 conducted for the solicitation of money for either home or overseas mission work. Unions and
13 conferences should prevent violations of this regulation.

14
15 ~~4. Interdivision employees visiting their home churches or otherwise communicating~~
16 ~~with their home bases are asked to solicit funds only for enterprises included in the budget of~~
17 ~~appropriations, working in cooperation with churches and conferences to raise the funds required~~
18 ~~to meet the appropriations on which our world mission work depends. All such funds shall be~~
19 ~~passed through regular channels.~~

20
21 Questionable Methods for Raising Funds—The local church should take a strong stand
22 against questionable methods for raising money.

23
24 “When money is raised for religious purposes, to what means do many churches resort?
25 To bazaars, suppers, fancy fairs, even to lotteries and like devices. Often the place set apart for
26 God’s worship is desecrated by feasting and drinking, buying, selling, and merrymaking. Respect
27 for the house of God and reverence for His worship are lessened in the minds of the youth. The
28 barriers of self-restraint are weakened. Selfishness, appetite, the love of display, are appealed to,
29 and they strengthen as they are indulged.”—9T 91.

30
31 “As God’s work extends, calls for help will come more and more frequently. . . . If
32 professing Christians would faithfully bring to God their tithes and offerings, His treasury would
33 be full. There would then be no occasion to resort to fairs, lotteries, or parties of pleasure to
34 secure funds for the support of the gospel.”—AA 338.

35
36 Tithes and Offerings Not a Personal Trust Fund—Tithes and offerings donated by
37 members to the Church do not create a trust fund for the future benefit of the givers. These funds
38 shall be used for the current purposes for which they are given.

39
40 Financing Building Plans—Churches considering the purchase or erection of church or
41 other buildings, or incurring debt of any kind, should counsel with conference officers before
42 undertaking such financial obligations. In the purchase or building of church properties, in no
43 case shall commitments be made or building operations begun until approval has been given by

1 the conference and union committees. These committees will approve only after they have
2 assured themselves that the financial arrangements conform to established policies. In giving
3 financial counsel, the conference executive committee should consider the size of the
4 congregation, its financial strength, and the location of the building.

5
6 Handling and Accounting for Funds—The gathering and handling of funds for the Lord’s
7 work is a sacred responsibility. The proper channel through which these funds flow is first from
8 members to the local church, where the treasurer receives the funds. (See pp. 88-91.) The
9 treasurer disburses funds intended for local church purposes. The treasurer holds in trust and
10 passes on to the conference treasurer funds intended for conference or general purposes. The
11 treasurer of the local church works under the direction of the board. Treasurers of any level
12 (local church, conference, union, or division/General Conference) do not act independently.
13 They disburse funds only by action or authority of responsible committees.

14
15 Auditing—Every set of accounting records, from those of the local church to those of the
16 General Conference, are subject to audit by auditors appointed for the purpose. This rule, which
17 also applies to every denominationally affiliated institution, provides the maximum of safety in
18 the handling of funds. (See p. 91.)

19
20 Transparency and Accountability—The church finance committee (see pp. 138-139) is
21 required to prepare quarterly reports that should be publicly accessible and presented to the
22 church members. These reports should include information about the proper governance of
23 funds, the adequate allocation of resources for mission-related purposes, and testimonies
24 highlighting the impact of contributions on advancing the church’s mission. Furthermore, they
25 should present an annual report showing the proportion of members that are systematic in
26 returning tithe and giving offerings.

1 STW/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 411-24GSb TO COOPERATE WITH THE CONFERENCE (ELDERS) -
4 *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and
7 Organizations, page 81, To Cooperate With the Conference (Elders), to read as follows:

8
9 To Cooperate With the Conference—The pastor, elders, and all officers should cooperate
10 with conference officers and departmental directors in carrying out approved plans. They should
11 inform the church about the offering plan adopted by the division for their territory and of all
12 regular and special offerings, promote all the programs and activities of the church, and
13 encourage all officers to support conference plans and policies.

14
15 Elders should work closely with the treasurer and see that all conference funds are
16 remitted promptly to the conference treasurer at the time established by the conference. Elders
17 should see that the clerk's report is sent promptly to the conference secretary at the close of each
18 quarter.

19
20 Elders should regard all correspondence from the conference office as important. Letters
21 calling for announcements should be presented at the proper time.

22
23 In the absence of the pastor, the first elder (see p. 120-121) should see that the church
24 elects delegates to conference sessions and that the clerk sends the names of delegates to the
25 conference office.

1 STW/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 411-24GSc TREASURER - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

4
5 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and
6 Organizations, pages 88-91, Treasurer, to read as follows:

7
8 Treasurer

9
10 Because of the important functions of the treasurer, it is wise to choose one who can be
11 elected to a new term of office to provide continuity in record keeping and reporting. Large
12 churches may elect assistant treasurers as needed.

13
14 The treasurer can greatly encourage faithfulness in the returning of tithe and deepen the
15 spirit of liberality on the part of the members. A word of counsel given in the spirit of the Master
16 will help members to render faithfully to God His own in tithes and offerings, even in a time of
17 financial stringency.

18
19 Treasurer the Custodian of All Funds—The treasurer is the custodian - No change

20
21 Conference Funds—Conference funds, which include tithe, all regular - No change

22
23 Sabbath School Offerings—Any offering collected during Sabbath School should be
24 accurately recorded by the Sabbath School secretary, who will pass them on to the treasurer as
25 soon as possible. Extension division offerings should be added to the offering regularly collected
26 during Sabbath School.

27
28 In territories that have adopted the Combined Offering Plan, these offerings should be
29 distributed according to the formula voted by the division for that Offering Plan. As part of the
30 promotion of any offering collected during Sabbath School in those territories, the givers should
31 be informed that part of their offerings will fund the quarterly world mission projects sponsored
32 by the General Conference.

33
34 All Sabbath School offerings in territories that use the Calendar of Offerings Plan, and
35 the Personal Giving Plan are for the support of the mission fields and are to be passed on in their
36 entirety to the conference. These funds include the regular weekly Sabbath School offering, the
37 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Mission Investment, and Birthday-Thank Offering. These Mission
38 funds will then be distributed by the conference according to policy. No mission funds may be
39 retained by the church or conference.

40
41 In territories that have adopted the Personal Giving Plan or the Calendar of Offerings
42 Plan, these mission funds are transmitted to the conference office as outlined in the section above
43 (“Conference Funds”). The regular church budget should make provision for Sabbath School
44 expenses, as for other ministries or departments of the church.

~~Sabbath School Funds—All Sabbath School offerings are to be passed over weekly to the treasurer by the Sabbath School secretary-treasurer, the treasurer keeping a careful record of all such offerings. These mission funds are transmitted to the conference office as outlined in the previous paragraph. Sabbath School expense funds are held in trust, subject to the orders of the Sabbath School council (See pp. 103–104.), to meet the routine expenses of the Sabbath School.~~

Local Church Funds—Local church funds include church - No change

Funds of Auxiliary Organizations—Auxiliary organization funds - No change

Safeguarding the Purpose of Funds—All offerings and gifts contributed by individuals for a specific fund or purpose, under all three offering plans. ~~Funds—When an offering is taken for worldwide missions or for any general or local enterprise, all money placed in the offering plate (unless otherwise indicated by the donor) shall be counted as part of that particular offering. All offerings and gifts contributed by individuals for a specific fund or purpose must be used for that purpose. Neither the treasurer nor the board has the authority to divert any funds from the objective for which they were given.~~

The funds of auxiliary organizations, often donations given for specific purposes, are raised for that special part of the church's work for which the auxiliary organization is established. Such funds are held in trust by the treasurer, and they too may not be borrowed or in any way diverted by the treasurer or the board from the objective for which they were raised.

When an auxiliary organization is discontinued, the church in a regular business meeting may take action indicating the disposition of any balance of funds in the account of the organization.

Money for Personal Literature Orders—Money for personal orders - No change

Proper Method for Payment of Money by Members—The treasurer - No change

Receipts to Members—Receipts should be issued promptly for all - No change

Proper Method of Remitting Funds to the Conference—In sending - No change

Preservation of Financial Documents—Financial - No change

Books Should Be Audited—The conference - No change

Relations With Members Confidential—The treasurer should always remember that relations with individual members are strictly confidential. The treasurer should never comment on personal giving decisions are strictly confidential. The treasurer and the pastor should never disclose individual giving records, except with consent of the giver, as required by law, as

1 needed to audit or review the church's financial records, or as needed for the nominating
2 committee process (see p. 118). ~~the title returned by any member or on the income or anything~~
3 ~~concerning it except to those who share the responsibility of the work.~~ Great harm may be
4 caused by failure to observe this rule.

1 STW/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 411-24GSd WORLD HEALTH MINISTRIES SABBATH OFFERING -
4 *CHURCH MANUAL* DELETION

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To delete the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and
7 Organizations, pages 100-101, World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering, which reads as
8 follows:

9
10 World Health Ministries Sabbath Offering—The entire World Health Ministries Sabbath
11 Offering is sent to the conference to be distributed according to policy. Upon the church's
12 request to the conference, up to 25 percent of the offering received in the church may revert to
13 the church for health ministries programs.

1 STW/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 411-24GSe SABBATH SCHOOL - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

4
5 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Local Church Officers and
6 Organizations, pages 103-106, Sabbath School, to read as follows:

7
8 Sabbath School

9
10 The Sabbath School, the primary religious education program of the Church, has four
11 purposes: study of the Scripture, fellowship, community outreach, and world mission emphasis.
12 The General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department distributes the
13 Sabbath School Bible study guide for all age levels, provides designs for Sabbath School
14 programming within the context of the various world division cultures, provides resources and
15 training systems for Sabbath School teachers, and promotes world mission ~~Sabbath School~~
16 offerings. Because it incorporates the core spiritual elements of Bible study, prayer, fellowship,
17 and mission, Sabbath School is an essential part of the church's strategy for making disciples.
18

19 “The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it
20 gives to young and old a knowledge of God’s Word, but because it awakens in them a love for its
21 sacred truths, and a desire to study them for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate
22 their lives by its holy teachings.”—CSW 10, 11.
23

24 “The Sabbath school, if rightly conducted, is one of God’s great instrumentalities to bring
25 souls to a knowledge of the truth.”—CSW 115.
26

27 Officers of the Sabbath School Council—The church elects - No change
28

29 Sabbath School Superintendent and Other Sabbath School Officers—The superintendent
30 is the leading officer of the Sabbath School and should begin planning for its smooth and
31 effective operation as soon as elected. The superintendent should support the plans and emphases
32 of the conference Sabbath School department and should implement decisions of the Sabbath
33 School council concerning the operation of the Sabbath School. The church may elect one or
34 more assistant superintendents.
35

36 The secretary should complete the quarterly report on the appropriate form immediately
37 after the last Sabbath of the quarter and mail it before the deadline to the conference Sabbath
38 School and personal ministries directors. The secretary also should place a copy in the
39 secretary’s permanent file, give copies to the superintendent and the pastor, and present it at the
40 business meeting. In addition, any offering collected during Sabbath School should be accurately
41 recorded by the Sabbath School secretary, who will pass them on to the treasurer as soon as
42 possible. (See p. 88.)
43

44 The Investment secretary promotes the Investment plan for mission support in all Sabbath
45 School divisions and keeps all members informed as the program progresses.
46

1 The Vacation Bible School (VBS) director leads in organizing, promoting, and launching
2 community evangelism through the annual VBS. The church may assign this responsibility to the
3 children's ministries coordinator.

4
5 The council may appoint a music director for the Sabbath School in consultation with
6 division leaders. As an expression of worship, music should glorify God. Singers and other
7 musicians should be as carefully selected as are the leaders for other parts of the Sabbath School
8 service and should be measured by the same standards. (See pp. 101, 155, 157.) The council also
9 may appoint pianists and organists for the divisions.

10
11 Sabbath School Division Leaders—The church board elects a leader - No change

12
13 Sabbath School Teachers—The Sabbath School council chooses - No change

14
15 ~~Sabbath School Offerings—The Sabbath School secretary should accurately record~~
16 ~~Sabbath School offerings and pass them on to the treasurer as soon as possible. Extension~~
17 ~~division offerings should be added to the regular Sabbath School offerings. Many Sabbath~~
18 ~~Schools take offerings for Sabbath School expense. With the exception of that expense fund, all~~
19 ~~Sabbath School offerings are for the support of the mission fields and are to be passed on in their~~
20 ~~entirety by the treasurer to the conference. These funds include the regular weekly Sabbath~~
21 ~~School offering, the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, Sabbath School Investment, and Birthday~~
22 ~~Thank Offering. Each is to be identified as a separate fund in the financial system of the church.~~
23 ~~Mission funds are distributed according to policy. No mission funds may be retained by the~~
24 ~~church or conference.~~

25
26 ~~The Sabbath School expense offering and the mission offering, where the calendar of~~
27 ~~offerings is being used, shall not be taken as one offering and divided according to an agreed-~~
28 ~~upon formula or percentage. The offerings may be taken as combined offering where the church~~
29 ~~is operating under a division approved combined offering plan.~~

30
31 Resources—For Sabbath School and personal ministries - No change

1 STW/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2
3 411-24GSf CONDUCTING THE COMMUNION SERVICE - *CHURCH*
4 *MANUAL* AMENDMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 11, Services and Other Meetings,
7 pages 131-132, Conducting the Communion Service, to read as follows:
8

9 Conducting the Communion Service—Length of Service—Time is not the most
10 significant factor in the communion service. However, attendance can be improved and the
11 spiritual impact increased by (1) eliminating extraneous items from the worship service on this
12 high day, (2) avoiding delays before and after foot-washing, and (3) having the deaconesses
13 arrange the emblems on the communion table well beforehand.
14

15 *Preliminaries*—The introductory portion of the service should be brief, including only
16 short announcements, a hymn, prayer, offering, and a short sermon before separating for the
17 foot-washing and returning for the Lord's Supper.
18

19 *Foot-Washing*—Each church should have a plan for meeting the needs of its members for
20 the foot-washing service. (See Notes, #5, p. 188.)
21

22 *Bread and Wine*—Following the foot-washing, the congregation comes together once
23 again to partake of the bread and the wine. (See Notes, #6, pp. 188-189.)
24

25 *Celebration*—Communion should always be a solemn, never somber, experience.
26 Wrongs have been righted, sins have been forgiven, and faith has been reaffirmed. It is a time for
27 celebration. Let the music be bright and joyous. The service should end on a high note, such as
28 with a musical feature or congregational singing, followed by dismissal.
29

30 An offering for the poor ~~is often~~ may be taken as the congregation leaves. This offering is
31 promoted as an addition to regular and systematic offerings.
32

33 After the service the deacons and deaconesses clear the table, collect the utensils, and
34 respectfully dispose of any remaining emblems. In no case should these emblems be consumed
35 or returned to common use.

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS
2
3 424-24GS CAPITALIZATION OF CHURCH DEPARTMENTS -
4 *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE
5
6 RECOMMENDED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual*, where appropriate, by
7 capitalizing the names of church departments (e.g. Family Ministries, Youth Ministries, etc).

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC+25GCS
2
3 412-24GS USE OF “DISCIPLESHIP” - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 DIRECTIVE
5
6 RECOMMENDED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual*, by replacing
7 “discipleship” with “disciple-making” or “making disciples,” where appropriate.

1 TRE to GPS-24AC+25GCS

2

3 423-24GS USE OF “THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING” -

4 *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE

5

6 RECOMMENDED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual*, where appropriate, by
7 deleting “Thirteenth Sabbath Offering” and replacing it with “Thirteenth Sabbath Offering (also
8 known as Quarterly Mission Project Offering).”

1 IAD/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC

2
3 419-24G INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 SUPPLEMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To endorse the *Church Manual* Supplement of the Inter-American
7 Division, which reads as follows:

8
9 INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPLEMENT

10
11 Title Deeds of Church Properties

12
13 The designated corporation must have its name on all church properties. This is the only
14 means of ensuring effective property deeds for denominational real estate. This method prevents
15 a few persons who may have distanced themselves from the church from misappropriating from
16 the body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church the property that belongs to the church. In the
17 history of this movement there is no record of any misappropriation of property that has been in
18 the name of the General Conference or legal corporations of local conferences.

19
20 Legal Documents—All legal documents, including life insurance policies, wills,
21 documents, trust services minutes, must be filed for its custody and preservation in the
22 conference or mission office.

23
24 Insurance—The church, through its administrators, is obligated to ensure denominational
25 properties, such as church buildings, homes where the workers live and which belong to the
26 organization and their contents, and school buildings are adequately insured by a reputable,
27 trustworthy company.

28
29 Someone has been designated to be in charge of insurance, usually it is the treasurer of
30 the local field, who is always ready to give counsel relative to insurance and how to secure the
31 most ample protection possible for the institutions and properties of the church against multiple
32 risks, in companies of good reputation. The General Conference suggests that the properties
33 be insured based upon what it would cost to replace the buildings and their contents whenever
34 feasible. All church property insurance policies shall be in the name of the corporation. Provision
35 shall be made in the local church budget to cover these expenses.

36
37 Repairs and Conservation of Buildings

38
39 God's church must always be well-maintained. The foundations, roofs, and paint shall
40 receive attention in such a way that they will be preserved in the best condition. This same
41 care should be taken of the properties and furnishings that belong to the denomination. Funds for
42 this purpose must come from the expense budget of the church or from special contributions.
43 Under the general direction of the church board, this work is normally supervised by the
44 deacons.

Suggestions Relative to Wills

Wills, Legacies, and Testaments—The love of God constrains all who await His soon appearing to give Him part of their goods so that His truth can prosper on earth. The spirit of sacrifice is fundamental for Christian service.

Funds that cannot be given immediately to the cause can equally be dedicated to the cause of God through wills, legacies, lifetime income, and trust agreements.

Laws Must be Strictly Followed—The laws regarding the manner of the disposal of a property belonging to an individual, be this prior to or after death, must be strictly followed according to the rights of the country where the testator or donor resides. If the transfer of a person's real estate is done through a title deed, the country where the property is located establishes the requirements for writing the document. If the donation of a property by an individual, be this real estate or personal goods, is to become effective after his death, this can be done through the means of a will, or by a title deed, or other instrument.

The elaboration of a plan for even the most simple wills require adequate counsel. To find the counsel of servant of the Lord relative to wills and legacies, read *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 476-485.

Who Can Make a Will—It is important that every will, donation, lifetime revenue or trust agreement be done with the assessment of a professional in the area, be it the director of Trust Services of the local organization, if he or she is competent to do so, an attorney they or a notary public. In any case, it is necessary to strictly and faithfully follow the local laws.

Wills must always be kept in a safe place, known as a vault, so that they can be presented as proof upon the death of the testator. Whenever there are different parcels of real estate, each shall be described relative to its location. This also applies to personal property.

To Make a Change in a Will—Frequently, circumstances arise through which the testator desires to make some alterations to his or her will. No changes should be made in a will by erasing or crossing out. Any change or addition to the document shall be made by an appendix or postscript, which must be done with the same formalities with which the will was prepared, and shall include a statement that it is a part of the will.

Suggested Sample of a Simple Will—"I of the city of ... in the province of belonging to (name of country) in full use of my mental faculties and memory, by means of the present, I publish and declare that this is my LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, through which I revoke any and all previous wills made by me on any previous occasions.

"First. It is my will and desire that all my just debts be paid.

1
2 “Second. I grant, give and leave to (if it is a real estate, it is best to describe it and explain
3 where it is located; personal property must always be clearly described so that it can be easily
4 identified).
5

6 “Third. I grant, give and leave to the Seventh-day Adventist Church with headquarters in
7
8

9 (The fourth paragraph may be used to any attempt to refute a will).
10

11 “Fourth. I establish that if one or more of the named beneficiaries in this will object to the
12 distribution just as it has been done, or claim to refute it for any reason, or make an attempt
13 to annul the provisions of this will, such person or persons will each receive the sum of one
14 dollar (\$1.00) and no more, and whichever and all other provisions made by the present
15 in favor of such litigants, apart from the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) as has been established, be
16 annulled and revoked.
17

18 “Fifth. By this instrument, I appoint, constitute and assign a as executor of this my LAST
19 WILL AND TESTAMENT IN TESTAMENT OF WHICH, I sign and seal this document on
20 this day of A.D. 20....
21

22 The previous instrument was signed, sealed, published and declared by as his/her LAST
23 WILL AND TESTAMENT, before us and in the presence of each of us. We, at the same
24 time, and at his petition and before him, in our presence, sign our names as eye witnesses and
25 leave proof of our residence.
26

27of
28of
29of”
30

31 In Favor of Whom Should Wills Be Made—Wills can be made to benefit the local
32 conference or mission, the union or the General Conference, Inter-American Division. In this
33 respect, upon each individual rests a grave responsibility, which is revealed in the following
34 admonition: “God is displeased with His people for becoming surety for unbelievers. They seem
35 to have lost all sense of the fact that the property they are using belongs to God, and that they
36 must render to Him an account of their stewardship.
37

38 “...Some leave their worldly business in perfect confusion. Satan has his eye on it all, and
39 he strikes at a favorable opportunity, and by his management takes much means out of the ranks
40 of Sabbath-keepers.
41

1 And this means goes into his ranks...“I was shown the awful fact that Satan and his
2 angels have had more to do with the management of the property of God’s professed people
3 than the Lord has... Satan and his angels exult over their success in this matter. And those who
4 should be wise heirs of salvation almost willingly let their Lord’s money slip out of their hands
5 into the enemy’s rank. In this way they strengthen Satan’s kingdom, and seem to feel very easy
6 about it! (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 199, 200)

7
8 The leaders of the church can help their members to get in contact with the administrators
9 of the conference or mission to ensure that the Lord’s money that He has committed to His
10 church, be assured for His cause.

11 12 Practical Instructions for the Communion Service

13
14 Preparation of Communion Bread—In preparing for the Lord’s Supper, it is necessary to
15 take into account the bread to be served. Because of the nature of the sacred service and the
16 protection of the participants’ health, the following recipe for the bread is VOTED to be used in
17 the Lord’s Supper. Under no circumstance should ingredients that can negatively affect the
18 health of the participants be used, and it is necessary to avoid all types of leaven or anything
19 similar.

20 21 COMMUNION BREAD RECIPE

22 1 cup fine-ground flour
23 1/8 cup olive oil
24 1/8 cup water
25 Pinch of salt

26
27 Method: Put the flour in a bowl. Pour the water into the oil, but do not stir. Add the flour. Mix
28 these ingredients and the salt and mix with a fork until all the flour is uniformly dampened. Roll
29 out all the dough between two sheets of waxed paper to the thickness of fine dough. Place on a
30 floured baking sheet, and mark off with a sharp knife into squares of sides measuring
31 approximately 1 ½ centimeters, being careful to prick each square to prevent blistering. Bake at
32 375-390 degrees Fahrenheit (190-198 Celsius) for 15 to 20 minutes. Serves 150 persons.

33 34 SALT-FREE COMMUNION BREAD RECIPE

35 3 cups whole-wheat flour
36 . cup olive oil
37 ¼ cup water

38
39 Method: Put the flour in a bowl. Pour the water into the oil, but do not stir. Add the flour. Mix
40 the ingredients with a fork until all the flour is uniformly dampened. Roll out all the dough
41 between two sheets of waxed paper to the thickness of fine dough. Place on a floured baking
42 sheet, and mark off with a sharp knife into squares of sides measuring approximately 1 ½

centimeters, being careful to prick each square to prevent blistering. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit (175 degrees Celsius) for 10 to 15 minutes. Serves 300 persons.

Special Cases of Ordination

Ordination of Women as Church Elders (Voted at the 1984 General Conference Annual Council)—Each congregation is free to elect the person of the gender of its choice as church elder. Such a person must fulfill the requirements for such a position. However, because the ordination of women as church elders can be something which may cause division, no church should plan such action before consulting with the administration of the local field. Such consultation is to preserve the unity of the church.

1. The concept should be carefully examined, discussed, and properly accepted at the local church level.

2. If a church contemplates such an action, the entire matter should be discussed and approved by the conference committee after the conference administration has sought counsel from the union leadership. The negotiation between the church and the conference should occur in advance of the final decision and vote by the local church.

3. The action to elect and ordain a woman as a local church elder must not be taken unless a clear consensus exists that the ministry of a woman elder is desirable and even essential to the spiritual well-being of the local church family. It should also be the consensus of the church that a woman elder will be respected as a spiritual leader and soul-winner. The church should also express its belief that there are dimensions of spiritual service and counsel that cannot be properly fulfilled by a male elder.

4. A clear majority of the voting members of the local church must be in favor of the action. The matter should be considered at a specially called church business meeting. Every church member should be given the opportunity to vote on this issue rather than only the few who might be present at a regular meeting where routine items of business are on the agenda. Although preliminary study could be given to this question by the church board, any final action should be taken by the church in a business meeting.

5. Whatever the decision of the church, it should result in unifying the members and not be the source of divisiveness or alienation. The body of Christ, the Church, must not be tarnished in any way. In this important issue, as in all things, the name of our Lord and Saviour must be exalted.

1 Criteria for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons Who Have
2 Been Disfellowshipped but Have Returned to the Church
3

4 If a local church elder or deacon returns to the church after being removed from
5 fellowship and was later rebaptized and his or her congregation feels that he or she has given
6 signs of genuine conversion, and desires to elect him or her once again to a leadership position
7 requiring ordination, it is recommended that in such cases they consult with the administration
8 of the local field.
9

10 Re: Dress
11

12 The people of God should always be found among the conservatives in dress, and will not
13 let “the dress question fill the mind.”—Ev 273. “To dress plainly, abstaining from display of
14 jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith.”—3T 366. It is clearly taught
15 in the Scriptures that the wearing of jewelry is contrary to the will of God. The apostle Paul
16 admonishes us to dress ourselves “in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with
17 braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing” (1 Tim. 2:9). The wearing of ornaments of
18 jewelry is a bid for attention not in keeping with Christian self-forgetfulness. In some countries
19 and cultures the custom of wearing the wedding ring is considered imperative, having become, in
20 the minds of the people, a criterion of virtue, and hence it is not regarded as an ornament. Under
21 such circumstances we do not condemn the practice. P.153

1 NAD/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC

2
3 420-24G NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 SUPPLEMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To endorse the *Church Manual* Supplement of the North American
7 Division, which reads as follows:

8
9 NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPLEMENT

10
11 ORGANIZATIONS FOR HOLDING CHURCH PROPERTIES:
12 TRUST SERVICES, WILLS, AND ANNUITIES

13
14 Legal Organizations Under the Law

15
16 The Seventh-day Adventist Church conducts its evangelistic work and performs its other
17 religious functions as an unincorporated body. It is the general plan not to incorporate or register
18 regular denominational organizations unless required by law. Corporate organizations are
19 established pursuant to governing laws for the management of legal activity, and these operate
20 under rules and bylaws as adopted by each organization. All organizations planning to form legal
21 corporations for operations in North America shall first secure approval from the General
22 Conference Executive Committee. The delegates to the regular conference sessions constitute the
23 delegates to the session of the legal organization.

24
25 Title to Church Properties

26
27 In order to safeguard denominational property it is necessary to have the title vested in a
28 corporation created by a conference organization according to the laws governing in the locality
29 where the property is located. Title to all local church properties should be held by the
30 conference corporations. When properties are acquired for the use of local churches or
31 conference organizations, the titles should be held by the corporate organizations.

32
33 Care of Legal Documents

34
35 All legal documents, including insurance policies, church property deeds, abstracts, and
36 trust agreements, should be filed for safekeeping in the office of the corporate organization.

37
38 Church Repairs and Upkeep

39
40 The church, its related buildings, and their furnishings should always be kept in
41 representative condition. Funds for this purpose should come from the church-expense budget or
42 from special contributions. Under the direction of the church board, this work is generally
43 supervised by the deacons.

Insurance Policies

The church board, through the church treasurer, is under obligation to see that the properties of the denomination, such as the church building, school buildings, and equipment, are kept adequately covered by insurance. Provision for this expense should be made in the church budget. The following procedures are recommended:

1. The local church board, through the treasurer, and its consultation with the treasurer of the conference or corporation, shall be responsible for adequate insurance coverage of assets, including fire, theft, boiler, public liability, and workman's compensation insurance, in harmony with denominational policy.

2. All denominational assets shall be insured with companies of sound financial standing and A-grade general policyholders' rating. Reciprocal and assessable companies are not recommended. Whenever possible, insurance should be purchased through Adventist Risk Management, Incorporated.

3. The conference or corporation treasurer shall be responsible for holding and keeping a complete record of the insurance policies covering the property and assets in the conference and its churches.

a. This record shall include the name and description of the property, the amount of insurance carried, the name of the company with which it is insured, the expiration date of the insurance policy, and other relevant details.

b. Negotiations for the renewal of insurance policies should begin at least 60 days before the expiration date, to avoid unintentional lapse of coverage.

4. It shall be the duty of the conference auditor to review the church, school, or other church property insurance program and report to the governing board or committee any inadequacies in insurance coverages not in harmony with *Working Policy* recommendations.

Wills, Trusts, Annuities, and Life Income Agreements

The spirit of sacrifice and dedication is fundamental to Christian service. Moneys and property which are not given outright to the cause may still be contributed to the work of God through wills, trusts, annuities, and life income agreements.

Laws Must Be Strictly Followed

Laws concerning the disposition of one's property, either before or after death, must be strictly followed. If conveyance of real estate is made by deed, the laws of the state or province where the land is located govern the requisites of the deed. Disposing of one's property, whether real or supplemented by a trust agreement. Therefore, a will or trust agreement is of the utmost importance. Christian responsibility is demonstrated when one provides for the future security of one's dependent family, and for meeting future needs of the church.

"Our brethren should feel that a responsibility rests upon them, as faithful servants in the cause of God, to exercise their intellect in regard to this matter, and secure to the Lord His own,"—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 479.

Wills

The making of a will calls for good counsel. We are given definite instruction relative to securing proper counsel in the executing of wills, as follows:

"Many families have been dishonestly robbed of all their property and have been subjected to poverty because the work that might have been well done in an hour had been neglected. Those who make their wills should spare pains or expense to obtain legal advice and to have them drawn up in a manner to stand the test."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 117.

It is essential that a will be executed in accordance with the statutory requirements of the state, province, or country where the will is made.

Bequests to the Church Organization

Bequests should be made to the legal organization of the local, union, or General Conference, or denominational institutions. In such cases, great care should be exercised to ensure the use of the correct legal title. Church officers should put their members in touch with the conference officers concerning potential bequests and subsequent procedures, that the Lord's property, which He has entrusted to His people, may be secured for His work.

Transferring Property Before Death

A donor's wishes for ensuring that moneys and properties will accrue for the Lord's work, for family, or others, prior to his/her death, can be fulfilled through trusts, annuities, and life income agreements.

1 More detailed information on the advantages of available plans may be obtained, in
2 confidence and without obligation, by consulting with the officers of the legal association of the
3 conference or institution.

4 5 Health-Care Institutions 6

7 The gospel ministry is advanced through health-care institutions which are influenced by
8 Christ and His Spirit. Seventh-day Adventists see in the gospel commission, and the example of
9 the Lord and His apostles, the responsibility of followers of Christ to serve the spiritual, mental,
10 and physical needs of humankind through motivated Christian lives and service. Thus from the
11 earliest years of the Adventist movement, health-care institutions have been established to help
12 facilitate the total ministry of carrying the gospel to all the world.

13 14 REVERTING CHURCH STATUS 15

16 As stated in the *Church Manual*, church status is not necessarily perpetual (p. 41). There
17 are instances when the mission viability of a local church may need to be reviewed to add
18 impetus to its vision for growth based on Matthew 28.

19
20 Church status should only be reversed after an intentional revitalization plan has been
21 considered. This plan should consider a periodic review of church growth reports by the local
22 conference Executive Committee and the local church board. The following is a general
23 description of procedures for reverting church status.

24 25 Circumstances for Reverting Church Status 26

27 A local conference may revert a local church status under some of the following
28 circumstances based on the local conference's criteria for church vitality:

- 29
- 30 1. Persisting decline in baptisms
 - 31
 - 32 2. Minimal or no kingdom growth over the last few years.
 - 33
 - 34 3. Low church attendance to unsustainable levels.
 - 35
 - 36 4. Drop in membership below a threshold determined by the local conference.
 - 37
 - 38 5. No community presence.
 - 39

Local Conference Process for Reverting Church Status

When the local conference or local church feels it is in the best interest for the mission of the church to revert a church's status to company or group status, the following process shall be followed:

All reverting church status recommendations must be submitted to the designated committee (e.g., ADCOM, Evangelism Committee, etc.) in the local conference for review and approval. The local conference in consultation with the local church or the local church based on its applicable policy can make the recommendation. Once approved by the designated committee, the recommendation is to be submitted to the local conference executive committee for review and approval. Once approved, communication shall be sent to the local church, clearly indicating the effective date of change from church status to company status or group status. Final action shall be ratified at the next constituency meeting of the local conference.

1 SAD/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC

2
3 421-24G SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION - *CHURCH MANUAL*
4 SUPPLEMENT

5
6 RECOMMENDED, To endorse the *Church Manual* Supplement of the South American
7 Division, which reads as follows:

8
9 SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION SUPPLEMENT

10
11 LEGAL ENTITIES ESTABLISHED TO CARE FOR
12 CHURCH PROPERTIES AND TO RECEIVE
13 DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

14
15 Legal Entities

16
17 Unions, fields, institutions, or local churches are not authorized to constitute a legal entity
18 to host the activities of pathfinder clubs, university associations, entrepreneurs, health, education,
19 social assistance, or any other, without the prior approval of the South American Division
20 Executive Committee (*South American Division Working Policy*, B 115).

21
22 Property Titles of Church Buildings

23
24 Real estate must be deeded and registered in the name of the legal entity with legal
25 personality representing the Church in the country or in the Union where the entity is located,
26 and never in the name of individuals, asset custodians, or local congregations (*South American*
27 *Division Working Policy*, S 60).

28
29 Control and Preservation of Legal Documents

30
31 All legal documents, including insurance policies, deeds, and receipts for the purchase or
32 sale of all real estate, including churches and schools; registration certificates, authorized
33 construction projects, final work certificates, trust agreements, wills, and legacies, etc., must be
34 filed for safekeeping and preservation in the office of the corresponding legal entity.

35
36 The minutes of the local church board must be properly preserved and archived
37 in the church office, as well as historical documents, photographs, among others.

38
39 Building Restoration and Maintenance

40
41 The church or chapel, its dependencies, its furniture, and equipment must
42 always be kept in good and representative conditions. Funds for this purpose shall
43 come from the church budget or special contributions. This task is usually overseen
44 by deacons under the general direction of the Church Board.

Building and Equipment Insurance

The board of the local church, through its treasury, has an obligation to ensure that the church or chapel and its facilities are adequately covered by insurance. Arrangements must be made to include such expenses in the church budget.

1. The South American Division suggests that insurance be contracted based on what it would cost to replace the building and its contents, if feasible.

2. These insurances are managed by the local Field, in mutual agreement with the local church.

3. All insurance policies for churches, chapels, and church school buildings must be in the name of the corresponding legal entity and be filed in the local field.

Suggestions on Wills and Legacies

The spirit of sacrifice and dedication is fundamental to Christian service. Money from real estate, which cannot be given immediately to the work, can later contribute to the good of God's work through wills, legacies, and trust agreements.

Laws Must Be Strictly Followed

The person who wishes to donate his/her property or assets to the Church must take the necessary steps while he/she is still alive, because otherwise, upon his/her death, his/her assets will be distributed in accordance with the laws governing inheritances in the country where they resided, and this may not represent the person's wishes when he/she was still alive.

The laws concerning the way in which a person's property is disposed of, before or after his/her death, must be strictly followed according to what the testator's or donor's country of residence determines. If the transfer of the property is made through a deed, the law establishes the requirements for the deed and its registration. If the donation of a person's property, whether real estate or personal property, takes place after his/her death, it may be done through a will, a document of trust, or another legal instrument. Therefore, it is important to make a will.

Preparing what will be done with what someone owns and taking care of dependent family members, as well as the Church and the cause of God, is part of the most important and responsible acts of life.

“Our brethren should feel that a responsibility rests upon them, as faithful servants in the cause of God, to exercise their intellect in regard to this matter, and secure to the Lord His own” (*Testimonies for the Church*, v. 4, p. 478; see also p. 554-557).

1
2 In Favor of Whom Wills or Legacies Should Be Made

3 Wills or bequests must be made in the name of the legal entity that the Organization has
4 in the corresponding country or Union. Local church leaders can help members establish contact
5 with the administrators of the Conference/Mission, to ensure that the Lord's money, which He
6 has entrusted to His people, is used for His cause.
7

8 Note of CHAPTER 7
9

10 Detailed Instruction and Public Examination Before Baptism (see p. 51)—In addition to
11 the determination regarding the instruction and public examination of baptismal candidates
12 mentioned in Chapter 7, p. 51, 52, their names must be recommended by the Church board to the
13 floor before the baptismal ceremony so that they can be received as members through baptism.
14

15 Notes of CHAPTER 8
16

17 1. Members Who Change Residence and Do Not Report (see p. 73)—In the case
18 of the South American Division, due to the widespread use of ACMS and social media in local
19 churches, the period of waiting and searching for missing members before they are removed
20 from the membership record will last for one year, provided that every effort is made to locate
21 them and all steps established in this Manual are followed.
22

23 2. Notification to Those Removed from Church Fellowship (see p. 74)—If the pastor
24 who presided over the business meeting visits the member accompanied by another member of
25 the board, to personally communicate the reasons for the discipline, the written communication
26 provided for in this Manual will be provided.
27

28 Notes of CHAPTER 9
29

30 1. Commissioned Pastor (see p. 82, 138)—In the territory of the South American
31 Division, there is no role as a commissioned pastor.
32

33 2. Wedding Ceremony—Regarding the marriage ceremony mentioned in chapter 9,
34 p. 82, of this Church Manual, the following must be considered:
35

36 a. The “exhortation” is what the pastor says to the couple just before taking
37 their vows. It is not a sermon, but a specification of the responsibilities that each of the bride and
38 groom acquires towards their spouse and their future family.
39 “

40 b. The South American Division, with the express authorization of the
41 General Conference Executive Committee, did not approve the exception” mentioned, referring

1 to the officiant at the wedding ceremony. Therefore, in the territory of the South American
2 Division, this ceremony must always be performed by an ordained pastor.

3
4 c. In some regions of the world, the wedding ceremony begins with a prayer
5 and ends with a final prayer giving blessings to the congregation, as in any of the other church
6 meetings. In South America, these prayers are generally not included in the wedding program;
7 but if they are included, it is not necessary for them to be done by an ordained pastor.

8
9 d. The order of the wedding ceremony suggested in the Seventh-day
10 Adventist Minister's Handbook does not include this initial prayer, nor the final one, thus
11 eliminating the problem regarding who should or should not say them.

12
13 e. The center of the wedding ceremony consists of: 1) exhortation,
14 sometimes also called commitment or responsibility; 2) marriage vows; 3) words declaring the
15 couple husband and wife; and 4) pastoral prayer on behalf of the couple. All of this must be
16 carried out only by an ordained pastor (see, in this manual, p. 82, 184). It is evident that, even if
17 there are no other parties, the ceremony will be complete, and the marriage will be held.

18
19 3. Ministry of Reception—Regarding the reception of members and guests at church
20 programs, mentioned in chapter 9, p. 86, 88 of this Church Manual, it should be considered that
21 action 2012-173 of the South American Division Executive Committee establishes the
22 appointment of a coordinator for the Ministry of Reception in each church and organized group.
23 It is important to organize this ministry based on the guidelines and materials offered by the
24 South American Division and available at: adv.st/recepcao.

25
26 4. Adventurers Club (see p. 115, 118)—Regarding the age of the Adventurers
27 mentioned in chapter 9, p. 115, of this Church Manual, it will remain from 6 to 9 years old in the
28 territory of the South American Division, maintaining the existing organization through the four
29 preliminary classes.

30
31 “Occasional programs involving families and children under six years old must be
32 coordinated by the Children's Ministries and the respective Sabbath School classes” (action
33 2015-103 of the Executive Committee of the South American Division).

34
35 5. Adolescent's Ministry (see p. 145)—Adolescent's Ministry (AM) department was
36 created in the South American Division to facilitate the deepening of the spiritual experience of
37 teenagers (ages 13 to 16); with the aim of attracting them to a redemptive friendship with Christ
38 and a lifelong commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

39
40 The TM, like the Children's Ministries, cooperates with the Sabbath School and other
41 departments providing the development of gifts in the context of family, church, and society. The
42 TM coordinator works with the support of the pastor and the Church board.

1
2 The objectives of the TM are the following:
3

4 a. Teach the Bible with a methodology that allows the teenager to get closer
5 to Christ.
6

7 b. Help church leaders and members recognize the importance of this age
8 and the appropriate time to attract teenagers to Christ and His Church.
9

10 c. Encourage the inclusion of teenagers in church programs and activities.
11

12 d. Prepare leaders who are qualified to work with teenagers.
13

14 e. Work closely with other church departments; especially Sabbath School,
15 Family Ministries, Youth Ministries, and Pathfinders and Adventurers Ministries.

SPD/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering) to GPS-24AC

422-24G SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION - *CHURCH MANUAL*
SUPPLEMENT

RECOMMENDED, To endorse the *Church Manual* Supplement of the South Pacific Division, which reads as follows:

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION SUPPLEMENT

Preamble

Often the question is asked “What does the church say about...?” This enquiry not only comes from Seventh-day Adventist believers but also from the general public or media. To assist its membership the Church has developed a number of position statements on specific topics or issues. These Church statements not only help to clarify and express its stance publicly but enable the development of a unified understanding by the membership of the Church in addressing some of the pressing challenges faced by the Church in this present age.

The Seventh-day Adventist form of governance is representative, which recognises that authority rests in its membership and is expressed through duly elected representatives at each level of organisation, with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the Church at each level.* Thus the elected representatives at each level of organisation do not represent their local entities, institutions or defined geographical area but are to administer the interests of the Church as a whole. It is through this form of governance that Church strategies for mission and vision have been refined and Church statements and policies developed to provide smooth operations and to enhance the growth and development of the Church.

These supplementary notes begin with the South Pacific Division vision and mission statements, stating the objectives and the direction the Division wishes to take in fulfilling the Mission of the Church. These vision and mission statements are reviewed each quinquennium and they may change in order to reflect the new quinquennial goals and objectives of the Church.

Included in the supplementary notes are the South Pacific Division Executive Committee’s resolutions on issues that are of particular importance to local churches within the South Pacific Division. For example, one issue is Sabbath observance in the Pacific around the dateline. The South Pacific Division also develops policies that assist church leadership in administering the operation of the Church and its institutions. These Church Policies are subject to changes as well, given the changing nature of the circumstances they are addressing.

Thus the supplementary notes within this edition of the Church Manual are a compilation of some of the Church’s position statements voted at various General Conference Sessions and Annual Committees, together with resolutions confirmed and accepted by the South Pacific Division Executive Committees. For more on the Church’s position statements, go to the

* GC Administrative Notes, 2009—used by permission, December 7, 2010.

1 Church's official website (www.adventist.org) to view and obtain the Church's stance on certain
2 issues, or contact the Secretariat department of the South Pacific Division for assistance.

3
4 Please note that certain church statements and resolutions included in this Church Manual
5 have geographical and cultural limitations and therefore only apply to those churches within
6 these geographical boundaries of the South Pacific Division. These statements are included in
7 this compilation for the understanding of the corporate Church.

8 [Table of Contents]

9 Chapter 1

10 MISSION

11 A. The South Pacific Division Vision and Mission Statement

12
13 Vision—A thriving Adventist movement, living our hope in Jesus and transforming the
14 Pacific.

15
16 Mission—Make disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim
17 to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation of His soon
18 return (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Rev 14:6-12).

19
20 Purpose—To Inspire Hope and Wholeness of Life in our Communities.

21 PREPARE THE SOIL

22 Build relationships and community with people using these steps:

- 23 • Seek the best for them
- 24 • Eat with them
- 25 • Listen to their stories
- 26 • Work with them to do good in the community by serving others
- 27 • As appropriate, pray with them

28 Continue to teach other people how to prepare the soil

1 SOW THE SEED

2
3 Sow the life-changing word of God into people's lives using these steps:

- 4
- 5 • When appropriate, share Bible verses and/or stories that are meaningful and
 - 6 relevant in their lives
 - 7 • After listening to their story, share your own story of faith
 - 8 • Show how their story and your story fits within God's story
 - 9 • Read the Bible together, such as the Gospel of Mark, Acts, Ephesians, Daniel etc
 - 10 • Share the gospel – the good news of God's work of salvation – and its benefits,
 - 11 and explain how your friends can respond to the gospel
 - 12 • Help teach your friends how to Prepare the Soil and Sow the Seed.
- 13

14 Continue to sow the word of God into other people's lives

15

16 CULTIVATE THE PLANTS

17
18 Grow new disciples to become more like Jesus in every way using these steps:

- 19
- 20 • Show your friends how to pray and read the Bible so they can grow
 - 21 • Introduce your friends to the key teachings of the Bible
 - 22 • Make sure your friends make friends with other Christians for spiritual support
 - 23 and to be equipped as disciple-makers
 - 24 • Help your friends discover and use their spiritual gifts in ministry Continue to
 - 25 spiritually cultivate more new disciples
- 26

27 HARVEST THE CROP

28
29 Bring new disciples to make decisions and build church community using these steps:

- 30
- 31 • Invite your friends to be baptised into Christ and join His Body the church
 - 32 • Involve them in the 5 purposes of the church
 - 33 • Let the Holy Spirit lead your friends to use their spiritual gifts
 - 34 • Plant a church where appropriate and led by the Holy Spirit
- 35

1 Continue to lead more disciples to make decisions and build more church communities

The 5 purposes of church are:

1. Worship—love God (Matt 22:37)
2. Ministry—love your neighbour (Matt 22:39)
3. Evangelism/Witness, Go... (Matt 28:19)
4. Community—love your church, invite commitment through baptism (Matt 28:19)
5. Christlikeness—teach people to obey Christ, to become like Him as life long disciples (Matt 28:20)

2
3 **MULTIPLY THE HARVEST—TO MAKE DISCIPLES**

4
5 Grow the movement by multiplying disciple-makers and leaders using these steps:

- 6
- 7 • Identify disciple-makers and leaders
 - 8 • Train disciples to become disciple-makers
 - 9 • Develop leaders who train leaders
 - 10 • Equip and resource disciple-makers and leaders to make disciples and establish
 - 11 new groups and churches
 - 12 • Support disciple-makers and leaders in their mission strategies
- 13

14 Continue to be a disciple-maker and a leader yourself

The process for developing leaders who train other leaders are:

1. Teach
2. Model, let them watch
3. Watch them do it
4. Let them do it



1 Values—The five values based on Scripture and the life of Jesus Christ and that all
2 should live by are: Unconditional Love; Enduring Truth; Dignity and Respect; Unity in
3 Diversity; and Courageous Hope.

- 4
- 5 • Unconditional Love: Understanding/Accepting/Compassion. Actively contribute
6 to a culture of unconditional love and support. Unconditional love means we
7 address issues when they arise, but with fairness and compassion, whilst valuing
8 each other's differences. Lend a helping hand when others need it. Take a genuine
9 interest in each other. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
- 10 • Enduring Truth: Accountability/Authenticity/Integrity. Be honest and truthful in
11 our actions and words. By being truthful we will steer away from gossiping and
12 rumours. Maintain confidentiality whilst preserving transparency. Be authentic in
13 our interactions with each other. We admit our own errors and weaknesses
14 because we are in a safe environment. Hold ourselves and others accountable in
15 working towards our mission. (John 8:32)
- 16 • Dignity and Respect: Empowering/Confidentiality/Equality. Consider others
17 worthy of honour, kindness and respect. Realise the power words have for either
18 building each other up (encouragement, care, support, trust) or tearing each other
19 down (gossiping, belittling, criticising, protecting your turf). Individual respect is
20 essential in committing to professional development and excellence. Respecting
21 the talents and abilities each person has, allows empowerment in carrying out
22 roles. Physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing are of great importance for
23 personal and corporate health. (Philippians 2:2-4)
- 24 • Unity in Diversity: Innovation/Collaboration/Tolerance. We are united in our
25 mission, but diverse in our approach. At times of disagreement, once objections
26 have been aired, move forward in a spirit of unity. Strength lies in difference as
27 well as similarities. Be aware of unconscious bias – question entrenched attitudes
28 and existing practices so that as an organisation we can continually improve. Be
29 creative, embrace the opinions of others and be tolerant of each other (Colossians
30 1:16-17)
- 31 • Courageous Hope: Encouragement/Inspiration/Vision. Support and encourage
32 each other as we work together towards the fulfilment of our mission. Look
33 beyond the current context and exhibit 'over the horizon' thinking. Communicate
34 regularly and openly to ensure we are all united in our purpose, and together in
35 our operation. Take on what appears to be impossible with optimism and courage.
36 Be courageous in living our faith. (Titus 2:13)
- 37

38 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

39

40 Church Ministry—Develop empowering leaders, mobilise disciples, and expand
41 missional opportunities.

42

1 Community Development Ministry—Strengthen engagement, inspire and equip,
2 strengthen capacity.

3
4 Health and Lifestyle Ministry—Be a leader in lifestyle medicine, become a trusted
5 provider in good nutrition and food choices, provide world-class healthcare, grow and empower
6 our advocates and centres of influence.

7
8 Education Ministry—Ensure Adventist identity remains a key part of Adventist
9 education, develop and grow our education leadership team, educational improvement, ensuring
10 the future.

11
12 People and Culture—Inspire, engage and empower/develop our leaders and teams to
13 achieve our mission, develop and improve systems, and build organisational culture.

14
15 Communication and Media—Develop the key message framework, mobilise
16 communicators-generating effective scale, and maximise communication infrastructure.

17
18 Governance and Administration Support—Strengthen organisational culture, organisation
19 structure review, use technology and new systems to drive efficiencies, effectiveness, and
20 engagement, and the nature of church.

21
22 B. Safeguarding Mission in the Social Environment

23
24 Seventh-day Adventists are engaged in a mission to communicate to all peoples the
25 everlasting gospel of God’s love, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Saviour and Lord, to
26 unite with His remnant church and to prepare for His soon return. This mission is advanced
27 through many and varied methods of preaching, teaching and healing. A worldwide
28 infrastructure links local churches as part of a global faith community. The Church has also
29 established numerous educational, publishing and healthcare institutions that perform a vital role
30 in demonstrating and communicating the Church’s focus on mission and witnessing to the gospel
31 through service to others.

32
33 Seventh-day Adventist churches and institutions operate in diverse social, political and
34 religious environments. The development of national and local legislation in many parts of the
35 world has been influenced by, or is compatible with, Christian worldview and morals. More
36 recently, concern for social policy is becoming a dominant factor in the development of laws.
37 This results in rather new, and at times challenging, environments for the practice and advocacy
38 of historic Christian beliefs and values relating to morality. The actual situations vary widely
39 around the world making it difficult to outline a single global response.

1 The following principles should be weighed in determining an appropriate course of
2 action in those situations in which the Church encounters tension with obligations imposed by
3 the state:
4

5 1. The ability to maintain mission and witness—Christian mission, witness and
6 proclamation take place in a fallen world, amidst circumstances that are not always favourable or
7 neutral. In such situations, the Christian response is not to retreat or abandon mission, but to find
8 ways of bearing a witness in spite of circumstances. The ability to bear witness and to carry on
9 mission should be an important consideration in determining how to respond in difficult
10 situations.
11

12 2. Demonstration of good citizenship—Christians live simultaneously in two
13 communities, the secular state and the kingdom of God, and have loyalties and obligations to
14 both. Christians should be good citizens of both communities. In situations where tension arises
15 between the two, a Christian will demonstrate allegiance to faith convictions informed by the
16 Bible. In all other matters, the Christian is advised, by teachings of the Bible itself, to accept and
17 discharge the obligations of earthly citizenship.
18

19 3. Realisation that boundaries exist and cannot be breached if mission is to be
20 sustained—Church members and church organisations live in the world but are not “of the
21 world.” This constant reality explains why the Church cannot always accommodate itself to the
22 prevailing customs of society. Faithfulness to its understanding of Bible teaching will require
23 the determination of boundaries beyond which the Church cannot and will not go. To do so
24 would render its efforts at mission contradictory and meaningless. The particular course of
25 experience through which an organisation is brought to that point will vary from place to place.
26 Each situation needs to be assessed in the light of its presenting circumstances.
27

28 4. Adjusting practices to comply with legislation does not redefine denominational
29 positions—There is every likelihood that response patterns from various entities will differ
30 somewhat before reaching the boundary—the point beyond which the Church would be in denial
31 of its convictions and abandoning its mission and witness. The central concern in these situations
32 is not one of questioning or redefining the Church’s position, but of finding a way to translate
33 that position into practices that safeguard the mission of the Church.
34

35 5. Consultation rather than unilateral action—A Seventh-day Adventist organisation
36 will not act unilaterally in such matters. Its executive committee or board will seek counsel from
37 the administration of supervisory organisations (conference, union, division), before deciding the
38 nature of its response to legislation that obligates the organisation to practices deemed in conflict
39 with its beliefs and values.
40

41 6. Counsel before entering into litigation—In situations where litigation is
42 contemplated by a denominational entity, or where an entity must defend itself in a lawsuit

1 regarding practices deemed in conflict with the Church's beliefs and values, the administration of
2 the entity shall also seek counsel, from the General Conference Office of General Counsel and
3 SPD in-house counsel, before initiating or responding to litigation.

4
5 *South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 13.3, November 9, 2022.*

6 7 C. Supporting Ministries

8
9 The South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church defines Recognised
10 Supporting Ministries as those organisations that comply with the following criteria:

11
12 1. The leaders and representatives of Recognised Supporting Ministries shall be
13 members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing.

14
15 2. The organisation seeking Recognised Supporting Ministry status shall make
16 available a formal statement of mission, including plans, objectives and governance, upon the
17 request of the local conference/ mission, union or Division in whose territory they are based. It
18 will be incumbent upon them to show in what way their ministry is supportive of and
19 complements the operations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division.

20
21 3. The organisation seeking Recognised Supporting Ministry status shall be invited
22 to dialogue with the church entity/ministry/institution with which they may be offering a
23 supportive ministry. This should be done with a spirit of cooperation and with the objective to
24 expand the ministry of the Church in a direction that is most helpful to the Church. The Church
25 entity/ministry/institution is to advise how it would like the applicant ministry to be supportive
26 and invite them to explain how they plan to be supportive. If agreement can be reached on how
27 they can best support the Church this should then be formalised through a Memorandum of
28 Understanding/ Memorandum of Agreement. When the Supporting Ministry operates across
29 conference boundaries the union is to be part of the dialogue, and when the Supporting Ministry
30 operates across union boundaries the Division is to be part of the dialogue.

31
32 4. The Supporting Ministry shall make initial application for approval, recognition
33 and registration of their supportive ministry to the conference(s)/mission(s) of the Seventh-day
34 Adventist Church in which they are located.

35
36 a. The local conference/mission, or other relevant church entity, that receives
37 an application for Recognised Supporting Ministry status shall decide whether it is appropriate to
38 proceed with a review of that application.

39
40 b. Where the operations of an applicant for Recognised Supporting Ministry
41 status reach beyond the territory of the local conference/ mission in which they are based, the

1 review process will include consultation with the conference/mission and union in which they
2 intend to, or do, operate.

3
4 c. A recommendation that approval be given is to be normally made in the
5 first instance by the local conference/mission, then the union and finally passed on to the South
6 Pacific Division.

7
8 d. Final approval is to be given by the members of Seventh-day Adventist
9 Church (Pacific) Limited. Such approved applications are to be held in the register for
10 Recognised Supporting Ministries at the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist
11 Church and also forwarded to the General Conference Secretariat for listing in line with General
12 Conference policy K.05, Criteria for Defining Supporting Ministries.

13
14 5. The organisation seeking recognition shall:

15
16 a. Have been in operation for at least one year.

17
18 b. Be led by a Seventh-day Adventist who does not receive remuneration
19 from any Seventh-day Adventist denominational entity in recognition of his/her leadership of the
20 supporting ministry.

21
22 c. Is governed by a board which comprises a majority of lay Seventh-day
23 Adventists.

24
25 d. Complete the application process as approved by the Division.

26
27 e. Supply copies of the following documents along with the application:

28
29 i. Mission statement.

30 ii. Code of conduct or equivalent document setting out the
31 organisation's objectives, legal status and mode of operation.

32 iii. Constitution whether incorporated or unincorporated.

33 iv. Copies of the latest financial statements. Financial statements
34 should meet current industry standards.

35 v. Compliance with Government Register(s) for Charities.

36 vi. Any other documents as requested by the conference, union or
37 Division.

38
39 f. Hold current and effective liability insurance policies.

40
41 6. Final approval by the members of Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific)
42 Limited shall initially provide provisional Recognised Supporting Ministry status for two years.

1 In the second year of that provisional status a review shall be conducted at the initiative of the
2 South Pacific Division. That review shall be reported to the South Pacific Division
3 Administrators' Council. Upon a satisfactory outcome, full status shall be granted.
4

5 NOTE: Provisional status has all the benefits of full status but is under greater scrutiny
6 and subject to a formal review process.
7

8 7. A review of all Recognised Supporting Ministries shall normally be undertaken
9 after each three-year period. This review shall be conducted by the local administration in which
10 the ministry resides at the request of the South Pacific Division and a report and recommendation
11 concerning the continued status of the ministry shall be forwarded through the union to the
12 Division.
13

14 8. The theological positions of a Recognised Supporting Ministry and the emphasis
15 placed upon them shall be in harmony with the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist
16 Church. In supporting these beliefs, the context of both the Biblical text and the writings of
17 Ellen G White will be faithfully used. Theological positions not addressed in the fundamental
18 beliefs shall be treated as private beliefs and shall not be promoted to the point where they
19 become divisive.
20

21 9. The leaders and representatives of a Recognised Supporting Ministry shall
22 support and co-operate with the goals and purposes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by
23 words, actions and in their communications, whether by print, film or electronic means. Their
24 work shall positively supplement that of the Church in carrying out the gospel commission.
25

26 10. The Recognised Supporting Ministry personnel—ordained or unordained—shall
27 not present their ministry or organisation as an official church project or ministry. Recognised
28 Supporting Ministries shall dialogue and negotiate with Church administrators in the conferences
29 or missions in which they intend to, or do, operate, and shall secure approval from these church
30 administrators to render their services within that conference/mission. All invitations for
31 speakers shall be processed in the normal way with a service request from the local
32 conference/mission according to policy. Recognised Supporting Ministries should contact the
33 Secretary of the South Pacific Division to acquaint themselves with service request procedures.
34

35 11. Recognised Supporting Ministries shall not solicit or knowingly accept the Lord's
36 tithe from Seventh-day Adventist church members but shall encourage and ensure the returning
37 of tithes and regular offerings through the authorised channels of the Seventh-day Adventist
38 Church.
39

40 12. Recognised Supporting Ministries which accept financial contributions shall
41 provide copies of their annual audited financial statements upon the request of the South Pacific
42 Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1
2 13. All fundraising activities within local churches, at camp meetings and at other
3 church events are to be approved by the local conference or institution where the fundraising is
4 to take place, and are not to compete with other official church appeals. The Divine Service
5 should not be used to solicit funds.
6

7 14. An equivalent of up to six full-back page Record advertisements per year are to be
8 allocated for Recognised Supporting Ministries with no more than the equivalent of two pages of
9 advertising to be used by any one supporting ministry. The number and timing of these
10 advertisements are to be negotiated so that they do not conflict with any regular cycle of
11 advertising by recognised Church entities. The Recognised Supporting Ministry is responsible
12 for all costs associated with such advertising.
13

14 15. Limited use of other church media is permitted. The number and timing of such
15 media use will be determined to ensure appropriate support for denominationally operated
16 ministries. The Recognised Supporting Ministry is responsible for all costs associated with such
17 advertising.
18

19 16. Advertisements are to carry the statement that while the ministry is not part of the
20 organised church's ministry, it is supportive of the mission of the Church.
21

22 17. A Recognised Supporting Ministry and its personnel shall clearly and explicitly
23 state in their legal documents and in their dealings with third parties that they support the
24 spiritual mission of the Church but are separate organisations not controlled by or legally
25 affiliated with the Church. A legal statement is to be signed which states that recognition of
26 supportive ministry status does not bind the Church in any litigation, liability, protection or legal
27 issues that may arise in the course of operation of the supportive ministry.
28

29 18. The Recognised Supporting Ministry is to maintain its independence by not
30 purporting in any of its documentation or public statements that it is part of the organised Church
31 or any of its entities or agencies. In the same manner, it shall not use the name Seventh-day
32 Adventist Church or abbreviations thereof in association with its title or name.
33

34 19. Recognised Supporting Ministry status carries with it endorsement to attend, at
35 the cost of the ministry, General Conference sponsored and organised events for Supporting
36 Ministries.
37

38 20. To provide mutual support and to afford protection and recognition of all parties,
39 the activities of registered Recognised Supporting Ministries shall undergo review from time to
40 time by the South Pacific Division.
41

21. Recognised Supporting Ministries based in other divisions, wishing to operate within the territories of the South Pacific Division, must first apply for, and be granted Recognised Supporting Ministry status by the South Pacific Division. Approval will be based on these criteria. Visits and activity within the territory of this Division must be with the prior approval of the Division, union and conference/mission in which they wish to operate, through the regular service request protocols of the Division.

South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 13.3, November 9, 2022.

D. Visiting Speakers

The Seventh-day Adventist Church holds the unity of the Church in high regard. The reasons for this are biblical (theological) and practical. Church unity is maintained in many ways and at many inter-related levels, and it takes all parts of the Church working together to achieve this unity.

Unity is an important component of member nurture. Church members are nurtured through pastors and elders preaching the gospel in the context of the Adventist faith in a relevant, inspiring and spiritually dynamic way. It is an important responsibility of the Church to ensure that this nurture takes place. At times, however, Church leaders may feel that inviting a speaker from outside the home union or conference/mission will be helpful.

The following guidelines for invitations to guest speakers are intended to help and instruct Church leaders in the South Pacific Division.

1. Leaders' Duty to Provide Proper Nurture—The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual makes it clear that “under no circumstances should a minister, elder, or other church officer, invite strangers or any unauthorised persons to conduct services in our churches. Each one worthy of the confidence of our churches will be able to identify himself or herself by producing proper credentials. There may be times when it is proper for our congregations to be addressed by government officials or by civic leaders. All others should be excluded from the pulpit unless permission be granted from the conference/mission/field office. It is the duty of every elder, minister and conference/mission/field president to see that this rule is carried out.” *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 19th Edition, pages 70, 74,75. (Further instruction on the importance of guarding the pulpits for the spiritual benefit of our people is found on pages 118-121.)

Thus, for a union or conference/mission in the South Pacific Division, it is ultimately the president that has the duty to see that properly authorised speakers from abroad are duly screened and channeled through the Church system.

1 2. Factors that Multiply the Invitations to Speakers—Today the invitation of
2 speakers from afar has become increasingly popular. Due to the electronic communication
3 systems, low-cost travel, the proliferation of Adventist parachurch organisations and the need for
4 fund-raisers to impress their donors, a cadre of popular speakers advertise themselves to our
5 churches and members.

6
7 While the Church has practised a standard protocol to manage invitations to speakers
8 outside the proper conference/mission territory, recent developments make it necessary to put
9 them into writing and have them formally approved by the relevant executive committee.

10 11 3. Principles for Service Requests

12
13 a. What is a Service Request? A service request is an officially recognised
14 request within the Church organisation for the services of a Church employee in a union or
15 conference/mission other than the home union/conference/mission. It also applies to speakers
16 that are not denominationally employed.

17
18 b. Why is a Service Request needed? It is needed in order to ensure:

- 19
20 i. that the service offered builds up the church spiritually and
21 doctrinally,
22 ii. that speakers who are invited to nurture the church have proper
23 credentials, are in good standing and come with the
24 recommendation of their Church employer,
25 iii. that all Church entities affected by the service action are properly
26 informed and advised of approval/denial well ahead of time, and
27 iv. that responsibilities are assumed by the proper Church body for
28 travel insurance and the costs of travel and accommodation.

29
30 c. For whom should a Service Request be made? A formal service request is
31 required for any Adventist speaker living outside the South Pacific. This includes
32 denominational employees, retirees, private individuals and individuals active in any parachurch
33 organisation. Speakers living outside of a union/ conference/ mission will require either a service
34 request or administrative approval as detailed in the procedures provided below.

35
36 d. Who may initiate it? A service request may be initiated by the committee
37 of any Church organisation within a union—a local church board, an institution, a conference/
38 mission/field committee, or a union committee. If a private individual or a private group
39 (including a para-church organisation) initiates the request, they are to bring it to the
40 conference/mission/field administration or, where no such organisation exists, to the union
41 administration, and must respect the response of that administration.

1 e. What information is needed on the request? The request shall include (a)
2 the speaker's name, (b) home conference and union, (c) position (if denominationally employed),
3 (d) the assignment for which he/she is invited, (e) the venue and event, (f) who is responsible for
4 the event, (g) the time frame, and (h) financial arrangement for covering the costs including
5 travel insurance. Prepared service request forms seeking this information are available from your
6 union/conference/mission secretaries.

7
8 f. Approval by Union and Division Committees. All inter-division and union
9 mission personnel service requests must be voted by the appropriate union committee. All
10 service requests for inter-division personnel or union mission personnel are to be passed on to
11 the Division Secretary for approval by the South Pacific Division. No final agreements are to be
12 made with a speaker by anybody in the Church until the union has voted its approval. It would
13 also be essential that a proper time-limit is set for the processing of service requests; a union
14 should normally not process a service request to the Division which relates to an event less than
15 three months ahead.

16
17 g. Interaction between the Union and the Division at the Preparatory Stage.
18 When the Associate Secretary has been informed about an invitation, documents supporting the
19 request will be supplied with the invitation by the union, otherwise the Secretary will contact the
20 speaker's home division to determine the standing of the invitee in his/her home field. The
21 findings will be shared in discretion with the inviting union. If the information implies that the
22 invitee would not be appropriate, it is the union's responsibility, in consultation with the
23 requesting conference, to decide to withdraw the invitation. The Division is merely providing a
24 service to the union. Should a union insist on an invitation, the Division still has the right to turn
25 it down, but it is always preferable that the conference, union and the Division reach consensus.

26
27 h. Communicating Guidelines. The unions should communicate guidelines
28 for the processing of service requests widely in their field. Every elder and pastor should have a
29 copy of these guidelines and should be encouraged to instruct the local churches about the
30 procedure.

31
32 i. Reasons for Cancellation. Reasons for declining an invitation or
33 withdrawing a suggested invitation include: lack of proper credentials; lack of positive
34 recommendation from the home field; divisive, sensationalist, or extreme emphasis in teaching;
35 preaching which can be assumed to deprive the Church of its spiritual, communal and
36 theological unity in the South Pacific Division; funding availability; or it is not the right timing.

37
38 4. Procedures for Managing Service Requests—The following procedures are to
39 assist conference leaders in dealing with their duty of leading the Church to the best speakers by
40 avoiding those who should be avoided.

1 a. That Church-related visits to the territory of the South Pacific Division by
2 all personnel (denominationally employed and lay person) from outside the South Pacific
3 Division be by service request.

4
5 b. That Church-related visits by personnel (denominationally employed and
6 lay person) from the territory of the South Pacific Division to the territory of any other Division
7 be by service request.

8
9 c. That within the South Pacific Division, Church-related visits by lay
10 persons and/or retirees to missions outside the conference/ mission in which their membership is
11 held be by service request.

12
13 d. That within the South Pacific Division, Church-related visits by lay
14 persons and/or retirees to conferences outside the conference/ mission in which their membership
15 is held, be by approval of the administration of the requesting entity.

16
17 e. That within the South Pacific Division, Church-related visits by
18 denominationally employed persons to the territory of another employing entity be:

19
20 i. By service request; or

21 ii. In harmony with the following:

- 22 (a) Approval of the visit must be obtained from the
23 administration of the requesting entity and the
24 administration of the employing entity of the invitee.
25 (b) When the inviting entity is within a mission, approval must
26 also be obtained from the administration of the union in
27 which the inviting entity is located.
28 (c) When the inviting entity is within a conference, union
29 administration and, where applicable, the union
30 departmental counterpart must be informed of the visit.

31
32 f. That whenever a service request is not required, there must be a written or
33 electronic record (e.g. e-mail) of the approval of the visit by the approving entities. This record
34 will specify the nature of the visit and the entity responsible for expenses when responsibility for
35 the cost of the visit falls outside accepted Division protocols.

36
37 g. That whenever a service request is not required, informal contact at the
38 beginning of the process should be made with approving administrations by calling entities.

39
40 h. That whenever a service request is not required, local churches, schools
41 and institutions should work through their local conference/mission administrations in initiating
42 requests for visitors.

i. Service requests and approvals should normally be addressed to the secretary of an entity unless otherwise so designated by that entity.

South Pacific Division Board of Pacific Limited, 21.5 Guidelines for Visiting speakers, September 11, 2007.

Chapter 2

THEOLOGY

E. Creation

The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms its belief in the biblical account of Creation in contrast to an evolutionary explanation for the origin of living organisms and the relationship of humans to other life forms. Seventh-day Adventists note with great interest the increasing discussion of intelligent design in nature and the evidence that supports this view. In the light of considerable public interest in this topic, the Church takes this opportunity to express its confidence in the biblical record.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is the Creator of all life and that the Bible reveals a reliable account of His creative activity. Further, we believe that the biblical events recorded in Genesis 1-11, including the special creation of human beings, are historical and recent, that the seven days of Creation were literal 24-hour days forming a literal week, and that the Flood was global in nature.

Belief in Creation is foundational for Seventh-day Adventist understanding concerning much more than the question of origins. The purposes and mission of God described in the Bible, human responsibility for stewardship of the environment, the institution of marriage and the sacred meaning of the Sabbath all find their meaning in the doctrine of Creation.

Seventh-day Adventists recognise that the biblical record of Creation does not answer all questions that can be asked concerning origins. Our comprehension of such mysteries is limited. We anticipate that continued study of both the Bible and nature will deepen our understanding of God's power and strengthen our faith in His Word and the Creation account it contains. (This statement is supported by numerous Bible passages including: Psalm 19:1; Colossians 1:16-17; Genesis 1-11; Psalm 139:14; Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27; Romans 8:20, 21.)

This statement was approved and voted by the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM) and was released by the Office of the President, Ted N. C. Wilson, on June 23, 2010, and released at the General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia, June 24-July 3, 2010.

1
2 F. Caring for the Environment
3

4 The world in which we live is a gift of love from the Creator God, from “Him who made
5 the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water” (Revelation 14:7; 11:17, 18). Within
6 this creation He placed humans, set intentionally in relationship with Himself, other persons, and
7 the surrounding world. Therefore, as Seventh-day Adventists, we hold its preservation and
8 nurture to be intimately related to our service to Him.
9

10 God set aside the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial and perpetual reminder of His
11 creative act and establishment of the world. In resting on that day, Seventh-day Adventists
12 reinforce the special sense of relationship with the Creator and His creation. Sabbath observance
13 underscores the importance of our integration with the total environment.
14

15 The human decision to disobey God broke the original order of creation, resulting in a
16 disharmony alien to His purposes. Thus our air and waters are polluted, forests and wildlife
17 plundered, and natural resources exploited. Because we recognise humans as part of God’s
18 creation, our concern for the environment extends to personal health and lifestyle. We advocate a
19 wholesome manner of living and reject the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and other
20 drugs that harm the body and consume earth’s resources; and we promote a simple vegetarian
21 diet.
22

23 Seventh-day Adventists are committed to respectful, cooperative relationships among all
24 persons, recognising our common origin and realising our human dignity as a gift from the
25 Creator. Since human poverty and environmental degradation are interrelated, we pledge
26 ourselves to improve the quality of life for all people. Our goal is a sustainable development of
27 resources while meeting human needs.
28

29 Genuine progress toward caring for our natural environment rests upon both personal and
30 cooperative effort. We accept the challenge to work toward restoring God’s overall design.
31 Moved by faith in God, we commit ourselves to promote the healing that rises at both personal
32 and environmental levels from integrated lives dedicated to serve God and humanity.
33 In this commitment we confirm our stewardship of God’s creation and believe that total
34 restoration will be complete only when God makes all things new.
35

36 *This statement was approved and voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*
37 *Executive Committee at the Annual Council session in Silver Spring, Maryland, October 12,*
38 *1992.*
39

40 G. Human Equality
41
42

In God’s Image

Theology of Full Humanity and Abundant Life Introduction

Throughout human history, in many different cultures, there have been varying perceptions of women and men. Some cultures have perceived women as subservient to men; other cultures have emphasized the importance of women; and still others have seen women and men as equals. Some Melanesian societies have traditionally been patrilineal, emphasizing the importance of men; while others have been matrilineal, emphasizing the importance of women.

Papua New Guinea is part of Melanesian culture; however, as it is very diverse, cultural beliefs and practices differ between and within provinces. Thus, within cultural groupings, there are varying views on men and women. While relationships between men and women have traditionally been defined by mutual respect, as with most human societies, there has also been a degree of inequality between men and women.

Many factors, including societal changes, as well as religious/cultural beliefs and practices, have influenced the demeaning of women and their status as lesser, incomplete, damaged human beings, and along with their ill-treatment, this has increasingly become a societal norm.

It is the premise of this document that, while cultural beliefs and practice are an inevitable part of human experience, all human practices should be viewed through the lens of the authority and teachings of the inspired Word of God, which asserts equality based on love and respect between men and women.

What is Human Equality?

Human equality refers to the equal dignity, responsibilities and opportunities of females and males. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same, but that women's and men's dignity, responsibilities, and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Human equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are of equal value.

Toward a Theology of Human Equality

Human equality is not a social construct or the result of modern cultural influences but finds its origin in God's creation of humans in His own image and His relational activity in the Garden of Eden (Gen 1 and 2). Built upon this foundation the theology of human equality affirms the equal humanity and dignity of all people, regardless of biological sex, ethnicity, culture, colour, and creed, and seeks to redress the cultural and theological beliefs that justify and validate human inequality. Because human equality is grounded in God's creative and relational activity, it transcends all cultural and ethnic beliefs and practices. Thus, respecting the equality

1 and dignity of all humans demonstrates respect for the Creator. Conversely, denying this equality
2 and dignity disrespects the Creator and undermines His original design for human relationships.

3 4 Adventist Perspectives on Human Equality

5
6 The Seventh-day Adventist Church embraces the Holy Scripture as divinely inspired, and
7 views it as the final doctrinal and moral authority for Christian practice. Because of its deep
8 biblical foundations, the Adventist Church embraces the theology of human equality as
9 expressed in the theological pillars, outlined in the paragraphs below. The Church also seeks to
10 redress practices and beliefs that deny any human beings, and particularly women and girls, the
11 abundant life (John 10:10) by reaffirming the fundamental biblical and theological truth that all
12 are created in God's image and likeness and are equal before God.

13 14 Theological Pillars of Human Equality

15
16 The theology of human equality is built upon the following theological principles, which
17 enable the participation and inclusion of both men and women in creating and sustaining
18 communities that reaffirm, respect and celebrate the equal value of being female and male:

19 20 Pillar 1—Humans are Created in God's image and likeness

21
22 At its core, a theology of human equality is the affirmation and recognition that both male
23 and female were created in God's image and likeness. God said, *"Let Us make man in Our
24 image, according to Our likeness... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God
25 He created him; male and female He created them"* (Gen 1:26, 27 NJKV). It was after God
26 created man and woman that He looked at what He had made and declared that "everything that
27 He had made... was very good" (Gen 1:31 NJKV). Thus, both man and woman were created
28 equally in God's image and likeness.

29 30 Pillar 2—Salvation and Restoration for All

31
32 Genesis 3 records the disobedience of the first couple and the consequences of their sin.
33 Because of sin, they lost direct access to God and became subject to death. Other results included
34 pain in childbearing, the dominion of man over woman, and hardship. However, because of His
35 great love for those created in His own image and likeness, God did not leave humanity in
36 desperation. Already in Genesis 3:15 there is a promise that the woman's "offspring" will one
37 day overcome death and reconcile humanity to God. This promise becomes the central theme of
38 the Old Testament and finds its fulfillment in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Thus, in John 3:16,
39 we find these words: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that
40 whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Using creation language, the
41 Apostle Paul proclaims that "if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone,
42 the new is here!" (2 Cor 5:17 NIV). Through his call to the new life in Christ, the Apostle Paul

1 advocates a return to God's original, pre-Fall design for humanity, which includes the equality of
2 man and woman proclaimed at the time of Creation.

3 4 Pillar 3—Priesthood of All Believers

5
6 Human equality aligns with another New Testament teaching, namely, the priesthood of
7 all believers. During Old Testament times, a limited group of Jewish men from the tribe of Levi
8 were selected to serve as priests of the Holy God of Israel. Through their ministrations, the
9 children of Israel were able to fulfil the requirements of the Old Testament covenant. This
10 system of priestly mediation pointed to Jesus Christ and ceased with His death on the cross when
11 He proclaimed, "It is finished" (John 19:30). With His death, Christ inaugurated a system in
12 which all believers are now priests with direct access to the throne of God's grace (1 Pet 2:5-9;
13 Heb 4:16). The New Testament does not teach the priesthood of all male believers, rather, the
14 priesthood of all believers. This principle affirms and validates the human dignity and worth that
15 God assigned to every human being at the beginning.

16 17 Pillar 4—Respect for human dignity and equality

18
19 God endows dignity and equality on every human being. "*There is neither Jew nor*
20 *Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in*
21 *Christ Jesus*" (Gal 3:28 NKJV). This means that all human beings are equal and precious in
22 God's created order, regardless of whether they are men or women. Differences in gender, race,
23 class, disability, age or religion do not negate this equality in Christ.

24 25 Pillar 5—Abundant life

26
27 Jesus declared that His mission was to bring abundant life to humanity. "*I have come that*
28 *they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10 NKJV). Thus, both
29 men and women are invited to experience gutpela sindaun (abundant life). This is only possible
30 when both men and women are seen as equal in the eyes of God and people.

31 32 Pillar 6—God's Kingdom as Inclusive and Participatory

33
34 God's Kingdom involves a transformed world where women and men, boys and girls live
35 and relate to one another in the way that God intended, reflecting the ways and values of the
36 Kingdom of God. Inclusion and participation are the hallmarks of the Kingdom (John 3:16; Acts
37 2:17-18; Gal 2:38) both of which must incarnate in human relationships that transform cultural,
38 institutional, and structural injustices.

39
40 Jesus demonstrated this inclusiveness when He invited all into His kingdom—the
41 wealthy tax collector and the poor widow, the little children and respected Pharisee, the foreign,
42 Syrophenician woman and the Galilean fishermen—all were invited to participate equally. The

1 Christian church is called to extend this invitation to all. In the parable of the Wedding Banquet
2 the instruction is given: “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that
3 my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23 NJKV).

4 5 Pillar 7—Mutuality in Marriage Relationships

6
7 Mutuality in marriage relationships is a core teaching of the Scriptures. Instituted at
8 creation, mutuality in marriage was affirmed in the New Testament. In Ephesians 5:21, the
9 Apostle Paul states: “*submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*” (Eph 5:21 ESV). The
10 following twofold instruction of Paul affirms this mutuality: “*Wives, submit to your own*
11 *husbands, as to the Lord,*” which is balanced by “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also*
12 *loved the church and gave Himself for her*” (Eph 5:25 NKJV).

13
14 The word “love” (*agapē*) with which the husband is to love his wife is the same word that
15 the Apostle Paul uses to speak of Christ’s love for His bride, the church. “*Gave Himself for her*”
16 refers to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross on behalf of his beloved. It follows that the *agapē* love
17 with which Christ loves His church is the ultimate example of submission of which Paul spoke in
18 Ephesians 5:21. Husbands are thus invited to follow the example of Christ and to love their
19 wives with sacrificial *agapē* love rather than “lording over” them (compare with Mark 10:42-45).
20 Mutual submission is also reflected in the sexual relationship in marriage. Paul declares “*The*
21 *wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband*
22 *does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does*” (1Cor 7:4 NKJV).

23 24 Pillar 8—The Gifting by the Holy Spirit is Inclusive

25
26 “[*There is*] one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”
27 (Eph 4:6 NKJV). It is through His Spirit that all believers receive both fruit and gifts for the
28 work of ministry. The fruit, “*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
29 *gentleness, self-control*” (Gal 5:22 NKJV), and the gifts, “*When He ascended on high,... [He]*
30 *gave gifts to men*” (Eph 4:8 NKJV) are inclusive.

31
32 The New Testament affirms that these fruits and gifts are given without regard to gender.
33 Peter, quoting the Old Testament prophet Joel, says:

34
35 “*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,*
36 *That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;*
37 *Your sons and your daughters shall prophecy,*
38 *Your young men shall see visions,*
39 *your old men shall dream dreams.*
40 *And on My menservants and on My womenservants*
41 *I will pour out My Spirit in those days;*
42 *And they shall prophecy*” (Acts 2:17, 18 NKJV).

1
2 Like the fruit of the Spirit, the gifts are given to male and female, young and old.
3 Similarly, in Romans 12:6-8 the Apostle Paul lists the gifts of the Spirit: prophecy, ministry,
4 teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership and showing mercy. These gifts are distributed
5 “according to the grace given to each of us” without regard to gender.
6

7 The inclusiveness in the gifting by the Spirit recognizes that members of the body are
8 blessed with distinct, yet equally important and necessary gifts from the Holy Spirit for the
9 building up of Christ’s Body, the Church.
10

11 Pillar 9—Sex and Gender Roles 12

13 There are roles that are biologically sex-specific to a woman and roles that are
14 biologically sex specific to a man. These sex roles were given by God at creation and have to do
15 with procreation and special bond between the spouses (Gen 1:27-28; 2:24-25).
16

17 These God-given roles are often supplemented by gender roles, which are assigned by
18 society/culture to men and women. Since people construct cultures, it is also people who can
19 change cultures that contradict God’s original design and deny certain groups of people their
20 God-given humanity, dignity and equality.
21

22 Within the Christian movement and community initiated by Jesus Christ, traditional and
23 cultural gender roles have been superseded by the inclusiveness in the gifting by the Spirit. The
24 Christian Church, operating according to this model, is a change agent in society rather than a
25 reflector of society.
26

27 Pillar 10—Empowering the disempowered. 28

29 Jesus’ radical compassion, risk-taking, ministering across borders, and challenges to the
30 traditions and practices that excluded the vulnerable and most marginalized (among these
31 women, children, and those deemed unclean because of disability or illness) demonstrated the
32 principles and values of the Kingdom of God. It is within the very essence of God’s ministry in
33 Jesus Christ and of God’s community to continue to seek out and strive to empower the least and
34 most vulnerable in society. Most often this means women and children. This is often exacerbated
35 when they are suffering from some form of disability (John 4, 8; Matt 8, 25).
36

37 Conclusion 38

39 A theology of human equality asserts that all humans have equal dignity, regardless of
40 sex, ethnicity, culture, colour, and creed. This assertion is deeply grounded in God’s creative
41 activity, described in the opening pages of the Bible. The Fall of the first human beings
42 disordered God’s original plan and resulted in pain, suffering, and inequality within the human

1 family. Nevertheless, the Scriptures urge all followers of God to redress the painful effects of sin,
2 among them the inequality between men and women. With explicit reference to the Creation, the
3 apostle Paul states that if “anyone is in Christ, [they] are a new creation” (2 Cor 5:17 NKJV). It
4 is thus God’s desire to see His followers restored to His original plan for humanity. One reason
5 God sent His Son was so He could model the abundant life He had planned for them from the
6 beginning.

7
8 Following Jesus’ example, the Seventh-day Adventist Church aspires to fulfil Christ’s
9 mandate to regard all human beings as equally created in His image and to enable all to live with
10 dignity and respect, in order that they may experience gutpela sindaun (abundant life).

11
12 *The Biblical Research Committee of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists has*
13 *endorsed this document.*

14 15 H. Philosophy of Music

16
17 God has woven music into the very fabric of His creation. When He made all things “the
18 morning stars sang together and the angels shouted for joy.”—Job 38:7. The book of Revelation
19 portrays heaven as a place of ceaseless praise, with songs of adoration to God and the Lamb
20 resounding from all.—Rev 4:9-11; 5:9-13; 7:10-12; 12:10-12; 14:1-3; 15:2-4; 19:1-8.

21
22 Because God made humans in His image, we share a love and appreciation for music with
23 all His created beings. In fact, music can touch and move us with a power that goes beyond
24 words or most other types of communication.¹ At its purest and best, music lifts our beings into
25 the very presence of God where angels and unfallen beings worship Him in song.

26
27 But sin has cast blight over the Creation. The divine image has been marred and well-nigh
28 obliterated; in all aspects this world and God’s gifts come to us with a mingling of good and evil.
29 Music is not morally and spiritually neutral. Some may move us to the most exalted human
30 experience, some may be used by the prince of evil to debase and degrade us, to stir up lust,
31 passion, despair, anger and hatred.

32
33 The Lord’s messenger, Ellen G White, continually counsels us to raise our sights in
34 music. She tells us, “Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when it is put to a wrong

¹ “It (music) is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth” (Education, p. 168).

1 use, it is a terrible curse.”² “Rightly employed,... (music) is a precious gift of God, designed to
2 uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the souls.”³
3

4 Of the power of song, she writes: “It is one of the most effective means of impressing the
5 heart with spiritual truth. How often to the soul hard-pressed and ready to despair, memory
6 recalls some word of God’s—the long-forgotten burden of a childhood song—and temptations
7 lose their power, life takes on new meaning and new purpose and courage and gladness are
8 imparted to other souls!... As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as
9 is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer As our Redeemer leads us to the threshold of the
10 Infinite, flushed with the glory of God, we may catch the themes of praise and thanksgiving from
11 the heavenly choir round about the throne; and as the echo of the angels’ song is awakened in our
12 earthly homes, hearts will be drawn closer to the heavenly singers. Heaven’s communion begins
13 on earth. We learn here the keynote of its praise.”⁴
14

15 As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe and preach that Jesus is coming again soon. In
16 our worldwide proclamation of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12 we call all
17 peoples to accept the everlasting gospel, to worship God the Creator and to prepare to meet our
18 soon-returning Lord. We challenge all to choose the good and not the bad, to “say ‘No’ to
19 ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this
20 present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and
21 Saviour, Jesus Christ.”—Titus 2:12,13.
22

23 We believe that the gospel impacts all areas of life. We therefore hold that, given the vast
24 potential of music for good or ill, we cannot be indifferent to it. While realising that tastes in
25 music vary greatly from individual to individual, we believe that the Scriptures and the writings
26 of Ellen G white suggest principles that can inform our choices.
27

28 In this document the phrase “sacred music”—sometimes referred to as religious music—
29 designates music that focuses on God and on biblical and Christian themes. In most cases, it is
30 music composed and intended for worship service, evangelistic meetings, or private devotion and
31 may be both vocal and instrumental music. However, not all sacred/religious music may be
32 acceptable for an Adventist. Sacred music should not evoke secular associations or invite
33 conformity to worldly behavioural patterns of thinking or acting.
34

² Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 497. She also states that in the future, “just before the close of probation, there will be shouting, with drums, music and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time.” (Selected Messages, Vol. 1, p.37

³ Education p. 167

⁴ Education, p. 168

1 “Secular music” is music composed for settings other than the worship service or private
2 devotion. It speaks to the common issues of life and basic human emotions. It comes out of our
3 very being, expressing the human spirit’s reaction to life, love and the world in which the Lord
4 has placed us. It can be morally uplifting or degrading. Although it does not directly praise and
5 adore God, nevertheless it could have a legitimate place in the life of the Christian. In its
6 selection the principles discussed in this document should be followed.

7
8 Principles to Guide the Christian—The music that Christians enjoy should be regulated
9 by the following principles:

10
11 1. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes, whether sacred or
12 secular, will glorify God: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory
13 of God.”—1 Corinthians 10:31. This is the overriding biblical principle. Anything that cannot
14 meet this high standard will weaken our experience with the Lord.

15
16 2. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes, whether sacred or
17 secular, should be the noblest and the best: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is pure,
18 whatever is right, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think about
19 such things.”—Phil 4:8. As followers of Jesus Christ who hope and expect to join the heavenly
20 choirs, we view life on this earth as a preparation for, and foretaste of, the life to come.
21 On these two foundations—glorifying God in all things and choosing the noblest and the best—
22 depend the other principles listed below for the selection of music by Christians.

23
24 3. It is characterised by quality, balance, appropriateness and authenticity. Music
25 fosters our spiritual, psychological and social sensitivity and our intellectual growth.

26
27 4. It appeals to both the intellect and the emotions and impacts the body in a positive
28 way. It is wholistic.

29
30 5. Music reveals creativity in that it draws from quality melodies. If harmonised,⁵ it
31 uses harmonies in an interesting and artistic way and employs rhythm that complements them.

32
33 6. Vocal music employs lyrics that positively stimulate intellectual abilities as well
34 as our emotions and our will-power. Good lyrics are creative, rich in content and of good
35 composition. They focus on the positive and reflect moral values; they educate and uplift; and
36 they correspond with sound biblical theology.

37
38 7. Musical and lyrical elements should work together harmoniously to influence
39 thinking and behaviour in harmony with biblical values.

40
⁵ We acknowledge that in some cultures harmonies are not as important as in other cultures.

1 8. It maintains a judicious balance of spiritual, intellectual and emotional elements.

2
3 9. We should recognise and acknowledge the contribution of different cultures in
4 worshipping God. Musical forms and instruments vary greatly in the worldwide Seventh-day
5 Adventist family, and music drawn from one culture may sound strange to someone from a
6 different culture.

7
8 Seventh-day Adventist music-making means to choose the best and above all to draw
9 close to our Creator and Lord and glorify Him. Let us rise to the challenge of a viable alternative
10 musical vision and, as part of our wholistic and prophetic message, make a unique Adventist
11 musical contribution as a witness to the world regarding a people awaiting Christ's soon coming.

12
13 *South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 44.17, November 6, 2004.*

14
15 I. Sabbath in the Pacific

16
17 The Biblical Research Committee of the South Pacific Division was asked by the Trans-
18 Pacific Union Mission to make an assessment of principles and practices for Sabbath-keeping in
19 the Pacific in relation to the date line.

20
21 This statement is the result of wide consultation. The Biblical Research Committee has
22 listened to and received advice from a number of sources, such as theologians both inside and
23 outside of the Division, Trans-Pacific Union Mission administration, ministers and members.
24 The issue has also been presented and discussed at the Pacific Islands Administrators' Council,
25 among others. Finally, it has been shared with the Biblical Research Institute Committee of the
26 General Conference (BRICOM), and the statement includes in the present form, the
27 recommendations from this body.

28
29 In the process of reaching a conclusion, the Biblical Research Committee has made the
30 following observations in regard to the divine origin of the Sabbath and the keeping of the
31 Sabbath during the time of the Bible and in various cultures and historical eras.

32
33 1. The biblical Sabbath was established by God at the time of creation to be
34 celebrated by all people (Genesis 2:1-3), and the Adventist understanding of the importance of
35 the Sabbath is closely linked to our belief in creation as revealed in the Word of God.

36
37 2. Among the central purposes of the Sabbath is individual and
38 communal fellowship with, and worship of, God (Revelation 14:6-7).

39
40 3. As sin entered the world and the toil and hardship of human existence became our
41 reality, other elements of God's intention were highlighted, such as trust in God's providence by

1 resting from labour and work, faith in God's forgiveness and redemption in spite of our sins
2 (Exodus 20:11; Isaiah 58:13).

3
4 4. One of the purposes of the Sabbath highlighted by Scripture with special
5 significance toward the end of earth's history, is for the Sabbath to be a sign of loyalty toward
6 the Creator. The believing community is to worship on the Sabbath day, even during times of
7 opposition and persecution (Revelation 14:6-12).

8
9 5. At Sinai the Sabbath commandment was given as part of the Ten
10 Commandments, built upon the laws of love (Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 22:35-40; Deuteronomy
11 6:4-5; 10:12-13).

12
13 6. Though some details in the specific laws for Sabbath-keeping given in the broader
14 Mosaic code were unique to the people of Israel, the principle of Sabbath-keeping as part of the
15 Ten Commandments belongs to God's universal law for all mankind everywhere on earth
16 (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8-12; Deuteronomy 4:13-14; Isaiah 56:3-7).

17
18 7. Both at creation and in the laws given to Israel, the Bible makes it clear that the
19 Sabbath lasts from sunset to sunset, and Seventh-day Adventists around the world have come to
20 follow that principle in their Sabbath-keeping (Genesis 1:5 ff; Nehemiah 13:19; Luke 4:40).

21
22 a. In arctic areas where the sun does not set for periods of the winter,
23 there is still a darkest and a lightest time of the day, and the Adventist Church has on that basis
24 been able to maintain the principle even in these remote areas of the earth.

25
26 8. The Bible contains no statements regarding the date line and the challenge of
27 keeping the Sabbath around the date line.

28
29 9. The date line, which is necessary because the earth is round, is not established by
30 any divine principle, but solely on the basis of historical and practical human considerations.

31
32 a. While choosing the 180th meridian is practical, it has never been
33 consistently followed by human authorities and societies, and the deviations from it are all
34 generally accepted by the same authorities which established and accepted the position of the
35 date line in general.

36
37 b. The Seventh-day Adventist pioneers coming to the Pacific
38 understood, however, the 180th meridian to be the natural date line and chose to keep the
39 Sabbath in accordance with that. They observed that the sunset moved in a consistent line across
40 the globe without any random deviations, and the setting of the sun implied to them a biblical
41 principle.

1 c. For various historical and practical reasons, a few societies deviate
2 from the general date line at the 180th meridian and follow an Eastern hemisphere calendar, even
3 though they are positioned in the Western hemisphere. As a consequence, Seventh-day
4 Adventists in those places today face a choice either to celebrate the Sabbath on the Sunday of
5 their nation's calendar by selecting a different date line than commonly accepted, or to drop the
6 allegiance to the 180th meridian and keep the Sabbath on the Saturday of their national calendar.
7 This is the challenge for Tonga, Wallis and Futuna, Kiritimati (Christmas Island) of Kiribati, and
8 more recently, Samoa.

10 i. A few nations cover areas on both sides of the 180th meridian and
11 choose to follow the same calendar for all of their territory. These
12 are the United States of America (Alaska), Kiribati and Fiji (Lau
13 Islands).

14 ii. We cannot take for granted that the situation in any of these places
15 will remain as it is. A change of Adventist Sabbath practice might,
16 therefore, lead to considerable tension if Tonga, for instance, as a
17 state, decides to change to a calendar which follows the meridian
18 and the Adventists had to change once again. Such a scenario
19 could cause people to lose respect for the Sabbath-keeping
20 practices of the Church and, consequently, for the very message of
21 the Church.

22 iii. At least in one of these nations, namely Kiribati, the calendar has
23 actually only recently been changed for Kiritimati (Christmas
24 Island) in the Line and Phoenix Island Group located to the east of
25 the 180th meridian. These islands are so far away from the rest of
26 Kiribati that for all practical purposes they function as an isolated
27 society. The calendrical change happened primarily in order to be
28 the first country into the 3rd millennium. It created a challenge for
29 the Seventh-day Adventist community which for generations have
30 kept the Sabbath in sequence on Saturday, but due to the
31 calendrical shift either had to change the sequence in accordance
32 with the culture or as chosen by the Adventists on Kiritimati
33 (Christmas Island) in the Line and Phoenix Group of Kiribati, to
34 keep their Sabbath on what is now the national Sunday.

35 iv. Any change under such circumstances would create serious
36 pastoral problems.

38 d. Seventh-day Adventist pioneers who brought the Advent message
39 to the Pacific Islands, from the very beginning of our presence as a Church, decided to follow
40 Western hemisphere time in Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands and Tahiti, in spite of the fact that
41 these areas in the early days of Western colonization all followed Eastern hemisphere time.

- 1 i. When all of these areas, except for Tonga, in the late 19th Century,
2 changed to Western hemisphere time, it was generally recognised
3 by these countries and throughout the Polynesian culture that the
4 Seventh-day Adventist Church was correct on this point.
5

6 10. The Seventh-day Adventist Church focuses on the unbroken observance of the
7 “seventh day” in the weekly cycle, rather than “Saturday.” Consequently, the calendrical changes
8 created by Pacific nations have resulted in the seventh-day being identified as “Sunday” in these
9 situations. The Church is the “Seventh-day Adventist” Church, not the “Saturday Adventist”
10 Church.
11

12 On the basis of these observations and the wide consultation sought, the Biblical
13 Research Committee of the South Pacific Division states that:
14

15 1. As there is no clear “Thus saith the Lord” for the establishment of the date line
16 and the keeping of the Sabbath around the date line, it is important to listen to the local Seventh-
17 day Adventist community and its leadership,
18

19 2. And as there is a general sense of agreement with present practice in the Pacific
20 Islands, as we want to show respect for the culture and the decisions of the local believing
21 community, and as any attempt to change would create serious and complicated pastoral
22 problems,
23

24 3. And as the present calendar is subject to change by any future government at any
25 time, as has recently occurred in Kiribati and Samoa,
26

27 We recommend that the present practice of Sabbath-keeping in the Pacific Islands around
28 the date line be maintained (namely Tonga, Wallis and Futuna,
29

30 Kiritimati (Christmas Island of Kiribati), and that Sabbath-keeping in Samoa (due to
31 Samoa’s recent calendrical changes) be consistent with other Pacific countries in similar
32 circumstances, and
33

34 Further, that initiatives be taken and a strategy developed to teach the theology and
35 existential meaning of the Sabbath in the areas involved in order to maintain a clear
36 understanding of this important aspect of Seventh-day Adventist identity in present and future
37 generations, and that the principles contained in this document relating to Sabbath observance
38 and the date line be shared with the membership of the Church.
39

40 *Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Ltd Members Meeting of the South Pacific Division 8.7,*
41 *November 16, 2016.*
42

Chapter 3

Community and Family

J. Assault Weapons

Automatic or semi-automatic military-style weapons are becoming increasingly available to civilians. In some areas of the world it is relatively easy to acquire such guns. They show up not only in the street, but in the hands of youngsters at school. Many crimes are committed through the use of these kinds of weapons. They are made to kill people. They have no legitimate recreational use.

The teachings and example of Christ constitute the guide for the Christian today. Christ came into the world to save lives, not to destroy them (Luke 9:56). When Peter drew his weapon Jesus said to him: "Put your sword back in its place... All who take the sword will die by the sword" (Matt. 26:52, TEV). Jesus did not engage in violence.

The argument is made by some that banning assault weapons limits the rights of people and that guns do not commit crimes, but people do. While it is true that violence and criminal inclinations lead to guns, it is also true that availability of guns leads to violence. The opportunity for civilians to acquire by purchase or otherwise automatic or semi-automatic assault weapons only increases the number of deaths resulting from human crimes. Possession of guns by civilians in the United States has increased by an estimated 300 per cent in the past four years. During the same period there has been a staggering increase in armed attacks and resulting deaths.

In most of the world such weapons cannot be acquired by any legal means. The Church views with alarm the relative ease with which they may be acquired in some areas. Their availability can only open the possibility of further tragedies.

Pursuits of peace and the preservation of life are to be the goals of Christians. Evil cannot be effectively met with evil, but must be overcome with good. Seventh-day Adventists, with other people of good will, wish to cooperate in using every legitimate means of reducing, and eliminating where possible, the root causes of crime. In addition, with public safety and the value of human life in mind, the sale of automatic or semi-automatic assault weapons should be strictly controlled. This would reduce the use of weapons by mentally disturbed people and criminals, especially those involved in drug and gang activities.

This statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal Wilson, after consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on July 5, 1990, at the General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana.

1 K. Digital Platform Guidelines

2
3 The right to use the official name and logo of the Church is accompanied by an obligation
4 to protect these against misuse and misrepresentation. Technological advances have made it
5 possible for a local entity of the Church to exhibit a global presence through various digital
6 platforms including websites, social media and others. It is in the interest of the Church to
7 provide guidance regarding how the Church is portrayed, and thus perceived, through digital
8 platforms. All denominational entities choosing to establish an online presence are expected to
9 develop their digital platforms within the scope of the following guidelines.

10
11 1. Only official churches, organisations and entities administered by organisations
12 listed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* are entitled to use the Seventh-day Adventist
13 Church's corporate identity symbols (logo graphic and text) as described in the Church's
14 corporate identity standards manual.

15
16 2. Domain names used by Church entities should be owned and registered in the
17 entity's name, or in the name of another denominational entity, such as a conference, union or
18 division, that has granted use of its domain name; and a business plan should be established to
19 preserve the domain name for future use by the entity.

20
21 3. Every denominational digital platform should display appropriate trademark and
22 copyright notices and symbols.

23
24 4. Seventh-day Adventist Church beliefs and teachings are to be upheld in content
25 published on all denominational digital platforms. Promotional material and information
26 provided through the platform must be consistent with the beliefs and ethical values of the
27 Seventh-day Adventist Church.

28
29 5. Widespread public access to digital platform requires that communication and
30 information originating from a site must reflect the courtesies of public discourse. The Church's
31 message can be communicated in ways that acknowledge diversity of viewpoints while avoiding
32 hostile or offensive remarks and caricatures about other people, groups, or organisations.

33
34 6. Seventh-day Adventist digital platforms shall respect intellectual property rights
35 when posting audio, video, pictures, text and all other content.

36
37 7. All digital platforms should display professional appearance, including design,
38 choice of colours, graphics and layout. It is recommended that sites be tested for usability before
39 being made public. The Division may identify preferred digital platform hosts and/or software
40 platforms in order to facilitate connectivity among denominational entities and to maintain
41 technical quality of denominational sites and services.

1 8. Adventist internal language, jargon, acronyms and abbreviations are to be used
2 with care on denominational digital platforms as they are available to all internet users, many of
3 whom will have little understanding of such terms. Content is to be checked for spelling and
4 grammar.

5
6 9. The board or executive committee of the entity having a digital platform presence
7 is ultimately responsible for the maintenance, content and operation of the site. Therefore, each
8 entity is expected to establish a system for monitoring and oversight, including the appointment
9 of personnel who are entrusted with responsibility for managing the digital platform and its
10 content. Care should be exercised in selecting types of information that is made available for
11 global access.

12
13 10. In the context of the internet culture, digital platforms which include time-
14 sensitive information, should be updated on a regular basis. It is recommended that a monitoring
15 system be established to measure unique visitors or page views.

16
17 11. Care should be exercised when selecting links to other sites and services.
18 Information portrayed on digital platforms linked to a denominational entity's site should be
19 supportive of the Church's mission, message and values. Legal counsel should be obtained as to
20 whether or not commercial activity facilitated by the digital platform can jeopardise the
21 organisation's status as a religious, not-for-profit organisation.

22
23 12. Denominational entities sponsoring digital platforms are responsible for ensuring
24 that the operation and content of the site is in compliance with applicable laws, including
25 requirements for the privacy protection of children who may access the site or whose picture
26 may be placed on the digital platform.

27
28 13. All digital platforms must be protected and maintained with appropriate security
29 controls in place to ensure confidentiality, integrity and availability.

30
31 *South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 13.3, November 9, 2022.*

32 33 L. Drugs

34
35 The Seventh-day Adventist Church urges every individual and every nation to cooperate
36 in stamping out the worldwide drug epidemic that undermines the social structure of nations and
37 on the individual level often kills its victims or leads them into lives of crime.

38
39 Seventh-day Adventists believe the Bible teaches that each human body is a "temple of
40 the living God," which should be cared for intelligently (2 Cor. 6:15-17).

1 The church's Bible-based Fundamental Belief No. 22 states, "Along with adequate
2 exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible. Since alcoholic beverages,
3 tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to
4 abstain from them.... Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into
5 the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness."

6
7 For vibrant living, Seventh-day Adventists urge everyone to follow a lifestyle that avoids
8 tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, and the misuse of drugs.

9
10 *This public statement was released by the General Conference president, Neal C. Wilson, after*
11 *consultation with the 16 world vice presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, June 1985,*
12 *at the General Conference session in New Orleans, Louisiana.*

13 14 M. Ethnic and Political Tensions

15
16 The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognises that this present world is plagued and
17 divided by the results of sin, greed and hatred. A long history of tribal conflict, conquest, war,
18 occupation and political division have left many peoples dispossessed of their land and
19 displaced. There are no totally human solutions to the ethnic conflicts and racial injustices that
20 exist. However, the Church believes that in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is healing for human
21 hearts and hope for a new world where justice and righteousness will prevail. Human dignity and
22 equality can be restored through the grace of God in which humans see each other as members of
23 the family of God. In the light of Calvary, hatred gives way to love, selfishness and greed are
24 replaced by respect and service for others. Freedom and peace are the fruit of a life controlled by
25 the Spirit of Christ.

26
27 Racism—Scripture plainly teaches that every person was created in the image of God,
28 who "made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).
29 Racial and ethnic discrimination is an offence against our fellow human beings who were created
30 in the image of God. In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal 3:28).

31
32 Seventh-day Adventists therefore deplore any attitudes or activities that incite tribal or
33 ethnic conflict or promote racial divisions. The Church upholds the ideal of racial equality and
34 inter-racial harmony.

35
36 Seventh-day Adventists want to be faithful to the reconciling ministry assigned to the
37 Christian Church. As a worldwide community of faith, the Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes
38 to witness to and exhibit in its own ranks the unity and love that transcend racial differences and
39 overcome past alienation between races.

40
41 Politics and Religion—Scripture clearly teaches that government is divinely ordained,
42 and that while our first and highest duty is to God, the Bible instructs Christians to be subject to

1 “the powers that be” (Romans 13:1) and to perform their duties as faithful citizens (Matt 22:21).
2 Seventh-day Adventists therefore do not support the overthrow of governments by force. The
3 Church upholds the rule of law in a peaceful society.
4

5 The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes in the separation of church and state and
6 maintains neutrality towards politics. The Church respects the various political processes that
7 exist in different forms of government, but does not become involved in advising Church
8 members in political matters or in supporting any particular parties.
9

10 Church members who are involved in political or public life by their own personal choice
11 are urged to do nothing that will discredit the cause of God or compromise the standards of the
12 Church. They are encouraged to serve their country and community in a way that will uplift
13 society and bring glory to God.
14

15 Non-combatancy—Scripture reveals that life is sacred and has its source in God (Gen
16 1:11-27) and should not be taken by human hands (Ex 20:13; Matt 19:18). Christians are
17 instructed to “love your enemies and do good to them that hate you” (Matt 5:44).
18

19 Seventh-day Adventists are therefore opposed to bearing arms and taking up weapons in
20 time of conflict. Rather than inflicting injury or harm on fellow human beings the Church
21 encourages service to their country through loving ministry to the sick or injured. The Church
22 upholds the ideal of peaceful resolution and of practicing the Golden Rule to “do unto others,
23 what you would have men do to you” (Matt 7:12).
24

25 With sadness and regret the Church acknowledges that in recent ethnic and political
26 conflicts and coups in the Pacific, some former Seventh-day Adventists and current members
27 have been involved. This would suggest that the Church may have failed in promoting the ideals
28 of peace, equality and lawfulness. We confess that in the past our own attitudes to other
29 Christians and those of other ethnic origins may have been unloving and less than the ideal. The
30 values of human dignity, integrity and humility may not have been demonstrated as they should
31 have been.
32

33 We therefore appeal to all Seventh-day Adventists to put away all ethnic and tribal
34 differences and help create an atmosphere of co-operation and understanding between all races,
35 cultures, faiths and political persuasions.
36

37 We call on members to respect governments and the systems of law and justice, to be
38 peacemakers and agents of reconciliation in their communities.
39

40 We urge all men and women to pray for the peaceful resolution of present tensions and
41 conflict. We challenge all Church administrators and pastors to pursue a more active role in

educating members in a proper understanding of the Gospel and biblical principles in respect to human relations, armed conflict and our relationship to God and Government.

South Pacific Division Executive Committee 8.5, November 16, 2016.

N. Freedom of Speech

A distinguishing feature of humans is our God-given ability to communicate in the abstract through speech, symbols, and the written word. Nowhere is this capacity more uniquely expressed than in the domain of faith. Communication concerning religious beliefs is central to our ability to explore meaning and purpose in life, discuss the values that guide our actions, and to share experiences as we search for a closer knowledge of God. The Seventh-day Adventist Church strongly supports freedom of speech in general, and freedom of religious speech in particular.

Although freedom of speech is guaranteed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, efforts continue to limit speech at both the national level and at the United Nations. In both settings, significant focus has been placed on limiting speech that offends the religious beliefs of the hearer. Seventh-day Adventists affirm sensitivity and respect in all communication. We are thus concerned about speech designed to offend religious sensibilities. However, we believe that ceding the right to the state to control religious speech creates a far greater threat to the autonomy of people of faith than that posed by offensive speech. Indeed, there are numerous examples today of states citing a desire to protect religious feelings to justify the forceful silencing of peaceful religious speech.

Our opposition to the restriction of speech is not without exceptions. The Church recognises that in limited circumstances, speech can result in significant, tangible harm to the right to physical safety, the enjoyment of one's property and other similarly compelling rights. In such very limited instances, we recognise the responsibility of the state to act to protect its population. When such limits are necessary, the Church expects governments to target restrictions narrowly to address only the dangerous speech in question.

The Church recognises a special responsibility of those in power to communicate a message that supports fundamental human rights, including all the facets of religious freedom. This responsibility is particularly pertinent to governments, as they are generally in a unique position to encourage robust respect for the rights of their people, and particularly minorities.

While recognising the right to freely express religious beliefs, Seventh-day Adventists accept the responsibility to self-regulate their speech to ensure it is consistent with biblical teachings. This includes the obligation to be both honest and loving. This is particularly important when discussing another faith as religious passions can prompt a one-dimensional view of others. Honesty does not mean merely stating facts accurately, but also placing

1 information in an accurate context. Seventh-day Adventists will be constrained by Christ's law
2 of love in all they say and do. When the God-given gift of speech is used to communicate in
3 love, we will bless not only our fellow human beings; we will honour the God who made us all
4 with the gift to express ourselves.

5
6 *This statement was approved and voted by the Executive Committee of the General Conference*
7 *of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee (ADCOM) and was released by the Office*
8 *of the President, Ted N. C. Wilson, On June 23, 2010, and released at the General Conference*
9 *Session in Atlanta, Georgia, June 24-July 3, 2010.*

10 11 O. Gambling

12
13 Preamble—The Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned with ethical issues in our
14 church and society. The following statement on gambling, approved by the South Pacific
15 Division Executive Committee, represents the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist
16 Church in the South Pacific Division. This statement may be reviewed for further refinement and
17 updating.

18
19 Definition—Gambling may be defined as any practice in which a person risks money or
20 other assets for a chance to win a reward that is predicated on the loss of another's assets.

21 Seventh-day Adventist position—The Seventh-day Adventist Church has consistently opposed
22 gambling for biblical reasons that include the following:

23
24 1. Gambling violates the Christian belief that all persons are stewards of all their
25 assets (be they time, talent, knowledge or financial resources). These are to be used wisely for
26 human sustenance and fulfilment, to support family, church and community, and to meet the
27 needs of those less fortunate. Gambling is an improper application of these assets. (Genesis 1:26-
28 28; 2:15; Deuteronomy 8:11-18; 1 Chronicles 29:14; Psalm 24:1; Ecclesiastes 3:13; 5:19;
29 Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 15:26,27; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.)

30
31 2. Gambling promotes a spirit of selfishness and a desire to have that which is not
32 earned and which properly belongs to someone else. Gambling downgrades the God-ordained
33 dignity of labour. (Exodus 20:17; Proverbs 21:25,26; Matthew 6:24,25,31-33; Luke 12:15; 1
34 Thessalonians 4:11,12; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12.)

35
36 3. Gambling is a violation of God's command to love one's neighbour as oneself.
37 Implicit in the act of gambling is a loss for those who are not winners. Gambling preys upon the
38 weaker members of the community, who often must forgo life's necessities because of their own
39 gambling or that of one on whom they depend. (Proverbs 22:16; Isaiah 58:6,7,10; Matthew 7:12;
40 Luke 10:27, Romans 13:10; James 2:8.)

4. Gambling brings about adverse social consequences to individuals, families and communities. Poverty, suicide, drug dependency and alcoholism are often associated with it. Gambling itself becomes an addiction to many. Since Christians have a responsibility to safeguard the well-being of “weaker” fellow humans, gambling, even in moderation, is an abdication of that responsibility. (Job 22:6-11; Psalm 10:2; Proverbs 23:21; 28:19; Isaiah 3:14,15; Romans 14:7,13,21; 1 Corinthians 8:9.)

Fund Raising—In light of the foregoing, Seventh-day Adventists oppose the use of raffles, lotteries and other games of chance as means of fundraising, even for worthy projects.

1. Contributions made in the hope of personal gain rob the givers of the joy of altruistic giving.

2. Gambling even to raise money for a worthy cause may be a gateway activity that can lead to gambling addiction. As with alcoholism, there is no way to determine in advance who will become a compulsive gambler.

3. Funds known to be generated solely from gambling and lotteries, and allocated by governments to charitable organisations, should not be used by churches or denominational institutions. However, in special circumstances that are deemed not to violate biblical principles, union executive committees may approve variations of this.

Business Risk—All business investment includes some element of risk ranging from reasonably secure to extremely speculative. A fine line exists between business risk and gambling. High risk in business is often referred to as gambling and there are compulsive risk takers in business just as there are compulsive gamblers. However, in business, high return on an investment is not necessarily predicated on the losses of other investors. Thus, while risktaking in business may be a questionable stewardship of God-given assets and a violation of biblical principles, it should not be directly equated with gambling.

South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 5.31, November 22, 2005.

P. Global Poverty

Poverty is present in every society. Poverty robs human beings of their most basic rights. It keeps people hungry; it deprives them of medical care, clean water, an education, the opportunity to work, and often results in a sense of powerlessness, hopelessness, and inequality. Every day, more than 24,000 children die due to preventable conditions created by poverty.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that actions to reduce poverty and its attendant injustices are an important part of Christian social responsibility. The Bible clearly reveals God’s special interest in the poor and His expectations as to how His followers should respond to those who

1 are unable to care for themselves. All human beings bear the image of God and are the recipients
2 of God's blessing (Luke 6:20). In working with the poor we follow the example and teaching of
3 Jesus (Matthew 25:35, 36). As a spiritual community Seventh-day Adventists advocate justice
4 for the poor and "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8, NIV) and
5 against those who "deprive the poor of their rights" (Isaiah 10:2, NIV). We participate with God
6 who "secures justice for the poor" (Psalm 140:12, NIV).

7
8 Working to reduce poverty and hunger means more than showing sympathy for the poor.
9 It means advocating for public policy that offers justice and fairness to the poor, for their
10 empowerment and human rights. It means sponsoring and participating in programs that address
11 the causes of poverty and hunger, helping people to build sustainable lives. This commitment to
12 justice is an act of love (Micah 6:8). Seventh-day Adventists believe it is also a call to live lives
13 of simplicity and modesty that witness against materialism and a culture of affluence.

14
15 Seventh-day Adventists join the global community in supporting the United Nations'
16 Sustainable Development Goals for reducing poverty. In furtherance of this, Seventh-day
17 Adventists partner with civil society, governments and others, working together locally and
18 globally to participate in God's work of establishing enduring justice in a broken world.

19
20 As followers of Christ we engage this task with determined hope, energised by God's
21 visionary promise of a new heaven and a new earth where there is no poverty or injustice.
22 Seventh-day Adventists are called to live imaginatively and faithfully inside that vision of God's
23 Kingdom by acting to end poverty now.

24
25 *South Pacific Division Executive Committee 8.6, November 16, 2016.*

26
27 Q. Immunisation

28
29 The Seventh-day Adventist Church places strong emphasis on health and well-being. The
30 Adventist health emphasis is based on biblical revelation, the inspired writing of Ellen G. White
31 (co-founder of the Church), and on peer-reviewed scientific literature. As such, we encourage
32 responsible immunization/vaccination, and have no religious or faith-based reason not to
33 encourage our adherents to responsibly participate in protective and preventive immunization
34 programs. We value the health and safety of the population, which includes the maintenance of
35 "herd immunity."

36
37 We are not the conscience of the individual church member, and recognize individual
38 choices. These are exercised by the individual. The choice not to be immunized is not and should
39 not be seen as the dogma nor the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

40
41 *This statement was voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative*
42 *Committee in Silver Spring, Maryland, April 15, 2015.*

R. Marriage Exchange: “Bride Price”

Summary of Issue—Marriage exchange is a traditional social practice in Melanesia. In 1985 the South Pacific Division formally adopted a statement on bride price that took an absolute stance against the practice. It is now recognised that the statement adopted at that time did not adequately account for the positive values in the traditional practice of exchange or the ongoing social needs of those affected.

These guidelines amend that statement on bride price from biblical, sociological and church organisational perspectives. The positive Melanesian values necessary to a stable family and community, as well as the current and ingrained practice that nearly all would agree is not according to Christian principles, form the context for the amendment.

Definitions—Marriage exchange is not practised uniformly throughout Melanesia. The following definitions help to describe traditional and current practice.

Bride price is a seal of marriage through an exchange of gifts between two families (kinship groups) to establish, mend, and strengthen past, present and future relationships (in-laws).—Pr Kemona Deraba (2021)

*The Bride Price is not a demand of gifts by the Bride’s father or family to be given to them by the groom’s father or family. It is a gift given from the heart of the Groom’s father or family to the bride’s father or family in the exchanging of traditional gifts between the two families. Bride Price must not be demanded by the bride’s father or family in any other form than exchanging of traditional gifts that are in accordance to the Biblical principles of the church.
—Pr Loleth Worwor (2022)*

The custom of bride price ... is not inconsistent with a constitutional law or statute, or repugnant to the general principles of humanity. It is a worthy custom and should be protected. Bride price ... represents the approval of the community of the marriage, and when children are bred, they are legitimate and belong to a society which is stable and thereby provides security for their upbringing. It is inherent and is inextricably bound up in the processes of constructing and consolidating the social or moral order in society.—Kaputan J in Sate v Ure Hane (1983) N442 (quoted in G Egu’s paper “The Seventh-day Adventist and ‘Bride Price’”)

Hence, bride price as a ‘seal’ metaphorically and publicly unveils three aspects:

1. Legally, the bride price as a ‘seal’ legitimises the marriage institution in the presence of the community as a witness.

2 2. Culturally, bride price as a ‘seal’ binds a web of past, present and future
3 relationships (between in-laws).

5 3. Religiously, the bride price as a ‘seal’ redeems the exchange of gifts that paves
6 the way for dialogue, reconciliation, peace and unity through the presence of the Holy Spirit (the
7 true seal of God). (Pr Kemona Dereba, 2021).

9 Biblical, Cultural and Church Considerations—Some theological themes have been taken
10 into account in providing these guidelines in regard to Melanesian marriage customs.

12 1. God—We believe that God is revealed to us in Scripture as our Creator, to whom
13 we all owe first and ultimate allegiance (John 1:1-3; Acts 5:29). He also interacts with humans in
14 a wide variety of situations. His ultimate revelation is to be found in his Son, Jesus Christ (John
15 1:14; 17:3-4). And he continues to lead the Church through the illumination of the Spirit as
16 believers search the Scriptures for answers to contemporary questions (John 16: 13-14; Psalm
17 119:105).

19 2. Scripture—We believe Scripture to be the inspired Word of God. The fact that its
20 writers evidence particular historical and cultural contexts is not inconsistent with its Divine
21 origin or its relevance to all peoples at all times. Thus, Scripture stands as normative for God’s
22 people as individuals and as a community (2 Timothy 36-17; Luke 1:1-4).

24 3. Humankind and Salvation—We believe that humans are God’s special creation.
25 The individual, male and female, is of inestimable value to God and He seeks each one out for
26 their salvation (Luke 15:3-7; Luke 19:10). Humans find their essential unity and equality in their
27 creation in the Divine image and their redemption in Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:27; John 1:3,14). At
28 the same time, humans exhibit differences of gender, race, culture and social situation. The
29 Christian gospel does not demand cultural levelling, but calls on believers as individuals and as a
30 body to assess cultural values and rituals by such Christian ideals as unity within diversity in the
31 body of Christ, adherence to biblical principles and faithfulness to the gospel of grace in Jesus
32 Christ (Acts 15:7-11; Ephesians 3:6).

34 4. Stewardship—We believe that all humans are accountable to God as stewards of
35 that which God has given us (1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Proverbs 3:9).

37 The appropriate human response to the gift of grace in Jesus Christ is one of giving and
38 gratitude (Matthew 25:31-46). The giving of gifts is endorsed by Scripture, and the core value of
39 exchange as evidenced in Melanesian culture is something to be affirmed as of great value in
40 building relationships, fulfilling needs and providing reconciliation. Thus, there may be parallels
41 between human exchanges and the gift of the gospel. Just as the gospel may be abused by
42 legalism or carelessness, so too marriage exchanges may be abused by mercenary considerations

1 and carelessness in regard to the sacredness of marriage. Even by ignoring the right of the
2 community to participate in the marriage rituals, there may be a retarding of the stewardship
3 principles of the gospel.
4

5 5. Church and Community—We believe that humankind is united in community and
6 that this is as God intended. Such biblical themes as nationhood, kinship, the role of marriage
7 and family, individual relationships, communal relationships and cosmic/ spiritual relationships
8 are capable of enhancing community ties in the Melanesian context. We believe that the Church
9 is the community of believers in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is found, first of all, in its
10 local form, and secondly in a corporate mode. The role of the Church is to provide nurture and
11 support to its members in their own lives as well as in their tasks within the Church and in their
12 mission to the community (Ephesians 4:11-16). While the Church is “the body of Christ,” it is
13 also a fallible human institution (Acts 15:2).
14

15 6. Marriage—We believe that marriage is ordained by God to be the most
16 meaningful relationship between humans. Eve was given to Adam as a companion, not a
17 commodity. Human community finds its foundation in marriage (Genesis 2:23-24). In addition
18 Christian marriage stands as a model of the relationship God desires between Himself and His
19 people (Isaiah 54:5; Hosea 2:19-20; Ephesians 5:30-32). At the same time, marriage is also a
20 human institution that, in its associated rituals and customs, reveals much of the cultural diversity
21 that is present in the human race (Isaiah 61:10; Matthew 22:12; Genesis 29:22; Genesis 21:21). It
22 is not considered necessary (or even desirable) that Melanesian marriage customs should
23 conform to either the marital rituals of the Ancient Near East or to those that come from Western
24 cultures. Nevertheless, marriage customs, of whatever kind, should be consistent with biblical
25 principles.
26

27 7. Marriage Gifts—Marriage and the exchange of gifts are inseparable in Scripture.
28 The Old Testament describes three types of marriage gifts:
29

30 a. Goods, money, services or tokens of respect from the bridegroom or his
31 family to the family of the bride (Exodus 22:17; 1 Samuel 18:25; Genesis 34:12; Genesis 24:53;
32 Genesis
33 29:18).
34

35 b. A gift from the bride’s father to the bride or groom with examples being
36 land and servants (Genesis 29:24; Judges 1:15).
37

38 c. Something special from the bridegroom to the bride, such as
39 jewellery or clothing (Genesis 24:53).
40

41 Ellen White sums it up this way: “The ancient custom, though sometimes abused, as by
42 Laban, was productive of good results” (AH 92-93). In the New Testament the Church is

1 illustrated as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom. There are also references to humanity as
2 having been “purchased” with the high value of Christ’s blood (1 Corinthians 6:20; Acts 20:28).
3 It is possible to link these concepts to the “bride” analogy.
4

5 Marriage Exchange—the Positives and Problems—Marriage contributes significantly to
6 the Melanesian value system as it impacts on community relationships and community functions.
7 In the traditional Melanesian cultural contexts, marriage exchange plays a large symbolic and
8 ceremonial role in showing that a couple is actually married. It is indicative of the fact that
9 marriage is far more than just the joining of two people; it is also the joining of families and
10 kinship groups. As such, it “seals” the marriage and binds the community together in mutual
11 hospitality. Failure to enter into a mutual exchange can destabilise the place of children in the
12 family, that normal guarantees of care are not given, that reciprocal exchanges of wealth do not
13 take place and that women are devalued.
14

15 It is to be noted that as Melanesian economic systems move further and further away
16 from wealth belonging to the tribe/clan/community to that of belonging to the individual, the
17 exchanges of wealth that took place through marriage exchange have much less to do with
18 “community.” As society changes, so must the concept of value of women as traditionally
19 expressed through marriage exchange. The Christian view of such value does not express this in
20 terms of quantity but quality, and of a Creator who values each person so much He died for all
21 and also seeks all to serve Him in a loving response.
22

23 On the other hand, marriage exchange arrangements—like any other customary
24 arrangements, whether of Melanesian, Western or Ancient Near Eastern origin—are sometimes
25 subject to abuse. This has been so in the meeting of the traditional Melanesian values with the
26 cash economy. At times women are seen as objects of merchandise to be exchanged for the
27 highest price. This has meant that marriage is beyond the means of some, and couples begin
28 “living together” without either traditional or church “blessing.”
29

30 *South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 13.3, November 9, 2022.*
31

32 S. Nurture, Protection and Empowerment of Children and Vulnerable Adults
33

34 Our commitment
35

36 The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division (the Division) has zero-
37 tolerance for abuse and is committed to protecting children and vulnerable adults. The Division
38 affirms the dignity and worth of each human being and condemns all forms of abuse (including
39 but not limited to physical, sexual, psychological, neglect, coercive control and family violence).
40

41 In Christ we are a new creation, we are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded
42 us into one fellowship with Him and with one another. Differences in gender, race, class,

1 disability, age or religion do not negate this equality in Christ. Human equality implies that the
2 interests, needs, and priorities of all people are of equal value. God endows dignity and equality
3 on every human being. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is
4 neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28 NKJV). This means that
5 all human beings are equal and precious in God’s created order.
6

7 The proceedings of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to
8 Child Sexual Abuse (The Australian Royal Commission) provided an appropriate understanding
9 of past events and the subsequent development of recommendations, to bring effective change
10 across a broad range of issues relating to child sexual abuse. The Australian Royal Commission
11 “had heard from 6,875 survivors in private sessions, of whom 4,029 (58.6 per cent) told us about
12 child sexual abuse in religious institutions”⁶
13

14 Survivors who were brave enough to share their lived experience of abuse, enabled the
15 Australian Royal Commission to identify what needed to be done to make institutions safer for
16 children in the future. This led to extensive recommendations which have been the catalyst for
17 numerous and ongoing national and state/territory legislative changes and the development of
18 national child safe standards, as well as various similar state/territory standards. As a result of the
19 findings and outcomes of the Australian Royal Commission, society expects more vigilance from
20 faith-based organisations collectively, in relation to child and vulnerable adult protection and
21 will not tolerate further failures to protect. The Australian Royal Commission has been the
22 catalyst for numerous national and state/territory legislative changes, which are continuing to
23 emerge and inform our Division’s safeguarding framework.
24

25 The formation of Adsafe in 2016 was the extension of our Division’s intentional
26 commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults, and was a direct reflection of the
27 recommendations from the Australian Royal Commission. Adsafe has been established for the
28 purpose of providing a service for Denominational Entities of the Division for the protection of
29 children and vulnerable adults relating to physical and sexual abuse. Adsafe develops prevention
30 strategies to mitigate against the risk of abuse against children and vulnerable adults, responds to
31 abuse in line with the Church Manual and best practice as outlined in various child safe standards
32 and legislation.
33

34 Impact of abuse 35

36 The impacts of abuse are multifaceted. At the core, the abuse within a faith-based context
37 destroys the survivor’s faith journey, distorts their view of Christ as a loving Saviour, and thus
38 can irretrievably damage their relationship with God. They suffer mental health issues such as
39 anxiety and depression, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide. Survivors find it difficult to
40 trust others, experience challenges in their relationships and often struggle to maintain

⁶ Commonwealth of Australia (2017). The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report—Religious Institutions, Volume 16, Book 1, p23.

1 employment. The effects of trauma can result in severe and long-lasting effects, and can also be
2 fatal.

3
4 Abuse not only impacts the survivor but also has significant impact on their family
5 members. Families are often left to support the survivor through their mental health struggles,
6 risk-taking behaviours, self-harm and the like without fully understanding the cause of these
7 behaviours and how best to provide support. Church members and the wider community can also
8 be impacted as they try to understand and respond to what may appear to be irrational behaviour
9 of the survivor. Likewise, the perpetrator's family are impacted as they try to comprehend the
10 abuse that their loved one has perpetrated.

11
12 Together, creating safe faith communities

13
14 There is no priority higher than protecting children, and other vulnerable people, within
15 our care. This is something close to the heart of God (Matthew 18:6) and cannot be done through
16 wishful thinking or vague aspirations. In order to intentionally protect children and vulnerable
17 adults from abuse, and be admitted to membership, or maintain membership of the sisterhood of
18 churches, local church congregations must comply with Adsafe child safe policies. These
19 policies are updated periodically as best practice in this area continues to evolve. It is essential to
20 ensure the versions of the policies being followed are current.

21
22 Our Church communities must respond appropriately to disclosures of historical and
23 current abuse. Everyone has a part to play in keeping our faith communities safe, including
24 leadership, those working with children and all of our community members. Unfortunately, all
25 forms of sexual abuse (including incest), family violence and the inappropriate discipline of
26 children are far too prevalent within our Division and society at large.

27
28 Each member in our Church community must actively support a culture where the best
29 interests of children and vulnerable adults are the priority, through the implementation of
30 safeguarding best practices, appropriate governance practices and proper compliant handling
31 processes. Church Leaders must be intentional in addressing gender inequality and promoting
32 equality for all, to authentically challenge and change the inherent biases and perceptions that
33 persist within our Division and the wider community. In partnership with God, we are all
34 potential "change agents" to build safe Adventist communities where abuse has no place, and
35 changing and empowering lives so that everyone can equally experience the love of God.
36 Protecting the vulnerable from abuse is a shared concern and a joint responsibility. The part you
37 can play, is to work collectively with Adsafe and your local church and conferences, to help
38 build safe faith communities. Collectively, we each play a vital role to facilitate Adsafe's mission
39 to educate and inspire our people to intentionally hear and protect children and vulnerable adults,
40 to enable God's healing by empowering survivors, demonstrating compassion, providing
41 trauma-informed care, and restoration with procedural fairness.

1 *South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 13.3, November 9, 2022.*

2
3 T. One Humanity: Addressing Racism, Casteism, Tribalism, and Ethnocentrism

4
5 The moral duty of declaring biblical principles in the treatment of fellow human beings
6 has become paramount as the world increasingly recognizes the lingering scourge of racial
7 injustice, tribal conflicts, and caste system bigotry suffered by millions of persons in every
8 society and world region. God “has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the
9 face of the earth” (Acts 17:26) and Jesus teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matt
10 22:39). The Seventh-day Adventist Church acknowledges the important responsibility of making
11 its commitments and compassion clear to a world expecting both words and deeds in harmony
12 with the teachings of Jesus. Our commitment flows from our mission to preach the Gospel of
13 Jesus Christ to “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev 14:6) in our troubled world as we
14 recognize only Christ can change the human heart.

15
16 Seventh-day Adventists are committed to the unchanging biblical truths which reveal that
17 human beings are made in the image of God (Gen 1:27). Based on the creation account in the
18 book of Genesis, we believe in the God-given and immutable equality of all persons in all times,
19 all places, and all circumstances. We are all descended from Adam and Eve, our original
20 ancestors, who make all humanity one family (Gen 3:20). Even the tragic results of human
21 choice to rebel against God have not erased the enduring relationships between all human beings.
22 Distinctions of race, ethnicity, caste, and tribe are used to sinfully segment and divide the
23 fundamental unity God intended all human beings to experience with Himself and each other.

24
25 We maintain our allegiance to the biblical principles of equality and dignity of all human
26 beings in the face of historic and continuing attempts to use skin colour, place of origin, caste, or
27 perceived lineage as a pretext for oppressive and dominating behaviour. These attempts are a
28 denial of our shared humanity and we deplore all such aggression and prejudice as an offense to
29 God. Still, we acknowledge that many members of our worldwide Church fail to uphold this
30 biblical truth about the equality of all persons. Contrary to the teachings and example of Jesus,
31 many believers and church organizations have absorbed sinful, dehumanizing ideas about racial,
32 tribal, caste, and ethnic valuing that have led to practices injuring and wounding the human
33 family. These ways of thinking, and the practices resulting from them, undermine the very truths
34 we have pledged ourselves to live and teach. We apologize where in the past we may not have
35 spoken or acted boldly enough on these matters.

36
37 Seventh-day Adventists are members of a diverse, global Church and are committed to
38 being agents of peace and reconciliation in society by modelling and advocating for the biblical
39 truth about our shared ancestry. “For the love of Christ compels us” to regard people from His
40 point of view and to be His “ambassadors” in this divided world with the “word of
41 reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:14, 19, 20). We will support and nurture those marginalized and
42 mistreated because of their colour, caste, tribe, or ethnicity (Matt 25:40). We believe those who

1 abuse and mistreat others should, in accordance with biblical principles, be appropriately brought
2 to justice and will ultimately face divine judgment (Eccl 12:14; Heb 9:27). We will teach and
3 urge that God's truth about human origins and equality as taught in the Bible is the wisest
4 foundation for all human relationships.

5
6 God places a special responsibility upon those who have responded to His gracious
7 salvation for all (Gal 3:28) to demonstrate our commitment to equality, fairness, and
8 accountability in all human relations. God created each person unique, and His powerful
9 influence in our lives results in a celebration of differences that respectfully values each person's
10 human heritage and culture. We recognize the ultimate solution to the sins of racism, casteism,
11 tribalism, and ethnocentrism is the transformation of individual lives and relationships through
12 Christ and His saving power. We accept and embrace our Christian commitment to live, through
13 the power of the Holy Spirit, as a Church that is just, caring, and loving, grounded on biblical
14 principles.

15
16 God invites everyone, everywhere to join the remnant Church described in Bible
17 prophecy (Rev 12:17) in proclaiming the everlasting gospel which focuses on the righteousness
18 of Jesus Christ encapsulated in the three angels' messages (Rev 14:6-12). These messages are to
19 be given to "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" culminating with Christ's soon return (Rev
20 14:6, 14). We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth when "there shall be no more pain,
21 for the former things have passed away" (Rev 21:4).

22
23 *This statement was voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative*
24 *Committee in Silver Spring, Maryland on September 15, 2020.*

25 26 U. Trade Unions

27
28 The Seventh-day Adventist position on and relationship to trade unions is complex and
29 has to be seen against not only a broad theological background, but also in the light of historical
30 and social developments within the last centuries.

31
32 Theological Background—The biblical history of creation, the origin of sin, Christ's
33 crucifixion on the cross, and the second coming of Jesus forms the background for the Seventh-
34 day Adventist philosophy of all human societies and institutions.

35
36 The emphasis on creation is an expression of a deep concern for the realities of human
37 life, not only in its spiritual, but also in its mental, physical and social aspects. However, because
38 of the fall, humans are born into an imperfect world with a natural selfish tendency. For that
39 reason, human governments are invested with a divinely given authority to help not only in
40 general need, but also to protect their citizens against internal and external oppression and
41 exploitation that is due to the natural egotism of sinful humankind.

1 This need to govern should, however, be balanced by another central concern, that is, to
2 secure every individual's freedom of conscience and right to choose his/her religious belief and
3 to exercise that belief without the risk of losing their common civil rights. To secure not only this
4 right, but also to provide every human being with the choice of eternal life, God has established
5 the Church as the body of believers to present Jesus Christ to the world.

6
7 The Adventist understanding of the gospel and of the final events in the history of this
8 earth highlights this concept of liberty and freedom of conscience. On the cross Christ decided to
9 die rather than use His power because He wanted humans to maintain the freedom of choice.
10 Before His second coming, He has committed his Church to bring the everlasting gospel to the
11 world as a last warning (Rev 14:6-12), inviting all people to worship the Creator, even in the
12 context of oppressive governments and social structures that oppose genuine religious freedom.

13
14 Historical Background—The Seventh-day Adventist Church had its beginning in rural,
15 pre-industrial, mid-19th century USA. The traditional attitude of the Church toward labour and
16 trade unions reflects this origin. So do the various statements by Ellen G White, an influential
17 leader in the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its early years. Ellen G White
18 was well aware of the economic exploitations that in the course of history brought the labour
19 movements into existence.

20
21 Some trade unions of her time did not uphold the democratic political process or the
22 principle of freedom of conscience. In this context, Ellen G White strongly upheld the principle
23 of liberty and condemned any individual or organisation that devalued or discredited that
24 principle. Her comments must also be read in the light of events that according to prophecy are
25 expected to take place toward the end of history.

26
27 Today, Seventh-day Adventists live in all parts of the world. The operation of labour and
28 trade unions vary greatly. In many countries they have established memoranda of understanding
29 as a natural part of the negotiating process. Some unions cater solely for the professional
30 development of workers within the trade, while in other places, controlling and antidemocratic
31 tendencies are very strong.

32
33 Statement of Position—

34
35 The Church recognises:

- 36
37 • That exploitation and oppression of workers have been major factors contributing
38 to the development of trade unions in recent centuries.
39 • The positive impact that some unions have had in creating and securing the social
40 support system for the weak and the poor, “the stranger, the fatherless and the
41 widow” (Deut 24:20) of modern welfare societies. Today, many enjoy the

benefits brought about by the trade union movement even though they may not have participated in the process.

- That this positive influence has contributed to far greater freedom for many people.
- That in many countries trade unions form a natural and supporting part of the negotiating process.
- That individual members have the right to choose whether or not they will join a trade union.

The Church realises:

- The complexity of the issue and the great variety of trade unions and professional organisations.
- The threat that major institutions and organisations, national and/ or international, may constitute to the liberty of the individual, and the danger that trade unions may also be utilised as forces of control and oppression.
- That the biblical description of events immediately before the second coming of Christ should make us particularly sensitive to any organisational threat against the individual's right to free choice.
- That as an organisation, the Church is called by God to proclaim the gospel of Christ which embraces freedom of choice, and that it must be bound by the Word of God in performing this task.

The Church affirms:

- That it understands its work as a divine calling, and commits itself at all levels to fair and equitable treatment of its employees.
- That no individual or organisation should diminish the trust between an employer and the employee.
- That governments should uphold and protect the right of each individual to choose his/her religious belief and to exercise this belief without losing any of the civil or economic rights that society bestows.
- That its members maintain their conscientious right not to join any organisation that they perceive as a threat to their religious freedom or their freedom of individual choice.
- That no members should participate in the work of any organization that:
 - a. does not uphold and respect the rights and the free choice of the individual;
 - b. does not respect the duly established structures and processes of government;
 - c. uses force or coercion to achieve its ends.

- That in order to fulfil its divine mission, it maintains independence from any employee, community or governmental organisation.

South Pacific Division Executive Committee, 29.30, May 22, 2003.

Chapter 4

Finance

V. Auditing

1. General Conference Auditing Service

The General Conference Auditing Service is the preferred supplier of auditing services to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and affiliated entities in the South Pacific Division at all levels above the local church.

The General Conference Auditing Service provides an internal audit service that audits to external audit standards for finance and compliance (policy, contractual and statutory, as applicable) of the highest quality at minimum cost, to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and affiliated entities in this Division. The objective is to enhance the credibility of financial information to assist governing committees/boards and management in their mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The General Conference Auditing Service is not operated by the South Pacific Division and operates under the auditing policies in the General Conference Working Policy.

To achieve standardisation of auditing procedures within the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church, the General Conference Auditing Service has adopted an audit methodology which shall, at a minimum, comply with auditing standards of the country in which the audit is conducted.

2. External Auditors (Including Registered Company Auditors)

It is intended that external auditors be engaged only when:

- a. required by law or professional standards, or
- b. specifically requested by the governing committee/board of a denominational entity

1 c. and the auditor is from a panel of auditors approved by the Division.
2 In such circumstances, when using the services of an external auditor, the selection and hiring of
3 such shall be done by the organisation, in consultation with the Associate Director of the General
4 Conference Auditing Service (SPD) and selected from a panel of auditors approved by the
5 Division.
6

7 The cost of external audits shall be borne by the entity being audited. An audit by an
8 external auditor shall not take the place of regular denominational policy compliance audits by
9 the General Conference Auditing Service.
10

11 When an external auditor is engaged the General Conference Auditing Service should be
12 invited to assist the external auditor to minimise cost, conduct a policy audit and maintain a
13 consistent denominational audit approach.
14

15 3. Auditing Standards 16

17 Audits should be conducted in harmony with each country's legal requirements and
18 professional standards.
19

20 4. Governing Committee/Boards' Responsibility 21

22 a. Ensure that audits are conducted at least annually in harmony with this
23 policy.
24

25 b. Determine if an external audit opinion is required.
26

27 c. Receive the audit report and adopt any recommendations deemed
28 necessary.
29

30 d. Where deemed advisable, appoint an audit committee in harmony with
31 current professional and governance standards.
32

33 5. Management's Responsibility 34

35 a. While the auditor is responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on
36 the financial statements of an organisation, the responsibility for the preparation of those
37 financial statements is that of the organisation's management. Management's responsibilities
38 include the maintenance of adequate accounting records and internal controls, the selection and
39 application of appropriate accounting policies, and the safeguarding of the assets of the entity.
40 The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management of its responsibilities.
41

1 b. Management shall allow auditors complete access to all staff, assets,
2 accounting and corporate records, agreements, contracts, minutes, service records, and other
3 related documents deemed necessary by the auditors for the performance of the audit.
4

5 c. New Entities—It shall be the responsibility of the next higher organisation
6 to inform the General Conference Auditing Service, through standard denominational channels,
7 whenever a new entity is organised or created.
8

9 6. Local Church Audits

10
11 a. The local church and other local church body audits shall be carried out
12 annually by competent auditors engaged by the local conference/ mission. In situations where it
13 is not feasible to perform the audit of a local church on an annual basis, the union may authorise
14 an alternative audit cycle that would normally not exceed a two-year period. The work shall be
15 carried out under standards as set by this Division and working papers and reports made
16 available to the auditors in harmony with clause 5.b.
17

18 b. The conference/mission treasurer shall report to the conference/ mission
19 committee, indicating whether or not the accounts and records of each church have been audited
20 during the year. The report shall be in writing and shall include the date and place of each audit.
21

22 c. Since in many conferences and missions it is physically impossible for the
23 treasurer to personally audit all local church records, suitable provision shall be made for other
24 competent individuals to assist in this, and such individuals to be responsible directly to the
25 conference or mission treasurer.
26

27 d. The financial records of Dorcas federations and welfare centres, and other
28 enterprises operated by one or more churches, shall be audited annually by or under the
29 supervision of the local conference or mission treasurer in whose field the enterprise is located
30 unless audited through the services of the General Conference Auditing Service – South Pacific
31 Division.
32

33 e. In situations where it is not feasible to perform this audit on an annual
34 basis the union may authorise an alternative audit cycle that would normally not exceed a two-
35 year period.
36

37 *South Pacific Division Working Policy: FIN.20.50, Auditing, November 27, 2014.*
38

39 W. Denominational Funds

40 1. Introduction

41
42

1 In order that assets for investment might be prudently managed the following principles
2 and policies have been adopted for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3 4 2. Philosophy

5
6 Committees and individuals authorised to invest funds for the denomination must always
7 be mindful of their stewardship responsibility. This means direct investments will not be made in
8 certain industries which are not in keeping with Seventh-day Adventist values. Principles of
9 integrity and fairness will govern all transactions.

10 11 3. Principles

12
13 a. Controlling committees, defined as any group with the authority to give
14 direction and control execution of instructions, must act as prudent investors. They are to seek
15 reasonable income, preserve principal and to avoid speculative investments. To the extent
16 reasonably practicable, the operational role should be separated from the oversight role for
17 investment management.

18 19 b. Custody of Financial Documents.

20
21 c. Men and women who give evidence of a genuine Christian experience and
22 who have relevant training or qualifications are the best security that can be obtained in the
23 safeguarding of funds. Only those persons shall be chosen for places of trust and responsibility
24 involving the handling of moneys and investments. The Chief Financial Officer, or senior
25 accounting officer, is the person responsible within each organisation for the recording of assets,
26 liabilities, receipts and disbursements. The custody of financial documents (e.g. bank statements,
27 vouchers, etc.) for the denomination rests primarily with the Chief Financial Officer or
28 equivalent administrative officer.

29
30 d. All investments must be prudent and in harmony with the laws, rules and
31 regulations of the jurisdiction in which the organisation is located.

32 33 e. Investment of Reserves and Trust Funds.

34
35 f. The investment of reserves and trust funds held in our conferences/
36 missions, institutions and other organisations shall be made only under the direction of the
37 controlling committee or board.

38
39 g. A return correlates strongly with risk, but tolerance for risk varies greatly
40 with the purpose of the funds for investment and the relevant circumstances of the organisation.
41 Levels of risk and return must be determined for all asset pools. Acceptable risk and return levels

1 are guided by the purpose or objective of the funds. The management of the trade-off between
2 risk and return is the committee's central task.

3
4 h. Specific investments or techniques are not by themselves prudent or
5 imprudent. The choices of techniques or investments to include in a portfolio are determined by
6 the level of risk for a specific investment and its anticipated effect on the portfolio.

7
8 i. Controlling committees shall diversify the portfolios of intermediate and
9 long-term assets for investment. All intermediate-term and long-term portfolios should be well
10 diversified to avoid undue exposure to any single economic sector, industry group, or individual
11 security. Pooled investment vehicles are the recommended method for facilitating diversification.

12
13 j. When pooled funds are offered, interest and values must be established in
14 such a manner that all investors are treated fairly based on length of time investments were held.

15
16 k. Within the values of the denomination, controlling committees shall invest
17 and manage each pool of assets for investment solely in the interest of achieving the purposes for
18 which each of the individual pools of assets were established.

19
20 l. In investing and managing assets, a controlling committee must limit costs
21 to those that are appropriate and reasonable in relation to the size of the asset pools, the purpose
22 of the asset pool and the skill of the controlling committee.

23 24 4. Permitted Investments

25
26 a. Approved investments for denominational funds shall be:

- 27
28 i. Savings banks.
29 ii. Interest-bearing deposits with banks.
30 iii. Transferable certificates of deposit.
31 iv. Government bonds and treasury bills.
32 v. Semi-government or local body loans.
33 vi. Industrial or commercial issues, backed by Government guarantee.
34 vii. Cash Management Facility (CMF) operated by Division CCMF
35 Limited.
36 viii. Unitised Fund operated by Division CCMF Limited.
37 ix. The official or unofficial money market for short-term funds,
38 subject to adequate security being lodged.
39 x. Real estate assets—regular income-producing real estate assets
40 may be used except for speculative investments which will not be
41 authorised.

1 xi. Such other investment types as may be approved by the controlling
2 committee and the Board of Division CCMF Limited.

3
4 b. Trustee funds shall be invested at all times in accordance with the laws of
5 the country or state in which the funds are held and in accordance with the overall principles of
6 this policy.

7
8 5. Investment Policies

9
10 a. At no time shall a controlling committee allow more than 7.5 per cent of
11 the assets under its management, based on market value, to be invested in the securities of any
12 one issuer other than Division Financial Services, government debt and bank securities with at
13 least an investment grade rating of A or higher.

14
15 b. Convertible notes; Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs); and preferred
16 preference shares are considered equity securities and thus are prohibited from being purchased
17 as fixed income securities.

18
19 c. All members of controlling committees must have a current, signed
20 conflict of interest statement on file.

21
22 d. Self-custody of marketable securities is not allowed. Controlling
23 committees must select a recognised custodian to hold securities, to settle brokerage transactions
24 and to provide monthly detail of such transactions. Non-marketable securities may be held in
25 safekeeping. Where safety deposit boxes are maintained for the keeping of such documents and
26 other valuables, it shall be arranged with those in charge of such services that two authorised
27 persons shall be present to gain admittance to the safety deposit boxes and their contents.

28
29 e. Controlling committees are required to retain all records pertaining to
30 transfers of assets, account documents, contracts and statements. A careful and complete record
31 shall be kept of the purchase and sale of all securities.

32
33 f. Controlling committees should require a legal review of initial account
34 opening documents, management contracts and powers of attorney.

35
36 g. When restricted or illiquid securities or real estate are acquired through
37 donation or the maturity of a trust they may be held until a prudent investor would liquidate such
38 securities. Securities otherwise permitted under this policy which have become illiquid due to
39 changes in the market should also be treated in a similar manner.

40
41 6. Equity Investments

1 a. Equity investments in any company should not normally exceed 4.9 per
2 cent of the ownership of the entity. This excludes the operation of Division institutions, Health
3 Food Department entities and affiliates, Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited and
4 Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Limited who may take larger holdings in companies for
5 the purpose of strategic business ownership.

6
7 b. At no time shall a controlling committee allow more than 25 per cent of
8 the assets under management, based on market value, to be invested in any one industry.
9 Industries are defined as sub-groupings within macro-economic sectors (e.g. Sector =
10 Technology, Industry = Hardware).

11
12 c. Retention of external managers or the construction of portfolios through
13 the purchase of individual securities or vehicles should only be considered when the assets for
14 investment are large enough to allow for appropriate diversification and to justify the fees
15 associated with management of the fund and custody of the securities. Normally asset pools of
16 less than AUD\$2,000,000 would not qualify. For asset pools greater than AUD\$2,000,000, a
17 committee must evaluate available options with a view to minimising management costs.

18
19 d. Use of Brokers

20
21 i. Criteria for Selection—In placing portfolio transaction orders on
22 behalf of an investment fund, the manager or anyone with
23 authority to approve the purchase or sale of securities shall use
24 well capitalised, qualified broker-dealers.

25 ii. Costs—All transactions must be executed at the optimum
26 commission rates and spreads, taking into consideration the
27 efficiency of execution of the transaction. All costs must be fully
28 disclosed including direct commissions, reductions in yield,
29 placement fees, management fees, administrative or any other
30 benefits the brokers may receive as compensation. These types of
31 costs are traditionally negotiated and the committee has the
32 responsibility to negotiate the most favourable rates. Seeking
33 prices from multiple vendors is strongly suggested.

34
35 e. Controlling committees shall complete an asset allocation study in
36 consultation with non-conflicted, qualified professionals for asset pools for investment prior to
37 investing any assets.

38
39 f. Ordinary and convertible preference shares should be of good quality and
40 listed on a major exchange or traded in the over-the-counter market with the requirement that
41 such shares have adequate market liquidity relative to the size of the asset pool.
42

1 g. For each asset pool, an Investment Policy Statement in a format
2 understood by the money management industry and consistent with this policy shall be approved
3 by each controlling committee whether employing external managers or managing funds
4 internally.

5
6 h. Controlling committees which make investment decisions in shares should
7 retain professional investment advisors. Compensation of such persons shall be fee based and not
8 commission based. All investment advisors must be registered as investment advisors with
9 appropriate regulatory authorities.

10
11 7. Special Consideration Securities

12
13 a. With Division CCMF Limited approval the following may be permissible for
14 administering large investment pools (normally not less than AUD\$10,000,000):

- 15
16 i. Real Estate—Syndicated with institutional investors and
17 representing no more than 25 per cent interest in the property(ies),
18 or if single property principally owned investment shall require
19 professional consultation and management advice.
20 ii. High yield bonds.
21 iii. Mortgage or asset-backed securities when managed by a
22 professional manager.
23 iv. Derivative contracts may be used to reduce or manage the risk
24 exposure of a portfolio when used in combination with the other
25 portfolio holdings and within the context of the manager's overall
26 strategy.
27
28 (a) Contracts can be used in lieu of cash market transactions
29 only when fully documented and when their valuation,
30 execution and/or cost provide relative advantages.
31 (b) Adequate liquidity for contract margin requirements must
32 always be coordinated within the overall manager's
33 strategy.
34 (c) Asset sales for cash must be accomplished in an orderly
35 way.
36 (d) The manager may utilise derivatives contracts to replicate
37 the risk/return profile of an asset or combination of assets
38 provided that the guidelines allow such exposures with the
39 underlying assets themselves. Derivatives may not be used
40 to produce exposure to an asset, asset class, index, interest
41 rates, or other financial variable that would not otherwise
42 be allowed in the portfolio guidelines were derivatives

- (e) contracts not allowed.
- (f) At no time shall the portfolio in aggregate be more than 100 per cent invested.

v. Private equity.

b. Professional management staff shall assist in the administering of large investment pools.

c. Approval must be given by the controlling committee or board before funds can be invested as permitted in clause 6.(a).

d. Clauses 4.–7. of FIN.50.20 Division Financial Services shall be applied in the operation of large investment pools.

8. Policies—Other

a. Audits—Denominational organisations shall provide for annual audits as well as for interim audits and such other help as may be required to afford adequate security for denominational funds and for the protection of those who are responsible for these moneys.

b. Executors of Deceased Estates—Denominational employees who serve as executors or administrators of deceased estates because of their office with the denomination shall:

- i. For estates with a value greater than \$100,000 instruct a solicitor to secure the grant of probate and administer the estate, and
- ii. Pay any income accruing to them in connection with their executorial role to their employing organisations.

c. Violation of Financial Trust or Responsibility—Where an employee of a conference/mission or other organisation violates the laws of the country and/or their financial trust or responsibility, church discipline shall be administered and conference/mission officials shall cooperate in the proper punishment of such offenders.

d. Deposit of Denominational Funds

- i. Denominational funds shall be deposited only in banks approved by controlling committees or boards.
- ii. Bank accounts shall be opened with banks or similar bodies only by specific resolution of the responsible controlling committee or

- 1 board which shall name the persons authorised to operate the
2 account, at least one of whom shall be a financial administrator.
3 iii. When no longer required, bank accounts shall be closed by
4 authority of the controlling committee or board concerned and
5 written instruction delivered to the bank of such intention.
6

7 *South Pacific Division Working Policy: FIN.50.10, December 18, 2015.*
8

9 X. Local Church Finances

10
11 1. Church Treasurer

12
13 The local church treasurer is the sole custodian in the church of all tithes and offerings.
14

15 2. Tithes and Departmental Offerings

16
17 All tithes and church and departmental offerings shall be passed over weekly to the
18 church treasurer.
19

20 3. Receipts

21
22 The church treasurer shall give receipts to the persons concerned for all moneys received,
23 and carbon duplicates of all receipts shall be retained for audit purposes.
24

25 4. Treasurers' Books

26
27 A uniform system of church treasurers' books shall be followed throughout the Division.
28

29 5. Tithe Envelopes

30
31 Suitable envelopes shall be provided free by the local conference/ mission for the purpose
32 of securing uniformity and regularity in the collection of tithes.
33

34 6. One Collection Per Service

35
36 No more than one collection shall be lifted in any one church at the one service except to
37 meet a special need for a specified limited time.
38

39 7. Funds Forwarded to Conference/Mission Treasurer
40

Churches and companies shall forward all conference/mission funds, as designated in the conference offering calendar or planned giving program, and reports to the conference or mission treasurer immediately after the close of each month.

8. Instruction to Church Treasurers

The conference or mission treasurer should visit the churches once each year for the purpose of giving necessary instruction to the church treasurer and other officers regarding church accounts.

Bank Account

Where it is advisable to bank church and conference or mission funds, a local bank account should be opened under the advice of the officers of the church concerned.

9. Local Church Audits

It is the duty of the local conference/mission treasurer to ensure that financial and compliance audits of local churches, and their subsidiary organisations/departments, are conducted in accordance with Auditing Policy FIN.20.50.

10. Operation of Church Schools

In view of the fact that “every member should share in the expense” of the church school and that every church school is a department of the church, churches operating church schools shall make financial provision in their yearly operating budget for the church school in harmony with conference/mission policies.

South Pacific Division Working Policy: FIN.40.50—Local Church Finance, December 18, 2015.

Y. Offerings

1. The following church offerings shall be included in the Division church calendar for Australia and New Zealand. In union missions and the mission territories of the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, the Planned Giving Program applies.

PROJECT

a. Division Strategy:
Discipleship of Adventist Youth

b. Annual Sacrifice

c. Record

FREQUENCY

Biennial—

*Alternating with Christian Services for the
Blind and Hearing Impaired*

Annual

Annual

d. Avondale University	Biennial– <i>Alternating with Pacific Adventist University</i>
e. Division Strategy:	Biennial– Discipleship by Christian <i>Alternating with Services for the Blind and Discipleship youth Hearing Impaired</i>
f. Division Strategy: Comprehensive Health Ministry Offering	Annual
g. Adventist World Radio	Annual
h. Union Global Partnership Project	Annual
i. Pacific Adventist University	Biennial– <i>Alternating with Avondale University</i>
j. Division Strategy: Mission to the Cities	Annual
k. Division Strategy: Media Evangelism	Annual
l. ADRA/Disaster and Famine relief	Annual
m. Union Offering	Annual
n. ADRA/Community Projects	Annual

2. In preparing the annual church calendar, conferences in Australia and New Zealand shall ensure that a minimum of thirty-two local offerings, including education offerings, are reserved for local churches.

3. All offerings and donations to ADRA received through the Tithe & Offerings system, including the ADRA/Disaster and Famine Relief offering, shall be passed on directly to the appropriate legal entity within the union in which the donations were received.

4. In Australia all other offerings and donations to a Deductible Gift Recipient fund received through the Tithe & Offerings system shall be passed on directly to the relevant legal entity holding that endorsement. In relation to those offerings listed in clause 1 the Avondale University offering is to be passed on to Avondale University Ltd while the Division Strategy: Discipleship by Christian Services for the Blind and Hearing Impaired offering is to be passed on to Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Limited.

5. All other funds received for offerings listed in clause 1 as well as for Sabbath School offerings shall be recorded as income in the local conference.

6. Conferences in Australia and New Zealand shall appropriate funds to the following entities for the purposes as outlined:

1 a. An amount equivalent to 50 per cent of the Division Strategy:
2 Comprehensive Health Ministry offering shall be remitted to Seventh-day Adventist Church
3 (Pacific) Limited. The balance is retained to support local initiatives for this strategy.
4

5 b. An amount equivalent to the total of the relevant offerings shall
6 be remitted to the following entities:
7

- 8 i. Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD) Ltd:
 - 9 – Division Strategy: Media Evangelism
 - 10 – Record
- 11 ii. Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific) Ltd:
 - 12 – Adventist World Radio
 - 13 – Division Strategy: Discipleship of Adventist Youth
 - 14 – Division Strategy: Mission to the Cities
 - 15 – Annual Sacrifice
 - 16 – Pacific Adventist University
 - 17 – Sabbath School offerings

18
19 c. An amount equivalent to the total offering received for the Union Offering
20 and the Union Global Partnership Project shall be remitted to the union in which the offerings
21 were collected.
22

23 7. Planned Giving Program 24

25 As provided in General Conference Working Policy the Combined Offerings Plan
26 (commonly referred to as The Planned Giving Program), has been adopted as the offering system
27 to be followed in the union missions and the missions of the New Zealand Pacific Union
28 Conference of this Division.
29

30 All congregational offerings received on each Sabbath shall be
31 combined and apportioned as follows:
32

33 a. Fifty per cent (50%) shall remain with the local church to be applied for
34 evangelism, operating and conference/mission responsibilities.
35

36 b. Twenty per cent (20%) shall be received by the conference/ mission and
37 applied in the support of its operations as determined by the mission executive committee.
38

39 c. Six per cent (6%) shall be remitted to the union conference/ union mission
40 and applied in the support of its operations as determined by the union mission/union conference
41 executive committee
42

1 d. Four per cent (4%) shall be remitted to the Division and allocated to the
2 Division offerings listed in the annual church offerings calendar. The Seventh-day Adventist
3 Church (Pacific) Limited shall determine the formula for allocation of these funds between these
4 offerings.

5
6 e. Twenty per cent (20%) shall be remitted through the union to the General
7 Conference to be applied for the world mission of the Church and distributed in accordance with
8 the formula determined by the General Conference Executive Committee.

9
10 Union conferences/union missions shall approve distribution of the local church and
11 mission share of mission offering received at district camp meetings, being mindful of the needs
12 of existing offering arrangements and the special needs of the Planned Giving Program.

13 14 8. Division Strategy Offerings

15
16 The Division will be responsible for the promotion of the offerings which support and
17 feature major Division Strategies. The use of the offerings must be in harmony with the offerings
18 promotion and Division Strategic plan.

19 20 9. Union Global Partnership Project

21
22 This offering is to be used by unions to maintain a global vision by partnering with an
23 area of the Church in the 10/40 window.

24
25 *South Pacific Division Working Policy: FIN.30.50—OFFERINGS, November 14, 2019.*

26 27 Z. Tithe

28
29 From time to time events occur that lead some well-intentioned church members or
30 congregations to consider deviating from returning tithe to their local conference/mission/union
31 of churches through the local church where they hold their membership. Our practice which is
32 detailed in appropriate policies and procedures has been developed and adopted by the world
33 Church based on its understanding of the teachings of the Bible and the counsel given to us
34 through Ellen G White.

35
36 God has given to His church clear instructions related to the nature of tithe and its
37 recipients, and any deviation from these divine instructions is not in the best interests of the
38 Church and the fulfilment of its mission, and is to be avoided. This call to submission to the Lord
39 on this matter is based on the following biblical information, supplemented with statements from
40 Ellen G White.

1 Tithe Is Holy—The Bible makes it unquestionably clear that tithe is holy. It belongs to
2 the Lord (Lev 27:30). This biblical principle is the very foundation of tithing. Since it seems to
3 be a result of our labour, the tenth of our income may appear to be ours. But the Lord has stated
4 that this is not the case. The tithe belongs to Him. This brings with it several implications.

5
6 First, since the tithe is not ours, we have to return it to Him. This is the way the holiness
7 of tithe is preserved. Using it for other purposes makes it common and violates its sanctity.

8
9 Second, returning tithe is not a payment to a pastor or to any other person for benefits
10 received from him or her. We do not give the tithe to humans; we return it to the Lord and He
11 decides who should get it and how it is going to be used (Num 18:21,24).

12
13 Third, since tithe is holy, and, therefore not ours, it should not be used to put pressure on
14 others in order to produce any change that we would like to see taking place. Nor should tithe be
15 withheld in order to achieve a personal objective. The only thing we can properly do with the
16 tithe is return it to the Lord in a timely manner as a sublime expression of love and respect to our
17 Saviour.

18
19 God Identifies the Recipients of Tithe—Since tithe belongs to the Lord, He is the owner
20 and the one who determines who should receive it. In the Scripture tithe was assigned by the
21 Lord, not by the Israelites, to the Levites (Num 18:21). The only thing He expected from the
22 Israelites was to return the tithe to Him. The storehouse was the temple, from which it was
23 distributed to priests and Levites (Mal 3:10; Num 18:24). In the Christian dispensation tithe has
24 been assigned under inspired instruction from the Lord to the organised ministry of the church (1
25 Cor 9:13; cf. Matt 23:23). The writings of Ellen G White clearly indicate that tithe is to be
26 returned to the treasury of the conference/mission/union of churches for the work of the gospel
27 ministry (TM 308; 7MR 366). Any deviation from God's revealed plan for His tithe is a human
28 expression of independence from Him and calls into question allegiance to the very Church we
29 are members of. As it is the local conference/mission/union of churches (where an individual
30 lives and where they should hold their membership) that provides the members pastoral support,
31 it is appropriate for the conference/ mission/union of churches to receive the tithe.

32
33 Tithe and the Failure of Leadership—It may seem logical to some to think that if we
34 believe leaders of God's people have failed, then we should not give our tithe to the
35 conference/mission/union of churches. The nature of tithe and some clear examples from the
36 Bible indicate that this logic is not an appropriate guide. During the time of Nehemiah there was
37 among priests and Levites a serious religious and spiritual corruption (Neh 13:4-5,15). As a
38 result the people decided to stop returning God's tithe (13:10). When Nehemiah realised what
39 was happening he did two things. First, he condemned the decision of the people (13:11) and,
40 second, he initiated a reform among priests and Levites (13:9,13).

1 Malachi, writing during this crisis, accused the people of robbing God and ordered them
2 in the name of the Lord to return to Him the full tithe (3:8-10). He also publicly spoke against
3 priests and Levites for their spiritual failure (1:6-13; 2:1-8).

5 It is clear that our primary spiritual responsibility is to return God's tithe to those
6 appointed by the Lord to receive it. This is what Jesus also taught. He knew very well the
7 spiritual condition of the spiritual leaders of Israel. But when asked about tithing He did not
8 encourage anyone to retain it or to give it to someone else. On the contrary, He supported what
9 He had revealed to Israel—to return tithe to the Lord via the temple (Matt 23:23).

11 We find a third example in the writings of Ellen G White. In 1890, the spiritual condition
12 of the Michigan Conference was low and depressing. The situation was so bad that she stated,
13 "The churches would be far better without such elders and ministers" (2SAT 73). Because of that
14 situation many church members began to withhold the tithe. To them she said, "Cannot you see
15 that it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offering, because you are
16 not in harmony with everything that your brethren do? The tithes and offering are not the
17 property of any man" (p. 74). Then she added, "Unworthy ministers may receive some of the
18 means thus raised... but do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from the Lord His own
19 property" (p. 74).

21 We appeal to our church members to pray for God's church and its leaders and to remain
22 loyal to the Lord in the matter of tithe. The Lord is more concerned for His church than anyone
23 of us is, and we can rest assured that He will guide us to safety.

25 *Seventh-day Adventist (Pacific) Ltd. AGM: 12.23, November 13, 2012.*

27 DISCIPLES AND DISCIPLESHIP

29 Disciple:

31 A disciple is a person who follows Jesus Christ and is becoming more like Him in every
32 way. (Mark 1:16-20, Matthew 9:9, Eph 4:15, Rev 14:4).

34 Discipleship:

36 Jesus Christ calls all men, women and children through the Holy Spirit to become His
37 disciples and to make other disciples. Guided by the Holy Spirit, discipleship is a life-long
38 process of becoming more like Jesus Christ by learning of Jesus and His grace through the Bible
39 and the lives of others, by worshipping Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and by serving in His name
40 and sharing Him with others. This growth is enhanced in community as disciples support and
41 challenge one another to faithfulness, perseverance when suffering, the practice of spiritual
42 habits, and the stewardship of life. As the fruit of the Spirit develops, disciples connect with the

needs of others, listen to the stories of friends and family, and share their stories and how the story of Jesus intersects with life. As ministers with Jesus, disciples use their spiritual gifts, personality and God-given passions to multiply disciples. Disciples apply the Bible teachings to their lives, model the Christian life and mentor others in discipleship. So in these last days and in the context of the three angels we are obedient to the command of Jesus to make disciples.

(Mat 28:18-20, 2 Pet 3:8, Eph 4:15, John 5:39, 1 Tim 4:12, John 4:23-24, 1 Cor 12:12-13, Gal 6:2, Heb 10:24-25, Gal 5:22-25, MH 143, John 4, Acts 26:4-23, 1 pet 2:9, Eph 4:11-13, James 1:22-25, 1 Cor 10:31-33, 2 Tim 2:2, Rev 14:6-12, Mat 28:18-20).

1. Prepare the Soil

Build relationships and community with people using these steps:

- Seek the best for them
- Eat with them
- Listen to their stories
- Work with them to do good in the community by serving others
- As appropriate, pray with them

Continue to teach other people how to prepare the soil

2. Sow the Seed

Sow the life-changing word of God into people's lives using these steps:

- When appropriate, share Bible verses and/or stories that are meaningful and relevant in their lives
- After listening to their story, share your own story of faith
- Show how their story and your story fits within God's story
- Read the Bible together, such as the Gospel of Mark, Acts, Ephesians, Daniel etc
- Share the gospel—the good news of God's work of salvation—and its benefits, and explain how your friends can respond to the gospel
- Help teach your friends how to Prepare the Soil and Sow the Seed.

Continue to sow the word of God into other people's lives

3. Cultivate the Plans

Grow new disciples to become more like Jesus in every way using these steps:

- Show your friends how to pray and read the Bible so they can grow
- Introduce your friends to the key teachings of the Bible
- Make sure your friends make friends with other Christians for spiritual support and to be equipped as disciple-makers
- Help your friends discover and use their spiritual gifts in ministry

1 Continue to spiritually cultivate more new disciples

2
3 4. Harvest the Crop

4
5 Bring new disciples to make decisions and build church community using these
6 steps:

- 7 • Invite your friends to be baptised into Christ and join His Body the church
- 8 • Involve them in the 5 purposes of the church
- 9 • Let the Holy Spirit lead your friends to use their spiritual gifts
- 10 • Plant a church where appropriate and led by the Holy Spirit

11 Continue to lead more disciples to make decisions and build more church
12 communities

13
14 5. Multiply the Harvest

15
16 Grow the movement by multiplying disciple-makers and leaders using these steps:

- 17 • Identify disciple-makers and leaders
- 18 • Train disciples to become disciple-makers
- 19 • Develop leaders who train leaders
- 20 • Equip and resource disciple-makers and leaders to make disciples and
- 21 establish new groups and churches
- 22 • Support disciple-makers and leaders in their mission strategies

23 Continue to be a disciple-maker and a leader yourself

