

1 ADCOM/ADCOM/ADCOM/PreC/GCDO17AC to TLL-17AC(DIV)

2
3 116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
4 IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II

5
6 *This document has not been voted by the General Conference Executive Committee.*

7
8 SECTION A

9
10 The General Conference Executive Committee is committed to exhibiting godly
11 forbearance, Christian charity, and redemptive grace in each instance of non-compliance and to
12 preserve the governance and organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on all
13 levels (General Conference, divisions, unions, conferences, and local congregations). The
14 General Conference Executive Committee acknowledges previous efforts of division executive
15 officers to resolve the current issues of non-compliance, and encourages them to continue the
16 discussion, listen sensitively, and seek further resolutions. Although all non-compliance carries
17 its own self-initiated results, the continued forbearance and discussion process will provide
18 additional time to find solutions within the context of voted actions of the General Conference
19 Session, General Conference Executive Committee, and General Conference *Working Policy*.
20 The second phase in the process of non-compliance will be implemented when General
21 Conference Executive Committee members register for Annual Council on an annual basis
22 beginning with the 2018 Annual Council. At that time, the results of non-compliance outlined in
23 the Section B of Phase II will be implemented due to the individual's own declaration not to
24 comply with actions of General Conference Session, General Conference Executive Committee,
25 and General Conference *Working Policy*.

26
27 The General Conference Executive Committee encourages each member of the Executive
28 Committee to prayerfully consider their responsibilities to the entire world Church as Executive
29 Committee members, and uphold the corporate decisions of the Church in General Conference
30 Session, in actions of the General Conference Executive Committee and General Conference
31 *Working Policy*.

32
33 SECTION B

34
35 THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR CHURCH ORGANIZATION,
36 GOVERNANCE, AND AUTHORITY

37
38 The organization of the Church is intimately related to its biblical faithfulness, cohesive
39 unity, and mission focus. Throughout scripture, organization has been a priority for God's
40 people. In the Old Testament the building of the sanctuary, the dedication of the priests, the
41 instructions for the sacrificial system, and the administration of the nation of Israel all reveal a
42 divinely ordained organizational structure (Exod 25, 29; Lev 1-5; Exod 18).

43
44 The New Testament organization of the Church—the *ekklesia*, God's called out ones—is
45 equally significant. The apostle Paul likens the Church to the human body, which underlines the
46 diversity and the necessity of harmony at the same time (1 Cor 12). The body is a highly-

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 2

1 complex, supremely-organized, minutely detailed combination of tissues, organs, and
2 interrelated systems. For Paul, the Church is the body of Christ, Christ's representative body on
3 earth. It was the apostle Paul who counseled the Corinthian church to "Let all things be done
4 decently and in order." (1 Cor 14:40 KJV).

5
6 The New Testament Church faced challenges but made decisions together to solve those
7 challenges (Acts 6, 15). The establishment of a system of elders and deacons was one of the
8 factors in the organization of the church that kept it focused on its mission and faithful to its
9 biblical ideals (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 2:41, 42, 48; Acts 6, 15; 1 Tim 2, 3; 2 Tim
10 4:1-5). Commenting upon Christ appointing the disciples, Ellen G White shares this divine
11 insight, "The first step was now to be taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's
12 departure was to be His representative on earth." (DA 291).

13
14 Church organization is also a clear biblical mandate and foundational biblical teaching
15 for God's end-time people (Eph 4:1-16). The organization of the Church is rooted in scripture. It
16 is one of the ways that the Holy Spirit unifies Christ's Church. Church policy is an outgrowth of
17 church organization and governance. The policies of the Church are not infallible. They certainly
18 do not equate with or supersede biblical teachings and doctrines, but they do play a significant
19 role in helping the Church work in harmony.

20
21 Policies are agreements on operating procedures that reflect the best judgment of a
22 representative group of Church leaders at a given time on how denominational entities live and
23 work together. As the Holy Spirit leads Christ's Church, policies can be changed and at times
24 policies have been changed, but that change takes place as the Church makes decisions together
25 under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Policy recognizes a unity of entities (church, conference,
26 union, General Conference) based on mission, purpose, and belief that binds the believers
27 together in a universal fellowship. Policy is the result of unity, not the cause of it.

28
29 While the integrity of each entity is recognized (church, conference, union), each is seen
30 to be a part of a sisterhood which cannot act without reference to the whole. Without clearly
31 defined policies and organizational procedures, the entities of the Church and its leaders and
32 members are left to their own independent judgment with the ensuing result of organizational
33 chaos, a divergent theology, an inward focus, and a narrow view of world mission. Policies are
34 not the only basis of Church organization but they are one of its building blocks. Commenting on
35 the dangers of independent judgment, Ellen G White states, "God has invested His church with
36 special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for he
37 who does this despises the voice of God." (AA 164).

38

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 3

1 1. *Result of Biblical Foundation for Unity in Mission and Church Activities*
2

3 The result of the biblical process for unity in mission for the world Church is an
4 administrative function requiring prayerful, careful approaches to maintaining the unity of
5 purpose established and agreed to by all entities through actions of General Conference Sessions,
6 and the General Conference Executive Committee between sessions. The General Conference
7 Constitution and Bylaws are amendable only by a super majority of the delegates at a General
8 Conference in session which has large representation from all world regions. General Conference
9 *Working Policy* is voted on by Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee
10 with representation from all world regions. Since there have been some non-compliant
11 manifestations by certain unions and local entities, it is important to outline procedures to bring
12 compliance by all entities to the advancement and promotion of the policies and actions of the
13 world Church thus nurturing the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Again, these
14 administrative and committee procedures are based on a biblical understanding of how the
15 worldwide Church works together under the Holy Spirit’s guidance.
16

17 2. *Constitutional Procedures for Church Unity in Mission*
18

19 The General Conference Constitution and Bylaws are clear about the unity of the Church
20 in providing strong interwoven and inter-dependent collegial activity binding the world Church
21 together in decision-making (see General Conference Constitution Article III regarding divisions
22 and unions to be in full harmony with General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, the General
23 Conference *Working Policy*, and actions of the General Conference Executive Committee). In
24 addition, the General Conference Constitution Bylaws Article I, Section 4, states that:
25

26 “Administrations of all organizations and institutions within a division’s territory shall be
27 responsible to their respective executive committees/boards and operate in harmony with
28 division and General Conference Executive Committee actions and policies. General Conference
29 institutions and fields without divisional affiliation shall operate in harmony with the General
30 Conference Executive Committee and its policies.”
31
32

33 3. *Working Policy Provisions for Church Unity in Mission*
34

35 The General Conference *Working Policy* is equally clear in its portrayal of the world
36 Church as inter-related and cohesive in its approach to all entities of the Church on every level
37 abiding by the collective decisions made by General Conference Sessions and General
38 Conference Executive Committee actions:
39

40 “B 15 05 Authoritative Administrative Voice of the Church—The General Conference
41 *Working Policy* contains the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference, the Mission
42 Statement and the accumulated or revised policies adopted by General Conference Sessions and

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 4

1 Annual Councils of the General Conference Executive Committee. It is, therefore, the
2 authoritative voice of the Church in all matters pertaining to the mission and to the
3 administration of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in all parts of the world.
4

5 B 15 10 Adherence to Policy Required—1. The General Conference *Working Policy* shall
6 be strictly adhered to by all organizations in every part of the world field. The work in every
7 organization shall be administered in full harmony with the policies of the General Conference
8 and of the divisions respectively. . .”
9

10 The General Conference administration is obligated to adhere to the General Conference
11 Constitution and Bylaws and the General Conference *Working Policy* as are all other entities
12 around the world having accepted the longstanding arrangements as agreed to by representation
13 from all over the world. Not only denominational entities, but also individual members of the
14 General Conference Executive Committee are accountable to the General Conference Executive
15 Committee in following procedures and actions by the Executive Committee, the General
16 Conference in session, and the General Conference *Working Policy*. There are many General
17 Conference working policies that provide for and imply how God’s Church should work together
18 for unity and careful structural activities involving differences of opinion between entities. These
19 already existing policies in the General Conference *Working Policy* can be utilized, when
20 appropriate, for any redemptive approaches needed under the leading of the Holy Spirit. As a
21 sacred responsibility of trust, accountability, and delegated authority by the world Church, the
22 General Conference staff and the General Conference Executive Committee are to uphold fully
23 the *Working Policy* and actions of the General Conference Executive Committee and the General
24 Conference in Session. *Working Policy* is therefore the combined decisions of global leadership
25 regarding how entities live and work together. It is the willing submission to one another in love
26 as the “family code of conduct.” (Eph. 5:21, Rom 12:10, Eph 4:2-6, Gal 5:15-17). Compliance
27 with *Working Policy* is a standard of conduct for Seventh-day Adventist leaders.
28

29 4. *Spirit of Prophecy Counsel for Church Unity in Mission in Relation to Conscience*
30

31 In respect to concerns that a person’s conscience should not be dictated to and that
32 entities can excuse themselves from following worldwide working policies or General
33 Conference Session actions for matters of conscience, it is helpful to briefly review some Spirit
34 of Prophecy instruction. A quotation in *The Desire of Ages* on pages 550 to 551, from Chapter 60
35 entitled, “The Law of the New Kingdom,” is specifically talking to individuals who try to usurp
36 authority and seek the highest place. It referred to the attempt by James and John to have a
37 higher position than the other disciples. The quotation is as follows:
38

39 “Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to
40 authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Power, position, talent,
41 education, placed their possessor under the greater obligation to serve his fellows. To even the
42 lowliest of Christ’s disciples it is said, ‘All things are for your sakes.’ 2 Cor. 4:15.

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 5

1
2 “[...] In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammled. No one is to control
3 another’s mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to
4 think, and to follow his own convictions. ‘Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’
5 No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where
6 principle is involved, ‘let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.’ Rom. 14:12, 5. In
7 Christ’s kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven
8 do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate
9 with men in uplifting humanity.

10
11 “The principles and the very words of the Saviour’s teaching, in their divine beauty,
12 dwelt in the memory of the beloved disciple. To his latest days the burden of John’s testimony to
13 the churches was, ‘This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one
14 another.’—DA 550, 551

15
16 This is a profound message and one for all of us to accept and practice wholeheartedly.
17 In addition, it is important to see the full picture of Spirit of Prophecy counsel regarding the
18 matter of conscience in relation to Church unity in mission.

19
20 Another vital reference provided regarding the conscience and Church unity in mission
21 was presented in 1909 and is found in *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 9, entitled “The Spirit
22 of Independence” on pages 257-261. It was read to the delegates of the General Conference
23 Session on May 30, 1909, and has real relevance. It is helpful to review the entire chapter which
24 has some similarities to the quotation from *The Desire of Ages* regarding the judgment or
25 conscience of individuals. This quotation in *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 9, culminates
26 with the accepted process we have of voting on motions at a General Conference in Session and
27 accepting those votes as the will of the body in spite of differences of opinion or conviction. The
28 core of the message is found on pages 260-261 which states:

29
30 “THE GENERAL CONFERENCE—I have often been instructed by the Lord that no
31 man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the
32 mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to
33 control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. But when, in a General Conference, the
34 judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence
35 and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a
36 laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to
37 the decision of the general body.

38
39 “At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the
40 work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to
41 restrict God’s work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General
42 Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 6

1 decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative
2 men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives
3 of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have
4 authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment
5 of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has
6 vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for
7 the prosperity and advancement of His work.

8
9 “When this power, which God has placed in the church, is accredited wholly to one man,
10 and he is invested with the authority to be judgment for other minds, then the true Bible order is
11 changed. Satan’s efforts upon such a man’s mind would be most subtle and sometimes well-nigh
12 overpowering, for the enemy would hope that through his mind he could affect many others. Let
13 us give to the highest organized authority in the church that which we are prone to give to one
14 man or to a small group of men.”—9T 260, 261

15
16 It is obvious that in matters of conscience that members are not to be forced against their
17 will, however, the principles provided in the Spirit of Prophecy indicate that when the world
18 church in session makes a decision it should be respected and human opinion should be
19 submitted to the world church’s decision.

20
21 5. *Basis for General Conference Executive Committee Authorization to Assure the*
22 *Continuous Effective Operation of the World Church to Fulfill its Mission*

23
24 In the Bylaws of the General Conference Constitution Article XIII entitled, “General
25 Conference Executive Committee,” it indicates in Sec. 1. a.:

26
27 “During the intervals between Sessions of the General Conference, the General
28 Conference Executive Committee is delegated the authority to act on behalf of the General
29 Conference in Session. The membership of the General Conference Executive Committee
30 includes representatives of all the divisions of the world field, the presidents of all unions and
31 therefore speaks for the world Church. Major items affecting the world Church are considered at
32 the Annual Council meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee, when all the
33 members of the Committee are invited to be present. The authority, therefore, of the General
34 Conference Executive Committee is the authority of the world Church.”

35
36 Sec. 1. b. gives power for various actions by the General Conference Executive
37 Committee and ends with:

38
39 “. . . [A]nd to take all necessary actions not otherwise reserved for the General
40 Conference in Session to assure the continuous effective operation of the world Church to fulfill
41 its mission.”
42

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 8

Resolution of Non-Compliance

Resolution of Category 1 non-compliance is addressed in the General Conference *Working Policy* (for example, see B 95 and L 60 20), and the legal governing documents (articles of incorporation, constitutions, and bylaws) of the organization and resolution of Category 3 non-compliance is the responsibility of the next higher organization. Resolution of Category 2 non-compliance will be addressed below.

The primary issue under consideration is that of Church unity in mission and compliance by all entities regarding General Conference Session actions, General Conference Executive Committee actions, and the General Conference *Working Policy*. Our central task is to accomplish, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the biblical mission of proclaiming Christ, His righteousness, His Three Angels’ Messages, and His imminent return using every means possible. It is vital that all give support to the process of Church voted actions so that the worldwide Church, including every entity, can participate in following mutually agreed-upon methods of policy adherence and spiritual collegiality in the Church’s mission outreach and evangelistic activities rather than to work unilaterally or separately even for conscientious reasons since we are all part of the same remnant church and Advent movement under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Vigorous, open discussion, including varied opinions, is encouraged as a meaningful part in all administrative meetings, including General Conference Sessions. However, once a motion has been voted up or down, it is the sacred responsibility of leadership to uphold the decision.

a. *In Relation to Officers/Administrators of Church Entities Not in Compliance with Category 2:*

We urge the executive committees and/or constituencies to direct their elected leaders to comply with the General Conference *Working Policy* B 15 15 which states:

“Officers/Administrators to Work in Harmony with Policy—Officers and administrators are expected to work in harmony with the General Conference *Working Policy*. Those who show inability or unwillingness to administer their work in harmony with policy should not be continued in executive leadership by their respective constituencies or governing boards/committees.”

We request that executive committees and/or constituencies, use the provisions of their governing documents to take steps when necessary, to remove and replace leaders who do not follow General Conference Session or General Conference Executive Committee actions, including *Working Policy* and to use the provision of their governing documents to carry out such responsibilities.

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 9

1
2 b. *In Relation to Members of the General Conference Executive Committee*
3 *Not in Compliance with Category 2:*
4

5 If members of the General Conference Executive Committee openly advocate positions
6 contrary to voted actions of General Conference Sessions, General Conference Executive
7 Committee, or General Conference *Working Policy*, then those members will by their own self-
8 initiated actions and pronouncements, forfeit General Conference Executive Committee
9 membership privileges of voice, vote, and subcommittee participation which will be suspended
10 until they come into or are in compliance (or unless the General Conference Executive
11 Committee at some point in the future votes to terminate Executive Committee membership for
12 cause) with what has been voted by the General Conference in session and/or General
13 Conference Executive Committee voted actions or policies contained in the General Conference
14 *Working Policy*.
15

16 At the time this document is voted and approved by the General Conference Executive
17 Committee at the 2017 Annual Council (see General Conference Bylaws, Article XIII, Sec 1. b.),
18 all Executive Committee members registering for the 2018 Annual Council, and annually
19 thereafter, will be requested to sign a statement, electronically or in hard copy, indicating
20 compliance with General Conference *Working Policy* B 15 15 which states,
21

22 “Officers/Administrators to Work in Harmony with Policy—Officers and administrators
23 are expected to work in harmony with the General Conference *Working Policy*. Those who show
24 inability or unwillingness to administer their work in harmony with policy should not be
25 continued in executive leadership by their respective constituencies or governing
26 boards/committees.”
27

28 The principle of working in harmony with General Conference *Working Policy* is part of
29 the sacred responsibility placed upon any leader or participant in leadership activity including
30 members of the General Conference Executive Committee. In addition to the standard financial
31 Conflict of Interest, each General Conference Executive Committee member will be asked to
32 sign a Statement of Commitment regarding General Conference Session actions, General
33 Conference Executive Committee actions, and General Conference *Working Policy*, and the
34 sacred spiritual trust of leadership. Although this has been the expectation of leadership in the
35 current policy, this statement will be included on the registration page for Spring Meeting or
36 Annual Council, as part of the registration process. Those who do not sign the document for
37 whatever reason, will forfeit their privileges of voice, vote, and subcommittee participation.
38

39 The subject of a person’s conscience in relation to items voted and compliance regarding
40 organizational structure has been explained in item 4 of this document. The statement to be
41 signed cannot be altered or edited by the individual Executive Committee member otherwise the
42 statement becomes invalid. The General Conference Unity Oversight Committee will consider

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 10

1 instances where the actions or statements of an Executive Committee member are shown to be
2 inconsistent with the statement after signing it. If an Executive Committee member is considered
3 to be acting out of harmony with the signed statement, a pastoral process, which follows the
4 biblical counsel of Matthew 18, will be initiated. This process would seek to understand, to pray,
5 and to counsel, first with one or two individuals appointed from the entity’s leadership. In all
6 interaction, the first biblical mandate is to redeem. Should resolution not be reached, the Unity
7 Oversight Committee will consult with the appropriate division, General Conference, or General
8 Conference institution officers to determine the status of compliance of the Executive Committee
9 member. If the Unity Oversight Committee determines that the actions or statements of an
10 Executive Committee member are shown to be inconsistent with the statement the member has
11 signed, the Unity Oversight Committee will send its recommendation to the General Conference
12 and Division Officers (GCDO) for review and for a decision, to forward a recommendation
13 to the General Conference Executive Committee for action.
14

15 If, at a future time after prayerful consideration on the part of the General Conference
16 Executive Committee member who has not signed the document, or has been denied privileges
17 of voice, vote, and subcommittee participation, there is a change of mind resulting in the desire
18 to sign the document, the Executive Committee member should contact General Conference
19 Secretariat in order to obtain the document to sign and submit it. The statement to be signed by
20 each General Conference Executive Committee member is as follows:
21

22 “I will comply with General Conference *Working Policy* B 15 15 in upholding General
23 Conference *Working Policy* provisions in addition to General Conference Session and Annual
24 Council actions.
25

26 1. I agree to respect church structure and abide by the General Conference *Working*
27 *Policy* which has been voted by worldwide representation.
28

29 2. Within my sphere of influence, I will work with appropriate Church leadership to
30 correct any non-compliance situations within my jurisdiction.
31

32 3. If my organization or entity has voted or has been engaged in actions, and/or
33 unilateral activities or has released statements or pronouncements which are not in harmony with
34 General Conference Session actions, General Conference Executive Committee actions, or
35 General Conference *Working Policy* for global implementation through divisions, unions,
36 conferences, and missions, which, if not implemented, would adversely impact Church unity, for
37 whatever stated reasons, I will use my influence as a member of the General Conference
38 Executive Committee to reverse and reject those actions recognizing that normal and accepted
39 administrative Church procedures are to be followed regarding any adjustments to policy or
40 voted actions.
41

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 11

1 4. I understand that my membership on the General Conference Executive
2 Committee is a sacred, spiritual trust and that I am bound to adhere to the General Conference
3 Session actions, General Conference Executive Committee actions, and General Conference
4 *Working Policy*.”

5
6 Name: _____

7
8 Signed: _____

9
10 Date: _____

11
12
13 c. *In Relation to Official Annual Council Invitees Not in Compliance with*
14 *Category 2:*

15
16 Invitee status at Annual Council Sessions is a privilege not a right. As a result, official
17 invitees to the General Conference Executive Committee Annual Council who openly advocate
18 in their territory or elsewhere directions or actions which are contrary to General Conference
19 Session, General Conference Executive Committee actions, and General Conference *Working*
20 *Policy* will forfeit, by their own self-initiated actions and pronouncements, General Conference
21 Executive Committee privilege of an invitation as an official invitee (official invitees have voice
22 but do not have voting privileges or subcommittee participation). The Unity Oversight
23 Committee will review appropriate facts and will verify who these individuals or entities are,
24 based on known information, and then recommend to General Conference Secretariat subsequent
25 handling of official invitee status.

26
27 d. *In Relation to General Conference Session Delegates Not in Compliance*
28 *with Category 2:*

29
30 In accordance with best practice and in anticipation of the General Conference Session,
31 unions shall present a list of delegates who have signed the Statement of Commitment regarding
32 General Conference Session actions, General Conference Executive Committee actions, and
33 General Conference *Working Policy*, to their respective divisions. If it is determined that an
34 individual, on the unions’ delegate list, is in Category 2 non-compliance, and intends to continue
35 in non-compliance with General Conference Sessions actions, General Conference Executive
36 Committee actions, and General Conference *Working Policy*, then the General Conference senior
37 executive administration, in consultation with division senior executive administration, will
38 report this to the General Conference Secretariat by July of the year preceding the General
39 Conference Session so that the union can choose a replacement.

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 12

1 7. *Earnest, Spiritual Appeal to All Entities Worldwide for Unity in Mission and*
2 *Combined Church Commitment*
3

4 We humbly appeal to all unions, local conferences/missions, and organizations to unite
5 with the world Church by adhering to the actions taken by the General Conference in session, the
6 General Conference Executive Committee, and General Conference *Working Policy*. Although
7 our worldwide family experiences a wide degree of diversity, our common commitment to
8 Christ, the teachings of scripture, world evangelism, and church organization unite us in a bond
9 of Christian fellowship unequaled in our fragmented, fractured world.
10

11 Recognizing that at times we do and will have differences of understanding regarding
12 some aspects of Church policy, we affirm that anything that threatens the divinely ordained role
13 of Church organization poses a threat to the entire body of Christ and deters us from our God-
14 given mission. We stand united on the eternal truths of Christ's last-day message for our dying
15 planet and resolve to be ambassadors of unity in our collective spheres of influence.
16

17 We believe that the Christ-centered biblical truths that unite us through the ministry of
18 the Holy Spirit are greater than anything that divides us. Therefore, we resolve to encourage each
19 of the entities we represent and all members of the Church to join us in this commitment to a
20 unified Church organization and governance structure, each focused on reaching the world with
21 Christ's last-day message.
22

23 In the spirit of unity and common mission objectives of the Advent movement, please
24 note the following biblical and Spirit of Prophecy instructions:
25

26 a. "I do not pray for them alone, but also for those who will believe in Me
27 through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they
28 also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."—John 17:20-21 KJV
29

30 b. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the
31 calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering,
32 bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
33 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord,
34 one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you
35 all."—Eph 4:1-6 KJV
36

37 c. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own
38 understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do to be wise
39 in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil."—Prov 3:5-7 NKJV
40

41 d. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in
42 unity!"—Ps 133:1 KJV

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 13

1
2 e. “When a burden bearer desires wisdom more than he desires wealth,
3 power, or fame, he will not be disappointed. Such a one will learn from the Great Teacher not
4 only what to do, but how to do it in a way that will meet with the divine approval.”—PK 31
5

6 f. “Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will
7 know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive
8 not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as
9 Christ has promised.”—DA 668.
10

11 g. “In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as
12 watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world . .
13 . They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first,
14 second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to
15 allow nothing else to absorb their attention.”—9T 19
16

17 h. “Light was given by His Spirit that there must be order and thorough
18 discipline in the church—that organization was essential. System and order are manifest in all
19 the works of God throughout the universe. Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of
20 God’s people on earth. (TM 26).
21

22 “Unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they
23 have nothing to hope for in the future. (1T 270).
24

25 “Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this
26 people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the
27 greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the Word of
28 God! We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of
29 organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to
30 disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time.
31

32 “Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God
33 will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that
34 in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent. (9T 257, 258).
35

36 “As we near the final crisis, instead of feeling that there is less need of order and
37 harmony of action, we should be more systematic than heretofore. (3SM 26).
38

39 “God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be
40 justified in disregarding and despising, for in so doing he despises the voice of God. (3T 417).
41

116-17G PROCEDURES FOR RECONCILIATION AND ADHERENCE
IN CHURCH GOVERNANCE: PHASE II - 14

1 “God has bestowed the highest power under heaven upon His church. It is the voice of
2 God in His united people in church capacity which is to be respected. (3T 451).”—LDE 46-48
3

4 i. “I am instructed to say to Seventh-day Adventists the world over, God has
5 called us as a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. He has appointed that His church on
6 earth shall stand perfectly united in the Spirit and counsel of the Lord of hosts to the end of
7 time.”—2SM 397
8

9 Let us seek God in earnest prayer for the unity of the Church, for a unified Spirit-inspired
10 focus on mission and a continued cohesive Church structure that propels the Church forward to
11 proclaim Christ’s love, His salvation, and His Three Angels’ Messages. Let us call people
12 to focus on Christ, His righteousness, and the true worship of God. Let us pray that all that is
13 done will be according to heaven’s instruction and to the glory of God as we anticipate Christ’s
14 soon return.