

B

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

B 05 Organisational and Operational Principles of Seventh-day Adventist Church Structure

Organisational life and procedures in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are based upon the following principles:

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world-wide community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and who are united in mission, purpose, and belief. The Church defines its internal governance as representative in form with executive responsibility and authority assigned to a variety of entities and institutions and their respective constituencies, boards, and officers through constitutions or articles of incorporation, bylaws, and operating policies and guidelines.

2. The primary building blocks of global Seventh-day Adventist Church organisation are the local church, the local conference/mission, the union conference/mission, and the General Conference. (Further definition of these units is found in B 10, Outline and Definitions of Denominational Organisations). Each of the organisational units described above has a defined membership, also known as a constituency. Being part of a constituency carries the privilege of participation in the deliberations and decision-making of that particular organisational unit. Additional units of denominational structure, known as divisions, have been established as regional offices of the General Conference serving a defined geographical area. Therefore divisions are not considered as constituency-based organisations. Various institutions, authorised and established in harmony with General Conference and/or division policies also have defined constituencies. Institutions fulfil vital and specialised functions but are not considered as primary building blocks of denominational structure.

3. Organisational status is granted to a constituency as a trust. Official recognition as a local church, local conference/mission, or union conference/mission is not self-generated, automatic, or perpetual. It is the result of a formal decision by an executive committee or a constituency session at higher levels of denominational organisation. Organisational membership and status are entrusted to entities that meet certain qualifications including faithfulness to Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, compliance with denominational practices and policies, demonstration of adequate leadership and financial capacity, and responsiveness to mission challenges and opportunities. Membership and status can be reviewed, revised, amended, or withdrawn by the level of organisation that granted it.

4. Decision-making is based on group processes that allow for member participation. Each individual member of a local church has the right of voice and vote (unless under discipline) in the business decisions of the local church. At other constituency levels participation is accomplished through the selection of representatives. For example, representatives chosen by each local church

become delegates, authorised participants, in a local conference constituency meeting. Each unit of organisation follows a regular pattern of constituency meetings (also called “sessions”) to transact official business. These meetings are conducted within the terms of bylaws or operating policies applicable to the level and status of the organisation concerned. In a local church, the constituency or membership meeting is generally called a “church business meeting” and is conducted in harmony with the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. When the necessary quorum is present for a constituency/executive committee meeting, the opinion of the majority participating in a vote is regarded as the decision of the entire group unless bylaws or rules of order require approval by more than a simple majority.

5. The highest level of authority within the powers granted to each level of denominational organisation resides in the constituency meeting. Various officers may be elected and vested with a degree of authority but ultimately each officer is accountable to a group such as the executive committee. An executive committee, or board in the case of institutions, is entrusted, through policies or constitution and bylaws, with authority to govern between constituency meetings. However, the executive committee, or board in the case of institutions, is ultimately accountable to the constituency meeting of the organisation concerned.

6. Different elements of organisational authority and responsibility are distributed among the various levels of denominational organisation. For example, the decision as to who may/may not be a member of a local Seventh-day Adventist Church is entrusted to the members of the local church concerned; decisions as to the employment of local church pastors is entrusted to the local conference/mission; decisions regarding the ordination of ministers are entrusted to the union conference/mission; and the definition of denominational beliefs is entrusted to the General Conference in session. Thus each level of organisation exercises a realm of final authority and responsibility that may have implications for other levels of organisation. In a similar manner, each organisation is dependent to some extent on the realm of authority exercised by other levels of organisation. No church organisation or entity assumes responsibility for the liabilities, debts, acts, or omissions of any other church organisation simply because of its church affiliation.

7. Denominational entities may establish, in harmony with General Conference and/or division policies, affiliated organisations such as educational, healthcare, and publishing institutions, food industries, media centres, and radio and television stations, that are integral parts of the church’s Christian witness but each of which may operate with its own authority and responsibility under its own organisational documents, board of directors, and administrative officers in harmony with church working policies.

8. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has both a local and global identity. The local church is indeed a genuine expression of the Seventh-day Adventist Church but its identity cannot be fully defined or viewed in isolation from its relationships with other local churches and other levels of denominational

organisation. The local and global elements of Seventh-day Adventist identity are expressed in documents such as the *Church Manual* and General Conference *Working Policy* that reflect aspects of self-governance and inter-relationship. The *Church Manual* and the General Conference *Working Policy* present the collective voice of Seventh-day Adventists regarding beliefs, denominational structure, relationships, and operational procedures.

9. References in the Trans-European Division *Working Policy* to higher level, higher organisation, lower level, lower organisation, or similar terms referring to Church structure, or references to levels of the Church are for descriptive purposes and are not meant to define a legal relationship or create liability unless otherwise specifically stated.

B 10 Outline of Denominational Organisation

B 10 02 Nomenclature and Status of Organisational Units—The global structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church includes layers of organisations which serve successively greater geographic territory. These include: the local church, the local conference/mission, the union conference/mission, and the General Conference and its divisions. (See B 05, paragraph 2. for further explanation of divisions).

It may be necessary, from time to time in the establishment of a Seventh-day Adventist presence in new territory, to form organisational units that are not constituency-based. Examples of such are: Companies of members and clusters of churches within a relatively small geographic area that are administered directly by a union conference/mission rather than by a local conference/mission. Such arrangements are generally transition stages towards becoming a local church (in the case of companies) or a local conference/mission (in the case of groups of churches directly administered by a union conference/mission).

One of two classifications, mission status or conference status, may be granted to certain levels of denominational organisation. In denominational structure, the family of local churches may be classified as a local mission, local conference, or union of churches with conference or mission status. In similar fashion, the family of local missions/conferences may be classified as a union mission or a union conference.

Mission status entitles an organisation to identify itself as an official part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In addition, mission status indicates that an organisation may receive direct support (financial and/or administrative) from the next higher level of organisation. The officers of an organisation having mission status are appointed by the next higher level of organisation; in the case of local missions, by the union in session or by the union executive committee between sessions; and in the case of union missions, by the division executive committee. Organisations with mission status conduct constituency meetings in harmony with operating policies (based on model documents in General Conference *Working Policy*) for the level of organisation concerned.

When an organisation having mission status is considered by higher levels of organisation to have demonstrated its capacity for greater responsibility and

participation in the global life of the Church (see B 65 15 and B 75 10), conference status may be granted. Conference status entitles the organisation to identify itself as an official part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also represents the highest level of self-governance available to an organisation. Accordingly, the officers of organisations having conference status are elected by the constituency session or executive committee of that organisation. Organisations with conference status have constitutions and bylaws (based on model documents in General Conference *Working Policy*) that serve as governing documents for constituency meetings.

B 10 05 Local Church—A group of Seventh-day Adventist members in a defined location that has been organised in harmony with the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Newly organised local churches are accepted into the sisterhood of churches by formal action of the next constituency session of the local conference/mission or union of churches concerned.

B 10 10 Local Conference/Mission/Field—A group of local churches, within a defined geographic area, that has been organised in harmony with General Conference and division *working policy* and granted, by action of a division executive committee at mid-year, year-end, or division council meeting, official status as a Seventh-Day Adventist local conference/mission/field. Newly organised local conferences/missions are accepted into the sisterhood of local conferences/missions by formal action of the next constituency session of the union concerned.

B 10 15 Union Conference/Mission—A group of local conferences/missions/fields, within a defined geographic area, that has been organised in harmony with General Conference policy and granted, by action of the General Conference Executive Committee, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist union conference/mission. Newly organised unions are accepted into the sisterhood of unions by formal action at the next General Conference Session.

B 10 17 Union of Churches—A group of local churches, within a defined geographical area, that has been organised in harmony with General Conference policy and granted, by action of the General Conference Executive Committee, official status as a Seventh-day Adventist union of churches. Newly organised unions of churches are accepted into the sisterhood of unions by formal action at the next General Conference Session.

B 10 20 General Conference—1. General Conference—The world-wide family of all unions along with conferences/fields/missions directly attached to the General Conference and all General Conference institutions. It serves as the global voice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The General Conference acts through its constituency sessions, the General Conference Executive Committee, and personnel elected for specific leadership responsibilities.

2. Divisions—To facilitate its world-wide activity, the General Conference has established regional offices, known as divisions of the General Conference, which have been assigned, by action of the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Councils, general administrative and supervisory

responsibilities for designated groups of unions and other church units within specific geographic areas. (See C 05, Division Territories. The division executive committee acts for the General Conference Executive Committee in the territory of the respective division.) After administrative consultation with the units directly affected, the General Conference Executive Committee may:

- a. Reconfigure division territories and/or establish new divisions
- b. Determine the location or relocation of a division office.

When such decisions are made, the General Conference Executive Committee shall also approve the financial plan, including acquisition, division, or disposal of assets involved in the reconfiguration of division territories or the establishment or relocation of a division office. In situations where geopolitical circumstances inhibit a division committee's supervisory role in part of the division territory, the division committee may request from the General Conference Administrative Committee an appropriate arrangement to address the situation.

3. *Additional Organisations*—The General Conference is authorised by its Constitution to create additional organisations to promote specific interests in various sections of the world.

B 10 22 General Conference Authority and Settlement of Differences Between Organisations—All organisations and institutions throughout the world will recognise the authority of the General Conference Session as the highest authority of the Seventh-day Adventist Church under God. When differences arise in or between organisations and institutions on matters not already addressed in the Constitution and Bylaws, in the General Conference *Working Policy*, or in the General Conference Executive Committee actions at an Annual Council, it is proper to appeal to the next higher organisation not directly involved in the matter. The decision of the organisation to which the matter was referred shall be final unless that organisation itself chooses to refer the matter with comment or recommendation to a division or General Conference Executive Committee/General Conference Session. During the interim between these Sessions, the General Conference Executive Committee at Annual Council shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint has been referred. Its decisions shall control on such controverted points, but at the request of the division executive committee concerned such a decision may be reviewed at a General Conference Session. (See also B 40 10). When organisations review decisions of other organisations, they do not assume responsibility for the liabilities of any other organisation.

B 10 25 Structural Stability—Local churches, local conferences/missions/fields, union conferences/missions, unions of churches, and institutions are, by vote of the appropriate constituency, and by actions of properly authorised executive committees, a part of the world-wide organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Whereas each has accepted the privilege and responsibility of representing the Church in its part of the world, each is therefore required to operate and minister in harmony with the teachings and policies of the Church, and the actions of the world Church in the General

Conference Executive Committee or in General Conference Session. While individual units of the Church are given freedom to function in ways appropriate to their role and culture, no part of the world-wide organisation of the Church has a unilateral right to secede.

B 10 27 Structural Flexibility—Flexibility in Seventh-day Adventist organisational structure is the application to new or existing organisational structures of specific alternative organisational patterns and procedural principles in light of prevailing circumstances and environments within the territory of a division of the General Conference. The application of such patterns and principles, after appropriate approvals, may result in:

1. Modification of structural design at units of organisation between the local church and the General Conference/division as compared with the historical pattern of local conference/local mission, union conference/ union mission organisations, and unions of churches;

2. Modification of staffing patterns (as compared to historical practice at local conferences/local missions, union conferences/union missions, and unions of churches) at units of organisation between the local church and the General Conference/division;

3. Realignment of how services are provided between the various existing or new organisations;

4. Establishment of new regional structures as a result of the consolidation of existing organisational units, the reclassification of entities or the reduction of constituency-based units of organisation.

Decisions to implement flexibility in organisational structures, staffing, procedures and relationships shall preserve dynamic and formal linkage to the world church and sister organisations in harmony with denominational policies. Accordingly, such decisions will involve consultation with organisations affected by proposed restructuring. Policies define the various approval processes that apply to organisational changes. Flexibility in organisational structure does not mean that the design of organisational structure or staffing is self-determined or that an infinite number of alternatives is available.

B 10 28 Alternatives in Organisational Structure—Denominational structure in one geographic area may illustrate one model while organisation in an adjacent territory may reflect another of the available models. The following range of organisational models for denominational structures may co-exist within a division territory.

1. **Four Constituency-based Units Model**—This model has four constituency-based units of organisation: local church, local conference/mission, union conference/mission, General Conference. In this model, the local conference/mission, union conference/mission, and General Conference have similar staffing patterns. Its widespread use makes this the standard model of structure. However, the four constituency-based units model should not automatically be considered as preferred above others.

2. **Complementary Staffing Model**—This model retains the four constituency-based units of organisation. It is different from the four

constituency-based units model in that the staffing pattern at local mission/conference does not parallel that of the union mission/conference. Each organisation in this model has a multiple officer leadership team (typically three officers). Department directors may be located at either or both the local mission/conference and the union mission/conference. However, a department director at the local mission/conference may not have a full-time counterpart at the union. Similarly, the union department director may not have a counterpart at the local conference/mission. The department staffing pattern at both local and union organisations serves to complement (complete rather than duplicate) the range of services required in the territory.

3. **Shared Administration and/or Administrative Services Model**—This model introduces differentiation from the four constituency-based units model in the staffing of administration. At the local mission/conference there may be only one full-time officer, the president. The union treasurer/chief financial officer may serve simultaneously as the local mission/conference treasurer/chief financial officer in such situations. Unless someone is elected to serve as the secretary this role may be assigned by election to either the president or the treasurer/chief financial officer. Department staffing in this model may be configured as in #2 above. The result is that the local mission/conference has fewer employees in administration since officers of the union mission/conference also hold administrative assignments in the local mission/conference and/or care for certain administrative services.

4. **Three Constituency-based Units Model**—This model has three constituency-based units of organisation (local church, union of churches conference/mission, General Conference) compared to four in the four constituency-based units model. In this model the regional unit of organisation is identified as a “union of churches.”

5. **Three Constituency-based Units Model with Delegated Roles to District Leaders**—This model continues the three constituency-based model described above. It differs from the previous model in that a non-constituency-based coordinating function is inserted for a group or district of local churches. The role of the district director (in some places designated as a field secretary) is advisory and consultative rather than administrative. The district director serves as a representative of administration. This person may also have some departmental leadership functions assigned by the regional organisation.

6. **Special Alternative Organisations**—The General Conference Executive Committee has adopted guidelines for establishing alternative structures to initiate Seventh-day Adventist mission in areas where traditional church structures are not present and/or not permitted.

B 10 30 Variations in Administrative Relationships—1. For the purpose of fulfilling the mission of the Church, division administrations are authorised to recommend modified organisational structures and/or administrative relationships in situations which do not involve the resizing of unions, as outlined below in paragraphs a. through c., or to experiment with further modifications in territories where unusual economic, political, geographic,

religious, or demographic circumstances, or strategic purposes make normal church organisational and administrative structures impractical or inefficient. In all cases where alternative arrangements are implemented, the inter-related constituent levels of Church organisation, as more fully described in the General Conference *Working Policy*, shall be maintained, and the following fundamental principles for Seventh-day Adventist organisational structure and relationships shall be preserved:

a. All basic administrative units shall have a defined membership and a regular pattern of membership/constituency sessions.

b. All administrative relationships shall be clearly defined (responsibility is ultimately held by an elected/appointed officer[s] who is accountable to an executive committee).

c. Constitutions and bylaws may be amended to provide for alternative administrative arrangements and the process by which such arrangements are continued or suspended.

2. Innovations in organisational structure and administrative relationships must be approved by the respective division committees and the General Conference Executive Committee and will be reviewed periodically by division administrations to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each arrangement. Division committees may grant constituencies the option to continue or discontinue the alternative administrative arrangements.

B 15 General Conference *Working Policy*

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

The Division *Working Policy* does not supersede the General Conference *Working Policy*, but provides specific applications and addresses specific needs in the territories of the Division.

B 15 10 Adherence to Policy Required—1. The General Conference *Working Policy* shall be strictly adhered to by all organisations in every part of the world field. The work in every organisation of the Division shall be administered in full harmony with the policies of the General Conference and the Division. No departure from these policies shall be made without prior approval from the General Conference and/or Division Executive Committees, except as stated below. The Division Executive Committee is the authorised body which acts for the General Conference Executive Committee. All conference, mission, or institutional administrators shall co-operate in maintaining these policies as they affect the work in their respective organisations. Only thus can a spirit of close co-operation and unity be maintained in the work of the Church in all parts of the world field. In the event that laws/changes in the laws governing a country

seem to render compliance with denominational policies a violation of the law, the organisation shall act in harmony with the law, provided the following:

a. Counsel has been sought from the General Conference officers (president, secretary, and treasurer/chief financial officer) and it is established that denominational policies do indeed violate the law.

b. Compliance with the law does not constitute a violation of scriptural principles.

2. General Conference institutions shall adhere to the remuneration policies of the host division (Y 05 05, paragraph 6.) with any exceptions approved by the General Conference Executive Committee at a Spring Meeting or by an Annual Council. For all other policies, the General Conference *Working Policy* shall apply except where the General Conference Executive Committee votes that the host division policies shall be followed.

B 15 15 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.

B 15 20 Definition of Election and Appointment—1. *Election*—Unless otherwise specified in the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, an individual shall be said to have been elected, when the process by which that individual was chosen involved a decision by the constituency of the organisation to be served as set out within the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws and the General Conference *Working Policy*. The General Conference Executive Committee acts for the constituency in filling vacant elective positions between sessions of the constituency. Election is subject to the individual's acceptance of the position and ability to meet, within a reasonable time, any requirements for relocation to fulfil the duties of the position. The General Conference Executive Committee shall determine what is a reasonable time.

2. *Appointment*—An individual shall be said to have been appointed when the process by which that individual was chosen involved a decision by an administrative body other than the constituency to be served, except as provided in paragraph 1. above.

B 20 General Conference Sessions

B 20 05 Delegates—General Conference Sessions are made up of delegates duly appointed in harmony with the General Conference Constitution. Such delegates are vested with authority to participate in, and vote on, all questions coming before the General Conference Session, to elect officers and to have voice and vote in all the affairs of the session.

B 20 10 Nominating Committee—Procedural Guidelines—1. The president of each division is the executive officer placed in general administrative oversight of all activities in the division. As a vice president of the

General Conference he is an officer of the General Conference responsible to that body for administration of the work in harmony with General Conference policies. Because he stands in this special and constitutional relationship, the General Conference has a major interest in the nomination of the division president.

2. In order to ensure proper representation of the interest of the General Conference in the nomination of such a vice president as well as that of the division to which he will be assigned, the following shall be the procedure: Under the chair of the newly elected General Conference president or his designee, the members of the session Nominating Committee from each division shall suggest a mutually agreed upon name to the Nominating Committee for nomination in plenary session.

3. The division presidents shall be among the first nominated after the President, Secretary and Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer of the General Conference.

4. With the General Conference president or his designee as chair and with the counsel of the newly-elected division president, the members of the Session Nominating Committee from each division shall recommend personnel to the Session Nominating Committee for the positions of secretary and treasurer/chief financial officer on the division staff. The final decision regarding the nomination of such personnel rests with the Session Nominating committee. The newly-elected division president will also meet with the Session Nominating Committee for counsel when recommendations regarding that division are being considered.

B 20 15 Election/Appointment of Division Officers and Staff—The election of a president, secretary, and treasurer/chief financial officer for each division shall be by the General Conference in regular session. However, the General Conference has delegated to each division executive committee the authority to appoint associate officers, field secretaries, and departmental directors/secretaries and associates to serve within its territory. The Division Executive Committee may appoint its own nominating committee to operate under the chair of the Division president for this purpose. Persons holding positions which are to be filled by this process shall not be eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee. Elections/Appointments by the Division do not require General Conference Executive Committee approval. The Division procedures for electing/appointing associate/assistant officers and departmental directors are:

1. Following the election of the Division officers, the ex officio members of the Division Executive Committee shall be expanded to include all the delegates of the Division.

2. The expanded Division Executive Committee shall choose from its number, a nominating committee.

3. The Nominating Committee shall report its recommendations to the expanded Division Executive Committee for appointment.

The election of lay and other members of the Executive Committee will take place at the first regular meeting of the Division Executive Committee after a GC session and shall follow the procedure as outlined below:

1. In order to facilitate the election of the lay and other members of the Executive Committee, each union conference, union mission and union of churches is to provide the Division President at least one month prior to this election with at least two but no more than five names of suitable candidates from their respective field.

2. The Nominating Committee shall recommend and the Executive Committee shall elect the lay and other members to serve on the Executive Committee of the Division.

B 25 Election of Retirees to Elective Offices

Persons who have retired from denominational service ordinarily shall not be elected to serve in officer or departmental leadership positions since these roles involve full-time responsibilities. In the event that a denominational retirement beneficiary is elected to an officer or department director role, this person shall be remunerated according to the regular wage and benefit provisions of the entity concerned. Denominational retirement plan policies for the person and entities concerned shall address, in conformity with legal requirements, the retirement plan's responsibilities for beneficiaries who re-enter denominational employment.

B 40 Administrative Relationships

B 40 05 General Conference Constitution Expresses Unity of Church—

As the Scriptures represent the church of Christ as one body, all the parts members one of another, so our Constitution, adopted by the representatives of the world-wide sisterhood of churches, seeks to express the unity and oneness in mission, purpose, and belief of all organisations that make up the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the one undivided remnant church of God.

B 40 10 Representative Character of Church Organisation—The truly representative character of our organisation is thus set forth in the *Testimonies*: “Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences; and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement, every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities of the General Conference.”—Vol 8, pp 236, 237.

B 40 15 Unions United in General Conference—As the churches unite in the local, mission, conference or union of churches for mutual help and co-operation in service, so the conferences/missions/fields grouped together unite in the union conference or union mission. In like manner the unions, unions of

churches and entities directly attached to the General Conference in all the world are united in the General Conference organisation. For the more efficient administration of the world-wide work, the organised unions, unions of churches, and any mission fields not included in the unions in great continental or geographical sections are set apart by constitutional provision as divisions of the General Conference.

B 40 20 Divisions a Part of General Conference—The larger and more extensive the work of these divisions, and the less dependent any may become upon help from other divisions in the way of personnel or material support, the greater the necessity of holding closely together in mutual counsel and fellowship. It is ever to be held in mind that each division is a part of the General Conference. In the church of Christ, which is His body, there can be no such thing as one part or member independent of the whole. No division, therefore, is free to pursue a course of action contrary to the will of the whole, or to appropriate to itself the authority of the General Conference in defense of such action. Between sessions of the General Conference, the General Conference Executive Committee is constitutionally the final authority throughout the world field.

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

B 40 30 Division President—Duties and Relationships—The President of the Division is the first officer placed in general administrative oversight of all activities in the Division. As a vice president of the General Conference he is an officer of the General Conference, responsible to that body for administration of the work according to plans and programmes voted by the General Conference Session and/or the General Conference Executive Committee and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the Executive Committee of the Division, of which he is chair. It is his duty to stand as counselor to the officers of unions or attached missions/local fields, as well as to those in charge of Division departments and institutions.

B 40 35 Division Secretary and Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer—Duties and Relationships—Associated with the President as executive officers are the Secretary and the Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer. It is the duty of these officers to carry forward the work according to plans and programmes voted by the General Conference Session, and/or the General Conference Executive Committee and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the Division Executive Committee. The Secretary and Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer shall report to the Executive Committee after consultation with the President. The Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer shall be held responsible for the accounting system of the division, so that statements of receipts and disbursements may be supplied monthly to the President's office.

B 40 40 Division Departmental and Association Directors/ Secretaries—Duties and Relationships—Departmental and association directors/secretaries shall assist the executive officers of the Division in the leadership and nurture of the church, by promoting plans and programmes developed in co-ordination with their General Conference counterparts, and by facilitating the involvement of the membership in the mission of the Church. This will be accomplished through the production of resources, through promotion, co-ordination, and training. Departmental plans and programmes shall be developed and co-ordinated by the departments under the direction of an administrative officer, be processed through administration, and receive Executive Committee approval, whenever deemed advisable, before implementation and promotion in the field.

B 40 45 Departmental Staffing at Different Organisational Levels—All departments shall be represented at the General Conference and its divisions, but not all departments will necessarily be needed at all other levels. Careful attention should be given to avoiding the overlapping of functions at various levels. Division administrations shall consult with the General Conference departments and with unions and conferences/ missions to determine what their needs are, and what denominational levels are best suited for the production of resources and for the promotion of departmental programmes. If unions wish to vary staffing at union and/or conference/mission/field levels, they shall consult with the division and with the conferences/mission/fields to determine the most effective arrangement. Recommendations for variations in staffing shall be referred to constituency meetings, or the executive committees if so authorised, for consideration and decisions. In such planning the channel for transfer of information and materials from one staffed level to the next shall be clearly defined and provided. If it is determined that a service will not be provided at a particular level, it will be implied in that decision that authority is granted to the next higher organisational level to deal directly with the organisation to be served.

B 40 50 Departmental Relationships—Union and Local—The principle laid down in B 40 40 as obtaining in General Conference and division relationships applies also to union or local organisations, care being necessary to ensure that all launching of plans shall be based upon action of the executive committee, the executive officers being acquainted with departmental plans and methods of promotion. Thus in every organisation all departments will be able to co-operate with one another in field promotion.

B 40 55 Division Committee—General Conference Executive Committee for Division—The executive committee of each division shall function on behalf of the General Conference Executive Committee in the division, and its authority shall be recognised by union and local organisations in matters of division administration and counsel.

B 40 60 Attached Unions and Conferences—For union or local fields which, because of war emergency or other special reasons, are not included in any division, the General Conference Executive Committee serves as division committee in all matters of division administration and counsel.

B 40 65 Attached Local Fields—1. *Criteria*—When a local conference/mission/field cannot be conveniently included in an existing union organisation, due to special circumstances, it shall be attached directly to a division organisation and classed as an attached local field.

2. *Special Provisions/Procedures*—The election of officers, the representation on the Division Committee, the delegates to the General Conference Session, and the tithe percentage remittances of an attached local field shall be governed by the following special provisions/ procedures:

a. *Election of Officers*—Officers and departmental directors of an attached local field (conference/mission) shall be elected in the same way as for a local conference/mission/field, with the division organisation taking the place of the union organisation in such elections.

b. *Representation on the Division Committee*—The president of the attached local field (conference/mission) shall be a member of the Division Committee.

c. *Delegates to General Conference Sessions*—Representation at General Conference Sessions for fields attached directly to the division shall be in harmony with the constitutional provision.

d. *Tithe Percentages*—1) Attached local fields shall pass on to the division organisation 10 percent of their tithe receipts, tithe sharing percentages, all mission offerings, and such other funds as may be called for by the policies of the division organisation.

2) Union organisations consisting of only one local conference/mission/field which have not been passing on 10 percent of their tithe receipts to the division shall be required to follow the regular policy. Because this may require some financial adjustments, it may be taken into account by the division in the making of the yearly appropriations.

B 45 Personal Relations and Organisational Authority

B 45 05 Unity in Work—It is fundamental that employees counsel together as to plans and policies of work in all organisations, the consensus, or majority conviction, being accepted as the general working plan. Unity in effort is more essential and fruitful in soul winning than exact perfection in plans.

B 45 10 Grievance Procedure and Jurisdiction—Each union shall develop appropriate conciliation and dispute resolution procedures, which take into account legal requirements and principles of fairness, for the use of denominational organisations and employees within its territory.

Following the *Church Manual* and established policies, the Division recognises that each level of the church's organisation has its own distinct jurisdiction when disputes arise.

1. The local church has jurisdiction in disputes between its lay members. Disputes that affect the employment of members hired by the conference, the conference institution, or the division to serve the local church are in the jurisdiction of the hiring body.

2. The Local Conference/mission has jurisdiction in disputes between:
 - a. Local conference employees and the congregation.
 - b. Conference institution employees and the institution.
 - c. Lay members and the local conference.
 - d. Local church employees, local conference employees, local conference institution employees, and the local conference.
 - e. Local conference churches, organisations, and/or institutions.
 - f. Congregations split within the conference.
3. The Union Conference has jurisdiction in disputes between:
 - a. Intra-union conference employees (includes employees of local conference churches, organisations, and institutions) and/or union employees.
 - b. Local union employees and the union.
 - c. Union institution employees and the institution.
 - d. Lay members or local churches and the union conference.
 - e. Local conference employees, conference institutional employees, union conference institution employees, and the union conference.
 - f. Intra-union organisations, union institutions, and/or local conferences within the union.
4. The Division has jurisdiction in disputes between:
 - a. Inter-union denominational employees, division employees, and/or employees of division institutions.
 - b. Division institution employees and the union conference.
 - c. Division employees and the division (through the Office of Human Relations rather than administration).
 - d. Lay members and the division.
 - e. Local and union conference institutions or division institution employees and the division.
 - f. Any two denominational organisations within the division which do not come under the jurisdiction of a single union conference.
 - g. Any denominational organisation within the division and the division.

It is the expectation of the Division that all grievances are resolved at the level where they arose. All unions and attached fields are expected to set up procedures to deal with conflicts and grievances, in harmony with Biblical principles, church policy and national laws, with due consideration for cultural aspects. These procedures should include an informal phase, but should also offer formal arbitration, when informal attempts at resolving the difficulty do not succeed.

Involvement of the Division. The Trans-European Division will at all times recognise the jurisdiction of the various levels of the church's organisation.

Unions and attached fields may, however, seek counsel from the Division administration when faced with conflicts or grievances.

An individual who feels that his/her complaint against any church organisation has not been dealt with fairly by the organisation concerned, and

that all levels (up to and including that of the union) have failed to do them justice, may contact the secretary of the Appeals Committee of the Division. The Appeals Committee (consisting of one division officer, one other elected division leader and one lay person) will establish whether the lower church organisations have followed proper process, in harmony with the grievance procedures established by the organisations concerned. If no such grievance procedures have been established, then the Appeals Committee will assess whether Biblical principles, church policies and legal procedures have been adequately followed, and will advise the individuals and organisations concerned of its findings. If proper procedures have not been followed, the Division will insist that the organisations concerned reconsider the case.

In rare cases, when everything else fails, the Division is willing to provide binding arbitration to resolve a conflict that has occurred at a lower organisational level. The arbitration team will consist of the following: Two members of the Appeals Committee and one member to be named by each of the parties involved in the dispute (whether individuals or organisations). The following conditions will apply:

1. Arbitration will only be considered if the union in which the conflict has arisen has not been able to resolve the matter.
2. Arbitration will only take place if the parties concerned are willing to accept binding arbitration.
3. The parties involved in the dispute and the TED must reach an agreement when and where the arbitration is to take place and how costs (i.e. for travel) are to be met.
4. The parties concerned must withdraw any pending lawsuits and agree that they will not institute a lawsuit against each other.

It must be recognised that certain cases may not lend themselves to this form of arbitration, such as:

1. Settlement of insurance or self-insurance claims
2. Marital differences or matters concerning the custody of children
3. Matters involving the administration of estates
4. Some matters involving ownership of real estate, or the establishment of boundaries, etc.
5. Debt collection matters
6. Issues where government agencies, or law enforcement agencies are involved
7. Specific theological questions.

B 45 15 Adjustment of Personal Differences—Persons accepting employment in any branch of the work of the denomination thereby indicate their willingness to support the purposes and policies of their employing organisation and, should the need arise, to use Biblical principles in conciliation and dispute resolution procedures.

B 45 20 Definition of Phrase “For Cause”—The phrase “for cause” when used in connection with removal from an elected or appointed position, shall

include but not be limited to misdeeds, incompetence, incompatibility or lack of team work by an elected/appointed person.

B 45 25 Adjustments of Differences—Divisions and General Conference—If any adjustment is needed regarding differences of opinion arising between the division committee and the General Conference Executive Committee or the General Conference Administrative Committee, the matter shall be referred to the next Annual Council.

B 45 30 Appeals—The Seventh-day Adventist Church makes provision that every agency in the work, from the individual in the remotest station to the responsible committees at every stage of the organisation, is assured full privilege, without prejudice, of representing opinion and conviction, and asking consideration and counsel in matters affecting life and service.

B 50 Relationships Between Organisations

B 50 05 Lines of Responsibility—1. *Local Conferences/Missions/Fields*—Local conferences/missions are responsible to the union conference/mission organisation of which they are a part, and are administered in harmony with the policies which govern the union.

2. *Union Conferences/Missions*—Union conferences/missions are responsible to the respective division section of which they are a part, and are administered in harmony with the operating policies of the General Conference and of the division.

3. *Institutions*—Institutions established by church organisations operate with authority and responsibility under their organisational documents, boards of directors, and administrative officers in harmony with church working policies.

B 50 10 Churches and Local Conference/Mission/Field/Union of Churches Sessions—Churches belong to a sisterhood of churches that forms the constituency of a local conference/mission/field/union of churches. The churches appoint delegates who are duly authorised to represent them at constituency sessions of the local conference/mission/field/union of churches. The constituency in session, in units with conference status, elects officers, grants credentials and licences, adopts or changes the constitution and bylaws, and transacts other business. One of its most important acts is the election of the executive committee, whose duty it is to function for the constituency during the interim between sessions. The executive committee is thus vested with the delegated authority of all the churches within the conference/mission/field/union of churches. The constituency meeting of a unit with mission status does not elect officers. (See B 50 12). Further, such constituency sessions are conducted under a set of operating policies rather than under a constitution and bylaws.

B 50 12 Appointment/Election of Officers and Staff in Local Mission/Field—The appointment of officers of local missions/fields shall be by the union at a regular session. However, a local mission/field is authorised to elect or appoint all other employees of the local mission/field in harmony with the union policies and within the limits of the budget provided. The union committee shall appoint leadership to fill all vacancies that may occur between

regular sessions by death, resignation, or otherwise, in the offices of president, secretary, or treasurer/chief financial officer of any local mission in its territory.

B 50 15 Local Conferences/Missions/Fields and Union Sessions—A union session is made up of delegates duly appointed by the various local conferences/missions/fields within its territory to represent them in the session. The delegates are vested by the conferences/missions/fields with delegated authority to participate in, and vote on, all questions coming before the session. The united authority of the various conferences/mission/fields is thus combined in the union organisation, which is administered during the interim between sessions by its officers and executive committee in harmony with the relevant constitution and bylaws or operating policy.

B 50 25 Appointment/Election of Officers and Staff in Union Mission/Union of Churches with Mission Status—The appointment of union mission/union of churches with mission status president, secretary, and treasurer/chief financial officer shall be by the division committee/division council and shall not be delegated to the union. However, a union mission/union of churches with mission status is authorised to elect or appoint all other employees of the union in harmony with division policies and within the limits of the budget provided. The division committee shall fill all vacancies that may occur between quinquennial meetings by death, resignation, or otherwise, in the offices of president, secretary, or treasurer/chief financial officer of any union mission/union of churches with mission status in its territory.

B 55 Responsibility and Relationship of Officers

B 55 05 Union Conference/Mission Officers—In order to preserve the unity of the world-wide work, administrators in union conferences and union missions are expected to maintain close counsel with their respective division offices. Conference and mission organisations which, during emergency conditions, may be temporarily detached from division organisations shall maintain close counsel directly with the General Conference.

B 55 10 Union Mission President—The union mission president appointed by the division is a member of the division committee, and is the division representative in the conduct of the work in the union to which he has been appointed. He shall, together with the union committee, supervise and carry forward the work in the union.

B 55 15 Local Mission/Field President—The local mission/field president appointed by the union is a member of the union committee and is the union representative in the conduct of the work in the local mission/field to which he has been appointed. He shall, with the local mission/field committee, supervise and carry forward the work in the local mission/field.

B 55 20 Newly Elected Officers of Conferences/Missions/Fields to Receive Training—Union conferences/missions shall be responsible to arrange for appropriate executive training for newly elected officers of conferences/missions/fields.

B 55 25 Committee Membership of Officers—1. *Members Ex Officio of Lower Organisations*—The officers of higher organisations are members ex officio of the executive committees of lower organisations. Any such officers may attend executive committee meetings of the lower organisations; however, those exercising their voting rights at any one meeting shall not make up more than ten percent of the committee membership present. A spirit of close co-operation shall always be maintained between the lower and the higher organisations, and officers of the lower organisations shall secure counsel from the officers of the higher organisation on all major matters and policies affecting the work of their respective fields.

2. *General Conference and Division Committee Membership*—Each division committee is a section of the General Conference Executive Committee; therefore, any members of the General Conference Executive Committee who are available are members of any division committee.

B 60 Establishing New Constituency-based Organisational Units

New constituency-based organisational units may be established in harmony with procedures outlined below and in compliance with provisions of applicable bylaws and policies.

B 60 10 Organising New Local Churches—New local churches shall be organised according to procedures outlined in the *Church Manual*.

B 65 Organising New Missions/Conferences/Unions

B 65 05 Responsibility of Administrative Committees—1. The process of organising new missions/conferences/unions, in each case, is an administrative responsibility of the next higher organisation, and great care should be exercised to ensure fiscal and pastoral responsibility and accountability.

2. In order to assist administrations in the process of organising new missions/conferences/unions thorough study by a committee of experienced individuals shall assess the proposed entity's readiness for the denominational responsibilities of maintaining the Seventh-day Adventist faith and values, nurturing believers, furthering the Church's mission, demonstrating and developing leadership capacity, and fulfilling all financial obligations to the denomination while remaining fiscally viable. The majority of members on such committees, appointed as outlined below, shall consist of persons from higher levels of denominational organisation and from others not employed by the entity being assessed.

B 65 10 Organising New Local Missions—1. If it is proposed to organise a new local mission, the proposal shall be considered by the respective union executive committee at a time when a full representation of the conferences/missions and institutions in the union is present. Proposals to

organise groups of churches into new missions may be initiated by the conference/mission, by a group of churches, by the union, or by the division.

2. If the union committee favours the proposal, and the churches to be formed into a new mission are part of an existing conference, the union shall request the conference to call a constituency meeting to consider the proposal. In the event of a positive action by the constituency, or where the churches involved are a part of an existing mission, the decision shall be conveyed to the division.

3. The division committee shall appoint a survey team to evaluate the proposal. The report and recommendation of the survey team will be submitted to the division executive committee.

4. The final division executive committee decision shall be made at its mid-year or year-end meeting, or at a division council.

5. If the division executive committee approves the proposal, the union executive committee shall prepare an operating policy for the mission patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working policies. The union executive committee shall also appoint the officers of the new mission.

6. The union shall call a constituency meeting of the new organisation as soon as possible in order to organise the mission. At this meeting, departmental directors and the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the mission operating policy.

7. The new mission shall be presented at the next union constituency meeting for acceptance into the sisterhood of missions/conferences.

B 65 15 Organising New Local Conferences—(See B 75 05 Criteria for Conference Status)—1. If it is proposed to organise a new conference from an existing mission or from within the territory of an existing conference, the proposal shall be considered by the respective union executive committee, at a time when a full representation of the conferences/missions, and institutions in the union is present. Proposals to organise groups of churches into new conferences may be initiated by the executive committee or constituency session of the currently existing mission or conference, by a group of churches, by the union, or by the division.

2. If the union executive committee favours the proposal, it shall request the local conference/mission executive committee to consider the proposal if it has not already done so. In the event of a positive decision by the local conference/mission executive committee, the union shall appoint a study committee (see B 65 05, paragraph 2. above) to assess the readiness for conference status of organisations involved in the proposal.

3. The study committee, in addition to its assessment role, or a team appointed by the union executive committee, including division and union personnel, shall conduct area meetings in the territory of the new organisation to educate the constituency regarding the process of attaining conference status. In areas where it is considered helpful, a conference status candidacy period may be required.

4. When the union is satisfied that the proposed organisation is ready for conference status, the union executive committee shall call a constituency

meeting of the current conference/mission to consider the report and recommendations of the study committee. In the event of an action by the constituency in favour of proceeding with the organisation of a new conference, the union shall submit a request to the division for an on-site evaluation of the proposed new conference.

5. A survey team appointed by the division executive committee, comprised of union and division personnel, shall make an on-site evaluation. If the survey team is satisfied that the request is appropriate, it shall recommend conference status for the new organisation to the division executive committee. In the event the organisation is not ready for conference status at the time of the division's evaluation, recommendations will be made and, after a suitable passage of time, a further evaluation conducted.

6. Upon the recommendation of the survey team, the division council or the division executive committee at its mid-year or year-end meeting shall determine whether or not to grant conference status.

7. Upon the approval of the division executive committee, the union shall call a constituency meeting of the new organisation as soon as possible in order to organise the conference. At this meeting, a conference constitution and bylaws patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working policies shall be adopted. Officers, departmental directors/secretaries, and the members of the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the newly adopted constitution.

8. When a new conference has been organised, it shall be received into the sisterhood of conferences at the next union constituency meeting, and recorded at the next mid-year or year-end meeting of the division executive committee or at a division council.

B 65 20 Organising New Union Missions—1. If it is proposed to organise a new union mission, the division officers shall initiate a preliminary consultation with General Conference officers to assess the general merit and implications of such a proposal. If such a consultation results in a decision to study the matter further, the proposal shall be considered by the respective division executive committee at its mid-year or year-end meeting, or at a division council. Proposals to organise groups of missions/ conferences into new union missions may be initiated by the union, by a group of missions/conferences, by the division, or by the General Conference.

2. If the division executive committee favours the proposal, and the local conferences/missions to be formed into a new union mission are part of an existing union conference, the division shall request the union to call a union constituency meeting to consider the proposal. In the event of a positive action by the constituency, or where the organisations involved are a part of an existing union mission, the division shall request the General Conference to appoint a survey team, including General Conference and division representation, to consider the merits of the proposal.

3. The survey team, after its investigation, shall report its findings to the General Conference and division executive committees.

4. If, after considering the findings of the survey team, the division chooses to proceed with organising the new union mission, it shall record an action to this effect at its mid-year or year-end meeting or division council, and forward its recommendation to the General Conference Executive Committee for consideration.

5. The General Conference Executive Committee shall consider the report of the survey team and the recommendation of the division and shall take the appropriate action.

6. If the General Conference Executive Committee approves the recommendation, the division executive committee shall prepare an operating policy for the union mission patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working policies. The division executive committee shall also appoint the officers of the new union mission.

7. The division shall call a constituency meeting of the new organisation as soon as possible in order to organise the union mission. At this meeting, departmental directors and the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the union mission operating policy.

8. The new union mission shall be presented at the next General Conference Session for acceptance into the sisterhood of unions.

B 65 22 Organising New Unions of Churches—(See also B 75 12 Criteria for Union of Churches Status)—1. A union of churches structure is designed for unusual circumstances (such as slow church growth/development with limited need for infrastructure, unique geopolitical situations, or peculiar administrative challenges). A union of churches is the sole constituency-based administrative link between the local church and the General Conference/division. Consideration regarding the establishment of unions of churches shall include the following guidelines:

a. A clear demonstration that the new status will enhance the mission of the Church in the specific territory.

b. The establishment of a union of churches shall normally result in a reduction in the number of organisational units, e.g. the combination of conferences/missions should reduce the overall number of entities.

c. Its territory shall be made up of contiguous boundaries or be part of a single country.

d. The geographical boundaries shall not overlap another field or local conference/mission or union conference, union of churches, or union mission.

e. The population of the geographic area shall indicate a strong potential for growth of membership together with an adequate number of churches to establish a new union of churches.

f. While there should be a fair degree of flexibility in the way a union of churches is organised, there should be no sub-units with executive authority and/or treasury accounting functions.

g. A union of churches may own and operate institutions.

2. If it is proposed to organise a new union of churches, the division officers shall initiate a preliminary consultation with General Conference officers to

assess the general merit and implications of such a proposal. If such a consultation results in a decision to study the matter further, the proposal shall be considered by the respective division executive committee at its mid-year or year-end meeting, or at a division council. Proposals to organise groups of churches or missions/conferences into new unions of churches, or to reorganise a union mission or union conference into a union of churches, may be initiated by a group of missions/conferences, a union conference or union mission, a division, or by the General Conference.

3. When a group of conferences/missions initiates a proposal to organise a new union of churches, the officers of the division and union(s) shall consult with the officers of the organisations making the proposal.

4. When a union conference or union mission initiates a proposal to organise a new union of churches the officers of the division and General Conference shall consult with the officers making the proposal, including the officers of the conferences/missions.

5. If the division executive committee initiates and/or concurs with the proposal initiated elsewhere, and the conferences/missions to be formed into a new union of churches are part of an existing union conference, the division shall request the conferences involved to convene constituency meetings to consider the proposal and, if there is concurrence, to initiate appropriate dissolution procedures as per policy. In the event of a positive action by the constituency, or where the organisations involved are a part of an existing union mission, the division shall request the General Conference to appoint a survey team, including General Conference and division representation, to consider the merits of the proposal.

6. When the General Conference initiates a proposal to organise a new union of churches it shall request the division to consider the matter and, in the event of division concurrence, to implement the processes outlined in 4. above.

7. Further consideration of a proposal to organise a union of churches will be discontinued when the specific proposal is not approved by:

a. A constituency meeting action of any local or union conference involved in the proposal.

b. An executive committee action of either the division concerned or of the General Conference Executive Committee.

8. The survey team, after its investigation, shall report its findings to the General Conference and division executive committees.

9. If, after considering the findings of the survey team, the division chooses to proceed with organising the new union of churches, it shall record an action to this effect at its mid-year, year-end meeting, division council or at a time when adequate representation is available, and forward its recommendation to the General Conference Executive Committee for consideration.

10. The General Conference Executive Committee shall consider the report of the survey team and the recommendation of the division and shall take the appropriate action and, if approving the formation of a new union of churches, shall authorise mission or conference status for the new organisation.

11. In any situation involving constituency meetings pertaining to the establishment of a new union of churches, the division shall oversee the process of constituency decisions, dissolution of entities, re-organisation, determination of organisational status, adoption of constitution and bylaws/operating policies, clarification of operational obligations, and the selection of leaders.

12. The new union of churches shall be presented at the next General Conference Session for acceptance into the sisterhood of member units.

B 65 25 Organising New Union Conferences—1. If it is proposed to organise a new union conference from an existing union mission or from within the territory of an existing union conference, or to organise a union of churches into a union conference, the division officers shall initiate a preliminary consultation with General Conference officers to assess the general merit and implications of such a proposal. If such a consultation results in a decision to study the matter further, the proposal shall be considered by the respective division executive committee at its mid-year or year-end meeting, or at a division council. Proposals to organise groups of conferences/missions into new union conferences may be initiated by the union, by the executive committees or constituency sessions of a group of conferences/missions, by the division, or by the General Conference.

2. If the division executive committee favours the proposal, it shall request the union mission/conference/union of churches executive committee to consider the proposal if it has not already done so. In the event of a positive action by the executive committee, the division shall appoint a study committee (see B 65 05, paragraph 2. above) to assess the readiness for conference status of organisations involved in the proposal.

3. The study committee, in addition to its assessment role, or a team appointed by the division executive committee shall assist the administration of the conferences/missions/union of churches desiring to be part of the new union conference in their programme of moving toward union conference status. In areas where it is considered helpful, a union conference status candidacy period may be required.

4. When the division is satisfied that the proposed organisation is ready for union conference status, the division executive committee shall call a constituency meeting of the current union mission and/or union of churches to consider the report and recommendations of the study committee. In the event of an action by the constituency in favour of proceeding with the organisation of a new union conference, the division shall submit a request to the General Conference for an on-site evaluation of the proposed new union conference.

5. A survey team appointed by the General Conference Executive Committee, comprised of division and General Conference personnel, shall make an on-site evaluation. If the survey team is satisfied that the request is appropriate, it shall recommend union conference status for the new organisation to the General Conference Executive Committee. In the event the organisation is not ready for union conference status at the time of the General Conference's

evaluation, recommendations will be made and, after suitable passage of time, a further evaluation conducted.

6. Upon the recommendation of the survey team, the General Conference Executive Committee, at a Spring Meeting or Annual Council, shall determine whether or not to grant union conference status.

7. Upon the approval of the General Conference Executive Committee, the division shall call a constituency meeting of the new organisation as soon as possible in order to organise the union conference. At this meeting a union conference constitution and bylaws, patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working policies, shall be adopted. Officers, departmental directors/secretaries, and the members of the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the newly adopted constitution.

8. If organisation of a new union conference is approved by the General Conference Executive Committee, it shall be received into the sisterhood of unions at the next General Conference Session.

9. If a new union conference is formed from a union of churches or entities that include a union of churches, plans should include the establishment of local conferences/missions in accordance with General Conference *Working Policy*. (See B 65 10, Organising New Local Missions, and B 65 15, Organising New Local Conferences.)

B 70 Organising New Divisions

B 70 05 Organising New Divisions—1. If it is proposed to organise a new division, or divisions, the proposal shall be considered by the General Conference Executive Committee at an Annual Council when a full representation of the unions and institutions involved is present. Such proposals may be initiated by the division(s) or by the General Conference.

2. If the General Conference Executive Committee favours the proposal, it shall request the division(s) involved to call a full meeting of the division executive committee(s) to consider the proposal. The General Conference shall appoint a survey team having the task of preparing specific detailed plans for the division status of the proposed organisation(s).

3. The survey team, appointed by the General Conference Executive Committee, comprised of General Conference and division personnel shall make an on-site evaluation. If the survey team is satisfied that the request is appropriate, it shall make its recommendations to the General Conference Executive Committee.

4. Upon recommendation of the survey team, the General Conference Executive Committee, at an Annual Council, shall determine whether or not to grant division status to the new organisation(s).

5. In the event that the General Conference Executive Committee votes to establish a new division it shall also arrange for the election of officers to serve the new division. As soon as possible, the General Conference shall call a meeting of representatives of the unions, conferences, and institutions within the territory of the new division, under the leadership of the newly elected division

officers, to elect department directors/secretaries and members of the executive committee.

6. Any new division(s) organised during the quinquennium shall be formally introduced to the world Church at the next General Conference Session by the General Conference Secretary.

B 75 Adjustments in Organisational Status

B 75 05 Criteria for Conference Status—As local missions/fields grow in strength and experience, they normally qualify for larger responsibilities in organisation and administration. When studying the eligibility of missions/fields for conference status, the following considerations shall serve to guide union and division organisations in studying such authorisation:

1. The members and employees of the mission/field for which conference status is being considered shall give evidence of understanding the basic principles by which the churches and the mission/field are administered, particularly demonstrating an appreciation of the spiritual needs and objectives of the church. The mission/field shall give evidence of possessing both a local and world-wide evangelistic vision.

2. The mission/field shall have attained a well-balanced programme in the activities of the church and shall have demonstrated its ability to co-operate with other organisations and institutions of the church. The mission/field shall have developed to the point of being able to provide personnel to serve within its territory and help supply employees for other missions/fields as the occasion may arise. Employees and church membership in the mission/field shall give evidence of their confidence and respect for duly appointed leadership and committees and show willingness to work in harmony with the policies and plans of the denomination.

3. The membership shall be sufficiently large to justify the additional responsibilities implied in a conference organisation. Its churches shall be well organised and well staffed with competent and judicious leaders.

4. The mission/field shall be expected to have given evidence over a reasonable time of its capability to operate within its own finances. This is understood to mean not only the operation of the local organisation but also sharing the expense of maintaining institutions which benefit the territory of the local mission/field and carrying the usual percentages for the Retirement Plan and other general funds as outlined in the policies of the union and division organisations. The mission/field shall likewise have demonstrated its willingness and ability to carry its share of financial responsibility in the denomination's world mission programme as set forth in the denominational policies.

5. The mission/field shall have demonstrated its ability to properly store the materials specified in the records retention schedule as provided by the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

B 75 10 Organising Local Missions/Fields Into Local Conference Status—Procedure—Local missions/fields desiring local conference status shall proceed as follows:

1. The local mission/field shall request its committee(s) for strategic and financial planning to prepare specific detailed incremental plans for moving the mission/field toward conference status.

2. At the request of the local mission/field, the union and the division shall assist the local mission/field administration to complete a self-evaluation form, based on the Criteria for Conference Status outlined in B 75 05, and to prepare for the responsibilities that rest upon a conference.

3. The local mission/field executive committee shall review the completed self-evaluation form, and, if satisfied with the plans for conference status, shall submit its request to the union for conference status. In areas where it is considered helpful, a conference status candidacy period may be required.

4. If the union executive committee, in consultation with the union committee(s) for strategic and financial planning, finds the local mission/field request to have merit, it shall ask the division to appoint a survey team comprised of division, union, and local mission/field representatives.

5. The survey team shall conduct an on-site evaluation and report its findings to the union executive committee. In the event the mission/field is not ready for conference status at the time of the division's evaluation, recommendations will be made, and, after a suitable passage of time, a further evaluation conducted.

6. The union executive committee shall study the findings of the survey team and, if satisfied that the mission/field is ready for conference status, shall record an action to this effect at a meeting of the union executive committee when the president of the local mission/field is present, and forward the request to the division for consideration.

7. The division executive committee shall, at a meeting when the president of the union is present, take action on the request and advise the union of its decision.

8. Upon the approval of the division executive committee, the union shall call a constituency meeting of the new organisation as soon as possible in order to organise the conference. At this meeting, a conference constitution and bylaws, patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working policies shall be adopted. Officers, departmental directors/secretaries, and the members of the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the newly adopted constitution.

9. Where there has been a change of status from a local mission/field to a local conference, it shall be reported at the next division mid-year or year-end meeting/council for acceptance and recording.

B 75 12 Criteria for Union of Churches Status—A decision to establish a union of churches will involve the assessment of many different factors some of which are external to the territory under consideration. However, the church membership and internal infrastructure of the territory also needs to be evaluated. The following criteria must guide this evaluation:

1. Leaders, employees, and members of an organisation(s) for which union of churches status is contemplated shall give evidence of possessing a clear

perception of the denomination's primary objects which are to supply the spiritual needs of the church and obey the Lord's commission, "Go . . . and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15).

2. The membership, employees, and Church leaders should give evidence that they understand the world-wide character of the work and participate by assuming their share of the financial responsibility.

3. The proposed union of churches must demonstrate that it is able to make budgetary provision to adequately staff and care for the various lines of activity and, when necessary, be ready to share its employees with other fields.

4. The union of churches shall demonstrate its ability to develop and administer an adequately staffed departmental and institutional programme.

5. The union of churches shall demonstrate its ability to properly store the materials specified in the records retention schedule as provided by the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

6. A spirit of unity shall prevail among the members, employees, and leaders of the field. This unity shall be evident in the plans formulated and in the implementation of the same. It shall be found between individual members and between the various organisations within the proposed union of churches.

7. The membership, the ministry, and the leadership shall give evidence of understanding and accepting the established principles of denominational administration and relationships between the various organisations. Leaders and committees shall demonstrate a willingness to work in harmony with the working policies of the denomination.

8. Confidence in, and loyalty to, the leadership of the denomination at all levels shall be evident on the part of the membership. Employees and members shall respect the decisions of responsible committees.

9. Administrative officers and committees shall demonstrate an ability to recognise problems which affect the welfare of the work, and thus take steps which will resolve these problems.

10. The major portion of the financial resources for the operating of organisations and institutions shall be found within the territory of the proposed union of churches. However, in locations where an institution and/or organisation serves the territory of more than one organisational unit, the major portion of the financial resources for operating the institution and/or organisation shall be provided within the territories of the entities served.

11. The proposed union of churches shall possess financial stability, having its operating capital intact. It shall also have adequate resources to meet its financial obligations promptly, including accounts payable to other denominational organisations.

B 75 15 Criteria for Union Conference Status—A union mission should normally develop to the point where the world sisterhood of churches, represented by the division and General Conference, will recognise its readiness to become a union conference with the larger responsibilities thus implied. As a means of evaluating this development and guiding the organisations responsible

for determining the readiness of a field for union conference status, the following criteria are established:

1. Leaders, employees, and members of organisations comprising a union field for which conference status is contemplated shall give evidence of possessing a clear perception of the denomination's primary objectives which are to supply the spiritual needs of the church and obey the Lord's commission, "Go . . . and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15).

2. The membership, employees, and church leaders should give evidence that they understand the world-wide character of the work and participate by assuming their share of the financial responsibility.

3. The union field should be adequately staffed to care for the various lines of activity and, when necessary, be ready to share its employees with other fields.

4. The union should have demonstrated its ability to develop and administer a balanced departmental and institutional programme.

5. The union shall have demonstrated its ability to properly store the materials specified in the records retention schedule as provided by the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

6. A spirit of unity should prevail among the members, employees, and leaders of the field. This unity should be evident in the plans formulated and in the implementation of the same. It should be found between individual members and between the various organisations within the union.

7. The membership, the ministry, and the leadership on the local and union level should give evidence of understanding and accepting the established principles of denominational administration and relationships between the various organisations. Leaders and committees should demonstrate willingness to work in harmony with the working policies of the denomination.

8. Confidence in, and loyalty to, the leadership of the denomination at all levels should be evident on the part of the membership. Employees and members should respect the decisions of responsible committees.

9. Administrative officers and committees should have demonstrated the ability to recognise problems which affect the welfare of the work, and thus take steps which will resolve these problems.

10. One or more of the local organisations should have attained to conference status and should be operating successfully.

11. The major portion of the financial resources for the operating of organisations and institutions should be found within the union territory.

12. The union as a whole, including its subsidiary organisations, should possess financial stability, having its operating capital intact. It should also have adequate resources to meet its financial obligations promptly, including accounts payable to other denominational organisations.

B 75 20 Union Conference Status—Procedure—*The following procedure shall be suspended until further notice. The procedure presented in the guidelines entitled, "Becoming A Union Conference—A guidebook and Procedural Steps for Changing From a Union Mission to a Union Conference"*

shall be used during this trial period. (See Appendix A in the General Conference Working Policy.)

1. The union mission shall request its committee(s) for strategic and financial planning to prepare specific, detailed incremental plans for moving the union mission toward union conference status.

2. At the request of the union mission, the division shall assist the union administration to complete a self-evaluation form, based on the Criteria for Union Conference Status outlined in B 85 05, and to prepare for the responsibilities that rest upon a union conference.

3. The union mission executive committee shall review the completed self-evaluation form, and, if satisfied with the plans for union conference status, shall submit its request to the division for union conference status. In areas where it is considered helpful, a union conference status candidacy period may be required.

4. If the division executive committee, in consultation with the division committee(s) for strategic and financial planning, finds the union mission request to have merit, it shall ask the General Conference to appoint a survey team comprised of General Conference, division, and union representation.

5. The survey team shall conduct an on-site evaluation and report its findings to the division executive committee. In the event the union mission is not ready for union conference status at the time of the General Conference's evaluation, recommendations will be made and, after a suitable passage of time, a further evaluation conducted.

6. The division executive committee shall study the findings of the survey team and, if satisfied that the union mission is ready for union conference status, shall record an action to this effect at a meeting when the presidents of the unions are present and forward the request to the General Conference for consideration.

7. The General Conference Executive Committee shall, at its spring meeting or annual council, take action on the request and advise the division of its decision.

8. Upon the approval of the General Conference Executive Committee, the division shall call a constituency meeting of the new organisation as soon as possible, in order to organise the union conference. At this meeting, a union conference constitution and bylaws, patterned after the model in the General Conference and division working policies, shall be adopted. Officers, departmental directors/secretaries, and the members of the executive committee shall be elected according to provisions of the newly adopted constitution.

9. Where there has been a change of status from a union mission to a union conference, it shall be reported at the next General Conference Session for acceptance and recording.

B 75 30 Process For Reviewing Status—It is expected that organisations, when established, will experience financial, administrative, and operational stability with prospects for growth and advancement in status. However, from time to time, entities may experience adverse circumstances (such as loss of membership, major reduction in resource patterns, war, or natural calamities)

which seriously impede the ability to maintain the current organisational status. In such situations, it may be advisable to adjust the current organisational status for non-disciplinary reasons.

The process to review, revise, suspend, or withdraw organisational status shall be conducted in a manner that permits consultation with, and representation from, organisations affected. A constituency meeting of the entity, whose status is under consideration, will be necessary in order to discuss the reasons for possible adjustment in status and in order to secure consent of the constituency membership. Such a process will seek to reach agreement, among all organisations involved, that an adjustment in status is appropriate. An agreement might provide for a probationary period, normally not exceeding 12 months, during which the entity under consideration addresses the operational issues involved. When such an agreement is reached the constituency and executive committees involved shall record the necessary actions. In the event that such an agreement is not reached the higher levels of organisation involved may proceed, in the larger interests of the Church, with an adjustment in status.

A review of organisational status may be initiated by a decision of the executive committee in any higher level of organisation that was involved in granting the type of status in question. (The merger or dissolution of local churches is addressed in the *Church Manual*.) If an organisational status review results in a recommendation to adjust the organisation's status the following shall apply:

1. When the entity under consideration is a local conference/mission, the decision to adjust status shall be made, after appropriate consultation with the entity concerned and the union executive committee, by the division executive committee at a mid-year or year-end meeting.

2. When the entity under consideration is a union conference/mission or union of churches, the decision to adjust status shall be made, after appropriate consultation with the entity concerned and the division executive committee, by the General Conference Executive Committee at a Spring Meeting or Annual Council.

The decision to revise, suspend, or withdraw status due to operational reasons shall be effective immediately unless the decision also contains a probationary period, normally not exceeding 12 months, during which the entity concerned is given opportunity to address the operational deficiencies. The executive committee that made the decision shall determine, at the close of the probationary period, if operational deficiencies have been satisfactorily rectified and, if not, shall implement the adjustment in status upon expiry of the probationary period.

When the decision to adjust an organisation's status becomes effective the organisation shall immediately comply with the operational terms and relationships pertaining to its revised status. If the decision to adjust status involves dissolution of the organisation concerned, the assets of the organisation shall be distributed in harmony with applicable organisational documents (such as Articles or Bylaws).

3. Any adjustments in a union's status shall be reported to the next General Conference Session.

B 75 35 Survey Commissions—When a division requests the General Conference to establish a new union or change the status of an existing union, the General Conference Administrative Committee will appoint a survey commission. The survey commission shall consist of the following members:

Chair	General Conference Vice-President
Secretary	General Conference Secretary (or designee)
Members	General Conference Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer (or designee)
	Two executive officers (president preferred) from other divisions
	President of division requesting the survey
Advisors	Secretary and Treasurer/chief financial officer of the division requesting the survey (to be granted voice but not vote)
Invitees	Others at the discretion of the commission

The survey commission shall assess the proposed entity's readiness for the denominational responsibilities of maintaining the Seventh-day Adventist faith and values, nurturing believers, furthering the Church's mission, demonstrating and developing leadership capacity, and fulfilling all financial obligations to the denomination while remaining fiscally viable. (For expanded criteria, see B 75 12 and B 75 15).

The survey commission shall submit its report and recommendations to the General Conference Administrative Committee. On the basis of the survey commission's report, the General Conference Administrative Committee will determine its response to the division's request. If the response is in support of proceeding with the establishment of a new union or the change of status of an existing union, the General Conference Administrative Committee will forward its recommendation to the General Conference Executive Committee. If the General Conference Administrative Committee's response is not in support of the organisational change, it shall refer the matter back to the division and indicate the reasons for such a decision, listing the conditions, if any, that need to be addressed before further consideration of the matter.

B 80 Adjustments in Territory Of Organisations

B 80 05 Territorial Adjustments or Resizing of Territories—1. If it is proposed to make territorial adjustments between local fields or between unions, or to resize the territorial units, the proposal shall be considered by the executive committee of the next higher administrative organisation, at a time when a full representation of the territories and organisations involved is present.

2. If the proposal is approved by the executive committee of the next higher level of church organisation, the proposal shall then be routed to the executive committee of the division, in the case of local field territories, and of the General Conference, in the case of union territories, where, in each case, the final decision shall be made.

3. If the territory of a conference, a union of churches with conference status, or union conference is involved, the administration of the next higher organisation shall use its discretion to examine constitutions and legal requirements to determine whether a constituency meeting should be called and, if so, at what point(s) in the procedure.

4. A re-alignment of unions may affect the status of some employees. Any arrangement for a re-alignment of unions must include a specific agreement as to how the retirement benefits of those employees will be safeguarded and which denominational entity will eventually be responsible for the payment of those affected.

B 80 10 Dividing Existing Union Conferences/Missions—Criteria—Care should be exercised to assure that dividing a union conference/mission is of benefit to the mission of the Church and does not add an unreasonable burden to the administration of the work of the Church that would cancel out the benefits. As a means of evaluating the situation and guiding the organisations responsible for determining the benefits of dividing a union conference/mission, one or more of the following criteria shall apply:

1. An increase in the number of local conferences/missions/fields and the total union church membership which places an unmanageable demand on the union staff.

2. A decision on the part of the division, following consultation with the General Conference and the union officers, that the dividing of the union will provide a strategic advantage for the fulfilment of the mission of the Church.

3. Evidence that there is sufficient leadership, with experience and dedication, to staff the new entities and to care for the various departments and functions of the Church.

4. Sufficient financial stability or provisions for the new organisations to be able to meet their financial obligations.

5. The proposal to divide shall be driven by a genuine desire for the advancement of the work of the Church and not by a lack of unity within the union conference/mission.

6. Extremely difficult political situations or lack of adequate infrastructure which hinder travel and proper supervision from one area to another.

7. Internal situations where cultural, linguistic, ethnic, territorial, and/or financial issues render it advisable.

B 80 15 Dividing a Union Conference/Mission—Procedure—1. A proposal to divide a union conference/mission into two or more unions may be proposed by the union conference/mission, by the division, or by the General Conference. In any case, the division officers and General Conference officers shall consult to assess the general merit and implications of such a proposal. If such a consultation results in a decision to study the matter further, the proposal shall be considered by the respective division executive committee and, if approved, the respective division administration shall assist the union administration in assessing the need and viability of the increased number of unions.

2. If, after completing the assessment described above, the division executive committee determines that the proposal has merit, it shall ask the General Conference to appoint a survey team composed of General Conference, division, and union representatives.

3. The survey team shall conduct an on-site evaluation and report its findings to the division executive committee.

4. The division executive committee shall study the findings of the survey team at a meeting at which the union presidents are present and, if satisfied that dividing the union will be an advantage to the mission of the Church, shall record an action to this effect and forward the request to the General Conference for consideration.

5. The General Conference Executive Committee shall, at its Spring Meeting or Annual Council, take action on the request and advise the division of its decision.

6. Upon the approval of the General Conference Executive Committee, the division shall call a constituency meeting of the union conference/mission in order to initiate proceedings for the establishment of the new unions. Delegates will be asked to vote to dissolve the union conference/mission as a first step in the organisation of the new unions.

7. For any new union conferences, the division shall call constituency meetings of the delegates representing the new territories to elect officers, department directors, and members of the union executive committees and to adopt constitutions and bylaws.

8. For any new union missions, the division executive committee shall appoint the officers and approve operating policies. The division shall then call constituency meetings of delegates representing the new territories to elect department directors and union mission executive committees.

9. The General Conference Executive Committee shall recommend that the new unions be received into the sisterhood of unions at the next General Conference Session.

B 90 Discontinuation of Organisations

B 90 03 Reasons for Discontinuation of Organisations—Circumstances relating to the viability or need for an entity may change. Organisational units may be discontinued for various reasons including:

1. Merger with other entities. A merger that would result in the discontinuance of an organisation with conference status requires the consent of the constituency meeting of that organisation.

2. Action of the constituency session to dissolve the organisation. (See the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* regarding the dissolution of local churches.)

3. Disciplinary action by a constituency meeting of the sisterhood of organisations to which an entity belongs.

B 90 05 Discontinuation of Conferences, Missions, Fields, Unions, and Unions of Churches by Merger—If it is considered beneficial for the

strengthening of the work of the Church to reduce the number of organisations within a specific territory, steps may be taken to merge into one, two or more conferences/missions/fields or two or more unions or unions of churches. A proposal to merge may be initiated at any of the administrative levels of the Church. In the event that a merger takes place, the new organisation shall be received into the appropriate sisterhood at the next constituency meeting of the next higher organisation.

B 90 10 Merger of Local Conferences/Missions/Fields—1. If it is proposed to merge two or more conferences/missions/fields, the matter shall be considered by the executive committees of the units concerned and a recommendation forwarded to the union executive committee.

2. The union executive committee shall assess the recommendations and their implications for the growth and development of the Church in the territory concerned.

3. If the union executive committee approves the proposal, it shall request the division executive committee to consider it.

4. If the division executive committee approves the merger, it shall authorise the formation of the new organisation (local conference/mission) or recommend, to the General Conference Executive Committee, the formation of a union of churches with conference or mission status. The merger shall proceed subject to dissolution, by the union, of any local mission involved and by corresponding action of the constituency meeting of any conference involved.

5. If the new unit is to function as a local mission, the union shall call, as soon as possible following the action to merge, a union executive committee meeting to adopt an operating policy for the new mission/field, patterned after the model in the General Conference *Working Policy*, and to appoint the mission/field officers. The union shall call a constituency meeting of the new mission/field at the earliest possible convenience to determine leadership staffing and executive committee membership.

6. If the new unit is to function as a local conference or union of churches, the union (in the case of a union of churches, the division) shall arrange for a joint constituency meeting of the merging units. This newly convened constituency meeting shall adopt a constitution and bylaws for the new conference/union of churches, or operating policy in the case of a union of churches with mission status; elect officers (in the case of units with conference status) and the membership of the executive committee. The constitution and bylaws or operating policy shall be based on model documents in the General Conference *Working Policy*.

7. All assets and any liabilities of the merging organisations shall become the responsibility of the new organisation.

8. Following any actions involving the dissolution of a local mission/field and the establishment of a new local mission/field, the union shall recommend to the next union constituency meeting that the resulting changes to the sisterhood of member units in the union be accepted. In the case of a new union of churches being formed as a result of merger, the General Conference Executive

Committee shall recommend, to the next General Conference Session, its acceptance into the sisterhood of unions.

B 90 25 Merger of Union Conferences/Union Missions/Unions of Churches—1. If a proposed merger involves union and/or unions of churches, the matter shall be considered by the union executive committees involved and a recommendation forwarded to the division executive committee.

2. The division executive committee shall assess the recommendations and their implications for the growth and development of the Church in the territory concerned.

3. If the division executive committee approves the proposal, it shall request the General Conference Executive Committee to consider it.

4. If the General Conference Executive Committee approves the proposal and authorises the formation of a new union/union of churches, the following procedure shall be followed:

a. If union missions or unions of churches with mission status are involved, the General Conference Executive Committee shall, at an Annual Council, vote their dissolution.

b. If union conferences or unions of churches with conference status are involved, the division shall call, or arrange for the entities to call, constituency meetings to approve the proposal and to vote the dissolution of current entity.

5. If the new union/union of churches is to function with mission status, the division, as soon as possible after a General Conference Executive Committee decision authorising the new entity and after actions by relevant parties to dissolve the units affected, shall convene a division executive committee to adopt an operating policy, based on the model in General Conference *Working Policy*; and appoint officers for the new organisation. The division shall then arrange for a constituency meeting of the new entity to appoint other leaders and to elect members of the executive committee.

6. If the new union/union of churches is to function with conference status, the division, as soon as possible after a General Conference Executive Committee decision authorising the new entity and after actions by relevant parties to dissolve the units affected, shall call a constituency meeting of the new entity to adopt a constitution and bylaws, based on the model in the General Conference *Working Policy*; and to elect the officers, department directors, and executive committee members.

7. All assets and any liabilities of the merging organisations shall become the responsibility of the new union conference.

8. Following any actions involving the dissolution of a union/union of churches or the establishment of a new union/union of churches, the division shall recommend to the General Conference Executive Committee that the changes of status be approved at the next General Conference Session.

B 95 Discontinuation of Organisations by Voluntary or Involuntary Dissolution

B 95 05 Discontinuation of Conferences, Missions, Fields, Unions, and Unions of Churches by Dissolution and/or Expulsion—If a situation arises where it is determined by the higher organisation that the majority of members of a conference, a mission, a field, a union, or a union of churches are in apostasy, or that the organisation refuses to operate in harmony with denominational policies and constitutional requirements, and is in rebellion, the higher organisation has a responsibility to act for the protection of its loyal members, and the good name of the Church. Every effort should be made to avert the need for dissolution by counseling with the leadership and members, seeking to bring healing and reconciliation, and to preserve the organisation as a witness for God and His saving truth. If conciliatory efforts fail and discontinuation appears to be the only solution, the higher organisation shall have authority to act as set out under B 95 10, and B 95 15.

B 95 08 Dissolution and/or Expulsion of Local Churches—The dissolution and/or expulsion of local churches is addressed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*.

B 95 10 Dissolution and/or Expulsion of Local Conferences/ Missions/Fields—If, in the opinion of a union conference/mission administration, a local conference/mission/field appears to be in apostasy or rebellion, and the procedures outlined under B 90 05 have been followed, but have proved unsuccessful, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The matter shall be considered by the union executive committee at a duly called meeting of committee members, at which time all the relevant data shall be shared, and the union executive committee shall determine whether or not the conference/mission/field is in apostasy or rebellion.

- a. In the case of a local mission/field: If the union executive committee determines that a local mission/field is in apostasy or rebellion, and should be dissolved, it shall take an action to dissolve the local mission/field, and shall recommend to the next union session, or to a specially called session, the expulsion of the local mission/field from the sisterhood of missions/fields.

- b. In the case of a local conference: If the union executive committee determines that a local conference is in apostasy or rebellion, and should be expelled from the sisterhood of conferences, the union shall seek counsel from the division.

- 1) The union, in consultation with the division, shall use its discretion to decide whether another local conference constituency meeting should be called, and if so, at what point in the procedure.

- 2) The union shall submit a recommendation for expulsion of the local conference from the sisterhood of conferences to the next union session, or to a specially called session, if there is no evidence of conciliation on the part of the conference.

3. If the union constituency votes to expel the conference/ mission/field from the sisterhood of conferences/missions/fields, it shall, as a companion

action, vote to take into the care of the union all the churches of the conference/mission/field until reorganisation, or some other provision can be arranged.

4. The union executive committee, functioning in place of the conference/mission/field constituency, shall proceed to disband any local churches which prove to be disloyal, and to redistribute remaining churches by territorial adjustment and/or reorganisation.

5. The union executive committee shall make provision for the preservation of the membership of any such churches by holding records of their membership at the union until appropriate arrangements can be made.

6. In the event of the dissolution of a local mission/field and/or the expulsion of a local conference/mission/field from the sisterhood of conferences/missions/fields, audits of the financial and membership records of the conference/mission/field shall be conducted. All assets remaining after all claims have been satisfied shall be dealt with as specified in the conference constitution and bylaws; mission/field operating policy; articles of incorporation of the organisation. Assets not so covered shall be transferred to a legal entity authorised by the division.

7. If, with the passage of time and efforts toward healing and restoration, it seems desirable for the nurture of the members and for the mission of the Church to reorganise the conference/mission, the process set out under the relevant section of B 65 shall be followed.

B 95 15 Dissolution and/or Expulsion of Unions/Unions of Churches—If, in the opinion of a division administration, a union/union of churches appears to be in apostasy or rebellion, and the procedures outlined in B 95 05 have been followed, but have proved unsuccessful, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The matter shall be considered by the division executive committee at a duly called meeting of the committee, at which time all the relevant data shall be shared. The division executive committee shall then determine whether or not the union/union of churches is in apostasy or rebellion.

2. a. In the case of a union mission/union of churches with mission status: If the division executive committee determines that a union mission/union of churches with mission status is in apostasy or rebellion and should be dissolved, it shall take an action to dissolve the organisation, and shall recommend to the General Conference Executive Committee the expulsion of the unit from the world sisterhood of unions.

b. In the case of a union conference/union of churches with conference status: If the division executive committee determines that a union conference/union of churches with conference status is in apostasy or rebellion and should be expelled from the world sisterhood of unions, the division shall refer the matter to the General Conference Executive Committee with the recommendation for expulsion from the world sisterhood of unions and the reasons for it.

3. The General Conference Executive Committee, in consultation with the division, shall use its discretion to decide whether another union conference constituency meeting should be called and, if so, at what point in the procedure.

4. The General Conference Executive Committee shall consider the recommendation of the division executive committee at its Spring Meeting or Annual Council. If it approves the proposal for expulsion, the General Conference Executive Committee shall refer the recommendation to the next regular or specially called General Conference Session for consideration.

5. If a General Conference Session concurs with a recommendation to expel and votes to expel a union from the world sisterhood of unions, the division shall exercise direct responsibility for the conferences and/or missions/fields affected by the expulsion and shall, through its executive committee, take an action to attach them directly to the division until a new organisation can be established or a rearrangement of territorial boundaries effected. Disloyal conferences/missions/fields shall be dealt with in harmony with the principles set out under B 75 10. In the event that a union of churches is expelled from the sisterhood of unions, the division executive committee shall vote to take into the care of the division all churches of the union of churches until reorganisation or a redistribution of boundaries can be arranged. The division executive committee, functioning in place of the expelled union of churches constituency, shall have authority to disband any local churches which prove to be disloyal and to redistribute remaining churches by territorial adjustment and/or reorganisation.

6. In the event of the dissolution of a union mission/union of churches with mission status and/or the expulsion of a union/union of churches with conference status from the sisterhood of unions, audits of the financial records of the union conference/union mission shall be conducted. All assets remaining after all claims have been satisfied shall be transferred to a legal entity authorised by the division, or dealt with as specified in the expelled entity's constitution and bylaws or operating policy.

7. If, with the passage of time and efforts toward healing and restoration, it seems desirable for the nurture of the members and for the mission of the Church to reorganise the union/union of churches, the process outlined under the relevant section of B 65 shall be followed.