

FOURTH BUSINESS MEETING
Fifty-seventh General Conference Session
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
July 2, 2000, 9:30 a.m.

H&T/ADCOM/GCDO98AC/98AC/200-98Ga/110-99G/00GCS to AHT(DIV)

112-00G HEALTH AND TEMPERANCE DEPARTMENT—NAME
CHANGE

VOTED, To change the name of the Health and Temperance Department to the Health Ministries Department.

WHT/ADCOM/00GCS to AHT(DIV)

235-00G RESOLUTION ON THE GIFT OF PROPHECY THROUGH
THE MINISTRY OF ELLEN G WHITE

VOTED, To adopt the Resolution on the Gift of Prophecy Through the Ministry of Ellen G White, as follows:

Resolution on the Gift of Prophecy Through the Ministry of Ellen G White

For more than six thousand years the cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan has raged throughout the universe. By both human and supernatural means Satan has continued the conflict that began in heaven millenniums ago. Consumed by hatred toward Christ, he has confused the vast majority of earth's population concerning the nature of God. Instead of showing Him to be a God of love whose law is a transcript of His character, Satan has caricatured Him in a variety of ways, including as a tyrant who demands an impossible level of obedience and as an indulgent Deity who cares little whether His law is obeyed.

Throughout past centuries God has endeavored to set forth the truth about Himself. Through patriarchs and prophets, through nature and written revelation, through human experience and divine providences He has countered Satan's deceptions and distortions. Ultimately, He sent His only begotten Son into the world that through His life, ministry, and death the world could see that God is love and would be drawn to Him.

Almost two millenniums have passed since Jesus returned to heaven. All the great time prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled. The final conflict in the controversy between

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righteousness and sin is rapidly approaching. “Intensity is taking possession of every earthly element” (*The Desire of Ages*, p 257).

In light of these considerations,

1. We express thanks to God for the instruction, counsel, warnings, and reproofs that, in His mercy, He has given us through the writings of Ellen G White, and we desire to show our appreciation for these messages by humbling our hearts before Him and letting these messages bear full fruit in our lives.

2. We urge that efforts be intensified to inform all church members, especially the youth and those new to our faith, concerning the role and value of this gift in the experience of Seventh-day Adventists. We also encourage increased circulation of the Ellen G White books as well as concerted study programs throughout the world utilizing those Ellen G White books available to our members.

3. We urge church administrators, pastors, educators, and lay leaders, by precept and example, to encourage all our people to study and follow the practical instruction and principles for daily living contained in these inspired counsels.

4. We urge all church administrators, including those of educational and health care institutions, to give careful heed to the inspired counsels given to Seventh-day Adventists through the writings of Ellen G White.

5. We encourage every church to conduct an annual Spirit of Prophecy Day, and we urge schools to conduct a yearly Adventist Heritage Week.

In order to make Ellen G White’s published writings more available to the Church,

1. We recommend the continuation and promotion of special purchase incentives for denominational employees to acquire Ellen G White’s published writings, as well as the continuation of offering to members the lowest possible prices for these “message-filled” books at camp meetings and other special times.

2. We encourage the church’s publishing houses and Adventist Book Centers to feature Ellen G White’s books prominently in their advertisements and displays.

3. We express appreciation to the world divisions and their publishing houses for the 237 translations of Ellen G White books authorized during the past quinquennium, and call upon the world divisions to continue availing themselves of the subsidies available from the General

Conference for translating the Ellen G White books into local languages. Further, we encourage making use of approved, innovative, and inexpensive methods, including electronic format, to reach that objective.

4. We encourage our publishing houses, where feasible, to translate the landmark volume, *Messenger of the Lord*, and we urge church members and employees to read the volume and take particular note “of the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (*Life Sketches*, p 196).

In recognition of recent activities of the Ellen G White Estate,

We express appreciation to the Ellen G White Estate for its CD-ROM products, including the recently released interactive CD-ROM, *Legacy of Light*. We also express appreciation for its efforts to provide Ellen G White’s published writings, plus pertinent and accurate information regarding those writings and her ministry, through its official web site. We urge that the web site’s information be provided in languages in addition to English, and that it be kept current regarding issues of interest and concern to church members.

00GCS to RJK-Plans00GCS

RESOLUTION ON THE BIBLE

VOTED, To refer to the Plans Committee the request that a resolution be prepared supporting the Bible which is similar to the Resolution on the Gift of Prophecy Through the Ministry of Ellen G White.

PRE/GCDO99AC/ADCOM/99AC/267-99G/00GCS to RJK-Con&By00GCS+00GCS

114-00G GENERAL CONFERENCE AUDITING SERVICE— STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

VOTED, To refer to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee the proposed action concerning the General Conference Auditing Service—Structure and Organization, with the request that it reconsider the chairman and membership of the General Conference Auditing Service Board.

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ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO99AC/99AC/184-99G/00GCS to MV

130-00G FIELD/MISSION/CONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE/
MISSION/FIELD - *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVES

VOTED, To approve directives to amend, where applicable, the *Church Manual* in all references to the term “field” (where the obvious reference is to the collective organization of local churches) to now read “field/mission/conference;” and in all references to “conference” to read “conference/mission/field.”

SS&PM/ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO99AC/99AC/195-99G/00GCS to MV

131-00G PERSONAL MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* DIRECTIVE

VOTED, To approve a directive to amend the *Church Manual* in all references to “Lay Activities” to now read “Personal Ministries.”

ChMan/152-97G/ChMan/ADCOM/ChMan/ADCOM/ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO98AC/98AC/
120-98Ga/131-99Ga/00GCS to LCC-ChMan00GCS+00GCS

134-00Ga *CHURCH MANUAL* AUTHORITY - *CHURCH MANUAL*
ADDITION

VOTED, To refer back to the Church Manual Committee the proposed addition to Chapter 1, *Church Manual* Authority, with the request to add the biblical principles that are referred to and to reconsider the matter of Church authority.

ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO99AC/99AC/182-99G/00GCS to MV

135-00G FOUR CONSTITUENT LEVELS IN THE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST ORGANIZATION - *CHURCH MANUAL*
AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 4, The Form of Organization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, page 24, Four Constituent Levels in the Seventh-day Adventist Organization, to read as follows:

Four Constituent Levels in the Seventh-day
Adventist Organization

Among Seventh-day Adventists there are four constituent levels leading from the individual believer to the worldwide organization of the work of the church:

1. The local church, a united organized body of individual believers.
2. The local conference or local field/mission, a united organized body of churches in a state, province, or territory. (See p. xx.)
3. The union conference or union field/mission, a united body of conferences or fields within a larger territory.
4. The General Conference, the largest unit of organization, embraces all unions in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility assigned to them in designated geographical areas.

“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 in the General Conference.”—
Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 236, 237.

ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO98AC/98AC/120-98Gc/131-99Gc/00GCS to MV

136-00G GENERAL CONFERENCE THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY,
CHURCH MANUAL AUTHORITY - *CHURCH MANUAL*
ADDITION

VOTED, To add a new section, *Church Manual* Authority, to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 4, The Form of Organization in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, General Conference the Highest Authority, at the bottom of page 26, to read as follows:

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General Conference the Highest Authority

The General Conference in session, and the Executive Committee between sessions, is the highest organization in the administration of the church's worldwide work, and is authorized by its constitution to create subordinate organizations to promote specific interests in various sections of the world. It is therefore understood that all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world will recognize the General Conference as the highest authority, under God, among Seventh-day Adventists. When differences arise in or between organizations and institutions, appeal to the next higher organization is proper until it reaches the General Conference in session, or the Executive Committee at the Annual Council. During the interim between these sessions the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop. The committee's decision may be reviewed at a session of the General Conference or at an Annual Council of the Executive Committee.

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

"At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work.

"When this power, which God has placed in the church, is accredited wholly to one man, and he is invested with the authority to be judgment for other minds, then the true Bible order is changed. Satan's efforts upon such a man's mind would be most subtle and sometimes well-nigh overpowering, for the enemy would hope that through his mind he could affect many others. Let

us give to the highest organized authority in the church that which we are prone to give to one man or a small group of men.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 260, 261.

Authority of the Church and the *Church Manual*—(See Chapter 1.)

CHM/ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO98AC/130-98G/CHM/ChMan/ADCOM/GCDO99AC/
99AC/134-99G/00GCS to MV

137-00G MEMBERSHIP ON A SPIRITUAL BASIS - *CHURCH*
MANUAL AMENDMENT

VOTED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 5, Church Membership, page 27, Membership on a Spiritual Basis, to read as follows:

Membership on a Spiritual Basis

The serious, solemn obligations of church membership should be impressed on everyone who applies for admittance to the church. All should be faithfully taught what it means to become a member of the body of Christ. Only those giving evidence of having experienced the new birth, and who are enjoying a spiritual experience in the Lord Jesus, are prepared for acceptance into church membership. Thorough instruction in the fundamental teachings and related practices of the church should be given to every candidate for church membership before being baptized and received into church fellowship. Each person seeking admittance to the church should be informed of the principles for which the church stands.

This is a spiritual relationship. It can be entered into only by those who are converted. Only in this way can the purity and spiritual caliber of the church be maintained. It is the duty of every minister to instruct those who accept the principles of the truth, that they may enter the church on a sound, spiritual basis. While there is no stated age for baptism, it is recommended that very young children who express a desire to be baptized should be encouraged and entered into an instruction program that may lead to baptism.

“The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

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Adjourned.

Philip S Follett, Chairman

Harold W Baptiste, Secretary

Athal H Tolhurst, Actions Editor

Carol E Rasmussen, Recording Secretary