

Curriculum Guide for Presentations on:

Working Policy 101

Goal: To understand the purpose for governance documents in the life of the church and to increase the knowledge of GC Working Policy and its relevance to leadership issues.

Points to cover:

1. Introduce and discuss the primary Church governance documents:
 - a. Statement of Fundamental Beliefs
 - b. General Conference *Working Policy* or the Division *Working Policy*
 - c. *The Church Manual*
 - d. Constitution and Bylaws (for conferences and institutions)
 - e. Operating Policies (for units with “mission” status)

2. The function of policy:
 - a. Defines how we do our work
 - b. Represents a collective decision-making process (executive committee)
 - c. General Conference *Working Policy* is the policy framework for the World Church
 - d. The Church Manual is the policy framework for operations in local churches
 - e. Policy is dynamic and can be amended

3. The purpose of policy: To protect the organization from:
 - a. Autocratic and erratic leadership
 - b. Merely reactive decision-making
 - c. Widely differing patterns of action

4. Policy is outlined as:
 - a. Organizational Structure
 - b. Operating Principles
 - c. Procedures and Practices

5. Key concepts for SDA Organizations (see GCWP D 05)
 - a. Membership is the basis of organization. Membership is required for participation in business meetings, to hold office, to sit on governing committees.
 - b. Conferred status. Membership is always a privilege granted by a group; it is not self-proclaimed nor self-derived nor automatically perpetual; it is not a right.
 - c. Representative and constituency-based.
 - d. Authority rooted in God and distributed throughout the committee system; there are different types of authority at the local church, conference, union, division, General Conference.

- e. Shared administration, not presidential style. Decisions are made by groups; every elected/appointed leader is accountable to a group; no group or committee has authority equal to or greater than the group that appointed it. The 3-officer team avoids kingly power, decreases potential for conflict and provides for specialization.
 - f. Unity of entities; united by submission to the Holy Spirit and by commitment to worldwide mission, purpose, and belief create bond of fellowship.
 - g. Separate but not independent organizations. Organizations are not congregational nor hierarchical, but interlocking and interdependent. Most organizations are unincorporated entities, but the Church also has “legal status” as required by various national and international laws.
6. Review appropriate sections of Working Policy as required by the occasion, the audience, the time available, and the specific needs of the participants. Examples for additional review could include:
- a. Model Constitutions and Operating Policies
 - b. Constituency sessions
7. It is recommended that in this session the presenter use short quizzes and/or short case studies to clarify the concepts presented.