

61st Session of the
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

CHURCH MANUAL REVISED AGENDA

GPS	405.	427-22GS	Business Meetings - Church Manual Amendment (CM 128) [2]
GPS	412.	436-22GSa	Nominating Committee and the Election Process - Church Manual Amendment (CM 110-113) [10]
GPS	413.	436-22GSb	Term of Office - Church Manual Amendment (CM 72) [13]
GPS	421.	443-22GS	Youth Ministries - Church Manual Amendment (CM 104-109) [14]
GPS	422.	434-22GS	Membership (Church Board and its Meetings) - Church Manual Amendment (CM 130-131) [19]
GPS	427.	424-22GS	Redemptive Membership Auditing - Church Manual Addition (CM 55) [21]
GPS	428.	426-22GS	Church Records - Church Manual Amendment (CM 82) [22]
GPS	429.	429-22GSa	Making Disciples - Church Manual Addition (CM 43) [23]
GPS	431.	408-22GS	No Additional Tests of Fellowship - Church Manual Amendment (CM 64) [28]
GPS	435.	439-22GS	Purposes of Organization - Church Manual Amendment (CM 25-26) [29]

ESD/ChManSub/SAD/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/19AC/428-19GS/428-20GS/
427-21GS/Con&By(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

427-22GS BUSINESS MEETINGS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment clarifies some of the organizational aspects of the church business meeting.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, page 128, Business Meetings, to read as follows:

Business Meetings

The local church operates within defined roles in Seventh-day Adventist Church structure. Within the context of those roles, the business meeting is the constituency meeting of the local church. (See p. 27) Members in regular standing are encouraged to attend and are entitled to vote. A member under censure has no right to participate by voice or vote.

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

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

Votes by proxy or letter are not permitted.

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

The business meeting has authority over the board and may delegate responsibilities to the board in addition to those already assigned by the *Church Manual*. (See pp. 129-132.)

The business meeting agenda should include reports about the work of the church. At least once a year the agenda should include reports covering church activities. Based on those reports, a proposed plan of action for the next year, including an annual budget, should be presented for approval. When possible, reports and plans for the next year should be presented in writing. (See Notes, #7, pp. 183, 184.)

In order to maintain a spirit of cooperation between the church and conference, the church shall secure counsel from conference officers on all major matters.

Conference and union officers (president, secretary, treasurer) or their designee may attend without vote (unless granted by the church) any business meeting of any church in their territory. An action to allow voting is not required if the officer is currently a member of that congregation.

SEC/ChManSub/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/19AC/438-19GSa/438-20GSa/
436-21GSa/ChMan(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

436-22GSa NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment provides for a standing nominating committee.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 9, Elections, pages 110-113, Nominating Committee and the Election Process, to read as follows:

Nominating Committee and the Election Process

Officers are elected every one or two years (see p. 72) through an appointed nominating committee. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of office may be extended an additional year. This committee brings its report to the church, which then votes on the names presented. This procedure enables the church to give careful study to each name prior to election and avoids the competitive element that may arise when nominations are made from the floor.

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

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

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

Quorum—The quorum for the nominating committee may be determined by the church at the same time the committee is elected. (See pp. 128, 131.)

When and How the Nominating Committee Is Appointed—The nominating committee should be appointed early in the closing quarter of the ~~church year~~ election term and should report at least three weeks before the final Sabbath of the election term, except in the case of a standing nominating committee, which functions year-round. ~~church year~~.

The pastor or district leader or, in the absence of the pastor or district leader, the elder should bring the matter to the attention of the church. The church shall then appoint an organizing committee responsible to nominate the nominating committee. This organizing committee may be chosen in one of two ways:

436-22GSa NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION
PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT - 2

1
2 1. By nominations, verbal or written, from the floor. If verbal nominations are made,
3 no member may nominate more than one person. The effort of one individual or a small group to
4 dictate to the entire membership is disapproved. Every effort should be made to ensure fair
5 representation in the composition of the organizing committee. Everything of a political nature
6 should be avoided. The pastor or district leader shall serve as chairperson of this organizing
7 committee. If a pastor or district leader has not yet been appointed to serve as church leader, the
8 chairperson of this organizing committee shall be appointed by the board from among the
9 members of the organizing committee. The size of the organizing committee should be five to
10 seven more than the number of board members.

11
12 2. By the church authorizing the board, together with five to seven additional
13 persons chosen by the church (see preceding paragraph), to function as the organizing
14 committee. If this method is adopted, the chairperson of the board normally serves as chairperson
15 of the organizing committee (see p. 32).

16
17 3. In the case of a standing nominating committee, the board may fill any vacancies
18 in their membership, or the organizing committee may choose to nominate a new list of members
19 for the nominating committee for election by the church in business session.

20
21 How the Process Works—The steps of the nominating process are:

22
23 1. The church appoints by vote an organizing committee by one of the two methods
24 listed above.

25
26 2. The organizing committee recommends names to the church for the nominating
27 committee, with a recommendation for secretary. Every effort should be made to ensure fair
28 representation in the composition of the nominating committee representing a range of age
29 groups and both genders and limiting representation to no more than two members from the
30 same immediate family. ~~committee.~~

31
32 3. By vote, the church appoints the nominating committee and the secretary.

33
34 4. The pastor or district leader is an ex officio member and serves as chairperson of
35 the nominating committee. Should the pastor or district leader choose not to serve as chairperson,
36 or if a pastor or district leader has not been appointed to the church, the organizing committee
37 shall recommend the name from the proposed nominating committee to serve as chairperson.

38
39 5. The nominating committee meets to prepare the list of officers that it will present
40 to the church for approval.
41

436-22GSa NOMINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ELECTION
PROCESS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT - 3

1 6. By vote, the church appoints its officers for the ensuing year(s) who continue to
2 serve until their resignation, replacement, or the beginning of the new election term. ~~year.~~

3
4 Who Should Be Members of the Nominating Committee—Only members - No change

5
6 Work of the Nominating Committee—The chairperson should call - No change

7
8 Nominating Committee to Get Consent of Prospective Officers—Having - No change

9
10 Members May Appear Before the Nominating Committee—Members - No change

11
12 Nominating Committee Discussions Are Confidential—All inquiries - No change

13
14 Reporting to the Church—The nominating committee's report is presented - No change

15
16 Objections to the Report of the Nominating Committee—Members may - No change

17
18 Filling Vacancies Between Elections—If an office of the church becomes vacant during
19 the term of office because of death, removal, resignation, or any other reason, and there is no
20 standing nominating committee to fill the nominations, the board may nominate ~~the board~~
21 ~~nominates~~ a successor to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office and submits the
22 nomination to the church for election.

ChManSub/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/19AC/438-19GSb/438-20GSb/436-21GSb/
ChMan(St Loui) to GPS-22GCS

436-22GSb TERM OF OFFICE - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment allows for three-year terms of office in exceptional circumstances, if approved by the conference.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and Organizations, page 72, Term of Office, to read as follows:

Term of Office

The term of office for officers of both the church and its auxiliary organizations shall be one year, except where the church in a business meeting votes to have elections every two years in order to facilitate continuity and development of spiritual gifts and eliminate the work involved in having yearly elections. In exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with the conference, the term of office may be extended an additional year.

While it is not advisable for one person to serve indefinitely in a particular position, officers may be reelected.

YOU/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/20AC/445-20GS/443-21GS/ChMan(St Louis) to
GPS-22GCS

443-22GS YOUTH MINISTRIES - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This amendment is coming as a recommendation from General Conference
Youth Ministries in consultation with the divisions

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and
Organizations, pages 104-109, to read as follows:

Adventist Youth Ministries

The various youth organizations of the church should work closely with the youth
ministries department of the conference. The church works for and with its youth through
Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM). ~~the AYM~~. Under the AYM, youth are to work together, in
cooperation with the wider church community, towards the development of a strong youth
ministry that includes spiritual, mental, and physical development of each individual, Christian
social interaction, and an active witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans
of the church. In the quest for discipleship, the goal of AYM should be to *bring* all youth to a
saving relationship with Christ, *build* them up in His Word to reflect a Christ-like character, *train*
them how to serve the church and communities using their spiritual gifts, and *send* them out to
reach the communities in the power of the Holy Spirit.

~~Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM)—The church works for and with its youth through
the AYM. Under the AYM, youth are to work together, in cooperation with the wider church
community, towards the development of a strong youth ministry that includes spiritual, mental,
and physical development of each individual, Christian social interaction, and an active
witnessing program that supports the general soul-winning plans of the church. The goal of
AYM should be to involve all youth in activities that will lead them to active church membership
and train them for Christian service.~~

AYM Mission—To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and
help them embrace His call to discipleship.

AYM Motto—The love of Christ compels us.

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

The youth ministries program of the church comprises three broad categories, namely:
Junior Youth (Adventurers: ~~ages 6-9~~ ages 4-9 and Pathfinders: ages 10-15), Senior Youth
(Ambassadors: ages 16-21 and Young Adults: ~~ages 22-30+~~, ages 22-30), and Public Campus
Students: ages 16-30+.

God said to Moses, “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.
You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your

house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:6-9).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Adventist Youth Ministries Committee—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee is the umbrella organization in the church for the general planning of the youth ministry program. (See pp. 133, 134.) The AYM Committee includes the following church-elected officers: Young Adults leader, Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator, Ambassador leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, plus the personal ministries leader, youth Sabbath School division leader, children’s ministries leader, health ministries leader, principal of

1 the school, the AYM ~~advisor, sponsor,~~ and the pastor. The Young Adults leader, Ambassador
2 leader, Pathfinder director, Adventurer director, and Public Campus Ministries leader are
3 members of the church board.
4

5 If there are no distinct Ambassador ministry or young adults ministries established in the
6 church, or until such time as they are established, the AYM Committee will plan for the senior
7 youth ministry to include both age groups.
8

9 In parts of the world where there is no Pathfinder or Adventurer ministry, or until such
10 time as they are organized, the AYM Committee will plan for appropriate activities for the junior
11 youth.
12

13 ~~The AYM leader (formerly known as the AYS director), who is a member of the board,~~
14 ~~chairs this committee. The Young Adults leader may chair the AYM Committee.~~ The committee
15 should meet as necessary to develop short- and long-range goals and plans for a successful
16 ministry. (See Notes, #18, pp. 177, 178.)
17

18 Young Adults Ministries Committee—The Young Adults Ministries - No change
19

20 Public Campus Ministries—Strengthening the Youth Ministries - No change
21

22 Public Campus Ministries Leader/Coordinator—The church may - No change
23

24 Ambassador Ministry—The Ambassador Ministry provides - No change
25

26 Ambassador Committee—The Ambassador Committee is responsible - No change
27

28 Pathfinder Club—The Pathfinder Club provides a church-centered - No change
29

30 Pathfinder Committee—The Pathfinder Club director and deputy directors are elected by
31 the church. (See pp. 105, 179.) If two deputy directors are elected, there should be one male and
32 one female. One of the deputy directors may also serve as club secretary and treasurer. ~~The~~
33 ~~director is a member of the board and the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.~~
34

35 Additional Pathfinder staff may include instructors of craft and nature classes and
36 counselors who are each responsible for a unit of six to eight Pathfinders.
37

38 Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.
39

40 Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards
41 and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should
42 consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and
43 certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

1
2 Adventurer Club—The Adventurer Club provides home and church programs for parents
3 with ~~6 to 9 year old~~ 4- to 9-year-old children. It is designed to stimulate the children's curiosity
4 and includes age-specific activities that involve both parents and child in recreational activities,
5 simple crafts, appreciation of God's creation, and other activities that are of interest to that age.
6 All is carried out with a spiritual focus, setting the stage for participation in the church as a
7 Pathfinder.

8
9 Adventurer Committee—The church elects the club director and associates. (See pp. 104,
10 178.) Additional staff members are selected by the administrative staff of the club. ~~The director~~
11 ~~is a member of the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Committee.~~

12
13 Resource materials are available from the conference youth ministries director.

14
15 Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards
16 and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should
17 consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and
18 certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #8, pp. 174, 175.)

19
20 AYM Officers—The leaders/directors of the ~~four~~ five youth ministry entities must
21 exemplify Christlike graces and have a burden for soul winning and contagious enthusiasm. The
22 five leaders/directors are members of the church board. In helping motivate youth to work
23 together and take responsibilities, the leaders/directors will be in the background— guiding,
24 counseling, and encouraging youth, helping them gain experience and the joys of achievement.
25 The leaders/directors should study the youth profile of the church and seek to involve every
26 eligible youth in the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM).

27
28 The leaders/directors will keep in touch with the pastor, ~~their respective sponsors,~~
29 advisor, and the conference youth ministries director, taking advantage of opportunities for in-
30 service training and leading their respective ministry into a cooperative relationship with the
31 church and the conference.

32
33 The associate leaders/deputy directors (if needed) will assist the leaders/directors and
34 perform leadership duties when the leaders/directors are absent. The respective committees may
35 assign additional responsibilities to the associate leaders/directors.

36
37 The secretary-treasurers will keep a record of the activities of their respective ministries,
38 submit monthly reports on forms provided to the conference youth ministries director, and
39 encourage youth to report their witnessing activities during the ten-minute personal ministries
40 period.

41
42 The respective assistant secretary-treasurers (if needed) assist with the secretary-
43 treasurers' work as assigned.

1
2 AYM Advisor—The Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) advisor ~~Sponsor~~—The
3 ~~Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) sponsor~~ may be an elder or other person on the board who
4 understands the objectives of the AYM, is sympathetic with youth and their involvement in the
5 church's ministries, and will serve as a valued counselor to the youth. The ~~sponsor~~ advisor serves
6 as a guide or counselor to AYM officers and joins them regularly in AYM Committee meetings.
7 ~~The sponsor will work with the AYM leader to present the ministry's needs to the board.~~

8
9 The ~~sponsor~~ ministry leader should become acquainted with the conference youth
10 ministries director and keep the director informed of changes in officer personnel and other
11 AYM matters. Along with AYM leaders, the ~~sponsor~~ advisor should attend conference youth
12 training institutes to keep informed about developments in youth ministry.

13
14 For the sake of continuity, the ~~sponsor~~, advisor, if possible, should serve multiple terms.

15
16 Everyone involved in work with minor children must meet Church and legal standards
17 and requirements, such as background checks or certification. Local church leaders should
18 consult with the conference, which will ascertain and advise as to what background checks and
19 certifications are available and/or required. (See Notes, #7, pp. 168, 169.)

20
21 Resources—For youth ministries resources, see Notes, #17, p. 171.

SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/19AC/436-19GS/ChManSub/ChMan/
ADCOM(Steering)/20AC/436-20GS/434-21GS to GPS-22GCS

434-22GS MEMBERSHIP (CHURCH BOARD AND ITS MEETINGS) -
CHURCH MANUAL AMENDMENT

RATIONALE: This proposed amendment updates the membership list of the church board in accordance with other *Church Manual* additions and amendments being brought to the 2022 General Conference Session.

RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 10, Services and Other Meetings, pages 130 and 131, Membership (Church Board and Its Meetings), to read as follows:

Membership—The board is elected by the members at the time of the regular election officers. (See pp. 71, 72.) In addition to conference-appointed pastors, the church should elect a representative board that includes the following officers:

Elders
Head deacon
Head deaconess
Treasurer
Clerk
Interest coordinator
Adventist Community Services leader or Dorcas Society leader
Adventist Men's coordinator
Adventist Possibility Ministries leader
Adventist Youth Ministries
Adventurer Club director
Ambassador Club leader
Pathfinder Club director
Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator
Young Adults leader
~~Adventist Youth Ministries leader~~
~~Adventurer Club director~~
~~Ambassador Club leader~~
Bible school coordinator
Children's ministries leader
Church music coordinator
Communication committee chairperson or communication secretary
Education secretary/church school principal or head teacher
Family ministries leader
Health ministries leader
Home and School Association leader
~~Pathfinder Club director~~
Personal ministries leader and secretary
~~Public Campus Ministries leader/coordinator~~

434-22GS MEMBERSHIP (CHURCH BOARD AND ITS
MEETINGS) - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT - 2

- 1 Publishing ministries coordinator
- 2 Religious liberty leader
- 3 Sabbath School superintendent
- 4 Stewardship ministries leader
- 5 Women's ministries leader
- 6 ~~Young adults leader~~
- 7

8 In some cases, depending on the size of the membership, the board may not include all of
9 this list or may add additional members. The pastor appointed by the conference to serve the
10 church always is a member of the board.

1 SEC/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/18AC/425-18GS/425-19GS/425-20GS/424-21GS/
2 ChMan(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

3
4 424-22GS REDEMPTIVE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW - *CHURCH*
5 *MANUAL* ADDITION
6

7 RATIONALE: This new section on redemptive membership review is being added as a
8 recommendation of the Nurture and Retention Committee.
9

10 RECOMMENDED, To add a new section, Redemptive Membership Review, to the *Church*
11 *Manual*, Chapter 6, Membership, following Membership Record, on page 55, to read as follows:
12

13 Redemptive Membership Review—Membership records are kept up to date by the local
14 church. They are subject to review by the next higher organization. This rule, which also applies
15 to every entity or level of the organization, provides the maximum privacy of members' personal
16 information and shall comply with legal requirements. (See p. 82.)
17

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

1 SEC/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/18AC/428-18GS/427-19GS/427-20GS/426-21GS/
2 ChMan(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

3
4 426-22GS CHURCH RECORDS - *CHURCH MANUAL* AMENDMENT

5
6 RATIONALE: This amendment provides for the auditing of church membership records.

7
8 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 8, Local Church Officers and
9 Organizations, page 82, Church Records, to read as follows:

10
11 Church Records—The clerk keeps church records, which should be carefully preserved.
12 All records and account books of all officers are the property of the church and are to be
13 surrendered to the newly elected clerk at the expiration of the term of office of the previous
14 clerk, or to the church at any time during the term on request of the pastor or elders. Church
15 records, within the privacy limitations of local law, are subject to review by the next higher
16 organization. (See p. 55.)

AM/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/19AC/430-19GSa/430-20GSa/429-21GSa/
ChMan(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

429-22GSa MAKING DISCIPLES - *CHURCH MANUAL* ADDITION

RATIONALE: This is a new chapter on the importance of discipleship.

RECOMMENDED, To add a new chapter to the *Church Manual*, Chapter 6, Making Disciples, following Chapter 5, Organizing, Uniting, and Dissolving Churches and Companies, on page 43, to read as follows:

Making Disciples

Making disciples is a continuous process by which a person becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, matures as His disciple, and makes more disciples. Baptism is an essential part of the discipleship process, but it is not the end result of that process.

Seventh-day Adventists accept with honor and humility the command of Jesus contained in the Gospel Commission to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19). We are to obey this Commission, as we live in these last days, within the context of the Three Angels’ Messages (Rev. 14:6-12).

The Gospel Commission’s main emphasis to “make disciples” contains three parts:

1. “Go therefore and make disciples” is Jesus’ command to fulfill the mission. Thus, making disciples should be our way of life. We are to go and make disciples in our homes, our work, our schools, and in our everyday interactions with others. We are to make disciples of every nation, tribe, language, and people. The goal of witnessing and evangelism is disciple-making (Matt. 10:25, Matt. 28:19, 20).

2. “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” is not the end goal but an important part in the process of discipleship as people acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, become part of His church, and commit to making more disciples. Disciples are baptized into Christ’s body, the church. Their commitment to obey Christ in making disciples should be demonstrated before baptism.

3. “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you,” indicates that teaching is a vital and ongoing experience of maturing in the experience of discipleship. “Teaching” should take place before and after baptism.

Making disciples is a continuous process with its purpose being grown “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) into Christian maturity and multiplication of disciples.

Growing as a disciple and making disciples to prepare them for the second coming of Jesus, is not optional; it is the essence of our last-day commission as Seventh-day Adventists.

Genuine discipleship only happens as a result of the amazing grace of Jesus Christ. We can take comfort that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, and He promises to be with us to the end of the world (Matt. 28:18, 20). Further, He promises us the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, Guide, and Power (John 16:7-16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8; 2:37-39).

What is a Disciple?

In Jesus' time, disciples were followers whose instruction was wholistic and comprehensive. The disciples of Jesus spent so much time with Him that they received His teachings and learned valuable lifestyle lessons. A disciple is one whose choices, decisions, and worldview are being transformed by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Christian disciples pattern their faith, character, and mission after the faith, character, and mission of their Teacher, Jesus. A disciple is one who has made a commitment to follow Christ and bring their life under the Lordship of Christ.

A disciple is a person who is becoming more like Jesus Christ in every way (Eph. 4:15). The process of disciple-making is a continuous process. It also entails teaching new believers how to bring their lives into conformity with the Word of God through various programs such as mentoring, small group ministries, Bible studies, service, etc.

1. Thus, discipleship impacts every area of our lives: our beliefs, character, lifestyle, relationships, work, entertainment, finances, health, witness, and our burden to see others in God's kingdom.

2. "Is becoming" indicates that discipleship is an ongoing activity of following Jesus.

3. "More like Jesus Christ" means that Christ is our Savior and Lord and the only perfect example for us to follow.

Growth of a Disciple

The discipleship journey starts when one takes the first steps toward Jesus (see John 1:35-2:2). Abiding in Him daily and following His Word, one can continue to grow in Christlikeness. Some of the key areas in which Scripture indicates disciples must mature in personal development, as well as part of a community of believers, are listed below:

1. *Worship/Personal Devotion*: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt. 22:37 ESV). Worship is our response to God's initiating work in our lives. True worship is not focused on us but on God (Ps. 150:6; John 4:23; Rev. 14:7).

1 “We need to cherish and cultivate a spirit of true worship, a spirit of devotion upon the
2 Lord’s holy, sanctified day. We should assemble together believing that we shall receive comfort
3 and hope, light and peace from Jesus Christ.”—FLB 35.

4
5 “Personal religion will reveal itself in bearing good fruit, sanctification is not the work of
6 a day, but a lifetime. . . . There should be in the heart of everyone grace which can bloom in the
7 garden of God. Selfishness will cut out every precious likeness of Christ, will expel humility and
8 self-denial and devotion.” —PM 91.

9
10 2. *Ministry to Others:* “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39
11 ESV). Every disciple is called and gifted by God for the benefit of the church and to take the
12 gospel message to the world (1 Peter 2:9; 4:10).

13
14 “[The disciples’] office was the most important to which human beings had ever been
15 called, second only to that of Christ Himself. They were to be workers together with God for the
16 saving of men.”—AA 19.

17
18 3. *Witnessing/Need-Based Evangelism:* “Go therefore and make disciples of all
19 nations” (Matt. 28:19 ESV). Witness and evangelism happen best when following Christ’s
20 method of ministry to the whole person.

21
22 “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour
23 mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered
24 to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”—MH 143.

25
26 4. *Obedience:* “. . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”
27 (Matt. 28:20 ESV). A primary indication of true discipleship is faithfulness to Christ and His
28 Word and submission to Him as our Lord. Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My
29 commandments” (John 14:15 ESV).

30
31 “Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus,
32 the Scripture says, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments’”—SC 60.

33
34 A faithful disciple is one who recognizes the Shepherd’s voice and continually seeks
35 to learn in order to obey more completely. Reflecting Christ’s character and laboring for the
36 enlargement of His kingdom is to be our overriding passion. This includes growth in character,
37 stewardship and service (Eph. 4:13-15; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; 1 John 3:2).

38
39 5. *Community/Outreach:* “. . . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the
40 Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19 ESV). True discipleship only happens within a
41 community that is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word, where worship,
42 ministry, evangelism, and obedience are given the highest priority (Rev. 14:6-12).

“Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What testimonies you may bear of the loving acquaintance made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God.”—7T 195.

Practical Steps

The grace of Jesus Christ is not cheap. It cost Him His life. Anyone who accepts Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior needs to know that being His disciple also comes at a cost. “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34, NIV).

Disciples grow Christlike in character amid the routines of day-to-day life. Through the intentional practices of daily Bible study, prayer, service, and mission, we grow ever deeper in our discipleship commitment. A fully committed disciple continually “walks” with Christ, being with Him, modeling one’s life after Him, and obeying Him in one’s ordinary daily activities.

The work of making disciples is ongoing. “The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time.”—DA 822. Therefore, patterning one’s life after Jesus’ example is a personal responsibility as well as a teaching responsibility that every church member owes to those who are young in the faith. Church membership and even church activity by themselves are insufficient. Ongoing personal growth as a disciple is necessary to have an impactful and lasting relationship with God.

Love, The Defining Mark of a Disciple

Loving others as God loves us, which is intimately connected to unity, is the ultimate indication of true discipleship. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another” (John 13:35, ESV).

“Christ has given us a pattern in his own example. He would bind his followers to one another and to himself. Their oneness with Christ makes them love one another, for love is the sure fruit of unity with Christ. Christ declared that their love for one another was a sure badge of their discipleship”—Ms 51, 1894.

True love for Jesus means more than His disciples loving each other; they must share God’s love with others. If we love God, we will obey his command to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. . . .” (Matt. 28:19).

1 God’s love is the defining mark of a disciple because in love all other characteristics of
2 discipleship are complete. Christ “mentioned only one condition of discipleship and service.
3 ‘Lovest thou Me?’ He said. This is the essential qualification”—DA 815. “The love of Christ is
4 not a fitful feeling, but a living principle, which is to be made manifest as an abiding power in
5 the heart. . .”—RC 345.

1 SEC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/16AC/411-16GS/409-17GS/408-18GS/
2 408-19GS/408-20GS/408-21GS/ChMan(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

3
4 408-22GS NO ADDITIONAL TESTS OF FELLOWSHIP - *CHURCH*
5 *MANUAL* AMENDMENT

6
7 RATIONALE: This amendment simplifies the language of this section.

8
9 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 7, Discipline, page 64, No
10 Additional Tests of Fellowship, Process of Discipline, to read as follows:

11
12 No Additional Tests of Fellowship—The authority to establish tests of membership rests
13 with the General Conference Session. ~~Fellowship—No minister, congregation, or conference has~~
14 ~~authority to establish tests of fellowship. This authority rests with the General Conference~~
15 ~~Session.~~ Anyone seeking to apply tests other than those herein set forth does not, therefore,
16 properly represent the Church. (See 1T 207.)

1 GMIC/ChManSub/ChMan/ADCOM(Steering)/ChMan/19AC/441-19GS/441-20GS/439-21GS/
2 ChMan(St Louis) to GPS-22GCS

3
4 439-22GS PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION - *CHURCH MANUAL*
5 AMENDMENT
6

7 RATIONALE: This amendment expresses the importance of finding new ways to reach the
8 varied and diverse cultures of the world with the Seventh-day Adventist message, including the
9 forming of new mission groups.

10
11 RECOMMENDED, To amend the *Church Manual*, Chapter 3, Organization and Authority,
12 pages 25 and 26, Purposes of Organization, to read as follows:
13

14 Missionary Purposes of Organization
15

16 Our mission remains unchanged wherever we find ourselves in the world. The Seventh-
17 day Adventist Church has been organized for the purpose of mission. However, the way in which
18 we fulfill that mission will of necessity take a variety of forms due to different cultural and
19 societal norms. As we seek to share the gospel in cross-cultural contexts, we will encounter
20 societies where particular religious bodies deem other writings as sacred, where restrictions to
21 religious freedom sometimes exist, where diverse points of view and practices occur, as well as
22 other challenges. To fulfill the mission in such diverse contexts, we rely on the guidance of the
23 Holy Spirit and employ a flexible approach to sharing God's love in a manner that reaches
24 hearts, while preserving our unique calling and identity as Seventh-day Adventists.
25

26 The conditions Seventh-day Adventists face in sharing the message of Jesus to people of
27 other religions largely parallel those that the apostles encountered. How they went about the
28 mission is instructive for us today. Although they modified their approach in keeping with the
29 audience, they never deviated from proclaiming the uniqueness of Jesus as the hope of the world.
30 They never suggested that they had come to help their hearers find a deeper spiritual experience
31 within their own religions; on the contrary, they challenged them to turn to the salvation
32 provided in Christ.
33

34 Groups should be formed to lead all people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ
35 and into fellowship with the remnant church. In forming such groups, a theologically sound,
36 culturally informed plan of action should be prayerfully developed and followed to guide these
37 new believers into membership. These groups should be established and nurtured in
38 collaboration with local administration and guidelines of the world Church. Leaders of these
39 groups should seek to lead the people into membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
40

41 The church is a missionary community and its organization exists to fulfill this purpose.
42

43 “As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there
44 would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide
45 for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the
46 churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the

439-22GS PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION - CHURCH MANUAL
AMENDMENT - 2

1 publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was
2 indispensable.”—TM 26.

3
4 “As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed
5 Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church. Mark the
6 prayer of Christ: ‘That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also
7 may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The unity of the church is
8 the convincing evidence that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer.”—5T 619, 620.