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Current

**CONSTITUTION
OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
WITH PROPOSED CHANGES**

Legend for proposed changes:
Underlined print = new wording Strikethrough = deleted wording

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this organization shall be known as the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, hereinafter referred to as the conference.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of this conference is to facilitate the proclamation of the everlasting gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 to all peoples within its territory, leading them to accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return.

ARTICLE III - Relationships

The Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is a part of the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which in turn is part of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, a world church organization; and all purposes, policies and procedures of this conference shall be in harmony with the working policies and procedures of the North American Division and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This conference shall pursue the mission of the Church in harmony with the doctrines, programs, and initiatives adopted and approved by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in its ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial sessions.

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ARTICLE IV - Territory

The territory of this Conference shall consist of the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, except San Juan County in New Mexico.

ARTICLE V - Membership

The membership of this conference shall consist of such churches as have been or shall be properly organized in any part of the geographic territory under its jurisdiction and formally approved for membership by vote of the delegates at any regularly scheduled constituency meeting.

ARTICLE VI - Bylaws

The voters of this conference may enact bylaws and amend or repeal them at any session, and such bylaws may embrace any provision not inconsistent with the constitution.

ARTICLE VII - Dissolution and Disposition of Assets

This conference may be dissolved only by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at any constituency meeting.

In the event of the dissolution of this conference, all assets remaining after all claims have been satisfied shall be transferred to a legal non-profit entity authorized by the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

ARTICLE VIII - Amendments

This constitution shall not be amended except to conform to the model local conference constitution when it is amended by action of the General Conference Executive committee at an Annual Council. This conference shall amend its constitution from time to time at any duly regularly called constituency meetings, and any such changes to conform to the spirit of the model local conference constitution located in the most current edition of the North American Division Working Policy Book. The conference executive committee may recommend to the General Conference, through the Southwestern Union Conference and the North

**American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,
amendments to the model constitution.**

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Current

**BYLAWS
OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
WITH PROPOSED CHANGES**

Legend for proposed changes:

Underlined print = new wording Strikethrough = deleted wording

ARTICLE I - Principal Office

The principal office for the transaction of the business of the Southwest Region Conference is fixed and located at 2215 Lanark Ave., Dallas, Texas, 75203. The executive committee may, in an emergency, change the location of the principal office on a temporary basis.

ARTICLE II - Constituency Meetings

Sec. 1. Regular Meeting

This conference shall hold a regular ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial constituency meeting at such time and place as the executive committee shall designate. This meeting must be held within the third quarter of the quinquennial year. Notice of the time and place of the meeting of the delegates representing the members shall be given by:

- a. A notice printed in the official publication of the Southwestern Union Conference at least four weeks before the date of the session or
- b. A method approved by the Southwest Region Conference executive committee.

Sec. 2. Special Meetings:

a. **The executive committee of the conference may call a special constituency meeting, at a time and place it deems proper when:**

- 1) **It is voted by the executive committee; or**

- 2) It is voted by the delegates at any constituency meeting; or
- 3) It is requested by ~~50~~ 33 percent of the churches of the conference through their church boards or
- 4) It is voted by the union committee, division committee, or General Conference Committee.

- b. The union committee or the division committee may call a special constituency meeting of the conference.
- c. The agenda for special constituency meetings shall be included in the notice of the meeting.
- d. The time and place of special constituency meetings shall be given in the same manner as for regularly scheduled constituency meetings.

Sec. 3. Quorum

a. ~~More than~~ At least fifty ~~forty~~ percent (40%) of the delegates authorized hereinafter under Sec. 1.a of Article III must be present at any regular constituency meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Once the meeting is declared open, the delegates present shall constitute a quorum.

b. At least thirty-three percent (33%) of the delegates authorized hereinafter under Sec. 1.a of Article III must be present at any special constituency meeting to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Once the meeting is declared open, the delegates present shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 4. Proxy Voting

All delegates must be present in person at any constituency meeting in order to be eligible to vote. There shall be no voting by proxy.

Sec. 5. Voting Rights of the Delegates

Each delegate appointed to act on behalf of the members of this conference shall ~~be entitled to~~ represent one vote. The delegate is a voting delegate until the official notice of the next regular constituency meeting. The voting rights of the individual delegates representing the members as hereinafter provided shall be limited to the particular constituency meeting ~~of the conference in which they have been designated to represent a local church, an institution, the Southwestern Union Conference, the North American Division or the~~

1 ~~General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists~~ the delegate
2 represents. The delegates shall serve at each special constituency
3 meeting held during the ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial session unless
4 such delegate is replaced by the local church for cause.
5

6 **Sec. 6 Election/Appointment and Term of Office:**
7

8 **All officers and members of the executive committee who are not**
9 **ex officio members shall be elected by the delegates at the**
10 **regular meeting of the conference constituency and shall hold**
11 **their offices until the next regular meeting of the conference**
12 **constituency, unless they resign or are removed from office, for**
13 **cause, by the executive committee/a special constituency**
14 **meeting. The election/ appointment of departmental directors,**
15 **associate departmental directors, associate secretaries, or**
16 **associate treasurer/chief financial officers, if not determined by**
17 **the delegates at the conference constituency meeting, shall be**
18 **referred to the executive committee.**
19

20 **Sec. 7. Voting - Secret Ballot/Voice Vote**
21

22 The election of officers shall be by secret ballot, and the voting on
23 other matters shall be by voice vote, or as designated by the chair,
24 unless otherwise determined by a majority of the delegates present.
25

26 **Sec. 8. Election of Officers**
27

28 All officers of the conference and members of the executive
29 committee shall be chosen by the delegates at the regular meeting of
30 the conference constituency and shall hold their offices until the next
31 regular quinquennial session, unless removed for cause by the
32 executive committee.
33

34 **Sec. 9. Term Limits**
35

- 36 a. All executive officers can be elected to the same office for a
37 maximum of two (2) consecutive five (5) year terms.
38
39 b. All departmental directors can be elected to the same office for a
40 maximum of two (2) consecutive five (5) year terms.
41
42 c. All elected official terms begin upon being voted and accepted by
43 the individual. All bylaw changes take effect at the close of the
44 constituency session.
45
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47
48

1 Sec. 10. Election of Departmental Directors

2
3 Departmental directors shall be elected at the regular ~~quadrennial~~
4 quinquennial session of the conference and shall hold their offices
5 until the next regular ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial session, unless
6 removed for cause by the executive committee.

7
8 Sec. 11. Executive committee Members Transferring to Different States

9
10 A layperson or denominational employee serving on the Southwest
11 Region Conference executive committee from a particular ~~state~~
12 geographical area (as defined by the executive committee) shall lose
13 his/her seat on the committee if he/she transfers to another
14 geographical area during the ~~quadrennium~~ quinquennium. Another
15 layperson or denominational employee representing that
16 geographical area shall be selected by the executive committee to
17 serve the remainder of the term.

18
19 Sec. 12. Session Reports Delivery Date

20
21 All reports to be presented at constituency meeting are to be
22 prepared and delivered to regular and at-large delegates at least
23 fourteen (14) days prior to the session.

24
25 Sec. 13. Rules of Order

26
27 The rules of order governing the conduct of business of constituency
28 session shall be the General Conference Rules of Order.

29
30
31 **ARTICLE III - Representation**

32
33 Sec. 1. Regular Delegates and Delegates-at-Large

34
35 **The delegates at any constituency meeting of this conference**
36 **shall be regular delegates and delegates-at-large**

- 37
38 a. **Regular Delegates: All delegates duly accredited by any**
39 **one of the organized churches and companies of the**
40 **conference.** Each church and company shall be entitled to
41 one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate
42 for each 45 members or major fraction thereof. ~~Delegates must~~
43 **and who hold membership in the local church or company**
44 **which accredits them.**

1 **b. Delegates-at-large:**
2

- 3 **1) All members of the executive committee of the**
4 **Southwest Region Conference.**
5
6 **2) All members of the executive committee of the**
7 **Southwestern Union Conference who may be present**
8 **at any constituency meeting of the conference.**
9
10 **3) All employees holding credentials or licenses issued by**
11 **this conference.**
12
13 **4) All retired employees of the Southwest Region**
14 **Conference who reside within this territory and are**
15 **members in regular standing in a Southwest Region**
16 **Conference Church.**
17
18 **5) Members of the General Conference Committee and**
19 **North American Division Committee, who may be**
20 **present at any constituency meeting of this**
21 **Conference. The number of such delegates**
22 **representing General Conference of Seventh-day**
23 **Adventists shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the**
24 **total number of delegates otherwise provided.**
25
26 **6) Such other persons as may be recommended by the**
27 **executive committee and accepted by the delegates**
28 **in session. The number of such delegates shall not**
29 **exceed ten percent (10%) of the total number of**
30 **regular delegates provided for hereinabove.**
31

32 **Sec. 2. All delegates appointed to represent the members of this**
33 **conference at any constituency meeting shall be members in**
34 **regular standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. All regular**
35 **delegates, delegates at large provided for herein above in Article III,**
36 **Sec. 1. b. 1), 3), and 4) of these bylaws, members of the Southwest**
37 **Region Conference executive committee, and every committee of the**
38 **Southwest Region Conference must be members in regular standing**
39 **of the Southwest Region Conference and must return a faithful tithe**
40 **and offering. Unfaithfulness in stewardship subjects an individual to**
41 **dismissal from their elected position.**
42

43 **Sec. 3. Delegate Representation**

44 **The number of delegates representing each church of this**
45 **conference shall be based on the official local church clerk's**
46
47

1 ~~September 30~~ report, on file in the conference secretary's office
2 the year nine months prior to the quinquennial session.

3
4 **Sec. 4. Voice and Vote Privileges**

5
6 Voice and vote privileges at regular and special sessions of this
7 conference shall be the prerogative of only regular and
8 delegates at large.
9

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14 **ARTICLE IV - Committees**

15
16 **Sec. 1. Organizing Committee**

- 17
18 a. Members of the Organizing Committee shall be chosen prior to
19 the constituency meeting. At least ninety (90) days prior to the
20 session, the secretary of the Southwest Region Conference shall
21 notify each church and company as to the number of delegates
22 to which it is entitled under Article III Sec. 1-a and the members
23 of the Organizing Committee to which it is entitled.
24
25 b. The Organizing Committee shall be constituted as follows: Each
26 church or company to be represented at the constituency
27 meeting shall choose, or empower its delegation to choose one
28 member plus one additional member for each full 500 members.
29
30 c. The chairperson of the Organizing Committees shall be the
31 president of the Southwestern Union Conference or his
32 designee.
33
34 d. The Southwest Region Conference is divided into eight (8)
35 geographical areas (as defined by the executive committee).
36 Members of the Organizing Committee shall meet in their
37 designated geographical area no later than forty-five (45) days
38 prior to the Constituency meeting at a location and date
39 determined by the conference executive committee.
40
41 e. Each geographical area of the Organizing Committee shall select
42 and appoint conference employees and lay persons from their
43 geographical area to serve on the Nominating Committee
44 according to a pre-determined number for their area. The
45 conference executive committee shall determine the number of
46 laypersons and employees for each area. The number of
47 members for the Nominating Committee for each geographical
48 area shall be determined as close as reasonably possible by the

1 proportion of the geographical area's membership to the total
2 conference membership.

3
4 f. **The Organizing Committee shall select the following:**

- 5
6 1. **A Nominating Committee,**
7 2. **A Constitution and Bylaws Committee,**
8 3. **Other committees as may be deemed necessary.**
9

10 **Sec. 2. Nominating Committee**

- 11
12 a. **The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least 10,**
13 **and but not more than 25 members, including the**
14 **president of the Southwestern Union Conference, or his**
15 **designee, who shall serve as the chairperson.** The
16 membership of the committee shall be balanced, as nearly as
17 possible, between denominational employees and laypersons
18 representing various segments of the work and territories of
19 the conference.
20
21 b. The Nominating Committee shall be chosen by the Organizing
22 Committee in the following manner: Each state of Southwest
23 Region Conference shall be represented by one layperson and
24 one denominational employee from different church districts.
25 Up to fourteen (14) additional persons shall be selected by the
26 Organizing Committee, representing various segments of the
27 work and territories of the Conference. This membership shall
28 be balanced as nearly as possible, between denominational
29 employees and laypersons. The Chairperson shall complete
30 the total number of twenty-five (25) members of the
31 Nominating Committee.
32
33 c. If a vacancy occurs in the nominating committee membership,
34 the executive committee shall appoint a replacement
35 consistent with Article IV Sec. 2 a and b.
36
37 d. The nominating committee shall begin its work within thirty (30)
38 days prior to the regular constituency session. At least
39 nineteen (19) members or 75% of the committee must be
40 present to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
41 Members of the nominating committee may request the
42 chairman to solicit résumés to possibly fill positions. The
43 committee shall have in hand its report to the delegates with a
44 résumé of each non-incumbent nominee at least seven (7)
45 days prior to the regular Constituency session.
46
47 e. The date, time, and location of the initial nominating committee
48 meeting shall be determined by the conference executive

1 committee in consultation with the president of the
2 Southwestern Union Conference or his designee, and shall be
3 made known to the Nominating Committee at least fourteen
4 (14) days prior to said meeting.
5

6 f. The nominating committee shall nominate the Officers (see
7 Article VI), the Departmental Directors, the Conference
8 executive committee, and the Conference Association Board.
9 Members of the Nominating Committee shall make nomination
10 without consideration being given to specific incumbents only.
11

12 g. No more than three (3) members of the Nominating Committee
13 shall be eligible to be elected as members of the executive
14 committee for the ensuing ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial session.
15

16 h. No individual shall be eligible to serve on the Nominating
17 Committee for two consecutive ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial
18 sessions.
19

20 **Sec. 3. Standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

21
22 a. **The standing constitution and bylaws committee shall**
23 **include an officer of the Southwestern Union Conference,**
24 **and shall be chaired by the secretary of the local**
25 **conference, or his/her designee.**
26

27 b. **This committee shall function between the regularly**
28 **scheduled constituency meetings and shall submit its**
29 **reports and detailed recommendations through the**
30 **conference executive committee to the next regular**
31 **constituency meeting or special constituency meeting.**
32

33 **Sec. 4. Executive Committee Members Eligible to Serve On Nominating**
34 **Committee**

35
36 a. **The members of the executive committee who served**
37 **during ~~the ending of the quadrennium~~ quinquennium are not**
38 **eligible to serve on the nominating committee during the**
39 **current session, but may be selected to serve on other**
40 **current session committees.**
41

42 b. **Former members of the executive committee are eligible**
43 **to serve on the nominating committee, who were**
44 **eliminated from service under Article II, Sec. 9 11 and to**
45 **whom Article IV, Sec. 4a does not apply.**
46
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1 **ARTICLE V - Executive Committee**

2
3 **Sec. 1. Membership**

4
5 a. **The executive committee of Southwest Region Conference of**
6 **Seventh-day Adventists shall be elected at its regularly**
7 **scheduled constituency meeting and shall consist of not**
8 **more than twenty-seven (27) members. The president,**
9 **secretary, treasurer/**~~**chief financial officer**~~**, and vice president**
10 **shall be members ex officio of the executive committee. The**
11 **remaining membership shall be balanced as nearly as**
12 **possible between laypersons and denominational employees.**
13 **The membership shall include** ~~**the conference director of**~~
14 ~~**education,**~~ **one layperson and one denominational employee**
15 **from each state and from different church districts, and up to**
16 **twelve (12) additional persons from the eight (8) geographical**
17 **areas of the conference.**

18
19 **The officers of the Southwestern Union Conference, of the**
20 **North American Division and of the General Conference of**
21 **Seventh-day Adventists are members ex officio of the local**
22 **conference executive committee; however, their membership**
23 **shall be in addition to the number detailed above. Any such**
24 **officers exercising their voting rights at any one meeting**
25 **shall not make up more than ten percent (10%) of the**
26 **committee membership present.**
27

28
29 **Until such time as a vice president is elected/or appointed,**
30 **the membership of the executive committee shall be no more**
31 **than twenty-five (25) members instead of twenty-seven (27)**
32 **members and the twelve (12) additional persons from various**
33 **sections of the conference shall be eleven (11) additional**
34 **persons instead of twelve (12).**

- 35
36 b. **The executive committee should include at least two (2) non**
37 **office employees and two (2) laypersons from the previous**
38 **executive committee for the purpose of continuity.**
39
40 c. **No individual shall be eligible to serve on the executive committee**
41 **for more than two consecutive quinquennial sessions unless the**
42 **individual is returning under a different elected position.**
43

44 **Sec. 2. Delegated Authority**

45
46 **The executive committee of the conference is delegated the**
47 **authority to act on behalf of the constituents between regular**
48 **sessions, including the authority to elect or remove, for cause**

1 **officers, directors of departments/services, board and committee**
2 **members.**

3
4 **Sec. 3. Administrative Authority**

5
6 **The executive committee shall have full administrative authority:**

- 7
8 a. To fill for the current term, any vacancies that may occur by
9 death, resignation or otherwise, in its boards, committees,
10 departments or in offices which have been filled by conference
11 election. **If a new president is to be elected, the president**
12 **of the Southwestern Union Conference or his designee,**
13 **shall serve as chairman of the executive committee.**
14
15 b. To appoint subcommittees, such as an administrative
16 committee, with their terms of reference.
17
18 c. To employ ministers, ~~secretaries~~ and other persons as
19 deemed necessary for the work of the conference.
20
21 d. To grant and withdraw credentials and licenses. The
22 withdrawal of credentials or the removal of those names under
23 Article V, Section 3, Subsection c, of these bylaws shall require
24 the consent of ~~two-thirds (2/3)~~ a simple majority of the
25 members of the executive committee.
26
27 e. To remove any executive officer of the conference shall require
28 the consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the executive
29 committee.
30
31
32 f. To handle other business matters of the conference.
33

34 **Sec. 4. Regular Meetings**

- 35
36 a. The executive committee shall schedule at least (4) regular
37 meetings per year at such times and places as it may select.
38
39 b. Invitees to the meetings, such as conference departmental
40 directors shall be non-voting members with participation rights
41 in committee discussions. Individuals who are invited for
42 special presentations will do so without voting rights.
43
44 c. Observers to the meetings, such as the Lay Advisory
45 Chairperson, laypersons or denominational employees
46 (teachers, pastors, or others) appointed by the committee, will
47 observe the operations of the executive committee without
48 voice or vote. Permission to participate in committee
49 discussions may be granted by the committee members.

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- d. The officers of the Southwestern Union Conference, of the North American Division and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are members ex officio of the local conference executive committee; however, their membership shall be in addition to the number detailed above. Any such officers exercising their voting rights at any one meeting shall not make up more than ten percent (10%) of the membership present.
 - e. The Ministerial Secretary shall meet with the executive committee when they are in executive sessions that concern personnel issues. The ministerial secretary will have voice but no vote.

16 Sec. 5. Special Meetings

17
18 Special meetings of the executive committee may be called at any
19 time or place by the president or, in his absence, by the secretary. A
20 special meeting shall also be called by the secretary in response to
21 the written request of a majority of the members of the executive
22 committee.

23
24 Sec. 6. **Quorum**

25
26 Fourteen (14) members of the executive committee shall constitute a
27 quorum.

28
29
30 **ARTICLE VI - Officers**

31
32 Sec. 1. **Executive Officers**

33
34 **The executive officers of this conference shall be a president, a
35 secretary, and a treasurer/chief financial officer.**

36
37 **The secretary and the treasurer may be one individual known as
38 the secretary-treasurer/chief financial officer. It is the duty of
39 these officers, in consultation with one another, to carry forward
40 the work according to plans, policies, and programs voted by the
41 constituency and/or the conference executive committee. These
42 plans, policies, and programs shall be in harmony with the
43 doctrines and actions adopted and approved by the General
44 Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in its quadrennial
45 quinquennial sessions.**

- 46
47 a. **President:** The president, who shall be an ordained
48 minister of experience, is the first officer and shall report

1 to the executive committee of the conference in
2 consultation with the secretary and treasurer/chief
3 financial officer. He shall act as chairman of the
4 constituency meetings and the executive committee, and
5 serve in the general interest of the Southwest Region
6 Conference as the constituency and the executive
7 committee shall determine. In his leadership he shall
8 adhere to the policies of the Southwestern Union
9 Conference and the North American Division of the
10 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, work in
11 harmony with the Southwestern Union Conference
12 Committee, and in close counsel with the union officers.
13

14 b. **Secretary/Vice President for Administration:** The secretary,
15 associated with the president as an executive officer, shall
16 serve under the direction of the executive committee and
17 shall act as vice-chairperson of the committee. The
18 secretary shall report to the executive committee of the
19 conference after consultation with the president. It shall
20 be the duty of the secretary to keep the minutes of the
21 conference constituency meetings and of the executive
22 committee meetings, to furnish copies of these minutes to
23 all members of the executive committee and to the officers
24 of the Southwestern Union Conference. The secretary
25 shall also be responsible for providing information as may
26 be requested by the president or by the executive
27 committee, and shall perform such other duties as usually
28 pertain to the office.
29

30 c. **Treasurer/Chief Financial Officer:** The treasurer/chief
31 financial officer, associated with the president as an
32 executive officer, shall serve under the direction of the
33 executive committee. The treasurer/chief financial officer
34 shall report to the executive committee of the conference
35 after consultation with the president. The treasurer/chief
36 financial officer shall be responsible for providing
37 financial leadership to the organizations which will
38 include, but shall not be limited to, receiving, safeguarding
39 and disbursing all funds in harmony with the actions of
40 the executive committee, for remitting all required funds to
41 the union/division/General Conference in harmony with
42 the North American Division policy, and for providing
43 financial information to the president and the executive
44 committee. The treasurer/chief financial officer shall also
45 be responsible for furnishing copies of the financial
46 statements to the Southwestern Union officers.
47

1 d. **The treasurer/chief financial officer is responsible for**
2 **auditing the books of the local churches. Where it is**
3 **found impossible for the treasurer/chief financial officer to**
4 **personally audit the books of the local churches, the**
5 **executive committee shall arrange with him/her for**
6 **assistance as may be necessary in order to make the**
7 **above possible. The treasurer/chief financial officer has**
8 **an oversight responsibility for the local church treasurers.**
9

10
11 **Sec. 2. Other Officers**

12
13 Other individuals may serve as officers of the local conference, such
14 as vice president, associate secretary and associate treasurer.
15

16
17 **ARTICLE VII - Directors of Departments/Associations/Services**
18

19
20 **Sec. 1. Advisory Role**

21
22 **The directors of departments/associations/services of this**
23 **conference shall work under the direction of the executive**
24 **committee of the conference and the president and shall serve in**
25 **an advisory relationship to the field.**
26

27
28 **Sec. 2. Departments/Services Structure**

29
30 Conference departments/services shall be organized in harmony with
31 the departmental/service structure of the General Conference, but
32 shall not necessarily duplicate the departments/services in the Union,
33 Division or General Conference.
34

35
36 **ARTICLE VIII - Other Organizations**
37

38 **Sec. 1. Unincorporated Organizations**

39
40 The Southwest Region Conference may carry on its ministry through
41 unincorporated subsidiary organizations. Constituency meetings of
42 such organizations shall be held in conjunction with the regularly
43 scheduled constituency meetings of the conference.
44

45 **Sec. 2. Corporations**

46
47 **The Southwest Region Conference may form corporate bodies**
48 **provided it obtains prior approval of the North American**

1 Division. Membership meetings and elections of boards of
2 directors shall be held as provided by articles and bylaws of the
3 corporations in harmony with applicable laws.
4

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6
7 **ARTICLE IX - Finance**
8

9 **Sec. 1. Tithes and Offerings**

10
11 The church funds managed by this conference shall consist of
12 such tithe, including direct tithe, as it shall be assigned by policy
13 and as received from within its territory, and such gifts, legacies,
14 bequests, devises, appropriations, reverted funds, and other
15 donations as may be made to it.
16

17 **Sec. 2. Policies**

18
19 The portion of the tithe which is reserved for this conference, as
20 specified by policy, and all other funds shall be used in harmony
21 with the financial policies of the North American Division of the
22 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; and in the case
23 of donations, their use shall be in harmony with the
24 specifications of donors and in compliance with the government
25 regulations. Tithes are shared with the union and division on
26 fixed percentages as set by the division executive committee,
27 and with the General Conference on fixed percentages as set by
28 the Annual Council of the General Conference executive
29 committee.
30

31 **Sec. 3. Bank Accounts**

32
33 The funds of this conference shall be safeguarded in harmony
34 with the financial policies of the North American Division of the
35 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Monies shall be
36 deposited in the name of the Southwest Region Conference of
37 Seventh-day Adventists in regular or special accounts, in such
38 banks or saving institutions as the executive committee shall
39 designate, and shall be withdrawn only by persons authorized by
40 resolution of the executive committee.
41

42 **Sec. 4. Financial Statements**

43
44 The Southwest Region Conference shall prepare annually
45 appropriate statements of income and fund balances and shall
46 be responsible for the filing of any financial information directly
47 within the Southwestern Union and the North American Division
48 of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and, to the

1 extent required by law, with any branch of local or national
2 government.

3
4
5
6 **ARTICLE X - Budget, Salary Review and Audit**

7
8 **Sec. 1. Budget**

9
10 **The Southwest Region Conference shall prepare an annual**
11 **budget in harmony with the policies of the North American**
12 **Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.**

13
14 **Sec. 2. Salary and Expense Review**

15
16 The executive committee shall constitute an employee remuneration
17 committee to review annually the salary and expenses of all the
18 employees and set salary rates for the subsequent year.

19
20 **Sec. 3. Independent Audit**

21
22 **All accounting records of this conference shall be audited at**
23 **least annually by an auditor designated by the General**
24 **Conference Auditing Service; and the records of this conference**
25 **or any of its subsidiaries, agencies or institutions shall at all**
26 **times be open to said auditor.**

27
28
29 **ARTICLE XI - Indemnification**

30
31 **Sec. 1.** To the extent permitted by law, this conference shall indemnify any
32 person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to
33 any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding,
34 whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, because
35 he/she is or was a member of the conference executive committee or
36 an officer, employee, or agent of the conference against expenses,
37 (including legal fees), judgments, fines, and amounts paid in
38 settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection
39 with such action, suit, or proceeding if he/she acted in good faith and
40 in a manner he/she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to
41 the best interest of the conference, and, with respect to any criminal
42 action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his/her
43 conduct was unlawful.

44
45 **Sec. 2.** This right of indemnification shall be in addition to, and not exclusive
46 of, all other rights to which such member of the executive committee
47 or an officer or department director may be entitled.
48

(Note: This right of indemnification may be expanded or contracted as allowed under local law and as adopted by the constituents.)

ARTICLE XII - Churches

Sec. 1. Each church, in order to be retained as a member of this conference shall conform to the tenets, general policies and usages of the Seventh-day Adventists denomination set forth in the current edition of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual and the current Working Policy of the North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Sec. 2. This conference may receive or expel a church at any regular session, or in a special session providing such a church has been given notice to the proposed action at least thirty (30) days previous to the date of the special session, either by letter or through publication in the Southwestern Union Record, or by such other means or methods as voted by the executive committee.

Sec. 3. ~~Legal title to all real property acquired by churches, institutions, and associations, within the conference shall immediately, upon acquisition, be vested in the Southwest Region Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, the legal corporation of the conference unless otherwise permitted in writing by the executive committee. All such real properties acquired by the Southwest Region Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists and/or churches, and/or conference institutions are held in trust for the organization that acquired it.~~

Legal title to all real property acquired by local congregations, institutions and associations within the conference shall be acquired and title held in the name of the Southwest Region Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc., the legal corporation of the Conference. Local congregations will be given permission to use the property and the responsibility for its upkeep, subject to the overall control and consent of the Conference.

ARTICLE XIII - Conference Church

Sec. 1. The conference church shall consist of such baptized believers as may be received into its membership who do not live close to any regularly organized church.

1 Sec. 2. The president of the conference shall be the pastor of the conference
2 church. The conference secretary, shall likewise serve as the clerk of
3 the conference church, and the conference treasurer/chief financial
4 officer shall serve as the treasurer of the conference church. The
5 executive committee shall serve as the administrative board of this
6 church for the acceptance and dismissal of members.
7

8
9 ARTICLE XIV - Lay Advisory/Town Hall Meeting

10
11 Sec. 1. A permanent Southwest Region Lay Advisory made up of an elder
12 and one other designee from each church of the conference shall
13 meet with the officers and departmental directors not less than two (2)
14 times per year, to study all phases of the conference program, and
15 will make recommendations and give counsel to the executive
16 committee. It is recommended that these Lay Advisory meetings be
17 held in conjunction with conference-wide meetings, such as elders
18 and deacons retreats, camp meetings, and church officers meetings.
19 The officers of the conference and departmental directors should
20 submit written reports at these Lay Advisory meetings.
21

22 Sec. 2. The Lay Advisory is to be chaired by a layperson elected by the
23 conference constituency at the regular ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial
24 session to serve for the term of the ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial session.
25 The Lay Advisory Chairperson will also sit on the executive
26 committee as an observer.
27

28 Sec. 3 Town hall meetings shall be held annually throughout the conference
29 with at least one general town hall meeting held on the last Sunday of
30 camp meeting.
31

32
33 ARTICLE XV - Pastoral Advisory

34
35 A permanent Southwest Region Pastoral Advisory consisting of eight (8) pastors
36 from the eight (8) geographical areas of the conference shall be elected by the pastors
37 from those respective areas. They shall meet with the conference officers not less than
38 twice per year to discuss pertinent conference-related issues, and to make
39 recommendations to the conference officers and/or the executive committee. The
40 members of this advisory shall serve for the term of the ~~quadrennial~~ quinquennial.
41

42
43 ARTICLE XVI – Amendments

44
45 Amendment, Revision, and Repeal:

46
47 The bylaws of this conference which are essential to the unity of the Church
48 worldwide, and are designated in bold print shall be amended or revised from time

1 to time in order to comply with changes to the Model Local Conference Constitution
2 and Bylaws as voted by the General Conference Executive Committee in its annual
3 meetings. Such amendments or revisions shall be approved by a two-thirds
4 majority vote of the delegates present and voting at any duly called constituency
5 meeting of the local conference. Other sections of the bylaws may be amended,
6 revised, or repealed, in like manner, provided such changes are in harmony with
7 the spirit of the Model Local Conference Constitution and Bylaws, and have been
8 processed through the conference executive committee. Notice of any proposed
9 changes to the constitution and bylaws of this conference shall be given
10 specifically in conjunction with the publication of notice for the session. The
11 constituency or the conference executive committee may recommend to the
12 General Conference through the Southwestern Union Conference and the North
13 American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
14 amendments to the Model Local Conference Constitution and Bylaws.

15
16
17 ~~Sec. 1. — This conference shall amend its bylaws from time to time at any~~
18 ~~duly called constituency meeting, any such changes to conform~~
19 ~~to the spirit of the model local conference bylaws. Such~~
20 ~~amendments or revisions shall be approved by a two thirds (2/3)~~
21 ~~majority vote of the delegates present and voting.~~

22
23 ~~Sec. 2. — The constituency or the conference Executive Committee may~~
24 ~~recommend to the General Conference through the~~
25 ~~Southwestern Union Conference and the North American~~
26 ~~Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists~~
27 ~~amendments to the Model Local Conference Constitution and~~
28 ~~Bylaws.~~

29
30 **Sec. 3 1.** Copies of proposed constitution and bylaws are to be furnished
31 to each delegate three (3) weeks before the quadrennial
32 quinquennial session via email to the delegates, posting on our
33 conference website, the postal service, and/or social network.
34
35
36
37