

Defining Participation: A Model Conference Constitution

Preamble: The Church's Objectives and Polity

Varied concepts of the church and its objectives find expression in diverse forms of church government. The New Testament conceives of the church as a community of faith composed of people who, individually, accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and commit their lives and service to him as head over the church. It is what they *are*, collectively and corporately; it is not an impersonal entity or a hierarchy to which they *belong*. In this community of faith all are equal, all are one in Christ, bound together in allegiance to him by the bond of the Holy Spirit. As a corporate body the church belongs equally to all of its members. Each has a legitimate, inalienable interest in and concern for its effective operation and a God-given responsibility to contribute to the success of its mission. This is the corporate aspect of the priesthood of all believers.

According to the New Testament, the church provides an environment and a fellowship within which its members, as

members of the body of Christ, can cooperate together for their mutual edification and encouragement, and for the accomplishment of their individual and collective mission to the world. This ministry includes the present well-being of all human beings, and their reconciliation to Jesus Christ in preparation for his soon return and life eternal.

New Testament principles and church members' governmental expectations will find expression in the organizational structure adopted by the membership. In the North American Division, it will be constitutional and representative, and authority will be exercised in harmony with the gospel and the informed will of the church as a whole. Members of the church have a duty to cooperate intelligently and responsibly with those to whom they entrust authority. Those elected or appointed to positions of authority and leadership will be responsible to God and to the church for the manner in which they exercise the authority entrusted to them and discharge their several responsibilities. They are to serve, not to rule over, the church. Each member, according to his or her natural abilities and spiritual gifts, will contribute to the well-being of all and to the mission of the church

to the world. Directly, or indirectly through elected representatives, each will have a meaningful role in the decision-making process, in the election of leaders to implement the decisions made, and in evaluating the quality of their leadership and the manner in which they exercise authority.

Article 1: The Conference

This conference shall be known as the _____ Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is one of _____ conferences associated together in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, its designated territory being _____. Acting in harmony with the will of its constituent congregations, which it represents, it is the highest authority of the church within its territory.

Membership. The membership of this conference consists of the organized congregations and conference-operated institutions within its territory that have been or shall be accepted as such by vote of the conference in regular or special session. Each congregation shall administer its own affairs and cooperate with the other congregations in the basic decision-making and electoral processes of the conference.

Authority. This conference, an integral part of the world church, derives its constitutional authority from its constituent congregations and membership, and implements the policies they initiate, and those of the church at large, in so far as they are applicable and appropriate to the church in the _____ Conference. Title to all real property and fixtures appertaining to institutions, congregations, and companies of the conference shall be held in the name of the conference.

Article 2: The Conference Session

Delegates. Supreme legislative authority for the _____ Conference shall be vested in a Triennial Conference Session, to which delegates shall be elected by the congregations and conference-operated institutions. Each congregation shall have one delegate for the congregation plus one additional delegate for each 100 members or major fraction thereof, to be chosen by the congregation. Delegates from conference-operated institutions shall include the ranking officer of each institution or his or her designee plus one additional delegate for each 50 employees or major fraction thereof, to be chosen by the employees of the institution. Elected conference officers, senior pastors of congregations, and associate pastors of congregations shall be voting delegates *ex officio*. All delegates shall be members of congregations within the conference. Voting delegates shall be elected not later than four months prior to the session. Apportionments shall be calculated as of the end of the preceding calendar year. Fifty-one percent of the voting delegates to any regular or special session shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Unless elected by their respective congregations or institutions as delegates or unless they are voting delegates *ex officio*, members of permanent commissions, committees, and boards of the conference (as specified in this constitution), administrators of conference-operated institutions, and guest officers of organizations above the conference level, duly appointed to the session, shall be non-voting delegates. Such delegates may speak in the same manner as other delegates. As space permits, members of the constituent congregations of the conference may be present as observers but shall have no voice in the session deliberations.

Calling Regular and Special Sessions. The Conference Executive Committee shall designate the time and place of regular and

special sessions. Notice of a regular or special session shall be given by publication in two consecutive issues of a regular publication designated by the session, the last of which notices shall appear at least two weeks prior to the session.

A special session may be called by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. A special session shall be called by the Executive Committee when so requested by submission to the vice president for administration of a petition signed by at least 20 percent of the delegates.

Authority of the Session. The Conference Session shall have authority to amend this constitution; to elect a president, a vice president for administration, a vice president for finance, members of the Conference Executive Committee and of the permanent commissions, committees, and boards of the conference (as specified in this constitution); to determine the basic administrative policies of the conference; to authorize conference programs; to accept congregations or institutions into the constituency and to expel congregations or institutions from the constituency; to authorize ministerial credentials and licenses; and to transact such other business as may properly come before it.

Session Personnel. At least one month prior to a regular session, and at the time a special session may be called, the Adjudicatory Commission (as constituted in Article VI) shall appoint a session chairperson and vice chairperson, parliamentarian and vice parliamentarian, and secretary and vice secretary. The parliamentarian shall, when requested by the chairperson, rule on procedural matters, using as a guide the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*. The secretary shall preserve a true and accurate record of the proceedings and actions of the session and shall be responsible for the tallying of all votes cast. During a session as at other times, the Adjudicatory Commission shall interpret this constitution when questions arise about its intent.

Voting. In the election of personnel to fill

all offices, voting shall be by secret ballot. A majority vote shall elect and shall determine all other matters except amendments to this constitution and matters specified in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* as requiring a different proportion.

Agenda Proposals. Not later than four months prior to each regular session the vice president for administration shall solicit agenda proposals for consideration at the session from congregations, conference-operated institutions, the Conference Executive Committee, departmental directors, and the permanent commissions, committees, and boards of the conference. The vice president for administration shall accept for consideration any other proposals that may be submitted. All proposals shall be submitted in writing, shall include an explanation of the proposal and an argument in favor not to exceed 500 words in length, and shall bear the name and position of one to three principal sponsors of the proposal. The Conference Executive Committee shall review all proposals and prepare an agenda for the session. The agenda shall include any proposal signed by at least 10 percent of the delegates.

Not later than two months prior to the session, the vice president for administration shall transmit to all congregations, conference-operated institutions, the Conference Executive Committee, departmental directors, and the permanent commissions, committees, and boards of the conference a statement in full of the proposals approved for the session agenda, with a request for arguments against these proposals. Such arguments, not to exceed 500 words in length, and bearing the name and position of one to three principal opponents of the proposal, shall be submitted to the vice president for administration. From these he or she shall select one that most effectively presents reasons for opposing the proposal.

Session Booklet. Not later than one month prior to the session the vice president for administration shall publish a session booklet and shall send it to each prospective

delegate, each pastor and head elder of a congregation, each ranking officer of a conference institution, each officer of the conference, each departmental director, and each member of a permanent conference commission, committee, or board. Copies of the booklet shall be available for distribution at the conference office to other persons requesting it. The session booklet shall contain:

- a. The agenda, including all proposals accepted for the agenda, which shall be given in full.
- b. A brief summary of the background and content of each proposal, prepared by the vice president for administration.
- c. A brief estimate of the fiscal impact of each proposal, prepared by the vice president for finance.
- d. For each proposal, the argument in favor of the proposal.
- e. For each proposal against which arguments were submitted, one such argument selected by the vice president for administration, as specified above.
- f. A statement concerning the organization and procedures of the session and the responsibilities of delegates.
- g. A list of the delegates, indicating their status (elected or *ex officio*) and the congregation, institution, or other conference entity they represent or which with they are affiliated.
- h. A copy of this constitution, and of proposed amendments thereto.

The summary and estimate referred to in (b) and (c) above shall be informative only in nature and shall not be so written or presented as to constitute advocacy for or against any proposal.

Additional information needed by the delegates to discharge their responsibilities shall be supplied to the delegates with the session booklet by the vice president for administration.

Pre-Session Delegate Meetings. Prior to each regular session, the conference president shall arrange for at least five area meetings

with the delegates. These meetings shall occur between two to four months before the date of the session. The chairperson for each meeting shall be designated by the Executive Committee and shall not be an employee of the conference. Items for discussion at these meetings shall come from the delegates.

Tenure and Duties of Delegates. Delegates to each Triennial Conference Session shall retain their delegate status for three years, until delegates are chosen for the next Triennial Conference Session. They shall be delegates to any special conference session called during the interim between regular sessions, except that delegates who for any reason may no longer be able to serve or who no longer represent their congregation or institution may be replaced by that congregation or institution. Following each conference session, delegates shall make a full report to their respective constituencies, explaining actions taken and assisting in implementing such actions within their constituencies.

Delegate Roster and Identification Card. Each congregation and conference institution shall maintain a permanent roster of its delegates, removing the names of those who cease to represent it or who may no longer be able to serve and adding the names of replacements. The church clerk shall inform the conference vice president for administration of such changes.

The conference vice president for administration shall maintain a permanent roster of all voting delegates, with their signatures. He or she shall update this roster at least once each year and shall send this roster annually to all delegates. He or she shall also issue each voting delegate an official delegate's identification card bearing the delegate's name, the name of the constituency the delegate represents, and the delegate's term of service and signature.

The Organizing Committee. At least three months prior to the session, each delegation representing a congregation, acting as a unit, shall elect from among its members

people to serve on the Session Organizing Committee. Each congregation shall be entitled to one member of the Organizing Committee, and one additional member for each 500 members or major fraction thereof, computed on the basis of its membership at the close of the preceding year. The Organizing Committee shall meet at least ten calendar weeks before the session. At that time it shall choose its own chairperson and shall select the members of the Nominating Committee. In choosing the Nominating Committee, the Organizing Committee shall recognize that it has a duty to consider the diversity of members within the conference. Either before or during the session it shall perform such other duties as may be requested by the Conference Executive Committee.

The Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of not more than 21 members and shall select its own chairperson. It shall meet at least two months before each regular session. At least two-thirds of its members shall be laypeople not in the employ of the conference. For all permanent commissions, committees, and boards it may nominate more people than minimally necessary to fill available positions. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to compile for each nominee a resume of the nominee's service record, qualifications, and major objectives if elected. The Nominating Committee shall recognize in its nominations to all Conference committees, commissions, and boards that it has a duty to consider the diversity of members within the conference. All nominees shall have indicated in writing their intention to serve if elected.

The Nominating Committee may nominate more than one person for each position. Any eligible person favored by at least one-third of the committee or for whom a nominating petition signed by at least 20 percent of the delegates is submitted to the committee shall appear on the ballot. Meetings of the Nominating Committee shall be closed, but the Nominating Com-

mittee shall hear all people who request in writing an opportunity to appear before it and shall receive all documents presented to it that are relevant to its duties. Upon the committee's request, the vice president for administration shall furnish to the committee any conference documents that the committee shall deem necessary for the discharge of its responsibilities.

The Nominating Committee may recommend that the session remove from office any appointed conference official. Proposals for removal of appointed officials may also be made to the session delegates by petitions signed by at least 20 percent of the delegates. Proposals for removal of appointed officials shall take effect if approved by majority vote of the delegates present. Vacancies created in this matter shall be filled in the same way as other vacancies in appointed positions.

Special Sessions and Action without Meeting. Special conference sessions may be called by majority vote of the Conference Executive Committee or by submission to the vice president for administration of a petition signed by at least 20 percent of the delegates and submitted to the vice president for administration at least three weeks before the special session.

A session booklet for the special session shall be prepared by the vice president for administration at least two weeks in advance of the session. It shall include all of those items specified above for the regular session booklet.

Elected or appointed conference officials may be removed from office at a special session by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present, if their removal was specified as an item on the agenda for the special session.

By a majority vote of the Conference Executive Committee or by submission to the vice president for administration of a petition signed by at least 20 percent of the delegates, any business except removal of conference elective and appointive personnel may be brought to the delegates without meeting. In such case, the vice president for

administration shall obtain and circulate to the delegates for each proposal the summary, financial estimate, and arguments for and against the proposal specified above for inclusion in the session booklet, in addition to any other relevant information needed by the delegates to discharge their responsibilities. Votes on such actions shall be returned in person or by mail to the vice president for administration. Actions taken by the delegates in a special session and without meeting shall have equal force with actions taken at a regular conference session.

Article 3: Electoral Procedures

Elective Personnel. The president, vice president for administration, vice president for finance, and members of the Conference Executive Committee and other permanent commissions, committees, or boards of the conference (as specified in Article 6) shall be elected at each regular conference session. Unless otherwise specified herein, their term of office shall be three years, or from the time of their election until their successors are elected.

Qualifications. The conference president shall be an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister. All other offices and positions shall be equally open to all church members. Any person elected or appointed to conference offices or positions shall be a member of a constituent congregation or company of the conference at election or appointment or shall become a member within a reasonable time after election or appointment.

The vice president for administration shall have education in administration or a related field and administrative experience before nomination. The vice president for finance shall have education in business or finance and business experience before nomination.

Additional qualifications for these positions, clearly related to the duties of the

position and not inconsistent with this constitution, may be established by the Conference Executive Committee. Such criteria shall be reviewed by the Conference Executive Committee four to six months before each regular conference session.

The Election. Early in the session, the Nominating Committee shall present its report, which shall be accompanied for each nominee by the nominee's service record, qualifications, and major objectives if elected. Additional nominations from the floor at the session shall not be permitted. Election to all offices shall be by secret ballot. Where only one position is being filled, a simple majority of the votes shall elect. If a simple majority is not obtained on the first ballot, the two names receiving the highest number of votes shall appear on a second ballot. For all elective committees, boards, and commissions, the available positions shall be filled by the nominees receiving the largest number of votes. If only one nominee is presented for a position, the ballot shall provide for an affirmative or negative vote. If negative votes exceed affirmative votes for any nominee, the Nominating Committee shall resubmit a nominee or nominees (who may include the first nominee), and a simple majority shall elect. If a simple majority is not obtained on the first ballot, the two names receiving the highest number of votes shall appear on a second ballot. For members of the Executive Committee and of all permanent commissions, committees, and boards, more names may appear on the ballot than positions to be filled. In case of a tie for the last position to be filled, the tying names shall appear on a second ballot.

Article 4: Officers and Their Duties

The officers of the conference shall be a president, a vice president for administration, and a vice president for finance,

elected at each Triennial Session. They shall enter upon their respective duties when elected and shall hold office for a term of three years, or until their successors are elected and assume their duties.

As chief executive officer of the conference the *president* shall administer its affairs subject to this constitution and as directed by the Conference Executive Committee. He shall foster and coordinate all branches of the work of the church within the conference, and all conference programs. He shall call meetings of the Executive Committee and preside at its meetings, or designate another member of the Executive Committee to do so; or a chairperson pro tem may be chosen by the Committee on its own initiative to serve in the absence of the president or his designee. He shall coordinate the work of the Executive Committee and the permanent commissions, committees, and boards, and supervise the work of the other officers, the staff, and the employees of the conference. He shall perform all other duties appropriate to the office of president except those reserved by this constitution to other conference officers, committees, commissions, and boards. He shall report to the conference session for review.

The *vice president for administration* shall preserve a full and complete record of all conference proceedings and serve and publish all official conference notices. He or she shall prepare the agenda for each conference session and publish the session booklet. He or she shall perform other duties assigned to him or her by this constitution, by the president, or by the Conference Executive Committee and shall report to the conference session for review.

The *vice president for finance* shall receive and have custody of all conference monies deposited with him or her, together with gifts, legacies, and bequests. In consultation with the conference president he or she shall prepare a budget for the conference, which shall be submitted to the Conference Executive Committee for approval. He or

she shall supervise, control, and be responsible for the keeping of accounts and books of the conference in a manner consistent with the policies, procedures, and guidelines established by the Conference Executive Committee, the North American Division, and the General Conference. He or she shall pay and receive all monies in whatever form necessary to carry out his or her duties. He or she shall make and file a full annual report of all financial business transacted by the conference, and make and submit such other written reports and statements as may be required by the Executive Committee. He or she shall supervise and audit the financial records of each congregation, company, and conference institution, or cause this to be done. He or she shall report to the conference session for review.

The records and accounts of this Conference shall be audited by the auditor of the North American Division or by an independent certified public accountant.

Article 5: Administration

The Executive Committee. Administrative authority for this conference between sessions of the constituency shall be vested in an Executive Committee of 16 members elected by and responsible to the Conference Session. It shall consist of the conference president, vice president for administration, and vice president for finance, and at least eight laypeople not in the employ of the conference or having business dealings involving more than 10 percent of their business with the church or its subsidiaries. The Executive Committee shall have jurisdiction over all matters not reserved by this constitution to the conference session or to permanent commissions, committees, or boards of the conference elected by the conference session.

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called at any time by order of the president or at the president's request by the

vice president for administration. Upon the written request of five or more members of the Executive Committee, the president or the vice president for administration shall promptly call a special meeting. At such a meeting, in the absence of the president or a chairperson designated by him or her the committee may choose a chairperson *pro tem*, who shall serve for that meeting only.

Written notice of the time and place of meeting and agenda shall be given to each member of the committee by mail, or otherwise sent or delivered by the vice president for administration or other person authorized to give such notice, at least 10 days prior to a regular meeting. Notice and agenda of a special meeting shall be provided in a manner to permit adequate time for members to attend. Meetings shall be scheduled at times and places convenient for the members. Notices of meeting and agendas for regular meetings shall also be transmitted at least 10 days prior to a regular meeting to the senior pastor of each congregation in the conference.

A majority of the full Executive Committee, excluding vacant positions, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Items may be placed on the agenda of the Executive Committee by any member of the Executive Committee.

Personnel. Subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee, the president shall appoint assistants to the conference officers, departmental directors, and assistants to the departmental directors. Personnel below these levels shall not be subject to appointment and confirmation but shall be hired according to their abilities and background on the basis of job descriptions which shall indicate with particularity the nature and requirements of the position. Such hiring shall not discriminate by age, sex, race, or national origin. The permanent boards, commissions, and committees of the conference shall appoint their own staff.

Dismissal. By a two-thirds vote the

Executive Committee may dismiss any elected officer or member of a permanent commission, committee, or board of the conference upon a clear showing of misconduct in office. By majority vote the Executive Committee may initiate procedures for removal of any elected officer or member of a permanent commission, committee, or board of the conference, as specified in the provisions of Article 2 for special sessions.

Appointed personnel may be removed by majority vote of the Executive Committee on recommendation of the president. Hired personnel shall be discharged only for failure to fulfill the duties and requirements of their position as set forth in the job description.

Interim Vacancies. An interim vacancy in the conference presidency may be filled only at a special session. An interim vacancy in any other elective or appointive position shall be filled by vote of the Executive Committee according to procedures that it shall establish. No person who ceases to be a member in good standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as determined by his or her congregation (or decision of appropriate adjudicatory authority on appeal) shall continue to serve the conference in any policy-making, elective, or electoral capacity.

Pastors. The Conference Executive Committee shall assign pastors to constituent congregations and organized companies after determining their acceptability to each congregation or organized company. It shall issue credentials and/or licenses to all people in the service of the conference.

Article 6: Permanent Commissions, Committees, and Boards

In this article, as elsewhere in this constitution, the term “layperson” shall be defined as in Article 5. At the time when

members of bodies specified in this article are first elected, their terms of office may be adjusted to allow for overlapping (staggered) terms where required.

Ministerial Commission. There shall be a permanent Ministerial Commission consisting of five ordained ministers and five laypeople elected by the conference session. Half of its members shall be elected at each regular conference session and half at the following regular session. They shall serve terms of six years and shall not be eligible for re-election until the next regular session following the expiration of their terms of service. In addition to the above 10 people, the conference president shall be a member of this commission *ex officio* and shall be its chairperson. At least two members of this commission shall be people educated and experienced in biblical studies and theology, preferable on the graduate level. At least one member of this commission shall be a person educated, experienced, and professionally licensed in a field related to counseling.

This commission shall be responsible to the Conference Executive Committee and shall make recommendations to it. It shall receive requests for consideration from the Executive Committee, from any member of the ministerial staff of the conference, or from any congregation; and it may investigate on its own initiative. It shall consider all matters and questions relating to the professional competence and conduct of members of the ministerial staff of the conference, such as eligibility for ordination, credentials and licenses, and doctrine. It shall foster the continuing education of pastors and seek in every way to encourage a high level of competence and quality in their ministry. For renewal and continuance of credentials, each active ordained person shall meet minimum requirements for continuing education as determined by this commission.

Adjudicatory Commission. There shall be a permanent Adjudicatory Commission of seven members, six of whom shall be elected

by the conference session. In addition to these six members, the president of the conference shall be a member of this commission *ex officio*. The commission shall elect its own chairperson. Except for the president, incumbent conference officers and staff shall not be eligible to serve on this commission. At least two of its members shall be attorneys who are members of the State Bar and have neither business nor suit with the conference during their term of service on the commission. Three members of this commission shall be elected to the commission at each regular conference session. They shall serve terms of six years and shall not be eligible for re-election until the next regular conference session following the expiration of their term of office.

Upon request, this commission shall review and decide differences of opinion with respect to the interpretation of this constitution. Upon request, it may review the case of a member disfellowshipped by a congregation, and may, at its discretion, reinstate disfellowshipped members in the conference church. Its decisions with respect to the interpretation of this constitution and to the reinstatement of disfellowshipped members shall be final. In all other matters its decisions shall be advisory. With respect to disputes between church members, congregations, and institutions of the conference it may, upon request, review and make recommendations for resolving such differences.

The Adjudicatory Commission shall have access to all documents and all information it deems necessary for the conduct of its responsibilities. It shall adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of its duties and shall report to each regular session. Within the specifications of this constitution, the Adjudicatory Committee shall determine its own jurisdiction.

Constitution Committee. There shall be a permanent Constitution Committee elected by the conference session. The Constitution Committee shall receive and initiate sugges-

tions for amending this constitution and shall propose amendments. It shall consist of five members, who shall serve a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election. At least four members must be laypersons, and one member of this committee shall be an attorney who is a member of the State Bar and has neither business nor suit with the conference during his term of service on the committee. The committee shall be responsible to and report to the conference session. All proposals for amending this constitution shall be published in the session booklet.

Board of Information. There shall be a permanent Board of Information consisting of seven members, six of whom shall be elected to the board by the conference session. The responsibility of the Board of Information shall be to assure the availability to members of constituent congregations and companies of the conference of full information on all aspects of the operation of the conference. Its members shall include the vice president for administration of the conference as a member *ex officio*, at least three laypeople, at least one pastor of a congregation, and the editor of its publication organ; it shall elect its own chairperson. Three of its members shall be elected to the board at each conference session. They shall serve terms of six years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election. The Board of Information shall publish an organ of general information, for which it shall serve as the publication board. The editor of this publication shall be nominated by the board and confirmed by the Conference Executive Committee. The editor shall be a member of the board and responsible to it. Subject to this constitution and to the board, he or she shall have full editorial discretion. Among other things, this publication organ shall convey news of local church and conference activities and shall provide an open forum for the responsible discussion of issues affecting the church at large, the conference, its congregations and companies, and their members.

The Conference Executive Committee shall make available to the Board of Information a sum adequate for the discharge of its duties, including publication of the organ of general information, as determined by mutual agreement between the Executive Committee and the board. Monies accruing to this fund shall be kept by the conference vice president for finance as a trust fund, and disbursements from this fund shall be at the discretion of the Board of Information.

This board shall draw up a statement of principles concerning freedom of information within the conference, guidelines for its own operation, and rules and regulations by which to implement freedom of information in the conference. It shall submit this statement to the next regular conference session after its completion for amendment and approval. The resulting document shall henceforth govern freedom of information in the conference and may be amended only by a majority vote of the conference session. Pending approval of this statement, the board shall discharge its responsibilities as specified in and in harmony with this constitution. The board shall report for review at each regular conference session and shall be responsible to the session.

Article 7: Freedom of Information

Availability of information on all operations of the conference is necessary for the existence and effective operation of representative government. Conference operations shall be conducted in recognition of this principle.

In particular, all documents relating to conference operations shall be available for public inspection, except for documents whose confidentiality is necessary for the effective and proper conduct of conference operations. Documents may be certified as

confidential by the relevant decision-making body, which shall file an open statement of the reasons for making each such document confidential.

All meetings of conference committees, commissions, boards, or other executive, legislative, adjudicatory, or administrative bodies at all levels of conference operations shall be open meetings unless the body shall determine to go into executive session. If such a determination is made, the body shall within five days file a statement of the reasons for going into executive session and a list of the subjects considered, but not the substance of the discussion. This statement shall be a matter of public record. Differences of opinion with respect to the classification of documents shall be referred to the Adjudicatory Commission, whose decision shall be final.

The Board of Information shall implement these principles and shall monitor freedom of information within the conference.

Article 8: Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present at any regular or special conference session, subject to confirmation by two-thirds of the constituent congregations of the conference in business session. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Constitution Committee, together with an explanatory statement setting forth the reasons for the proposed amendments. This statement shall not exceed 500 words in length. The Constitution Committee shall study the proposed amendments and submit them to the Conference Executive Committee with a recommendation for acceptance or rejection. Proposed amendments shall be placed on the agenda for the next conference session, with the recommendations of both the Constitution Committee and the Conference Executive Committee appended thereto.