

TRE/ADCOM/GCDO02SM/02SM to SGR(DIV)

113-02G INTERDIVISION EMPLOYEE DATABASE AND  
PROCEDURES REVIEW

VOTED, To hold a meeting from September 25 to 30, 2002, in Silver Spring, Maryland, for division Secretariat and Treasury personnel who are responsible for the administration of the interdivision employee program in their divisions. Interdivision employee policies, procedures, and the new database will be discussed.

PRE/ADCOM/GCDO02SM/02SM to EH(DIV)

114-02G WORLD STEWARDSHIP SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The World Stewardship Summit which was held prior to the 2001 Spring Meeting made various recommendations which, along with an implementation plan, were to be presented to a meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee. A small ad hoc committee was formed which prepared an implementation plan. Following approval by the 2002 Spring Meeting, appropriate policies will be prepared for inclusion in the General Conference *Working Policy*, and will be submitted to the 2002 Annual Council.

VOTED, To approve the concept of a simplified offering system and its implementation as follows:

1. Simplified Offering System - Characteristics
  - a. Offerings will be promoted as worship to God in response to His blessings.
  - b. The distinction between tithes and offerings and the utilization of each will be preserved.
  - c. All regular/systematic offerings will go to a unified fund and will be distributed according to established guidelines.
  - d. While encouraging the simplified offering system, the plan will respect the wishes of donors who designate a specific use for their offering.

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e. It will be understood that one's expression of worship through financial stewardship begins with tithing and the regular support of the Church through systematic offerings.

f. Church members will be informed as to how tithes and offerings are used in accomplishing the mission of the Church.

## 2. Simplified Offering System - Distribution

Funds received from the simplified offering system will be distributed as follows:

a. The local church will receive a minimum of 50 percent and a maximum of 60 percent of the unified fund for the local church budget.

b. World mission will receive a minimum of 20 percent and a maximum of 25 percent of the unified fund.

c. Division committees will determine the specific distribution of the funds within the percentages expressed above in establishing the proportions for the local church, mission/conference, union, division, and World mission.

## 3. Simplified Offering System - Implementation Guidelines

The World Stewardship Summit has recommended important initiatives which will require significant time and commitment, and the world Church is investing a significant amount of funds in developing materials for these stewardship initiatives.

The following are the implementation guidelines for the simplified offering system:

a. Before a conference/mission implements the simplified offering system, there must be a clear training of pastors in the biblical stewardship principles, as well as in the simplified offering system.

b. Before a conference/mission implements the simplified offering system, the conference/mission shall have a system for communicating how church funds are used.

c. Before implementing the simplified offering system, each church organization shall name a department director whose primary responsibility will be to direct the Stewardship Department, and these directors shall attain the secondary level of Stewardship Certification.

d. The local church or local conference/mission/union shall be given the choice as to when to transition to the simplified offering system.

4. Quarterly Mission Projects

Each quarter, a Quarterly World Mission Project will be designated which will replace the existing 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Offering Project, and General Conference Treasury will be requested to assign (recommend) a fixed percentage/amount of the World Mission percentage (unified fund portion coming to World Mission) for that quarterly project.

5. Direct Appeals and Priority of Systematic Church Support

All entities making direct appeals to the Seventh-day Adventist donor base will be requested to include in their donor materials an affirmation of the donor's prior responsibility to worship God through tithe and regular support of the Church through systematic offerings. Such affirmation shall include a statement such as: "Contributions to the appeal should be above and beyond your regular return of tithe and systematic offerings through your local church."

6. Church Finance Communication Strategy

Because the communication of church financial information is crucial to the credibility of the Church and its leadership, the Stewardship Department will be responsible for developing and implementing a church finance communication strategy for the General Conference that has both hi-tech and low-tech elements and is reflective of the approved actual use of offerings as well as finance communication strategy models for other church entities at all levels. These entities shall implement a church finance communication strategy, and the Stewardship Department at each level shall have primary responsibility for developing and implementing this strategy in cooperation with administration, particularly treasury.

7. Statement on Financial Integrity and Transparency

The following statement on Financial Integrity and Transparency will be developed into a written pledge to be signed by church leaders:

The role of leadership is critical for developing the confidence of church members in their Church and in strengthening their relationship with God. We are living in an information age. Information is easily discovered and easily shared. Information contributes to confidence in leadership and in the Church organization. When that information is not provided by organizational leadership in an open and understandable way, it is easily misunderstood. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Church leadership to be transparent and credible in all its dealings.

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The Apostle Paul provides a biblical example of this type of leadership: “And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.”—2 Cor 8:18-21, NIV

Ellen G White states, in the context of dealing with tithe and the financial side of church leadership, that “Those in responsible places are to act in such a way that the people will have firm confidence in them. These men should not be afraid to open to the light of day everything in the management of the work.”—MR Vol 13, 198

Church leadership considers itself accountable to the Church at large and to its published policies in the use of its financial resources. Thus, the Church is committed to integrity and an open leadership that will encourage confidence in God and His Church. It is the responsibility of organizational leadership to provide information regarding the financial dealings of the Church organization in a way that is clear and understandable. Details regarding an individual and his/her finances are to be respected and kept confidential. All other dealings and appropriate financial information of the church organizations are to be reported regularly and completely to the respective organizational constituencies.

#### LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY/LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER - REPORT

Nearly 100 years ago, during the Spring Council in 1905, Ellen G White indicated that land should be purchased on which Loma Linda University and the Loma Linda University Medical Center now stand. The most important value that these institutions bring to the Church is credibility and integrity and an ongoing quest to relate faith and science.

B Lyn Behrens, President of Loma Linda University and Loma Linda University Medical Center, introduced a video report which highlighted the role of these institutions in rebuilding the Kabul University School of Medicine in Afghanistan, doing fossil research in Peru, operating the Sir Run Run Hospital in China, and providing free dental care to children attending a Head Start preschool in Needles, California.