

# Statement of Ethical Foundations for the General Conference and Its Employees

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## ***Our Mission***

The Seventh-day Adventist Church mission is to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel, in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior, and encouraging them to unite with His church and prepare for His soon return. Within the scope of this mission, the General Conference office exists to lead the Church in being a worldwide witness for God's kingdom and in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

## ***Our Responsibilities***

General Conference employees believe:

- We are responsible first to God, our Creator. Individual and collective action must reflect His character and exhibit His love.
- We are responsible to the communities in which we work and live and also to the world community. We accept the challenge to be exemplary individuals and corporate citizens. We support good works and charities. We encourage civic improvements, a better quality of life, security, health, and education for all.
- We are responsible to our fellow church members. We accept accountability for sound leadership decisions and appropriate stewardship.
- We are responsible to each other within the office complex. Every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect; to have his or her role and contribution valued and affirmed; to function in a safe working environment; to experience an atmosphere of challenge, open communication, and contentment.

## ***Our Values***

- We value the *Bible* as the primary reference for life's direction and qualities.
- We value *excellence* in all that we do.
- We value *ethical and moral conduct* at all times and in all relationships.
- We value *creativity and innovation* in the completion of our mission.
- We value *honesty, integrity, and courage* as the foundation of all our actions.
- We value the *trust* placed in us by colleagues and by the world church membership.
- We value *people* as children of God and therefore brothers and sisters of one family.

## ***Ethical Responsibilities as Employer and Corporate Citizen***

In pursuit of its mission, and while maintaining its responsibilities and adhering to its values, the General Conference operates under the following ethical guidelines:

- *Equal opportunity employment.* Within the purview of laws permitting church membership as a condition of employment, and subject to denominational policies on positions requiring ministerial

ordination, the General Conference will follow procedures to ensure equal opportunity of employment, remuneration, and advancement on the basis of job qualifications and performance.

- *Equity, fairness and non-discrimination.* The General Conference will treat all individuals and groups with loving justice. It will not practice or condone discrimination with regard to race, national origin, gender, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions.
- *Compliance with laws of the land.* The General Conference will carry on its activities in compliance with the laws of the land provided these are not in contradiction to God's expressed will.
- *Loyalty and fulfillment of contractual obligations.* The General Conference will fulfill the commitments it has entered into through authorized channels. Where misunderstandings arise regarding such commitments, the General Conference shall participate, with the parties concerned, in conflict resolution procedures within the organizations before seeking the help of the wider community.
- *Atmosphere of safety and happiness.* The General Conference is committed to providing a work environment that offers physical safety and security. It also strives to encourage and promote genuine happiness through the realization that every employee is valuable and every task, no matter how routine or unnoticed, is a service to God. The General Conference will continue to integrate worship, work, and celebration in a manner that acknowledges wholeness in life and relationships.
- *Respect for human dignity and individuality.* The General Conference affirms and respects the uniqueness of every employee. It recognizes that a person's value surpasses the worth of his or her contribution to the organization. It believes that communal harmony and corporate objectives are enhanced rather than compromised by the broad mosaic of personalities, talents, skills, and viewpoints dedicated to the honor of Jesus Christ. The General Conference shall strive for communication that is timely, truthful, open, candid, and kind.

#### ***Ethical Responsibilities as Employees***

We recognize that employment in the Seventh-day Adventist Church implies commitment to the organization's mission and concurrence with its responsibilities and values. We affirm that the employer-employee relationship grows within reciprocity of mutual regard. Our reasonable service as employees includes the following ethical responsibilities:

- *Life consistent with church message and mission.* While in the employ of the General Conference we will live in a manner consistent with the beliefs and values of the church. We will uphold, in word and conduct, the teachings and principles held and advanced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- *Respect for church- owned assets.* We will respect the property of our organization, including any intellectual property that is developed in the course of our employment. We will use the property, facilities, and resources solely for the benefit of our organization, unless otherwise permitted or when financial compensation for such use has been arranged.
- *Respect for colleagues.* We will respect and uplift our fellow employees. We will refrain from intentionally placing another in a position of embarrassment, disrespect, or harassment. We will avoid all behavior that may be construed as sexually inappropriate. We will honor the privacy and guard the safety of others.
- *Efficiency and attention on the job.* The hours of our employment shall be devoted to the work assignments entrusted to us. We will not use the employer's time for personal business or the advancement of personal interests unrelated to the work assigned by our supervisors. We will not deprive our employer by entering into other employment or activities which impair our performance for the General Conference while on the job. We will aspire to greater efficiency and the reduction of waste in time, effort, and resources.

- *Personal integrity in financial matters.* We will not engage in theft or embezzlement of any kind including the misuse of expense accounts, falsification of time reports, or the misapplication of resources for which we are responsible.
- *Avoiding inappropriate influence.* We acknowledge that the giving or receiving of business gifts can easily inject ulterior considerations in our work and employment relationships. Therefore the use of gifts, payments, or honoraria as incentives or rewards for a particular course of action is unacceptable. We will not offer gifts, favors, payments, or other forms of reward directly or indirectly in exchange for a specific gain or action.
- *Maintaining an ethical environment in the workplace.* We accept the obligation of maintaining ethical standards in personal life and in the workplace. We believe it is our personal responsibility to report, through established confidential channels, any behavior that is inappropriate or which undermines the ethical environment in the office complex. We are prepared to be held accountable by our supervisors and peers for professional conduct representing the moral and ethical values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*This document was voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee at the Annual Council Session in Silver Spring, Maryland, September 29, 1999. The document was prefaced by a recommendation that world divisions adapt the Statement for use in the territories under their jurisdiction.*