



Governance and Structure of the Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a representative form of government in which members delegate responsibility to representative bodies and to officers who govern the church. Four constituent levels lead from the individual believer to the worldwide church organization:

- The **local church**, an organized body of individual believers,
- The **local conference** or **local field/mission**, an organized body of churches in a particular state, province or territory,
- The **union conference** or **union field/mission**, a body of conferences or fields within a larger territory, and
- The **General Conference**, the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church embracing all members and organizations. **Divisions** are sections of the General Conference with administrative responsibility assigned to them in designated geographical areas.

Within these four constituent levels, the church also operates a variety of educational, health-care, publishing and other institutions. All units of the church, including these institutions, are organized so as to have representation at the General Conference.

The General Conference is the church's highest earthly authority, and the General Conference in Session and the Executive Committee between sessions are its highest administrative bodies. Authorized to create subordinate organizations, settle administrative issues involving church organizations and institutions and serve as the final authority on all questions where differences of viewpoint arise, the General Conference works to organize and promote church interests throughout the world.

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