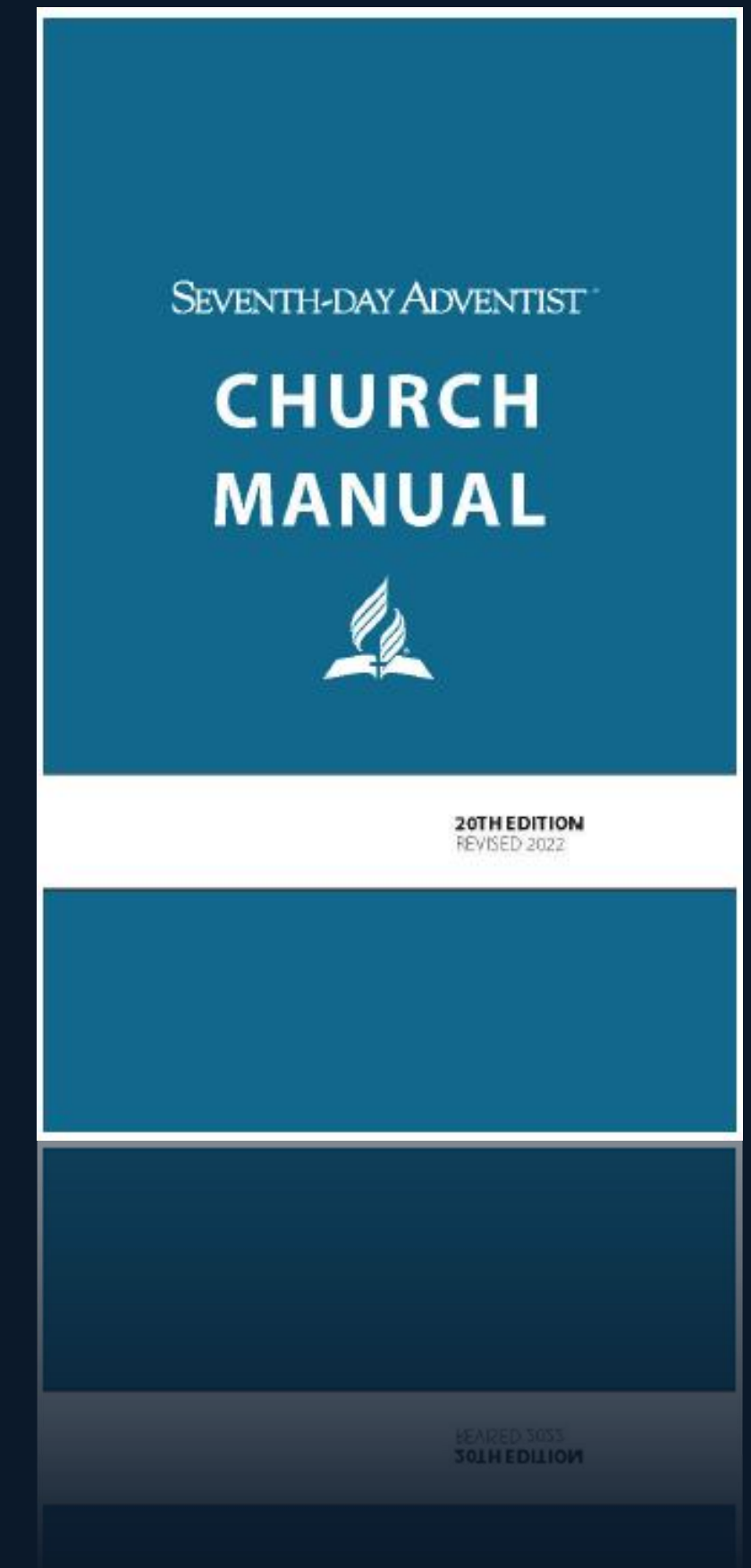
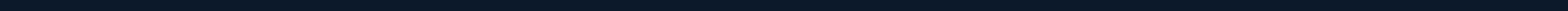
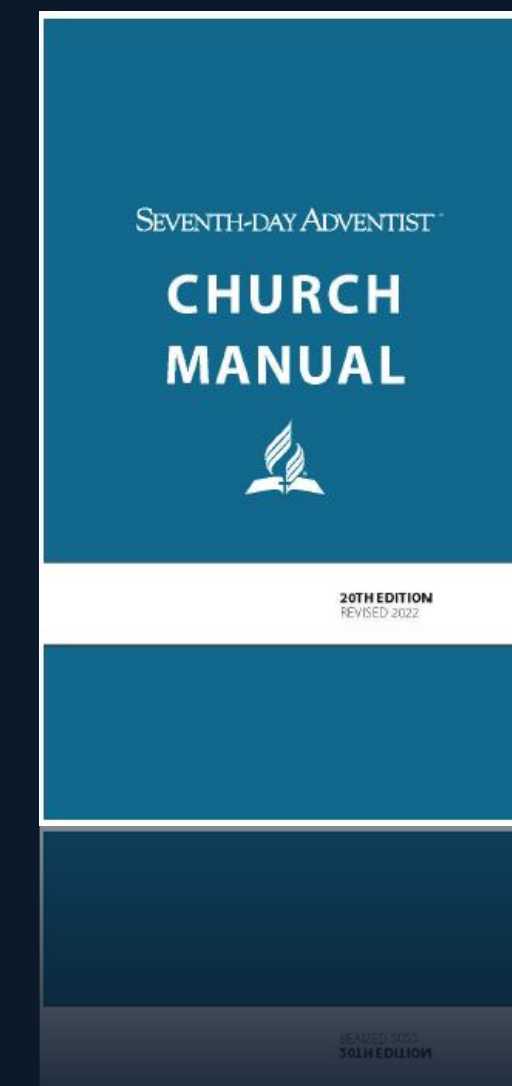

The Importance of the Church Manual

Gerson P. Santos, DMin
General Conference Associate Secretary





How the guidelines of a manual can help the members' spiritual development and the growth of the denomination?

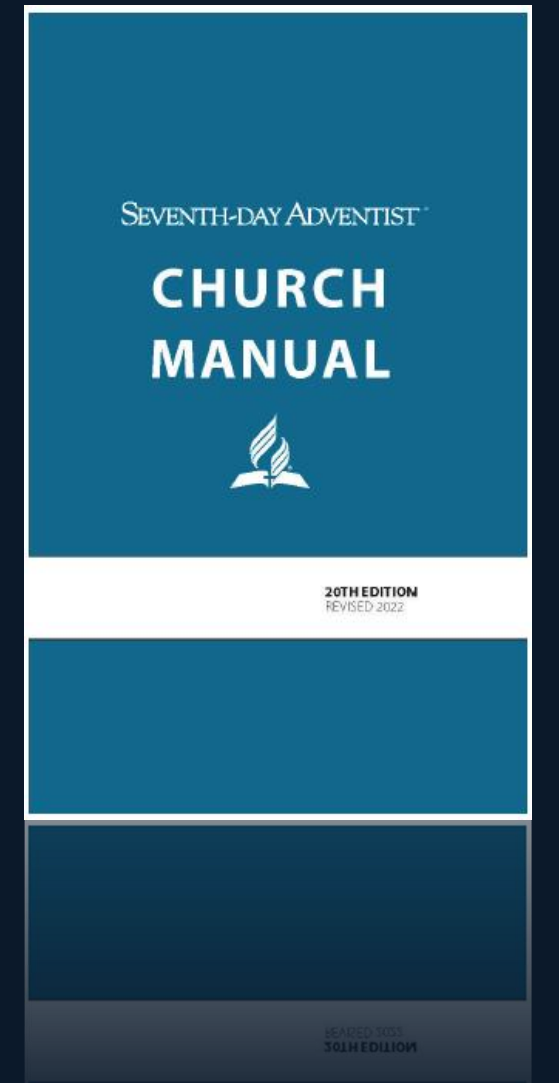




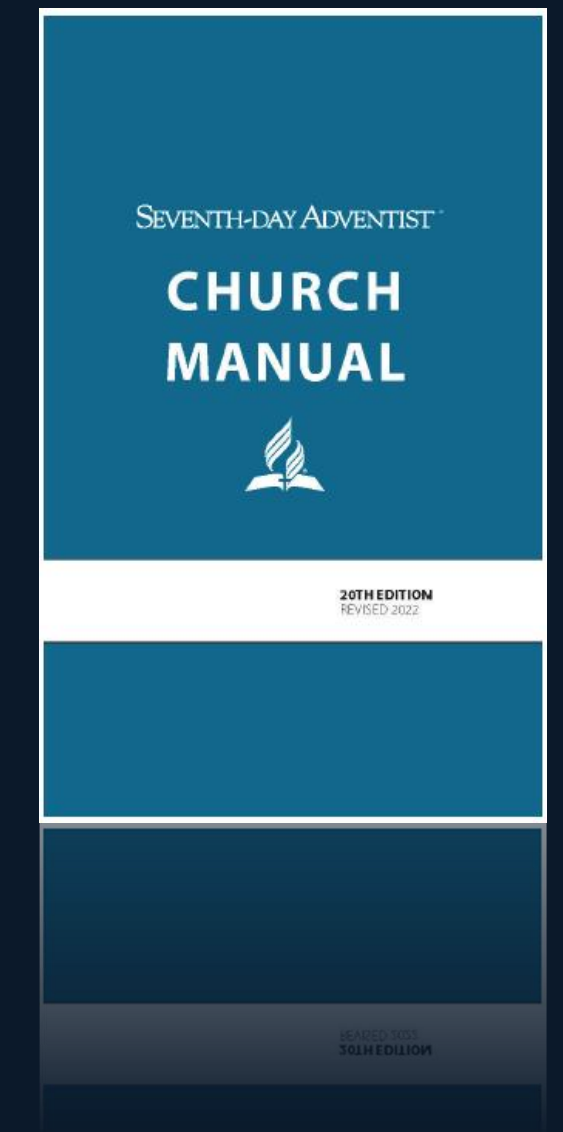
Why a Church Manual?



The Church Manual has an essential role within the church organization.



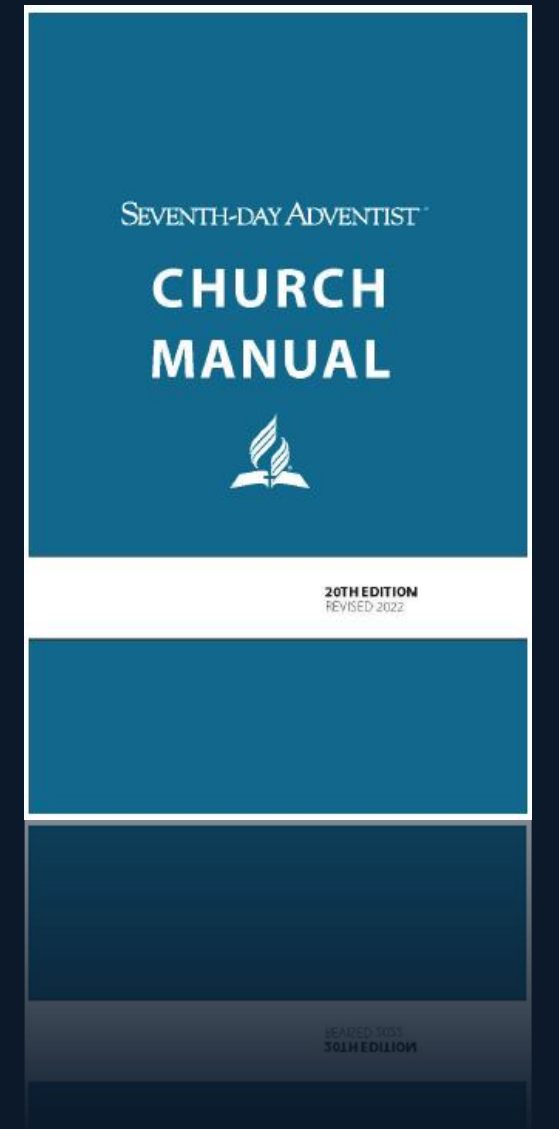
○○○ Delay in the process



The pioneers feared a manual could formalize the Church and take from the pastors their freedom.

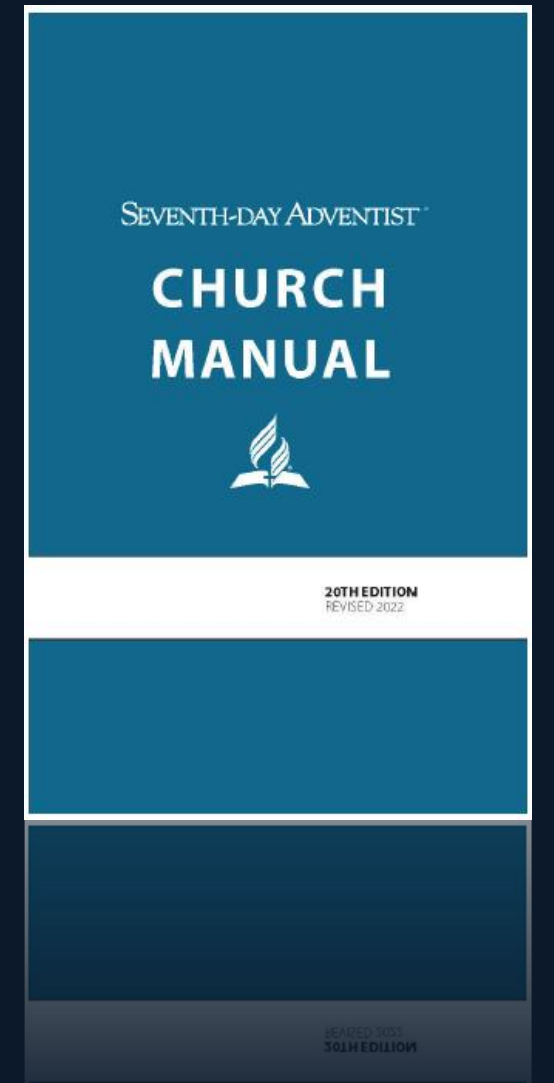
○○○ Delay in the process

- The pioneers feared a manual
- First sample rejected in 1883
- J. H. Waggoner - 1887
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- Draft - James L. McElhany asked by GC in 1926
- **Church Manual - 1932**



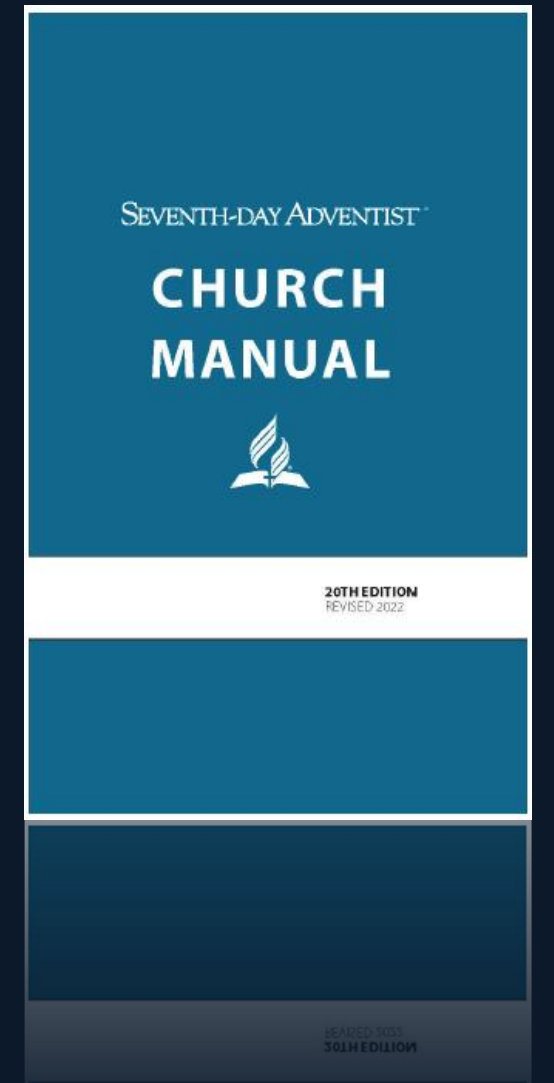
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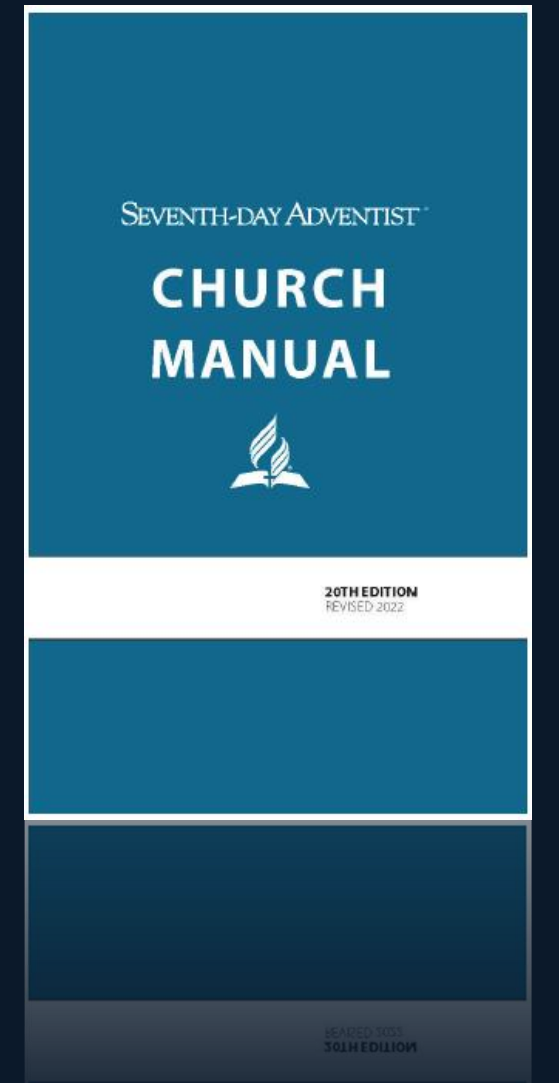
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○○○ Authority and Function

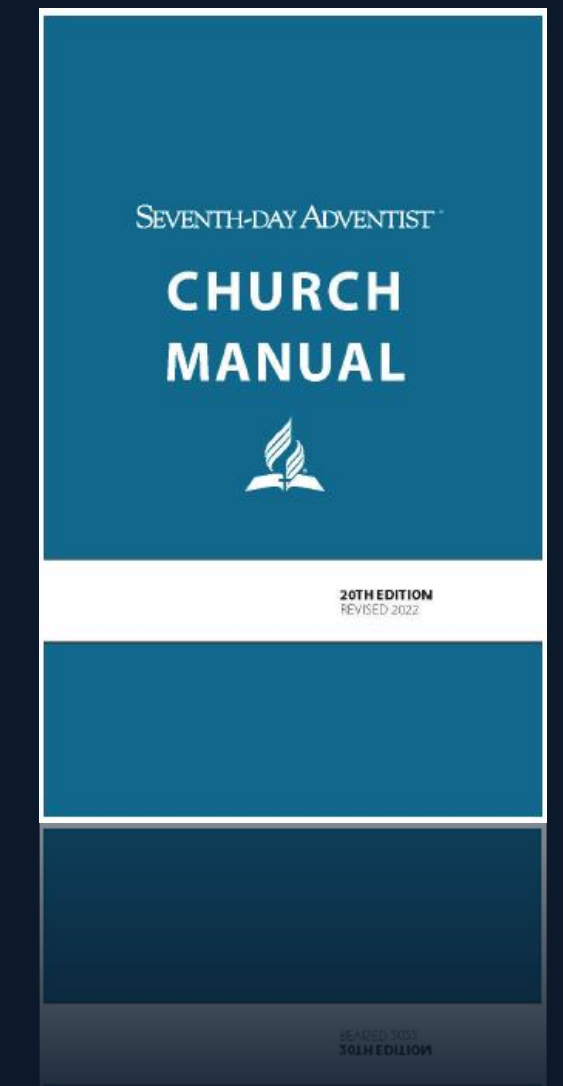
Since its adoption, the church manual has been widely used and very helpful to give guidance, structure and strength to the worldwide church. It describes the operation and functions of local churches and their relationship to denominational structures in which they hold membership.

Church Manual, 17



○○○ Authority and Function

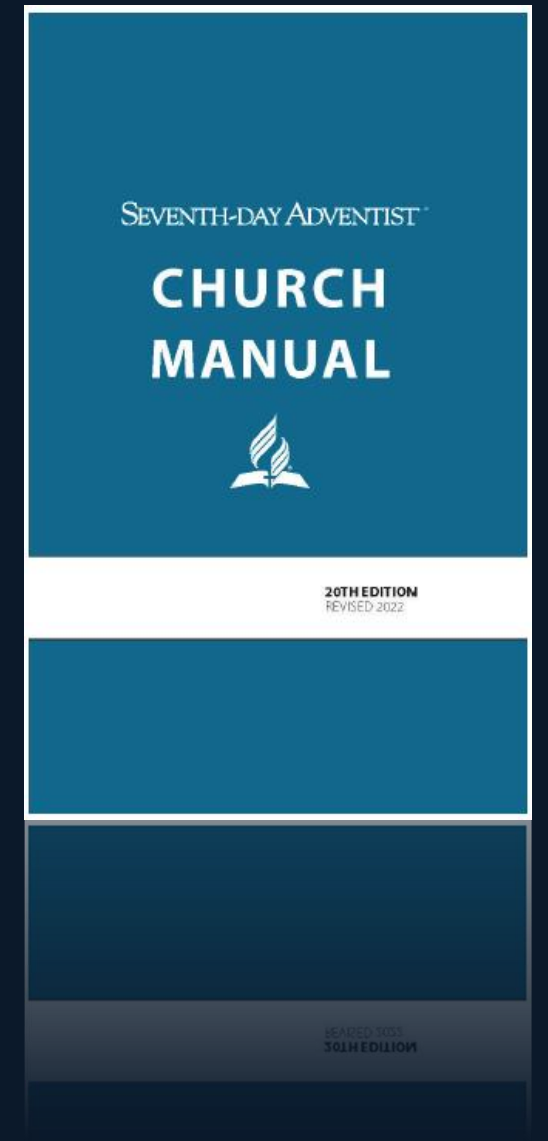
The Church Manual also expresses the Church's understanding of Christian life and church governance and discipline based on biblical principles and the authority of duly assembled General Conference Sessions. "God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority." —9T 261.



○○○ Updating and Making Changes

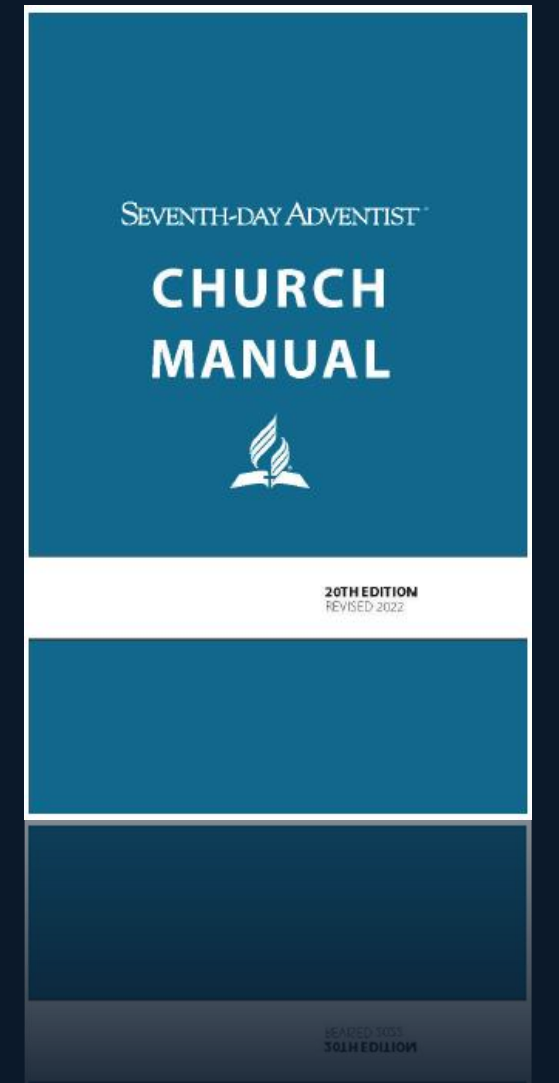
The General Conference through the years voted important changes concerning the Church Manual. Realizing the importance of conducting the worldwide work of the Church “decently and in order,” the **1946** General Conference Session voted that “all changes or revisions of policy that are to be made in the Manual shall be authorized by the General Conference Session.”

Church Manual, 18



○○○ Updating and Making Changes

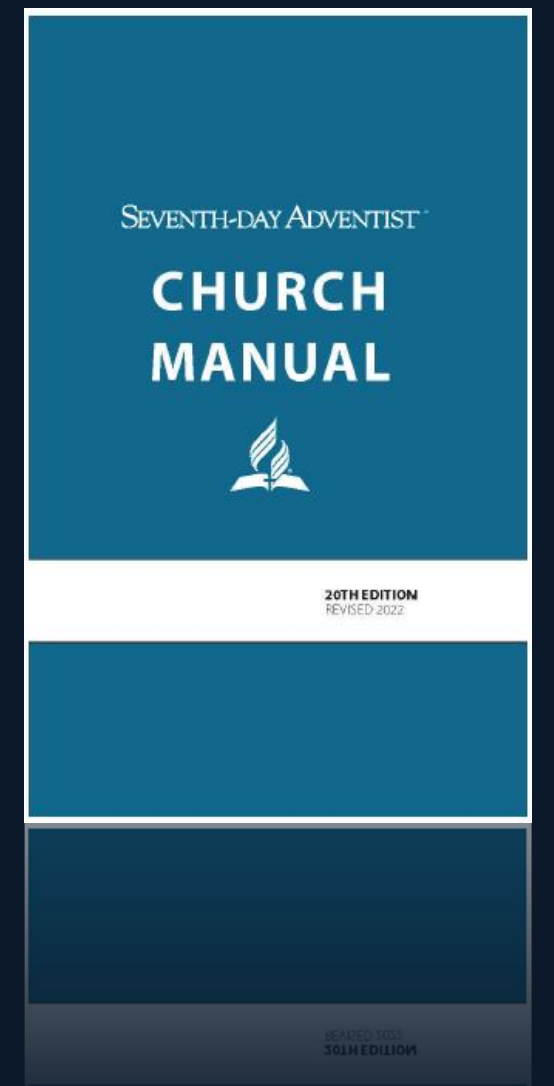
In **1948**, recognizing that local conditions sometimes call for special actions, the General Conference Committee voted that “each division, including the North American Division of the world field, prepare a ‘**Supplement**’ to the new Church Manual not in any way modifying it but containing such additional matter as is applicable to the conditions and circumstances prevailing in the division; the manuscripts for these Supplements to be submitted to the General Conference Committee for endorsement before being printed.”—Autumn Council Actions, 1948, p. 19.



○○○ Updating and Making Changes

The **2000** General Conference Session authorized the reclassification of some existing Church Manual material into the **Notes** section as guidance and examples rather than mandatory material, and approved the process for making changes.

Changes in the Church Manual, except for the notes and editorial changes, can be made only by action of a General Conference Session, where delegates of the world church have voice and vote.



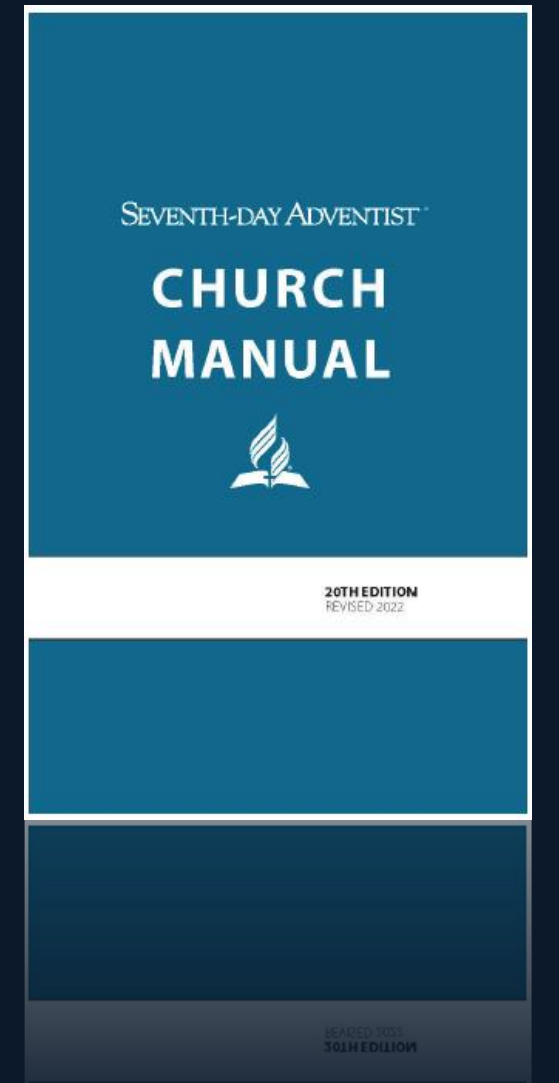
○○○ Updating and Making Changes

Local church, conference, or union conference/mission submit its proposal to the next constituent level.

If approved, it submits to the next level for additional evaluation.

If the various levels approve the proposal, it eventually comes before the General Conference Church Manual Committee

If the Church Manual Committee approves a revision, it presents at an Annual Council and then to the General Conference Session.





Process for Updating and Making Changes

Supplements

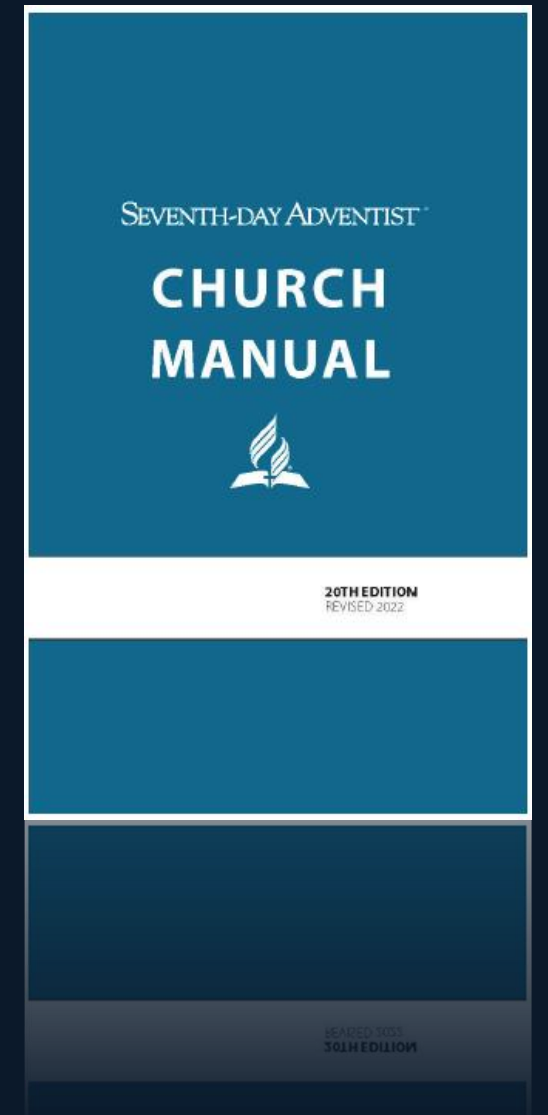
Division action - GC CM Committee - GC Annual Council

Notes and editorial changes

GC CM Committee - GC Annual Council

Changes in the Church Manual

GC CM Committee - GC Annual Council - Session





Process for Updating and Making Changes

Supplements

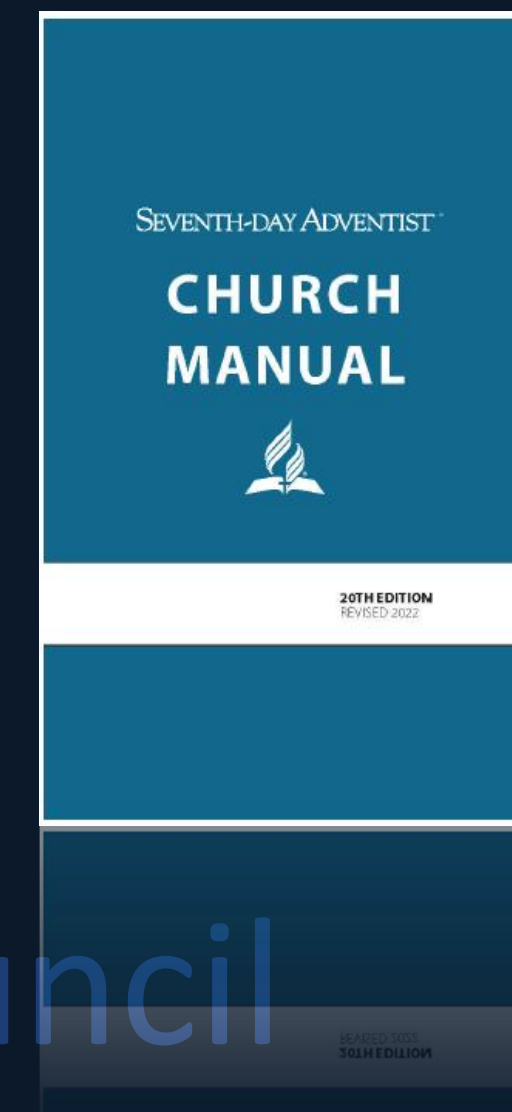
Division action → GC CM Committee → GC Annual Council

Notes and editorial changes

GC CM Committee → GC Annual Council

Changes in the Church Manual

GC CM Committee → GC Annual Council → GC Session





Process for Updating and Making Changes

Supplements

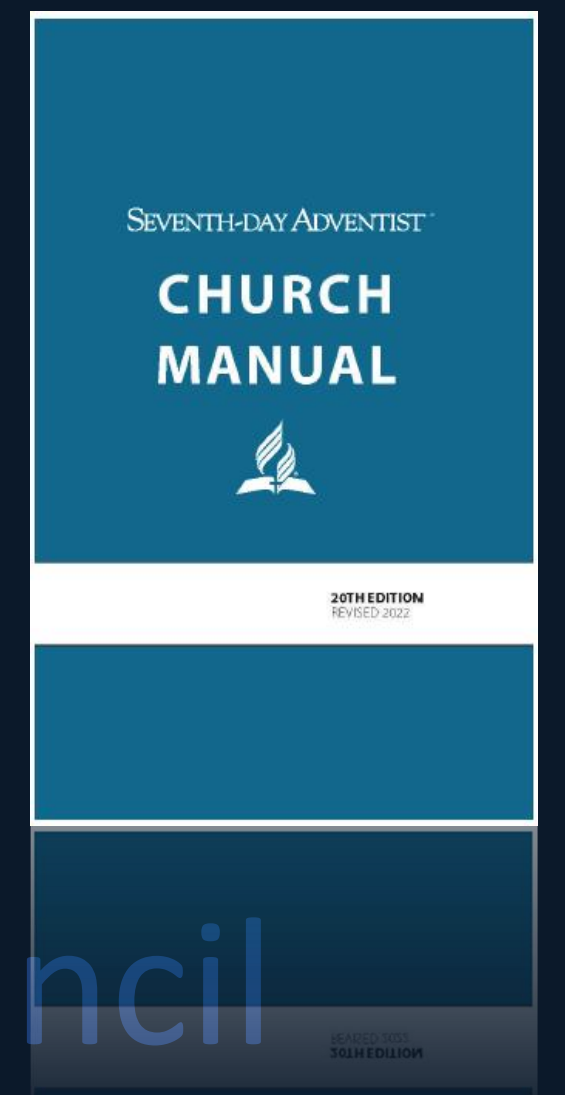
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Changes in the Church Manual

GC CM Committee → GC Annual Council → GC Session

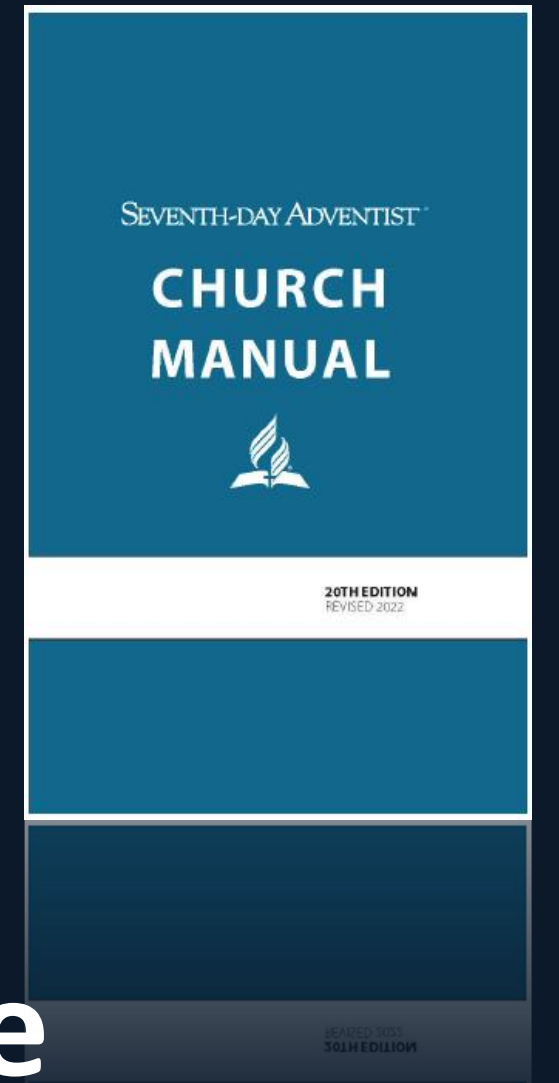




Process for Updating and Making Changes

At the final Annual Council of a quinquennium, the General Conference Executive Committee reviews all changes to the notes and coordinates the changes with any proposed amendments to the main content of the Church Manual.

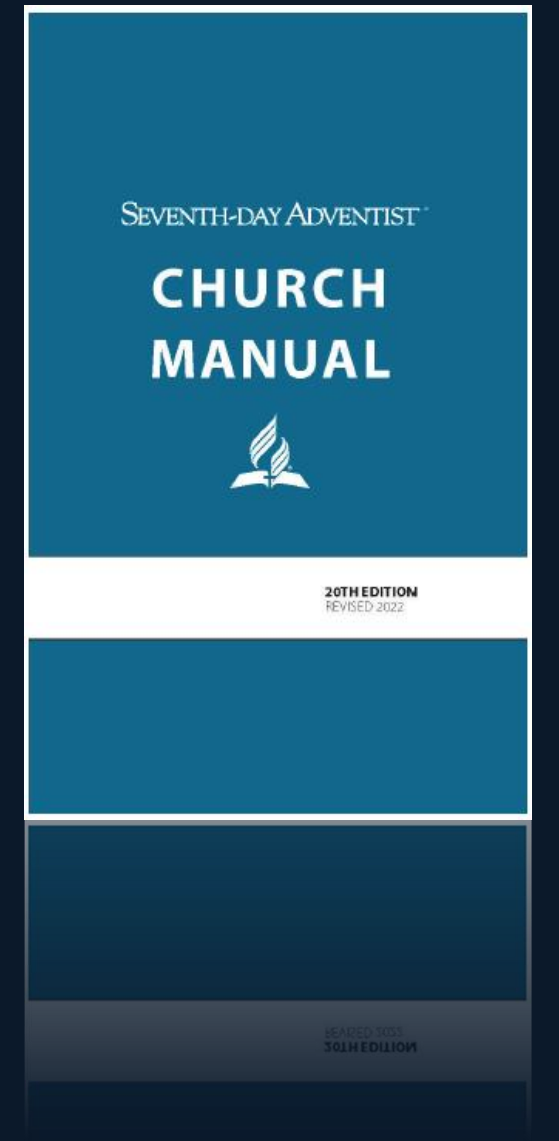
A new edition of the Church Manual is published after every General Conference Session. The most recent edition should always be used. This edition incorporates amendments made at the postponed 2020 General Conference Session, which took place in 2022.



○○○ Updating and Making Changes

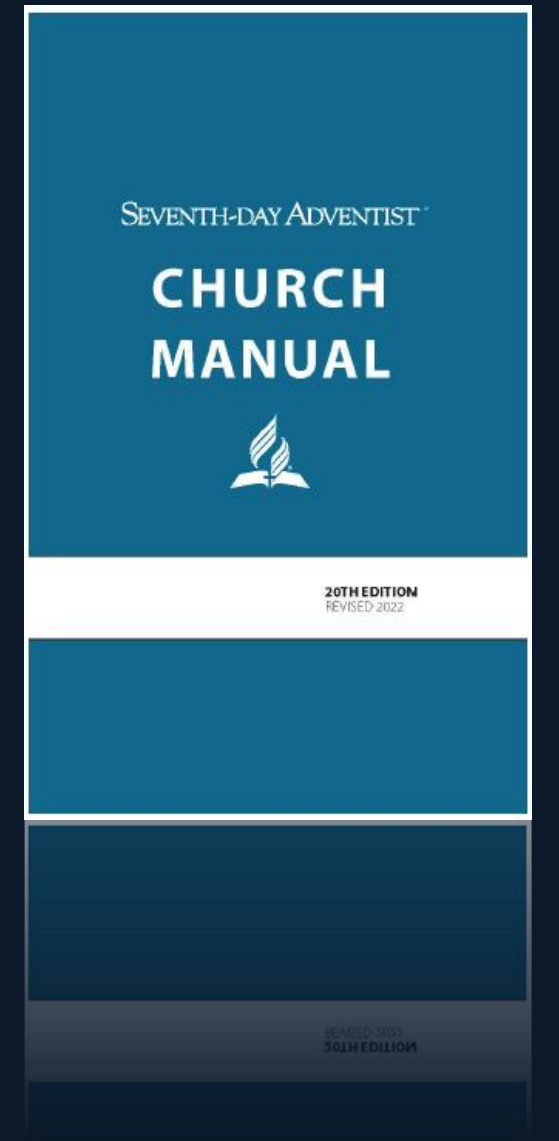
“The church of Christ is in constant peril. Satan is seeking to destroy the people of God, and one man’s mind, one man’s judgment, is not sufficient to be trusted. Christ would have His followers brought together in church capacity, observing order, having rules and discipline, and all subject one to another, esteeming others better than themselves.”

EGW, 3T, 445



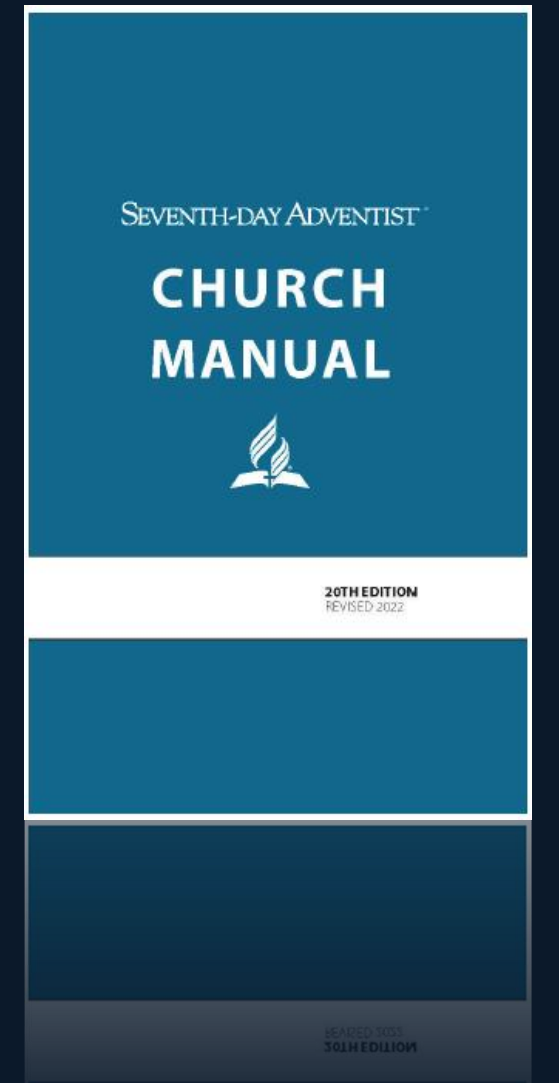
○○○ The Importance of the Church Manual

From the beginning of its adoption in 1932, “it stated that the manual was set forth “as a guide” in matters of church administration. It was not, however, just to set forth “denominational practices and polity”— but also to “preserve” these.”



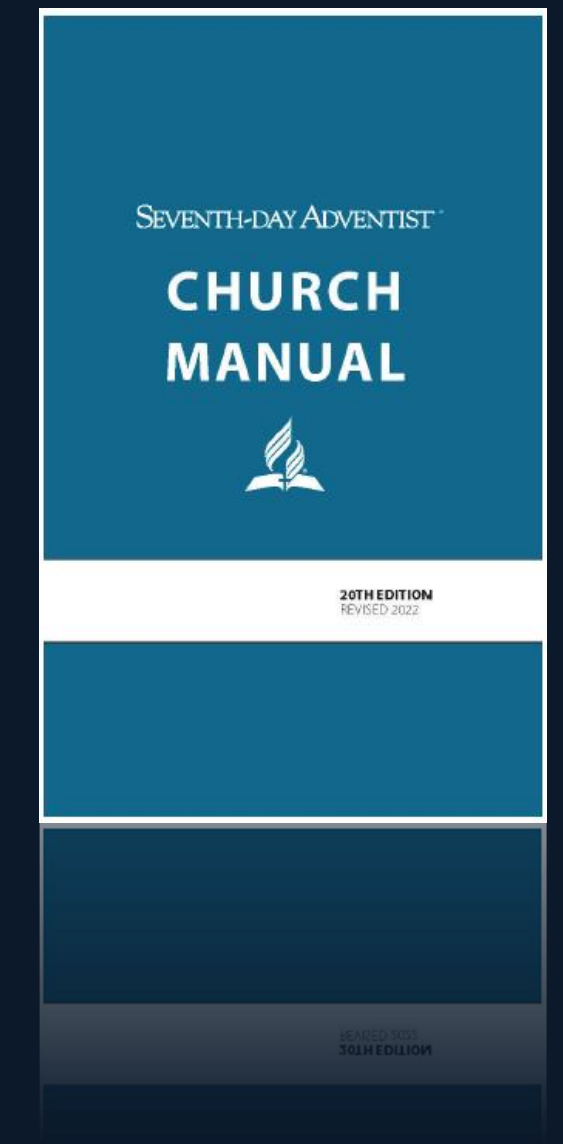
○○○ The Importance of the Church Manual

Church officers and leaders, pastors, and members should consult with their conference for advice pertaining to the operating of their congregation or on questions arising from the Church Manual. If they do not reach mutual understanding, they should consult with their union conference/mission for clarification.



○○○ The Importance of the Church Manual

Even though the Seventh-day Adventists reluctantly adopted a church manual, the benefits of this decision can be seen as a robust worldwide church. On the other hand, some reasons that prevented the pioneers from moving forward in that direction are still present today. Therefore, it is up to the leaders of this denomination to learn from the past and wisely fulfill their call with humility and open heart to continue receiving God's guidance.



The Importance of the Church Manual
