



General Conference Executive Committee Newsletter

An informative publication for members of the General Conference Executive Committee as a service through the office of the Chair

NOVEMBER 2019

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Thus God would teach us that during the time that we work, we are to do our very best, be that time long or short. We are to serve Him to the best of our ability. He will reward all who work faithfully for Him, those who have labored but one hour, as it were, as well as those who have labored all the day.

*General Conference
Bulletin, April 25, 1901.*



“NOT FOR SALE”

BY G. T. NG, PH.D., SECRETARY
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Editor's Note: The following is abridged from Dr. Ng's presentation to the GC Executive Committee during Annual Council, October 15, 2019. Elements of the oral style have been retained.

*H*ave you ever been disappointed by an election? In a few months we will be in Indianapolis, at the General Conference Session. And I hear many people asking questions about the purpose of a GC Session. Questions such as:

- Is it true God appoints but the nominating committee disappoints?
- Why am I not elected to a higher position?
- Is there such a thing as righteous ambition or holy covetousness?

- When is it my turn to serve God in a larger capacity?
- What does it take for me to be elected?
- My friend and I graduated from the same seminary together. Today he is the mission president and I am just a local church pastor. God isn't being fair with me. Why?

ELECTION YEAR PHENOMENA

In every election we have “election year phenomena.” The
—continued, next page

number one phenomenon is: “The Year of Prophecy.” You can hear people prophesying who will be the new “pharaoh.” Will the new pharaoh know me? If he doesn’t, what will it take for him to get to know me? You see people already beginning to posture because of prophecies they’ve heard.

The number two phenomenon is: “The Year of Theme Songs.” The most common one is: “I shall not be moved.” Others include: “Is my name written there?” “I’m pressing on the upward way, new heights I’m gaining every quinquennium,” and, “Pass me not, oh gentle Savior, hear my humble cry!” If there is any time to be humble, it is the time of elections.

The third phenomenon is: “The Year of Monkey Business.” “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours; you vote for me, and you will never be forgotten.” It’s a win-win situation—why not?

There are all kinds of strategic planning going on during an election year—who will be at the planning committee? Who will be members of the nominating committee? It’s all prearranged, unfortunately. Sometimes, even within the Church, the results of an election are known before the election takes place! Did you know there is such a thing as “the underground nominating committee?” Why do some people do this? Because we don’t understand what elections are about!

Some people cannot sleep. They lose their appetite. They ask, “What is going to happen to me?” We have sweaty palms, we have nightmares. Why? Because we don’t understand what elections are all about.



THE CHAIR

We can think of election as this chair. What does the chair represent? Position.

The chair has three characteristics:

- **It is magnetic.** When you first sit in the chair, you don’t really feel it. But the more you sit, the stickier the chair becomes. It becomes so sticky that when you stand up, the chair stands up with you! And when you walk, the chair walks with you! Magnetic. You and the chair become inseparable.
 - **It is addictive.** The more you sit in the chair, the more you like it.
 - **The chair is talkative.** The longer I sit in the chair, the more I have a relationship with it. And the chair starts talking to me: “You know, G.T. Ng, I love you!” And I reply to my chair, “I love you, too.”
- When we understand what elections are about, we will not allow the chair to talk or to exercise its magnetic power! We will do away with the addiction that can come from sitting in the chair.

ELECTION DEFINED

What is election? I couldn’t find a proper definition in the dictionary, so I came up with my own:

“Election in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the corporate process in which duly constituted committees of the Body of Christ prayerfully select leaders to serve in positions of trust as stewards for a designated term of service. At the end of the period of service, elected leaders relinquish their stewardship positions and are ready to be reassigned to other service opportunities that fulfill the mission of the church and advance the kingdom of God.”

When there is no aspiration, there is no perspiration! When there is no expectation, there is no frustration. Where there is no ambition, there is no anticipation. It's just that simple.

What is Position?

Position is a stewardship. The moment I sit in this chair, I am a steward of that chair, of that position. The chair does not belong to me; I'm not the owner of the chair. I'm a steward of the chair. For how long? For a designated period. It can be three years, it can be five years—usually five years on the division, General Conference, and the union level. I am a steward. But if I think I'm the owner, how will I behave?

“POSITION AS OWNERSHIP”

- You own the position and the position owns you. The latter is even worse than the former! Both of you become inseparable.
- You are defined by your position. Your position gives you identity as a person. Your self-worth is predicated on your position. Without the position, you think you are nobody.
- People respect you for your position and not necessarily for who you are. You allow yourself to be defined by your position.
- The longer you occupy the position, the more you are enamored with it.
- But, if you think of position as a stewardship, then everything is different.

“POSITION AS STEWARDSHIP”

- You are the steward, not the owner.
- You are not defined by your position.
- Your term of office is limited.
- You refuse to talk to your chair.
- You vacate your chair at the end of the term.
- You are ready to be reassigned.
- You don't pray, “long live the chair!”
- You have peace of mind.
- There is no bereavement, no disappointment.
- You are not a candidate for the ICU.
- You can sleep like a baby every night.
- Peace of mind! “Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3). There's no need to worry about the election!

When there is no aspiration, there is no perspiration! When there is no expectation, there is

no frustration. When there is no ambition, there is no anticipation. It's just that simple.

What does ambition mean? Climbing the corporate ladder of success. And when you climb the corporate ladder, you subject yourself to “The Law of the Jungle” which is:

- When personal ambition overshadows God's call
- Survival of the strongest.
- Pulling down those ahead of you.
- Decimate the ones following you.
- Eat or be eaten.
- Use spirituality as a veneer.
- Assign confidants to committees.
- Rally laymen for support.
- Exploit weaknesses in the system.
- Divide and conquer.
- Reciprocate favors in kind.
- Curry favor with power brokers.
- Present statistics to impress.

One of the curses of election is the curse of re-election. There is no such thing as “re-election” at the General Conference Session or any constituency meeting. The purpose of the nominating committee is to elect a person to a full-term of office. That's it! It's a new term of office, and when we don't understand that we get ourselves into trouble.

ACTING IRRATIONALLY

Look at the history of our church in the Iowa Conference, in the beginning of our work. We were organized in 1863, with six conferences. Two years later, in 1865, we had seven conferences. The president of the Iowa Conference was B. F. Snook, and the secretary, W. H. Brinkerhoff. At the 1865 constituency meeting they were not elected for another term. In disgust, they tendered



B. F. Snook



W. H. Brinkerhoff

their resignations. Not only that, they turned their guns against the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They criticized the Spirit of Prophecy—it's a long story. You see, people don't take disappointment in an election kindly. They tend to act irrationally.

Another example is European leader, L. R. Conradi. Such a pioneering missionary! He pioneered new work on the continent of Africa, South America, and the Middle East. He was a foremost evangelist and missionary. He was the first president of the European division—for 21 years! Then in 1922 he was not elected to a new term of office. He took it very badly. He thought the church had rejected him after he had contributed so much to the missionary enterprise of the church. After he was not "re-elected," he resigned from the ministry and joined the Seventh-Day Baptist Church. Later on, he came to Washington, D.C. where he tendered his ministerial credential.

Former North American Division president, Charles Bradford, used to say, "If you cannot accept being elected out, you should not accept being elected in."

HOW TO PREPARE

So, how do you prepare for the upcoming General Conference Session? What do you do to get ready? You do nothing. That's it.

We must pray for the Holy Spirit to anoint the Session itself. Such a great convocation of Seventh-day Adventist representatives from all corners of the Earth! What organization does the world have that is comparable to the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Name me one! There is none. It is God's remnant Church. God's last-day Church. Because we have obeyed Revelation 10:11—"You shall prophesy again." There is only one.

If you ask me how I prepare for GC Session, I will tell you. On my last day at the office, and I've done this several times already, I will bring an empty box. I will collect all my books and whatever else belongs to me. I will bid farewell to my assistant. "Thank you, Susan, for serving me the last five years. You have been most faithful in your service in the Secretariat. Whoever it is who occupies my chair, please give him the same level of professionalism and service. Thank you very much. May God bless you and your family."

And I leave with my box. As I walk out and cross the threshold of my office, I dare not look back, because if I do, I would see my kingdom has come to nothing. You leave the office in peace, praising God, singing, "Hallelujah!"

because God has blessed you for the last five years, and He will continue to bless you during the next five years because you are a servant of God. You are at God's disposal.

ELECTION ICU

Unfortunately, not everyone can do that. That's why during every election we should have an ICU—an Election Intensive Care Unit, because people need care. Because they may not understand what elections are all about.

In ICU, some people need CPR. I've known people who have suffered heart attacks at constituency meetings. Unfortunately, one man said to me, "You know what you've done to me? You have shamed me! Not only have you shamed me, you have shamed my family! Not only have you shamed

my family, you have shamed my tribe! Not only have you shamed my tribe, you have shamed my country!" Can you imagine? That's how they take it. It's a huge embarrassment to people when they are not elected, or elected to a new term.

They need professional care. We need individuals assigned to the special Election ICU, to offer them comfort, assurance, and prayer. Offer them the balm of Gilead. Say something to the effect:

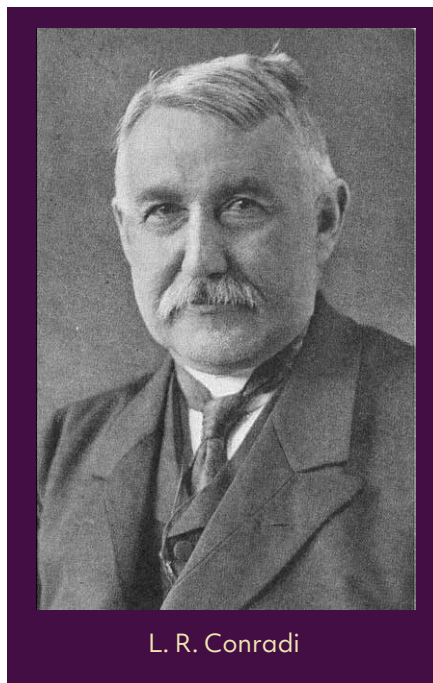
"In God's service, there is no such thing as promotion or demotion."

"Election outcome is not necessarily a reflection of a person's good deeds or misdeeds. Don't take it personally."

"It's not about you. It's about putting leaders in the right places once every five years."

"There's nothing to worry about. God will assign you to another post of duty that is proportionate to your spiritual gifts. The better days of your ministry are still ahead of you".

"Why are you disappointed? You are disappointed because you dreamed the wrong dream. You expected the wrong thing. You aspired for positions which do not belong to you. You have been covetous, that's why! (but we don't say that).



L. R. Conradi

“TRUE NORTH” LEADERS

A famous passage states: “The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”¹

The Seventh-day Adventist Church today needs “True North” leaders, because Jesus is the “True North.” He is always right. We need to follow Him.

True North leaders refuse to be bought or sold. They say:

- My integrity is not for sale.
- My principles are not for sale.
- My leadership is not for sale.
- My loyalty to God is not for sale.
- I cannot compromise, not matter how attractive the offer might be.

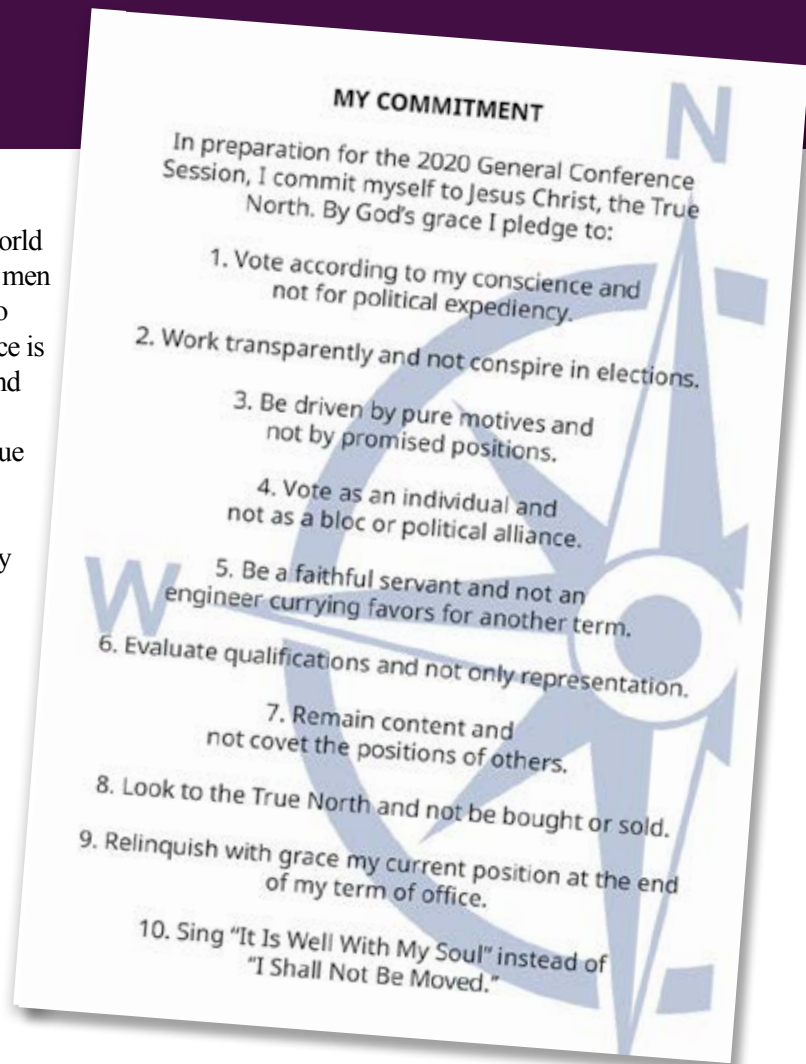
“Before honor is humility,” wrote Ellen White. “To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. . . . But when men exalt themselves, feeling that they are a necessity for the success of God’s great plan, the Lord causes them to be set aside.”²

That’s why there may be disappointments. And because pride may be one of the factors, God allows them to be set aside.

“It is made evident that the Lord is not dependent upon them. The work does not stop because of their removal from it, but goes forward with greater power.”³

In *Testimonies for the Church* we read, “There has been a spirit of self-sufficiency and a disposition to strive for position and supremacy. I have seen that self-glorification was becoming common among Seventh-day Adventists and that unless the pride of man should be abased and Christ exalted we should as a people be in no better condition to receive Christ at His second advent than were the Jewish people to receive Him at His first advent.”⁴

In *The Desire of Ages* we are reminded, “God calls a man to do a certain work; and when he has carried it as far as he is qualified to take it the Lord brings in others, to carry it still farther. But, like John’s disciples, many feel that the success of the work depends on the first laborer. Attention is fixed upon the human instead of the divine, jealousy comes in and the work of God is marred. The one thus unduly



honored is tempted to cherish self-confidence . . . He does not realize his dependence on God. The work of God is not to bear the image and superscription of man. From time to time the Lord will bring in different agencies, through whom His purpose can best be accomplished. Happy are they who are willing for self to be humbled, saying with John the Baptist, ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’”⁵

COMMITMENT

Today, I invite you to come forward to receive this card, making a commitment in preparation for the 2020 General Conference Session, to commit yourself to Jesus Christ, the True North.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 57.

² White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 436.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 727.

⁵ White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 182.



MORNING DEVOTIONALS

EMPHASIZE FAITHFULNESS IN CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE

TO WATCH THE VIDEOS, CLICK ON THE PRESENTATION TITLES.

SUNDAY

Wholeness in Christ and Our Commitment to His Health Principles, presented by Neil Nedley, M.D. Dr. Nedley emphasized the power that comes from living according to God's plan, emphasizing the importance of brain health, particularly the frontal lobe. He indicated ways of improving brain health, including drinking plenty of water, having a healthy plant-based diet, and thinking true thoughts as outlined in Scripture, rather than relying on emotion. He also pointed out substances shown to impair mental ability, including alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, and caffeine. "Guard your heart [mind] above all else, for it determines the course of your life," he said, quoting Proverbs 4:23 (NLT).



MONDAY

God's Leading in My Life and Yours, presented by Vicki Griffin, MPA, MACN. "I don't worship health, I worship God," said Mrs. Griffin at the start of her dynamic presentation on the importance of a blended ministry of evangelism and health. "We don't *have* a soul—we *are* a soul," she said. "When people understand that, then everything else is secondary." Citing numerous scientific studies along with passages from the Spirit of Prophecy, Griffin emphasized the importance of the mind-body connection and temperance. "We are a whole, *living* sacrifice for Him, and it is an act of worship to obey the laws that govern my being!" she said. Downloadable presentations for sharing and more are available at LifestyleMatters.com.



TUESDAY

Lifestyle Choice and Our Ability to Connect With God, presented by Ross Grant, Ph.D. (NeuroPharmacology). Dr. Grant, a research scientist, emphasized the vital role of the pre-frontal cortex (PFC) in developing a relationship with God. He shared numerous studies showing ways in which the PFC is weakened, including the use of alcohol and other drugs, caffeine, lack of sleep, stress/anxiety, saturated fats and sugar, certain types of music, and transcendental meditation. Dr. Grant elaborated on the detrimental effects of caffeine, including negative effects on memory, creativity, and intellectual ability. He encouraged strengthening the mind through vigorous exercise, listening to classical music, engaging with nature, studying God's Word and meditating upon it.



WEDNESDAY

Complete Restoration in Christ, presented by Ron Kelly, M.Div. "We are called to be restorers," said Pastor Kelly, "physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially." God calls us to do the prophetic work of reformation through: 1) Edification (the teaching of righteousness); 2) Exhortation (strong urging to do right, confronting the wrong); 3) Consolation (encouraging/comforting people when they stand up to do the right thing). Through the story of his own family, Pastor Kelly illustrated how this prophetic work operates, causing spiritual reformation in our own lives and in the lives of others. "Lifestyle standards exist because of our relationship with Jesus," he said. "These lifestyle standards are in place because there is a beauty in holy living when it is practiced in a relational fragrance." Speaking of legalism, he added, "Legalism is a disease of motivations. It is not a disease of standards. Our lifestyle standards exist to protect our walk with God, to restore our physical well-being, to deepen our walk with Jesus, and to save us from falling in love with the world."



ANNUAL COUNCIL SUMMARY

OFFICER'S REPORTS

Sabbath Sermon: "God's Restoring Salvation—Our Last-day Message"

by Ted N.C. Wilson

Elder Wilson focused on the heart of spirituality—Christ's death and resurrection, His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and His power to save and transform all who are willing to fully surrender to Him. Starting with a vivid description of the cross, Wilson invited listeners to consider the great sacrifice made on our behalf, and Christ's restorative power in a person's life. Citing Ephesians 2:8-10, he pointed out the complete picture of Justification and Sanctification expressed in the text: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Explaining how the two work together, Wilson said, "This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. . . His righteousness also, then, begins to work in you. . . you accept the Holy Spirit into your life and Christ's righteousness beings to work in you, and you become a new creature."

Drawing attention to Christ's work in the Heavenly Sanctuary, he pointed out, "The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth" (*Christ in His Sanctuary*, p. 5). Because of its vital role in salvation, everyone is to understand Christ's important work in the Sanctuary.

Illustrating the power of God to change lives, Elder Wilson told the story of Don Johnson, a convicted murderer who had recently been put to death by the State of Tennessee. During his time in prison, Johnson had given his life to Christ, became a Seventh-day Adventist, and led others to Him while behind bars. Calling John and Pam Dysinger, Kirsten Dysinger Knecht, and Pastor Furman Fordham of the Riverside Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church where Don was a member, he invited those who knew Don well to testify to the change that had taken place in this man's life.



Again citing Christ's justifying and sanctifying power, Wilson quoted Titus 2:15—"Speak these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you."

"Preach this precious message," he urged. "It is the core of the three angels' messages in Revelation 14—the very core of those messages is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, turning people back to the true worship of God. You're not saved by works. You're saved by His justifying power, and His sanctifying power helps you to accomplish good works."

Secretary's Report by G.T. Ng

In his report, Dr. Ng focused on the power of giving to mission—especially supporting world mission, citing the "Reflex influence," a term used by Ellen White to describe the benefits received by giving to foreign mission: "To show a liberal, self-denying spirit for the success of foreign missions is a sure way to advance home missionary work; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off. It is in working to supply the necessities of others that we bring our souls into touch with the Source of all power (*Gospel Workers*, p. 465).

“Amazing!” Ng exclaimed. “By sending resources and funds to foreign mission, our home mission will prosper!”

Tracing the history of mission giving in the Adventist Church, Ng identified the three sources of mission funding then and now: 1) Annual Mission Offering (1897); 2) Sabbath School Mission Offerings (1885); 3) Direct Appeals (1899). He also highlighted the sacrificial giving that greatly expanded Adventist mission work in the late 19th/early 20th century, explaining that sacrificial giving is still beneficial today. “Prosperity will follow whole souled activity in aggressive warfare, if wisely conducted,” he read from Ellen White. “We are to be prepared to show that our missionary success is fully proportionate to our self-denying, self-sacrificing efforts” (Lt. 134-1900).

Calling it the “boomerang effect,” he shared three examples:

1. A division suffered great political instability and currency devaluation, and yet, they devoted US\$13 million dollars into foreign mission during the past five years (2015-2019), and they have prospered.

2. A church in Vancouver, B.C., Canada that is noted for selfless service to their community. When asked how they fund the many services they offer, the pastor replied: “Mission first. Money will follow.”

3. Although small, the El Monte Vietnamese Seventh-day Adventist Church has its own Mission Center, providing a free daycare center, classes for children, and a television studio where they teach the Sabbath School lessons, broadcasting in the vicinity of the church. “We never worry about money,” said the pastor. “When we do God’s mission, money will

always come.”

“If you wait for money to come, mission will never be accomplished,” said Ng. “It’s always the other way around!” In conclusion, Ng quoted Luke 6:38—“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you sue, it will be measured back to you.”

Treasurer’s Report by Juan Prestol-Puésan



“First and foremost, we wish to acknowledge our dependency upon God for His continuous presence, guidance, and sustaining grace,” said Elder Prestol-Puésan as he began his report that covered the 2019 financial operations through September 30. “Our financial picture points to a ‘break even, by December 31,” he said, while indicating it could be ‘break even’ or better, based on three variables:

- 1) Gross tithe and offerings
- 2) The exchange fluctuation of key currencies
- 3) Continued fiscal discipline within the GC, holding expenditures and allocations down

Prestol-Puésan also indicated the importance of retaining an adequate liquidity level. Commenting on investment earning, he stated that as of September 30, GC net assets had increased by US\$1.2 million, in spite of continued volatility in the US stock markets. The church, he said, invests “almost exclusively” in fixed instruments, which carry less risk.

The financial report indicated a total gross tithe increase of 3.6 percent in 2018, for a total of



US\$89,094,912. Nevertheless, due to the ongoing fluctuation of some major currencies, the 2019 total may be less the figure reported for 2018. Prestol-Puésan added, however, that the recommended percentages in working capital and liquidity are similar to a year ago.

Undertreasurer Ray Wahlen commented that the continued strength of the U.S. dollar against most currencies was a dominant factor in the GC operating budget, as “roughly half of our total income is originally contributed outside the United States.”

A second factor affecting the GC

operating budget is the decrease of the North American Division’s tithe contribution from 6.1 percent to 5.85 percent, representing US\$2.5 million, or 1.5 percent of less income.

Nevertheless, GC appropriations will remain unchanged in terms of local currencies, Wahlen said. He also noted that the allocation to GC Office Operating budget in 2020 was US\$540,000 under the 2 percent Operating Cap.

Prestol-Puésan noted three items that may have an impact on the financial operations of the church in the future:

1) The policy amendment

modifying the tithe percentages that division remit to the General Conference;

2) the sale of property in Hagerstown, Maryland where the Review and Herald Publishing Association was previously located;

3) the building of a warehouse on the church’s world headquarters property.

Closing his report, Prestol-Puésan thanked “the generosity of members” and “the large number of volunteers and employees” who serve in church finance. And once again he thanked God and expressed confidence in His guidance.

ANNUAL COUNCIL SUMMARY

GENERAL REPORTS



“We must be inclusive when making the gospel invitation,” said **Larry Evans**, during the **Possibilities Ministries Report**. During his Sabbath afternoon report, Evans focused on the many advances taking place in ECD, SID, and WAD regarding work for the deaf and others with disabilities. Recently, 80 individuals with a variety of disabilities were baptized, and more than 1,000 people attended a special needs camp meeting in Rwanda.



In his **Adventist Mission** report, **Gary Krause**, reminded all that “Where there is no mission there is no church” (Emil Brunner). In the year 2000, there was 1 Adventist for every 519 people in the world, and by 2018, there was 1 Adventist for every 356 people worldwide, due in part from concerted missionary efforts. Currently, 764 adults, plus children, are serving as Interdivision Service Employees (ISE), with the majority serving in education or administration. The focus of Global Mission is church planting, incorporating centers of influence and global mission centers, and reaching unreached people groups. Church planting projects are currently taking place in 68 countries. The [Office of Adventist Mission](#) provides

a wealth of resources and programs for promoting and implementing mission.

Mission Advance

reports were given throughout the Annual Council meetings, showing how Total Member Involvement, One Year in Mission, and other initiatives are making a difference in winning souls to Christ across the globe.

The **Institute of World Mission** (IWM), headed by **Cheryl Doss**, trains missionaries for the world church. In her report, Doss noted, “The missionaries come from everywhere, and they go to serve everywhere!” Approximately two-thirds of Mission Institute participants are ISEs, and one-third being Inter-union employees, volunteers, contract workers, tentmakers, pastors of multicultural churches, seminary students, mission teachers, supporting ministry missionaries and others. In addition to in-person training, IWM also offers an online community featuring blogs, webinars, podcasts, and online courses at iwm.adventist.org. IWM also offers an online class, “Passport to Mission,” for Adventist Volunteer Services (AVS) participants.

One Year in Mission

Invitation. The 2020 GC Session will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, within the territory of the



Lake Union Conference. As part of their outreach plans, the Lake Union is inviting “a specific type of young person” to join them in One Year in Mission—“a person who is willing to suffer, a person who is willing to study the Bible like never before, and a person who is willing to do whatever it takes to lead a soul to Jesus Christ. . . .to live the hardest, and yet the most rewarding year of your life.” [Watch the short video here.](#)

“I Will Go,” strategic focus

was introduced by **Mike Ryan**. This document is more than a strategic plan. It’s a mission-focused tool based on real data and the Great Commission. Its value will be determined as the Church works together as a worldwide team of brothers and sisters, under the power of the Holy Spirit. The [“I Will Go” plan](#) offers something for the entire church, from local churches, missions, and conferences, to unions, divisions, and the GC. It’s a tool to help the Church be more focused and effective in performing critical tasks. The document includes our mission statement, method, and vision, along with 10 objectives

and tools for accomplishing that mission. Some of the objectives include: “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors, but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples” (Obj. 1); “To disciple individuals and families into spirit-filled lives” (Obj. 5); “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults” (Obj. 6); and “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview” (Obj. 7). To obtain an electronic copy of the full plan, [click here](#).



In his **“Statistical Report—Mission Trends and Resources”**, David Trim, ASTR director, reported that as of June 30, 2019, there were 21,252,743 Seventh-day Adventist members worldwide. He also showed gains and losses from the years 2012-2018, with 2018 being the highest number of accessions (1,383,427) and 2016 being the year of the lowest losses (394,248). Nevertheless, Trim reported that

while 37,592,451 people have become Adventists since 1965, 15,132,555 have chosen to leave, giving a net loss rate of 40 percent. Other statistics included: Congregations per ordained pastor (SID being the highest, NAD the lowest); Members per pastor (SID highest, MENA lowest); Accessions per pastor (SID highest; ESD lowest); Members per congregation (NAD highest, ESD lowest). Accessions per congregation was highest in ECD, lowest in ESD; and ECD had the highest ratio of members to administrators, with MENA being the lowest. Other statistics included administrators per pastor, with SAD having the highest number, and NSD the lowest; tithe per congregation was highest in NAD, lowest in SUD. While global trends showed upward growth in the number of pastors, congregations, membership and baptisms, the largest growth was in the increased number of administrators worldwide. “Examining the balance between administrators and pastoral/evangelistic workers might help us to see greater growth in the numbers of accessions,” Trim said. Concluding his report, Trim noted, “There are different resources available in different parts of the world Church. . . . Some parts of the world contribute to the work in other parts. Yet all work towards the same end.”

Nurture and Retention Summit report presented by **Gerson Santos**. This report came out of the Summit held at the 2019 Spring Meeting. The report outlines recommendations for the local church, and recommendations for church administration. In his brief report, Santos highlighted four important elements of a strong nurture/retention program and discipleship in the local church: 1) Implement a systematic process to discipleship; 2) a strong, warm environment to nurture the congregation—the members and newcomers; 3) develop and implement a strategy for reclaiming former members; 4) to have an assessment to encourage follow-through.

Voted Change of Status: The Belize Union of Churches Mission to the Belize Union Mission with three local fields—North Belize Mission, Central Belize Mission, and Southwest Belize Mission. The number of Adventists within Belize is 46,105, with a population of 421,088. This gives a membership ratio to population of 1 to 9, one of the highest in the world., according to **Gerson Santos**.





Voted Realignment of Ethiopian Union. Ethiopia is the second most populous country on the African continent, according to **John Thomas**. Adventism entered Ethiopia in 1909. In recent years, there has been tremendous growth in Ethiopia. It was voted to divide the present Ethiopia Union into two union missions—East Ethiopia Union Mission, with headquarters in Addis Ababa, and West Ethiopia Union Mission, headquartered in Nekemte. Membership has grown from 122,000 in 2011 to 205,000 in 2018, with an average of 10,000 baptisms annually. In the past four years, tithes as grown by 154 percent from 26.6 million Birr (\$900K) to 67.6 million Birr (\$2.3 million) with clean GCAS audits for the past ten years and offerings from 2.2 million Birr (\$75K to 4 million Birr (\$137K).

A vote of solidarity with our Seventh-day Adventist Church family in Burundi was taken in recognition of the harassment and persecution being faced by the 186,000 Adventists in Burundi. A special prayer was offered for them, the local church leaders in the Burundi Union Mission, and for the country of Burundi, by Ted N.C. Wilson.

Recognition of Service to Wilmar Hirle. Wilmar Hirle, recently retired publishing director, along with his wife, Cleni, was recognized by Almir Marroni, current publishing director, for his 39 years of service in the publishing ministry. The Special Service Recognition Award was presented by Ted N.C. Wilson on behalf of the Publishing Ministries Department.



Believing that education is for all children, **ADRA's** new campaign, “Every Child. Everywhere. In School.” seeks to bring awareness and action to the plight of 262 million children who are currently not in school. According to **Michael Kruger**, interim **ADRA** president, 90 percent of children with disabilities in the developing world are not in school. Further, 25 million primary school age children have never been to school. Refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than their non-refugee peers. ADRA is aiming for 1 million signatures supporting “Every Child. Everywhere. In School.” Sign today at ADRA.org/InSchool.



The **Family Ministries** department, headed by **Willie and Elaine Oliver**, celebrated the department’s 100-year anniversary during Annual Council on October 14. Taking a few “to remember and reflect on its relevance then and now and reaffirm our commitment to all families.” Willie Oliver pointed to an important conversation Ellen White had with Arthur Spaulding in 1913 that led to the formation in 1919 of what was then called “The Home Commission,” led by Arthur Spaulding and his wife,

Maud, who served in that capacity until 1941. The Olivers continued tracing the history of this special service, which was first nestled within the Education Department, but in 1975 became its own entity, “The Home and Family Service,” headed by Delmer and Betty Holbrook. In 1980 Ron and Karen Flowers joined the Home and Family Service and became the directors when the service became the Family Ministries Department in 1995. The Olivers became the directors of Family Ministries in 2010. A Family Ministries Centennial brochure, plan book, and other material is available for download [here](#). A *Couple’s Bible*, produced in partnership with the publishing house, Safeliz, was also introduced at this time. Acknowledging their outstanding work for families, a special award, “The Arthur and Maud Spaulding Medallion for lifetime service,” inaugurated specifically to commemorate the centennial of Family Ministries, was presented to Ron and Karen Flowers by Ted N.C. Wilson. A reception commemorating the centennial immediately followed in the Atrium.

Policy Amendment: It was voted to amend GC V 09 05, “Support of Worldwide Work (Sharing Financial Resources)” adjusting the tithe percentages forwarded to the General Conference Treasury from the world divisions. These funds are used by the General Conference for operations of the GC headquarters, appropriations to divisions and GC institutions, and the support of global programs adopted by the GC Executive Committee.

Compliance Action voted. Based on recommendations resulting from the 2018 Annual Council, a warning was voted on October 15 for the following entities that “have taken actions that are not in harmony with *Working Policy* and practices on credentials: Danish Union of Churches Conference (TED),



North German Union Conference (EUD), Norwegian Union Conference (TED) and the Swedish Union of Churches Conference (TED). A warning was also voted for the following entities that “have taken actions that are not in harmony with voted actions of the General Conference Session and the General Conference Executive Committee: Columbia Union Conference (NAD) and Pacific Union Conference (NAD). To read the voted document, [click here](#).

Statement voted. A “Statement on the Biblical View of Unborn Life and Its Implications for Abortion” was voted on October 16. The Statement originated





from the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) and was vetted by Health Ministries and other committees before coming to the floor of Annual Council. The statement affirms the sanctity of life and presents biblical principles bearing on abortion, including: “1. *God upholds the value and sacredness of human life.*; 2. *God considers the unborn child as human life.*; 3. *The will of God regarding human life is expressed in the Ten Commandments and explained by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.*; 4. *God is the Owner of life, and human beings are His stewards.*; 5. *The Bible teaches care for the weak and the vulnerable.*; 6. *God’s grace promotes life in a world marred by sin and death.*

“ellen4all: Crowd-translating Ellen White’s Writings.” An exciting possibility exists of translating the writings of Ellen White into multiple languages at a fraction of the cost of traditional translation. Currently, most of her writings are only available in English. Unfortunately, that excludes most of the world. Less than 1 percent of her writings have been translated into most languages. But, what if all bilingual Adventists from every country came together and worked towards the goal of translating Ellen White into their local language? [ellen4all](http://ellen4all.org) offers an open translation platform where volunteers can help make it happen. The goal is to enlist 10,000 lay members to participate in translating Ellen White’s writings into 55 languages. Visit ellen4all.org for more information.

During its video report, **Hope Channel** announced

the opening of five new affiliates in 2018—Finland, Ghana, Iceland, Singapore, and Central Asia. A new Hope Channel app was also developed in 2018, and at this point has been downloaded more than 300,000 times, and nearly 7 million live-stream videos have been played over the app platforms. Hope Channel affiliates are located in 50 countries, offering programming in 20 languages.

GCAS Auditing Report was brought by **Paul Douglas**. In its 2018 Annual Report, GCAS noted that its client numbered 2,360, with the largest groups being conferences/missions, and educational institutions. By the end of 2018, 60 percent of the GCAS portfolio was either completed or in progress. Of the financial statement opinions rendered, 59 percent were standard/unqualified, 32 percent qualified, 8 percent carried a disclaimer, and 1 percent were adverse. Regarding financial policy compliance reports, 79 percent included violations of core financial policies, including 3.4 violations coming from healthcare institutions, 2.9 from educational institutions, 2.7 from ADRA, 2.6 from Conferences/Missions, 2.5 from Division offices, 1.9 from Publishing Houses/ABCs, 1.8 Union offices, and 1.5 from other institutions. The report also provided insights for improving internal control for places experiencing deficiencies.

Ellen G. White Writings Report: In his report, **Darryl Thompson** from the White Estate noted some of the remarkable statistics in website and app

traffic. Just in the past 30 days, Thompson said, there were 900,000 unique visitors to the [egwwritings](#) website. In the EGW apps, there were 1 million unique visitors during the past month. Since the website and apps have launched, more than 50 million unique visitors have been served. Many of these visitors are coming in through social media, according to Thompson. Many are listening to audio books, and more than 300,000 subscriptions are being delivered every day through the EGW app. And now, EGW Cloud gives access to synchronize user data cross-platform to all EGW Writings apps. “We’re trying to encourage people to *read*,” said Thompson. “Not [just] to search, but to *read*.”

Communication Report by **Williams Costa** emphasized seven ways the Communication Department supports the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: 1) [Adventist News Network](#); 2) [GAI](#)N (Global Adventist Internet Network); 3) Service and Support, such as [Global Youth Day](#), [Revival for Mission](#), [TMI](#), [Facts with Hope](#), Creation Movie, and more partnerships; 4) Communicate and Integrate by presenting who we are to the world; 5) Public Relations; 6) [ACT](#) (Adventist Communication Training)-training and motivate church communication leaders; 7) Evangelism and Care through [adventist.org](#), the Church’s official website, focusing on the Digital Evangelism initiative, including search engine optimization.

Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists (ESDA) Report: Introduced by **David Trim**. Currently, 8,000 articles have been identified, expecting to have 2,000 articles online when the website is launched at the 2020 GC Session. This is due, according to Trim to the “Herculean efforts” of Dr. Dragaslava Santrac, the managing editor. Trim also noted increasing support from the world field for the project. Urgent assistance for the ESDA is still needed in the following areas: translation, bibliographical work and copy editing, obtaining photos/images from institutional archives and private collections, and the delivery of overdue articles.





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Directions: For more information on an item, click on the corresponding number on the map.

1 White Oak Medical Center (WOMC) in **Silver Spring, Maryland**, recently opened. Once known as Washington Adventist Hospital, in Takoma Park, Maryland, for more than a century, the center is now better positioned for access to the community. Offering private rooms, green spaces and a walking trail, this state-of-the-art Adventist Healthcare hospital is less than a mile from the General Conference. Dedication of WOMC took place earlier this year.

2 Almost 200 literature evangelists from across Jamaica, the English Caribbean, and the Netherlands Antilles met for the Inaugural joint Literature Evangelists Congress in **Willemstad, Curacao**. The four-day congress themed “Cast Deeper,” was designed to strengthen the literature evangelism ministry by facilitating testimonies, sharing experiences, distributing missionary books throughout communities in Curacao

and learning new skills.

3 City Hall changes Brazilian Independence Day Parade start time to accommodate Pathfinders. The parade, which typically takes place during Sabbath hours, began after sunset to allow Pathfinder clubs in **Carlos Chagas, Minas Gerais, Brazil** to participate. In the 70-year history of civic parades in the city of Carlos Chagas, this is the first time any change has been made.

4 More than 40,000 Seventh-day Adventists in Rwanda flocked to the Amahoro National Stadium to celebrate 100 years of Adventism in the country. The 100 years celebration was also a time to pay tribute to the Adventist missionaries who arrived in **Rwanda** in 1919.

5 Tusgal Adventist School, the only Adventist school in **Mongolia**, recently received an award as the best private school (out of 30) in their district in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. This is especially

remarkable as just one year ago the government threatened to close the school. About 200 students are enrolled at Tusgal, which was granted AAA accreditation in 2017.

6 A deadly fire claimed the lives of Seventh-day Adventist medical missionaries in Central Philippines. Dr. Pacifico Maypa, a surgeon and his wife, Delie May Maypa, Nurse Director of Adventist Hospital - Calbayog (AHC) both died in **Brgy. Policarpio, Calbayog City, Samar** after being trapped in their room while their house was ablaze.

7 The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fiji is giving praise to God following a decision by the High Court of Fiji that returns management and control of Vatuvonu Adventist High School to the Church. Previously, government orders had blocked the Church’s ability to run the school, including having any say on the appointment of staff.