

From the G.C. President

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The 1994 Annual Council, which concluded yesterday, dealt with many significant issues. The following were referred to the 1995 General Conference Session:

1. GC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:

Nobody can remember when, in recent decades, all members attended a meeting of the GC Executive Committee. In order that accountability may be increased by having GC Executive Committee more closely reflect world membership, this Annual Council accepted the recommendation of the Commission on World Church Organization and recommended **a)** that the size of the GC executive committee be 240, **b)** that all members should attend the Annual Council of the General Conference Committee (including conference presidents in the division where the meetings are held). The proposed members include ! GC & division officers, ! GC departmental directors, ! two lay persons from each division (currently one), ! Union presidents, ! pastors and other frontline workers, ! presidents of GC institutions, ! 30 delegates-at-large.

2. DEPARTMENTS: Two actions were taken regarding the delivery of departmental services. ! **Restructuring--** Church Ministries Department to be subdivided into Family Ministries, Personal Ministries and Sabbath School, Stewardship, and Youth Department (incorporating Children's Ministries) ! **Duplication--** While each department is to be represented at the General Conference and its divisions, not all departments must be duplicated at unions and conferences/missions. Concurrent with a decision by an organization not to staff a specific department is the authorization of the next higher staffed level to deal directly with the organization to be served.

3. CAPGC SESSION DELEGATES: Two options, limiting the number of delegates to General Conference sessions, will be placed before the 1995 GC Session (to be effective at the GC Session in the year 2000). The first, limits the number of delegates to 2,650 (the number estimated to attend in 1995), while the other limits the number to 2,000. Both maintain approximately the current representative balance between world divisions.

4. MIDDLE EAST UNION: The Council accepted the report of a study commission and voted to recommend all but four of the 17 countries of the Middle East Union become part of the Trans-European Division. The Iran Field, Turkey, and the two unentered countries of Libya and Afghanistan will become part of the Euro-Africa Division.

5. THE FAR EASTERN DIVISION'S name will change to the Asia-Pacific Division.

6. RIGHT TO ORDAIN: Acting on a request of the North American Division to define the role of divisions in

establishing ordination guidelines, the Annual Council voted to place North America's request on the General Conference Session agenda. It reads as follows: *The General Conference vests in each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with established policies. In addition, where circumstances do not render it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender. In divisions where the division executive committees take specific actions approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, women may be ordained to serve in those divisions.*

Some additional items voted by Annual Council, but that are not GC Session items, are as follows:

! **NEW PUBLISHING** department policies were voted including **a)** transferring to divisions the oversight of the Literature Evangelism programs in their respective divisions, **b)** permitting the Church's publishing houses to "have access to other territories outside their division to market their products." **c)** Publishing houses were authorized to fill orders received from members and churches outside their divisions. Until now, publishing houses were assigned specific territories within the Church's world divisions.

! **THE BOARD OF REGENTS** was renamed the Accrediting Association of Adventist Schools and Universities (AAA) as part of the process of securing recognition by the US Department of Education. Once granted, this recognition will enhance the standing of church educational institutions accredited by the AAA, both in the US and abroad, and would permit AAA to function as our own accrediting body.

! **GC SESSION BREAKOUT GROUPS:** To facilitate greater opportunity for delegates to direct future church initiatives, Annual Council voted to conduct six breakout groups during the 1995 GC Session on the following topics: The use of Scripture in the life of the Church; the historicity/authority of the Scriptures; relationship among the community of believers, family violence, religious liberty; and church initiatives designed to affect the import/export taxation and distribution of tobacco.

AMAZING FACTS FOUNDER DIES: Joseph A. Crews, founder and speaker of Amazing Facts, died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage on October 10. Born in 1924, evangelist, pastor, and radio/TV evangelist and speaker of Amazing Facts since 1965. He is survived by his wife Luann and two sons, Larry and Dennis. On October 5, he and Luann celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary.

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