

ADVENTIST Review

NEWSBREAK

A Daily News Bulletin

Volume 1, No. 4

Annual Council 2004

October 12, 2004

New Fundamental Belief Endorsed

Delegates to the Annual Council today voted to recommend the addition of a new statement to the 27 doctrinal affirmations currently identified in the church's Fundamental Beliefs. The proposed statement, "Growing in Christ," will be placed on the agenda of the church's worldwide General Conference Session in July 2005 in St. Louis, Missouri. It is the first addition to be recommended by an Annual Council since the original document was approved at the church's 1980 session in Texas.

The new statement addresses several areas of Christian belief and practice that many church leaders and theologians felt did not receive adequate attention in the present articulation of core beliefs. The power of Christ in confronting and vanquishing demonic powers is highlighted, and the freedom of believers from past deeds and influences is affirmed. Specific spiritual practices, including personal Bible study, prayer, worship, and witness, are described as supporting the believer's new life in Christ.

"As a church, we've set a priority on reaching those who live in the 10/40 window—nearly 70 percent

of the world's population," says Mike Ryan, vice president for strategic planning and director of the church's Global Mission initiative. "Most of these people go to bed each night fearing evil spirits. Their first question to us invariably is 'What will your Jesus do about the evil spirits?'"

"If we're going to be a people of hope, we also have to be able to show people where to find it—and that's why these spiritual resources and practices that point to Jesus have been identified in the new statement."

The complete text of the "Growing in Christ" Fundamental Belief, along with supporting Bible references, can be viewed at www.adventistreview.org.

Treasury Reports Increase in Tithes & Offerings

General Conference treasurer Robert Lemon presented a picture of strong world church finances. "The tithe increases the last few years, both pre- and post-9/11 around the world as well as in North America, are nothing short of a miracle," said Lemon. "The Lord has blessed His people, and

His people have become even more faithful during these difficult times."

Undertreasurer Steven Rose reported the following statistics:

Tithe income YTD (as of August 31, 2004) to the General Conference:

- Non-North American Division tithe—\$5,714,857, up from 4,327,308 at the same time in 2003.
- NAD tithe—\$40,066,611, up from \$39,670,622 in 2003.
- Total tithe income—45,781,468, an increase of \$1,783,538.

World Mission Offerings YTD (as of August 31, 2004) to the General Conference:

- Non-NAD—\$17,168,965, up from \$15,482,801 in 2003.
- NAD—\$12,863,221, an increase of \$66,721.
- Total mission offerings—\$30,032,186, up from \$28,279,301.

Delegates also voted to approve the 2005 budget proposal. Sixty-two percent of the budget comes from tithe, 36% from offerings, and 2% from investments and donations.

Commission to Study Use of Tithe

Delegates voted to establish a 59-member commission, with broad-based world representation, to review the use of tithe including tithe exchange, depreciation and tithe, tithe in educational institutions, and interdivision employee support and tithe.

Members will include representatives from the GC; theologians; division, union, and conference officers; pastors; educators; and laypersons.

No time limit for the commission to present a report was included in the vote.

Nurturing New Believers

Since 1999, nearly 40,000 new believers in North America have received the weekly *Adventist Review* in their homes free of charge for one year following baptism or profession of faith. This program is a joint effort of the local conference and the *Adventist Review*, and serves as a nurturing tool to introduce the new believer to the Adventist Church. Thanks to the generosity of faithful donors who have sacrificially given to this program, it continues to minister to thousands of new believers each year.