



WISCONSIN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
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March 12, 1991

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

Dear Church Member:

By letter we communicate today with our Wisconsin family regarding several items.

SPRING CONSTITUENCY MEETING

We are approaching the time for our **spring constituency meeting** scheduled to be held at the Madison Seventh-day Adventist church (3815 Dutch Mill Road) on **Sunday, April 14, 1991**, beginning at **9:30 a.m.** This is a continuation of the special constituency meeting which was held on November 18, 1990, at the Madison church. That meeting was recessed until April 14, 1991. Delegates (or alternates) who served at the November 1990 meeting are also delegates to the April 1991 meeting. If the delegates (or alternates) chosen for the November 1990 meeting are now unable to attend, the church may choose other persons to serve in their stead. Any church member may attend conference constituency meetings, but only delegates have voice and vote privileges.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY DEBT

Many persons have sacrificed and given liberally to help in this financial crisis in our conference. To each of you we express our deepest appreciation and thanks.

An enclosure with this letter from our Stewardship Department tells the story of what each church has been willing and/or able to give through the month of February.

The constituency voted objective requested each church to accept the challenge of its probable fair share of the total conference objective (based on tithe income for each church). Some churches have taken business meeting actions to send in the balance of their total goal with their March financial report to the conference. In these instances funds will have come from special gifts from members and/or savings and reserves in local church accounts. We express deepest appreciation and thanks to the churches that have made such commitments.

The ability of the conference to continue operating Wisconsin Academy requires --

- 1) Special funding for removal of past debts.
- 2) Special funding annually due to lowered enrollment at the academy.

We have made good progress to date. Let's keep doing our share, our best, to keep the doors of Wisconsin Academy open to the young people of Wisconsin.

DOWNSIZING OF EMPLOYEE STAFF

It is apparent that we have been overstaffed in the Wisconsin Conference in relationship to available income. Therefore during the past two years we have been downsizing our employee staff. To date, we have cut 7 full time equivalent staff members at Wisconsin Academy (due to lowered enrollment), 6 ministers, and at the office 2 full time persons and 1 part time employee. This has been and continues to be a most painful process.

Our planned objective is to achieve a balanced conference budget by January 1992 (or before), which is in harmony with North American Division operating guidelines for conferences.

We will continue the process of meeting with individual churches and pastorates to discuss this matter as from time-to-time we make these adjustments when employees accept calls out of state.

An enclosure lists the formation of Wisconsin pastorates as of March 1, 1991. Total membership for a single church or a pastorate (several churches) needs to be about 350 in order for that church or pastorate to be carrying its fair share of the total conference program. Looking at the arrangement as it currently stands, you will see progress has been made but that further downsizing is also necessary.

Many have asked, "Why do our pastors have so many churches?" Perhaps the enclosed sheet and the above comments will answer this question at least in part.

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that, due to the downsizing process that has taken place, conference finances are greatly improved as of the end of 1990 when compared with the year end report of 1989. The picture will continue to improve as we work together in this process. We are concerned, of course, over the financial status of our academy and the academy farm; but by God's blessing and our working together, these challenges can also be met.

EVANGELISM

Amidst all of our talk and implementation of downsizing, we must be about our mission -- sharing the good news of the everlasting gospel in the setting of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. Membership and attendance growth will help stop the downsizing process.

It is our desire to continue a strong emphasis on soul winning during 1991. Because of a special appropriation for evangelism from the Lake Union Conference and because of a small carry-over of unexpended evangelism funds for 1989, we are planning to reach out in a major way in two of our larger cities this coming fall -- Green Bay and Madison. Guest evangelists are being invited in to help our pastors. Remember these special meetings and many others like them in your prayers.

CAMP MEETING

We look forward to being with many of you again at camp meeting, June 14-22. This year's program includes the following speakers:

- 6:30 a.m. **WILLIAM SHEA**, Assoc. Director, Biblical Research Institute
9:30 a.m. **CALVIN SMITH**, Assoc. Church Ministries Director, General Conference
11:00 a.m. **ROGER COON**, Undersecretary, Ellen G. White Estate
1:15 p.m. Special Workshops and Seminars
2:30 p.m. **VIRGINIA SMITH**, Assoc. Church Ministries Director, General Conference
4:00 p.m. **WILLIAM SHEA** and
HAROLD LEE, Assoc. Church Ministries Director, North American Division
7:00 p.m. **CHARLES AND MILDRED CASE** -- Daily Family Life Feature
Charles Case, Assoc. Church Ministries Director, Lake Union Conference
Mildred Case, Assist. Professor of Nursing, Andrews University
8:00 p.m. **ALFRED MCCLURE**, President, North American Division
HYVETH WILLIAMS, Pastor, Boston Temple SDA Church
DWIGHT NELSON, Pastor, Pioneer Memorial SDA Church

SPECIAL ITEM

The General Conference is extending a special invitation to Adventist lay persons across North America to attend year-end division meetings overseas during the latter part of 1991. Several persons in other conferences have already responded to this invitation.

This special invitation is to those who are willing and able to make a significant contribution to a world division of their choice, and which, in turn, they would be willing to visit during the annual year-end meetings. Said persons would pay for their air fare to and from the division, and upon return, after having been appraised of special needs in that division, would make the distribution of their contribution according to how the Lord leads them.

Interested lay persons should contact the conference president for further details.

If you have read this far, we say thank you for doing so. We want you to be informed on the events and business of your conference.

Sincerely,



Arnold Swanson
President

AS/vb
Enclosures

P. S. Enclosed are copies of articles from a couple of our church papers which we believe to be relevant to current concerns in the Wisconsin Conference. One article discusses the current downsizing process taking place in the North American Division, the other article shows the blessings that come when churches and conferences grow.

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