An engineer conducts tests of audio and visual equipment in the Adventist Church’s headquarters auditorium last week. Crews were preparing the auditorium and its translation booths for next week’s Annual Council.

Annual Council, set for October 11 to 17, is the yearly meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Executive Committee, a group of more than 350 world church leaders. It is the church’s top business meeting other than General Conference Session, which is held every five years.

The General Conference’s office of the executive secretary offered ANN a preliminary agenda but stressed that it is not official until it is adopted on the first day of business. Annual Council begins the evening of Thursday, October 11, and business sessions start Sunday, October 14.

“We appreciate the prayers of members worldwide for this council and expect that the Spirit will be evident throughout the proceedings,” said Myron Iseminger, undersecretary for the Adventist world church. “It’s encouraging to see world church leaders representing diverse cultures passionately yet peacefully expressing their positions on tough issues and then praying together.”

Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson will deliver the Sabbath Sermon on October 13, which will be broadcast on the church’s Hope Channel network. Leaders will also give updates on several
presidential initiatives, including the Great Controversy Project, which is a global distribution of the book written by church co-founder Ellen G. White, and the Revived by His Word Project, a global prayer campaign.

Adventist Church Secretary G. T. Ng is scheduled to deliver his report regarding the world church’s membership and steps the denomination is taking enhance its records.

Secretariat is also expected to recommend a change in church structure to enhance ministry in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and in Burundi in the East-Central Africa Division.

Church Treasurer Robert E. Lemon will deliver his report on the state of the church’s finances and a revised policy on tithe incorporating recommendations from a study commission.

Delegates are also expected to receive an update on the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, which was established last month. The move follows last year’s unveiling of a roadmap for how the denomination will study the role and practice of ordination in response to a 2010 request at General Conference Session.

While the Adventist world church’s policy does allow for women to be commissioned as ministers, it does not allow for the ordination of women to ministry. The issue has become one of intense discussion again in recent years. Church officials said two union constituency sessions have authorized their executive committees to ordain women as ministers despite requests from Adventist world church leaders to wait for the committee’s conclusions.

Delegates are also expected to vote on wording of a policy change that adjusts the percentage of tithe from the North American Division that is offered forwarded to the General Conference headquarters. NAD currently contributes 8 percent of tithe to the General Conference, and the proposal is a reduction to 6 percent by the year 2020. The other 12 divisions, by comparison, each contribute 2 percent of tithe to the General Conference.

There could also be a name change for the denomination’s Euro-Africa Division, based in Berne, Switzerland. Last year, the division’s territory in Africa was aligned with the newly-created Greater Middle East Union.

Secretariat also said the two church statements on homosexuality will undergo rewording to more clearly articulate the denomination’s position.

Remembrance: Retired Publishing director Wickwire, 96, promoted Adventist literature legacy

Oct. 04, 2012
Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Ansel Oliver/ANN

Bruce M. Wickwire Sr. was the Seventh-day Adventist world church’s Publishing Department director from 1975 to 1980, having risen to the position after managing the publishing and door-to-door sales of Adventist literature in his native United States and mission fields worldwide.

Wickwire, who died September 27 at age 96, held Publishing director posts in East Asia three years
Bruce Wickwire was a missionary to East Asia in the 1940s and 1950s. He helped sell Adventist literature and recruited literature evangelists throughout the region. [photo courtesy Wickwire family]

Throughout his career, Wickwire touted the benefits of the denomination’s literature ministry, saying it was a good return on investment for the church, both financially and for bringing in new members.

Wickwire wrote two books in retirement. His 2005 book “Gospel in Shoes” identifies several well-known Adventists who joined the church because of Adventist literature, including Jack Blanco, who went on to become dean of the School of Religion at Southern Adventist University in Tennessee, United States, and authored the Clear Word Bible.

A native of Nebraska, Wickwire worked as a farmer in Arkansas before becoming a door-to-door salesman of Adventist literature, then known as a “colporteuring.” In 1944, he became the Publishing Secretary for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference and two years later moved to serve in the same post for the Texas Conference.

In 1948, he moved his family to Indonesia to accept a call in Jakarta. Traveling to Southeast Asia then meant living on a small freight ship at the mercy of sometimes rough seas. His daughter, Linda Breedlove, recalled a harrowing trip through a typhoon, in which the captain fought to keep the ship upright as waves crashed over the deck for three days.

“I always said the devil didn’t want him to go out there and tried to stop him,” she said. “He [had] been through a lot but he always came through trusting the Lord.”

Wickwire served in Indonesia for two years, later moving to Singapore to work for the Adventist church’s then Malayan Union Mission and Far Eastern Division. Trips to outposts throughout the division back then would take months. “Him coming home was like Christmas with all the things he bought for us on his travels,” Breedlove said.


“My dad was very active, very adventurous and always positive. I can’t remember him ever being negative,” said his son, Bruce Wickwire Jr.

Later in life, the elder Wickwire held Publishing posts in the Southwestern Union in Texas, the Columbia Union in Washington, D.C., and the church’s Northern European Division in England. He came to the denomination’s world headquarters in 1972 as associate Publishing director before becoming director in 1975. He retired in Tennessee.

He is survived by his wife Adele, three children, 13 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. A memorial service is scheduled for Sunday, October 7 at the Collegedale Adventist Church in Collegedale, Tennessee.

In South America, Publishing council recognizes role of Adventist editors

Oct. 04, 2012
Brasilia, Brazil
Dozens of Adventist editors from two church-run publishing houses in South America met last month at regional church headquarters in Brasilia, Brazil, to integrate their efforts and network with colleagues. [photo courtesy Brazil Publishing House]

Seventh-day Adventist editors at two church-run publishing houses in South America are integrating their communication ministry.

More than 40 editors from the Sao Paulo-based Brazil Publishing House and the South American Spanish Publishing House in Buenos Aries, Argentina, met in Brasilia last month for the region’s first publishing council in more than two decades.

The council recognized the work of editors, encouraged collaboration between the two publishing houses and provided resources and networking opportunities, church leaders said.

“Publishers are always offering so much to people, but they don’t always receive the support that they need in return,” said Erton Kohler, president of the church’s South American Division.

Numerous prominent Adventist editors led presentations during the conference. Former Adventist Review and Adventist World Editor Bill Johnsson shared lessons learned during his decades-long writing and editing career. Church historian, author and editor George Knight offered examples from early church pioneers who helped shape the Adventist ministry of communication.

Alberto Timm, an associate director of the White Estate and Wilmar Hirle, associate director of Publishing Ministries for the Adventist world church, spoke on major cultural and ecclesiological challenges the church is currently facing, and how editors can help offer clarity and context.

To Almir Marroni, a vice president for the South American Division, the conference served to motivate publishers, who he said play a key role in preparing the world for Christ’s Second Coming.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the importance of the ministry of those who were called by God to communicate the gospel through the written word in the last days of history,” Marroni said.

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