Headlines

Thousands CALLED to the NAD Ministerial Convention in Texas
More than 5,500 people attend the four-day workshop in the city of Austin

Supreme Court Rules on Same-Sex Marriage
Seventh-day Adventist Church Maintains Biblical Stance

GC Session 101: A look inside the Nominating Committee
Understanding the process of choosing leadership for the Adventist Church

General Vice President visits Emanuel AME Church after tragic shooting
Delbert Baker says the service in Charlestown South Carolina was one of the most meaningful services he's attended

Thousands CALLED to the NAD Ministerial Convention in Texas

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June 29, 2015 | Austin, Texas, United States of America | NAD Communication

Downtown Austin, Texas has been transformed into a giant ministerial convention as more than 5500 pastors, spouses and children are attending the CALLED NAD Ministerial Convention, sponsored by the North American Division
of Seventh-day Adventists. Held for the first time in decades, the convention serves to empower, educate and revitalize the diverse collection of ministers who serve the North American church. Held over a four day period from June 28 – July 1, 2015, the event provides keynote presentations, workshops and worship opportunities that focus on four tracks, Pastors, Ministerial Spouses, Youth and Children.

The convention kicked off its opening with general session meetings focused towards the four tracks. The Pastors event featured presentations from Wintley Phipps, Dirk Duerkson, Wesly Knight and a closing charge from NAD President Daniel R. Jackson who urged the ministers to consider “Who called you and what for?”. A prayer of dedication was offered by General Conference President Ted N.C. Wilson who praised the presenters, thanking them for focusing their messages on the need to follow Jesus Christ’s model of evangelism.

The ministerial spouses general session featured presentations by J. Nicole Brise, Mark O’Fill and Adrienne Townsend as they focused their on being Called to Belong, Follow and Eternal Glory.

Late evening events were then held where attendees could watch Adventist produced films or take part in a Shark Tank competition where pastors were given the opportunity to compete for prizes to further their evangelistic projects. Over the four days of the event, more than $120,000 will be given for evangelistic programs at the local church level.

In the opening presentation, noted musician, evangelist and pastor, Winitley Phipps urged pastors to “resemble, reflect and reveal the character of God.” Wesley Knight used the example of the folded burial cloth to remind pastors that Jesus wasn’t “rescued, He was resurrected!”.

The CALLED Ministerial Convention was planned and organized by the North American Division Ministerial Department, under the guidiance of Ministerial Director Ivan Williams and his associates. They spent the past 18 months carefully choosing speakers, planning events and developing resources that will provide spiritual refreshment, energy and encouragement to the ministers, spouses and children attending the convention.

At the conclusion of the event on July 1, many of the ministers and their families will board busses where they will be transported 80 miles to San Antonio, Texas to attend the 60th General Conference Session, the Adventist Church’s business session held every five years.

Photos of the event can be found at https://www.flickr.com/photos/nadadventist.

Supreme Court Rules on Same-Sex Marriage
**Seventh-day Adventist Church Maintains Biblical Stance**

*June 26, 2015 | North American Division Communication*

*Editors Note: The North American Division issued the following statement in response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage on Friday, June 26, 2015*

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday, June 26, released its decision legalizing same-sex marriage across the United States.

Even with the Supreme Court’s decision, the Seventh-day Adventist Church maintains its fundamental belief that marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman.

While the church respects the opinions of those who may differ, it will continue to teach and promote its biblically based belief of marriage between a man and a woman.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that all people, regardless of race, gender, and sexual orientation are God’s children and should be treated with civility, compassion, and Christ-like love.

More information on the church’s belief on marriage can be found on adventist.org.

**GC Session 101: A look inside the Nominating Committee**

*Understanding the process of choosing leadership for the Adventist Church*

*June 25, 2015 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Mylon Medley/ANN*

General Conference Session is the largest business meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that takes place every five years. During the 10-day meeting Church leaders are elected and business is conducted that governs the way the church will fulfill its mission.

When it comes to facilitating official church business, more than 2,000 delegates are tasked with the responsibility of voting on recommendations from previous meetings of the Executive Committee, the Church’s second-highest governing body.

However, when it’s time for electing Church leaders, including the denomination’s president, leaders of the Church’s divisions and leaders of the Church’s ministries; 252 delegates are chosen to form the nominating committee. But who are these delegates? How are they chosen? What
FORMING THE COMMITTEE

The 252 members of the nominating committee consists of 233 delegates from the Church’s 13 divisions, and 19 delegates from the Church’s world headquarters, also known as the General Conference.

Since the election process begins with the nomination of candidates, the nominating committee is formed on the first day of General Conference Session, according to Myron Iseminger, undersecretary of the General Conference. Delegates separate to form caucuses for their individual divisions. Each division is allowed to send 10 percent of its delegates to the nominating committee. The General Conference, on the other hand, is only allowed to send eight percent of its delegates.

There are other factors for the caucuses to consider when it comes to selecting representatives for the nominating committee. For example, anyone chosen must be a duly accredited delegate in attendance at the General Conference Session.

Also, delegates selected to serve on the nominating committee cannot be elected officials of the General Conference. These officials include General Conference and Division presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, undersecretaries, associate secretaries, undertreasurers, associate treasurers, division officers, officers of the General Conference Auditing Service, and leaders of the General Conference departments.

In other words, if a delegate is currently serving in a position that is up for election at Session, he or she cannot serve on the nominating committee.

You may ask, “Who is left to serve on the nominating committee?” Nominating committees are populated with delegates including, union presidents and officers, local conference leaders, lay members, top leaders of General Conference institutions, including schools, hospitals, sanitariums and the Ellen G. White Estate.

KEY PLAYERS IN THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Once all of the 252 openings for the nominating committee have been filled, the committee is directed to a private room where it immediately begins fulfilling its duties, starting with the selection of the nominating committee chair, vice-chair, secretary and associate secretary. The nominating committee selects its own officers, beginning with the chair.

Once the chair is selected, it is suggested that he or she lead out in the selection of the remaining three nominating committee officers.

After the officers have been briefed with their responsibilities, the group, under the direction of the chair, begins the process of selecting the Church’s top leaders.

Bob Kyte, president of Adventist Risk Management, who served as the nominating committee chair for the 2010 General Conference Session, said one thing to consider is all of the diversity in the room, not just in terms of multiple languages, but also different perspectives for the best methods the committee can adopt for the process of selecting names.

“One of the biggest challenges was trying to mix cultures from all over the world in how they do
business as a Church,” said Kyte.

While English is the official language of all the Church’s business meetings, translators are present during the committee’s meetings to ensure that information is effectively shared to committee members who speak other languages.

Two other key players of the committee include the managers of the electronic system, through which the votes are cast during the meetings. The managers document every nominated name and all of the tallied votes for every position. Their records are kept in the Church’s Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

THE NOMINATION PROCESS

At the start of every day, one of the officers shares a devotional thought. Leaders also invite the presence of God to guide the decision-making process.

“We prayed before every vote for God to lead in the voting,” said Kyte.

The first position the nominating committee considers is the president of the General Conference. Once the president is elected, the president serves as an advisor to the nominating committee for the remainder of the election process.

After the president is elected, the committee selects names for the General Conference secretary and General Conference treasurer. After the General Conference Officers have been elected, the committee selects names for the remaining positions to be filled during Session.

Once the committee votes on a name, an officer of the committee, or a designated officer from the General Conference, notifies the candidate of the nomination. The officers also notify incumbents if they have not been nominated before they notify the person who has been nominated to take his or her place.

Sometimes, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the nominating committee officers would do more than just notify nominees.

“In some cases we encouraged nominees to accept the nomination,” said Cindy Tutsch, retired associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate, who served the committee as its secretary during the 2010 General Conference Session, and later functioned as the committee’s vice chair, after the delegate who served in the position was elected to serve the Church as a vice president.

Once the candidate has been notified, the officers of the nominating committee are escorted to the venue where business meetings are held. The chair of the current business meeting interrupts whatever is being discussed on the floor to hear the nomination, also known as a report. Sometimes a report consists of a group of nominations.

While the nominating committee’s report is only to be viewed as a recommendation, it is rare for the delegates to reject a report from the committee.

If a delegate has reservations about the report and makes his or her reservations known after the report is delivered, the delegate is invited as a guest to the nominating committee to voice his or her concerns. After the concerns are voiced, the delegate is dismissed so the committee can decide whether to let the nomination stand.
‘THE INTERWORKING OF THE CHURCH’

Though relatively small compared to the Church’s global membership of 18.4 million, the nominating committee’s role is vital to the operation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is important for the group of 252 delegates selected to serve to be in tuned with the Holy Spirit, and to be disciplined to fill all of the positions during Session.

“It was an absolute privilege to see the interworking of the Church,” said Tutsch.

The next article in this series of “Session 101” will provide an in-depth look into the experience of a nominee.

General Vice President visits Emmanuel AME Church after tragic shooting

Delbert Baker says the service in Charleston South Carolina was one of the most meaningful services he's attended

June 25, 2015 | Delbert Baker/ANN Staff

After the tragic killing of 9 people in Charleston in the U.S. state of South Carolina, Delbert W. Baker, General Vice President of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, visited the Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church Sunday and conveyed respect and condolences.

The victims, including the church’s senior pastor and state senator, Clementa Pinckney were killed by a gunman during a prayer service inside the church.

Baker said it was one of the most meaningful services he recalls attending. He said, in the midst of the pain there was the evident power of forgiveness and love. There was a stubborn and redemptive theme outlined in Psalm 30:55 "Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning."

He recalls three recurrent messages that emerged from the service and from talking with the pastoral team. First, God is our strength and He gives us a loving and keeping power. Second, we will not let hate or violence interrupt or dampen the study and sharing of the Word. Third, our nine members did not die in vain--God will bring about justice and make sense of their sacrifice.

Thousands of people of all faiths and racial backgrounds were outside of the church before and after the service.