411 Subscribers,

There were a couple mistakes in the 411 Newsletter that went out yesterday, March 1, 2012. We would like to apologize for the mistakes and correct them for you below:

Adventist National & International Events:

- **Denver Youth Congress:** The newsletter stated that this event was sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Conference. However, it is actually sponsored by the Central States Conference Youth Ministry Department. More Info: Visit [IAmTheChurch.me](IAmTheChurch.me).

Miscellaneous Item:

- **North America Retracts "Commissioned" Ministers as Top Leader Candidates:** Ted Wilson, GC President, was mentioned as being the one who apologized, but it was actually Dan Jackson, NAD President. The article that was linked in the 411 was correct and if you wish to view the article again you may view it [Here](Here).

Sincerely,

411 Content Editors
North America retracts “commissioned” ministers as top leader candidates

Feb. 14, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

Ansel Oliver/ANN

The president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s North American Division apologized to the division’s Executive Committee for some inadvertent oversteps in policy in the division’s quest to allow commissioned ministers – including women – to serve as top leaders of local administrative units of the denomination.

The acknowledgement from division President Dan Jackson came in a January 31 letter following the results of the administration’s own policy review of its actions at its Year-End Meetings in 2010 and 2011.

The review determined that the division had acted beyond its authority in modifying its Working Policy to include commissioned ministers as candidates for presidents of local conferences.

That policy discussion began in 2009, under previous presidents of both the division and the General Conference world headquarters.

In his letter, Jackson wrote that the division had continued to discuss the matter and operated under an incorrect “assumption” of the extent of its authority within its territory.

Jackson stated that the division “takes full responsibility for failing to do sufficient research into the constitutional issues that impacted our decisions. In bringing this matter to the floor in 2010 and 2011 we were doing so under the assumption that the North American Division had a constituency separate and distinct from the General Conference. Unfortunately, we were wrong and we sincerely apologize.”

The first page of the General Conference Constitution states, “Each division of the General Conference is authorized to carry out responsibilities in the territory assigned to it. …In order to carry the authority of the General Conference, the actions of division committees shall, of necessity, be in harmony with and complementary to the decisions of the General Conference in Session, and the actions of the General Conference Executive Committee between Sessions.”
Still, some church leaders both in North America and at the General Conference say the recent discussion highlights a need for a clearer definition of a division’s delegated authority.

Indeed, the General Conference is already moving on the matter. Last month, administration requested a group to review governance documents outlining the General Conference and division relationships, said Lowell Cooper, a vice president of the General Conference. That group will later offer a decision concerning whether additional clarity is needed, Cooper said.

Each of the 13 divisions function as extensions of the General Conference. Divisions do not have their own constituencies, constitutions or bylaws. However, within division territories, unions – which are comprised of conferences – each have their own constituencies.

In an interview, Jackson said the North American Division would continue to promote equality of men and women in leadership positions. He said ordination is “a separate issue” and would not be addressed at this time.

“We have no intention of dropping the consensus of the North American church that we need to empower our women of God who are called to be pastors and leaders,” Jackson said. “We will not move away from this, but we will not cross policy again.”

The Adventist Church currently allows only ordained ministers to serve as conference presidents. In 2005, the world church voted for this distinction to also apply to the denomination’s president.

The “commissioned” ministers credential was authorized by the General Conference Executive Committee in 1987. In 1994, the Executive Committee delineated positions that could receive such credentials – typically treasurers, principals, directors, university presidents, hospital CEOs, and others not on an ordination track. That move also granted the title to associate pastoral care givers, including women.

General Conference policy and model constitutions for unions and conferences state that a president shall be an “ordained” minister of experience. The North American Division’s change of its own policy in 2010 was intended to expand this statement to read “ordained/commissioned.”

In his letter, Jackson stated that 107 of the division’s roughly 4,000 ministers are women. He also stated his support for women commissioned ministers, citing the division’s women clergy conference in Berrien Springs, Michigan, April 23 to 26.

The North American Division includes Bermuda, Canada, the French possession of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, the United States, and the Pacific islands comprising the denomination’s Guam-Micronesia Mission.

click HERE to see a pdf version of the letter.