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By 2020, the North American Division would annually contribute 6 percent of its gross tithe receipts to the General Conference budget, down from 8 percent today. Other world divisions - of which there are 12 - may see their annual contribution increase to 3 percent of gross tithe, although that is less certain. A commission is being formed to study the matter and report back to the 2014 Annual Council, said Robert E. Lemon, treasurer of the Adventist world church.

"This request will allow the North American Division to carry out its missional goals and the funds will be used to advance the work throughout the division," said Tom Evans, treasurer of the North American Division, in a statement. "The North American Division has been blessed in being instrumental in the growth of the world church since its inception," Evans added.

Because an adjustment in the contribution percentage is a matter of policy, leaders explained, it can be voted only at an Annual Council, next slated to take place in October 2012 at the world headquarters. For now, church leaders have authorized the General Conference's Treasury department "to prepare the budget based on these assumptions," that the change would be made, said Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference.

In explaining the move, Lemon said the North American Division, or NAD, the region where Adventism was born, "needs to remain strong. ... In addition to that, every part of the world considers NAD to be their territory and they come and raise funds in NAD. We have to understand the level of commitment NAD had given over the history of the church has given to mission."

After the measure was approved, on a voice vote, Wilson said, "Let me underscore the appreciation on the part of the world field and the General Conference for the generosity on the part of the North American Division for decades. We do value it and appreciate it."

In other actions at Spring Meeting, the Executive Committee voted to approve a "Client Identification and Cost-Sharing Action Plan" for the General Conference Auditing Service, or GCAS, which would shift some audit work to local, outside firms, and require church units to financially participate in the costs of audits conducted by the GC organization.

The 35-year-old GCAS operation is currently tasked with financial compliance audits of many church operations around the world, from divisions to remote clinics staffed by one or two people, said Lemon. While the North American Division pays for its audits, the General Conference pays for most of the rest, leaving an $8 million annual shortfall. In view of this, reorganization would ease the dollar drain, he said.
"This is a very comprehensive and needed action, but it's complicated," Wilson noted during discussion of the measure. Passed on a voice vote, further plans are to be discussed at Annual Council.

In other financial news, Lemon reported the General Conference operated in 2011 at $10 million below budget caps, and received an additional $18.8 million in unexpected income due to foreign exchange rates and other considerations. The Spring Meeting leaders voted to allocate $15 million to a variety of outreach and development projects aimed at reaching non-Adventists and strengthening church members in their faith walk.