North American Division to proceed with relocation from GC building

By Julio C. Muñoz

Following an afternoon of spirited debate the Executive Committee of the North American Division (NAD) Year-end Meeting approved two motions regarding the potential relocation of the NAD headquarters: 1) to accept the recommendation by the President’s NAD Council and NAD and Union Officers (NADOUP) that the NAD headquarters be moved to someplace within the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area; and 2) that the NAD should proceed with the relocation process.

A report presented by Tom Evans, treasurer of the NAD, showed data comparing moving expenses and cost recovery if the headquarters moved to Dallas, Denver, Atlanta, or remained in the Washington, D.C. metro area. The report, prepared by JLL, a consulting firm that specializes in corporate real estate, including corporate relocations, led the officers to determine that remaining in the D.C. metro area would be the most prudent move.

In addition to the financial data, Daniel R. Jackson, president of the NAD, listed ten non-financial considerations for the leadership team’s decision. These included the access to qualified individuals, airports, churches and schools for employees and their families. The first non-financial reason given was self-determination.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has a need to have its own unique message and strategies that are relevant and work in our territory,” said Jackson. “While the Seventh-day Adventist movement began in North America, we are among the youngest divisions in the church, and it’s time that we grow up and leave our parent’s house.”

At the October 2014 Annual Council, GC Executive Committee members approved a recommendation from the GC Treasury to support a request from the NAD to explore the idea of moving its headquarters out of the
GC building. If the division chose to move, the GGC would provide $3 million to assist with the transition.

“This should never be treated as an initiative to get them out of the building. Quite the opposite,” Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the Adventist world church, told Annual Council delegates after the vote.

Robert Lemon, GC Treasurer, echoed the sentiments of the GC president regarding the future NAD move from the building. He stated that while the GC would welcome the NAD remaining in the building, it fully supports the decision to relocate and establish its own identity.

“This move does not represent any distancing of mission or purpose from that of the General Conference,” Lemon said. “The North American Division has always been and continues to be the backbone of support, both financially and missionally for the worldwide work of the Church.”