

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL PRESIDENT

Another year of regional ministry has come to its close. As in the past, this year has been very challenging. This isn't surprising given the breadth of topics under discussion by the board of directors over the course of the year. This board is entrusted with the general supervision of the affairs and property of the region, carrying out the objects of the corporation, recommending policy, working closely with the Superintendent, and acting on behalf of the delegate body between its sessions. Each member of the board of directors serves in a volunteer capacity and each one holds multiple positions. The role of the members of the regional board is a significant and often thankless task. I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to these men who give their time to the Lord through this ministry. I am most grateful for their service.

The Lord has again proven faithful to guide us on our path this past year. This board is committed to seeking and doing the will of the Lord, and although we have struggled at times to know his will perfectly, God has been faithful to give us the wisdom we have required to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to us. By God's grace, even when his servants are not faithful, the Lord is always faithful! His word reminds us of this truth. "If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13) Praise God! We have relied on his faithful leading in matters of finance, church health, and other topics of mutual concern.

Since last year's convention, the regional board has sought to address the ongoing financial crisis. Conference presidents were encouraged to arrange special meetings for their leaders to provide opportunity for feedback and reflection on regional ministry. This was a helpful time for one conference and I hope that similar meetings can take place in other conferences in the future. Action was taken by the board to sell standing timber on regional property in an effort to generate additional revenue. This was more helpful than anticipated, netting the region a significant financial gain and providing much-needed budgetary relief. In an effort to help alleviate the potential revenue shortfall in future years, the board voted to sell the vacant parcel of land adjacent to the regional residence and office complex. The proceeds from this sale (possibly in excess of \$60,000) will be used to establish an endowment to help fund regional ministry moving forward. An update on this action will be provided as soon as one is available. It is my hope that these decisions will alleviate some of the pressures associated with a diminishing revenue stream. However, these are short-term solutions at best, and in my opinion a more permanent answer to the financial needs of the region must be sought.

The board has spent time in corporate and individual prayer, and has been Christ-honoring in our discussions and decision making. We recognize our role as leaders of the Lord's work in this region, and are dependent on him for wisdom and guidance in this most daunting task, desiring to serve him to the best of our limited ability. As a board we are committed to working with the Superintendent, assisting him in the formulation of ministry priorities, and listening carefully to the Lord's voice. We also affirm the need for input from pastors and leaders in our churches, intentionally building discussion time into the convention schedule this year for that purpose. An "Open Forum" will be held providing an opportunity for those in attendance at the convention to dialog with the President and Superintendent about regional ministry. I trust this will be a fruitful experience.

One of the things I am most excited about is the number of younger pastors within our region. These men have come together of their own accord to consider their role and responsibility in our ranks. They are dedicated, honest, humble, and determined to make a difference for the Kingdom of God. Plans have been made for representatives from this group to meet with the regional board prior to this convention, so we can hear from them and talk together about the Lord's work in our region. I look forward to their ongoing contribution in this region in the coming years.

This summer the board worked with one of our Conferences on the negotiation of the "sale" of church property in Western Massachusetts to the Seventh Day Adventists. Located in rural Savoy, MA, this was the site of an Advent Christian work many decades ago. It was determined by legal entities that ownership of the property belonged to the Eastern Region as the surviving entity. This property, in great disrepair, was something that Seventh Day Adventist leaders were interested in obtaining the rights to for historical reasons, and so they reached out to this region. Since this is a small and very remote location, without apparent potential for future ministry, the board gladly turned this property over to them in exchange for any artifacts or records that would be of benefit to the Adventual collection at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Special thanks to New Life Conference President George Karl for his role in this process, and the able assistance of Adventual collection curator Duane Crabtree.

One of the most challenging tasks over the past several months has been conducted by the Nominating Committee. Their work has been extremely thorough (please see their excellent report for details) and I am grateful for all they have accomplished. It has not been an easy task, but they have persevered and God has been faithful to guide them in this work. I trust that the outcome of their efforts will be evident in their report and that you will express confidence in their work by electing individuals selected for each role. While the Treasurer position remains unfilled, it is my hope that a suitable person can be found by the regional board to fill that role in the near future. Until then, I intend to present an action to the board of directors that should help alleviate any concern and continue to assure the financial integrity desired by constituents of the region. Further update will be presented as possible.

At the close of this convention I will complete my brief tenure as Regional President. For many reasons, including increasing ministry challenges and opportunities in my local church, I have prayerfully decided not to seek re-election to this position. As my time of service comes to a close, I want to thank the constituents of the region for their support of this region and its ministry. I urge your prayers for the Superintendent, his staff (which includes new secretary Tanya Poole and bookkeeper Ed Burleigh), and the regional board of directors. Please continue to pray for these individuals in their service to the pastors and churches of the Eastern Regional Association.

Thank you for your ongoing faithfulness to the Kingdom of God!

Most sincerely in Christ,
Glenn Rice