

## Message from the Board Chair: Robert Morrison, Jr.

To all members,

In this edition of the chairperson's letter to the conference, I want to thank everyone who has been a faithful supporter of the Church of God General Conference & Atlanta Bible College. In the few months that I have had the privilege of serving in this position, I have come to realize, even more than ever before, the importance that our message of truth is to the world. I don't want to discount the sincerity of other denominations' beliefs, but I strongly feel that the message of the One God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the truth about the Kingdom of God are vital today more than ever before. After all, we are every day that much closer to the return of the Messiah.

I want to take this time to share something that I have also come to better understand these past several months.

At the General Conference last year, during budget discussions, someone mentioned that the budget belonged to the board of directors. I want you all to know that I took that comment very seriously, and I immediately launched a "quest" for the board to better understand and be involved in the budget process. I am certainly not an accountant, and have to admit that I have struggled understanding the budgets that had been presented to the board and delegates in the past few years. This year, the board has been blessed by having a director elected who does have an accounting background. At our last board meeting, with her help, along with others on staff and the board, we have been able, for the first time I have been on the board, to go through the budget in a way that makes me feel more ownership than ever before. I must say this process is quite stressful and intense. Facing general fund shortfalls the past few

years, we have had to make extremely difficult decisions regarding what is funded and what areas need to be cut. This is not an easy process, as nearly all of those decisions affect people we know and love, and ministries that we know to be important to the work of the Conference. But I want you to all know that this board has stepped up to that challenge, identified several areas where we could effectively reduce

spending, and will be presenting a budget that is balanced for the coming year.

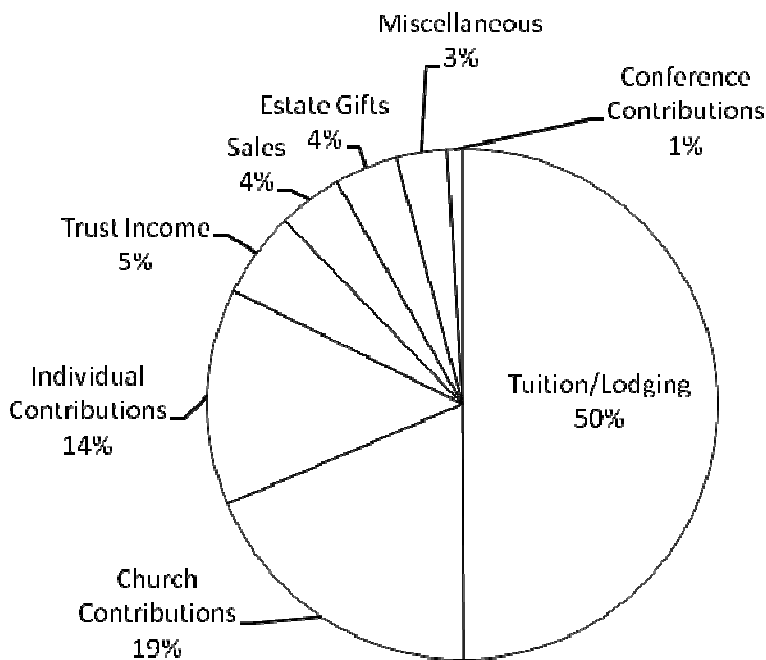
The final thought I want to convey for now, is that my understanding regarding where money comes from to support the work of the churches has also improved. I have always been one to respond more easily to financial requests for specific projects or appeals than for a "general fund" donation request. It is far easier to visualize the need for money to earthquake victims, than a need to pay the light bill, buy paper, or pay salaries and benefits. Not to take away from giving to special needs at all, but I have come to realize how important it is to also fund the engine (to borrow a term from my Caterpillar background) of the organization, namely, the general fund. It's similar to what we at the engine plant like to tell the truck plants, "Without our engine, your truck can't haul the iron ore." Without a healthy general fund, we can't support the vital ministries of our church base.

Please know assuredly that this board of directors has taken its role in developing and presenting a balanced budget at this year's conference very seriously. I am proud to be a part of this effort.

We have also endorsed a commitment of intense, acute focus on serving God, and we intend to increase efforts from board, staff, and churches to recruit potential pastoral students.

Thank you all for your continued support as we move forward in our mission, "To serve churches and individuals in the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ and God's Kingdom." ■

### Sources of General Fund Income



Contributions are a vital component of our income. Individual, church and conference contributions together provide 1/3 of our income.

Robert Morrison, Jr.