

From the G.C. President

February 15, 1993

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1. Please be patient if I miss an edition of *From the G.C. President* for, at the time of the next deadline, I will be in India and Nepal from which telecommunication is a bit complicated.

2. Visit to Pacific Union College: My faith in Adventist higher education was reinforced last weekend while spending 3 days with the students, faculty, and administration of P.U.C. Listening to the student leaders share their vision for the Church filled me with optimism about the future.

3. Zambesi Union Mission: Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) became the cradle of Adventism in black Africa when the work of the Church began in Solusi, near Bulawayo, over a century ago. Today this is the first union in black Africa in which all its local fields have sufficient financial strength to qualify for conference status. This historic achievement culminated between January 10-24, 1993, when, accompanied by M A Bediako (GC vice-president) and A H Tolhurst (GC under-secretary), the three local fields and one conference were realigned and the three missions organized into three conferences.

The one pre-existing conference (the Zambesi Conference) began in colonial days as a white conference. In 1977 it merged with the Zambesi general field which had served those of colored descent. Then, after Zimbabwe's independence, blacks were admitted until they constituted a significant majority of the Zambesi Conference. During the recent realignment, the churches which belonged to the Zambesi Conference were invited to unite with one of the three fields as they were organized into conferences.

It was a joyful occasion for 65% of the members of the Zambesi Conference who decided to join the sisterhood of churches in the realigned fields. Sadly, led by the president, some pastors and members of the former Zambesi Conference who opposed this realignment of the union territory met on December 20, 1992, and decided to abandon their relationship with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is our hope that the world Church will join with the members of the Eastern Africa Division and Zambesi Union to ask the Lord to appeal to those who were

mislead, choosing to leave the fellowship of the SDA Church.

4. M P Kulakov update: I am pleased to report that a fax from M P Kulakov states that he has fully recovered from what was diagnosed as a mild stroke. He has returned to his home in Zaokski and is continuing work on the translation of the Russian Bible.

5. Progress in Inter-America (IAD): George Brown (president) reports that 1992 baptisms far exceeded 100,000, tithes increased 13.4% and mission offerings by 17% after conversion to US dollars. In local currency, increases in some areas exceeded 30%. Leaders are also rejoicing at the full repayment (after 13 years, one year ahead of schedule) of the heavy debt incurred for the hospital and new campus at Montemorelos University.

6. Compassion and opportunity beckon in China: One of the greatest opportunities and challenges the Church faces today, in terms of the total number of people to reach with the Gospel, is the People's Republic of China. The number of people in China without one single Seventh-day Adventist is equal in number to three times the entire population of the United States! However, things are beginning to happen. An English language program is operating in 16 universities. At government request, Adventist physicians have conducted The 5-day Plan to Stop Smoking in several cities. Loma Linda University and Takoma Park's Washington Adventist Hospital Heart Teams have been working there several years. Another opportunity to serve and build a relationship with the Chinese people is about to become a reality.

The Adventist Church was asked to operate a new hospital in Hangzhou. Sir Run Run Shaw of Hong Kong provided the funds to build the hospital on the condition that Adventists provide its initial management. The 14-story facility is completed and should begin to operate in May or June. Loma Linda University, asked by the GC to manage this project, sent the first administrative and medical staff members to China last week who will assist the local

staff with this project. Due to the potential impact Global Mission has agreed to help raise \$250,000 to assist with this opportunity.