

# From the G.C. President

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**1. MERGER IN SOUTH AFRICA:** M. A. Bediako, General Conference vice-president, just returned and reported about the continuing church reorganization in South Africa. The Natal Field and the Orange-Natal Conference, covering the same territory but divided largely along racial lines, conducted back-to-back special sessions at Anerley November 11-14. The purpose was for both organizations to consider the report of a task force which recommended merging into a single conference.

The two delegations worshipped together Friday and Sabbath and enjoyed a spiritual feast. Saturday night, after an intensive debate, each organization voted to approve the concept of a merger. However, before agreeing to dissolve and to merge, each constituency had to approve a new constitution and budget. Finally, on Sunday night, after intense prayer sessions, negotiations, and sub-committees lasting all day, each constituency voted to merge. When God's people pray together, God answers with a miracle.

Then, the constituency selected: a temporary name for the new conference (Kwa-Zulu-Natal Free State Conference), a nominating committee, and elected its new officers and executive committee. The new leadership includes: C. F. Venter, president; A. N. Nzimande, vice-president/secretary; W. M. Mason, treasurer; and B. M. P. Ngwenya, departmental director.

The Cape Province area, currently served by three over-lapping conferences, is scheduled to meet in early February to continue discussions which we hope eventually will lead to a similar outcome.

**2. AWR ADDS SINHALESE:** In September, Adventist World Radio/Guam began to transmit Sinhalese programming to Sri Lankans, according to Gordon Retzer, manager of AWR/Guam. After broadcasting only 20 days, the Union office in Sri Lanka had already received 40 letters, most of them from Buddhists. Another letter came from 21 Sri Lankan prisoners in Egypt. It seems they had been sentenced to 20 years in prison for drug smuggling. Sinhalese "Voice of Prophecy" lessons have been sent to Egypt for delivery to these prisoners. Near Lakhpahana, Sri Lanka, 20 Buddhists get together every day to listen to AWR. They too have been sent Bible

lessons.

On another front, AWR Korean language broadcasts have contributed to establishing 34 Korean congregations in the People's Republic of China, as well as 13 on Sakhalin Island in Russia. We thank the Lord for the ministry of Adventist World Radio.

**3. GLOBAL MISSION IN FINLAND:** ! Oulu is a priority Global Mission target area. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was diminishing in this growing Finnish university town. The local church, with matching Global Mission funds, moved into action. After much preparation, a series of meetings opened that focused on astronomy. Six hundred people attended the opening night. As activities continue, seven people have been baptized. Of course, another benefit of the church becoming involved in outreach was a revival in the church.

! Narpes--Work in affluent Narpes poses another great challenge. With a population of 5,000, Narpes has a small Adventist presence. Adventist members sent 5,000 handbills to the community inviting them to meet and study God's word. Posters were hung and advertisements for the meetings were placed in the local newspaper. Fifty people (1% of the population) attended the opening meeting, surprising many members for previous attempts to interest people in Bible study had yielded few results. Fifteen have continued attending, five or six of whom have shown great interest in the Adventist message, and one woman has requested baptism.

**4. GLOBAL MISSION - NEW ZEALAND:** On the west coast of New Zealand, in the Hokitika district, there is a Maori community. Since there has never been a Maori baptized from this area, the South Pacific Division determined to establish a presence in this most difficult territory. Many programs were implemented and colporteurs sold \$16,000 worth of literature, 55 people took health courses, 30 people took Bible studies, Bibles and video tapes were distributed, and six homes are now being visited on a regular basis. The Lord blessed and recently the first Maori was baptized.

I frequently report on thousands being baptized in some parts of the world. However, the type of progress noted above, deserves equal recognition

*and praise to God. Winning souls for the Kingdom is extremely difficult in a secular and affluent society such as New Zealand. This baptism of our first Maori believer in this district occurred because a church pastor and other members acted on a vision of what can be done for the Lord. Such spirit of Global Mission needs to permeate the Church.*

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