

From the G.C. President

February 13, 1995

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1. GC SESSION OFFERING: Establishing 2,000 congregations in unentered areas (most with a simple building) is the purpose of the '95 General Conference Session offering. Funding goals for the US\$15 million cost are distributed as follows: General Conference—US\$5 million; divisions outside North America—US\$3 million, and; North America—US\$7 million. Half of the US\$7 million raised in North America will be used for Global Mission initiatives in North America and the other half will be shared with the rest of the world. Most divisions have laid plans to establish these new congregations as soon as the funds are available. Several families committed US\$3 million toward the North American goal leaving US\$4 million to be raised by the churches in North America. This is the largest evangelistic initiative ever undertaken in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Please pray for its success.

2. THE FIRST WOMAN WAS ELECTED as president of the Central American Adventist University in Costa Rica. Ada Barrientos, 41, holding Masters from La Sierra University, was serving as education director for the El Salvador Conference at the time of her election.

3. NETHERLANDS FLOODS: 250,000 have evacuated flooded areas in the Netherlands, reports Frank Teeuwen, director of ADRA/Netherlands. Members of the Netherlands Union contributed to an offering on February 18 to provide relief to those who are affected.

4. CALVIN B. ROCK (General Conference VP) will be the fifth Seventh-day Adventist to be inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers and Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College, in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 2. Morehouse, founded in 1867, is the oldest of the historically Black educational institutions in the United States and is part of the Atlanta University Center.

5. LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL CENTER BOARDS appointed a joint committee to identify ways to reduce dependence on General Conference annual appropriations by US\$1 million beginning with the current calendar year. At the last Annual Council, when the '95 General Conference budget was voted, headquarters operating expenses were reduced by

another US\$1 million and total appropriations to world divisions were reduced by US\$—million. General Conference institutions operating in the North American Division are participating, to one extent or another, in the overall cost-reduction program.

6. LINKING THE BIBLE AND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS in the public's mind is one objective of the Upper Columbia Conference's media-saturation initiative launched January 23. The campaign includes 40 billboards; a variety of radio spots designed to be heard 13 times by 85 percent of the public between 25-55 years of age; brochures mailed to all 677,000 homes in the conference; a series of ads placed in local newspapers and posters placed in the windows of area businesses. The ads feature "Five Steps to a Happy Marriage," "Four Hints to Improve Your Health," or "Seven Secrets of Child Training," ...IT'S IN THE BIBLE, and offers a free copy of "Your Bible and You." Those responding receive the book and a letter introducing them to "The Bible Information Line"; a post card to request a correspondence course or personal Bible studies; and a brochure patterned after "A Quick Look at Seventh-day Adventists."

Over 5,000 calls have been received (up to 100 per hour) since the program was launched January 23. About half requested the free book, the rest are browsing in the audio-library. Max Torkelsen, Upper Columbia Conference communication director, shared one story with me.

"I spoke to a Jewish man who has become a Christian and is attending a Pentecostal Church. He wanted to know why Christians keep Sunday instead of the Sabbath as taught in Scripture. He expected me to defend Sunday, but as he began to see where the texts were going he got excited. He said 'I can't believe I have found a Christian who keeps Sabbath.' I assured him there were at least 8 million more of us. When he asked about the dietary laws of the Old Testament, he was shocked to find we believe these are valid principles of life. By the end of the conversation he agreed to attend the NET '95 evangelistic meetings and requested a pastoral visit.