

# From the G.C. President

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**O EURO-AFRICA DIVISION:** As of March 31, the Euro-Africa Division has reached 118 percent of its Global Mission quinquennial goal with 129,773 people baptized. Ulrich Frikart, EUD secretary and acting president, reports that they expect to reach 140,000 by the end of June and that four unions have reached more than 100 percent of their objectives: (Bulgaria, 468 percent; Czechoslovakian, 163 percent; Romania 127 percent; and Mozambique 152 percent). This excludes information from the Angolan Union which is not available as a result of the war.

■ **GRAPE JUICE - SECRET INGREDIENT:** Promotion of wine-drinking as a preventive measure against heart disease has been a strategy of the alcohol industry for the past two years, according to Dr. Patricia Mutch, director of the Institute of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, formerly the Institute for Prevention of Addictions. New evidence suggests, however, that it is the grape juice, not the alcohol, which is responsible. A study by Dr. John Folts at the University of Wisconsin Medical School, reported that flavonoids, found in the skins, stems, and seeds of grapes and present in wine processing, are responsible for the reduced "stickiness" of blood platelets. Grape juice was as effective as red wine in study participants' platelet activity. The news release by Folts was delayed for a week before finally appearing in *USA Today* on Feb. 20, 1995.

More bad news for the alcohol industry is the current scandal about the secret payments made by the Portman Group (an organization of the United Kingdom drinks industry) to academics to "rubbish" a new report giving data on alcohol consumption and public harm by the World Health Organization. Exposed by a journalist for the United Kingdom newspaper, *The Independent*, the payoffs had reportedly gone to senior researchers at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, who are advocating increased alcohol consumption for alleged health benefits. One of the academics approached, Nick Heather, refused to cooperate and tipped off the newspaper. The WHO policy book advocates taxation of alcohol products as a useful tool to support public health.

■ **ADRA UPDATE: ✓Cyclone strikes Bangladesh—** Twelve districts along Bangladesh's Southern Coastal Belt suffered heavy cyclone damage on May 16 and 17 when cyclonic tidal surge of up to eight feet, accompanied by heavy rain and strong winds, caused water levels to rise more than six feet above normal tidal levels. Oliver Lofton-Brook, director of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Bangladesh, reports that more than 70,000 houses, plus schools and

mission buildings, have been extensively damaged or destroyed. "Food supplies and crops were destroyed, and an ADRA water project was almost totally destroyed," Lofton-Brook says. Water wells and water ponds have also been ruined or polluted.

✓ **Warehouse Guard killed—**About mid-day on Tuesday, May 16, on a bridge near his home in northern Addis Ababa, ADRA Ethiopia warehouse guard, Diriba Seboka, was tragically killed in an accident. Diriba was walking on the bridge when a Land Rover's brakes failed and went out of control. It struck Diriba, killing him instantly. He leaves a widow and two children. Diriba was a fine Christian and an intelligent and humble worker. Although he graduated from Ethiopian Adventist College with a diploma in Community Development, he was willing to accept the post of night guard until a better position opened.

■ **GLOBAL MISSION - SUDAN:** Racked with civil unrest, Sudan remains a Global Mission high priority. Traveling by bicycle, since public transportation is almost non-existent, Global Mission Pioneer (GMP) volunteers recently gathered in southern Sudan to report progress in the distant places to which they had been assigned. One Pioneer rode for 287 miles across trails and dessert to attend the meeting. He reported that when he and his evangelism partner arrived in their territory they were not well received. However, God's miraculous healing of a sick girl for whom they had prayed gave them instant respect in the community and within a few months 21 people had joined the Church.

Shortly after their baptism, war came to the area and the members fled to distant places. When things settled down two and a half months later, only four members could be found and the GMP team started to work all over again. Within eight months 31 more had been baptized.

One Sabbath as they were worshipping two of the missing members came in the door of the Church. They were greeted warmly. When asked what had happened to them when the war came, they told how they had fled 140 miles to the other side of the mountains. Now the purpose of their coming was to request the GMP workers to return with them to baptize 16 people they had prepared. This is the spirit of Global Mission.

Today thirty congregations worship each Sabbath in southern Sudan. A school has been started and plans have been laid to establish new congregations in many other areas of this great country.

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