

# From the G.C. President

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**O SESSION RECAPITULATION:** The 56th Session of the General Conference is history. Its numerous and weighty decisions will affect many aspects of our church organization. Permit me to mention just a few: ! GC Executive Committee—more accountable to and representative of world membership, ! GC Sessions—50 percent of delegates (capped at 2,000) will be laity, pastors, and other front-line workers, ! Church Ministries Department restructured and three new departments added (Women's Ministries, Children's Ministries, and Trust Services), ! Division Committees appoint associate officers and departmental staff. All but three divisions did this in Utrecht and invited all session delegates from that division to participate. The other three—Eastern Africa, North America, South Pacific—will do the appointing at the time of their respective division year-end meetings.

Communication was another hallmark of this session. Coverage by the public media was so heavy that reporters came from neighboring countries to investigate. The public perception in the Netherlands of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was significantly enhanced as a result of this coverage.

Providing information to our own believers was another high priority. A complete television production facility, staffed by 63 persons, mostly college-age young people (talk about a "piece of the pie") from 15 organizations, produced several hours of programming every day and uplinked it by satellite back to the North American Division for broadcasting to SDA churches via ACN and 3ABN. An estimated 250,000 around the world participated in the July 8 worship service, including the 30,000+ in Brazil who received the service by satellite—in Portuguese.

Adventist World Radio produced daily programming in 20 languages and distributed it by satellite and optical cable around the world to be broadcast by the AWR network, as well as ARN (NAD's college campus-based radio network).

**O SUDDEN DEATH OF SWEDISH UNION SECRETARY:** Terry Joshua, 50, secretary of the Swedish Union died of a heart attack yesterday while driving on holiday in Southern France. A tragedy to the family and to the church in Sweden, especially after election of Bertil Wiklander, union president, as leader of the Trans European Division.

**O Global Mission - Sudan:** In 1990, the church had almost no members in Sudan. A recent Middle East Union report confirms that there are now 28 organized churches and 46 organized companies in the country of

Sudan. This means that each Sabbath 5,204 believers worship in 74 congregations across this strife-torn land. This Islamic country remains a Global Mission priority though we have much for which to praise God.

✓ **The Sherpas**, an intriguing Nepalese tribe, consider it a sin to threaten children or make them cry, regardless of the reason.

✓ **Algeria:** Using the fingers to point at objects or people is considered impolite in Algeria. When handing something to or receiving it from another person, one uses either both hands or the right hand only.

✓ **Peru's Lake Titicaca** is nearly as big as the entire island of Puerto Rico. Ocean-sized steamships that travel about on the lake were made in Scotland many years ago. They were carried up the Andes mountains piece by piece to be reassembled.

✓ **In Russia** the question, "How are you?" (Kak dela?) is taken literally and Russians usually answer in detail. Asking the question without waiting for a full response is considered rude.

✓ **Laos:** Over the past 10 years 7,000 men, women, and children lost their limbs to landmines, planted during the civil war. When the war ended in 1975, the Lao government established the Ban Namaat Prosthesis Centre in Vientiane Province, which manufactures artificial limbs for amputees. During this year ADRA will provide the Centre with badly needed hand tools and machinery. Selected personnel will be trained in the installation and use of this equipment.

✓ **Guinea:** More than 30,000 refugees who fled their homes in northeastern Sierra Leone arrived in the southwestern areas of Guinea with reports of "attacks" from "armed and uniformed" men. Eye-witness accounts from refugees from the town of Kambia include haphazard killing, as well as the burning of homes and other town structures. "The refugees are in dire need of water, food, and shelter," states Hugo Wegmuller, ADRA/Guinea director. ADRA/Guinea has responded to this influx of Sierra Leonian refugees by transporting 3,750 tons of cooking oil and 22,250 tons of cornmeal from their warehouses in Gueckedou, from which ADRA also distributes emergency supplies to more than 600,000 Liberian refugees. In addition, ADRA has distributed 107 tons of lentils donated by the Protestant Church in Guinea. The UNHCR has asked ADRA/Guinea to set up a new logistic center for the Sierra Leonian refugees in southwestern prefecture of Forecariah, Guinea.