

From the G.C. President

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O FLASH!!!—'95 ANNUAL COUNCIL—*Pastors are invited to participate via satellite in the first two days of the '95 Annual Council. The General Conference Committee voted to substantively modify the Annual Council agendas during the next five years by dedicating the first two days of each Annual Council to various elements of the quinquennial theme, "Our Message and Mission."* Those two days will be uplinked and broadcast via satellite to the North and Inter-American Divisions, and we hope the programs will ultimately become available around the world. The Annual Council Message and Mission master videos will be made available to other divisions.

Beginning with the opening session of the '95 Annual Council, Sunday night October 1, and continuing for the next two days, eleven and a half hours of programming will be up linked. Conferences are *urged* to organize and facilitate pastors gathering at as many locations as may be convenient to see the presentations, participate in the discussions *and* to share their conclusions via CompuServe with those Annual Council attendees meeting at the General Conference headquarters.

A wide variety of speakers will present this year's topic and address 1) elements in modern secular society which tend to isolate us from the voice of God, 2) manifestations and consequences of these pressures in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, and 3) explore possible antidotes to this reality.

O ASI CONVENTION: Over 1,000 attended the '95 ASI (Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries) convention, held last weekend in Spokane, Washington, making this the largest convention in ASI history. Sabbath attendance swelled to 2,950 when the Spokane area churches closed and the members joined in the celebration. The Sabbath offering, which exceeded \$1,280,000, was assigned to a wide variety of projects including (among many others), \$100,000 for a Global Mission initiative in China, and \$300,000 to assist Maranatha Volunteers in building 16 primary schools in El Salvador and Panama. The ASI members elected Attorney Harold Lance, president of OCI (Outpost Centers, Inc.), as the new ASI president, replacing Ray Hamblin, under whose six years of leadership ASI expanded. After listening to the testimonies and sensing the focus on witnessing for God in the marketplace, I returned home thanking the Lord for the commitment and vision of these dedicated church members and praying that the spirit of ASI will become ever more contagious.

O RADIOSTATION BREAKS WITH NPR: *The Chronicle*

of Higher Education (a secular journal on higher education) reported in its August 4 edition that "Rather than compromise its religious tenants, the radio station at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists plans to give up its national Public Radio membership.

"Listeners complained in the spring that WSMC was editing NPR programs for content and, during the Sabbath, substituting classical music and religious programs for those on the public-radio network.

"The college station has substituted programs and edited content and language it deemed objectionable since joining NPR 24 years ago, a college spokeswoman said. But last month, NPR officials said both practices violated membership agreements.

"The college station, which will break with public radio this fall, is the only one in the area that airs NPR news programs."

My commendations to WSMC for their principled decision.

O ADRA NEWS: ✓ Andrews University announced it will, in collaboration with ADRA, provide academic training in international development, offering an M.A. in International Development, and a Ph.D. in leadership with emphasis on International Development. ADRA will offer internships in ADRA management. ✓ Authorities in Porto Alegre, Brazil, have turned over five children's homes to ADRA (each accommodating 10 children). The city will finance operating costs. ✓ ADRA's office in the Czech Republic recently received US\$50,000 from the Czech government to help victims in Chechnya's crisis, and US\$150,000 has been given by Japan for the same purpose. ✓ Last Monday I received a troubling fax. For the first time since the beginning of the Rwandan refugee crisis violence has been directed toward the expatriate population. A group of eight Italians (not SDAs) driving outside of Goma were shot. Six were killed instantly, one is critically injured and not expected to recover, and the 8th, though only slightly wounded, is in severe shock. No one knows what the implications of this incident will be among those in the international community caring for the refugees. ✓ By the year 2000 more people will live in Cairo and Calcutta than in all of Canada. ✓ The global population, which was 2.5 billion only 40 years ago, is expected to reach 6 billion in the next five years and swell to 10 billion 60 years from now. Every day earth's population increases by more than 200,000 people. Each second, two people die but four are born.