

# From the G.C. President

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Robert S. Folkenberg

**O DATELINE BUDAPEST, HUNGARY:** More than 850 ministers, from 22 countries of the Trans-European Division (speaking 40 languages and dialects), attended the first division-wide ministerial council ever held in this division. The council was planned when the General Conference Executive Committee decided not to conduct a ministerial pre-session prior to the General Conference Session in Utrecht, choosing rather to recommend that divisions conduct division-wide ministerial councils, to which a larger number of ministers might attend.

A wide variety of speakers from the General Conference, as well as the Trans-European and other divisions, presented a rich banquet of inspirational meetings and 18 continuing education seminars. I had the privilege of joining them last Sabbath for the close of this five-day council. The council venue was overlooking the beautiful Danube at Budapest's University of Technology, from whose halls, interestingly enough, have proceeded seven Nobel prize winners.

**O FIRST SDA PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GERMANY:** Seven first graders started their school life in the first Adventist primary school in Germany on August 22. Mrs. Reinhild Schmidt, a highly trained teacher, gave up her status as a civil servant to be the teacher and principal, according to Dr. Ronald Strasdowsky, director of Education of the Euro-Africa Division. There were some anxious moments when the government permit arrived four days before school was scheduled to begin. Massive support from the local church and a positive attitude of the church in general contributed to this successful initiative. German Adventists have never had Adventist primary schools, except one in Friedensau (in what was East Germany) which was closed in the 50s. In recent years several churches have begun to consider opening church schools, this in a country where there is no Christian teacher training. May God bless this venture into Adventist primary education in Germany.

**O CLOSED CAPTIONING BEGINS:** Without a lot of fanfare, the date has arrived. In a cooperative venture with Christian Record Services, the *It Is Written* telecast scheduled for September 24 will be "closed captioned" (a technology, designed for the hearing impaired, in which the words uttered by individuals on or off the screen can be read by the viewer). The program "Miracles on Trial" is a review of answers to prayer even when people did not know they were the subject of major intercessory prayer focus. Some scientific studies

are included that confirm what believers have accepted by faith.

**O VOLCANO THREATENS MONTSERRAT:** Eleven miles long and seven wide, the Caribbean island of Montserrat is too small to appear on most world maps. Suspense is building as a volcano at the island's southern end, overlooking Plymouth, the capital, threatens to erupt after eight days of rumbling. At least six cracks have developed in the mountain, all venting hot gas and ash. The Montserrat government has requested that the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) assist in evacuating citizens, according to Ed Griffin, Caribbean Union ADRA director. Government officials declared the south end of the island off limits, including Plymouth, and erected makeshift tents at the north end where citizens will wait for danger to pass. About half the island's population, 6,500 people, have been scheduled to evacuate to the nearby isle of Antigua, but a shortage of flights off the island has precipitated a near-panic situation. On the nearby island of Antigua, three Adventist churches are being converted to shelters to accommodate 600 people from Montserrat. Mattresses have been shipped to Antigua from the Virgin Islands to provide sleeping facilities, and the North Caribbean Union has contributed US\$2000 worth of supplies.

**O GLOBAL MISSION PIONEERS:** ✓ Igor Kostomarkin, his wife Luda, and two children left Zaokski Seminary, in the Tula region of Russia, to serve as Global Mission pioneers in the remote city of Birobijan. In affiliation with the local library, they organized an Adventist literature exhibit that triggered interests in the Bible. Now a group of 11 people meet for worship every Sabbath, and one lady has been baptized.

✓ Two brothers from Moldova, Ivan, and Georgy Sabor, moved to Nakhichevan, Azerbaijan, as Global Mission pioneers. They help ADRA personnel and preach the gospel to the local population. At first, only six people came to Sabbath worship. Then 13, 25, 32, 55, and so on! Now about 170 people—mostly Moslems—attend our meetings! By God's grace, we will soon have the first Adventist church in that Moslem area.