

From the G.C. President

October 9, 1995

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■ **ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORT:** Here are a few highlights of the 1995 Annual Council of the General Conference Committee that is drawing to a close.

✓ **Message and Mission:** Representing a significant change, the first two full days of this Annual Council agenda were dedicated to a fundamental spiritual issue related to our message and mission. Drs. Baldwin and Canale from the Andrews University; Dr. Viera, director of the E.G. White Estate; and Drs. Maxson and Zackrison, directors of the GC departments of Stewardship and Personal Ministries/Sabbath School respectively, made the major presentations. They focused the attention of attendees (in person and by satellite) on the irreconcilable confrontation between the self-centered, secular, materialistic worldview (the inevitable result of godless Darwinism) dominating modern society and which is infiltrating Adventist values and, the God-centered, Biblical worldview which portrays life, history, and current events from God's Great Controversy perspective and leads the believer to search the scriptures to understand how God desires His followers to live. (Video tapes of these presentations, plus my opening and concluding messages, will be available in the USA by calling 1-800-ACN-1119, and from the GC and division communication departments.)

✓ **The Six Focused Issues,** (Christian Life and Nurture, Stewardship, Communication, Education/Youth, Global Mission and Leadership development) approved at the 1993 Annual Council, have become the framework under which the General Conference staff will coordinate their activities during this quinquennium. Further, achieving the measurable objectives of each issue will also provide accountability to the General Conference Committee and a basis for evaluating effectiveness.

✓ **Division surveys:** Annual Council approved a process by which, during the next five years, all world divisions will conduct a comprehensive self-study following an outline provided by the General Conference. Then an eight-person team will conduct a site visit and report their findings to the respective division committees. A few of the issues to be surveyed include: trends in finance, self-support, membership growth/retention, legal organization, insurance, institutions, and lay representation in governance.

✓ **Staff Appointments:** Annual Council voted to fill the following positions at the General Conference by calling:

! Eugene Grosser (currently, president of the South Pacific Division Sanitarium Health Food Company) to be director of the International Health Food Association;

! T. Lynn Caldwell (currently, Public Relations director for Andrews University), to be associate director of the GC Communication department;

! Ardis Stenbakken (currently assisting in the GC department of Women's Ministries) to be associate director of the department of Women's Ministries; and

! Greg King (currently, professor of theology at Pacific Union College) to be editor of the adult Sabbath School Lessons.

The Council also reappointed the editors and associate editors of the journals produced at the General Conference.

✓ **Adventist Media Center:** In response to a request from the North American Division, motivated by a desire to more

completely incorporate the media ministries housed at the Adventist Media Center into an overall Division evangelistic strategy, the Annual Council authorized "the General Conference administration to negotiate, and the resident General Conference executive committee to approve, an agreement which may assign administration of the Adventist Media Center...to the North American Division," while continuing to provide international services as needed.

○ **LAWSUIT:** A class action lawsuit has been filed in the Federal District Court in Wichita Falls, Texas, against the American Council on Gift Annuities and 29 other defendants including the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists and Loma Linda University. If the claim does become a class action suit, it would include some 1,500 various charitable organizations as defendants. The lawsuit is premised upon the allegation that charitable gift annuities, used by many thousands of donors across the country to make charitable gifts while receiving payments during their lives, have violated federal antitrust laws. It also challenges the manner in which trusts administered by some charities have been managed and invested.

The General Conference Corporation and Loma Linda University believe the claim against the Seventh-day Adventist Church is without merit. Legal counsel is providing a vigorous defense.

○ **ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION:** An Adventist team of six, led by Dr. Udo Worschech, dean of the Theological faculty of our seminary in Friedensau, Germany, recently concluded an archeological excavation at el-Balu in Central Jordan. Dr. Worschech believes the site is "Ar Moab," mentioned in the Bible as the capital of the Moabites.

○ **AFRICA'S FIRST ADVENTIST RADIO STATION:** FM "Radio Good News," the first Seventh-day Adventist Church-owned radio station began broadcasting on October 2 in South Africa. "This is history, it is the first time we have a license to broadcast," said D.W.B. Chalale, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa. The Transvaal and Trans-Orange conferences applied for a radio license from the Independent Broadcasting Authority when restrictions on broadcasting were lifted in South Africa. The estate of an individual interested in radio ministry provided the funds and Adventist World Radio provided technical support. Located 20 kilometers from Johannesburg, the station will feature 65 percent talk and 35 percent music, according to Marie Lello, station coordinator. Although local broadcast stations have operated on Adventist college campuses in South Africa, this is the first public station owned by the church and is the first Adventist-owned station on the African continent.

○ **BANGLADESH FLOODS DAMAGE SCHOOL:** Last week, due to heavy rain in India, the northwestern part of Bangladesh was severely flooded. According to a report just received from Swapon Halder, Bangladesh Union secretary, classes at our Bajitpur Adventist Seminary had to be discontinued for the men's dormitory collapsed, some of the walls of the women's dormitory were washed away, and the

apartments of both dormitory deans were destroyed.