

From the G.C. President

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ODATELINE COTED'IVOIRE: Abidjan, headquarters of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division (AID) and capital of the French-speaking, equatorial west African nation of Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), was my first stop on this trip. This division, which includes 32 French and English speaking nations of Central and Western Africa as well as islands of the Indian Ocean, was organized 15 years ago with over 334,000 members. As of June '95, membership had increased to over 1,057,000 (organized in 8 unions and 55 local fields)!

More than 2,000 of our 5,000 believers in Cote d'Ivoire were joined in worship by 200 members of the diplomatic corps and government leaders. Sunday was a full day of committee meetings. "Wednesday night we fly all night on our way to Rwanda from which I'll report next week."

O NET '96, an evangelistic series to be conducted in Orlando, Florida's Forest Lake Academy 3,000-seat gymnasium, will be uplinked to a satellite five nights a week, October 5 through November 9, 1996. Pastor Mark Finley, speaker of *It Is Written* television ministry, will again be the evangelist, and Pastor C. D. Brooks, speaker of *Breath of Life* television ministry, will again conduct the question-and-answer periods during the event. North America's objective is for at least 2,000 churches to be involved in this effort.

Plans are also under consideration for Net '96 to reach other divisions. We just received word that the Inter-American Division has voted to provide equipment for one downlink site in each of its sixty local conferences. Since there is a possibility that even more divisions might also participate, study is under way to provide simultaneous translation channels in French, Spanish, Portuguese, and possibly German.

O LITERATURE FOR MILLION MAN MARCH: 85,000 copies of *Steps to Christ* were distributed to those attending the October 16 "Million Man March" on Washington, DC. About 100 lay members from across North America volunteered their time to distribute our literature, according to Larry McGhee, a layman from Chicago who was born in the Nation of Islam and became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1980.

O B.A. DEGREES FROM GRIGGS UNIVERSITY, the General Conference's distance-learning center, will be officially recognized by the University of South Africa and graduates admitted for higher studies, according to Dr. Joseph Gurubatham, president of Griggs University.

O PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Gideon Apen, is a Global Mission pioneer in a town along the border of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya, Indonesia. One day while driving through town, he met two men needing a ride to

the hospital. Gideon gladly obliged. Two years later, with no other contact with him, one of the men invited Gideon to his village of Amanab. The man remembered that Gideon was an Adventist and even remembered where he lived. Gideon went to the village and stayed with the man for about three weeks. One week after he arrived, the man's sister-in-law died. While villagers were preparing the body for a traditional ceremony, Gideon stopped them. "You need to give her a 'proper' burial," he suggested. Not sure what was "proper," they asked Gideon to perform the whole ceremony. He did so and shared the good news of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection at the second coming. Afterward, the entire village urged him to share more. Within six months the Holy Spirit used Gideon to establish a new congregation. Today there are three churches in that village, and 300 people are preparing for baptism.

O ANGELA SMASHES INTO PHILIPPINES: Typhoon Angela, billed as the storm of the decade, swept over the North Philippines and Manila, November 3, packing sustained winds of 180 miles (290 Km) per hour, with gusts up to 230 miles (370 Km) per hour. Catanduanes Province, an island some 230 miles east of Manila, reports the loss of 15,000 homes and the evacuation of 135,000 people. Angela is the twenty-seventh Pacific tropical storm this season and the fourteenth to hit the Philippines. The typhoon's route was over the Philippine's most densely populated area where there is an enormous amount of church property, including the university, college and other schools, hospital, union and conference offices, plus the residences of hundreds of employees, to say nothing of literally thousands of church members.

ADRA is providing direct help to families in the form of food rations, blankets, and shelter tarps. The agency will work together with church members to organize volunteer clean up teams, feeding them, and transporting them to the location of the clean up.

O THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION reports baptizing 101,727 in the first 10 months of 1995 which is a 15 percent increase over the same period in 1994. It also recently approved its quinquennial objectives: ! to baptize 600,000 new believers; ! to reach a total membership of 2 million by the year 2000; ! to have 15,000 organized Sabbath Schools attended by 2.5 million members (currently there are 12,660) and; ! to have one elementary school for every 1,500 members, one secondary school for every 5,000, and college for every union with 100,000 or more members (currently there are 600 elementary institutions, 174 secondary schools, and 10 colleges/universities).