

# From the G.C. President

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**O THE GC STAFF AND "TOTAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD":** Last week the General Conference officers, departmental and other cost-center directors spent a full day discussing how best to coordinate and prioritize the wide variety of materials, activities and services offered by headquarters staff and do so guided by the principles described in the document on "Total Commitment to God," voted by the '96 Annual Council. We agreed that all the services and materials offered by each branch of administration, department and cost center would identify, list and evaluate each service it provides. These reports would be reviewed internally by this same group during the second week in March and then be considered by the division presidents at the time of Spring Meeting. Truly we must dedicate all our energy and the Lord's resources to that which will contribute most to hasten His return.

**O AWR LAUNCHES WEB SITE:** I just visited this morning AWR's new World Wide Web site at <http://www.awr.org>. According to Gordon Retzer, AWR president, "The web site will contain the latest news and stories about AWR, history, program schedules, statistics, information about stations and studios, as well as photos and sound bytes. We want to create an atmosphere that will attract listeners and unchurched people to ask questions." That this site can be an outreach was clear when Davy, a student at Dundee University in Scotland, wrote: "I am a new Christian, but having problems. I was wondering if I could talk with you about them. I'm not an Adventist, but have heard broadcasts on the radio, which led me to look up your web site." Davy has received replies by mail and telephone and has been placed in contact with the local Adventist Church. Adventist Forum members on CompuServe will also find articles and information in the AWR section of Forum B (GO SDAOLB). Isn't it great that messages of the three angels of Revelation are proclaimed via the most modern means of communication! Why don't you stop by?

**O GLOBAL MISSION (GM) PIONEERS: Belarus**—Pioneers are working in eight target areas in Belarus (part of the former Soviet Union) to establish new congregations. Since Belarus became an independent country in 1991, our church has increased from 12 to 43 congregations. Building costs are so prohibitive the church purchases old houses (cost US\$1,500-\$6,000 each) and renovates them into sanctuaries with small living quarters for a minister or GM Pioneer.

**Baltic Union**—On January 18, 15 GM Pioneers (ages 18-32) completed practical soul-winning training and have returned to their native countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to work in unentered areas to plant new churches.

**O REPORT FROM PORTUGAL:** Eighty churches in Portugal participated in Net '96 and, according to a report from Union President Joaquim Dias sent to me by Euro-Africa Division President Ulrich Frikart, not only were many baptized—some churches conducting their first baptisms in many years—but 200 more are attending baptismal classes.

I'll condense only two of the stories from Pastor Dias' report. The members in Atalaia do Campo, a small village with a 20-member church, celebrated their first baptism in five years (and now have 10 more in a baptismal class) and

organized a pathfinder club with 16 young people. The 35 members in Vila do Conde, also without one baptism for many years, prayed fervently for three souls. A family of four attended every night and, though one lost his job in order to keep the Sabbath, all four were baptized on Nov. 30, 1996. Pastor Dias added, "One of the best results of Net '96 was the revival experienced in our churches. We thrilled at the sense of being part of a worldwide, dynamic church, a mission-oriented church that is alive and well and committed to preaching present truth."

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #51:** Here are other situations which explain why I take seriously the counsel of Ellen White. Simply, the reliability of her counsel testifies to the precision of her foreknowledge.

! In November 1901, she wrote a sober warning to the board of trustees of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. They had problems: about 90 percent of their work was commercial—some very inappropriate for Adventist publishers—while other problems revolved around interpersonal relationships. After many previous warnings, Mrs. White sent what amounted to a divine threat: "I have been almost afraid to open the Review and Herald fearing to see that God has cleansed the publishing house by fire. Unless there is a reformation, calamity will overtake the publishing house, and the world will know the reason" (8T:91, 96).

Thirteen months later, December 30, 1902, a fire of "unknown origin" destroyed the complex. Nothing of value was saved. When leaders wanted to rebuild in Battle Creek, Ellen White objected, saying, "Never lay a stone or a brick in Battle Creek to rebuild the Review office there. God has a better place for it" (GCB 1903, p.85).

! On at least three occasions Ellen White prodded her stunned colleagues into buying property in Southern California for medical centers. On October 13, 1902, she wrote that properties with buildings "especially suited to sanitarium work" could be bought "at much less than their original cost" (Letter 157, 1902, cited in *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 280). Without this insight into God's plan for Southern California, Paradise Valley Hospital, Glendale Adventist Medical Center and Loma Linda University would not have been centers for Adventist outreach (See D. E. Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message*, pp. 337-361).

! Before church leaders could get their breath after purchasing the Loma Linda property, Ellen White was painting the future of Loma Linda as the principle center for educating medical personnel. Far beyond any human dream, Mrs. White was calmly adamant: "This will be" (*Ibid.*, pp. 351, 352). Since her awesome prediction, Loma Linda University has graduated thousands of students in various fields of advanced education and is internationally known for many of its achievements and worldwide contributions in relieving human suffering.

You see why I believe reason demands a deep respect for the way Ellen White let God to use her as His "Messenger."