

From the G.C. President

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O ALBANIAN UPDATE: When the British Embassy in Tirana urged all British citizens to leave Albania, the Trans-European Division (TED) determined that the Seventh-day Adventist expatriates should do the same, according to a report from Miroslav Pujic, TED Communication director. Some of our evacuees boarded a ship for Italy while others drove over land to Macedonia and Yugoslavia. The newly appointed pastor for Korce, Eliaquim de Melo from Brazil, is being asked to wait until the situation clears before proceeding to Albania.

Recent crises, including the collapse of pyramid schemes and local elections, have highlighted a political rift between the North and South and led to a breakdown of law and order.

O JACOBSEN TO HEAD AWR: "Adventist World Radio (AWR) elected Donald G. Jacobsen as AWR president," announced Philip Follett, AWR Board chairman. Jacobsen comes to AWR with wide experience in church administration having served as president of the Oregon Conference, professor of evangelism and pastoral nurture at the Adventist Theological Seminary, ministerial director in Southeast Asia and pastor. His innovative vision, warm and positive relationships with people, will strengthen his leadership. Jacobsen, currently administrative assistant to A.C. McClure, NAD president, replaces Gordon Retzer, who accepted the Florida Conference presidency.

"If we are serious about taking the gospel to everyone on our planet," commented Jacobsen, "then radio will play an increasingly crucial role in that initiative. There is simply no other means by which we can go to everyone's door. When you read the letters that pour into the AWR offices around the world, you realize that this is truly the arena of daily miracles. It is a privilege for me to become a part of the AWR team."

Adventist World Radio currently broadcasts more than 1,000 hours every week, in 47 languages, from 18 transmitters around the world, which is more hours on the air than any other Christian broadcaster, according to a report prepared by the British Broadcasting Corporation. With headquarters at the General Conference, AWR also has offices and owns or leases transmission sites in Armenia, Costa Rica, Germany, Guam, Guatemala, Italy and Slovakia.

O IRLA AND HUNGARIAN PRIME MINISTER: Between March 2-5 more than 50 politicians and scholars met in the Hungarian capital of Budapest to attend a symposium on a range of vital church-state issues. The symposium, "The Role of the Church in the Renewed Societies," was sponsored jointly by the Office of the Prime Minister of Hungary and the European Section of the International Religious Liberty Organization, headquartered in St. Albans, England. Participants included Mr. G. Mezei, head of the Department of Political Affairs of the Council of Europe, and government representatives in charge of religious affairs from 11 Eastern European countries.

Four principle topics were addressed during the three-day conference: 1) What steps have been taken in Eastern Europe to date to create and maintain a legal framework that ensures full religious liberty to all?; 2) What remedies are offered for the injuries of the past? What have the various states done with regard to church properties confiscated during the Communist era?; 3) What is the social role of churches today?; 4) Does the state bear any financial responsibility for the operation of religious communities, and if so, to what extent?

Great effort went into the preparation of a "Budapest

Recommendation." Among the issues addressed in the 15-paragraph consensus statement, which will be sent to many international and religious organizations, is the duty of states to make "reasonable accommodations" for the observance of days of worship and other religious holidays.

O ON A PERSONAL NOTE: Mark Finley, speaker/director of the *It Is Written* telecast, ministered to the GC staff from the Word during our annual Colloquium (Week of Prayer), which concluded last Sabbath. During the week Richard Hart, Ph.D. and Linda Ferry, M.D., from Loma Linda University, presented four half-day seminars on pertinent, health-related topics such as the effects of workaholicism and living the Adventist lifestyle.

On Tuesday, I fly to Loma Linda to participate in a series of meetings—the first of which is the Global Summit on Higher Education, attended by the board chairmen and presidents of Seventh-day Adventist senior colleges around the world. The agenda is to consider ways to implement the section on higher education of the '96 Annual Council action on "Total Commitment to God." The primary objective of an Adventist college is to lead our youth into a saving relationship with Christ. Attendees will consider how best to plan every campus activity with this in mind and then how to discover the effect it had on their faith. Of course, the students, parents and general membership are entitled to receive regular reports regarding the spiritual and academic effect of the institution on their young people.

The Summit on Higher Education is being held at Loma Linda University in connection with the 1997 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee. It was in order that world division leaders could become familiar with General Conference institutions, that the '97 and '99 Spring Meetings of the General Conference Executive Committee were scheduled for Loma Linda and Andrews Universities.

Off the Back Burner

Segment #57: Ellen White urged the use of common sense in all areas of Christian living, even to the kind of clothing one wears: "Christians should not take pains to make themselves a gazing stock by dressing differently from the world. But if, when following out their convictions of duty in respect to dressing modestly and healthfully, they find themselves out of fashion, they should not change their dress in order to be like the world; but they should manifest a noble independence and moral courage to be right, if all the world differ from them ... They should shun extremes" (1T:458).

At Christiana (Oslo), Norway, in 1885, Ellen White met with about 120 new Adventists. Some were overconscientious "in making the matter of dress of first importance, criticizing articles of dress worn by others, and standing ready to condemn everyone who did not exactly meet their ideas." (3SM: 319). What problem did Ellen White see? She feared that "unbelievers" would get the impression that Adventists "were a sect of fanatics and extremists, and that their peculiar faith rendered them unkind, uncourteous, and really unchristian in character." Further, "one fanatic, with his strong spirit and radical ideas, who will oppress the conscience of those who want to do right, will do great harm" (Ibid., pp. 318, 319).