From the G.C. President

March 24, 1997 ***Robert S. Folkenberg***

O HISTORIC EDUCATIONAL SUMMIT: One hundred fifteen college/university presidents and board chairmen of 59 Adventist institutions of higher education (located in 49 countries and 12 divisions) met at Loma Linda University last week for the first International Higher Education Summit.

Under the auspices of the General Conference Department of Education, in response to the '96 Annual Council action on "Total Commitment to God," the Summit's three objectives were: a) To place as much attention on students' spiritual formation as on academic excellence; b) To suggest processes by which administration, faculty, staff and students can develop and implement an institutional "spiritual master plan;" c) To identify methods of assessing effectiveness in conveying biblical beliefs and values to students.

The primary reason the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates an educational system is the spiritual formation of our youth. Therefore, how to most effectively communicate the joyful assurance, transforming power and prophetic urgency of the gospel to students demands our best attention and highest priority. Please pray for our dedicated teachers at all educational levels. There is no task more sacred before God. For, in partnership with parents and the local church, they plant the eternal truths and values into the souls of our youth which become anchor points of life and, like the North Star, give them a Great Controversy perspective (a "world view" from God's outlook) by which our children learn to live their lives in the context of eternity, not just the here and now.

O WOMEN IN EVANGELISM: Even without reports from three divisions, we rejoice that 22,347 precious souls were baptized as a result of 21,705 evangelistic events held by women around the world, according to a message I just received from Dorothy Watts, director of the General Conference Department of Women's Ministries. It is clear, that evangelism and soul winning are the watchwords of Women's Ministries.

O GLOBAL MISSION PIONEERS AT WORK: Jackie Ordelheide Smith is the director of "Global Mission Pioneers" for the General Conference. I'd like to share with you a few of the highlights of the last report I received from her. ✔**Madagascar**—Since 1995, 19 young people have each served for 16 months conducting literacy programs, public meetings, home visits and gardening projects, according to John Ravelomanantsoa, ADRA director for Madagascar. As a result, 93 people have been baptized and are among those who now worship in the 11 new groups in previously unentered areas. Among those baptized are young people, business people, leading citizens, two sorcerers and the director of a local public school. ✔**Eastern Africa**—Joel Musvosvi, Global Mission coordinator for the Eastern Africa Division, reports that 30 Global Mission Pioneers have been trained and sent to serve in Zambia, 12 Pioneers in Botswana, and 24 Pioneers in Tanzania. ✔**Eritrea**—Azeze Tesfamarian, began serving in his unentered home town in October 1996 and now has 20 people meeting with him every Sabbath. Please continue to pray for all these front-line workers in this challenging, and frequently dangerous, work.

O SIBERIAN SUCCESS: Total attendance at Moses Ostrovsky's (Euro-Asia Division evangelist) evangelistic meetings in Komsomolsk-on-Amur in Siberia (population 319,000) began at 2,000, and two days later it had swelled to 2,500 (in three sessions). Nearly 600 people were baptized at the first baptism, and the total number of souls baptized has reached 782. When Moses preached on the subject of tithing, he asked the congregation to bring their tithe to the next evening. They brought US$3,000—a startlingly large figure. To put this in perspective, the budget for the entire campaign was US$5,000!

Off the Back Burner

Segment #58: Common sense in family and pre-marital relationships were also among the remarkably broad range of issues Ellen White addressed. Always relevant and at times very specific, her counsel, even today, seems as up-to-date as the morning newspaper. In letters to young people she knew well and in her sermons, she emphasized the need for common sense in choosing one's life mate: "The youth trust altogether too much to impulse. They should not give themselves away too easily or be captivated too readily by the winning exterior of the lover ... Common sense is needed here if anywhere; but the fact is, it has little to do in the matter" (RH, Jan. 26, 1886. See MYP: 450).

As I've read some of Ellen White's as yet unpublished writing (all of which will be released by the Ellen White Estate on CD-ROM in the not-too-distant future), I was startled by the directness and clarity of her counsel. It is at times so "clear" that in today's environment, where tolerance reigns above right and wrong, some would find it offensive. An example of her unvarnished candor was evident in the guidance to one married couple. Recognizing that home tensions often were the result of irresponsibility and the lack of common sense, Ellen White appealed to a self-centered wife: "Do you think it is no disappointment to your husband that he finds you what God has shown me you are? Did he marry you with the expectation that you would bear no burdens, share no perplexities, exercise no self-denial? Did he think that you would feel under no obligation to control self, to be cheerful, kind, and forbearing, and to exercise common sense?" (MR, vol. 16, p. 310).

(**Correction:** The quotation in last week's Segment was from Volume 2 of Manuscript Releases, not Volume 3)