

# From the G.C. President

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**O DATELINE LOMA LINDA:** Among those who have arrived on the campus of Loma Linda University and Medical Center are members of the General Conference Executive Committee. During the last two weeks, each day has been filled with a series of consultations, institutional boards constituency and other committee meetings. This gathering in Loma Linda was special in many ways. For example, this was only the third time in our history that the General Conference Executive Committee has met on the campus of Loma Linda—in 1915, 1974 and now in 1997. Here are a few highlights.

✓**The Adventist Review & Global Mission** each sponsored inspiring Sabbath afternoon programs (on March 22 and 29 respectively) both of which were distributed by satellite to the North, Inter and South American Divisions. In fact, these were the first programs received in Argentina where members watched the program in 11 churches.

✓**Loma Linda constituencies meet:** Motivated by a common mission and a desire to draw closer to the church and to each other, the two constituencies of Loma Linda University and Loma Linda University Medical Center voted to operate under a single constituency. These actions are part of a broad review of campus organizations many of which are necessitated by the rapidly changing health care environment.

Sunday evening the university and medical center hosted a dinner and program for the delegates which included a video report of Loma Linda's global activities and told the story of Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Roderick, whose co-joined twin girls had been born at Loma Linda and then successfully separated. It was a surprise and thrill when, at the close of the program, the Rodericks brought Janelle and Shawna, now one year old and both very healthy, onto the platform to greet the delegates and the medical staff who cared for them.

✓**Global Communication Network:** Responding to the rapidly increasing opportunities for global satellite distribution of evangelistic and other events, the General Conference Executive Committee voted to establish the "*Adventist Global Communication Network*" (AGCN) to arrange for intercontinental program delivery, coordinate event planning, establish technical standards and facilitate basic video production by church organizations around the world.

✓**Inter-Division employees (IDE):** The General Conference spends about US\$17 million per year to underwrite a significant portion of the cost of recruiting and/or sending about 800 missionaries from one division to serve in another. The highly valued direct services these provide, added to the unifying effect of workers from one culture serving in another, has contributed dramatically to our global effectiveness. A review of the trends of distribution of Inter-Division Employees and the functions they provide (in the context of the rapidly-increasing numbers of qualified national workers as well as Global Mission opportunities) resulted in modifying the IDE-review criteria and resource-allocation process.

**O SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PRIME MINISTER:** John Giheno, who Reuter's News Service described as a "non-drinking devout Christian, a Seventh-day Adventist," was sworn in as interim prime minister of the South Pacific nation of Papua New Guinea. Giheno, previously minister of mining

and petroleum, comes from the eastern highlands of this rugged and mountainous country and is charged with restoring stability after the country's worst political crisis in 22 years of independence.

**O BREAKTHROUGH IN SENEGAL:** Moussa Ba dit Aliou, an 18 year old man from South Senegal, West Africa, was recently baptized and became the first Seventh-day Adventist among the large Senegalese ethnic group—the Peul. Pastor Abraham Diedhiou had studies with Ba and baptized him. Now Ba wants to become a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and minister to his own people. Prior to Ba's baptism there was not one Adventist among the 800,000 people of the Peul tribe.

## Off the Back Burner

**Segment #59:** In past segments I've noted many examples where Ellen White advised the use of common sense to avoid extremism or simple foolishness. But let's look at this common-sense principle from another direction. Ellen White lived out her own counsel regarding common sense. Practical religion seemed to be the balancing theme throughout her writings. She saw a direct connection between daily life and properly representing God's character. When the young Australian publishing house was near bankruptcy, she saw that job estimates were bid too low, cost-control management was lacking, office overhead was too high. The solution: "I was shown that this was not the way to do business. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that His work should be so conducted as to be a continual embarrassment ... Some of the workers were not willing to help and instruct their fellow workmen ... (and) had very little insight into the right methods of obtaining success." Then she added: "Brethren and sisters concerned with the work of the Echo office, these words I have written were spoken to you by my guide" (Bio. vol 4, p26- 27).

During those difficult days, when the future of a college in Australia seemed uncertain, Ellen White was confident that the land purchased at such a "cheap price" would indeed fulfill all the needs of a future school. But none of the committee members were convinced by what she had been shown and she was distressed at their "unsanctified caution" (Ibid., p. 215).

Throughout her long ministry, strong, self-willed men and women learned to value her "sanctified caution" and common sense. Such confidence was a far-cry from the understandable hesitancy to accept counsel from her as a sick teenager in the 1840s. But Ellen White earned the respect of her church colleagues because she faithfully conveyed the messages of God—messages not always pleasant but always accurate, timely, and helpful—messages which have borne the test of the years because they united truth with common sense.