

From the G.C. President

June 9, 1997

Robert S. Folkenberg

O DATELINE STUTTGART: Last Sabbath I had the joy of worshiping with 8,000 (of the 14,000) church members of the South German Union at a large convention center in Stuttgart. Pastor Dwight Nelson—senior pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church at Andrews University and speaker for Net '98—also spoke several times during the weekend. The Euro-Africa Division arranged for Pastor Nelson to meet with pastors and members in several countries in anticipation of this evangelistic initiative.

O WHAT IS “WHAST?” Last Tuesday the General Conference launched the *Western Hemisphere Adventist Satellite Television System* which will distribute continuous television programming to the South, Inter- and North American Divisions in four languages concurrently—English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. “WHAST” is the first segment of a global satellite system which will deliver television programming, 24 hours a day, in up to 40 languages. Preliminary research indicates that the objective of continuous global television coverage is available at rates far more cost-effective than anticipated.

In addition to the hundreds of hours of programming in hand, each division and/or its media ministries, will produce and translate additional programming as necessary. It's thrilling that the potential for continuous, global, evangelistic, member-consolidation and leadership-training may be within sight! Could this be what the Revelator described when he penned: “the earth was lightened with his glory” (Rev. 18:1)?

O Dr. Tom Blincoe, a dear friend of mine and former dean of the Andrews University Theological Seminary, has been suffering a decline in health. While his condition is not life-threatening, I include his address, certain that many of his former students would like to send him a card and may do so to: 500 Rancheros Dr., Sp. #193, San Marcos, CA 92069, USA.

O 200 GLOBAL MISSION PIONEERS began their training last week in Moscow as part of a plan to establish 50 congregations in unentered cities—the majority of which are largely Muslim. Jim Zachary, from *The Quiet Hour*, is helping train these pioneers who, with support from Global Mission, have volunteered to spend at least one year in these unentered areas. *The Quiet Hour* is searching for existing congregations to adopt each of the new congregations raised up by the Pioneers.

O ADRA RECOGNIZED BY JORDAN: The country of Jordan has chosen the Adventist Development and Relief Agency Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) project as the best non-governmental organization development project in Jordan. The palace of King Hussein officially notified ADRA Jordan country director, Basim Aziz, on May 15, 1997, of this award. Under a cover letter by King Hussein himself, the palace has officially submitted the nomination of ADRA's project to the United Nations to represent Jordan in competing for the Roosevelt Award and a US\$50,000 prize.

ADRA's project is located in Al Mafraq, in northwestern Jordan, and is funded by the Canadian Embassy through ADRA Canada, and is the result of special collaboration between ADRA, the World Health Organization, the United

Nation's Children's Fund, the departments of Health and Social Services, and the Jordanian Swedish Medical Society.

The CBR project aims to serve physically and mentally disabled persons in Al Mafraq district, estimated at more than 12,000 people. At present, only two percent of all disabled people in Jordan are assisted through private or government institutions specializing in the needs of the disabled.

Off the Back Burner

Segment #67: Another abuse of inspired writings involves attempts to decide what is inspired and what is not. Seeking relief from the authority and moral restraint imposed by the very existence of God, some try to undermine God's voice by searching for inconsistencies in scripture. These justify their rejection of that which is “sacred” by finding “mistakes” in that which is common. Ellen White had to contend with this practice: “When men, in their finite judgment find it necessary to go into an examination of the scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us” (1SM:17).

Prophets often mixed the divine message with common, everyday information. When Paul greeted contemporaries with love it was not a divine message. When he asked Timothy to find the cloak and books that he had left at Troas and to “come before winter,” that too was common talk (2 Tim. 4:9-21).

Ellen White recognized this distinction between common and the sacred in her own writing: “There are times when common things must be stated, common thoughts must occupy the mind, common letters must be written and information given that has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God. Questions are asked at times that are not upon religious subjects at all, and these questions must be answered. We converse about houses and lands, trades to be made, and locations for our institutions, their advantages and disadvantages” (1SM:39).

This distinction appeared in a 1909 letter in which she was “troubled” about the former manager of the Paradise Valley Sanitarium, E. S. Ballenger, who was “denying the testimonies as a whole because of what seems to him an inconsistency—a statement made by me in regard to the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium.” She had written earlier that the Sanitarium had 40 rooms, when it had only 38.

She explained the difference noting that, “The information given concerning the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as a human opinion. There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. ... For one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake. In a tendency to do this we may see the working of the enemy to destroy souls” (1SM:38). In our next segment we will give an example of how she spoke to this feature in her letters.

CORRECTION: In the May 27 edition, we mistakenly reported that Brad and Kathy Jolly were baptized in Mongolia. They were actually the AFM missionaries who prepared the first people baptized in that country.