

ANNUAL COUNCIL  
GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

October 6, 1996, 8:00 a.m.

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

The devotional message entitled "The Power of His Resurrection" was presented by Joseph A Ola, President of the Nigeria Union Mission.

"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile: you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."—1 Cor 15:12-22, NIV

I want to welcome you all to this assembly this morning. I feel very honored to be among the speakers for this Annual Council. I see myself as being among the least of the brethren to address such a gathering as this. I shall be depending on our great Master, Jesus Christ, on our great Companion, the Holy Spirit, and on your prayers as we examine together the assigned topic, "The Power of His Resurrection."

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ

What I want to share with you today is not founded upon human reason. It is not based upon man's primitive axioms. It is not founded upon human imagination. It is not an ingenious hypothesis to account for any phenomena, nor a poetic myth to adumbrate any truth.

The power and resurrection of Christ are based on facts. Those facts are personal. They are historical. They are connected to a person, and that person is not Socrates, Plato, Mohammed, Buddha, nor any other religious leader of the world. My message today is about one Man whom the prophets and the apostles called Jesus Christ. The facts I am about to share with you are based upon the text read at the beginning of this message. The facts are few: He died, He was buried, He rose from the grave, and He will come back again for His

own. Our victory over death is sure because Jesus Christ rose from the grave. The resurrection of Christ involved the whole gospel. The facts are well attested. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul, in opposition to false teachers who had arisen in the Corinthian church, maintained the fact of Christ's resurrection to be the basis of Christian faith, practice, and hope. Our late brother, Gerhard F Hasel, said, "Genuine Christian faith and preaching has no foundation, no focus, no assurance, no guarantee, and no certainty without the factuality of the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ."—*Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, vol 5, p 6

For our convenience, I shall divide the subject of today, "The Power of His Resurrection," into three parts. We shall consider the significance of the resurrection of Christ in the plan of salvation, the impact of the resurrection in the lives of those who through baptism experience that power, and the certainty that the resurrection brings to our faith in the future resurrection to eternal life.

# 1. The Significance of the Resurrection of Christ in the Plan of Salvation

In the constant warfare of our time, the God of all grace has made provision for the salvation of man. Man in the beginning had a close relationship with God. That relationship was broken when man sinned. "Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race."—DA 834

Thank God for His foreknowledge. When man sinned, God the Father revealed to man His great plan of salvation. He chose as His instrument none other than His own Son, and subjected Him to a miraculous human birth under the most unexpected conditions. God the Son journeyed from glory to humiliation and took the form of a servant. The Maker became a man. The Sovereign became a servant. The Prince became a pauper to settle our case once and for all. Because of sin, the image of God in man had been largely lost. Man could not find salvation through his own personal righteousness. As far as the law of God is concerned, "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23, KJV). God cannot change His nature because of man. Man lost the ability to obey God. "The condition of eternal life is now just what it has always been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled."—SC 62

The fall of man necessitated the plan of salvation. The problems facing man are how to satisfy the law of God which claims the sinner's life, and how to obtain the perfect righteousness which is needed in order to be saved. We need somebody. Thank God that

Jesus came to fulfill this assignment. "Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptation such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness."—SC 62 There could be no person other than Jesus Christ to redeem man. By this act the law of God was satisfied. Although God loves us absolutely, He could not sacrifice His justice for His love. Hence Jesus died for us all.

### The Day Christ Died

The death of Christ on the cross was not a defeat, it was a total and complete victory for the Father and the Son; and it was a victory for you and me, sinners meant to die.

Satan lost the first battle centuries ago in heaven. He lost another battle when Jesus died on the cross. The Bible tells us he is going to lose the final battle at Christ's second coming to planet earth. The message of the Bible is that Satan is the loser and God is the winner. Jesus Christ did not die to make God loving, but He died because God was loving. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son" (John 3:16, KJV). Amen.

Jesus died on Friday afternoon. He died and gave up the ghost, like anyone else. He died according to the will of His Father. He died, and the sun became as blood. He died, and the earth shook like a drunken man. He died, and the graves of the righteous were opened. He died, and the centurion cried aloud, "'Truly, this was the Son of God'" (Matt 27:54, KJV). He died, and they pierced Him, took His body from the cross, wrapped it with a white linen, and put it into a borrowed tomb. He died, and they sealed the tomb with a huge stone, set the seal of Pilate at the entrance, and put soldiers to watch. Humanity was dead, but divinity was alive. Christ stayed in the grave until He completed His appointed time. All Friday evening Christ slept in the grave. All day Sabbath, Christ rested in the grave. The devil rejoiced, thinking he had won the battle. Beside the soldiers of Pilate at the tomb, the devil sent his angels to watch the tomb of Christ.

On Sunday morning, as it began to dawn, God the Father sent His own mighty angel to escort Christ to heaven. As the angel touched the earth, his countenance, which was like lightning, and his clothing, which was white as snow, dazzled the guards. They shook like drunk men and fell down like dead men. The earth shook. The messenger from heaven rolled the stone away and shouted, "Son of God, come forth, thy Father calls thee." Both the soldiers and evil agents heard him. They saw Christ come out with power and say, "I am the resurrection and the life." They saw "the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise."—DA 780 Christ said, before His death, "I can lay down my life and pick it up again." Jesus—the risen, reigning Saviour—had gotten the victory over death. Because of His resurrection, a new power was let loose into the world.

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Since then this power has changed lives for God, making bad lives good. This power has transformed barren deserts into flowering gardens, sighs into songs, gloom into glory, fear into faith, burdens into blessings, death into life, sadness into gladness, and tragedies into triumphs. It has done more for mankind than any other known power in this world.

Even though the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees did not believe it, my Lord was resurrected. Even though we have modern-day Pharisees and so-called scholars who do not believe that it happened, yet the eye witnesses in almost every book of the New Testament emphatically stated that my Lord was resurrected. Paul said He "was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25, NRSV). My Lord was resurrected.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NIV), "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, he appeared to Peter, . . . to more than five hundred of the brothers, . . . to James, . . . and last of all he appeared to me also." Ladies and gentlemen, Christ's resurrection gives me joy and power.

#### Christ's Resurrection Makes the Cross Effective

Paul says, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile: you are still in your sins" (1 Cor 15:17, NIV). Beloved, if Christ had not been resurrected, it would mean that He was an imposter and a sinner Himself, without any righteousness to impute to me. Thank God, the Holy Bible says He was resurrected. A dead Christ cannot save others from death. The resurrection of Christ has a direct relationship to the sins of believers. When a sinner accepts Christ as his or her personal Saviour and Lord, his or her debt is canceled by the death of Christ on the cross, and Christ's imputed righteousness justifies the repentant sinner. Another significant point is that it is the resurrection of Christ that makes Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary possible. In the Old Testament sanctuary system, the shed blood of the animal had to be applied in the sanctuary before forgiveness of sin could take place. "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross" (GC 489).

When the accuser of the brethren stands up to say that I am a sinner, unworthy of everlasting life, my Lord does not deny that fact; for He knows that He is not finished with me yet. Like Paul, I am still pressing toward the mark of perfection. But He tells Satan that He has died in my stead, and He imputes to me the perfect righteousness I need to qualify for everlasting life. When Christ says this, Satan is silenced.

## 2. The Impact of the Resurrection In the Life of Those who Through Baptism Experience that Power

The ordinance of Christian baptism represents dying and rising with Christ. This symbolism can be seen in the New Testament epistles. Paul says, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."—Rom 6:3,4

Baptism symbolizes that we die to sin and we are raised like Christ to live a new life. Gerhard F Hasel said, "to walk in newness of life means to live the life of genuine discipleship, being alive to God." To be in Christ, beloved, means a spiritual union. Jesus said, "abide in me and I in you." To be in Christ means standing in Him. To be in Christ means walking in Him, being found in Him—and after this life, sleeping in Him. At His glorious appearance, we will rise in Him. When you are in Christ, you are hidden as in the cleft of a rock which affords shelter from the storm. When you are in Christ, you are grafted for life, because you are branches of the living Vine. When you are in Christ, you are joined with Him as a member of the mystical body. Those who are in Christ will act like Christ. They will love like Christ. They will pray like Christ. They will say like Christ, "Father, Thy will be done." Those who are in Christ will exercise their faith, believing that as Christ was resurrected, they too will be resurrected one day.

God is not finished with us yet. As a disciple of Christ, what is your weakness? Are you struggling with a bad temper? Cheer up, the resurrection power is still available to give you victory. Is your weakness jealousy and envy? Do you have inordinate ambition? Do you find it difficult to get along with others? Do you find fault with the fundamental beliefs of the Church? Do you lack faith in the midst of perplexing problems? Cheer up, the resurrection power is still available. Are you disorganized and disoriented whenever you are misunderstood as an administrator? Cheer up, the resurrection power that gave ability to Christ to remain calm under such conditions will support you. This resurrection power, through Christ, will give us victory over sin and human frailties. Do not be afraid. The ultimate power is on our side.

## 3. The Certainty It Brings to our Faith in the Future Resurrection to Eternal Life

The apostle Paul gives me one of the greatest assurances. It has helped many in a period of grief. This hope is found in 1 Corinthians 15:20 (NIV): "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." The whole world may tumble down around us, but this great truth still remains; Jesus was resurrected. This is the faith that keeps all believers alive until we see Him in glory. This is the hope that stays in

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our hearts when we bury our loved ones—that the power which raised Christ up will surely bring our loved ones back to life again. Christ's second coming is dependent on the reality of His bodily resurrection. Since Jesus was physically raised from the dead by His Father, He could ascend into heaven and He is able to return again in the clouds of heaven. His promises have never failed. When He comes again, He will take His saints home. Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all who believe and follow Him. Christ's resurrection was the first fruit of those who slept. He was the first begotten from the dead. He proved that He had the keys of life and death. He became the plague of death, and the destroyer of the grave. He will one day, very soon, put forth His great power in raising His people from the dead in the likeness of His glorious body.

If we can hold out, if we can keep the faith, in God's own time our change will come. I am sure, because Christ's resurrection was according to the Scripture. It was attended with circumstances of peculiar glory. It was an act of stupendous power. He said, "I am he that was dead and now I am alive." He said, "I will come again to take all my own home." In this world there are lots of sad and perplexing deaths. Saints of God are attacked by cancer and they die. Some die of diabetes, some die of heart attacks, and some through automobile accidents. Jesus warned us that in this world we shall have tribulation. But He said we should be of good cheer, for He has overcome. He overcame when He was resurrected from the grave. His resurrection gives evidence that God has power over death. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death. Thank God that one day we shall see the end of death. How can I be sure? I am sure because of the testimonies of the saints.

What did Enoch, the seventh from Adam, say about Christ's coming again? The "Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones" (Jude 14, NIV).

What did Job have to say? "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God" (Job 19:25, 26, NIV).

What did David say about His coming? "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence" (Ps 50:3, KJV).

Isaiah recorded, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isa 25:8, KJV).

Ezekiel said that all the dry bones in the valley would live again. (See Eze 37:4, 5.)

Peter says, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief. . . . the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10, 12, 13, NIV).

John the Revelator, while on the island of Patmos, saw His glory. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1, NIV).

Jesus said, "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Rev 22:12, NIV).

Paul said, "Listen. I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead [in Christ] will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." — 1 Cor 15:51, 52, NIV

Beloved, the resurrection of Christ is fundamental to the Christian faith. Without it, there is no salvation for sinners; without it, Satan and sin would have conquered in the great controversy; without it, there would have been no intercessor/advocate for us in the heavenly sanctuary; without it, there would be no second coming of Christ our Saviour. And without the second advent of Christ, there would be no future resurrection to eternal life. Evil would continue to dominate forever. Thank God for the power of resurrection. Thank God for all the testimonies of the saints through the Scriptures.

If the resurrection had not taken place, the disciples who died for preaching it would not have been willing to die for it. No one would choose to sacrifice his life for what he knows to be a lie. When, according to tradition, Peter was to be nailed upside down on a cross, he should have said, "the resurrection of Christ is a lie." When John was put into hot oil, he should have said it was a lie. When Paul was to be beheaded, he should have said it was a lie. But he did not. Instead he said, "I have fought a good fight."

I am longing to see you on that day. Do not let anyone steal your joy. Do not let the devil steal your joy. Hold on to this resurrection power. In God's own time, our change will come. Our Lord will come from the sky. He will use His power of resurrection to gather His elect from all corners of the earth.

The millennium will be inaugurated. Heaven will be populated. Sin will be eradicated. Wickedness will be terminated. Sorrow will be obliterated. Diseases will be completely annihilated. Injustice will be prostrated. Death will be eliminated. The devil will be subjugated. Humanity will be liberated. The earth will be renovated. Redemption will be

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consummated. God's love will be vindicated. Jesus Christ, our King of kings and Lord of lords, will be congratulated.

A season of prayer by small groups followed.

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Amon Rugelinyange, President of the Rwanda Union Mission, opened the business session with prayer.

Matthew A Bediako called the fourth business session of the 1996 Annual Council to order.

96AC to RLR

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Robert L Rawson, Treasurer of the General Conference, introduced the Treasury staff and presented the Treasurer's Report, as follows:

It is my privilege to share some observations regarding General Conference finances with the General Conference Executive Committee meeting at the 1996 Annual Council. This report is designed to update you on important trends, to share with you challenges that weigh heavily on our hearts, and to share with you good news. We will provide you with information on sources of income and allocation of resources contained within the General Conference budget.

In the Treasurer's Report to the 1995 Annual Council, I drew attention to two issues of concern—decreases in working capital and in liquidity that occurred over the last several years. I wish to comment further on these issues. Over several years, both working capital and liquidity were substantially increased from the sale of General Conference property. This was for the express purpose of providing resources to construct the new General Conference office complex in Silver Spring, Maryland. Assets sold included the former General Conference offices in Takoma Park, Maryland. I hope this explanation will correct any misunderstandings that may have occurred as a result of last year's report. I hasten to add that



we believe it is important to the stability of the world Church that the General Conference build its working capital and cash reserves, thereby offering stability during economically uncertain times. In a few minutes, I will share some graphs that will highlight these trends.

### Major Challenges

1. Administration of Interdivision Employee Budgets. We are in the midst of a major change in the administration of interdivision employee budgets. The General Conference now assumes responsibility for a major portion of the funding of these budgets for frontline employees. Formerly, the divisions had this responsibility and the General Conference provided appropriations to cover the cost. Appropriations to the divisions have been adjusted, and the General Conference now retains the funds needed to care for this expense.

2. Sabbath School Mission Offerings. With the exception of 1995, world mission offerings have been on a steady decline in recent years. For the world Church to continue to maintain initiatives in newly entered areas of the world, this trend must be reversed. Reversal of this trend is essential as the Church seeks to continue the support of global initiatives and to maintain interdivision employees where needed.

3. Trust/Confidence. It is no secret that the secular society in which we find ourselves is expressing a major lack of trust in secular leadership. It is our perception that this phenomenon is also prevalent in the Church. My staff and I are energized by the opportunity to serve God in our areas of responsibility, and to participate in building the trust and confidence of our members in God and in His Church. We pledge ourselves to provide accurate, understandable, and readily available information.

### Good News

1. Tithe Income. Tithe income in recent years has kept pace with inflation. We must not pass this issue without thanking God for His people who are faithful to the command to "bring all the tithes into the storehouse."

2. Global Mission. Global Mission has opened church members' minds, hearts, and pocketbooks to the opportunities of sharing the good news of a soon coming King. Evangelism is alive and thriving around the world. The stories of hearts changed for God are thrilling. Project giving has opened an avenue of giving which is satisfying to many. We must find a way to nurture this method of support without destroying the base needed to support and maintain these initiatives.

3. Investment Income. The year 1995 was a good year for the investment market. The current year to date has witnessed a continual increase in the market indices. The General Conference Unitized Funds have performed well, which is very meaningful for the hospital and Church retirement funds, as well as for the General Conference who holds units.

Let me express appreciation for the professional, competent, and kind staff of associates with whom it is my pleasure to work. These associates and the support teams they lead give me the courage to face each day. We readily acknowledge that without God's help, we can accomplish nothing. We solicit your prayers that God will continue to provide, and we will continue to be directed by His Spirit with the willingness to follow as He leads.

Robert L. Rawson then shared some graphs to illustrate key elements of the General Conference budget.

Gary B. DeBoer, Associate Treasurer of the General Conference, presented a report regarding General Conference investments, as follows:

An Investment Report for the year 1995 was presented at the 1996 Spring Meeting. This Annual Council report provides a short review of the Investment Market activity from January to September 1996, a brief description of the General Conference Unitized Funds, and the initiatives being pursued by the Investment Office.

#### Investment Market

The year 1995 was a very good year for the investment market. With the stellar performance of the United States markets in 1995, it was feared that there would be a major correction in 1996. The market, however, continued an overall positive trend. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) index peaked at 5778 on May 22. There have been minor corrections throughout the year, with the most notable ones coming during July and August. An upward movement was experienced on September 13, 1996 that had not been seen since the spring. During the day's activities, the DJIA exceeded 5800 and closed at 5835. On September 23, the market set another record, closing at 5894.

Over the past twelve months interest rates have declined. However, within the last few weeks interest rates have fluctuated because of market gyrations. On September 24, 1996, the United States Federal Reserve voted to keep the interest rate at 8.25%, a rate which has been in effect since January 1996.

Various factors which are currently influencing the market are consumer debt, interest rates, inflation, Middle East tensions, and the upcoming presidential election in the United States.

The technology sector has caused the most significant fluctuations in the market during the current year. Consequently, there has been a good deal of speculation regarding the final outcome of the 1996 market. Long term experience has shown that the prudent thing is not to try to time or to outguess the market, but to choose good securities and hold them.

#### General Conference Unitized Funds

The unitized funds operated by the General Conference are open to all denominational organizations for investment purposes.

##### Money Fund

An investment in this fund returns dollar for dollar of capital plus interest earned. Investments are in high quality, short-term securities. The average return for 1995 was 5.96%, and to date for 1996 is currently 5.25%. Funds can be deposited or withdrawn on a daily basis and interest is calculated and credited to each account monthly.

##### Income Fund

This is a "balanced" fund comprised of approximately 50% equity/stocks and 50% bonds/debt securities. Due to the asset allocation, the yield is normally higher than the Money Fund, but it is subject to unit value fluctuation because of the equity component. Distribution of earnings is calculated quarterly. Deposits/withdrawals are limited to the beginning of a month. The average return for the past five years, ending December 31, 1995, was 10.37%.

##### Investment Fund

This fund is comprised of approximately 75% equity/stocks and 25% bonds/debt. The returns on this fund are subject to more volatility on unit value than the Money or Income funds. Distribution of earnings is quarterly. Deposits/withdrawals are limited to the beginning of a month. The average return for the past five years, ending December 31, 1995, was 12.56%.

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### International Fund

This fund is comprised primarily of non-United States equity securities and is managed by a firm located in Geneva, Switzerland. The volatility of unit value is greater in this fund than the others; however, the rate of return is usually higher. Distribution of earnings is calculated quarterly. Deposits/withdrawals are limited to the beginning of a month. The average return over the past five years, ending December 31, 1995, was 11.46%.

### Initiatives

The following initiatives are being taken by the Investment Office:

1. Custodial arrangements for securities have been initiated with the State Street Bank and Trust Company for the General Conference Hospital Retirement Fund. In October, the custody of the securities for the Income and Investment Funds will be transferred to the State Street Bank and Trust Company.
2. Security lending arrangement with State Street to reduce offset custodial fees.
3. Evaluation of fund managers by setting performance criteria.
4. Investigation of recapturing a percentage of brokerage commissions.
5. Development of an Investment Policy Statement.
6. Asset allocation diversification of the types of investments.
7. Investigation of the establishment of a unitized short term bond fund.

FinAudRev/96AC to RLR

### GENERAL CONFERENCE FINANCIAL AUDIT REVIEW COMMITTEE (ADCOM-SSub) - REPORT

VOTED, To accept the report of the General Conference Financial Audit Review Committee (ADCOM-SSub), and to record the opinion of that committee that the responses of management have adequately cared for the issues raised in the financial and policy compliance audits.

FinAudRev/96AC to RLR

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS  
STATEMENT OF POSITION 94-3—VARIANCE APPROVED

Inasmuch as the General Conference Auditors, in expressing an opinion on the 1995 combined financial statements of the General Conference, qualified the statement with respect to the non-consolidation of the related entities as required by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement of Position (SOP) 94-3, the General Conference Treasury has given study to entities that may qualify for consolidation into the annual audited financial statement of the General Conference to satisfy AICPA SOP 94-3. As of this point in time, we have concluded that Adventist Risk Management Incorporated is the only affiliate that may meet that requirement.

The General Conference officers recognize great caution must be exercised when deciding to depart from generally accepted accounting principles. Such departures should not be made with an intent to mislead users of the statements. Some factors that have been considered in determining whether or not to implement these requirements of the generally accepted accounting principles include: 1) Will the statements be more meaningful to the statement users? By users is meant church members, contributors, and management; 2) Will the benefits outweigh the additional cost? 3) Is audited data available from affiliated entities to prepare consolidated statements in time for Spring Meeting? We have concluded that the answer to each of these questions is "no." It was

VOTED, To authorize the General Conference to exercise a variance of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Statement of Position (SOP) 94-3, and to continue to present the General Conference audited statement to include the General Conference, the General Conference Corporation, and their related funds, which are the only organizations over which the General Conference Executive Committee has total financial control.

GENERAL CONFERENCE CORPORATION OF SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTISTS - LEGAL MEETING

The General Conference Executive Committee was adjourned, and a special legal meeting of members of the General Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists was held.

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At 11:10 a.m. the business session of the General Conference Executive Committee was reconvened.

#### ANDREWS UNIVERSITY - REPORT

Niels-Erik Andreasen, President of Andrews University, presented the following report:

Andrews University is a global university for a global Church. The first institution of higher education was established by our Church in 1874. Now known as Andrews University, this institution continues to serve the world field. The following are highlights of the worldwide education provided by Andrews University.

The student population has grown from 100 United States students in 1874 to over 3,100 students from around the world in 1996. Approximately 25 percent of the current students are international students. They come from 100 countries and represent all the divisions of the world Church.

The faculty members, who exhibit all the academic and personal qualifications needed to serve students and to promote Christian education, are also international, and they represent most of the divisions of the world Church. This has created a learning atmosphere in the university that equips it to serve well the world Church and its mission.

Andrews University has maintained a growing reputation as one of approximately 200 comprehensive, doctoral degree-granting universities in the United States, and it was recently noted as offering one of the 200 best general science programs in the country.

The Theological Seminary has graduated 2,300 students during the past ten years. These graduates now serve around the world as pastors, teachers, theologians, and church administrators. They came from 90 countries, and many have returned to their home countries to work.

The School of Education has offered graduate studies leading to a doctoral degree since 1976. Its graduates are found on the faculties of most of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities around the world.

The School of Business enrolls about 300 students, of which 45 percent are international, representing over 20 countries.

The James White Memorial Library holds nearly one million items of information, mostly in books of course. These materials are being made available electronically to the libraries in our sister institutions worldwide as these libraries become linked on the worldwide web.

A recent agreement between Andrews University and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA) has led to the development of a new program of graduate studies for ADRA professionals. This past summer, 250 participants enrolled in the program at four sites, one each in Africa, Central America, South America, and Southern Asia.

Andrews University and Home Study International are preparing an agreement which will enable students who are unable to attend school on a college campus to begin or complete university studies with Andrews University through distance learning.

Through collaboration with eight affiliated campuses, 2,800 students in several overseas divisions received Andrews Invested degrees since 1990.

Andrews University is committed to continue this service to the world Church and wishes to thank the General Conference and world leaders for their support of Christian higher education at Andrews University.

APDReComm/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to JP

#### 139-96Ga ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION TERRITORIAL REALIGNMENT

VOTED, 1. To divide the territory of the Asia-Pacific Division into a northern division and a southern division.

2. To include the territory of the East Asia Association as part of the northern division of the Asia-Pacific territory, and to terminate the East Asia Affairs Committee, effective January 1, 1997.

3. To assign territories to the two new divisions, as follows:

a. Northern Division

East Asia Association  
Japan Union Conference

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Korean Union Conference  
South China Island Union Mission

b. Southern Division

Bangladesh Union Mission  
Central Philippine Union Conference  
East Indonesia Union Mission  
Guam-Micronesia Mission (attached)  
Myanmar Union Mission  
North Philippine Union Mission  
Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sri Lanka (attached)  
South Philippine Union Conference  
Southeast Asia Union Mission  
West Indonesia Union Mission

4. To locate the northern division office in the vicinity of Greater Seoul, South Korea, and to locate the southern division office in the vicinity of Greater Manila, Philippines.

APTransMgtC/SEC/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to JP

139-96Gb ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION TERRITORY—NAMES OF  
TWO NEW DIVISIONS

VOTED, 1. To designate the territories of the East Asia Association, the Japan Union Conference, the Korean Union Conference, and the South China Island Union Mission as the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD), effective January 1, 1997.

2. To designate the territories of the Bangladesh Union Mission, the Central Philippine Union Conference, the East Indonesia Union Mission, the Guam-Micronesia Mission (attached), the Myanmar Union Mission, the North Philippine Union Mission, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sri Lanka (attached), the South Philippine Union Conference, the Southeast Asia Union Mission, and the West Indonesia Union Mission as the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), effective January 1, 1997.



APTransMgtC/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to JP-ADCOM+GCC

148-96G ADVENTIST INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
ADVANCED STUDIES—RECLASSIFICATION AS A GENERAL  
CONFERENCE INSTITUTION

VOTED, 1. To reclassify the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) as a General Conference institution with special attachment to the Asian and Pacific regions.

2. To request the General Conference Administrative Committee to oversee the revision of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), and to refer the Constitution and Bylaws to the General Conference Executive Committee for final approval.

SEC/ADCOM/96AC to AHT(DIV)

*SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE*—NEW NAME

VOTED, To change the name of the *Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly* and *Sabbath School Lessons* to *Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. (See 121-96G.)

Adjourned.

Matthew A Bediako, Robert S Folkenberg, Chairmen  
Mario Veloso, Secretary  
Harold W Baptiste, Editorial Secretary  
Carol E Rasmussen, Recording Secretary

ANNUAL COUNCIL  
GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

San Jose, Costa Rica

October 7, 1996, 8:00 a.m.

DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

The devotional message entitled "A Biblical Reflection on Authentic Christianity" was presented by Gregory P Nelson, Senior Pastor of the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Scripture texts are taken from the New International Version.

I was asked to speak this morning on authentic Christianity. This subject seems to center around integrity, authenticity, and honesty. It seems that Seventh-day Adventists, with our high emphasis on the truth, should be people of authenticity and integrity because this is what truth is. What makes it difficult is that we live in a society where integrity is a byword.

A boy's clothing store was giving away balloons to the children of customers. One little boy asked if he could have two balloons. "Sorry," the clerk said, "but we give only one balloon to each child. Do you have a brother at home?"

That question forced the boy into an ethical dilemma. He did not have a brother, he had a sister. He knew he should tell the truth, but he wanted another balloon so badly. After thinking for a moment, he replied hopefully, "No, sir, I do not have a brother at home. But my sister does, and I would like one for him." That kid was pretty sharp and fast on his feet!

Does not this point out one of the dilemmas of the human heart? Like the little boy, we often find ourselves caught in a struggle between what is right on one hand, and what we want on the other. Many times we find it difficult to harmonize the two. So we may end up like the boy, telling a little "white lie," or doing whatever it takes to maintain some semblance or appearance of integrity so we can get what we want. Integrity and authenticity are living the truth.

Do you find that hard to do, like I do at times? The phone rings, my child answers. It is for me, but I do not want to be bothered. "Tell them I am not home," I feel like instructing my child.

A peer in church leadership has a moral fall. I am tempted to feel proud that I have not fallen so low. I do not call or write to express my love and support. I shake my head and wonder where the Church is headed, saying that this is just one more confirmation of Ellen White's prophecy that some of the bright lights will go out in the end, and I feel smug.

I preach about the importance of family, but I am tempted to accept traveling appointments without consulting my wife or children, telling myself that it is an important sacrifice for the Lord's work. I say family time is vital, but there is a tendency for it to take a back seat to my work.

I am tempted to be lax with my personal life, but strict and unforgiving with others.

Stephen Carter, a professor of law at Yale University, spoke at a forum in Lincoln, Nebraska last month on the topic, "Integrity and Politics." He has just written a book to be released this fall entitled, *Integrity*. At the forum, Carter stated, "We as a nation [the United States] are suffering from an integrity crisis that is going to damage our society and is going to damage our children." He noted that a lack of integrity goes far beyond politics, and it is pervasive in our society. He noted the high divorce rate in the United States and the fact that 75 percent of college students admit to cheating on tests. He told of watching a football game in which a player dropped the ball, but the referee thought the player had caught it. The player "jumped up and celebrated" just as if he had caught the ball, and a sports commentator praised him for a "heads-up play."

This story demonstrates the philosophy that winning is all important, regardless of the cost. Is there a danger that we, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, could fall into this trap as well? Carter says a person with true integrity "tries to seek what is right, even at personal cost."

It is hard to be authentic and honest with ourselves and others. Notice how David wrestled with this dilemma (1 Samuel 21). David's best friend Jonathan, son of King Saul, has just confirmed to him that the king is definitely consumed with a passion to kill him. So, running for his life, desperate for food and protection, he comes to the temple where Ahimelech is the priest. But as he approaches the temple, he remembers that Ahimelech is the brother of King Saul's chaplain. So David is not sure whether he should trust him or not. Here is an ethical dilemma.

It might be safer to make up a story as to why he has come. So he does. When asked why he has come to the temple, he says, "The king has sent me on a top secret mission. I cannot tell you about it, but I am rendezvousing with my men soon. I need some food and a good weapon." Is this authenticity? Is this integrity?

That seemingly harmless charade ends up having tragic and disastrous results, as do many of our attempts to solve our own problems. We will look at those results shortly.

Unfortunately, it only gets worse for David. After successfully pulling the wool over Ahimelech's eyes, David flees into Philistine territory to get as far away from King Saul as possible. He is now on the run.

He then tries to settle down anonymously in the land of Gath, to live incognito as a servant of the king of Gath, but he ends up being recognized as Israel's great war hero. He cannot figure out how the people know who he is, until he looks at his belt and notices that on his belt he is carrying Goliath's sword, the one he used to cut off the head of the great giant from Gath. Oops!

Suddenly the precariousness of his predicament overwhelms him. He is scared to death that the king of Gath will seek revenge and, if not kill him, at least turn him over to Saul. His life is doomed for sure! So he panics.

Does he come clean with the king? No. In a panic, he feigns insanity in the king's court. Surely the king will not want to retain an imbecile at his court, a crazy madman! He jumps around banging on the doors of the palace, spitting on everything, frothing at the mouth, with saliva streaming down his beard. Is this the next king of Israel—God's man for the hour? A pretty scary thought, is it not?

The king looks at this madman and thinks, "I have enough madmen in my kingdom already."

Why does David find it so hard to be honest in these two situations? The answer is found in a little word that packs a big gun: FEAR. Has fear ever gripped your heart and caused you to do things you would not do otherwise? We are often afraid of the truth and its consequences. We are afraid of what we might see when we look in the mirror. We are afraid of what others might think of us if they really knew us. We are afraid of what God might think of us. So what do we do? We put on a mask, we massage the image to maintain at least the appearance of having it all together, for the truth would be too dangerous.

If we choose not to live with authenticity and transparency, what then? Brennan Manning says, "The alternative to confronting the truth is always some form of self-destruction." There is always a high price to living a lie.

1 Samuel 22 describes the tragic results of David's lie to Ahimelech. Doeg, the Edomite, chief of Saul's shepherds, happens to be at the sanctuary that day fulfilling a vow to God. He overhears David's conversation with the priest and reports it to the king. In fury and rage, and from a sense of betrayal, Saul orders the execution of Ahimelech and the entire

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priestly family, including women, children, and animals. The priests' complete village of Nob is wiped out. Hundreds of needless deaths took place on that day.

Only one person escapes. Abiathar, son of Ahimelech, flees to David and tells him the whole story. When David hears the report, the truth strikes him like a spear in his heart. Notice David's response, "I am responsible for the death of your father's whole family" (1 Sam 22:22). He confesses as he finally sees the tragic results of living a lie. There is a high price to living a lie. It takes courage to live truthfully, does it not?

I will never forget Brennan Manning's experience described in his book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, when he was a patient at an alcoholic rehabilitation center. Twenty-five chemically dependent men met regularly for group sessions with a trained therapist named Sean Murphy-O'Connor.

One day, Sean directed a patient named Max to sit on the "hot seat" in the center of the U-shaped group of men. He was a small man, a nominal Christian, married with five children, owner and president of his company, wealthy, friendly, and gifted with remarkable poise.

Throughout the entire session, the group relentlessly shot questions at Max about how long he had been drinking, how much liquor he drank each day, where he hid his bottles, and what his drinking patterns were. They even called long distance over a speaker phone to Max's bartender back home, asking him about Max's drinking history.

But through it all, Max fudged, hedged, minimized, rationalized, and justified his drinking patterns, denying he had a problem. He was just a social drinker, he insisted.

The group refused to give up. One of them finally asked, "Have you ever been unkind to one of your kids?"

Max triumphantly went into a glowing discourse about his recent camping trip with his four boys, until the questioner interrupted him and said, "I did not ask you that. At least once in his life, every father has been unkind to one of his kids. I am sixty-two years old and I can vouch for it. Now give us one specific example."

A long pause ensued. Finally, "Well, I was a little thoughtless with my nine-year-old daughter last Christmas Eve."

"What happened?"

"I don't remember. I just get this heavy feeling whenever I think about it."

Unobtrusively, the therapist dialed Max's hometown and spoke with his wife.

"Sean Murphy-O'Connor calling, ma'am. We are in the middle of a group therapy session, and your husband just told us that he was unkind to your daughter last Christmas Eve. Can you give me the details, please?"

Her soft voice filled the room through the speaker phone. "Yes, I can tell you the whole thing. It seems like only yesterday. Our daughter Debbie wanted a pair of earth shoes for her Christmas present. On the afternoon of December 24, my husband drove her downtown, gave her \$60, and told her to buy the best pair of shoes she could find in the store. That is exactly what she did. She climbed back into the pickup truck, and as her father was driving, she gave him a big hug and told him he was the best daddy in the whole world. Max was preening himself like a peacock and decided to celebrate on the way home. He stopped at the Cork 'n' Bottle—that is a tavern a few minutes from our house—and told Debbie he would be right out. It was a clear and extremely cold day, about twelve degrees above zero, so Max left the motor running and locked both doors from the outside so no one could get in. It was a little after three in the afternoon and . . . "

[Silence] "Yes?"

The sound of heavy breathing crossed the recreation room. Her voice grew faint. She was crying. "My husband met some old army buddies in the tavern. Swept up in euphoria over the reunion, he lost track of time, purpose, and everything else. He came out of the tavern at midnight. He was drunk. The motor had stopped running, and the truck windows were frozen shut. Debbie was badly frostbitten on both ears and on her fingers. When we got her to the hospital, the doctors had to operate. They amputated the thumb and forefinger on her right hand. She will be deaf for the rest of her life."

By now, Max's calm demeanor was gone; he was visibly upset—he looked like he was having a heart attack. He suddenly jerked to his feet and, shaking like a leaf, he collapsed on his hands and knees, sobbing hysterically. His cool veneer had finally broken. His self-deception and dishonesty had been unmasked and was seen in all its absurdity.

In one final step, the therapist walked up to Max, turned him over on his back on the floor, and roared, "You unspeakable slime! There is the door on your right and the window on your left. Take whichever is fastest. Get out of here before I throw up. I am not running a rehab for liars!"

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As Brennan Manning commented, "In order to free the captive, you must first name the captivity." And that takes courage! That is authenticity. That is integrity.

Later that same day, Max pleaded for and obtained permission to continue treatment. As Manning observed him, Max proceeded to undergo the most striking personality change he had ever witnessed. He became honest and more open, sincere, vulnerable, and affectionate than any man in the group. He had gotten the courage to stop living a lie and become real, and the truth had set him free.

We live in an age of dishonesty, where looking good on the outside is more important than being good on the inside. Because so few have the courage to be real, we are seduced into living lives of dishonesty. At least we look good, we console ourselves! And we do a lot of image managing and massaging.

The saddest thing of all is that this kind of lifestyle is perpetuated by Christians in the Church. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German preacher who was arrested by Hitler and finally executed, wrote a little book about the significance of Christian community entitled, *Life Together*. He wrote in the book that, ironically, Christians are often the loneliest people of all because "the pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everyone must conceal his sin from himself and from his fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkable horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy."

It is tragic that Christians, of all groups of people, could live unauthentic lives. It seems to me that we have a God-given commission as leaders in the Church to be real, authentic, and honest with ourselves and with each other. We need to be willing to say to our people, "I am on the journey with you, struggling myself, please pray for me."

So what is it that brings relief to this costly, destructive lifestyle? What is the secret to developing the courage to be real, the courage to live life with honesty and integrity, no matter who is around or what is happening? The answer is twofold, as David discovered.

Number one. Relief comes from rigorous honesty with ourselves; that is, being open with ourselves and with God about the deepest secrets and problems in our hearts and souls. It comes when we stop denying that we are sinners in need of a Saviour.

Is it not interesting that whenever the gospel writers Mark, Luke, and John refer to their colleague Matthew, they always call him either Levi or Matthew? But when Matthew refers to himself, he says "Matthew the publican." It is as though he never wants to forget

who he was and how low Jesus stooped to pick him up. Grace means nothing unless we understand what it has redeemed.

The sad irony is that we build institutions around academic honesty, scientific integrity, even theological openness, but when it comes to personal, emotional, spiritual transparency and authenticity, we put our feet down and say this is going too far!

Seventh-day Adventism prides itself on being built upon truth. We have doctrinal purity, moral sensitivity, and theological acuity. So of all people in the world, we should value authenticity and honesty, real truth. Our lives, both personal and corporate, should give clear evidence of this value in how we deal with failure and inadequacy in ourselves and each other.

We are publicans and sinners, just like Matthew. And the first step toward relief and freedom, as Max and David discovered, comes when we acknowledge the truth of our fragile humanity—who we really are.

Unfortunately, sometimes we are more concerned with public relations. As I talk with people who have left the Church, I often hear them say that they are waiting for the Church to become real before they come back. But if we stopped there, all of us would give up in despair.

Number two. What makes that kind of honesty possible and what gives us the courage to really face ourselves? It is when we see God for who He really is, when we experience Him as a God of grace. After John, the son of thunder, experienced the grace of Jesus Christ, he became the “beloved disciple.” Like Matthew, we need to remember who we were, and like John, who we have become.

Gerald May, a Christian psychiatrist in Washington DC, writes, “Honesty before God requires the most fundamental risk of faith we can take: the risk [to believe] that God is good, that God does love us unconditionally. It is in taking this risk that we rediscover our dignity. To bring the truth of ourselves, just as we are, to God, just as He is, is the most dignified thing we can do.”

Honesty with ourselves comes from seeing God as He really is, a God of unconditional grace who forgives and accepts us. Apparently David learned this lesson. After his failure with priest Ahimelech and later King Achish of Gath, David wrote Psalm 34. Do you know what he says in that song?



Verse 5, "Those who look to him [the Lord] are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame." Why? Verse 8, "Taste and see that the LORD is good." Verse 10, "Those who seek the LORD lack no good thing." Verse 18, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (in other words, those who are honest with themselves). Verse 22, "No one will be condemned who takes refuge in Him."

Authenticity. When we acknowledge and accept the truth that we are sinners with deep-seated needs, but who have been saved and empowered by a gracious Saviour, we are set free to live authentically/transparently with ourselves, with each other, and with God. I want to enjoy this kind of freedom. Do you? This kind of freedom will draw people to us and to our Church.

During the middle of the Great Depression of the 1930's, a poverty-burdened, older woman approached the front desk of an insurance office in Minneapolis. She wanted to know if she could stop making payments on the yellowed policy clutched in her farm-weathered fingers. She had nothing left to live on. She desperately needed the little bit of extra money to survive.

The clerk gave the wrinkled, soiled papers a perfunctory glance, and then studied them with intense amazement. "This is quite valuable," he said. "I would not advise you to stop paying the premiums now, after all these years. Have you talked to your husband about this?"

"No," she said. "He has been dead for three years."

"What!" exclaimed the clerk. "But this is a policy on his life—a \$300,000 policy!"

The woman had been barely existing financially because she had not cashed in the policy. Many of us are like this woman, barely existing in life, shackled by our fears and failures, paying painfully on an old policy. We are existing without any peace or security when all along we could be enjoying the benefits of a policy that matured long ago with Jesus' death.

Would you like to live in peace and security all the time? Then why not cash in on that policy this morning? Let us acknowledge our need for the Saviour and then allow His grace to set us free to live authentically, transparently, and honestly.

That is what I want today. Would you like this for yourself this morning and for the life of your Church? Let us cash in that policy today.

A season of prayer by small groups followed.

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Philip S Follett called the fifth business session of the 1996 Annual Council to order.

PRE/96AC to RSF

## GLOBAL MISSION REPORTS

### Southern Asia Division

M E Cherian, President of the Southern Asia Division, reported as follows:

The Southern Asia Division is one of the major Global Mission challenges for the Church. The population of the division is close to 900,000,000 of which 75 percent are Hindu. Over the years it has been very difficult to convert individuals from the Hindu religion. The division has now established an Islamic Study Center and a Hindu Study Center.

The Hindu Study Center identified a four-village area in Tamil Nadu where there was no Christian presence. After several initial community service activities, an evangelistic program was planned. One village rejected efforts to hold a campaign. In another village, a tent was pitched between two Hindu temples. As a result of the campaign held there, 67 individuals were baptized, and we now have an established church. This is the work of Global Mission.

About 200 kilometers from Bombay is a very ancient city named Aurangabad. An evangelistic campaign held there resulted in 604 individuals being baptized, many of them former Hindus. This is the work of Global Mission.

In the south Indian state of Kerala, a laymember decided to teach a sewing class to young Muslim women between the ages of 18 to 27. As she began teaching the sewing class, she also taught the students biblical principles. As a result, 11 girls are currently attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church, although none of them has yet made a public decision to be baptized. Such a decision would result in severe penalties from the families. However, the ladies continue to read and study the Bible. One of these young women is leading out in the Sabbath School program of the local church. This is the work of Global Mission.

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The country of Bhutan, which shares a border with India, has been closed to Christianity for many years. In recent years, Seventh-day Adventist believers from India have been reaching out to individuals across the border. In the last three years, 27 Bhutanese have been baptized and each Sabbath they cross the border into India to worship with our believers. This is the work of Global Mission.

The Hindus and Muslims of India and the Bhutanese people are waiting for the gospel message. I believe that Global Mission is the answer to reaching these people. Please pray for us.

#### South Pacific Division

Bryan W Ball, President of the South Pacific Division, reported as follows:

Global Mission is a source of strength and vitality to the church in the South Pacific Division. We have seen many evidences of God's leading through Global Mission programs. We have approved 60 new direct action plans with a total funding of \$750,000. Since Global Mission began in our division, 345 projects have been approved with a total investment of more than four million dollars. However, Global Mission is about much more than money; it is about people.

I would like to share three examples of what Global Mission is doing in our division.

On Malaita, in the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific, the Kwaio people have resisted the gospel for many years. Through a series of wonderful and miraculous events, this area has now opened to the gospel. During the 1995 General Conference Session, I received a letter from one of our leaders on Malaita in which he informed us that a village chief had indicated that he wanted to lead his people not only into Christianity, but into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now there are 15 areas in the inhospitable mountains of Malaita where we have believers. We are sponsoring various projects in these areas, including health evangelism programs for these primitive people. Sixty individuals have been baptized and several Sabbath School Bible study groups have been organized.

In Australia one of our most exciting projects is the Academy of Life and Family Studies. The academy's main focus is to take the ministry and gospel of Jesus to the target areas of Australia, including the outback and other isolated areas, via programs made available through the worldwide web, computer and CD-ROM, video tapes, and printed materials. We believe this has tremendous potential to not only reach people in Australia, but around the world through two separate, attractive home pages on the Internet.

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Finally, in Papua New Guinea we have a strong, growing church. The church members in Dorumoku looked around and noted there were several unentered areas near them. Global Mission pioneers were sent to small, neighboring villages. Soon requests came to the church for information and materials. We have now entered nine new areas, and in those areas nine separate companies had 184 baptisms, with another 494 individuals attending Bible classes. The Dorumoku church has now targeted 13 new areas. This is the type of mission that Global Mission engenders.

In 1997 we plan to have a division-wide outreach program—the first of its kind in many years. The theme of the program is, “Reach Out With Hope, Sharing Jesus in Your Community.” Brochures have been sent to every one of our churches and pastors inviting them to join in this special outreach program. We believe this will strengthen the churches we have already established and enable us to start new churches.

Global Mission is alive and well in the South Pacific Division, and we believe God will continue to lead and direct.

#### Eastern Africa Division

L D Raelly, President of the Eastern Africa Division, reported as follows:

In the Eastern Africa Division, we are moving from penetration to saturation. We want to saturate every inch of our territory with the saving gospel of Christ. This requires total commitment and total evangelism by pastors, teachers, denominational administrators and employees, laymembers, men, women, and youth.

For example, several of our administrators are holding evangelistic campaigns. Pastor Machamire just concluded a campaign in Bulawayo resulting in 145 baptisms. One of our departmental directors, Pastor Lekolwane, conducted a campaign in Uganda. During the first two weeks of the campaign, the meetings were interrupted twice by those opposed to the church. However, at the end of the campaign there were 51 baptisms.

In Tanzania, Pastor Nyagori has been working in a difficult area where the Haya tribe has resisted the Adventist message for many years. His efforts have yielded 75 baptisms, including 25 Haya people.

Our laity is also actively involved in evangelism. In Uganda, between February and June of this year, the Uganda Women's Adventist Organization led 141 people to the Lord and to baptism into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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One conference in Zambia has 500 youth organizations, and these young people are holding campaigns right now. That is 500 campaigns going on simultaneously!

In Malawi, two laymen in Blantyre decided to conduct an unusual campaign. They went to a local hospital and received permission to hold a one-week campaign on one of the wards of the hospital. At the end of the week, the patients asked the men to continue the meetings for another week. Seven decisions were made for Christ at the end of the second week, and the hospital administrators have asked these laymen to hold a campaign on one of the other wards.

Our literature evangelists are also actively involved in Global Mission. One man sold a set of books to the leader of a Protestant church in Zambia. The leader read the books and then invited the literature evangelist to come and speak to his congregation. That congregation has now become a Seventh-day Adventist congregation.

Our goal in "Saturation 2000" is, by God's grace, to baptize at least 40,000 individuals every quarter. During the second quarter of this year, 44,769 were baptized. We are grateful to God, and to the world Church for your support, prayers, and the sharing of your workers. Recently a number of individuals from the North Pacific Union in the North American Division came to our division to assist in camp meetings and to hold evangelistic campaigns. Individuals have also come from the Trans-European and South Pacific Divisions. Thank you so much. Please continue to pray for us.

#### South American Division

Ruy H Nagel, President of the South American Division, reported as follows:

At the time of the 1995 General Conference Session there were in the South American Division 8,005 counties, and only about half of these had a Seventh-day Adventist presence. In the past year alone, we have entered 405 new counties or 10 percent of our total Global Mission goal of having a presence in each county in our division.

In Bolivia, we just received approval from the government to operate a new radio station which will start in January 1997 and will cover the entire country. This program is being sponsored by a faithful church member in Brazil.

Our radio station in Porto Alegre, Brazil, offered Bible study courses to its listeners. Our local church members began going house to house, encouraging people to sign up for these courses. More than 6,000 individuals are currently enrolled in the courses. Even though the courses have not yet been completed, 70 people have been baptized.

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In the state of Rio Branco in northern Brazil, a pastor with the financial support of a church member in South Brazil, held three evangelistic campaigns each day. Two of them were in the evenings from 7 to 8 p.m. and from 8 to 9 p.m. The third campaign was held from 5 to 6 a.m.! At the end of the meetings, the pastor baptized 700 individuals.

On February 24, 1940, Pastor Moises Nigri, who later went on to become a General Conference Vice President, was working in the northeast section of Brazil in the state of Paraiba. A group of approximately 300 people went to the local auditorium where Pastor Nigri was holding his meetings. They were carrying stones and sticks which they planned to use to kill him. A woman from the group walked up to the pulpit and began hitting Pastor Nigri. The others in the group also began to move toward the platform, but then a young man stepped forward from the group and said, "Nobody will touch or kill Pastor Moises unless he goes over my dead body." The group disbursed and Pastor Nigri continued with his meetings.

In March of this year, at the beginning of an Easter Week program held by the local church, a man named Severino Alves de Melo attended all of the meetings and seemed to enjoy them. When Pastor Daniel Asin made an appeal for those who wanted to dedicate themselves to the Lord, Severino stood up, made his way to the front of the meeting place, and gave the following testimony:

"For 56 years I have been running away from God. I traveled to many different places trying to hide from God. I am tired of running, and today I surrender myself to Christ. I want to be a member of this church. I am the young man who, 56 years ago, defended Pastor Moises Nigri when the multitude wanted to kill him." On June 20, 1996, Severino Alves de Melo was baptized in the Queimadas Seventh-day Adventist Church in the city of Campina Grande, and he is now a faithful member.

Praise God for what He is doing through Global Mission in the South American Division.

ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to RSF(DIV)

#### 150-96G SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH LOGO

During the past year, the General Conference Corporate Image Design Committee (ADCOM-A) was asked to devise a logo that could be used by the world Seventh-day Adventist Church. In the past there has not been a recognizable logo which identifies the Seventh-day Adventist Church and embodies its values and distinctiveness. An artist was

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selected, preliminary work was done, and feedback was requested from a variety of groups, including division communication directors.

Rajmund Dabrowski and T Lynn Caldwell, of the General Conference Communication Department, presented the proposed logo to the 1996 Annual Council. The logo incorporates an open Bible, a flame (which represents the three angels and the Holy Spirit), a cross, an inference of the world, and the name "Seventh-day Adventist Church." A graphics standard manual is being prepared which will give instructions as to how the logo is to be used, including its placement, the inclusion of departmental logos, and the colors to be used. The international graphics standard will illustrate at least 12 different languages used in the script. The intention is that the logo will be used worldwide, without changes to the color or general design. This will ensure uniformity, regularity, and intentionality in the use of the logo. During the presentation of the logo to the 1996 Annual Council, a five-minute video was shown giving more information; and a kit, including an interim graphics standard manual, was distributed to the committee members and guests.

The process of registering the logo as a trademark in the United States has already begun. It may be necessary to register the logo in each country where it is used in order for it to be protected.

In November 1996, the General Conference Communication Department will send to each division, union, and publishing house a CD-ROM with information on the logo and its proper use. Specific instructions will be included on how to use the script when a language other than English is used. Samples for typography will be included on the CD-ROM so that printers can readily access the proper script types for their printing needs. There will also be at least three samples indicating how the logo can be used on different sizes of letterhead. It was

VOTED, 1. To adopt the proposed logo as the corporate logo for the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. To adopt the interim graphics standard manual.

96AC to JP

#### HOME STUDY INTERNATIONAL/GRIGGS UNIVERSITY - REPORT

Joseph Gurubatham, President of Home Study International/Griggs University, reported as follows:

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Home Study International was founded in 1909 by the General Conference at the recommendation of Professor Frederick Griggs. Originally known as the Fireside Correspondence School, it was later renamed Home Study Institute and subsequently Home Study International. It is the third oldest correspondence school in the United States.

The 1986 Annual Council voted to encourage Home Study International to offer degree programs. This higher education division was named Griggs University in 1990. Programs in Religion, Theological Studies, and Personal Ministries were accredited in 1991.

Currently, Home Study International/Griggs University offers internationally accredited programs at the preschool, kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and university levels. Study materials are carefully structured for independent or group learning situations. The courses are transportable, translatable, adaptable, and flexible. With the advancement in technology, student-teacher and student-student interactions are possible via correspondence, fax, e-mail, and 24-hour voice mail, with the potential for live and instantaneous interaction.

The organization is accredited by several agencies and accrediting associations in the United States and overseas.

More than 2,600 new students are enrolled each year, with a total of 6,900 students enrolled currently. Home Study International has students from all 50 states and more than 50 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Mongolia. Recently a Jewish family and a Muslim family were in the headquarters office in Silver Spring at the same time registering their children in Home Study courses.

Griggs University, founded in 1990 and accredited in 1991, has a current enrollment of 480 degree students and 170 nondegree students. There have already been 48 graduates from this university "without walls."

By the beginning of 1997, Griggs University should be offering degree programs in Personal Ministries, Religion, Theological Studies, Business Administration, Religious Education, and General Studies.

Home Study International/Griggs University's courses are used by home schooling families; small churches providing a Seventh-day Adventist education for small groups of children; small schools who wish to augment their curriculum; prisoners; handicapped or terminally ill individuals; high schools and colleges/universities for make-up courses, remedial work, or to meet emergency situations; colleges/universities as educational partners in distance education; public schools in the United States; other Christian denominations; and the United States Department of Defense, as well as United States embassies around the world.



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Revised

The major need of this organization is for additional funds so that the costs of the courses can be lowered and made more affordable for Seventh-day Adventist families around the world.

PRE/ADCOM/96AC to RJK

JOHNSON, LARRY ROBERT—ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,  
PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT - ELECTION

VOTED, To elect Larry Robert Johnson as Associate Director of the Publishing Department.

SEC/IDERem&All/ADCOM/ChanShunIFB/GC&DivSec96AC/GC&DivTre96AC/  
GCDO96AC/96AC to LRC(DIV)

182-96G DEFERRED MEDICAL APPOINTEE ASSISTANCE PLAN -  
GUIDELINES

VOTED, To approve the program of assistance for deferred medical appointees as offered by the Loma Linda Chan Shun Scholarship Fund in harmony with the guidelines listed below:

Deferred Medical Appointee Assistance Plan - Guidelines

1. Divisions desiring the services of General Conference approved medical appointees, who upon completion of their residencies are not employable by a division/institution due to educational indebtedness, shall be given the opportunity to apply, along with the individual, for financial assistance from the Loma Linda Chan Shun Scholarship Fund.
2. The Loma Linda Chan Shun Scholarship Committee, upon receiving the application, will evaluate its merit and consider the request as funds are available for one physician per year and one dentist per year.
3. If the request for assistance is approved, the educational indebtedness shall be shared as follows:

General Conference will provide 50 percent  
Loma Linda Chan Shun Scholarship Fund will provide 40 percent  
Division/Institution will provide 10 percent

4. The maximum educational indebtedness, which is adjusted annually by the General Conference and Loma Linda University, shall be the basis for calculating this assistance. Amortization of the assistance shall be prorated over a period of six years from the time of entering interdivision service. If the appointee does not complete six years of continuous interdivision service, any unamortized amount shall be payable in cash.

5. This provision shall also be applicable in cases where dentists and physicians are needed in areas defined by Global Mission as unentered countries and territories.

6. Requests for assistance according to these guidelines shall be made to the Loma Linda Chan Shun Scholarship Committee by April 15 each year.

TRE/ADCOM/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to RLR

171-96G ADVENTIST RISK MANAGEMENT, INCORPORATED—  
RECLASSIFY AS AN INSTITUTION

VOTED, To reclassify Adventist Risk Management, Incorporated, as a General Conference institution, rather than as a service. This will include line authority for only those personnel budgets currently included in the Adventist Risk Management, Incorporated budget—that is, personnel located in Silver Spring, Maryland; Riverside, California; Atlanta, Georgia; Berrien Springs, Michigan; and St Albans, England. This action does not affect individuals working under a risk management job title who are employed by divisions, unions, conferences, or church institutions.

ARMBd/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to RLR(DIV)

185-96Ga ADVENTIST RISK MANAGEMENT, INCORPORATED -  
RESOLUTION

VOTED, To approve an Adventist Risk Management, Incorporated - Resolution, as follows:

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### **Adventist Risk Management, Incorporated - Resolution**

In keeping with the principles of biblical stewardship, the Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the importance of aggressive management in controlling the risk associated with property, liability, personnel, and income losses. Successful risk control must be a function/responsibility of the office of the president and the administrative leadership team of each organization.

The Church recognizes the importance of operating a risk financing instrument to pool and retain risk capital for the benefit of the General Conference, divisions, unions, local conferences/missions, and their respective institutions. The preservation of this risk financing instrument can only be successful when each organization's president and administrative leadership team fulfill their duty in the prevention of losses. This includes establishing specific policies and procedures to prevent losses before occurrence, implementing corrective actions when losses have occurred, and proactive education of church employees and lay leaders in safety and risk control practices.

**ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to RLR(DIV)**

### **185-96Gb RISK MANAGEMENT—DIVISION COVERAGES AND EXPOSURES - REPORT**

**VOTED,** To recommend that a report of the risk management coverages and exposures that currently exist in each of the divisions should be made at the time of the 1996 division yearend meetings. A more comprehensive report is to be made at the time of the division surveys in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

**TRE/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to RLR**

### **186-96G NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION WORKING CAPITAL - ADJUSTMENT**

**VOTED,** To transfer from the General Conference to the North American Division \$7,662,331.80 of working capital, to equalize the percentage of working capital between the General Conference and the North American Division, effective December 31, 1991. The General Conference will act to fully complete the transaction by the year 2000 through a process of reconciling accounts receivable and other annual financial transactions.

TRE/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to REL

205-96Ga GENERAL CONFERENCE REMUNERATION SCALE—  
RATE CHANGE

VOTED, 1. To approve changes to the General Conference Remuneration Scale, as follows:

Percentage  
Min   Max

<u>135</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>Senior Staff Auditor</u>
<u>110</u>	<u>130</u>	<del>Assistant Staff Auditor</del>
<u>125</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>Assistant Staff Auditor</u>
<u>138</u>	<u>158</u>	<del>Adventist Review Associate Editor</del>
<u>140</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>Adventist Review Associate Editor</u>

2. To set the rate for ADRA Country Directors who serve the territory of a union so that it is equivalent to that of a union departmental director; and to set the rate for ADRA Country Directors who serve the territory of a field/conference/mission so that it is equivalent to that of a field/conference/mission departmental director.

TRE/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to REL(DIV)

205-96Gb OVERSEAS DIVISIONS REMUNERATION SCALE—  
RATE CHANGE

VOTED, 1. To approve changes to the Overseas Divisions Remuneration Scale, as follows:

Percentage  
Min   Max

<u>85</u>	<u>105</u>	<u>Senior Staff Auditor</u>
<u>60</u>	<u>80</u>	<del>Assistant Staff Auditor</del>
<u>75</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>Assistant Staff Auditor</u>

2. To set the rate for ADRA Country Directors who serve the territory of a union so that it is equivalent to that of a union departmental director; and to set the rate for ADRA

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Country Directors who serve the territory of a field/conference/mission so that it is equivalent to that of a field/conference/mission departmental director.

SEC/GCDOUP94SM/94SM/SEC/ADCOM/GCDOUP94AC/94AC/102-94Gc/SEC/ADCOM/  
GCDOUP95SM/95SM/SEC/ADCOM/GCDO95AC/95AC/102-95Gb/ADCOM/ADCOM/  
GCDO96SM/96SM/GCC/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to HWB(DIV)

102-96Ga AUTHORIZED MEETINGS 1996

VOTED, To approve the updated list of Authorized Meetings 1996, with the understanding that attendance at these meetings must also be approved by the administration of each entity, as follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>October 1996</u>			
1(eve)-10	Tue	Annual Council	San Jose COSTA RICA
11-15	Fri	Biblical Research Institute Sc Council	Lincoln NE
14-Nov 2	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Berrien Springs MI
20-22	Sun	Christian View of Human Life Committee	Silver Spring MD
23	Wed	R&H Board	Hagerstown MD
25(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
27(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
28	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
29	Tues	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
30	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
31	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
<u>November 1996</u>			
3(eve)-7	Sun	NAD Yearend Meeting	Silver Spring MD
10,11	Sun	Oakwood College Board	Huntsville AL
13	Wed	Andrews Univ Executive Committee	Berrien Springs MI
19-21	Tue	Special BRICOM	New Orleans LA
<u>December 1996</u>			
4	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Tucson AZ
11	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
12	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
16,17	Mon	Communication Strategy Council	Loma Linda CA

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>December 1996</u> contd			
19(am)	Thu	R&H Finance Committee	Silver Spring MD
19(pm)	Thu	R&H Executive Committee	Silver Spring MD

SEC/ADCOM/GCDOUP95SM/95SM/SEC/ADCOM/GCDO95AC/95AC/102-95Gc/ADCOM/  
GCDO96SM/96SM/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to HWB(DIV)

102-96Gb AUTHORIZED MEETINGS 1997

VOTED, To approve the updated list of Authorized Meetings 1997, with the understanding that attendance at these meetings must also be approved by the administration of each entity, as follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>January 1997</u>			
8	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
8-13	Wed	Focus Issues Taskforces—Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
9	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
<u>February 1997</u>			
5	Wed	Geoscience Research Institute Board	Loma Linda CA
7(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
9(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
10	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
11	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
11-14	Tue	Biblical Research Institute Committee	Loma Linda CA
12	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
13	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
20	Thu	Inst of World Mission Admin Council	Berrien Springs MI
21	Fri	Andrews Univ Building/Finance Committee	Berrien Springs MI
23	Sun	Andrews University Board Committees	Berrien Springs MI
24	Mon	Andrews University Board	Berrien Springs MI
26	Wed	Christian Record Services Inc Board	Lincoln NE
28-Mar 4	Fri	PPPA & R&H ABC Marketing Seminar	West Coast
<u>March 1997</u>			
5	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Silver Spring MD

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>March 1997</u> contd			
10-15	Mon	GC Colloquium & Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
10-29	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Loma Linda CA
17	Mon	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
18	Tue	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
18	Tue	"Total Commitment" Process Taskforce	Loma Linda CA
19-21	Wed	International Educational Summit	Loma Linda CA
23,24	Sun	GC & Division Officer Interviews	Loma Linda CA
23-25	Sun	Christian View of Human Life Committee	Loma Linda CA
25	Tue	GC & Division Presidents	Loma Linda CA
26	Wed	ADRA Board	Loma Linda CA
27(am)	Thu	Message & Mission Commission	Loma Linda CA
27(pm)-28	Thu	GC & Division Officers	Loma Linda CA
30	Sun	LLU Constituency	Loma Linda CA
31(am)	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
31(pm)	Mon	Strategic Planning & Budgeting Committee	Loma Linda CA
<u>April 1997</u>			
1,2(am)	Tue	Spring Meeting	Loma Linda CA
2(pm)	Wed	Andrews University Board	Loma Linda CA
7-10	Mon	GC & NAD Secretaries' Council	Virginia Beach VA
8	Tue	PPPA Board	Nampa ID
10-15	Thu	GC&NAD Treasurers' Council	Corpus Christi TX
16	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
17	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
20(pm)	Sun	R&H Finance Committee	Hagerstown MD
21(am)	Mon	R&H Board	Hagerstown MD
21,22	Mon	Oakwood College Board	Huntsville AL
30-May 2	Wed	Biblical Research Institute Committee	Berrien Springs MI
<u>May 1997</u>			
9(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
11(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
12	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
13	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
14	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
15	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
28	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Silver Spring MD

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>June 1997</u>			
11	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
11(pm)	Wed	GC Staff Day	Gaithersburg MD
11-July 12	Wed	Institute of World Mission	Berrien Springs MI
12(am)	Thu	R&H Finance Committee	Silver Spring MD
12(pm)	Thu	R&H Executive Committee	Silver Spring MD
12	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
15-27	Sun	Faith & Learning Seminar	
17-Jul 31	Tue	AWR Training	Bracknell ENGLAND
23-26	Mon	IRLA World Congress	Rio de Janeiro BRAZIL
26-28	Thu	GC PARL World Advisory	Rio de Janeiro BRAZIL
28	Sat	Festival of Religious Liberty	Rio de Janeiro BRAZIL
<u>July 1997</u>			
8,9	Tue	IHFA Executive Board	London ENGLAND
14	Mon	Assoc of Adv Family Life Prof Board	Berrien Springs MI
18	Fri	Andrews University Finance Committee	Berrien Springs MI
20(am)	Sun	Andrews University Seminary Subcommittee	Berrien Springs MI
20	Sun	Andrews University Subcommittees	Berrien Springs MI
21	Mon	Andrews University Board	Berrien Springs MI
21-25	Mon	Div Communication Dept Dir Training	Bracknell ENGLAND
24	Thu	Christian Record Services Inc Board	Lincoln NE
28,29	Mon	Communication Strategy Council	Bracknell ENGLAND
<u>August 1997</u>			
4-6	Mon	GC Staff Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
4-23	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Collonges FRANCE
8-12	Fri	Biblical Research Institute Sc Council	
15(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
17(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
18	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
18-29	Mon	Biblical Studies Seminar	ISRAEL & EGYPT
19	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
20	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
21	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
21	Thu	PPPA Board	Nampa ID
27,28	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Burlington VT



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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>September 1997</u>			
2-12	Tue	GC Staff Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
8(pm)	Mon	R&H Finance Committee	Hagerstown MD
9(am)	Tue	R&H Board	Hagerstown MD
15-17	Mon	Adventist Risk Management Conference	Cincinnati OH
17(am)	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
17-21	Wed	ICPA International Congress	Stavanger NORWAY
18(am)	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
18	Thu	Human Resources Workshop	Cincinnati OH
19,21	Fri	GC & Division Officer Interviews	Silver Spring MD
22	Mon	GC & Division Presidents Council	Silver Spring MD
22	Mon	GC & Division Secretaries Council	Silver Spring MD
22	Mon	GC & Division Treasurers Council	Silver Spring MD
23	Tue	Investment Managers Meeting	Silver Spring MD
23,24(am)	Tue	Message and Mission Commission	Silver Spring MD
24(pm)	Tue	AWR Board	Silver Spring MD
25,26	Thu	GC & Division Officers	Silver Spring MD
28	Sun	Strategic Planning & Budgeting Committee	Silver Spring MD
29	Mon	GC Institution Interviews	Silver Spring MD
30	Tue	ADRA Board	Silver Spring MD
30(eve)-Oct 9	Tue	Annual Council	Silver Spring MD
<u>October 1997</u>			
1(eve)	Wed	Home Study International Board	Silver Spring MD
13(eve)-16	Mon	NAD Yearend Meeting	Silver Spring MD
13-Nov 1	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Berrien Springs MI
19,20	Sun	Oakwood College Board	Huntsville AL
19-21	Sun	Christian View of Human Life Committee	Silver Spring MD
24	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
26	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
27	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
27-30	Mon	World Commission on Human Sexuality	Silver Spring MD
28	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
29	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
30	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
<u>November 1997</u>			
19	Wed	Andrews University Executive Committee	Berrien Springs MI

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>December 1997</u>			
3	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Silver Spring MD
10	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
11(am)	Thu	R&H Finance Committee	Silver Spring MD
11(pm)	Thu	R&H Executive Committee	Silver Spring MD
11	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA

SEC/ADCOM/GCDO96SM/96SM/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to HWB(DIV)

102-96Gc AUTHORIZED MEETINGS 1998

VOTED, To adopt Authorized Meetings 1998 with the understanding that attendance at these meetings must also be approved by the administration of each entity, as follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>January 1998</u>			
7	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
8	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
<u>February 1998</u>			
4	Wed	Geoscience Research Institute Board	Loma Linda CA
6	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
8(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
9	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
10(pm)	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
10-13	Tue	Biblical Research Institute Committee	Loma Linda CA
11	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
12	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
19	Thu	Inst of World Mission Admin Council	Berrien Springs MI
20	Fri	Andrews Univ Building/Finance Committee	Berrien Springs MI
23	Mon	Andrews University Board	Berrien Springs MI
25	Wed	Christian Record Services Inc Board	Lincoln NE
27-Mar 3	Fri	PPPA & R&H ABC Marketing Seminar	_____
<u>March 1998</u>			
4	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Silver Spring MD

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>March 1998 contd</u>			
9-14	Mon	GC Colloquium & Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
9-28	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Loma Linda CA
18	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
19	Thu	PPPA Board	Nampa ID
19	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
19	Thu	Message & Mission Commission	Silver Spring MD
20	Fri	ADRA Board	Silver Spring MD
22-24	Sun	Christian View of Human Life Committee	Loma Linda CA
25,26	Wed	GC Officers & Div Presidents Interviews	Silver Spring MD
27	Fri	GC & Division Presidents	Silver Spring MD
29	Sun	Strategic Planning & Budgeting Committee	Silver Spring MD
30	Mon	GC & Division Officers	Silver Spring MD
31	Tue	AWR Board	Silver Spring MD
<u>April 1998</u>			
1,2	Wed	Spring Meeting	Silver Spring MD
15	Wed	Andrews University Executive Committee	Berrien Springs MI
15	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
16	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
20(pm)	Mon	R&H Finance Committee	Hagerstown MD
21(am)	Tue	R&H Board	Hagerstown MD
29-May 1	Wed	Biblical Research Institute Committee	Berrien Springs MI
<u>May 1998</u>			
4,5	Mon	Oakwood College Board	Huntsville AL
8(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
10	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
11	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
12(pm)	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
13	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
14	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
27	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Silver Spring MD
<u>June 1998</u>			
10(am)	Wed	R&H Finance Committee	Silver Spring MD
10(pm)	Wed	R&H Executive Committee	Silver Spring MD
10	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>June 1998 - contd</u>			
10(pm)	Wed	GC Staff Day	Gaithersburg MD
10-July 9	Wed	Institute of World Mission	Berrien Springs MI
11	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
14-26	Sun	Faith & Learning Seminar	
<u>July 1998</u>			
13	Mon	Assoc of Adv Family Life Prof Board	Berrien Springs MI
16(eve)-18	Thu	Andrews University Board Retreat	
19(am)	Sun	Andrews University Finance Committee	Berrien Springs MI
19(pm)	Sun	Andrews University Seminary Subcommittee	Berrien Springs MI
19	Sun	Andrews University Subcommittees	Berrien Springs MI
20	Mon	Andrews University Board	Berrien Springs MI
23	Thu	Christian Record Services Inc Board	Lincoln NE
<u>August 1998</u>			
3-7	Mon	GC Staff Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
3-22	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Bracknell ENGLAND
7-11	Fri	Biblical Research Institute Sc Council	
14(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
16(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
17	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
18	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
19	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
20	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
20	Thu	PPPA Board	Nampa ID
26,27	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Burlington VT
<u>September 1998</u>			
8-18	Tue	GC Staff Travel Moratorium	Silver Spring MD
14-16	Mon	Adventist Risk Management Conference	
14(pm)	Mon	R&H Finance Committee	Hagerstown MD
15(am)	Tue	R&H Board	Hagerstown MD
16(am)	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
17(am)	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
17	Thu	Human Resources Workshop	
18,20	Fri	GC & Division Officer Interviews	
21	Mon	GC & Division Presidents Council	

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<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<u>September 1998</u> contd			
21	Mon	GC & Division Secretaries Council	_____
21	Mon	GC & Division Treasurers Council	_____
22,23(am)	Tue	Message & Mission Commission	_____
23(pm)	Wed	AWR Board	_____
24,25	Thu	GC & Division Officers	_____
27	Sun	Strategic Planning & Budgeting Committee	_____
28	Mon	GC Institution Interviews	_____
29	Tue	ADRA Board	_____
29(eve)-Oct 8	Tue	Annual Council	_____
30(eve)	Wed	Home Study International Board	_____
<u>October 1998</u>			
9(am)	Fri	LLU Budget & Finance Committee	Loma Linda CA
11(pm)	Sun	LLU Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
12	Mon	LLU Board	Loma Linda CA
12-31	Mon	Institute of World Mission	Berrien Springs MI
13(pm)	Tue	LLUMC & AHS/LL Board Committees	Loma Linda CA
14	Wed	LLUMC Board	Loma Linda CA
15	Thu	AHS/LL Board	Loma Linda CA
18,19	Sun	Oakwood College Board	Huntsville AL
18-20	Sun	Christian View of Human Life Committee	Silver Spring MD
<u>November 1998</u>			
1(eve)-5	Sun	NAD Yearend Meeting	Silver Spring MD
18	Wed	Andrews University Executive Committee	Berrien Springs MI
<u>December 1998</u>			
2	Wed	Adventist Risk Management Board	Silver Spring MD
9	Wed	AHS/LL Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
10	Thu	LLU Executive Committee	Loma Linda CA
10(am)	Thu	R&H Finance Committee	Silver Spring MD
10(pm)	Thu	R&H Executive Committee	Silver Spring MD

SS&PM/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to MAB(DIV)

141-96Gb PERSONAL MINISTRIES PROGRAM—PRESENTATION  
IN LOCAL CHURCH

VOTED, To request all divisions to encourage local churches to include, in their Sabbath School program or in the Sabbath worship service, a ten-minute Personal Ministries program during which outreach ministries, testimonies, and affirmation of the gospel commission may be presented to the entire church. Each division should provide ideas/programs to ensure the continuation of the ten-minute program.

SS&PM/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to MAB(DIV)

141-96Gc LAY CONGRESSES IN EACH DIVISION

VOTED, To encourage each division to plan lay congresses at various levels during the quinquennium at which lay members with outstanding success in soul winning will be affirmed and given opportunity to share their experiences.

FM/PRE/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to MAB(DIV)

179-96G STATEMENT ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

VOTED, To approve the Statement on Family Violence, as follows:

Statement on Family Violence

Family violence involves an assault of any kind—verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or active or passive neglect—that is committed by one person or persons against another within a family, whether they are married, related, living together or apart, or divorced. Current international research indicates that family violence is a global problem. It occurs between individuals of all ages and nationalities, at all socioeconomic levels, and in families from all types of religious and non-religious backgrounds. The overall rate of incidence has been found to be similar for urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Family violence manifests itself in a number of ways. For example, it may be a physical attack on one's spouse. Emotional assaults such as verbal threats, episodes of rage, deprecation of character, and unrealistic demands for perfection are also abuse. It may take

the form of physical coercion and violence within the marital sexual relationship, or the threat of violence through the use of intimidating verbal or nonverbal behavior. It includes behavior such as incest and the mistreatment or neglect of underage children by a parent or another guardian that results in injury or harm. Violence against the elderly may be seen in physical, psychological, sexual, verbal, material, and medical abuse or neglect.

The Bible clearly indicates that the distinguishing mark of Christian believers is the quality of their human relationships in the church and in the family. It is in the spirit of Christ to love and accept, to seek to affirm and build others up, rather than to abuse or tear one another down. There is no room among Christ's followers for tyrannical control and the abuse of power or authority. Motivated by their love for Christ, His disciples are called to show respect and concern for the welfare of others, to accept males and females as equals, and to acknowledge that every person has a right to respect and dignity. Failure to relate to others in this way violates their personhood and devalues human beings created and redeemed by God.

The apostle Paul refers to the Church as "the household of faith" which functions as an extended family, offering acceptance, understanding, and comfort to all, especially to those who are hurting or disadvantaged. Scripture portrays the Church as a family in which personal and spiritual growth can occur as feelings of betrayal, rejection, and grief give way to feelings of forgiveness, trust, and wholeness. The Bible also speaks of the Christian's personal responsibility to protect his or her body temple from desecration because it is the dwelling place of God.

Regrettably, family violence occurs in many Christian homes. It can never be condoned. It severely affects the lives of all involved and often results in long-term distorted perceptions of God, self, and others.

It is our belief that the Church has a responsibility—

1. To care for those involved in family violence and to respond to their needs by:
  - a. Listening to and accepting those suffering from abuse, loving and affirming them as persons of value and worth.
  - b. Highlighting the injustices of abuse and speaking out in defense of victims both within the community of faith and in society.

c. Providing a caring, supportive ministry to families affected by violence and abuse, seeking to enable both victims and perpetrators to access counseling by Seventh-day Adventist professionals where available, or other professional resources in the community.

d. Encouraging the training and placement of licensed Seventh-day Adventist professional services for both church members and the surrounding communities.

e. Offering a ministry of reconciliation when the perpetrator's repentance makes possible the contemplation of forgiveness and restoration in relationships. Repentance always includes acceptance of full responsibility for the wrongs committed, willingness to make restitution in every way possible, and changes in behavior to eliminate the abuse.

f. Focusing the light of the gospel on the nature of husband-wife, parent-child, and other close relationships, and empowering individuals and families to grow toward God's ideals in their lives together.

g. Guarding against the ostracism of either victims or perpetrators within the family or church community, while firmly holding perpetrators responsible for their actions.

2. To strengthen family life by:

a. Providing family life education which is grace-oriented and includes a biblical understanding of the mutuality, equality, and respect indispensable to Christian relationships.

b. Increasing understanding of the factors that contribute to family violence.

c. Developing ways to prevent abuse and violence and the recurring cycle often observed within families and across generations.

d. Rectifying commonly held religious and cultural beliefs which may be used to justify or cover up family violence. For example, while parents are instructed by God to redemptively correct their children, this responsibility does not give license for the use of harsh, punitive disciplinary measures.

3. To accept our moral responsibility to be alert and responsive to abuse within the families of our congregations and our communities, and to declare that such abusive behavior is a violation of Seventh-day Adventist Christian standards. Any indications or reports of



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abuse must not be minimized but seriously considered. For church members to remain indifferent and unresponsive is to condone, perpetuate, and possibly extend family violence.

If we are to live as children of the light, we must illuminate the darkness where family violence occurs in our midst. We must care for one another, even when it would be easier to remain uninvolved.

(The above statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Ex 20:12; Matt 7:12; 20:25-28; Mark 9:33-45; John 13:34; Rom 12:10, 13; 1 Cor 6:19; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:2, 3, 21-27; 6:1-4; Col 3:12-14; 1 Thess 5:11; 1 Tim 5:5-8.)

Adjourned.

Philip S Follett, Chairman  
Lowell C Cooper, Secretary  
D Ronald Watts, Editorial Secretary  
Rowena J Moore, Recording Secretary

ANNUAL COUNCIL  
GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

October 7, 1996, 2:30 p.m.

Sven H Jensen, President of the Middle East Union, opened the business session with prayer.

Jan Paulsen called the sixth business session of the 1996 Annual Council to order.

PRE/ADCOM/96AC to LR

AIDS STUDY COMMISSION (ADCOM-S) - REPORT

Leo Ranzolin and Albert S Whiting introduced the four speakers who would give AIDS presentations. The speakers were Harvey Elder, Mekebeb Negerie, Gary Hopkins, and Eunice Diaz. (The written report provided by Harvey Elder is filed with the official copy of the minutes.)

H&T/ADCOM/GCDO96AC/96AC to LR(DIV)

201-96G THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AND THE  
AIDS EPIDEMIC - GUIDELINES

VOTED, To approve The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the AIDS Epidemic - Guidelines, as follows:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the AIDS Epidemic - Guidelines

Rationale

The global epidemic of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) profoundly impacts the worldwide gospel mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church leaders are called to respond through initiatives in education, prevention, and community service, and through personal acts of kindness to persons and families involved in the crisis. AIDS is no respecter of national boundaries, church membership, gender, marital status, education, income, or position in life. In many countries of the world, it is decimating the population, taking the lives of many individuals, including Seventh-day Adventist Church members. All persons, especially young people growing up in an era of moral laxity, need to be taught

biblical principles regarding sexuality and God's design that sexual intimacy be experienced within the protection of the marriage covenant. Leadership should provide credible information to members—presented in their own language and sensitive to their own culture. The Church is called to be both a prophetic and a compassionate voice—the mouthpiece and hands of God as it extends the ministry of Christ into the community.

The global mission of the Church, in reaching out to all races and peoples, draws into church fellowship many who are infected by the AIDS virus prior to joining the church or who are affected by having family members with AIDS. The epidemic is of such magnitude that no family will ultimately remain untouched. Many are infected through no action of their own. A judgmental attitude is always inappropriate, especially since the source of the infection cannot be determined with certainty. Many have experienced shame, fear, and agony as family members suffered and died with AIDS, often feeling compelled to secrecy regarding their painful situation. Just as Christ came to offer healing to a suffering world, so Seventh-day Adventists are commissioned to compassionately care for those who suffer and are affected with the virus of AIDS. Members can safely serve as care givers, at home or in health care facilities, if they are educated in appropriate ways of doing so.

#### Recommendations

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes its Christian responsibility to respond to the global AIDS crisis and the devastating effect on humanity and wishes to respond in multiple ways which include:

1. Extending the teaching and healing ministry of Christ, who without prejudice cared for all in need, by engaging in efforts to reduce the risk of individuals acquiring AIDS, and compassionately and nonjudgmentally caring for all those affected when an individual suffers from AIDS.
2. Designating a person in each division, along with such personnel and financial resources as may be secured, to respond to AIDS challenges through appropriate initiatives and cooperative efforts with other entities in the community or country at large.
3. Developing and managing AIDS education programs using the resource *HIV/AIDS Guide* when applicable.<sup>1</sup> Programs should be contextualized for relevant cultural and linguistic needs and directed to:

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<sup>1</sup>Provided by the Health and Temperance Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in cooperation with the General Conference AIDS Study Commission members.

a. Pastors: Continuing education and ministerial meetings should be designed to equip pastors to deal with members touched by the AIDS crisis. Pastors need information on prevention, compassionate ministry, and applied ecclesiastical functions such as conducting a funeral service for a person whose death was the result of being infected with AIDS.

b. Teachers: Continuing education and in-service training should be offered with emphasis on conveying spiritual values and developing skills among youth for coping with sexual pressures.

c. Parents: Encouragement needs to be given to model a lifestyle that upholds Christian values, recognizing that poor marriage relations and any use of alcohol or other abusive substances has a direct negative effect on their children's sexual values and practices.

d. Church members: Sermons, Sabbath School Bible Study Guides, premarital counseling and marriage-strengthening activities, seminars regarding AIDS, and educational curricula are avenues for providing information regarding sexuality in general and AIDS in particular.

e. Communities: The Church needs to recognize the opportunity for Christian witness and ministry in the community at large, providing appropriate community outreach, and participating in cooperative endeavors.

4. Protecting and strengthening marriage by:

a. Upholding the ideal of abstinence from premarital sex.

b. Advocating premarital HIV testing for both potential partners as part of the church-based preparation for marriage.

c. Elevating God's ideal for fidelity in marriage.

d. Recommending protective measures against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

5. Intentionally transmitting Christian values to the next generation, recognizing that individual sexual values are established in youth. Priority should be given to providing accurate information, a forum for open discussion, and emphasis on the moral dimension of decision making regarding sexuality.

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Adjourned.

Jan Paulsen, Chairman

D Ronald Watts, Secretary

Mario Veloso, Editorial Secretary

Carol E Rasmussen, Recording Secretary

The Seventh-day Adventist Church:  
A "Community of Healing" in an Infected World

by Harvey Elder, MD

To be filed with  
the 10-7-96pm  
Annual Council  
minutes.

1. The Heart of God.

I know what it is to "long for." To truly miss someone, a dearly loved person who decided to separate, to distance emotionally and socially. You and I know the pain and hurt, the deep heart suffering. As a male, my initial response is anger. I want to fight to get my loved one back. How inappropriate! I realized that anger was hiding my sadness; I was not angry, rather I was sad. My sadness could see the hurt of my beloved. I wanted to reach out. I became willing to do anything, to pay any price. Yes, I would gladly have given life itself if only the relationship could be restored. I know longing.

I experienced an infinitesimal speck from the infinite heart of God. He longs for His creation. The separation of His loved ones brings terrible suffering to His heart. "Jesus did not consider Heaven a place to be desired while we were lost," (MH 105) as long as the ones He loves had no opportunity to return to Him. So God gave Himself. The incarnation and Calvary tell us that God gladly gave everything, including His divinity and His life, so that we could choose life with Him! The Lord says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."—Jeremiah 31:3. He draws with cords of love all of His children, each one, no exceptions.

2. Our Mandate.

Seventh-day Adventists take the "Three Angels' Messages" very seriously. "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.'—Revelation 14:6-7. We believe that God raised up our Church for this work. We accepted God's call. We take the gospel of God's passionate love to every people. Every people? What about the street people, injection drug users, prostitutes and their pimps, and gay sexual activists? Does God expect us to take the message of His loving kindness to "them?"

And note, we are to speak in every language—every language? What about street language, the language of the poor, or of gang members? What of slang from inner cities? The first angel's message says that God wants the message of His love to enter every hiding place shielding the hurt and suffering, and there the message is to be told using words that will be understood.

### 3. Our Problem.

We are affronted by the audacity of these questions and the proposed answers. These are not "our people." They are "not our people." With us, God has much the same problem He had with the early Christian church. They believed that God saved only their "type of people" and would not save others. To correct the erroneous thinking, God gave Peter a vision. "He [Peter] saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' 'Surely not, Lord!' Peter replied. 'I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.'" The voice spoke to him a second time, "**Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.**"—Acts 10:9-15. We see *images of clean and unclean sinners*, and we are the clean ones! We identify acceptable and unacceptable sins, and we only commit the acceptable ones and that quite infrequently. But "them," those we see as outside of God's saving power, they are unclean sinners who commit unacceptable sins! My words shame me, I want to deny the arrogance but I must confess my sin. Often we say with contempt, "I wouldn't do that!" Arrogantly we claim to be better than unclean sinners who commit such sins! God's word to Peter comes to us, "Do not label as unworthy anyone for whom Christ died." Christ came to "seek and save what was lost."—Luke 19:10. God excludes no one. His heart longs for those we label "unworthy" as much as He longs for us.

I grew up in a Bible-based Seventh-day Adventist home. I loved the stories but disliked the Pharisees, they were so very pharisaic! Because of God's mercy, I never did the "fool's hill" routine. After I gave my heart to Jesus as Lord and Savior and invited Him to take the throne of my life, I lacked a passionate response to Calvary. This troubled me greatly. I saw people who were moved to tears by what God did on Calvary. I envied them. I read the gospels through, hoping this would fill my lack. It didn't. I reread them a few years ago contemplatively. God stopped me with the story of Simon recorded in Luke 7:36-50. He, a member of high society, invited a popular but distinctly low society personage to his home for dinner. Uninvited, a woman of ill repute entered Simon's home, washed Jesus' feet, and anointed them with expensive perfume. Jesus confronted Simon with a parable about a man with two debtors. One owed 500 denari the other owed 50 denari. After stating that the lender forgave both debtors Christ asked, "Who will love him the most?" Simon hedges with "I *suppose* the one who was forgiven the most." After a few statements Jesus comments on the woman's great love and complete forgiveness adding, "He who has been forgiven little loves little." God convicted me. I knew why I had so little appreciation of Calvary. I loved little for I thought I had been forgiven little. I believed myself to be a very "decent sort of chap," never doing anything very bad. I was arrogant enough to believe that God had an easy time saving me (I acknowledge my sin of arrogance). I had been forgiven only a little. How could I love much? Now I knew why I despised the Pharisees. I was an unrepentant one!

God caused me to review my life by His standard, the ten commandments. As I looked at each commandment and the way Scripture defines obedience, I was guilty of all ten. I fell

## The Seventh-day Adventist Church: A "Community of Healing" in an Infected World - 3

on my face, confessed my pride and arrogance, asked for and received His forgiveness. If God can forgive an arrogant Pharisee such as I, and He has, then He longs to forgive every sinner, regardless of their sins. He longs to save and is capable of saving everyone.

### 4. HIV and AIDS cause some problems to emerge.

#### a. Transmission.

Most HIV (80%) is transmitted by sex, both gay and straight sex. In all probability, heterosexual sex transmitted the first cases of HIV infection. Later, in some parts of the world, gay sex became a major mode of transmission. Today, in almost every area of the world, gay sex is receding as straight sex becomes a major mode of transmission. Blood also transmits HIV. The mechanism can be via blood transfusion or injection drug use. Which dominates depends upon locale. In a few countries, injection drug use is more common; while in most countries, blood transfusions are the commonest mode for blood transmitted HIV infections. Worldwide, blood transfusions account for 5-7% of HIV infections. Vertical transmission from mother to infant explains 7-10% of HIV infections. In most of the world, baby infection rates parallel the frequency of infected women and reflect the rates of heterosexual transmission.

#### b. Number of HIV infected people.

In the absence of accurate counts, we have reasonable estimates of the number of HIV infections. In July 1996, epidemiologists estimated that 21,000,000 people were infected with HIV. Most (14,000,000) lived in sub-Saharan Africa, 4,000,000 lived in southeast Asia, 1,000,000 in North America, 1,000,000 in South America, and 750,000 in the Caribbean Islands. The HIV epidemic is spreading most rapidly in southeast Asia. At present rates of spread, within the first few years of the 21st century, there will be more HIV infected people living in southeast Asia than in all of sub-Saharan Africa. The epidemic continues rapid growth in sub-Saharan Africa, in the Americas, and in the Philippine Islands.

#### c. Who is infected?

It is impossible to judge behavior from knowledge that a person has HIV infection. The person may be straight or gay, an injection drug user or clean (without drugs), man or woman, rich or poor, educated or uneducated. The person may be of any race or from any country. Once infected, the infection matters, not the method of transmission.

The HIV epidemic affects the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Evangelism proclaims the love of God; and people living dissolute lives surrender to Him, are baptized, and join the Church. In geographic areas where Adventism is rapidly advancing, HIV is spreading the most rapidly. Every year we baptize thousands of HIV infected people who do not know they



are infected. In addition, many youth from good Adventist homes make poor decisions by adopting high risk behaviors and acquire HIV infection.

During the first 5-12 years of HIV infection, an infected person feels perfectly healthy and capably performs highly competitive athletic and educational accomplishments. Some students at Seventh-day Adventist colleges arrive with HIV infections. Some are new converts whose lives have been transformed by God. They graduate and minister as effective pastors, teachers, etc. About the time for ordination, the pastor's HIV infection becomes symptomatic, e.g. he comes down with shingles, loses weight, and everybody suspects he has AIDS. Forgetting the long asymptomatic period, people rush to judgment. They assume the pastor lived a double life. He loses his employment, he and his nuclear family are shunned. Within days he is ostracized, abandoned, and, without social support, he must make a living while he and his nuclear family cope with their shame.

5. Nature of the problem.

a. HIV/AIDS causes suffering.

Patients suffer, often their bodies are racked by pain. Some develop dementia. Most lose strength and need help to move about. They suffer emotional pain. The physical and mental losses bring grief. Anger and the pain of abandonment increase bitterness for many. As involuntary recipients of fear and prejudice, abandoned and lonely, they suffer without love or social support. Many believe that their sins permanently separate them from God. They are filled with guilt and see themselves as unable to receive either God's love or His grace. Spiritually fractured and shame based, they are filled with self-hate, self-loathing, worthlessness, and despair. They live without meaning and without hope. Medical care for HIV infections is very costly. Many go through their life savings, lose the material objects they accumulated, and are left with nothing and no one who cares.

HIV infection causes family and loved ones to suffer, not only empathetically but also from their own shame and sense of failure. Their loss is great and their grief deep. Providing care for their loved one often overwhelms their human, personal, and fiscal resources. The family and loved ones also feel the pain of stigmatization and ostracism.

HIV infections bring great loss to communities, churches, and countries. Their young people die many decades prematurely. The associated fear, hatred, prejudice, and abandonment cause their communities to unravel and fracture. The absence of compassion causes them to lose their humanity.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church shares in these losses. Members divert time and resources to the care of physical illness as well as emotional resources dealing with death. Loss of members due to death removes them as contributors who support the Church. Their orphaned children, tragic reminders of this plague, require resources from the expanded family

if such will help them. Trained personnel die. HIV infection, subsequent AIDS, and death form a large fiscal liability to the Church. The fiscal demands on laity for health care decrease available funds they can give as offerings.

6. What issues complicate HIV/AIDS for the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

a. Other than "Just say 'No,'" the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not dealt with sex.

We need to differentiate "human sexuality" from "sex." God created human sexuality and gave it as a special gift to His beloved children. Only those with spiritual health as well as social and emotional maturity can experience human sexuality. Only when we "know" (in the Biblical sense) that we are God's "beloved children," only when we "know" that God is pleased with us, only when we "know" that we are loved and precious, only when we "know" that we have choices, only then can we experience human sexuality. Only then are we capable of being intimate. Without intimacy between two whole people who "know" that God loves them, intercourse is only "sex," i.e. doing what any mammal does. Physical intercourse without intimacy denies humanity and destroys spirituality.

b. Only rarely has the Seventh-day Adventist Church dealt with drug use.

The so-called "civilized" world proclaims freedom from pain, hurt, and suffering. The so-called "free" press blitzes us with messages saying that all suffering will stop after medication. However, sin causes suffering, and we live on a sinful planet. Sin causes the sinner, victims, society, and planet Earth to suffer. We experience suffering due to loss and grief, sadness and loneliness. Suffering means we are in touch with reality. Scripture says that all who live on planet Earth will suffer! God uses suffering to clarify our need for Him in our lives. Suffering documents that we are incapable of creating heaven on this sinful planet. Suffering proves that we need a Healer, a Savior, someone to rescue us and make us whole.

HIV infection causes fear with secondary prejudice and hatred in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We have an epidemic of hysteria. Conspiracy ideas abound. Fear causes us to abandon our friends and church members. Prejudice causes us to cruelly treat those we suspect of being either high risk or HIV infected. Hatred causes us to wish harm to those we suspect of being either high risk or HIV infected.

God never promised judgment as one of the spiritual gifts for His Church. We are not Divine Beings, we do not have the ability to judge. Yet we judge and criticize as if we are obeying a mandate. The epidemic of HIV confronts our "judg-mentality." This epidemic requires that we deal with people we have always tried to avoid, talk to people we don't trust, see as God's children people we label as "living in sin." To communicate, we must use language we consider "wrong." We are called to help people deal with the suffering caused by their "sinful" actions.

7. Why should Seventh-day Adventists respond to the HIV crisis?

The infected are our family, our children, our flesh and blood. God "dearly loves" them. They and God need someone to love and care for them. God needs someone to go for Him demonstrating the reality of His love.

a. Church as Called Community, a "Community of Healing."

God calls His Church to be the "Community of Healers." When this world was infected with the virus of sin, Christ came. Now, at the end of time, Christ sends His Church into a world infected with HIV. We are called to minister love and compassion to those dying from sin and disease. These are "them," the ones not "us," not participants in our "acceptable" sinning, but people who do things that offend us. They are precious to God, He wants them to "know" His love and hear His call of love, acceptance, and healing. These are the people whose "gods" of sex and drugs failed them. They look, long, and pray to know Yahweh. They respond to Him when they meet Him. Many of my patients say, "I learned about Jesus after I got AIDS, I came to know Him through my AIDS. It was worth it. I thank God every day for my AIDS."

Not only are we a "Community of Healers," we are to be a "Community of Healing," a "City of Refuge," a place where people come and are healed of their emotional, social, religious, and spiritual brokenness. A place where people come for physical healing.

b. Church as Priest.

God calls His Church to be priests; "... you are a chosen people, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."—1 Peter 2:9. Priests atone for their people. We take into ourselves the suffering of hurting people. We minister reconciliation between them and God, reconciliation to the broken consumed by self-hatred. As priests, we mediate God's mercy and forgiveness to those who long to know Him. We bring "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."—2 Corinthians 4:6.

c. Church as Prophet.

God sends His Church as prophet into a wicked world to warn of coming destruction. Prophets proclaim the word of God, often a cutting truth that confronts popular sins. "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."—Ezekiel 22:30. God's prophets reflect the pain in God's heart as revealed by our Lord who wept when He proclaimed His warning messages. "As he [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.'"—Luke 19:41-44. We are called to participate

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in the longing of God, to experience His hurt and pain due to the wickedness of His creation. Only as we, in our sadness, feel their hurt, tenderly touch, and lovingly call them, will they be able to see and hear God's love and respond to Him.

### 7. Conclusion.

God longs for His children, those for whom He died. He commissioned His Church to be His presence in this fallen world, ministering love and hope, caring and compassion. He calls us to be a Community of Healing. To all we proclaim, "You are God's pearl. He paid a great price for you because He loves you, because you are very precious to Him. Live as a loved and precious person." To those not yet infected with HIV, we proclaim, "Do not spend your body and shorten your life." To those who made choices that shorten their earthly life, we offer a choice that gives them eternal life.