

ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INSPIRATION FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JULY 3, 1995



New GC Treasurer
ROBERT L. RAWSON

Reelected GC Secretary
G. RALPH THOMPSON

BULLETIN

*United
in Christ*

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in Utrecht

SUNDAY, JULY 2

The little group was locked in impromptu discussion on a just-completed business session, each one articulating his or her own version of events. The comments were neither malicious nor derogatory—just opinions based on personal beliefs and perceptions. But I was impressed with their understanding of the issues and their grasp of the facts.

How does one view a general session such as ours? Simply listening to the discussions on the floor, one could get the feeling that the meeting was like any other political convention. And in the discussion group to which I'm referring, there were some who obviously felt issues could have gone differently than the decisions already made. Some had one opinion, others had another, and still others a third.

The God Factor

In the midst of this dynamic exchange, something fascinating happened. Someone said: "Maybe God wanted it that way. Maybe the Holy Spirit just moved and impressed people to simply vote according to their convictions. Maybe the vote happened just the way God wanted it to." The inference? Maybe God was in the process!

Up to that point, it was all about what *humans* were doing—about political moves and counter-moves, with no mention of God or Providence. At first, the reference to God sounded axiomatic, elementary—almost too simple to be

relevant. But on second thought a profound element was being added to the discussion. The suggestion was that God could not be factored out of the equation. In the midst of all of the discussing, debating, theorizing, and voting, there is God!

"Maybe God wanted it that way." The comment brought a momentary silence. I don't know what people were thinking, for no one responded. But from that point on, the conversation changed. There was a different climate. It was as if the mention of God brought a different reality into the discussion.

The reminder of God's involvement does bring about a powerful and sobering impact. God in the midst of His people. God meeting with His people at the Jaarbeurs Convention Center at Utrecht just as He did in Bible times. Not with cloud and shekinah glory, but present just the same.

It's a comforting thought. It says to us that we are not in the work alone. We don't have to carry the burden of the task by ourselves. We don't have to worry about the session's outcome. Because God is involved. He is present. He is in charge.

How Do You See It?

What is your reaction? How do you respond to the idea of the presence and activity of God in the affairs of the church? Does it fit with your worldview? Or rather, does it fit with your churchview? Will your God get



By **Delbert W. Baker**
Director of Diversity at
Loma Linda University



The Bulgarian delegation arrives by bus at the Adventist congress in Utrecht.



The main auditorium, with approximately 22,000 seats, was jammed to capacity Sabbath morning, and thousands were seated in an overflow auditorium.

involved with the real work of the session? Do you believe that He influences outcomes, that nothing catches Him off guard? Have you considered that there are invisible but very powerful supernatural beings—some pure and noble, others evil and debase—in attendance at every meeting of the church, beings seeking to influence the outcomes of our deliberations?

I believe God is vitally interested in the outcome of this session. This church is His bride. He is counting on her to do a very special task for Him.

It is inconceivable that God would not be intimately involved with the affairs of this great gathering. After all, this is the last General Conference session of the decade, of the century, of the millennium. Yes, He is here. He is involved. And He will not be silent.

Divine Involvement

After he was reelected president of the General Conference, R. S. Folkenberg commented that “no one is smart

enough to lead this church. It can only be led,” he said, “by our Lord Jesus Christ.” Amen! Christ is the only One who can pull it all together. There are too many internal problems and external obstacles. But let us remember that this church is not too complicated or involved for God. He runs the universe. He runs myriads of other worlds, and He can run this church.

Heavy issues and decisions face the session, it is true: the election of General Conference officers, the ordination of women, limiting the size of future GC delegations, the reorganization of GC departments, and some 50 proposed changes to the *Church Manual*. Notwithstanding, we can draw courage from the fact that Christ is involved with every decision.

The delegates will have opportunity to speak—to raise germane points and positively seek to influence outcomes—that’s why they’re here. Jesus would have us be courageous and speak our conviction with the spirit of Christ. “Cry

aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet” (Isa. 58:1)—that is our privilege as well as our responsibility. God wants us to be thoughtful and astute and to do things “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). But ultimately, after all the votes have been counted, after all the delegates have returned to their countries and homes, God would have us believe in Him and trust Him to take all our decisions—the wise ones and the not so wise ones—and use them to the honor and glory of His name (Ps. 121:4, 5).

We can be assured of God’s involvement because of His track record. He has been involved in every event of His people from Genesis to Revelation. He directed the events of the early Christian church through the period of persecution and through the Dark Ages and the Reformation. It was He who providentially allowed the Great Disappointment and facilitated the birth and progress of the last church of Bible prophecy, the Seventh-day Adventist movement.



Costumed representatives from the Trans-European Division carry their flags at the first presentation of the International Festival of Mission.

So there you have it. God is in charge, Halleluia! To those reading this report at the session, I say: Look for His leading, listen for His voice throughout the sessions. As it is in your heart, so your hand will seek it out. You will find what you are looking for. You will interpret the proceedings as it is in your heart according to your mind-set.

If you have the confidence that God is in charge and providentially wills or allows outcomes, if you believe that He will ultimately use everything—the positive and the negative—to His glory and honor, that will be the lens through which you view the session proceedings.

You can see the session's outcome as either the providential outworking of God or as the political maneuvering of human beings; as the movement of the Spirit or as the manipulation of men; as a divine experiment in grace or as the deformities of human weakness.

But we are assured that God will successfully see His church through its problems to ultimate victory. Though members of the church, as in Bible times and in the early history of this

movement, sometimes disappoint God by their decisions and actions, God is able to use these missteps for the accomplishment of His will. He will do the same today.

Session Schedule

SUNDAY, JULY 2

7:30 a.m.

Devotional—Andrea Luxton

8:30 a.m.

Nominating committee meets
 Business session—discussion of proposed constitution and bylaws changes
 Women's meetings begin—morning plenary session and afternoon seminars
 Nominating committee Report #3—six vice presidents (see p. 31)

11:00 a.m.

Devotional—Joel Musvosvi

2:00 p.m.

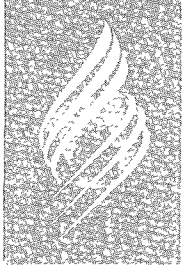
Business session—*Church Manual* amendments
 Women's seminars

3:00 p.m.

Division representatives meet to recommend division leaders

6:30 p.m.

Musical program
 International Festival of Mission
 Euro-Africa Division
 Eastern Africa Division



United in His Salvation



Gordon Bietz
President, Georgia-Cumberland
Conference, U.S.A.

I have twin daughters. They are identical twins and were born 13 minutes apart. They spent nine months sharing the same environment of the womb. They lived in the same home for 20 years. They went to the same school and took the same classes for 14 years. They are alike in almost every way. It is not hard for them to dwell together in unity.

Our church was born in the United States of America. It grew up in the same culture. It developed its organization in the same social context. It grew its theology in the same religious soil. We started as a homogeneous church of like-minded people. If we did not always agree—and we didn't—at least we could argue from the same platform of cultural and social experience.

We now have a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, international church. We come to Utrecht with a world of different experiences. What is the glue that will hold us together in worldwide unity?

We are here in Utrecht from the east coast of Africa to the west coast of America, from the islands of the Pacific to the continent of Europe—a united people, the only truly international Protestant denomination. Will what we hold in common transcend our differences? Will we be able to stand together while our compatriots are breaking up into enclaves of hatred, killing one another?

A Fractured World

Jesus came to bring us into the family of God as brothers and sisters. Yet religious hatred and violence run rampant through the entire civilized world. In Bosnia, Muslims are undergoing “ethnic cleansing”—an antiseptic euphemism for mass murder! India's Sikhs and Hindus routinely clash, burning houses of worship and killing one another. Israelis and Palestinians die in strife between religious visions of the Holy Land. The list of religiously inspired conflicts goes on and on. In every corner of our world, forces of religion and culture, race and language, are fragmenting people into groups of hatred.

What place will the international Adventist Church play in this age? Will we find our identity in the tribalism of our countries? Will we experience the Balkanization of the church? Or will we find a cross-race, cross-cultural, cross-language unity in the faith of our fathers? What is our glue? What will hold us together in our fragmenting world? Let us look to the early church for our answer.

The Struggle of the Early Church

According to Acts 15:1, “Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: ‘Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.’ This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them”*

Satan brings division. His modus operandi is disunity. He separated Adam from Eve, Cain from Abel, Lot from Abraham, Jacob from Esau, Joseph from his brothers, Saul from David, David from Absalom, Achan from Israel, Hosea from Gomer, Judas from the twelve, Ananias and Sapphira from the church. He even sought to separate Jesus from God!

And today he seeks to separate us from one another. He uses color, speech, political alignments, gender, tribe, nationality, and even our vision of God to cut us off from one another.

When we speak of unity and the early church we like to think of Acts 4:32: “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.” That's a good text, and there was, indeed, a period of harmony. But the massive social and cultural shifts as Jew and Gentile came into close contact with each other was a wrenching experience. Don't underestimate the importance of this conflict that Paul and Barnabas had with the circumcisers. The issue that they disagreed on was fundamental to the church. The questions they were asking were: What is the glue that holds us in unity? Is circumcision part of our identity? The early Christians teetered on the brink of fragment-

Devotional
message
presented
Friday
morning,
June 30, 1995

ing into a Jewish party and a Gentile party. What would hold them together? How would they maintain unity as the gospel spread outside homogeneous Judaism to the multicultural, multiethnic Gentile society of the Roman world?

We face the same issue today as we grow ever more rapidly into an international church. The immediate issue confronting the early church was circumcision, but the real issue was unity. Will we have Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians? Or will we be one family of God? The church moved to resolve the conflict by calling the first general conference session in Jerusalem.

How They Handled It

Acts 15:2 informs us that "Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question."

Did Paul and Barnabas need to go to Jerusalem to learn how it was that a person was saved? Paul knew how a person was saved, and he knew that these Judaizing circumcision-pushers who came to Antioch were wrong. But Paul and Barnabas respected the opinion of "the brethren." The church mattered to them. The opinion of the apostles and the elders made a difference to them.

If you don't care what others think, you don't go to Jerusalem. If you don't care about unity in the church, you don't

go to Jerusalem. If you believe that your opinion is the only opinion, you don't go to Jerusalem. If you don't care what others think, you don't go to Utrecht. If you don't care about unity in the church, you don't go to Utrecht. If you believe that your opinion is the only opinion, you don't go to Utrecht.

To be a family of God, we commit ourselves to one another. God's kingdom is not represented by privatized enclaves of soloists, all singing their own tune of faith, listening to their own directors, and marching to their own drummer. The church is not a collection of pious individualists. The opinions of those in Africa, South America, Inter-America, Russia, Europe, Australia, North America, and everywhere around the world must matter to us. For us to be one in Christ we must listen to one another.

"When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them" (verse 4). In other words, they showed a "Mission Spotlight" on the work among the Gentiles.

But there were those in Jerusalem who were not very pleased with the mission stories. Verse 5 says that "some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.'"

They wanted unity—unity on their own terms. They saw the mission stories and said,

- ▶ But they don't dress as we do.
- ▶ They don't eat as we do.
- ▶ They don't have the color skin we do.
- ▶ They aren't circumcised as we are.

They wanted a unity built on the glue of circumcision. "We can have no unity unless you are circumcised." I imagine they eloquently defended the faith based on Scripture and stories of Abraham. They probably quoted Genesis 17:10, 11. God said, "This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised." They probably recited the story of Moses, who was severely threatened by an angel because he had not circumcised his own son (Ex. 4:24-26). They appealed to the "General Conference session" not to abandon the faith as handed down to them by the patriarchs. They wanted unity—a unity based on the Jewish traditions. They were frightened that they would lose their identity.

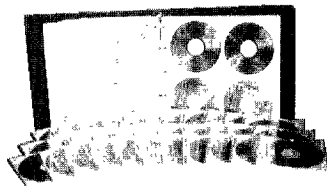
What would the early church do? Break up into sects? "The apostles and elders met to consider this question" (Acts 15:6). And the question was, What shall we require of all who join the church—whether Gentile or Jew, Roman or Egyptian? What is the common denominator? What is the glue that makes us one, that identifies us as Christian? What is the core? What is our identity?

"After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: 'Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us'" (verses 7, 8). This first argument of Peter is simple: "God demonstrated his acceptance of these uncircumcised Gentiles when he poured out His Holy Spirit on them." If the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to maintain worldwide unity, it too must be open to the leading of the Spirit.

Our Struggle Too

A second argument that Peter made comes in verse 9: "He made no distinc-

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tion between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.”

God made no distinctions, God made no difference. Humans draw lines where God does not. Humans make distinctions where God does not. Humans make rules that God does not. We separate where God combines. We isolate where God unifies. We become exclusive where God is inclusive. We build barriers where God builds bridges. We build walls, whereas God came to break down the “dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14).

The *third* argument that Peter makes appears in verse 10: “Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?”

We assure a schism in the church when that which is conditioned by history is imposed as law; when that which grows from culture is made the standard for all; when that which is local in importance is made universal in application. We will break into national separatist churches when we elevate the circumcision of our time to the position of the glue of our unity and identity.

Unity would not be achieved by holding everyone together by a list of rules. Seventh-day Adventism will not be held together as a world church by developing a muscular Adventism, by a strengthening of the central authority of the church. Unity is produced not by new rules, but by a renewed mission. Not by a new structure, but by a new vision, a renewed mission. Not because we have added policies, but because we have added faith.

The *fourth* argument Peter uses gives us the principle of unity—the glue, the source of our identity. It is in verse 11: “No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” We are saved in the same way: “Just as they are.”

United in His Salvation

▶ I am White, but I am saved, just as you are.

▶ I am American, but I am saved, just as you are.

▶ I speak English, but I am saved, just as you are.

▶ I don't wear a wedding ring, but I am saved, just as you are.

What was the common denominator

that held them together, the source of their identity? It was the grace of God—God's unconditional acceptance.

After Peter's speech the time had come for a decision. What would they do? Gentiles were flooding into the church. Would they set up circumcision clinics in Antioch? Would they establish schools to indoctrinate in Jewish practices and customs? Was circumcision the glue that would hold them in unity?

James expressed what seemed to be the consensus of the group: “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” (verse 19). That's

the point: *Don't make it difficult.*

The glue that holds us together is the gospel, the good news that Jesus didn't leave His Father's side to give us new burdens, but to lighten our load. “My burden is light,” He said (Matt. 11:30). He came to earth with the good news of the gospel of free grace and acceptance for all—whether Black or White, Russian or American, French or African. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

* Bible texts in this article are from the New International Version.

Robert Rawson: New GC Treasurer

The General Conference has a new treasurer! Delegates at the world business session elected Robert L. Rawson, treasurer of the North Pacific Union Conference, as the new GC treasurer. Rawson takes his place among the church's top three officers—who head the 8.5 million-member denomination.

Rawson's election came Friday afternoon, June 30, just five hours after the delegates reelected Robert S. Folkenberg as General Conference president, and just after the reelection of G. Ralph Thompson as General Conference secretary.

Rawson replaces retiring treasurer Donald F. Gilbert, who has served the Adventist Church for more than 42 years around the world. President Folkenberg gave a special tribute to Elder Gilbert for the distinction with which he has served this church.

Rawson, 58, of Oregon, U.S., served as business manager for Garden State and Mount Vernon academies before going to the Philippines in 1968. From his arrival there until 1976, he served in the Asia-Pacific region as business manager for Philippine Union College, and then as treasurer for the church's Far Eastern Division, with headquarters in Singapore. He also served as vice president for finance of the Adventist Media Center in Thousand Oaks, California, U.S., from 1977 to 1983.

“I've known Rawson since we worked together in the Far Eastern [now Asia-Pacific] Division,” says outgoing GC treasurer Gilbert. “He's a fine administrator, a true Christian, and a real people person. He brings a wide range of institutional experience to the world church. I think he's an excellent choice.”

In commenting on his appointment, Rawson summed up his reaction in one word—“shock.”

“We are overwhelmed with the challenge God has set for us,” he said. “God has successfully moved me out of my comfort zone. With God's help I will do my best to strengthen the church.”

When asked about the focus of his new ministry, Rawson said, “There has been a lot of erosion of confidence in the leadership and the finances of the church. I want to work to restore confidence. We want to be accountable to the people, because it's people who comprise the church.”

Rawson is married to Carolyn Lounsberry Rawson, and they have three children: Richard, 34; and twins, Timothy and Terrill, 31. He often finds relaxation and reflection through the game of golf.

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Growing Stronger With Global Mission



By Ulrich Frikart
Secretary

changes at the end of 1989. God has opened all doors to powerful evangelism in these fields, and our people there took advantage of these golden opportunities.

Bulgarian Union

During these five years of Global Mission, membership in this field went from 2,950 to 6,179.

It is the desire of members, pastors, and leaders of the Euro-Africa Division (EUD) to contribute, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the proclamation of *God's everlasting revelation all around the world.*

Expression of Gratitude

Our hearts are filled with deep gratitude to the Lord for His blessings, guidance, and protection. We have felt His presence day by day during these past five years. We also would like to thank all our fellow workers and believers for their loyal and devoted service. Special credit has to be given to Edwin Ludescher, former division president, for his 19 years of committed and dedicated leadership. He retired as of December 31, 1994.

Quick Look at the Statistics

In spite of a lot of difficulties and problems the work in our African fields and in the territories of Eastern and Western Europe has rapidly progressed

beyond our expectations and *we can view the future with confidence.*

A quick look at the statistics as of December 31, 1994, shows the situation of our division with its 29 countries and a total population of approximately 350 million, including more than 61 million Muslims.

Area	Population	Membership	Churches
Eastern Europe	47,806,720	83,021	1,249
Western Europe	271,541,095	72,707	1,051
Africa	24,900,000	251,736	1,339

The variety of cultures, languages, mentalities, and political systems makes the challenge great, and the possibilities tremendous.

EASTERN EUROPE

It is very encouraging to record the progress of the work in the countries of Bulgaria, Romania, and the Czech and Slovakia republics since the tremendous



Every year Euro-Africa Division sends out about 60 young people as overseas volunteers. Ingrid Beeken volunteered for Micronesia.

A camel named Emat promoted the evangelistic series by David Currie in Goteborg.



Brad Thorp held an evangelism institute in Sofia from January 8 to March 26, 1994. About 30 young workers attended the institute, which was followed by an evangelistic campaign.

Robert Wagley worked in May of the same year among the Romanies in the city of Kyustendil with good results. The new church building has been dedicated.

Forty-nine new church buildings have been constructed or enlarged since 1991. We are thankful to businessman Garwin McNeilus for his generous help and to Don Folkenberg for his support in the negotiations and construction work.

The new publishing house is in opera-

tion. Literature evangelism started this year under the leadership of Karel Samek, an interdivision worker from North America.

The radio studio in Plovdiv has been installed and equipped and is ready to produce programs for Adventist World Radio in the Bulgarian language.

Seven students from Bulgaria are currently studying at our seminaries in Collonges, Newbold, and Friedensau, among them a Gypsy and a student of Turkish origin. There are 900,000 Turkish people in Bulgaria. The need for well-trained ministers is tremendous.

And the third national congress of the Adventist youth in Bulgaria attracted 900 and took place August 25 to 28 in Veliko Tŕnovo. On Sabbath 1,700 attended. In four years the membership (and the number of youth) of the Adventist Church in Bulgaria has doubled.

Czecho-Slovakian Union

Of the 9,644 church members, 2,044 are in Slovakia and 7,600 in the Czech Republic. The leaders have been continuing to work harmoniously together within the given structure of the union since the separation of the two republics.

Nine evangelistic campaigns with evangelists from the United States and Western Europe were held in 1994. For 1995 the leaders have made plans for seven similar series. Besides these special series, all pastors are involved in local evangelism.

Two of the 46 buildings the Communist government had taken from our church in the 1960s have been given back by the present government. Long negotiations will be necessary during the coming years to get back the other buildings.

We received very encouraging reports about our publishing work in both republics. We have 72 literature evangelists working full-time and about 51 part-time. The publishing house is doing very well.

Another important aspect of the evangelistic program is the work among children and young people. Nearly 350 Pathfinders have experienced the first camporee in the history of the Czecho-Slovakian Union Conference. Their youth leader, Jaroslav Slosarek, said,

"We have dreamed for years about such an event."

In February 1995 the 35 students of the theological seminary moved to the new building purchased by the union. The fully equipped building—with 24 rooms for students, four classrooms, and a cafeteria—is located in Zázava, a beautiful small city about 30 miles (50 kilometers) from Prague. The seminary is partially financed by the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering of the fourth quarter 1994 and also by a private donor from North America, businessman Tom Zapara.

Romanian Union

This union with its six conferences is a fast-growing field. The baptismal objective of the leaders for the present quinquennium was 20,000. On June 30, 1994, 23,500 had been baptized, which brings membership to more than 68,000 church members in 973 organized churches.

This result comes from a very strong evangelistic program with evangelists from the United States and from Europe. Hundreds of local campaigns are being held by pastors and church members.

For the first time this year they began literature evangelism. Tremendous possibilities exist for our publishing work here.

Leaders were successful with their plans for the new seminary. They bought a piece of land of about seven acres (three hectares) in Cernica, nine miles (15 kilometers) from Bucharest. Construction work started in October 1994. The campus will accommodate 120 students. The seminary is also partially financed by the Thirteenth Sabbath offering and Tom Zapara. *We would like to express our gratitude to all church members in the world for their generous help and contributions.*

The secret of our progress in Romania is the strong commitment of our members, and particularly our young people. There is a big need for new church buildings throughout the country.

AFRICA

Angola Union

The situation in Angola is a real tragedy. During 20 years of war about

600,000 people have been killed and tens of thousands mutilated. There is terrible misery and poverty in this country.

Up to 80 percent of Huambo, the city where the union headquarters are located, has been destroyed. The property of the union has also been heavily damaged. We have lost workers and church members because of the war.

The leaders in Huambo did not complain about their situation but were happy that, in spite of the fighting in 1993, they were able, with the Lord's help, to baptize 2,300 people in Huambo and the surrounding area. They had never experienced such growth in the past.

Our seminary in Huambo has been closed since January 1993. The hospital in Bongo is still being operated as a dispensary. ADRA/Germany is working in close cooperation with ADRA/Angola.

ADRA also operates seven health centers to supply medicines and preventive health programs. Despite the war, a youth congress was held last year in Luanda. John Graz reports that 25,000 young people participated in the second congress of the Adventist youth in Luanda, capital of Angola.

More than 1,000 youth responded positively to a call and expressed their desire to be baptized soon.

Never before has an event in one of the unions of the Euro-Africa Division gathered so many people as when 225 Pathfinders from the city of Luanda received their Pathfinder awards and Honor tokens on Sunday, September 11.

São Tomé and Príncipe

These two small islands with a population of about 120,000 are part of the Angolan Union. Hermínio Monteiro, a retired lay member from Portugal, with his wife accepted a call to São Tomé to help the church provide community services and church construction. Six teams of young volunteers will build six new chapels on the island of São Tomé, in cooperation with the EUD. A team from Switzerland and another from Portugal will start this program in July 1995. Travel expenses will be at the volunteers' expense, and the respective

unions will finance the construction of the church buildings.

Mozambique Union

The elections that took place in October 1994 brought peace and stability. Today it is possible to travel throughout the country without problems. This facilitates our evangelistic program. The church in Mozambique is growing rapidly and has a big need for chapels and houses for workers. We can say for the moment that Mozambique is the second-largest union in the EUD, with more than 100,000 church members. Girimoio Muchanga was reelected as union president during the administrative assembly of February 1994. He is a dynamic leader and gives absolute priority to evangelism. And our seminary in Beira operates with 39 students.

MISSERM (Mission and Services in the Trans-Mediterranean Countries)

This organization is represented in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and among the Muslims living in France. Because of the tense political situation in Algeria, we had to repatriate our missionaries from Algiers to Europe.

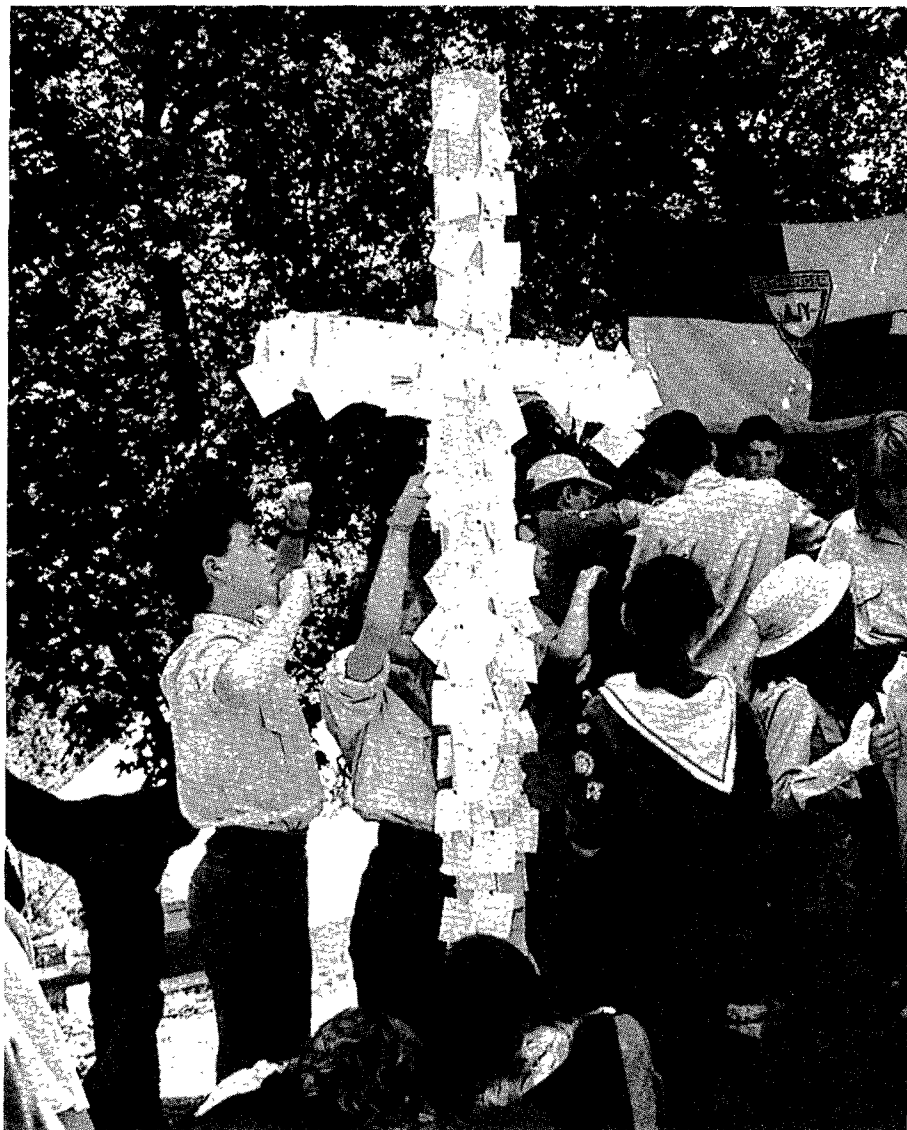
In spite of these difficulties, two young Muslims were baptized in Algiers one Sabbath as a result of the work of Pastor Jacques Marcille and Stefan Höschele, a young volunteer from Germany.

In Tunisia, Reynolds Agathe and his wife are doing an excellent work. The approach through ADRA is a good way to become acquainted with people and to share our hope with them. Government officials in Morocco were recently asking Agathe to establish officially an ADRA office in this country.

WESTERN EUROPE

In our fields in Western Europe the work is slowly growing, but there are encouraging facts and developments to mention. For the first time in our division, a mission conference was organized in 1994 at our Friedensau theological graduate school. About 180 young people attended.

The local conference, in cooperation



At an international camporee (1991) in Poppi, Italy, Pathfinders registered their decisions for Christ.

with the Euro-Africa Division, is running the "Dynamic Institute" to train young people to witness for Christ in unentered territories in Berlin. By the grace of God it has been possible, through the testimony of these young people, to perform several baptisms. The highlight of the activities of our youth was the international youth congress held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1994. John Graz reports that 330 young people indicated a desire for baptism. About 4,000 people attended the Sabbath program.

Island of Malta

The Italian Union supervises this Global Mission project that we started two years ago. Enrico Long, former union president and retired pastor, along with his wife, accepted a call to serve for

nearly two years on this island. Today we have a company of 15 members. Pastor Timoteo Marzocchini, from Switzerland, and his wife have been in Malta since October 1994 and work there as regular missionaries. There is hope that a church will soon be organized on the island of Malta, which has a population of 350,000. The Adventist Church has been legally recognized by the Maltese authorities since December 21, 1994.

Division-wide, our hospitals, schools, publishing houses, and food factories are also contributing to the accomplishment of the mission.

Global Mission has covered its first five years. The Euro-Africa Division was ready to step out. The results are inspiring. We have already reached the baptismal goal for the quinquennium. *Let the glory be to God.*



Fourth Business Meeting

Fifty-sixth General Conference session, June 30, 1995, 2:00 p.m.

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: We need to begin our session this afternoon. We hope to consider a number of constitution items this afternoon. Just before prayer is offered we have a request that has come to our attention that we would like to present to you so that unitedly we may pray for the individuals involved. M. T. Battle will read the request to us.

M. T. BATTLE: We have a missionary physician, Dr. Elmer Delgado, from Argentina, who is serving in Africa in the country of Zambia as medical director of the Songa Adventist Hospital.

Dr. Delgado and his family were in South Africa for a visit. On their return from that country they were attacked by robbers, and Dr. Delgado's daughter was killed. We should offer special prayer for this family.

MIREILLE ST. PIERRE: [Opening prayer.]

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: Elder Battle will read an official message addressed to this convocation.

M. T. BATTLE: We have a letter of greetings from the director of the General Department for Prisons in Romania, Major General Ioan Chis.

"Dear Friends: Our prisons are in compliance to the European standards for all Christian faiths to have full access to freedom and equality of rights. Those who wish are welcome to pray a prayer to God on behalf of the inmates. Among the most zealous volunteer workers in our prisons there are more than 600 Seventh-day Adventists, members of the humanitarian prison service. They minister week after week to those in need. They admonish them toward the real values to give to them spiritual and material help contributing to their social rehabilitation.

"May I ask you to accept at this special occasion the expression of our deep gratitude and most affectionate appreciation for all that has been accomplished in such an exciting area, the reconciliation of the man with the society and his turning toward God. I want you to know how much I do appreciate the joint project initiated by Richard Bland of the United Prison Ministries and Jeff Wright. By these great friends of Romania to secure international help to print and to distribute free of charge the book *Desire of Ages*. Eighty thousand

copies of this extraordinary book are now in the hands of every inmate and every employee of the Romanian prisons. This project has already created a powerful impact among all those who are for a time behind bars. And the fact that the very distribution of the book made it possible an abundance of one-to-one contacts with the inmates created immense opportunities for real moving spiritual fellowship."

We have another message of greetings. This comes from probably one of the most remote places, the Pitcairn Islands, where we have a group of believers. This message was received by Herbert Ford at the Pitcairn Island Study Center, Pacific Union College.

"The believers on Pitcairn Island, one of the earth's most remote places, send warmest Christian greetings and a firm belief in the blessed hope to all the brothers and sisters attending the fifty-sixth quinquennial General Conference session of the faith in Utrecht, the Netherlands."

I have another message from the state president of the republic of Botswana, President Q.K.J. Masire.

"I have heard that you will be meeting in Utrecht for your General Conference session, where almost 3,000 delegates, representing your more than 8 million church members, will assemble to discuss important issues. On this important occasion I would like to send you the good wishes of the people of Botswana and my good wishes. May your gathering be a success."

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: We start with our general agenda. This deals with the Trust Services area and the suggestion that it become a department of the church. Elder Gilbert, are you going to present this item?

D. F. GILBERT: The recommendation is for Trust Services, previously listed as a service activity of the church, to become a regular department of the church. I move that we approve this proposal. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: The next item of business that we would like to present before you is a name change for the Far Eastern Division.

M. T. BATTLE: For some time the Far Eastern Division and its committee have been studying the present name, Far Eastern Division. Inasmuch as most of the countries are there on the Pacific Rim, they are mak-

ing this recommendation to ratify and record the changing of the name of the Far Eastern Division to the Asia-Pacific Division (APD), effective January 1, 1995. [Motion was made, seconded, and voted.]

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: You will find in your agenda a Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. [The statement was read, then a motion to accept it was made, seconded, and voted.]

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: Please turn to the section concerning the constitution and bylaws. I would like to introduce to you Calvin Rock, who chairs the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

C. B. ROCK: The Constitution and Bylaws Committee has been at work during the years of this quinquennium. We appreciate the honor bestowed upon us by this world church to assist in making recommendations that are so vitally a part of the direction that the church will take constitutionally, and also let you know that we have done our best to treat this very seriously and soberly and solemnly. We recognize that much of what will be presented may be discussed vigorously and that there will probably be some recommendations for changes and we expect that the standing committee approved yesterday afternoon will meet fairly regularly during the days of discussion with regard to these amendments to the constitution that we will now be recommending to you on behalf of the General Conference Committee as reviewed at Annual Council. Athal Tolhurst is the man who has crafted most of this language. He is intimately acquainted with how all these policies interact, and believe me, they touch each other in many ways.

A. H. TOLHURST: There are two kinds of recommended changes to the constitution and bylaws. The first type of change or recommended change are those changes that clarify the meaning but do not change substantively the intent of the constitution or the bylaws. Second, there are those changes that do make a substantive change to the meaning of the constitution or the bylaws.

The first recommended change is a desire to enlarge the name of the constitution. In the present constitution we have only the word "constitution." If this was lifted out of the policy book and reprinted and handed to somebody, nobody would know what organization this constitution belonged to. And so we have added the words "Constitution of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." We also need to delete "As revised at the fifty-fifth session held in

Indianapolis," and in its place add the words "As revised at the fifty-sixth session held in Utrecht, Netherlands, June 29 to July 8, 1995." We wish to add, after the word "Adventist," in parentheses, the words "hereinafter referred to as the General Conference." [The motion to make the changes as suggested was made, seconded, and voted.]

A. H. TOLHURST: We have a similar recommendation that the bylaws be expanded to include the words "of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists." [Other minor changes were included in Tolhurst's recommendations. The motion to accept was made, seconded, and voted.]

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: Our General Conference president, Robert S. Folkenberg, has a statement to make at this time.

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: I just received word moments ago from B. B. Beach, General Conference director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, that this morning the Polish Parliament voted unanimously—no opposing votes, and only three abstentions—to register a special law regarding the Seventh-day Adventist Church

in which it recognizes the relationship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Poland to the world church, as well as provides for assurance for Sabbath worship and labor and the pressures to work on Sabbath, and many other benefits. Our leaders of Poland are delighted.

I now introduce a concept developed by the Commission on World Church Organization in its several years of work. It addresses one specific element, and that is the matter of accountability of the General Conference staff leadership administration to the world church through the Executive Committee of the General Conference. That's the issue.

Only 317, including invitees, attended the 1992 Annual Council. Normally there are 502 members, in addition to those who are invited to attend. There are some members who are urged not to come, and then there are others who are invitees who are not members who are encouraged to come.

Of the 317 attending the 1992 Annual Council, 236 (74 percent) were based in the North American Division.

It is interesting that when the Commission on World Church Organization confronted

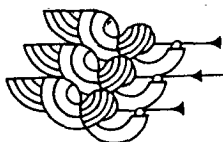
those numbers, it was the members from the North American Division who rose to protest this unfairness. They were certainly not seeking to protect their own interests; in fact, exactly the reverse was true. It was the North American Division members on the Commission on World Church Organization who rose to object and to insist that corrective measures be taken so that the attendees of an Annual Council more closely reflected the world membership of the church.

There is another strange dynamic. For many years the General Conference Committee met every Thursday morning. It was fairly common for the General Conference officers who were presenting the agenda to feel themselves on trial before the other members, who were almost entirely departmental staff within the General Conference. There was a dynamic that was really unhealthy. It certainly was not accountability to the world church. So a series of motivational issues needed to be addressed.

The Commission on World Church Organization made several recommendations that in their composite are all linked together.

We'll Be Looking for You

The Quiet Hour will be presenting an exhibit at the 1995 General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, June 29 through July 8, in Utrecht, Netherlands. The theme of the 56th Session will be "United in Christ," with more than 2,500 delegates in attendance representing 205 countries. If you are one of the 30,000 visitors expected to attend, please be sure to stop by and see us. We will have flags from the 94 countries in which The Quiet Hour ministries have been involved. Come and identify the flag from your country!



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We came back to the fundamental philosophy that was driving the commission—fairness and accountability. Those were the two principles. We came to the conclusion that we needed to restructure the General Conference Committee so that there was a significant increase of accountability of those doing the serving to those being served.

You see the recommended composition of the General Conference Committee. The General Conference officers, the division officers, the executive officers, the General Conference departmental directors, General Conference field secretaries, representatives of General Conference institutions, the director of Archives and Statistics, past presidents of the General Conference, two laypersons from every division who are recommended by the division committee, presidents of union conferences and union missions, one member for each 500,000 members or major fraction thereof, plus 30 members at large.

When you come up with a formula like this, it is still meaningless unless they attend. So the General Conference feels that the matter of accountability is so vital that the General Conference is not only going to invite the union presidents to attend, but pay the expenses for them to come in addition to the laypeople and others that currently come. Why? This is a gathering of the world unions. This church is made up of unions. When a union constituency meets, it elects; in the case of union conferences, the president was elected not only to be its leader, but to speak representing its constituency. Who better than the president to be present to speak on behalf of the world membership? So it is our desire to increase that number.

Now, several have noted that the proposal is to reduce the number of members of the General Conference Committee, and that is true—to reduce it from 362 members to 240 members. However, the rest of the story is that the intent is to increase the *attendance*.

Now, there is another element, and I am going to be compassionate but clear. It is really not accountability when you are accountable to yourself. When a large proportion of those at the meeting are employees of the General Conference, you really don't have accountability. It is accountability only when those doing the serving are accountable to those being served.

So the other recommendation is that we significantly adjust the process of the participation of the General Conference and division department directors. Now, in the past the General Conference department director

has been and is proposed to continue as a member. In the past the General Conference department associate directors were also members. They were also elected at a General Conference session. The division departmental directors who are on the same level as the General Conference associate directors therefore were also on the General Conference Committee.

So the proposal that is being brought to you today is to restrict the membership on the General Conference Committee in the process of reducing its size to those who are elected by the world body. Therefore, this changes the dynamic. Accountability is there, but the associates are not accountable as in the past to the world church by bypassing the director and going directly to the General Conference Committee. They are still accountable but under the oversight of the department director.

The proposal here is that in order to maintain the equity of appointment versus elected, the division department directors would be appointed by the division committee.

So you can see that the ratios both of accountability and world participation, the dynamics of the General Conference Committee would change massively.

I am particularly anxious that you may be perfectly free to reject any of the recommendations being made.

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: In light of his general statement I'm going to request Elder

Tolhurst to go again to the podium, and the chair directs your attention to the first implications of the practicality of the outline of statement by Elder Folkenberg.

A. H. TOLHURST: We have a recommendation that incorporates the spirit of the remarks that Elder Folkenberg has brought to us. I would move the recommendation on changing the constitution and bylaws that is set before us here. [Motion was seconded but was not voted at this time.]

NEAL C. WILSON: I wish to speak in response to the suggestion and explanation of our president. I have now been a member of the General Conference Committee for more than 40 years, but I'm a bit concerned about the negative aspects of why we are making this proposal. I am totally in accord with the positive. I believe that this is the right direction. We have discussed it many times in the past, and I believe it has great merit. I think it will produce efficiency and greater participation, and thereby hopefully a better organization.

My concern is the reference to the fact of certain negative things, and it refers primarily, for instance, to the fact that departmental directors in the General Conference often try to assert themselves and sort of take over the committee because of the few individuals. Departmental directors have never tried to take over the General Conference Committee or in any way tried to assert themselves beyond their proper role as members. I am in complete accord with the pro-

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posal provided it is done on the positive, and there's enough positive to give us good reason to adopt this.

[The negatives and positives of this recommendation were discussed freely by Joseph McCoy, Gerald Christo, Leon Trusty, Kenneth Watson, Gerado Morena, John David McKinney, Pardon Mwansa, Daniel Chaij, Susan Sickler, Nathaniel Walemba, Leonard Musuku, and Jan T. Knopper.]

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: The question as I understand it is the composition of the General Conference Committee at the time it meets in a given division. It varies depending on which division we are in, because the plan is that in whichever division the Annual Council is held, all the presidents are invited with full participatory rights. It's not just a matter of which division it happens to be located in.

Let me say a word of apology. A point has been made about positive or negative reasons to do this. Regarding the issue of accountability, let's do what we are going to do on the basis of a positive. Let's focus on that. The concept of accountability is the concept of the General Conference organization in Washington, D.C., serving organizations and members outside of Washington. It is not a matter of whether we are serving a local church member or a conference or a union or the conglomeration of unions organized in the division, but simply whether we are serving and being accountable to the broader church organization outside. So please disregard anything that may have seemed negative and offensive.

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: We will suspend the motion that is before us on the floor to receive the report from the Nominating Committee and then, depending on the time, we will see what we must do next. I would like to recognize the chair of the Nominating Committee.

BENJAMIN REAVES: The Nominating Committee is prepared to bring a report, and that report will be presented by the secretary of the committee, Dr. Lyn Behrens.

LYN BEHRENS: The Nominating Committee recommends for the position of secretary of the General Conference G. Ralph Thompson. I move that appointment. [The motion was seconded and voted.]

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: It has truly been a joy and a privilege to serve alongside my esteemed friend and colleague G. Ralph Thompson during these past five years. He is a man of God, with a vision for mission that is unswerving. He masters the myriad of management responsibilities in the

Secretariat and the interdivision worker placement and appointment program. It's a complex job, and I appreciate him because he is a man of good judgment who speaks up, and he keeps me from falling into holes into which I might otherwise trip. I am thrilled that this session has seen fit to ask Elder Thompson to continue his service to this church as secretary of the General Conference.

G. RALPH THOMPSON: Thank you very much for your continued confidence. It has been a joy and privilege for me to serve the church. I enjoy my work, and I have a marvelous, wonderful team. For the past five



Violet Makonesa, from the Zambesi Union in the Eastern Africa Division, read Scripture on Friday evening with force and clarity.

years I have really enjoyed working with Elder Folkenberg. In the Inter-American Division we learned to agree to disagree heartily on issues, but love each other nevertheless. I want to thank this world constituency for your confidence, and I just want to rededicate my life to Jesus Christ and to the service of His church.

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: During the past five years it has been my privilege to work with another dear friend and colleague, Don F. Gilbert, as treasurer of the General Conference. Elder Gilbert has served so well during some very difficult times. Difficult choices have had to be made. You could always count on Elder Gilbert to be the Christian, soft-spoken, loving gentleman, and I've appreciated his willingness to put up with me during these past five years.

Elder Gilbert recently notified me of his intent to move to a different pace of life—to slow down just a bit as of this session and to enter upon the benefits of the retirement program. And I hope that this body will record a vote of appreciation for the services of

Elder Gilbert, who has made this decision.

It's nice to have a treasurer whose highest priority is the mission of this church. I want to thank you, Elder Gilbert.

D. F. GILBERT: It's been a pleasure to work for our church. One does not enter into or think about retirement so easily, but you can be sure, in spite of the fact that I won't have the privilege of serving with you, the church is still number one, and God will lead it to His coming.

G. RALPH THOMPSON: I move a vote of appreciation for our outgoing treasurer, Don Gilbert. [Motion was seconded and voted.]

LYN BEHRENS: The Nominating Committee recommends to this body for treasurer of the General Conference, Elder Robert Rawson. [The motion was made, seconded, and voted.]

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG: Bob Rawson has served this church with distinction. He is a man of God, a minister, and one who has served as a missionary in what is today known as the Asia-Pacific Division. He is one of the senior treasurers today in the North American Division, currently occupying the responsibility of treasurer of the North Pacific Union. He is highly esteemed by his treasury colleagues and friends. I am deeply grateful that Elder Rawson has accepted the responsibilities as the treasurer of the world church, and I would like to welcome Elder Rawson to the pains and joys of that fellowship.

R. L. RAWSON: I can say only that the past two hours have been most traumatic in my own experience. I sought a prayer from my union president that he would seek God's guidance in this very important decision, and his prayer was that I would be in the center of God's will. And that's where I want to be. I pledge myself to uphold the fine, outstanding leadership that Elder Gilbert has given to this important responsibility. I would seek an interest in your prayers that the integrity will be maintained, and the confidence of God's people can be continued as we go through troublous days ahead. Pray for us, won't you?

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS: I'd like to suggest, if this is in accordance with your will, that someone table the motion that is before us, and that this be reactivated at a later time. [Motion was made, seconded, and voted.]

IVAN PARASCHUK: [Benediction.]

R. J. KLOOSTERHUIS, Chair

M. T. BATTLE, Secretary

D. A. ROTH and L. R. COLBURN,

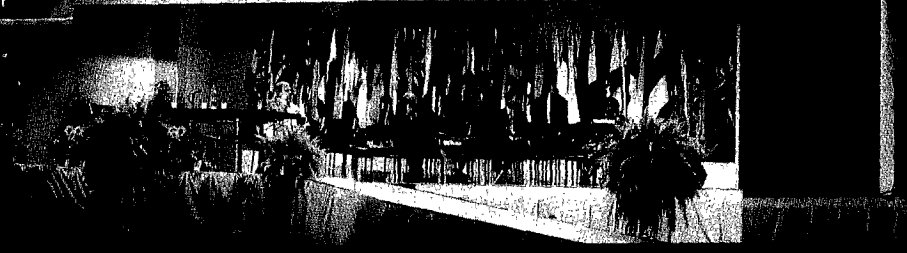
Proceedings Editors



In Christus Forenet | Kristus Forent | Kristus Yhtä Kristuksessa

Images

- 1 The Jaabeurs was their destination, and they came in by the thousands.
- 2 Heavenly music poured from the London Adventist Choral.
- 3 G. Ralph Thompson opened the Ward to 22,000 worshipers. Reinder Bruinsma translated into Dutch.
- 4 Youth from "Utrecht Impact '95" sang outside the main pavillion Friday evening.
- 5 Many attendees felt the need of prayer.
- 6 Spontaneous singing broke out Friday evening in the halls.
- 7 GC publishing director, Rudi Henning, captures the attention of excited German-speaking cradle rollers.
- 8 A crowd of 22,000 jammed the main hall of the Jaabeurs Convention Center.



6

2

Unuzent V Kristusu · Unis En Christ · Vereint In Christus · Unidos En Cristo · Bersatu Dalam Kristus · Umil In Christo · Uedhijet



3

MELISSA SPRINGER



4

KIRBY PATRICK



7

RON GUY



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JEREMY DIERKSEN

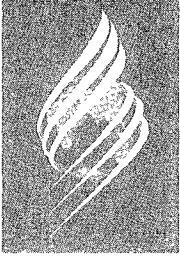


JEREMY DIERKSEN



8

JOEL D. SPRINGER



The Night Jesus Prayed for You



Mark Finley
Speaker/Director,
It Is Written Television
Broadcast

On an April day in the early 1900s the famed *Titanic* sped toward New York. No one knew that it was to be the *Titanic's* last journey! The huge ship hit an iceberg with its engines at nearly full throttle, and it slowly began to sink beneath the waves. Then, in an instant, it was gone. More than 1,500 people died that fateful evening. Many fascinating human-interest stories have emerged from that tragedy.

One story that has deeply impressed me is that of Colonel Gacey. Colonel Gacey's wife couldn't sleep the night of the *Titanic's* voyage. She was thousands of miles from the location of the tragedy in the North Atlantic. As she anxiously awaited her husband's arrival from Southampton, England, on the *Titanic*, she experienced a strange sense of foreboding. She was restless—sleep would not come.

Early in the morning she awoke to pray for her husband. Little did she know that precisely at that hour her husband, thousands of miles away, was struggling for his life in the icy waters of the Atlantic. Freezing, he thought, *This is it—life is over*. Just when he could hold on no longer, a lifeboat appeared out of nowhere. Desperately he grasped the side of the boat. Strong arms pulled him aboard.

Blessed is that man whose wife knows God and prays for him. Blessed is that woman whose husband knows God and prays for her. Blessed are those young people whose parents know God and pray for them.

Keep Him Safe, Please

I had little interest in my father's religion back when I was young. But I remember on those late Friday nights looking through a crack in the door of the small room next to the TV room. And I remember seeing my father with his Bible on his lap. From time to time he dropped to his knees by the side of his old favorite chair, and I listened to the echo of his prayers. "Dear God, please bless my boy. Keep him safe and secure. Lead him to

Jesus." And in my teen years the echoes of my dad's prayers kept me from doing some things that I know I would have done without those prayers.

Blessed is that husband whose wife is praying for him. Blessed is that wife whose husband is praying for her. Blessed are teenagers who, during those traumatic years of their lives, sense that their parents know God and are praying for them. But it is even more reassuring to know that Christ is praying for you.

John 17 is one of the most significant chapters in the Bible: It records Jesus' most comprehensive prayer for His people. In this chapter we listen to Jesus' earnest longing for His people to be saved. Jesus Christ focused His attention in prayer on you. Before Him lay Pilate's judgment hall, the whip and the lash, and Golgotha's hill. Nevertheless, that night in the garden, Jesus was praying for you. He looked beyond Pilate's judgment hall, beyond Golgotha's hill—and He thought of you.

His prayer speaks to us of the greatest love in all the universe. "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1). *Father, that hour has come—the hour of My death and the cross, the hour when the controversy between good and evil will be finally and fully settled.*

The Son of God offered His life as a sacrifice on Calvary's cross. The hour of Jesus' greatest agony was the hour of His greatest glory. The hour of His death was the hour of His glorification. Jesus marched to death, not as a defeated soldier, but as a conquering general. The hour of Christ's death was to be the hour of His greatest glory, because it was the clearest demonstration in the universe of a Father's love. Jesus revealed His matchless love on the cross.

He Got the Message Through

When Jesus Christ was lifted high on a cross above Jerusalem, He got the message through. Satan is a liar. God is love. Divine love would go to any length to save the human race. The prayer of

Devotional
message
presented
Friday
evening,
June 30, 1995

Jesus that night in John 17 is saturated with love.

Jesus made three specific requests for us that night! "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (verse 11). Jesus was thinking about you. He wasn't thinking about the crown of thorns or the nails or the spear that night—He was thinking about you.

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (verse 21).

He prayed for the unity of His church. He prayed for oneness and harmony. The most convincing evidence that Jesus Christ has come into the world is to be seen in the transformations that take place in the hearts and lives of people.

The echoes of that prayer of Jesus reverberate down the corridor of time and speak to my heart as I listen to Him pray, Father, "that they all may be one; . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Earnestly petitioning the Father, He declared, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (verses 15-17).

Jesus was saying, "I do not pray that My followers separate themselves from the world in high-walled monasteries. There will be temptation all around them. They will be enticed to do evil. The attractions of sin will be very real to them. Satan's temptations are not make-believe—they will be tempted on every hand. They will be enticed to forget Me. Their priorities may become confused. Father, I do not pray that You take them out of the world. I pray that in the midst of Satan's fiercest temptations, through the sanctifying influence of My Word, their hearts and minds will be transformed. Father, I pray that through My Word, their minds will be protected from the evil of the world."

Many books are inspiring, but the Bible is inspired. Many books are enlightening, but the Bible is enlightened. Many books are food for the mind, but the Bible is food for the soul. Many

books provide a direction for life, but the Bible provides a power for living.

Jesus was saying, "In the merry-go-round of life, when values are distorted and priorities are confused—in a world where down is up and up is down, in a world that has confused its price tags—fill your mind with truths from the Word of God." And when life gets busy and my priorities are mixed up, I remember a garden, and I remember a night.

A Prayer for Unity

Jesus prayed first for the unity of His church. He prayed second that men and women on the merry-go-round of the nineties, with life whirling by at its hectic pace, would not forget what really counts for eternity. He prayed that they would allow His Word to sanctify them as they spend time reading its pages.

Finally, Jesus reaches the climax of His prayer. In verse 24 Jesus prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Think of what Jesus was facing. Yet He was not thinking of His suffering, pain, and agony. His mind was not filled with what would happen to Him. He was thinking about you. He was thinking about me. Christ knew that beyond

the suffering, beyond the rejection, beyond the death, there was a resurrection morning. Jesus knew that soon He would be going home.

For the first time, He had been separated from His Father. From the very dawning of His human intelligence, He consciously sensed that separation. Yes, He spent time in prayer. Yes, He spent time in devotion. But He was nonetheless separated from His Father for more than 33 years.


On the Mount of Olives He lifts His hands in blessing on His disciples. He is going home now; it is time to leave. And as He lifts His hands, a force greater than the launching power of a thousand rockets, a force greater than the force of gravity, begins to draw Him heavenward. He is going home now.

Humans step off a mountain and go down. God steps off a mountain and goes up. The Creator is greater than the laws of His creation. He begins to ascend from earth to heaven. As the sun illuminates the deep-blue sky and puffy white clouds hang over the Galilean landscape, He is going home.

As He ascends higher and higher, He looks down and sees His disciples standing there. He sees the Sea of Galilee upon which He once walked. He sees Bethlehem and remembers how He was born there in a wooden cradle. He sees Calvary, where He was nailed to a

Issues in Science and Religion • God and Gender • Faith and Learning • Women's Studies • Ideas, Beliefs, and Disciplines • Men and Women Through Women's Eyes • The Christian and Her Culture • Reason, Ritual, and Religion • Inside/Outside: What Makes Somebody 'Other'?

When Simple Answers are not Enough



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wooden cross. He sees Pilate's judgment hall, where He was condemned. He sees the Mount of Olives, where He gave His magnificent sermons. He sees Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. He sees the empty tomb of Lazarus, and as He ascends higher still, He sees His own empty tomb in the garden, with the stone rolled away.

On His Way Home

He is going home. Soon He is out of sight of earth and within sight of heaven. As He ascends, He is met by tens of thousands of angelic beings. The Bible records the chorus the angels sing as they meet their returning Lord. David pictures the scene in Psalm 24. He describes its beauty and majesty. The psalmist pictures this grand and glorious occasion as Jesus is returning home. In majesty and glory and splendor, He is met by angels who begin to sing in chorus—a great antiphonal chorus.

The angels divide into two groups. One group sings the melody, asking a question—and the other sings a harmonious response. The combined voices of countless angels reverberate throughout all heaven. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in" (Ps. 24:7-10).

Listen as one group of angels asks in song, "Who is this King of glory?" And another group responds, "The Lord strong

and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." They do not ask "Who is this King of glory?" because they do not know. They repeat the musical question because they want to sing praises to His name.

The gates of heaven swing open and, surrounded by the rapturous singing of tens of thousands of adoring angels, Jesus Christ enters into the glorious splendor of heaven. And there, standing before Him with arms wide open, is His Father. In that magnificent moment Father and Son are reunited. As they approach each other in the ecstasy of the moment, a hush falls over heaven. Seraphim and cherubim are silent. The angel hosts are quiet now.

The angels prepare to lift their voices again in a rapturous song of praise. But Jesus raises His hands and waves them back. He stands silent before His Father for a moment. Jesus will not yet accept the adoration of the angels. He will not yet accept the warm embrace of the Father. Jesus stands and lifts His nail-scarred hands and says, "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am. Father, I cannot

accept Your warm embrace or the praise of the angels until I know that because of Calvary's cross, because of My sacrifice, My followers on earth will be here

GG SNAPSHOT



With the Adventist Church banned in Communist Albania for decades, 90-year-old Meropi Gjika, for 46 years, evaded the secret police to stash away from her meager resources 24,629 leke and US\$41.00 for a total of \$533.89.

with Me someday." And the Father replies, "Son, the sacrifice is accepted." Immediately the angels strike again the chorus: "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

If that night in the garden—with Pilate's judgment hall and Calvary's mountain before Him, with the nails, the whip, the crown of thorns, and the cross before Him—Jesus thought enough of me to pray for me, He must love me a great deal. And if Jesus loves me so much that on that long-ago day in heaven He would not accept the embrace of the Father—the loving squeeze of His heavenly Dad—until He knew that I would be there, then I want to be there!

When life seems to have little meaning and your head seems to be spinning, when discouragement crashes in on you like waves, when despondency overwhelms you, remember a garden, remember a night, and listen to the echo of the words of Christ, "Father, I will that they . . . be with me where I am."

Remember, Jesus is praying for you! Allow the echoes of His prayer to inspire you not to give up.

If Jesus is praying for you, you can make it, friend. Never give up! Never surrender to Satan's temptations to discouragement. Jesus is praying for you! You can be saved! You can live in heaven forever! He wants you to be there.

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The Lord Has Blessed Us



By L. D. Raelly
President

Five years have elapsed since the last General Conference session in Indianapolis. At that time the world church voted for itself a noble challenge—Global Mission.

Along with its sister world divisions the Eastern Africa Division (EAD) accepted this noble challenge. As part of this global mission emphasis, EAD accepted a goal of 700,000 baptisms by 1995. It was also understood that this baptismal goal was not to be reached only in the areas where the church was already established, but rather that the established church would seek to reach the unreached and establish congregations in totally unentered areas of the division. With this understanding EAD accepted for itself the goal of reaching all of its unentered territories by the year 1995. We thus designed the EAD logo as follows:

Penetration 95 with threefold objective: To Seek, to Reap, and to Keep. The EAD identified 896 unentered areas in 1990, and we are glad to report that by December 31, 1994, with two more quarters to go till the General Conference session, we had entered 710 of these areas, yielding a total of 606,935 baptisms. This leaves us with a shortfall of 186 targeted areas yet to reach and 93,065 baptisms. We are optimistic that the Lord of mission, who has led us through these targeted areas, will lead us into the remaining territories.

Unentered Countries

At the beginning of this quinquennium there were two countries in the division territory that were completely unentered, namely, Somalia and Djibouti. It was our intention, hope, and prayer to enter these by 1995. We are happy to report that as of December 31, 1994, we had a Seventh-day Adventist presence in both these countries. In Somalia we targeted eight areas, and we now have ADRA working in two of those areas. We have established a dental and eye clinic in Djibouti, and to date, 26 people are attending Sabbath services, five of whom have already been baptized. Thus we can say that while we have not effectively established a group of believers in Somalia, we have, in a way, established an Adventist presence in all the countries

(though not yet in all areas, as indicated above) of the EAD by December 31, 1994. We praise God for what He has done with and through us!

EAD laid proud claim to 936,540 members by GC session in 1990. By the second quarter of 1991 we had baptized our one-millionth member. As of December 31, 1994, our membership stood at 1,339,000. This tremendous surge was the result of the combined effort of the entire church—administrators, departments, pastors, laypeople, and institutions.

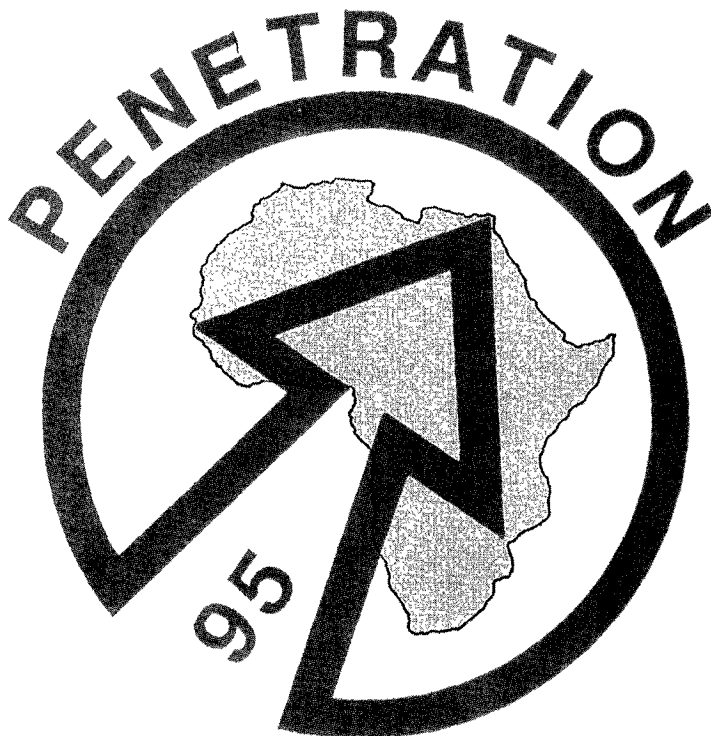
The various departments of the church came together and drew up an action plan for achieving the division's threefold objective: Seeking, Reaping, Keeping. As we look back on the period ending December 31, 1994, and as we reflect on the role that each department played, we discover the following:

► **Ministerial.** Our pastors took a very active part in evangelism. But we recognized also that the pastors themselves needed to be nurtured and motivated for their work. Various retreats and seminars were planned for them and their wives, and notable speakers visited our territory to encourage them. Thus, having been fed, they went out to feed and motivate the flock under their care.

► **The Laity.** EAD is grateful to and for its laity. Motivated and trained by their ministers, the laity went out to seek souls for the kingdom.

► **The Adventist Men of Action** held and financed campaigns in their territories, even going into distant unentered areas to serve as modern missionaries.

► **Adventist Youth** seized the opportunity during the Year of Evangelism and played a vital role in entering unentered areas. However, recognizing that our youth also needed nurturing, various functions were planned for them during the quinquennium. For example, Youth Leadership seminars, culminating in 1994 with a Youth Directors' Seminar, discussing issues that face our youth in the division and laying plans



and strategies for the future. In August 1994 EAD hosted a Pathfinder camporee, which brought together 7,000 young people from our neighboring territories of South Africa and Namibia, and as far away as Papua New Guinea.

► **Dorcas.** Our Adventist women, through the Dorcas societies, served with zeal and enthusiasm. Going beyond the usual humanitarian service, they were the mainstay of evangelism in EAD. In fact, they outdid the men in some unions in their evangelistic activities. We believe this is how it ought to be, since the news of the risen Saviour was first shared by a woman. We salute our women for their contribution to Global Mission.

► **Institutions.** Our institutions played a vital role in training for service and nurturing those within their precincts.

Health. From Djibouti to Botswana, from Uganda to Somalia, the Health and Temperance Department runs hospitals, clinics, and Better Living centers. Numerous services are provided, such as medical, dental, lifestyle, and community health and wellness programs. "In all of these our health work is used as the 'right arm of the message,' to win souls for Christ," writes Dr. Paul Wangai, the division's health and temperance director. Indeed, we can affirm that had it not been for the health work, we would not have pene-

trated Djibouti.

Education. Like its sister divisions, EAD operates schools on various levels. All these schools are engaged in both inreach and outreach programs. We are glad to report that we have made very notable strides toward improving both facilities, and have enjoyed accreditation over the past five years.

As of December 1994 two of our division institutions received their charter from the appropriate governments: the University of Eastern Africa Baraton (UEAB)—from the government of the republic of Kenya; and Solusi University—from the government of the republic of Zimbabwe.

Also, during this period we graduated the first students with Bachelor of Nursing degrees at UEAB, and the first batch of ministers with the Master of Pastoral Ministry degrees at Solusi University. We have also obtained permission from the (Adventist) International Board of Education to run a one-time Master of Science in Home Economics program in order to meet the teaching needs in our institutions.

Publishing. Our publishing houses



Time for public prayer at the session. Pictured from the center are Irene Gilbert and Imogene Thompson, wives of General Conference employees.

and book centers are supplying books to more than 3,960 literature evangelists. These literature evangelists had delivered gospel-packed books worth US\$10.3 million by the end of 1994, and were responsible for 50,860 new believers. We salute our dedicated literature evangelists.

God has blessed in the EAD this quinquennium, and we have every reason to believe He will yet do it again in the coming one.



GC vice president Matthew Bediako (right) met with delegates from the Eastern Africa Division as they caucused to select members for the Nominating Committee.

RON QUICK/ANN

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department



By B. B. Beach
Director

Religious liberty is a fundamental principle of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church and its members do God's will by upholding religious freedom.¹ The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists helps the church fulfill its mission by:

1. Defining and explaining religious liberty.
2. Defending the religious liberty of individuals, church institutions, and the church as a whole.
3. Educating and preparing church members, thought leaders, and others regarding current and future prophetic developments that impact religious liberty.

The Best and Worst of Times

The beginning of this quinquennium was marked by the collapse of totalitarian Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the development of fledgling democracies and market economies in these countries. It is a "grand and awful time." On the one hand, we see unique and exciting new opportunities for mission advance; on the other, we encounter in some parts of the world monolithic, nationwide resistance to the "eternal gospel." To use the words of Charles Dickens, we are living through both the "best" and "worst" of times. Even as the United Nations proclaims 1995 the Year of Tolerance—a concept we support—a thousand and one instances of ethnic and religious intolerance remain.

Violations of Religious Liberty

Although some of the forces inimical to religious liberty have been overcome—at least for the moment—we cannot unstring our religious liberty bow. Many violations of religious lib-

erty still exist: Seventh-day Adventists lose their jobs because of required Saturday work. Interference with public evangelistic meetings in various cities, including death threats, occurs. Adventist pastors have been arrested for preaching the message. Nagging problems persist regarding required school attendance on Sabbath. In one country the Seventh-day Adventist Church is banned. In other countries public church services cannot be held. The media reports misleading and occasionally denigrating stories, sometimes caused by the fanatical and un-Christian activities of misguided individuals on the fringes of Adventism.

Danger Signals on the Horizon

While we thank God for the improved religious liberty situation in many countries, we note danger signals on the religious liberty horizon:

1. A reemerging state church mentality in Eastern Europe and some other places.
2. The growing geopolitical status and diplomatic prowess of the Vatican.
3. The problematic rapprochement between Roman Catholics and conservative Evangelicals in order to execute certain politico-moral agendas that could threaten the separation of church and state.
4. The intensifying opposition of majority churches in certain countries to evangelism/proselytism by minority churches. This is evidenced by efforts to pass laws limiting such evangelistic outreach and through outlandish accusations against the minority churches.
5. A growing nationalism in which nations identify with one religion and threaten minority faiths by promoting "national sovereignty" and oppose recognized "universal human rights."

6. The lack of understanding of religious liberty in many of the 40 nations with Muslim majorities. In most of these countries the conversion of Muslims to Christianity is socially unacceptable. In some countries it is legally prohibited and subject to severe penalties.

7. The awakening of Eastern religions with the concomitant perception that Christianity in general, and Adventism in particular, are expressions of Western imperialism that threaten the national cultural and religious integrity.

8. The rise of intolerant fundamentalism and fanaticism within all major religions as a militant, myopic reaction to modernity, secularism, and moral decay.

9. The forces of antireligious secularism that endeavor to squeeze religion out of societal life and into what they view as irrelevant liturgical activity within the walls of authorized places of worship. There are those who view church schools and church-owned health-care facilities as disruptive of modern social engineering and antagonistic to community.

10. The growing government intrusion into corporate religion through legislation or regulation that could potentially limit the mission of the church.

General Religious Liberty Agenda

Despite reductions in staff, the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department has followed its agenda of fostering religious liberty. It has promoted the free exercise of individuals and church entities. It has established relationships with government and church officials and a presence at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. The Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department uses the defense of religious liberty as an opportunity to acquaint people with Adventism (eliminating false perceptions regarding the church) and works through the International Religious Liberty Associations. It holds seminars, congresses, and workers' meetings, and networks with organizations and individuals that have similar objectives in the religious liberty field. It promotes *Liberty* magazine and *Conscience et Liberté* (including its editions in other languages).

Congresses

New ground was broken during the quinquennium in regard to religious liberty congresses. In 1992 a successful congress was held in Tiranë, Albania, after the collapse of the Communist regime in that country. This was the first human rights congress to be held in Albania—the only nation in history to proclaim itself an atheistic republic. Government ministers and church leaders addressed the congress. Since then, several Seventh-day Adventist churches have been organized in Albania.

In 1993 the first Pacific area-wide religious liberty congress convened at Suva, Fiji. Leading political and religious figures participated in the congress. Press coverage was positive. As a by-product, the congress discussed and critiqued the Sunday law advocated by some segments of Fijian society.

In October 1994 a religious liberty conference convened on the island of Malta. The purpose of the congress was to bring Muslims and Christians of the Mediterranean basin into dialogue regarding religious liberty. Adventists actively participated. The General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department director served as secretary of the conference. The Malta conference resulted in important contacts between Christian and Muslim intellectuals, with a view to understanding better and improving the precarious religious liberty climate south and east of the Mediterranean.

Religious Liberty Balance Modified

In the United States the Religious Right (for want of a better term) has been gaining momentum. Because a number of their candidates won in the November 1994 elections, the religious liberty balance is shifting in the United States Congress. The issues of government-mandated school prayer and state financial support of church schools have now been moved toward the front burner. Interest in accommodating free exercise may have waned. The General Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, in cooperation with the North American Division, monitors such developments in the church-state separation arena.

Deserved Tribute


In closing this report, I would pay tribute to all current Public Affairs and Religious Liberty colleagues in the General Conference and its divisions whose dedication and professionalism make the director's job a rewarding one. Gary Ross has been a knowledgeable watcher of the congressional scene; Samuel Young has made important contacts at the United Nations, especially with the religious nongovernmental organizations; Gianfranco Rossi has been an influence in the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations in Geneva; Mitchell Tyner has brought his legal and administrative expertise to various employment cases and conference management; and Ray Coombe was pivotal in the success of the Pacific region congress. Clifford Goldstein has used his writing skills in support and promotion of religious liberty. Others have contributed in many more ways, such as organizing national religious liberty associations.

Open and Closing Doors

Five years ago at the Indianapolis General Conference session, we stated that we are living in *kairos* time, the New Testament word for a special time of divine opportunity. This is still the case. The doors have opened in countries where they were once closed. However, they are slowly swinging back to a more constricted position. Right now the challenges facing our department are greater, while the opportunities granted the church seem unlimited. Some problems are complicated, but we must fulfill in a proactive way the final gospel mandate of a God whose "purposes know no haste and no delay."² Like the pioneer religious liberty leaders of the church, we have a dream—to be in harmony with God's principles, providences, purposes, and program, anticipating the promised end of the religious liberty controversy and the establishing of God's eternal kingdom. ☰

¹ See *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 714.

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 32.



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No Cunningly Devised Fables

Text: 2 Peter 1:12-21

In 1994 Seventh-day Adventists celebrated the 150th year after the Millerite movement reached its climax on October 22, 1844—an epochal day when they expected the Lord to come.

For the Millerites, the anticipation of the soon return of Christ was sweet in their mouths. They expected to leave this world and be forever with the Lord. They hoped to see the clouds split wide open in a magnificent display of heavenly fireworks, and the Son of God, wrapped in the glory of ten hundred thousand midday suns, come riding down the flaming skies to call His people to their heavenly home. Every sin had been confessed. Wrongs had been made right. The earthly chores were forgotten. Their blessed Lord would soon be here. In a few hours, in a few minutes, it would be reality.

But midnight passed. October 23, 1844, was the true Great Disappointment. The thought of the day was sweet in their mouth, but the fact of it was bitter in their belly, as the book of Revelation states. Their hopes were crushed. Their hearts were broken. Tears flowed freely as strong men wept like babes, along with mothers and children. Jesus had not come!

All that has been written about this event cannot describe the depth of their disappointment. A cold, dismal feeling gripped their hearts! The derision they would face from their enemies would be almost too great to bear.

Out of the Ashes

Yet out of the ashes of their terrible disappointment arose a new biblical hermeneutic. They came to see that the *earth* was not the sanctuary to be cleansed. Daniel 8:14 had another meaning. The sanctuary is in *heaven*. The work of the pre-Advent investigative judgment had begun.

Christ entered into the Most Holy Place, and books were opened. The work of preaching the gospel was not over. The three angels' messages

had to be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

And so it was out of the ashes of the Millerite hopes, smoldering in the dust of October 23, 1844, that the Advent movement, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, arose.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church itself has never, ever set a date for the second coming of Christ. Anyone who does is doomed to failure, for he or she is outside the Word of God. "For ye know neither the day nor the hour," says Matthew 25:13. No, not the angels in heaven. But we Seventh-day Adventists must ask ourselves: Is our *hope* in the coming of the Lord also doomed to failure, as was that of the Millerites?

Will our belief in the coming of the Lord, which has become the warp and woof of the Advent movement and of our name, blow up in our faces?

Is our belief in Jesus' return just a figment of the imagination? Will we too die in despair, never realizing our hope?

Is this Christian belief in the second advent of Christ a prophetic fantasy?

After all, for almost 2,000 years the church has talked about it, preached about it, prayed about it, sung about it, waited for it. Generation after generation of believers have died without seeing its fulfillment. Will it ever come? Or is it simply a superstitious religious speculation?

Hope or Imagination?

We need, every so often, to ponder the enormous implications of this question. Shall we join the skeptics and the agnostics and say "Nothing has changed and nothing will change. Everything will continue as it has done for centuries and millennia"?

Was Macbeth right when he said that life is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing"?

Peter seemed to have sensed the disturbing questions that would arise. He too had experienced the apprehensions of sophisticated Greek audiences, questioning whether the Christians' story of the



Ralph Thompson
Secretary, General
Conference of Seventh-
day Adventists

Devotional
message
presented
Sabbath
morning,
July 1, 1995

Incarnation and the Second Advent was not some figment of the imagination. Some cunningly devised fable.

As we read 2 Peter 1:12-21, let's put our text into its setting. What did Peter mean when he said, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (verse 16, NKJV)?

Many years before, Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John across the fields and up a lonely hillside. Jesus seemed to enjoy the company of these three whenever He wanted to pray and meditate, or when some great event or teaching in His ministry was about to occur.

Going a little beyond them, Jesus, the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, poured out His soul to God, with heartbreaking intensity. For hour after slow-moving, agonizing hour He prayed

prayer. As Ellen G. White puts it in *The Desire of Ages*, page 421:

"While He is bowed in lowliness upon the stony ground, suddenly the heavens open, the golden gates of the city of God are thrown wide, and holy radiance descends upon the mount, enshrouding the Saviour's form. Divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above. Arising from His prostrate position, Christ stands in godlike majesty."

The quaking mountain blazed in the light. It was a miniature dress rehearsal of that great hour when powerful voices in heaven will announce, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15, NKJV).

Suddenly Peter, James, and John awoke. Before their astonished eyes

stood their Master in blazing splendor, enshrouded in the glory of his pre-Earth state. The disciples were completely enraptured by the thrilling grandeur of that moment.

The moment made an indelible impression upon Peter, never to be erased. It was the hard-nosed factuality of that stupendous event that led him to make this categorical declaration:

"We did *not* follow cunningly devised fables; we have *not*

followed sophisticated old wives' tales. We have not declared to you cleverly devised myths or bedtime stories when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (see 2 Peter 1:16).

Peter was saying, "We have actually felt the thrilling rapture of that grand and stupendous hour when Christ with clouds shall come." This was the message of the Transfiguration. No cunningly devised fables here.

And how do we today know that this

is true? We believe it *by faith*. Theologians call this *epistemology*—dealing with the question of how we come to *know*. And it boils down to a matter of faith. We may not always be able to prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt, but we believe it because God's Word says so.

What's the Evidence?

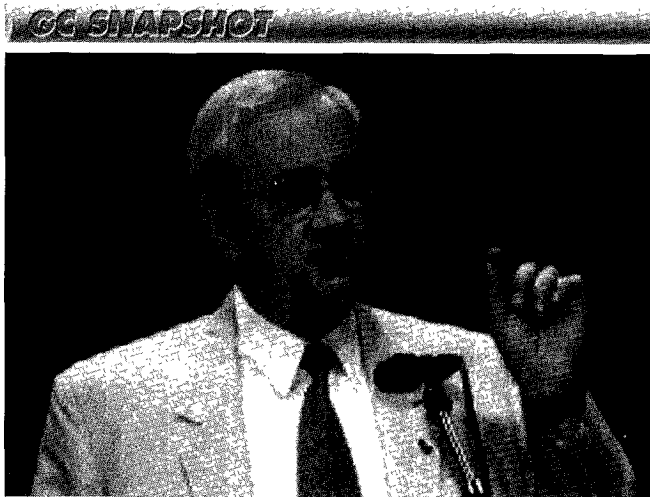
Involved in faith is the weighing and assessing of available evidence. There is an ability of the human mind, a sort of native shrewdness, a capacity to discern sense from nonsense, truth from fiction, fact from fancy, history from fantasy, reality from myth. We can't fully explain it, but the logic of the situation says it is so.

This may explain why some non-Christian nations maintain a policy against Christian witness and the Christian gospel. Some fear that their people will be confronted by a new system of ideas and that the native ability of the human mind to recognize truth, to discern sense from nonsense, truth from fiction, history from fantasy, will suddenly come into play, and that their ironclad non-Christian belief system will come crashing down.

On the other hand, the teachings and claims of the Christian faith have been under scrutiny for nearly 2,000 years. And the Jewish faith, from which it sprang, an additional 2,000 years. Historians, archaeologists, sociologists, and scientists of every description, not to mention biblical scholars themselves, have gone over the Judeo-Christian Scriptures inch by inch, millimeter by millimeter, yet its credibility stands.

We can affirm that we are not following cunningly devised prophetic fantasies when we preach the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

True, you and I have not been eyewitnesses ourselves of His majesty, but the native intuition of the human mind that God has given us has led us to believe the testimony of those who experienced it. Their unequivocal affirmation has come down to us in Scripture, a document whose reliability has remained unshaken by the massive onslaught of hostile critics over the years. Today we can sing with conviction the words of our General Conference theme song:



At one of the Sabbath services Dr. John Erickson, general secretary of the United Bible Societies, underlined the importance of making Scripture available to all peoples in their own language. He was responding to a gift of \$87,000 from the Adventist church to further the work of distributing the Bible.

for strength to endure the test before Him. He prayed that His faith would not fail in the dreadful crisis ahead.

He prayed for His disciples, especially the three sleeping ones who would witness His crushing anguish in Gethsemane.

Jesus prayed that they might behold with human eyes a revelation of His glorious kingdom, a revelation so vivid, so spectacular, so realistic as to sustain them through the dreadful events just ahead.

The Father in heaven heard His Son's

We have this hope—hope in the coming of the Lord.”

We have not followed cunningly devised fables. Seventh-day Adventists will believe the basic fundamental truths that make us a peculiar people, the remnant people of God. We still believe in *creation by divine fiat*, that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and rested on the seventh, which we celebrate today. We still believe the *seventh-day Sabbath* is a sacred memorial, which God set aside and asked us to remember. This reminds us that Jesus is our Creator, Saviour, and coming King. God's law is still sacred and provides the standard for humankind and happiness today.

We still believe in the *two-phase ministry of Jesus Christ* in the heavenly sanctuary. We still believe in the *pre-advent investigative judgment*, which is going on now. No cunningly devised fables here.

We still believe that *forgiveness for sin and salvation are available through Jesus Christ alone*. And salvation is provided as an unmerited favor to all who will accept and follow in His way. No cunningly devised fable here.

Yes, we still believe that the *prophetic basis for Adventism is anchored in God's Word*. The books of Daniel and the Revelation sustain our belief that the Adventist movement was established by God and is a vehicle by which truth is to be taken to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. And when the Great Commission is completed, Jesus Christ will come.

We still believe that the Christian life is an outgrowth of making *Jesus Christ the central reference point of life*. When this is done we no longer measure life, its failures or successes, by the instruments of society around us. Our citizenship is in heaven.

We still believe that *the Christian call is an invitation from God* for us to take our place, to declare our allegiance in a universal drama that is being played out in every life and community. The headlines of the newspapers are but the footnotes of Scripture. Our mission is to draw attention to God, not to ourselves. We become a link in the chain of divine history. The list of faith heroes in Hebrews 11 is continued even in our

day by individuals who demonstrate their faith in God by the choices they make in everyday life.

Yes, we still believe in the entire *27 fundamental points of belief in our church*. We believe that the Christian's destiny begins on this earth but does not end here. God has prepared for us something much more enduring. We are but strangers and pilgrims.

The Advent message is one of expectation and encouragement and hope. It is desperately needed today, especially in sophisticated circles where thinking people understand something of the frightful alternatives facing humanity in these, the closing years of the twentieth century.

There was a time that conservative Christians, especially Seventh-day Adventists, were branded as calamity howlers. Today it is the politicians and secular intellectuals who are the calamity howlers. A mood of pessimism is setting in. We hear it in the words of the late British philosopher Bertrand Russell. Expressing his philosophy in terms of the barren theory of evolution, he contended that humanity is the product of causes that have no prevision of the end they are achieving. He saw humanity's origin, growth, hopes and fears, loves and beliefs as simply the outcome of accidental combinations of atoms. Russell believed that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday bright-

ness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast depth of the solar system, and that the whole temple of our achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins. He says all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy that rejects them can hope to stand.

The apostle Peter does share some of Russell's pessimism. In 2 Peter 3 he does speak of the coming of the day of the Lord in which the heavens will pass away with a tremendous roar. The elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the whole earth, and the works of human civilization will be burned up.

But there is a difference, the great Christian difference. Peter is an ultimate optimist. He says that nevertheless, according to God's promise we look to "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13).

What a privilege is ours today to join Peter in this glorious hope! What a joy it will be to join in the rapture of that thrilling moment when the heavens split wide open and Jesus rides down the azure skies in blazing splendor to wake the sleeping saints and translate the living righteous, and claim His faithful people from all nations.

Let us then, brothers and sisters, remain *united in Christ*. We are God's "rainbow" family, made up of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. ☸

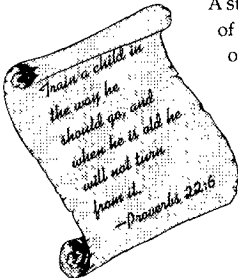
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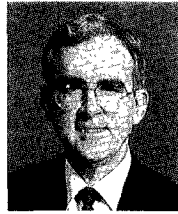
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Church Ministries Department



By Ronald M. Flowers
Director

Created at the 1985 General Conference session in New Orleans, the department of Church Ministries merged four former departments and a service of the General Conference, namely, Lay Activities, Sabbath School, Stewardship and Development, Youth, and the Home and Family Service.

Philosophy

The Department of Church Ministries shares the responsibility for developing a global evangelistic strategy in consultation and harmony with administration and other departments of the church. It challenges the world church with objectives, goals, and plans to take the gospel to all the world. All of its activities are intended to be coordinated into a master strategy for soul winning and for nurturing the church membership.

The philosophy undergirding the department includes the following elements: (1) it is a support ministry to the church; (2) its support is developed through modeling spiritual leadership and training, producing resource materials, and providing consultant services; (3) its assignment is to integrate and coordinate the necessary groupings of specialty functions comprehended within the department: children's ministries, family ministries, lay activities/personal ministries, stewardship and development ministries, Sabbath school ministries, and youth ministries; (4) it enjoys the responsibility of fostering a wholistic ministry involving worship, fellowship, nurture, stewardship, and outreach to provide a coordinated emphasis for the church.

After 1990

Israel Leito, formerly the associate for senior youth, was elected director at the

Indianapolis General Conference session of 1990 and served until December 31, 1993, when he became president of the Inter-American Division. In addition to continuing in his responsibility as codirector of family ministries, Ronald Flowers was elected to serve as department director from January 1, 1994, until the end of the quinquennium. Vice presidential adviser Matthew Bediako has fostered and emphasized a close working relationship with the General Conference administration.

In the face of a waning of specialists in the various aspects of church ministries throughout the world field and a downsizing of the General Conference Church Ministries Department itself, a higher profile was given to the six ministries dealing with children, youth, family, lay activities/personal ministries, Sabbath school, and stewardship. Associates in the department were given the title of director or, in some cases, codirector of their ministries. A world advisory held in February 1991 brought together division directors and associ-

ates with the headquarters team. During this time the world staff shaped the agendas for the various ministries for the quinquennium.

Closer ties and interfacing with other departments were also fostered. In cooperation with the Ministerial Association, a manual for local church elders was developed, and in 1993 the Year of the Pastor was promoted.

Major activities undertaken by the department included the Year of Youth Evangelism (1993), launched with the International Workshop on Youth Evangelism held in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in August 1992, which drew more than 600 youth from all world divisions and led to more than 100,000 youth evangelism projects that resulted in some 400,000 baptisms in 1993. Youth volunteerism expanded to major proportions during the quinquennium as 3,580 young people dedicated themselves to mission service around the world. Well on the way to a million copies, the youth edition of *Steps to Christ*, published for use in the 1993 Year of Youth Evangelism, has been well received worldwide and is available in both English and French from several publishing houses.

The Year of the Family (1994), following the United Nations designation, led to a number of initiatives by family ministries. Research designed to provide demographic data as well as specifics about the functioning of SDA families was initiated in the world divisions. Regional programs, such as the Pan-



The world Church Ministries team, under the leadership of then director Israel Leito, met in 1991 to map the direction of the department for the quinquennium.

African Consultation on the Family in Kenya in 1992 in which 21 countries were represented, the International Family Life Conference in Sydney in April 1994, and the European Conference on the Family at Bogenhofen in August 1994, encouraged a proactive approach by the church in assisting families.

The work of stewardship and development included establishing a process for training and certifying stewardship personnel around the world. Stewardship received new impetus at the Annual Council of 1993, with the mandate to establish stewardship commissions at the various organizational levels of the church to focus on self-reliance within each division. A World Stewardship Summit and Consultation held in March 1994 gave direction to a new thrust for "self-reliance"—attaining self-sufficiency—throughout the world divisions.

Sabbath School Action Units saw tremendous success, especially in Africa and South America, where reports indicate that daily lesson study, attendance, member involvement, tithe, Sabbath school offerings, and baptisms have increased as much as 100 percent in some localities. The 1991 World Sabbath School Curriculum Committee held in conjunction with the world advisory outlined and mandated new Sabbath school curriculum materials for every level. Particular emphasis has been placed on revised materials for cradle roll, kindergarten, primary, and an entirely new curriculum for junior and teen Sabbath school lessons.

Publications

By 1994, in addition to a wide variety of training and resource manuals, regular publications by the various ministries included the new Sabbath school/personal ministries quarterly *Action*, the new family ministries annual *Planbook*, stewardship's monthly *Resource*, youth ministries quarterly publications *Accent* and the new *Journal of Adventist Youth Ministry*, and MiCUS's quarterly publication, *Dialogue*. Sabbath school teacher and student editions of quarterlies and publications included *Adult Sabbath School Lessons* (standard, large print, easy English editions), *Collegiate Quarterly*,

Cornerstone Connections, *Junior Sabbath School Lessons*, *Teen Sabbath School Lessons*, *Primary Sabbath School Lessons*, *Kindergarten Sabbath School Lessons*, and *Mission* (adult, teen, and the new children's editions). The department also produced program helps for cradle roll, primary, and junior/teen Sabbath school leaders.

The General Conference Church Ministries staff during 1990-1995 included: Malcolm Allen (youth); Lyndelle Chiomenti (editor, *Adult Easy English Sabbath School Lessons*, and associate editor, standard *Adult Sabbath School Lessons*); Don Crane (stewardship); Karen Flowers (family); Ronald Flowers (family), elected director in 1994; Erwin Gane (editor, *Adult Sabbath School Lessons*); Charles Griffin (stewardship), elected to conference presidency in 1994; Charlotte Ishkanian (editor, *Mission*), appointed in 1993; Murray Joiner (personal ministries), resigned in 1993; Janet Kangas (editor, *Mission*), resigned in 1993; Andrea Kristensen (editor, *Junior* and *Teen Sabbath School Lessons*); Israel Leito (director, 1990-1993); Ben Maxson (stewardship), elected in 1994; Calvin Smith (Sabbath school/personal ministries); Virginia Smith (children's ministries); Michael Stevenson (youth/music), deceased 1993; Gary Swanson (editor, *Collegiate Quarterly*, *Cornerstone Connections*); David Wong (youth), elected in 1993; James Zackrisson (Sabbath school/personal ministries), elected in 1994. Patricia Habada (curriculum specialist) and Laurell Peterson (Sabbath school production manager) were assistant directors.

What of the Future?

With the intended plan to form four departments in lieu of Church Ministries—Family Ministries, Sabbath School/Personal Ministries, Stewardship, and Youth (and Children's) Ministries—each potential department group has examined goals for 1995-2000.

Sabbath school/personal ministries will focus on church growth and will support four purposes—study of the Scripture, fellowship, community outreach, and world mission—as plans are made for curriculum materials, an

international association of Sabbath school teachers, and an Adventist mission society. Personal Ministries will continue to work with Sabbath schools around the world to focus on promoting the successful small group activity known as Sabbath School Action Units.

Stewardship's goal is "to help the world church grow in its understanding of God's ability to care for His own," and to seek to enhance the individual and corporate walk with God in a complete lordship relationship by fostering a wholistic approach to stewardship ministries based on spiritual renewal, submission to Christ's lordship, and a growing partnership with God. This will involve expanding the stewardship certification program and refining curriculum and core materials to train personnel in spiritual formation.

The overarching objective of family ministries is to strengthen the family as a discipling center. Toward this end, the Adventist Family Survey, launched in 1994, will provide the first international look at the Adventist family through a common research instrument. Preliminary reports are in from sections of seven world divisions. The results of this study are expected to impact decision-making at all levels and to specifically chart the course of Family Ministries in the next quinquennium. In another major thrust, family ministries has convened an interdepartmental task force to address the issues of abuse and domestic violence. This task force will continue to develop materials for pastors and church leaders, seeking to respond appropriately at all levels.

Youth ministry accepts the challenge of ministering to the millions of church members under the age of 30. Plans include major endeavors in developing youth devotional life in 1996, youth leadership in 1997, youth evangelism in 1998, and youth commitment of life and lifestyle in 1999. In conjunction with those efforts, children's ministries will focus on three major goals: ministry to Adventist children, involving Adventist children in ministering to others, and reaching children outside Adventism. ☞

Session Actions

Fifty-sixth General Conference session, June 30, 1995, 2:15 p.m.

TRUST SERVICES—DEPARTMENT OF THE CHURCH

Voted, To approve Trust Services as a department of the church, with a request to the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws Committee to prepare an amendment to the General Conference Constitution to address this matter. (See 119-95Ga)

FAR EASTERN DIVISION—NAME CHANGE TO ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

Voted, To ratify and record the changing of the name of the Far Eastern Division to the Asia-Pacific Division (APD), effective January 1, 1995.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Voted, To approve the Statement of Confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy, as follows:

We, the delegates assembled in Utrecht for the 56th session of the General Conference, express praise and thanksgiving to God for His gracious gift of the Spirit of Prophecy.

In Revelation 12, John the revelator identifies the church in the last days as the "remnant, . . . which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (verse 17). We believe that in this brief prophetic picture the revelator is describing the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which not only keeps "the commandments of God" but has "the testimony of Jesus Christ," which is "the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

In the life and ministry of Ellen G White (1827-1915), we see God's promise fulfilled to provide the remnant church with the "spirit of prophecy." Although Ellen G White did not claim the title "prophet," we believe she did the work of a prophet, and more. She said: "My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there" (*Selected Messages*, Book One, p. 36); "If others call me by that name [prophethess], I have no controversy with them" (*ibid.*, p. 34); "My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people" (*ibid.*, p. 36).

Ellen G White's chief burden was to direct attention to the Holy Scriptures. She wrote: "Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (*Review and Herald*, January 20, 1903). She believed that although her writings are a "lesser light," they are light, and that the source of this light is God.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe that "in His Word God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 7). We consider the biblical canon closed. However, we also believe, as did Ellen G White's contemporaries, that her writings carry divine authority, both for godly living and for doctrine. Therefore,

We recommend, (1) That as a church we seek the power of the Holy Spirit to apply to our lives more fully the inspired counsel contained in the writings of Ellen G White, and (2) That we make increased efforts to publish and circulate these writings throughout the world.

WAIVING THE READING OF ITEMS

Voted, To waive the reading of items presented to the floor, excluding Constitution and Bylaws items, unless determined as being necessary.

NAME—GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

Voted, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Constitution, Article I—Name, to read as follows: Constitution of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

(As revised at the 56th session held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, June 29 to July 8, 1995.)

ARTICLE I—NAME

This organization shall be known as the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (hereinafter referred to as the General Conference).

TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION—GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

Voted, To amend the General Conference Constitution and Bylaws, Bylaws, Article I—Territorial Administration, to read as fol-

lows: Bylaws of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

ARTICLE I—TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 1. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (hereinafter referred to as the General Conference), normally shall conduct its worldwide work through its divisions, each division to operate within a specified territory in harmony with General Conference policies.

Sec. 2. a. The duly organized divisions are: Africa-Indian Ocean Division, Asia-Pacific Division, Eastern Africa Division, Euro-Africa Division, Euro-Asia Division, Inter-American Division, North American Division, South American Division, South Pacific Division, Southern Asia Division, and Trans-European Division. The boundaries of these divisions shall be subject to adjustment only at sessions of the General Conference or at annual councils of the Executive Committee.

b. The duly organized attached union is: Southern Africa Union Conference.

c. Additional territories are: China and Mongolia.

Sec. 3. If a territorial adjustment—No change

Sec. 4. Union conferences and union missions—No change

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE—GENERAL CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

After a very lengthy discussion, it was *Voted,* To table this item until the next business session.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT #2

Voted, To approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee: *General Conference*

Secretary, G Ralph Thompson
Treasurer, Robert L Rawson

DONALD F GILBERT—APPRECIATION

Voted, To express appreciation to Donald F Gilbert for his many years of service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the last ten of which were spent as treasurer of the General Conference. Adjourned.

Robert J Kloosterhuis, *Chair*
Maurice T Battle, *Secretary*
Athal H Tolhurst, *Actions Editor*
Rowena J Moore, *Recording Secretary*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Officers:

Chair: Benjamin Reaves
Secretary: B. Lyn Behrens

Members:

Ajuoga, Oyugi Wilson
Akombwa, Harrington Simui
Alalade, Adekunle
Almonte Vyhmeister, Elie
Andreasen, Niels-Erik
Andreason, Carl
Antic, Radisa
Apolinario, Joao
Aufderhar, Glenn
Bailla, Hla Thein
Baia, Saul Pereira
Balaleya, Robert
Baluku, Mbugha S
Barrientos, Ada M
Bastien, Antonine
Bautista, Eliseo
Baya, Ishmael Yaa Kahindi
Beavers, Rosalind R
Behrens-Basaraba, B Lyn
Benecch, Roberto
Benjamin, Dumas
Best, Pancy Judy
Bietz, Gordon
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Boakye-Dankwa, Gabriel
Bradfield, James T
Branez, Victor
Brooks, Stennett
Bustamante, Martha
Cardoso, Izeas dos Santos
Castillo, Ismael
Castillo, R Ernest
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Correia, Jose Orlando
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Cubenda, Vasco
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de Oliveira, Edgard
de Oliveira, Wandyr Mendes
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Espina, Jeremias E
Fan, Lam Hing
Ferreira, Melchor
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Gasapo, Rufo G
Gayares, Hector C
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Gomez, Raul
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Shim, Tae-Sup
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Suh, Kwang-Soo
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Teckie, G Amlak
Tetteh, Emmanuel
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Tollesa, Tinsae
Tompkins, Joel
Tonge, Joan
Tshimanga, Mulumba
Vano, Teaparetea
Vargas, Carmen
Walemba, Nathaniel
Walter, M Daniel
Wangai, Frederick
Wauilingas, Raffles Eldad
Wellington, Leon B
Wolde Selassie, Trunch
Wong, Robert C K
Yen, Yung Tse Nathaniel
Zehnacker, Maurice

SECRETARY'S REPORT—APPROVAL

Voted. To approve the report of the General Conference Secretary, G Ralph Thompson.

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT—APPROVAL

Voted. To approve the audited financial statement for the General Conference for the years 1990 to 1994, as presented by General Conference Treasurer, Donald F Gilbert and Undertreasurer, Donald E Robinson, and as approved by independent auditor Jack Powers of Manner, Costerisan & Ellis, Certified Public Accountants.

Adjourned.

Calvin B Rock, *Chair*
Mario Veloso, *Secretary*

Athal H Tolhurst, *Actions Editor*

Larry R Colburn, *Proceedings Editor*

Carol E Rasmussen, *Recording Secretary*

Nominating Committee Report—3

Voted. to approve the following partial report of the Nominating Committee:

GENERAL CONFERENCE

General Vice Presidents:

Matthew Bediako

Philip Follett

R. J. Kloosterhuis

Jan Paulsen

Leo Ranzolin

C. B. Rock

ADVENTIST REVIEW

General paper of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

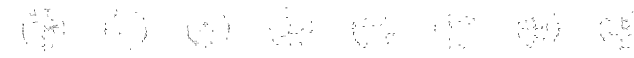
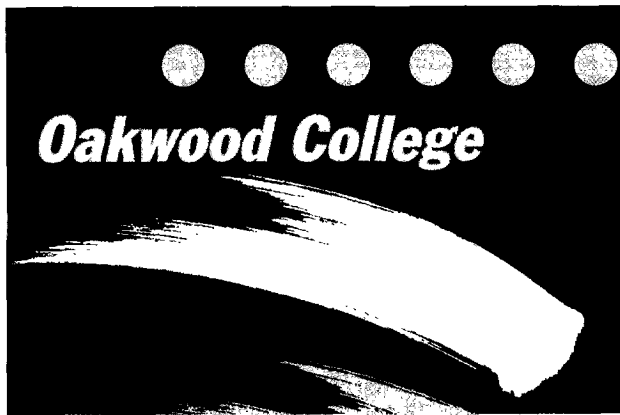
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