

SECRETARY'S REPORT
Annual Council 2002
By Matthew A Bediako

It is my privilege to welcome each of you to the 2002 Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee. It is wonderful to see so many of the Executive Committee members and invitees present this morning. As you know, due to the unfortunate events of a year ago, some of you were advised not to attend the 2001 Annual Council. Because of this, the 2001 Annual Council was shortened and most of the policy items were referred to the 2002 Spring Meeting, which all General Conference Executive Committee members were invited to attend. We thank God for granting traveling mercies to each person present today, and we hope you had a good trip.

At the request of some, we sent the official letter of invitation to you on July 1 instead of in August in order for you to begin working on your visas earlier. Please let us know if you had any difficulty receiving your letter. We would also appreciate it if you would inform us of any address changes.

Let me take this opportunity to commend you on your attendance during the 2002 Spring Meeting. Although it was not 100 percent, there was a great improvement. Once more I am appealing to each of you to be present and on time for all the upcoming business sessions.

You will notice that we only have three and a half days scheduled for this Annual Council. We are counting on your cooperation in successfully executing each item on our agenda.

Once again, I welcome you to the 2002 Annual Council.

Global Mission

With a strong emphasis on the 10/40 Window, Global Mission has kept its focus on starting new congregations in new areas. The challenge of the 10/40 Window was first introduced to the Adventist church at the 1995 General Conference Session. Since then it has been encouraging to see many church entities focusing on this region of the world.

Prior to 1995 there were 1,680,196 Seventh-day Adventist members in the 10/40 Window. Today there are four million members residing in the 10/40 Window. That is an increase of about 240 percent.

Global Mission pioneers have been a major key to unlocking the doors of the 10/40 Window. Their unique ministry has brought tremendous success in places where the Church had previously worked tirelessly with little or no result.

Let us review a few highlights from the work of Global Mission during the past year.

- A large donation from a strong supporter of Global Mission has opened up opportunities for new building initiatives in three regions of West Indonesia. These projects are currently in progress. Initially more than 100 churches, 17 medical clinics, and 15 schools will be built. In 1990, there were 27 unentered segments of one million people in West Indonesia. We are happy to report that all of them have now been entered.
- Likewise, in Myanmar, ASI is organizing and funding the construction of 320 churches and schools. Most of the pastors and teachers will be Global Mission pioneers.
- Finally, Global Mission remains on track to reach its goal of establishing 25,000 new congregations by the year 2005.

Adventist World Radio

Adventist World Radio (AWR) continues to broadcast the everlasting gospel to approximately 70 percent of the territory of the world by means of short wave, FM, and medium wave radio, as well as through the Internet. The programs are prepared in over 50 languages and are broadcasted on eight short wave stations and several satellites. Every day there are 171 broadcast hours, totaling about 1,200 hours per week.

This year is the 15th anniversary of the station on the island of Guam. At this time, five new transmitters are being installed as part of a major modernization project. The first new transmitter went on air for the first time on Thursday, September 26, and it is performing nicely. Also in September, Adventist World Radio completed one year of broadcasting from a Muslim-owned station in the

United Arab Emirates with powerful transmitters that potentially can reach a quarter of the world's population. This was a direct intervention of God since the project in Argentina, Italy was stopped because of government environmental legislation. But God had a plan, and we now have broader coverage and a stronger signal than we would have had from Argentina.

This month, on October 27, Adventist World Radio goes on the air with programs in the Khmer language for Cambodia. Khmer is the primary language for over 7 million people and is a mission language because less than 5 percent of the population is Christian. Most of the Cambodians are Buddhist. Khmer is within the top 100 priority languages in the AWR mission criteria list.

In Africa, Adventist World Radio began in August of this year to supply 30-minute English programs to Namibia once a week on their national radio which is heard all over the country. AWR is sponsoring the development of programs in Moro and Bari for South Sudan. Production for Farsi programs has resumed with the help of Iranian refugees to Turkey.

The impact of Adventist World Radio cannot be completely measured. From the thousands of believers discovered in Vietnam and China to the first public convert in Somalia, the gospel continues to go to the world in the 10/40 Window and beyond. Occasionally, AWR learns of secret believers in places without religious freedom, and it is suspected that there are many more. Much more could be said, but let us pray that the broadcasts of hope continue to fly clearly through the midst of heaven through the medium of radio.

Adventist Development and Relief Agency

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) reports that:

- In Azerbaijan a new commodities grant will support the Integrated Community Development Program being implemented by ADRA to improve the food security of more than 850,000 people.
- ADRA has opened a bakery in Pyongyang, North Korea that produces enough bread to feed 25,000 kindergarten age children two rolls of bread each day.

- To promote economic development, Indonesian farmers have been trained by ADRA in System for Rice Intensification (SRI). This rice cultivating technique allows farmers to grow more rice on less land and has increased production by nearly 100 percent, resulting in more income available from the sale of rice.
- In the primary health arena, 3.6 million dollars have been granted for ADRA's use in child survival projects in Cambodia and Nicaragua. These projects will benefit more than 114,000 women and children affected by extreme poverty.
- Last year ADRA responded to 61 disasters around the world and programmed more than \$500,000 to disaster response. An additional \$230,000 was transferred to Adventist Community Services for the September 11 crisis.
- ADRA assisted Afghan refugees in Pakistan with food, blankets, shelter, and cooking supplies. In addition, approximately 80 tons of humanitarian aid products were delivered to the Northern Province in Afghanistan.
- In Uganda 3,448 adults are now literate due to ADRA's Functional Adult Literacy Program. The students were taught to read, write, and do basic math through practical subjects such as micro-enterprise development, improved agricultural techniques, environmental protection, and improved hygiene and sanitation.
- ADRA is working to rebuild 16 schools, provide classroom supplies, and train teachers in Northern Afghanistan.

Restructuring

During the past four quarters restructuring or reorganizing has occurred in several of the divisions of the world Church.

In the South Pacific Division, there was a major reorganization of the unions resulting in the reduction of the number of unions from five to four. Australia became one union.

In the Inter-American Division, the church in Mexico was restructured into three unions.

During the 2002 Spring Meeting, it was voted to reorganize the church within sub-Saharan Africa into three divisions. As a result of the hard work of the transition team, the officers of the three divisions will be elected at this Annual Council. Sudan will remain within the Trans-European Division and the Euro-Africa Division will continue to care for the work in North Africa. We believe these reorganizations will yield positive results.

Unity

Some of you remember the crisis our church in Ethiopia has gone through. The ethnic tension was such that the church in Addis Ababa, the capital, was closed by church officials for fear of possible loss of life. Elder Benjamin Browne, the new union president, sent the following report:

“In Ethiopia our church was faced with money problems, morale problems, and splinter groups drawing away members from our congregations. There was a great need for revival and reformation, a return to the study of the word.

“The leadership team prayed earnestly for wisdom and special help from heaven to enable them to get the church to move forward. God has solutions to every problem, even special people to fill special needs. Brother and Sister Daniel Lefebo, Ethiopians who live in the United States, wrote to the leadership indicating they would be willing to come to Ethiopia at their own expense and spend many weeks to minister to the church in an effort to bring unity and spiritual awakening to their people.

“The Lefebos worked earnestly with thousands who had joined off shoot groups and preached Christ and His love to all. They reached out in love and compassion to those who had left the organized church. Working and traveling under difficult conditions, they were blessed by the Holy Spirit and today there are many churches and members who have reunited with our official church body.

“The spirit of evangelism has struck Ethiopia. This summer, as a result of the work of 52 evangelistic teams, 623 souls have been baptized with 250 more preparing for baptism.”

Pakistan

After ten years of separation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pakistan, the Issa Nagri church, the largest congregation in the southern section, has decided to reunite with the official church.

The group which formed the new church entity under the name “The Pakistan Adventist Church,” consists of one large church, four branch churches, two schools, and a membership of 500. “We had many hours of reconciliation talks and on Sabbath, August 31, I held a church service there,” reports Ole Kendel, President of the Pakistan Union.

Division Activities

Africa-Indian Ocean Division—In spite of the wars and tensions within the division territories, six major evangelistic campaigns have been conducted. These meetings were conducted by visiting evangelists, including college students from the North American Division and local pastors. Over 27,000 have been baptized.

Eastern Africa Division—Three major campaigns conducted in Nairobi, Kenya, and Zambia resulted in 31,000 baptisms. The division is averaging approximately 40,000 baptisms per quarter.

Inter-American Division—The evangelistic fervor of workers and laymembers of the division has dramatically impacted the entire membership. For the first five months of this year the union reported a total of 140,000 baptisms, bringing the membership to 2,252,715. It is expected that there will be 75,000 more baptisms as a result of the youth satellite campaign in Mexico.

Euro-Asia Division—A 300-member driven church project resulted in:

- 1,478 small groups organized
- 3,854 ongoing Bible studies
- Over 2,000 already baptized as a result of this project and about 200 house churches purchased.

The 300/300/300 project is not just a slogan but is the focus of division activities. Every day at 12:45, regardless of what the members are doing, they stop and spend 15 minutes in prayer. The last Wednesday of each month is set aside as a day of prayer and fasting throughout the division.

Trans-European Division—“Seventh-day Adventists in Europe are renewing their efforts to establish new congregations following a week-long training session of church planters in August,” reports Peter Roennfeldt, TED Ministerial Secretary. “The meeting attracted church leaders, church planting coaches, and about 120 future church planters throughout the division. It was one of the most encouraging experiences in my ministry. This is happening where many have suggested it could not be done. Adventist churches are being revitalized and new congregations are being planted.” About 27 new congregations have been established.

North American Division—Two Festivals of the Laity have been conducted in North America. The one held in Orlando, Florida attracted 8,300 attendees. Over 300 training seminars were conducted to equip the laity for work.

The second one was the NAD Hispanic Lay Festival held in the Los Angeles Convention Center. About 1,000 delegates from across the division who had won two or more souls in the past 18 months qualified to attend. During these meetings, Pacific Press Publishing Association launched the One Million Amigos el Centinela Outreach Initiative. The plan is to have each Hispanic member (120,000) take ten issues of this special edition to ten non-Adventist homes in the communities adjacent to their churches. Thus, they would reach one million non-SDA Hispanics. This is in preparation for the NAD Hispanic satellite campaigns to be launched from Washington, DC in November.

Approximately 30 academies and colleges have been working in New York City since 9-11, with the length of their activity ranging from a few days to many months. Thousands of dollars worth of Adventist literature have been sold and many more thousands given away. The brochure, *Attack on America* by Mark A Finley, has received an Angel Award for print media. In response to that paper, we have received approximately 6,000 calls for Bible studies.

Millions of copies of the *Signs of the Times* special issue entitled *Where Was God?* were printed. Everyone in the state of Minnesota received a copy of this special issue and as a result, 6,000 requests for Bible studies were received.

There are approximately thirty new church plants being developed in New York City. Some of these are a direct outcome of the Church's work there since 9-11. Others were already being planned prior to 9-11.

A Seventh-day Adventist minister and three Bible workers began an underground movement in Muslim-populated areas of North America. They hope to open a Seventh-day Adventist mosque within three years. This movement is being funded by Quiet Hour and Global Mission NAD funds.

South American Division—By means of the “small group approach,” the South American Division is adding new members to the Church and keeping them in. The goal is to have 75,000 small groups in the churches by the end of 2005.

With 10,000 church elders, the “Go One Million” was launched June 21-23. The intent is to prepare and equip 250,000 lay leaders to serve as Bible workers, small group leaders, and evangelists.

On Sabbath, August 10, the two millionth member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South American Division was baptized in Belem. The South America Division has now joined the 2,000,000 member club.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division—During the last four quarters, 58,423 souls have been baptized, bringing the division's membership to 1.2 million.

Bangladesh Union has a growth rate of 11 percent.

The good news from Thailand is that the Lord is opening the doors for the message to reach these people. A group of ministers from other denominations have been in conversation with our leaders. So far, 30 of them have been baptized. Let us continue to pray for this country.

Southern Asia Division—From July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002, 124,422 souls have been baptized bringing the membership of the division to 630,957. This is a new day in the Southern Asia Division. Our sincere thanks and appreciation goes

to ASI and Maranatha International for hundreds of beautiful churches provided for these new congregations.

South Pacific Division—“An ambitious youth satellite evangelistic program has given Seventh-day Adventist young adults in the South Pacific Division a renewed sense of identity,” says Pastor Gervais Cangy, one of the division youth leaders. The program reached 13 countries and attracted over 25,000 viewers each night. In all, there were ten live broadcasts.

The series known as Rezio aimed to encourage young adults to become involved in hands-on ministry through teams or groups of friends. The program has helped the young adults to feel proud of their church and their God.

Northern Asia-Pacific Division—The Language School Program is the largest language school program in the division in terms of student enrolment. The yearly student enrolment is about 100,000 with average baptisms of 1,000. Praise God for the many dedicated volunteers who serve at these language schools.

The work in Mongolia is growing rapidly. This year a branch for the 1000 Missionary Movement was established in Mongolia, and about 35 young people have been trained. There is much enthusiasm to reach out to the unentered places throughout the country.

In May this year, our division executive committee voted to approve the concept of launching the “Pioneer Mission Movement” with the goal of sending out 100 pastors and planting 100 churches during the next seven years.