

From the G.C. President

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1. Report from Maputo: Mozambique, stretching 2,300 miles (3,800 Km) up the eastern Africa coastline from South Africa to Tanzania, was a Portuguese colony until securing independence in 1975. A 2-year honeymoon period quickly degenerated into a bloody civil war between the communist federal government, which controlled the major southern and central population centers, and the RENAMO guerrilla movement controlling most of the northern rural countryside. Thousands of refugees fled into neighboring Malawi. During this period 2 Adventist pastors were killed, 2 were tortured and disfigured, and many members suffered the same fate. Finally, the 1990 "Rome protocol" led first to a cease-fire followed by, what Prime Minister Dr. Mario Machungu described to me as, a "fragile peace."

With massive unemployment, building the social infrastructure and providing basic services dominates both local and international attention. ADRA is providing valuable and acclaimed aid through various programs, including distributing food to 40,000 every month. This food is critical to their survival, for it makes up 90% of their diet.

In spite of strife, the church prospered. From 1975 to Dec, 1992, membership increased from 17,500 to 82,000 (6,000 in the southern mission, 10,000 in central, and 66,000 in the north). Members meet in 483 congregations attended by 115 pastors. According to a year-old report by the 2 pastors who care for them, there are another 9,000 members meeting in 260 congregations in areas still controlled by RENAMO where travel is dangerous.

During 1992, 8,400 souls were baptized, plus the 700 baptized by the 4 pastors working among the refugees in Malawi, plus the unknown in RENAMO areas.

That the Mozambicans are a loving, gracious people was evident during this visit. Elder Ludescher and I met with our believers in the southern, capital city of Maputo. Our next stop was in Beira, headquarters of the central mission, where at our nearby seminary about 20 ministerial students receive pastoral training. From there we bush-hopped in a small aircraft, crossing the Zambezi River (explored by David Livingston) to Quelimane, headquarters of the northern mission, where

members turned out in force for meetings.

The desperate need for chapels is evident. Most congregations can secure land and provide materials with which to raise the walls of a church, but they do not have the US\$3,000 to buy roofing materials. A rough estimate is that 200 or more (without counting those in the RENAMO areas) congregations are in this situation. Soon I will receive an accurate list of places where, if they had roofing materials, they could build a chapel for themselves.

2. Operation "Bearhug:" The North Pacific Union's adoptive relationship with the Russian Union (named "Operation Bearhug") has proved a blessing to both Unions. A recent account of just one conference, the Upper Columbia Conference, reported that during 1992 not only did members in that conference raise over US\$250,000 to build a church, hold evangelistic meetings and support a medical program, in the far-eastern Russian city of Magadan, but 132 volunteers from 46 churches personally went to work in their sister city. The blessings resulting from this demonstration of collective sacrifice abound. In Russia these include: (1) there is now a new church for 400, (2) over 300 were baptized in Magadan alone, (3) 300 attend an English language school, and (4) the entire population knows who Seventh-day Adventists are. Back in the Upper Columbia Conference God's blessings are equally evident: (1) the 1992 tithe increased 10.4% over 1991, (2) 274 sets of Kenneth Cox's evangelistic video tapes have been purchased (total now in the field is 874 sets), (3) 1992 has had the largest number of baptisms in the last decade, and (4) Mission offerings have increased by 6.8%. At a later date I'll give a more comprehensive report about the Union-wide impact of Operation "Bearhug."

3. Korea's publishing venture: In a letter I just received from Elder PD Chun, FED President, he reported that Korea printed and distributed 1,420,000 copies of their 16-page, full-message magazine, in addition to 100,000 each of The Great Controversy, The Desire of Ages, and Mark Finley's, The Almost Forgotten Day.