

**1. Dateline Nepal, a kingdom of opportunity:**

Majestic and spectacular are two of the adjectives which naturally come to mind when one describes this mountain kingdom. Wedged between the twin population giants of China to the north and India to the south, Nepal is the only official Hindu nation on earth. This evening, February 23, I will meet with His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shaha Dev, who is considered by the Hindu population a reincarnation of the god Vishnu and is worshipped as a god, which is why this meeting with a Christian leader is unprecedented. A peaceful "evolution" two years ago led to the establishment of the current democracy which Prime Minister Grija Prasad Koirala described to me as fragile.

The Adventist church is deeply involved in Nepal. Scheer Memorial Hospital, located in Banepa—18 miles from Kathmandu and established 33 years ago—was one of our first contacts in this country of 20 million inhabitants. Under the leadership of Paul and Dawn Dulhunty from Australia, ADRA's influence and that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, have rapidly expanded. Sydney Adventist Hospital is assisting a hospital in Kathmandu and Loma Linda University Medical Center is assisting with the development of a cardiac hospital. Two leprosy rehabilitation and relocation programs, initiated by a North American businessman, have motivated hundreds of young people, from Germany to Japan and from the US to Australia, to dedicate time and resources in short-term mission projects that have changed their lives and those they serve.

Today, the law provides that those who change their religion must spend six years in prison and, on release, sign a statement of recantation. For many years there were few, if any, Nepalese Adventists. Today, however, we have 173 members meeting in three churches and one company. Yes, this is a land of opportunity to demonstrate the gospel...in action.

**2. South Africa update:** December, 1991, the primarily black Southern Union Mission and the largely white and colored South Africa Union Conference merged into one union named the Southern Africa Union Conference. Elder M A Bediako, GC vice-president, recently returned from South Africa and reported that initially, due to Bloemfontein's record on apartheid, there was apprehension about moving the newly elected black and colored leaders into that community. These fears

have turned out to be unjustified. Except for the financial challenges facing the new union, the merger is working very well.

When the unions merged, local field mergers were referred to their respective constituencies. So far, all but one of the conferences have conducted regular or special sessions. All have voted in principle the concept of conference-level mergers. Each is to appoint a taskforce to identify obstacles and find solutions to the problems they face. Generally there is strong support for the merger process among the membership.

To develop a sense of unity among pastors of all races in South Africa, the first countrywide ministerial retreat was held in early February. Non-racial accommodation was planned so that blacks, whites, and coloreds shared the same rooms. This was the first experience for many to sleep and share facilities with someone of a difference race. Genuine, warm fellowship was evidenced as the retreat concluded with a communion service in which pastors of different races washed each others' feet. Thank God for the new day in South Africa. Pray that the process will continue to a successful conclusion.

**3. Loma Linda animal-human heart transplants:**

Despite successful infant heart transplants at Loma Linda University Medical Center, three babies were lost last year and one already this year for the want of a donor heart. Thus, the research in animal-to-human transplantation is gaining renewed emphasis. Performing more than one-third of baby heart transplants worldwide, LLUMC has now transplanted a new one-ounce, life-giving heart into 184 babies under six months of age and 204 in those under one year. Surgeons from all over the world are coming to Loma Linda to learn how to do the microsurgery successfully.

**4. Cuba membership continues growth:** Rex Edwards (GC Ministerial) and Jaime Castrejon (IAD) just completed the first formal continuing education experience in more than 40 years in Cuba. They report that the 1,200 baptized during 1992 marked the highest accession rate (10%) in the history of the Church in Cuba. More than 200 Bible instructors and pastors attended the four-day session—for which they had gathered sufficient food over a three-month period!