

**1. DURING 1994 INTER-AMERICA** will again celebrate the backbone of IAD's growth, with another quinquennial series of regional Festivals of the Laity. I urge laity, pastors, and other Church leaders from other divisions to attend one of these weekends and share in the inspiration of heartbeat from soul-winning laity. The dates and venues for these meetings are: Haiti (July 27-30); Martinique (August 3-6); Jamaica (August 10-13); Colombia (August 17-20); and Mexico (August 24-27). For further information call or write Sergio Moctezuma, Inter-American Division, P.O. Box 140760, Miami, FL 33114-0760, Ph. 305-443-7471.

**2. NO BILLBOARDS FOR DENVER:** Printed Page Ministries, of Troy, Montana, which says it paid for 21 billboards to be displayed in the Denver area during the Pope's visit August 12-15, cries foul over Gannett Outdoor of Colorado's refusal to display any ads attacking the Pope or the Catholic Church, reported the Rocky Mountain News, August 4. The policy has outraged leaders of the Printed Page Ministries. "We paid the money, we have signed the contract, and now they have refused to put them up," said Les Balsiger, director of the Montana group, whose members are mostly dissident Seventh-day Adventists. "I don't want to be un-Christian about this, but this isn't the end of this matter. We could be on the courthouse steps (today)," he said."

The billboards would have had a toll-free number, a picture of the Pope waving, and the message: "The Bible says, 'The man of sin shall be revealed,' II Thess. 2:3." Claudia Dillmon, vice president of Gannett Outdoors, said the agency "rejected the copy for the ads and has returned the payment based on a clause in our contract." The clause allows the company to reject ads that "reflect on the character, integrity or standing of any organization or individual," she said.

Printed Page Ministries will seek a court injunction upholding the contract while it fights the Gannett policy, Balsiger said.

While we continue to understand prophecies such as Dan. 7 and Rev. 12 and 13 as we long have, harsh attacks only generate barriers to our work of proclaiming the gospel and sharing the good news of Jesus' soon return. Such attacks are foreign to the spirit of Christ.

Ellen White advised us, "Be cautious in your labors, brethren, not to assail the prejudices of the people too strongly. There should be no going out of the way to attack other denominations; for it only creates a combative spirit and closes ears and hearts to the entrance of the truth. We have our work to do, which is not to tear down but to build up. We are to repair the breach that has been made in the law of God. It is the nobler work to build up, to present the truth in its force and power and let it cut its way through

prejudice and reveal error in contrast with truth." Evangelism, p. 574.

**3. REPORT FROM CHINA:** Shirley Burton, GC Communications Director, shared some good news with me upon her return from a recent trip to China. While cooperating with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the Church in China has grown 15% during the past 12 months. The 1,900 newly-baptized believers of one congregation attend a standing-room only "church," using primarily what was the bicycle parking lot, even in the below-zero weather of last winter, while those inside are also without heat.

House churches—legal when they are registered with TSPM—abound; worship services around shortwave radios with entire congregations becoming sabbatarians are reported. Lacking countrywide leadership, our believers are not always studying the same Sabbath School lessons. Without quarterlies, they use primarily The Desire of Ages or other books by Ellen White—from study guides prepared by veteran workers and provided only to teachers.

About 45 new Adventist church buildings—30 in Zhejiang Province alone—were erected last year from funds the believers sacrificed to bring together "for God's house," as they call it.

Three-Self officials authorized the printing of 20,000 Adventist hymnals last year. While that was not enough for the 200,000 Adventist believers, they now have granted permission to print more—when money is provided in advance.

They have also given permission to publish The Desire of Ages, and the initial plan is to print 100,000 copies at the cost of around \$1 per copy. This will be the first Spirit of Prophecy book printed with official recognition in China since 1950, and they are giving consideration to publishing other Spirit of Prophecy books.

About 5,000 copies of The 27 Fundamental Beliefs were published and are circulating among young leaders. Despite efforts of the Amity Press, Bibles, too, are in short supply. Amity is the only press in China allowed to print Bibles and other Christian literature.

The favorite song being passed from one group to another is out of Adventist history, "Count Your Blessings." The chorus adds, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one; and it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

Scattered animosity does exist. In one location where Adventist believers had secured TSPM approval for a new church, it was burned to the ground on the Friday night before the Sabbath dedication. Freedom of religious belief is guaranteed by Article 36 of China's Constitution, although free proclamation of that Gospel is generally not allowed outside TSPM churches. Nonetheless, holding

religious faith is no longer a crime in China.