

# From the G.C. President

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**1. PRELIMINARY REPORTS FROM EARTHQUAKE** rocked southern California indicate extensive damage to San Fernando Valley Academy. The principal's home was one of the mobile-park homes shown on television going up in flames. Beyond that, 13 churches have cracked walls, windows, and pipes; 15 more have buckled walls and shifted pillars; and 3 are apparently very heavily damaged. One of them, the University Church, may have to be totally demolished, although the fellowship hall is usable for church services.

**2. TRIP CANCELLED:** With deep regret, after consultation with Africa Indian Ocean leadership and others, our plans to visit Zaire, Rwanda and Madagascar were cancelled. Civil unrest continues to plague Zaire; the economy is in shambles, inflation rates are astronomical. In the last weeks the government removed six zeros from the currency. Some military units, unpaid for months, have been stopping vehicles on streets and highways to rob and pillage. During such disturbances the French ambassador was killed. My itinerary was to have included a gathering last Sabbath in Kigali, Rwanda, to celebrate AID's baptism of the one millionth member. Elder JJ Nortey, AID president, reported they have now reached 1,004,667 members!

**3. MEMBERS OF THE RUSSIAN MAFIA** have come to our seminary in Zaoski on two recent occasions, demanding monthly payments for "protection" and threatening reprisals should these payments not be forthcoming. Staff and students are spending hours together in prayer: for while leadership has counseled with and sought assistance from government officials, it is evident the only real source of protection, in these extremely unstable times through which Russia is passing, is from the Lord Himself. Remember this institution in prayer.

**4. AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES**, raging around Sydney and throughout the State of New South Wales, have not affected any Church-owned properties. However, flames from one fire came within meters of the Hoxton Park Church. Other fires reached within five kilometers of the South Pacific Division Wahroonga headquarters,

and the nearby Sydney Adventist Hospital was placed on emergency alert.

**5. TWO HUNDRED NINETEEN WERE BAPTIZED** at the close of a December crusade conducted in Pantitlán, Mexico, by Mrs. Adly Campos, administrative secretary for the G C Ministerial Association. Many of the 1,600 who studied the Family Life Seminar Bible course are still preparing for baptism.

**6. CHALLENGES IN PAKISTAN**, where less than three percent of the 120 million population are Christians, and only one in every 16,040 is an Adventist, are immense. However, 67 of the 519 baptized during 1993 resulted from youth evangelism. Four new church buildings, housing new congregations established in previously unentered areas, have recently been dedicated. Four more will be dedicated in the next few weeks as part of a Global Mission program to organize 15 new churches by summer, 1995.

**7. PASTOR TURKER OLCER MADE HISTORY** when he conducted the first-ever evangelistic series for Moslems in an Eastern European country. In a town of over 20,000 Moslems, 10 SDA members were almost unnoticed. In one night, with the aid of a taxi driver, Pastor Olcer hung 300 posters advertising the meetings, while the members distributed 8000 brochures.

The mayor's opposition, initially evident during an interview, became fully apparent on opening night when Elder Olcer, members, 80 visitors, journalists, and the police arrived at the rented hall and found locked doors. After much discussion, the visitors demanded that the doors be opened, and eventually they were. This "performance" was repeated during the next four nights before the meetings continued without interruption.

During the meetings 1,000 Bibles, 500 copies of *The Way to Jesus* and 1,500 brochures, all in Turkish, were distributed in the community. Seven visitors enrolled in a Bible study course and, after one week, 23 people stopped smoking. At the conclusion of the evangelistic series, ten Turks and eleven Bulgarians made their decision to be baptized and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.