

From the G.C. President

July 5, 1994

Robert S Folkenberg

1. SEQUEL TO GABON/CAMEROONS VISIT: A few days after returning from the visit to West Africa I described to one of our dedicated lay families the opportunity we have in West Africa to establish a new congregation (with a church building) in all ten of Gabon's provincial capitals, as well as in 30 of the larger villages, within the next year at a total cost of over US\$300,000. Shortly they called me back and agreed to finance the entire project. Immediately the plans to implement this initiative moved into high gear.

Over the weekend of June 25 I had the joy of worshipping with more than 800 denominational employees, now retired, at the annual convention which met this year at Andrews University. I described the invitation the Bamilike Chief, Marcel Feze Nganjong, of Bandekop in the Cameroons, had extended to me the previous Sunday for Adventists to come and establish a church in his village as well as five other villages in the area. It appears that during Sunday's banquet the retirees contributed or pledged most of the funds necessary to establish the six new congregations and assist with chapel construction.

2. CONGRATULATIONS are in order for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. They ordered 85 **CompuServe** kits (and will pay for the monthly service fees) for all their pastors and teachers in order to facilitate communication and as well as provide them access to the rich SDA database that go on line this month.

3. "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ISSUES IN DOMESTIC RELATIONS LAW," a paper by Mitchell A Tyner, associate in the G C Office of General Counsel, was published in The Brigham Young University Journal of Public Law. "Religious beliefs that are unpopular can sometimes be used either explicitly or inadvertently for the determination of substantive rights in all areas of family law," Tyner writes. He appeals for courts to recognize that they can hamper religious freedom unless they look only to the

effects of the religious practices and then apply only those standards they use for other domestic issues.

4. BUDDHIST EVANGELISM CENTER: The goal of Global Mission's Buddhist Evangelism Research Center in Bangkok, Thailand is the development of models for establishing congregations in predominantly Buddhist areas. The Center has recently opened two projects in Laos, a country with little Adventist presence. Center director, Dr Cliff Mayberly, reports seven Sabbath-keeping families are already meeting in one congregation. The Center is also involved in renewing contact with a members disconnected by 33 years of communist isolation. Additionally, the Korean Union and the Buddhist Center are developing plans to re-open the first Christian school in communist Laos. The Seventh-day Adventist church is one of only four denominations officially registered with the government.

5. THE INTER AMERICAN DIVISION leads the world with almost 1.5 million members, which is one Adventist for every 147 in the population. The laity have set the pace for Inter-America's explosive growth by accepting the Biblical responsibility to make disciples of all men and women. One hundred thousand lay evangelistic meetings are scheduled for 1995.

The division recently reviewed their Global Mission strategy and laid plans to implement thousands of actions plans each leading to the establishing of congregations in unentered areas. The will begin "Global Mission Pioneer" program in which volunteers commitment to establish a new congregation.

6. ELDER R L MILNE, passed away in Hong Kong on June 27, a few days before his 98th birthday. A graduate of Canadian Union College, Elder Milne went to China in 1920, subsequently serving in Thailand and then for the past 25 years in Hong Kong. Together with Dr. Harry Miller and Elder E

L Longway, he raised millions of dollars to build two hospitals and a nursing school in Hong Kong.