

From the G.C. President

August 29, 1994

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1. DATELINE LOMA LINDA: The Loma Linda University and Medical Center Boards filled two major leadership positions last week: ! David Moorhead, MD, currently president of Loma Linda Children's Hospital, was appointed to serve as president of the Medical Center and will replace David Hinshaw, MD, when he retires January 1, 1995 after giving 38 years of distinguished service to this institution, ! Brian Bull, MD, chairman of the department Pathology and Human Anatomy, was appointed as Dean of the School of Medicine, and replaces Lyn Behrens, MD, who was provisionally carrying this responsibility, along with that of University President.

2. DATELINE VERACRUZ, MEXICO: After the board meetings in Loma Linda, I flew to the gulf-coast city of Veracruz, Mexico, to participate in one of the Inter-American Division's *Festivals of the Laity*. Since 1979, these festivals have been conducted the last full year before the General Conference Session. This year the series of celebrations have been held in Colombia, Martinique and Mexico with one more scheduled for Jamaica. **Only** those laymen and church-employees who have been active in personal or public evangelism are invited to attend!

About 6,000 delegates attended the meetings, which began Wednesday night (August 24), with well over 10,000 attending the concluding services last Sabbath. Thursday night I tested the premise by asking those who had prepared one or more people for baptism since the last GC Session to stand. Almost every person in the auditorium stood! Then I asked those who had baptized from 1-9 to be seated, and continued increasing the number until, when I reached 80, it seemed to me there were only a few standing. However, when I invited those who had baptized 80 or more to join me on the platform, over 50 people came forward! I interviewed several of these individuals:

! Abraham Gomez, a layman from Campeche, Mexico, reported holding 68 efforts, preparing 414 for baptism and establishing four new congregations.

! Roberto Ramirez, a layman from El Salvador, living in Illinois (US) for a year, prepared 367 souls for baptism, mostly in El Salvador, though he is currently studying with seven families in Illinois and 15 are attending church. ! Carmen Jimenez, from Puerto Rico, told me how when she was bedfast with a serious disease her husband set up chairs in her bedroom and she continued giving Bible studies from her bed and thus far 450 have been baptized. ! Benjamin Morenos, a layman from Chiapas, Mexico, told me of his experiences leading to preparing 772 for baptism and establishing many new congregations of believers, including one in prison.

One of the most moving interviews I had was with Reymundo Ruiz, a layman from Chiapas, Mexico. He accepted the gospel message after leaving his hometown several years ago. Soon, he determined to return and establish a church in his hometown knowing that during

the previous 30 years missionaries, from any denomination, who tried to evangelize that community were run out of town, along with any citizens who had accepted the gospel.

Shortly after he began giving Bible studies he, and the seven who were studying with him, were tied up and placed on a nest of fire ants and left there for 20 hours! Undaunted, Reymundo discovered he was safe from the assassins (who bless their bullets with holy water before attempting to kill a missionary) only when conducting Bible studies late at night. He would leave his home, a four-hour walk away, at 6 p.m., arrive about 10 p.m., to find the house filled with those waiting to study the Bible. He would study with them until 2 a.m. before beginning the four-hour walk back home.

He broke down in tears as he told me how one night the friend who was walking with him back home pointed out that this was the time when most people are sleeping peacefully. He responded that the peace that comes from being an instrument in the hands of God is better than resting in bed. Dedicated laity, whose highest priority is sharing their faith, is the secret of evangelistic success in all sectors of the world where the church is growing rapidly.

3. JUST IN TIME: Run-away inflation, and other business pressures, delayed payment of a Brazilian donor's major funding commitment for the Portuguese *It Is Written* telecast. When they pled with him he responded, "I don't have it and cannot give you anything for at least three months." When they inquired how they would meet the imminent US\$15,000 payroll, he added, "Where is your faith?" and gave them a book on faith and finance. Upon reconciling their bank account to see how much money they actually had they discovered, to their amazement, that a \$15,000 deposit had been made to their account without their knowledge. Tracing the transaction to see if it was a mistake, they learned it had come from a prominent non-Adventist businessman. Several months before the telecast had started showing the name of the bank and account number on the air so donors could make direct deposits and this businessman had been moved to support the broadcast financially and it was discovered just in time for payroll.

4. ANOTHER DEVOTIONAL GEM: "If we are in love with our Lord, obedience does not cost us anything, it is a delight, but it costs those who do not love Him a good deal. Beware of the inclination to dictate to God as to what you will allow to happen if you obey Him." (*My Utmost for His Highest*, O Chambers, Jan. 11)

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