

From the G.C. President

September 26, 1994

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1. VOLCANO ERUPTS: The city of Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, has been evacuated and, though information is sketchy, over 1,500 people are now being cared for at Sonoma College campus, which is 45 Km (28 miles) from Rabaul. Ray Coombe, SPD's Communication director, reported that they are setting up an emergency hospital in the college library. New Britain New Ireland Mission President, Wilson Stephen was one of the last to leave Rabaul just before the major eruption and is now at Sonoma. Another 800 refugees are being cared for down the coast at Kambubu High School, which has good sea access for boats at Rugen Harbor, and they are clearing an unused airstrip which runs through the campus. There is preliminary discussion that Rabaul City, where we have a mission office, staff compound, primary school and several churches, has been so completely devastated that it may not be rebuilt. Papua New Guinea Union Mission ADRA Director, Peter Gwynne in Lae, is working closely with government emergency services and the Red Cross. ADRA South Pacific has allocated A\$40,000 for disaster relief to help provide, food, shelter and medical supplies.

2. INITIATIVE IN CUBA: A group of North American ASI laypersons and General Conference leaders recently met with church leaders in Cuba and planned a group of significant initiatives to strengthen and expand our work in this island nation. These included: ! printing 250,000 *Steps to Christ* (already ordered from the government printing house), ! Renovating 100 existing churches (Maranatha has six projects under way), ! Building 100 new churches (Maranatha has 10 under construction), ! providing 100 sets of Sabbath School felt materials, ! distributing 100 sets of all Ellen White books in Spanish, ! contributing 100 projectors for evangelism, and ! funding 100 lay-conducted evangelistic efforts in unentered areas (many will begin November 1994). A spirit of excitement pervades the church on the island with these plans under way.

3. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FLASH: ! In the face of a great deal of opposition from various religious bodies, especially the "Christian Right," the United States Equal Opportunity Commission has decided to postpone indefinitely any guidelines on religious harassment in the workplace.

! On August 28, the Sunday Trading Act became law in England and Wales. Now for the first time in English and Welsh history, large stores (example, supermarkets) can legally stay open on Sunday for six hours, and small shops for as long as desired. It is clear that in Britain the pendulum is currently swinging away from Sunday laws.

4. WOMEN'S EVANGELISM: Euzenilda Lira, from Abaetuba, Para, Brazil, planned a cooking school as part of the soul-winning program organized by Women's Ministries. The president of a local bank and his wife attended the course, became interested in Adventism and received Bible studies. After being baptized they joined the Global Mission initiative to establish the first Adventist congregation in the unentered city of Abaetuba. Today there is a congregation of 113 baptized members.

5. DEVOTIONAL GEM: "Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of true devotion to Jesus is the service we do for Him. It is easier to serve than to pour out our lives completely for Him. The goal of the call of God is His satisfaction, not simply that we should do something for Him. We are not sent to battle for God, but to be used by God in His battles. Are we more devoted to service than we are to Jesus Christ Himself?" (*My Utmost for His Highest*, O Chambers, Jan 18)

6. I REGRET THE CONFUSION caused when last week's issue of "FTP" went out dated "June 7, 1993," providing additional evidence that infallibility is in short supply.

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