

From the G.C. President

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1. DATELINE INTER-AMERICA CONTINUED: Other elements of progress were apparent during the Inter-American Division Committee meetings last week.

! **Finance**--Funds contributed by Inter-American members through the General Conference to the world Church have for some time *exceeded* the funds received from the General Conference. Becoming a net contributor to the world Church is a significant landmark of growth deserving recognition.

! **Mission offerings**--Inter-American members support of world missions was evident during 1994 as the ratio of mission offerings to tithe exceeded 10 percent and in some unions the ratio was as high as 19 percent!

The division committee also dealt with several very difficult issues.

! **Retirement fund**--An actuarial study, completed just days before the committee met, revealed the retirement fund to be seriously under-funded. As a first step, they voted to **a)** compute contributions to the retirement fund as a percentage of payroll rather than as a percentage of tithe income, **b)** increase the contribution to the fund by all organizations and institutions, and **c)** to review the benefits.

! **Publishing**--The committee voted, effective January 1, 1996, to merge the Inter-American Division Publishing Association and the division publishing department, placing the production *and* distribution of literature under the oversight of the Publishing Association Board.

The trip continued when we flew Friday morning to Kingston, Jamaica, where, with 170,000 Seventh-day Adventists, ours is the largest single denomination on this beautiful caribbean island. On arrival, we went directly to meet with Jamaica's Governor General, Sir Howard and Lady Cooke. Also present was Lady Cooke's sister, who is a faithful Seventh-day Adventist. After other interviews with government leaders, we visited Andrews Memorial Hospital.

On Sabbath, after a nostalgic visit to the North Street Church--built by my grandfather about 60 years ago, I had the privilege of studying the Word Sabbath morning with about 10,000 of our members in Kingston who gathered for worship services.

In the afternoon, a two-hour bus ride brought us to West Indies College, in the cool central highlands of Mandeville. With well over 2,000 students (1,100 college-level) the campus is filled to overflowing and in

desperate need of expansion. Immediately after speaking to our believers I participated, live by telephone, with the Adventist Communication Network (ACN) satellite uplink from Los Angeles which was launching the "Hands Across the World," General Conference Session offering. Then, after the evening banquet, and another two-hour drive back to Kingston, we enjoyed a brief night's rest.

Very early Sunday morning our journey continued to the beautiful Cayman Islands, located between Jamaica and Cuba. In 1990 there were 800 Seventh-day Adventists on the three islands that make up this British Crown Colony. Today, as a result of a strong evangelistic program, we have 1,400 members and Seventh-day Adventists comprise the largest single denomination in this island nation with a population of 27,000. Activities Sunday afternoon included: ! unveiling a monument celebrating Captain Gilbert McLaughlin who, in 1894, became the first Seventh-day Adventist in the Cayman Islands, ! dedicating a new church building, and ! conducting an evening meeting for all our believers.

2. GOOD NEWS FROM PAKISTAN: With one Adventist for every 16,040 people, Pakistan is a major Global Mission target. During the past two years, five new churches have been dedicated and several others are under construction. Five hundred fifteen people were baptized during 1993, 67 of which were a result of youth evangelism.

Recently, 50 Adventist women in Pakistan attended the two seminars, conducted by the Trans-European Division Office of Women's Ministries and the Global Center for Islamic Studies, where Adventist women in Pakistan were taught how to witness to Muslim women. Among the most unreached people in the world are the more than 500 million women who embrace Islam. Their social contacts are very limited and they are forbidden to have contact with any man outside the family circle. A similar seminar is planned for South Africa later this year.

3. EVANGELISM WORKS IN NORTH AMERICA is the conclusion made evident as there are 350 non-Seventh-day-Adventists attending Sabbath services as a result of John Carter's evangelistic crusade at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. Among those is a pastor of a well-known Congregational Church who has requested membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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