

From the G.C. President

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1. A NEW CHURCH-STATE LAW to regulate church-state relations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Republic of Poland was endorsed by all parliamentary factions on October 14. An agreement signed last year with the Vatican threw church-state relations with minority religions into turmoil. The new church-state Bill, one of four reviewed by the Sejm (the Polish Parliament), will guarantee complete freedom of religion and separation of church and state for Seventh-day Adventists. Similar draft legislation was considered for the Methodists and Baptists. With the endorsement of the parliamentarians, the Bills are in the final stage of the legislative process before a vote in parliament, which is expected in the near future.

The legislation will guarantee equality of all religions before the law, something of concern to minority denominations in this predominantly Roman Catholic country. Among the issues of particular interest to Seventh-day Adventists, is a guarantee to recognize Saturday as the holy day (Sabbath) and religious rights for conscripts in the Polish army, including access to chaplaincy privileges. [ANR]

2. SDAS IN US CONGRESS: The new American Congress will have three Seventh-day Adventists, an increase of one. They are: 1) Bob Stump, long-time Congressman from Arizona, 2) Roscoe Bartlett, re-elected to a second term from Maryland, and 3) Sheila Jackson Lee, elected to a first term from Texas.

3. THE MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA is responding to Adventist World Radio (AWR), which is broadcasting almost 15 hours a day in Arabic. Our AWR center is receiving 5-10 letters a day from Muslim writers. A recent letter said: "This is my fifth letter to my favorite station. Thanks to you, I now believe in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and believe He is the Son of God." Another letter stated, "With my warmest greetings, I would like to request a Holy Scripture, because I am very thirsty for it."

4. MORE THAN 3,000 were baptized in Kampala, Uganda, during the evangelistic crusade conducted by Jamaican lay-evangelist, Fitz Henry.

5. MOSCOW REPORT: ! Mark Finley conducted a brief series of decision meetings in Moscow, concluding eight evangelistic series by local pastors. 188 were baptized. At the close of the series, 3,500 attended a Sabbath Convocation at the Dynamo Sports Palace. When Elder

Finley asked those to stand who had been baptized since 1990, 90 percent of the congregation stood! Today we have more than 4,500 Adventists in Moscow.

! A husband-wife team from the Republic of Georgia, baptized during Elder Finley's 1989 crusade, is currently starting a Bible Correspondence School. They returned to their homeland, started a Bible study group in their home, were stoned and shot at, but are not giving up. They have translated some of our literature, including *Steps to Christ*.

! During the last six months, 65,000 pieces of mail were received from throughout the former Soviet Union in response to the *It Is Written* programs which are broadcast weekly on 25 stations.

6. GEM FROM ELLEN WHITE: "Sanctification is the measure of our completeness. The moment we surrender ourselves to God, believing in him, *we have his righteousness...* Christ demands undivided heart-service,.. When we make this surrender, Christ sets our minds at rest, and (*Christ*) *consecrates* our hearts and hands to his service... We reveal his grace in our characters; for we have his life. He presents us spotless before his Father; for we are sanctified through his blood." (*Adventist Review*, July 25, 1899)(emphasis supplied)

7. REFLECTIONS--ON THE WORD: "Make the scripture relevant" is a common refrain. It sounds good. However, interpreted, it frequently means: "Pastor, preach from the latest news headlines, make the worship service entertaining" or "In *my opinion*, that lifestyle issue, the 2300 day prophecy, the sanctuary message or other Biblical truths are optional so why emphasize them."

Pastor, beware of "*making the scriptures relevant.*" As the authoritative voice of the Majesty of the heavens it *IS* relevant. It is *our opinion* about the scripture that's irrelevant. He commissioned us to preach His Word, prayerfully, clearly, lovingly, so that He may "*draw all men unto Him.*" Under the power of His Spirit, preaching His Word, even the good news of the gospel, inevitably causes confrontation with our sinful natures and leads to a decision. We are not called to make the Word popular, but to preach it with power. Remember, we fail most when we fail God. His is the only opinion poll that is of eternal consequence.

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