

From the G.C. President

February 7, 1995

Robert S Folkenberg

1. NAD TITHE & OFFERINGS: The latest report indicates that during 1994 tithe from believers in North America increased 5.7 percent over the previous year while mission offerings reversed a declining trend and increased 2.7 percent. We thank the Lord for our believers in North America and for their faithful support of and commitment to the remnant church, its mission and message.

2. ADVENTIST DIES IN GROZNY, CHECHNYA: Oleg Ismailov, a deacon in the Adventist Church in Grozny, died January 16 from gunfire. He and several others were killed when they were caught in cross fire between Chechnyan and Russian soldiers. Ismailov was 35 and is survived by his wife and two children.

Uriy Bevza, pastor of the Grozny congregation, said, "Oleg died while trying to deliver bread to several families who had been unable to leave their basement hideout for several days."

Of the 61 church members in Grozny last month, 18 are still in the city. Estimates vary widely as to the numbers of casualties from the conflict. Bevza says, "I saw with my own eyes at least 1,500 dead soldiers. It is certain that at least 6,000 people have died and likely many more."

The Adventist church members in the greater Grozny region are working with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to provide emergency relief for those affected by the conflict. The first 17 tons of clothes arrived in Hasayurt in Dagestan, and a second truckload has been delivered to Ingushetia.

3. ADRA ASSISTANCE TO KOBE, JAPAN: The earthquake which struck Kobe, Japan, January 17, left more than 270,000 persons homeless, about 5,000 persons were killed, and 30,000 houses and buildings destroyed. ADRA is distributing water and food to survivors of the quake since, according to Maitland DiPinto (ADRA's assistant VP). "There is virtually no water or food available in Kobe." ADRA has provided \$100,000 to purchase blankets, food and medicines for earthquake victims. A Tokyo Adventist Hospital team was dispatched to the

disaster site to give medical assistance to those who have been wounded or become ill.

An ADRA team arrived in Kobe, January 20, to assess how ADRA can best assist with immediate and long-term needs of the earthquake survivors.

4. SIERRA LEONE'S CIVIL WAR claimed the life of John Bangura, an Adventist nurse at Masanga Hospital. He was killed instantly when, on January 18, a group of rebels shot at the van in which a group of hospital employees were traveling. His companions were able to escape in the bush and reported the tragedy.

5. UTAH'S MONUMENT VALLEY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL, the Church's only mission hospital in North America, struggled for survival with an aging facility and burdened by drastic changes in the health care industry. During 1994 the health foundation receipts increased 38 percent to nearly \$320,000 helping to offset the \$1.2 million in free care the hospital provides to people who cannot afford to pay. The donations will help ! provide an outpatient clinic in the nearby town of Kayenta, ! repair staff homes, ! upgrade communications equipment, and ! obtain fire fighting equipment.

6. MALTA: Recently, the newly established small group of believers (13 members and a pastor) on the Mediterranean Island of Malta were legally recognized by the Maltese authorities. It was an emotional event to establish the Church there since it was the apostle Paul that first evangelized Malta with the gospel.

7. ON A PERSONAL NOTE, away from home most of the month, February's travel began last Sabbath with a well-attended Global Mission weekend at Canadian Union College and continues this week with a series of board meetings including the Media Center, Board of Higher Education, Loma Linda University and Medical Center as well as a series of consultations. I return to Washington for only enough hours to repack and leave on another trip about which I'll say more later.