

From the G.C. President

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1. “SOARING OFF THE CHARTS,” that’s what is happening at the Voice of Prophecy Bible School, according to Lonnie Melashenko, VOP speaker. The Bible school has sent out 100,000 lessons of the new course, called “Discover,” in just the past four months. Last year the cost of lessons and postage was US\$144,000. At the current rate, the cost of lessons and postage during 1995 will be US\$600,000! The sudden surge may be caused by more than just the new course. “There is a deepening interest in spiritual insights,” says Melashenko.

2. PROPHECY COUNTDOWN, a private ministry, recently acquired a shortwave radio station. According to a report I have just received, the speaker last Monday evening announced, in very disparaging terms, that it is not part of our church nor part of the Adventist World Radio. We confirm that position. The spirit and content of some broadcasts of that organization do not represent those of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. Progress in Uzbekistan: The power of the Holy Spirit is evident in the Euro-Asia Division’s most difficult territory—the largely-Muslim Southern Union. The first Korean Church in Uzbekistan was organized last November 26. Today 68 members, plus guests, worship each Sabbath in the city of Tashkent.

Charles W. Cho, accepted the Global Mission challenge to establish an Adventist congregation among the thousands of Koreans living in Uzbekistan. In 1994, 78 students completed a 60-hour course of intensive Bible study after which 48 were baptized. The church-planting program was supported by a visiting Korean team from Loma Linda, California, who provided free medical and dental clinics, a Vacation Bible School, and a two-week evangelistic meeting. Today, the new members meet in their own church which has a seating capacity of 200. Thank God for the sacrifice and ministry of Brother Cho who was willing to follow God’s leading.

4. CHURCH ROOFS NEEDED IN AFRICA: Over 1.1 million new believers have been baptized and joined the Church in Africa since the last General Conference Session. With so many new members,

providing church buildings has become an extremely serious problem. It is a good problem but one that must be urgently addressed. Some may question the necessity of providing a house of worship but experience has taught us that a group of believers that has no place to worship is more likely to suffer membership loss. Most congregations can secure land for a church as well as all the building materials—except the corrugated zinc for the roof. Purchasing tin roofing normally requires hard currency which is frequently almost impossible. The average cost of roofing is US\$2,000 per church.

At this time, in Africa alone, we need roofs for 2,960 church buildings. Many of these already have land and the shell of a building erected. On hearing of this crisis, a family in North America contributed enough to provide roofing for over 500 churches and, as of last week, the first 88 had been roofed.

On my desk, I already have evidence of the first fruits—pictures from Burundi of several new churches. The walls are made from stone or adobe brick and beautifully designed and built by our brothers and sisters. The gleaming tin roofs give the Church a finished look. But for me these pictures are a reminder that we are a world church committed to helping each other complete the commission that has been left by our Lord. I pray that during the next three years the other congregations which are currently meeting outdoors will have a shelter in which to worship.

5. CHECHNYA: Many church members have sought refuge in the Grozny Church which is located near a military airport. When a bomb exploded nearby, the church members remained calm and stayed inside the Church while the neighbors who had packed into the Church began running out of the Church in fear. They returned to the Church just before a second bomb exploded. Once again they ran outside while the church members remained quietly inside. When the neighbors returned a second time they asked the members, ‘How can you be so calm and peaceful when bombs are exploding all around?’ This gave the church members a wonderful opportunity to share their belief that God was their Protector.