

From the G.C. President

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■ **DATELINE CUBA:** After an absence of 45 years, pleasant childhood memories tumbled over each other as the plane landed in Havana, Cuba, last Friday afternoon. Today, we have 13,000+ members among the 12 million inhabitants of this island nation located 90 miles south of Key West, Florida. Our four-day visit was fast-paced and eventful as we met with believers and government officials. Friday night and *all day* Sabbath nearly 2,000 believers attended services in the parliament/convention palace in Havana. Another 4,000 attended services on Sunday and Monday in meetings in Central and Eastern Cuba.

July '94 Maranatha Volunteers International launched an ambitious comprehensive program that included refurbishing all existing churches and building at least 100 new churches and "houses of worship" (a private residence designed with a large room for Bible study and worship). Eighty existing churches have already been renovated. Thirty new churches (including "houses of light") are completed or under construction, and construction permits are in hand for 26 more. Maranatha also plans to build, in addition to the 56 mentioned above, another 60+ churches. Sunday and Monday we traversed the island from one end to the other visiting many of these new facilities. Another highlight was Tuesday morning's ground-breaking for a new Seminary facility on the outskirts of Havana.

Additional projects sponsored by Maranatha include: providing 200 sets Sabbath School felt materials and 100 projectors with Bible study slides, sponsoring 100 evangelistic series and 100 lay evangelistic teams, and printing 250,000 *Steps to Christ* and 1.5 million evangelistic pamphlets.

■ **GLOBAL VILLAGE OPENS IN ROME:** An estimated 4,500 visitors crowded into Rome's Parco Di Via Lemonia to tour the Adventist Development and Relief Agency's (ADRA) Global Village exhibit on May 6 and 7. The one-of-a-kind exhibit, designed to create global awareness and sensitivity to the world community, features 11 full-size habitat reproductions. Opening on May 1, Global Village will be in Rome until May 14.

Deputy Spini, the congressman from Rome's Tuscany district, declared the village officially open. "This project is exactly what Rome needed," he said. "I hope ADRA will be able to take this project throughout Italy to show our children how other children live."

As school children approached the village, their noisy chatter hushed. They listened attentively as guides and habitat live-ins helped them explore full-size reproductions of an African mud and dung hut, a South American favela, a refugee boat, an Asian stilt house, and seven other dwellings. At each stop, students had their "passports" officially stamped.

By the end of their two-hour tour, the children were wanting to take action against this glimpse into poverty. So their last stop was at the Pack-a-box Center, where

they were able to pack boxes with clothes and personal hygiene items for children in Africa. One boy literally took the shirt off his own back and put it into his box. When his mother objected, he insisted he would not leave the village until he could give his shirt for some other child in the world. His shirt is on its way to Africa.

■ **WHAT IF** the world were a village with 100 households
! Six families, making more than \$17,000 annually, would control half the community's income
! Sixty-one families would make less than \$500
! Children in 23 households would not attend school
! Sixty families would live in homes made of mud and salvaged materials
! Half of the households would be hungry
! Fifteen out of 100 babies born would die before their fifth birthday {Share International}

■ **WALK AROUND THE WORLD 2000:** As part of the official activities at the General Conference Session in Utrecht, an inaugural walk, about one mile in length, will mark the beginning of a project designed to create an awareness of the need to live free from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. It is planned that *Walk Around the World 2000* will grow progressively over the next five years, until the year 2000, when hundreds of thousands of our members will join in to literally walk around the world. Additionally, a Youth-to-Youth conference will take place in Utrecht during the opening weekend of the G C Session (June 30 - July 2) to emphasize a drug-, alcohol- and tobacco-free lifestyle.

■ **CAMBODIA UPDATE:** Only two and a half years ago there were no Seventh-day Adventists in the country of Cambodia. So much has happened in these months. Recently, Pastor Daniel Walter, Cambodia Mission director, baptized the 1,000th member. The baptism of the 63 candidates took place in the village of Chong Kai, in the northern part of the Siem Reap province. After nearly 20 years of civil war in Cambodia, refugees who had fled temporarily into Thailand began to return to their native land. Among them were scores of church members who had learned the Adventist message while in the refugee camps. Now that they have returned, they are spreading the Gospel to most parts of the country. There have been no large evangelistic meetings, no radio or television programs. The message has been spread by just simple people, with a clear and comforting message, sharing it with their neighbors and giving their testimony. All this has resulted in the establishment of 44 congregations. Now, in Battambang, through the help of Global Mission, the Cambodia Mission is completing the construction of the first actual church building. Many more are expected to follow. Recently, James Craik and his family arrived from Alaska to supervise the construction of churches in Cambodia.