

From the G.C. President

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O A LIVE BROADCAST TO CHINA, the first ever in AWR's history, highlighted the dedication of a transmitter at the Adventist World Radio facility on Guam on May 16. "Unity in Christ" was the theme of my brief message which was translated by Elder Eugene Hsu, president of the East Asia Association. Hsu reported that the schedule for the live broadcast was announced weeks ago in China, and that church members were anxiously awaiting the event. The new 100,000 watt transmitter (made possible through a family trust, and the gifts of many other AWR supporters) was AWR-Asia's third transmitter and broadcasts programs in four Chinese languages to the 1.2 billion people of China.

I had the privilege to announce to those gathered for the dedicatory ceremonies that another donor offered funds to purchase yet another transmitter of the same power. The addition of this fourth transmitter will complete the original plan for AWR-Asia, which was funded by the 1985 General Conference offering.

The original plan was four antennas and four transmitters but funds were insufficient. However, the board built a structure large enough for four transmitters and installed four antennas. "This was a faith decision," said Walter Scragg, AWR president, "but not blind faith. The addition of the two extra transmitters does not create overhead for the station, since the operation of all four transmitters can be handled by a single operator.

"This station, these transmitters, the broadcast of the Gospel from this facility, all are possible because people had vision," said Kenneth Mittleider, AWR board chairman, before the dedication prayer. The vision for such a radio station actually goes back much earlier, as much as three decades, when people such as HMS Richards Sr. dreamed of a station that would broadcast the gospel to China.

The first opportunity for major international broadcasting came in 1971, using leased broadcast time on Radio Trans-Europe, a privately owned station in Portugal. This was the beginning of Adventist World Radio. The beginning was small: 20 hours a week in 12 languages. AWR-Europe was the only station for nearly a decade. Then in 1979, permission was granted in Guatemala for the first church-owned, short-wave station broadcasting to the Central American countries and the Caribbean. This station is still in operation, and reaping results.

In 1983, leased time on Africa One in Gabon made possible programs in French and English. Though only for an hour each day, these broadcasts have resulted in congregations being formed, baptisms, and the beginning of work among formerly unentered groups of people, such as the Tuarog peoples of Niger.

The year 1985 was another significant milestone: Construction began on AWR-Asia, and new broadcast laws in Italy made possible the construction of a small broadcast center in Forli. This was the beginning of a

decade of growth for AWR:

In 1986, AWR-Latin America added a transmitter, in Costa Rica, to complement the one in Guatemala.

In 1987 AWR-Asia went on the air with 15 languages. Within a few months, baptisms resulted. As of April 1995, the station had received more than 100,000 letters. Baptisms, especially in China, are uncountable, but reckoned in the thousands, based on letters, testimonies, and observers reports.

In 1990, a donor made funds available purchase an existing broadcast facility with transmitters and antennas in Cahuita, Costa Rica, thus quadrupling the potential outreach of AWR-PanAmerica. Currently this station receives about 200 letters a week from Cuba, one of the main target areas.

In 1994, leased time became available on two other former communist transmitters in Russia and Slovakia. The cost of leasing time from the Gabon station became prohibitive, so in 1994 AWR transferred broadcasts for Africa to the Slovakian transmitter, and increased broadcast hours from an hour a day to 12 hours a day in English, French and Swahili.

Today, AWR broadcasts more than 1,000 hours a week in 37 languages from its stations. And so it is fitting, as AWR looks toward its 25th anniversary in 1996, that the additional transmitters on Guam and the planned for larger station in Europe will be magnifying the opportunity for sharing the gospel.

O DATELINE GUAM-MICRONESIA: While in Guam for AWR's inaugural ceremonies, I visited three other islands of the Guam-Micronesia Mission. In addition to meeting with our believers on Guam and visiting our school, we also toured the large Adventist outpatient surgical center and clinic (the oldest and a highly respected clinic, one of only 3 on the island). The clinic staff's commitment to soul-winning, was inspiring. Each year several souls are prepared for baptism by our medical workers.

Our next stop was the island of Chuuk (formerly known as Truk), where our work began in 1973. We met with 30 members and the student missionaries who teach 265 students in our elementary and secondary school.

Eleven student missionaries, who teach at our school on the island of Yap, met us at the airport during a brief stop on the way to Palau. We had the unexpected opportunity to visit our school during the time it took repair one of the aircraft's tires which had blown out on landing.

The spectacularly beautiful island of Palau was our last stop. Adventist influence is great because a) a significant proportion of Palauans are Seventh-day Adventists (1,000 members, and a population of 15,000) and b) because the Queen and her brother the Paramount chief, who are extremely influential as leaders of traditional island government, are faithful members. Their grandparents were the first to accept the Advent message in 1932 when it was brought by a missionary from Japan.