

From the G.C. President

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O HEARINGS CANCELED: Congressional hearings on “religious equality amendment” to the United States Constitution (scheduled for July 17 in Los Angeles) were canceled. According to Alan Reinach, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, hearings were held around the country with the intent of demonstrating a groundswell of public support for an amendment. Instead, there was strong opposition in Tampa, Florida, and in New York City, and some 50 Seventh-day Adventist pastors and more than 300 laypersons were prepared to attend and protest the amendment in Los Angeles. The cancellation of the hearings in Los Angeles reflects the failure of the public hearings to achieve the desired result, says Reinach.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State recently made this statement concerning the attempt to legalize prayer via an amendment. “The so-called ‘Religious Equality’ Amendment in reality is a ‘religious tyranny’ amendment,” Lynn remarked. “Its purpose is not to foster fairness or equality but to gut the First Amendment’s church-state protections. If passed, the amendment will allow public schools to coerce children to participate in daily religious exercises, tax all Americans to support sectarian instruction and permit government to impose religion on people against their will.

“The Bill of Rights has never been altered in all of American history,” Lynn noted. “It has worked well to protect individual freedom. Congress should be ashamed to tinker with our basic constitutional protections in a brazen pay-off to sectarian political interest groups. (John L. Bechtel, *Religion Editor, Sacramento Valley Mirror* - used with permission)

O BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER: Previously, I reported that our Buddhist Study Center in Bangkok, Thailand, has scores of Buddhist monks coming to study religious topics comparing the writings of Buddha with the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible. As a result of the Center’s influence, one Buddhist monk has already accepted the gospel and is now a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Meanwhile another extraordinary event has happened. The conservative Buddhist University, which is located near our Center, has approved assigning a Buddhist “intern” to our Center. All prospective monk-scholars must do a year of “volunteer service,” serving in rural temples, teaching in isolated communities and schools before being admitted to the graduate program. One of the monks studying at the Center asked us to request his services. After much deliberation his assignment was approved. This is the first non-temple internship, let alone to an Adventist “Buddhist Study Center!” As a result, this intern, Phra Nikhom, has become a self-appointed public relations

officer sharing our beliefs and practices with other Buddhist scholars. He has been instrumental in attracting so many more scholars to the Center that we are expanding onto a second floor. Needless to say, it is unusual that this monk, who lives at the famous Temple of the Dawn, goes out collecting alms every morning, then comes and works with us for the rest of the day. It is evident that God has a thousand ways, which we cannot even imagine, of reaching those honestly searching for Him.

O GLOBAL MISSION - TENTMAKERS: Mr. and Mrs. Doty are tentmakers. Tentmakers are really missionaries, like the apostle Paul, who earn their own living while they pursue their real agenda — the soul-winning mission of the Church. *Global Partnerships*, a new ministry operated by the Institute of World Mission located at Andrews University, works to place tentmakers in Global Mission priority areas around the world. This week, Global Partnerships sent their first tentmaker family to South Korea to teach in a secular English language school. Please pray for the Doty family and this new ministry.

O RUSSIAN EVANGELISM: Some months ago 40 members from Nizni-Novgorod, Russia, planned an evangelistic campaign for Pravdinsk, a nearby city with a population of 70,000. They traveled there regularly to work as literature evangelists carefully noting the names and addresses of those interested in the Gospel message. When it was time for the campaign to begin, protesters from the Orthodox Church encircled the building where the meetings were to be held demanding that the meetings be canceled and they also complained to the city leaders. In the interest of public safety the city had no choice but to cancel the meetings. However, Albina Troitskaya, one of our literature evangelists, obtained permission to conduct Bible studies twice a week in the city library. Albania invited all those who had expressed an interest in the Gospel to attend. They were thrilled and amazed to find 200 people at the library waiting for them on opening night! She and the pastor conducted Bible studies for two and a half months and concluded this special “evangelistic series” with a baptism of 40 precious souls. In spite of the difficulties today, there is a Church in Pravdinsk.

O DEVOTIONAL GEM: “Beware of any work for God that causes or allows you to avoid concentrating on Him. A great number of Christian workers worship their work. The only concern of the Christian workers should be their concentration on God... The only responsibility you have is to stay in living constant touch with God, and to see that you allow nothing to hinder your cooperation with Him” (*O Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, April 23*).