

From the President

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

July 27, 1998

UPDATE

Another National Capitol Covered

By Adventist Radio: A new Voice of Hope radio station went to the air June 15 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. This is the 21st country in which the Adventist Church has local AM or FM coverage in a national capitol city. Allen Steele, AWR Vice President for Strategic Planning, reminded me that the Inter-American Division (IAD) has planted stations in 10 capitol cities! The Trans-European Division (TED) has four capitol stations, the Euro-Africa Division (EUD), the South America Division (SAD), and the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) each have two stations and the North American Division (NAD) has one. These stations are located in strategic cities such as Washington, D.C., Rome, Brasilia, Singapore, Stockholm and Oslo. Miodrag Zivanovic, communication director for the Yugoslavia Union, says the new station in Belgrade (using a 1,000 watt transmitter) has a potential listening audience of 4 million people. The FM station broadcasts from studios equipped by AWR in the union office.

A Women's Ministries Update:

Last week Ardis Stenbakken, Director of Women's Ministries, e-mailed an exciting update on WM recent events. Women in the seven unions of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division (AID) held evangelistic meetings and it is estimated that over 15,000 people were baptized. The four days before these meetings were held, church members gathered for all night prayer vigils. In Kananga, in the

West Congo Union Mission, a young woman presented a series of meetings. She preached for three weeks and 420 were baptized including several university professors, former local elders in another denomination as well as a female member of the clergy of that same church, and an army captain and his spouse! The largest number of baptisms from this division-wide outreach initiative was in the West African Union Mission where 5,128 people were baptized.

FOCUS ON FAITH

The Historical-Critical Method: In our second segment we saw that a second reason for the crisis over scripture in the Adventist Church is the gradual acceptance of a modified form of the historical-critical method by some of its scholars.

In 1898, the German theologian Ernst Troeltsch in his essay "On Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" formulated the three basic presuppositions of the historical-critical method: (1) The principle of criticism or methodological doubt, which says that religious traditions must also be subjected to criticism; (2) The principle of analogy, which claims that all events are in principle similar. Thus present experience and occurrence become the criteria for the past. What does not happen today could not have happened in the past; (3) The principle of correlation or mutual interdependence, which states that all historical phenomena rest on a chain of cause and effect. A change

in one phenomenon necessitates a change in the causes leading to it and in the effect it has. (E. Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method*, 1975, p.55).

These presuppositions rule out all miracles and therefore salvation history. Since no one can rise from the dead today, therefore, critics say, Jesus could not have risen from the dead. "And if Christ has not been raised," says Paul, "our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1Cor 15:14)

The impact the historical-critical method has had on the Adventist Church over the last 30 years can be seen in the present pluralism and consequent polarization among Adventist thought leaders around the world. *Christianity Today* in 1990 published an article by Kenneth R. Samples who wrote that Adventism is experiencing an identity crisis due to the theological pluralism which evolved in the 60s and 70s. While we may disagree with his separation of Adventists into Evangelical, Traditional, and Liberal Adventists, we must admit that he is right when he says that "in the 1950s and 1960s, many Adventist students began receiving graduate degrees from non-Adventist universities. In many cases, the schools attended by these Adventists were theologically liberal. Thus Adventist scholars were influenced by modern biblical criticism and liberal theology" (Feb. 5, 1990, p.21). ■

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