

# From the President

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

August 3, 1998

## UPDATE

**Adventist “Beaten for Christ” in Russia:** Disturbing reports have reached us of an Adventist young man being beaten for his faith in Russia.

Yury Salov, part of an outreach team in the Black Sea city of Anapa, was selling literature in a city park when he was approached by two uniformed men from the national Cossack organization. They “arrested” him and took him to their headquarters where he has interrogated and beaten with metal-tipped whips. They confiscated all his books before releasing him.

After his ordeal, Yury said that if his beating brought glory to Christ then he is not sorry for all the pain he suffered.

Valery Ivanov, Global Mission director for the Euro-Asian Division says, “We have appealed to the police, the court and the city prosecutor over this case. All of them are filled with indignation at the Cossacks actions.”

## **ADRA to manage Australian government grant for Bougainville**

The Australian government selected ADRA as the agency to be responsible to oversee its US\$732,000 grant to aid reconstruction work in the South Pacific island of Bougainville. The announcement, made by Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, said that the grant would help restore Bougainville after the ten-year war between government forces and secessionists. ADRA is also contributing US\$128,120 towards the project.

I am delighted that ADRA’s expertise in project management is recognized in this way, and that Adventists are seen as being heavily involved in humanitarian help.

## **PNG tidal wave disaster update:**

We have just received the sad news that 24 out of 52 members in the Arop church in Papua New Guinea died in the tidal wave disaster. In another church, Warapu, 3 children also died. The disaster has claimed the lives of at least 1,600, with over 8,000 now homeless and being cared for by aid agencies, including ADRA. Please continue to pray for the tragic situation in this beautiful land.

## FOCUS ON FAITH

**Modernism:** In segment three we discussed the historical-critical method and its impact on the Adventist Church. In consequence, theological pluralism has entered the Adventist church and is here to stay, at least until the shaking. Nevertheless the church at large has to ensure that this pluralism does not destroy the church. Parameters have to be set, and the voice of the church as expressed at a General Conference, must have the final say, otherwise the church as a world organisation will disintegrate.

We live in a time in which the world is undergoing profound changes, and the church is feeling the effects of it. Values that have come down to us from the past are being widely questioned, both in the world at large and in the church. Among

them such basic values as truth, honesty, and morality.

Since the days of the enlightenment, the world at large, and western society in particular, has grown up under the reign of modernism with rationalism and the scientific method as its two most important pillars. Central to modernism is the belief that because humans are only biological machines, knowledge can only be gained through our five senses. In other words reality and truth is understood by what we see, hear, feel, smell, or taste -- seeing is believing. Modernist thinkers are very optimistic, they believe that just as the natural world has progressed through stages of evolution, so human society will evolve and progress into a bright future, free from superstition, violence and poverty.

While we cannot share this optimism of modernism in the scientific method, we at least share the concept that there is a truth to be discovered. Modernism still controls to a large extent the educational system and the media, but a paradigm change is slowly working its way through the system. The new paradigm is called post-modernism. This shift from modernism to post-modernism is an intellectual revolution which is likely to dwarf Darwinism in its impact on every aspect of thought and culture. ■

Robert S. Folkenberg