

From the President

The Seventh-day Adventist Church

September 14, 1998

UPDATE

Annual Council: In last week's FTP I mentioned some of the preparations that have been made here at the General Conference as we face a thought-provoking and tightly-scheduled Annual Council. On Tuesday I leave for a lengthy itinerary which allows me to visit our church family in Cuzco and Lima, Peru for special anniversary celebrations. From Peru I will make my way directly to Brazil for Annual Council. Next week I will report on church celebrations in Peru and the beginning of A.C. pre-meetings. Once again, let me request your prayers on behalf of church leadership as this important annual business session begins.

News from It Is Written: I.I.W. has been invited to participate in the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN/ENLACE) satellite broadcasts in Spanish to 19 countries of Central and South America. The uplinking will originate from Costa Rica and the Esta Escrito program, alternating weekly with Milton Peverini and Mark Finley professionally voice-dubbed in Chile, began on Sunday, September 6 at 8 a.m. Bolivia time. Within two months, TBN/ENLACE Spanish plans to go on a larger satellite link that will expand to include the United States, Toronto, Montreal, the countries of Western Europe, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. This far-reaching release will eventually allow Esta Escrito to cover 54 countries.

Exciting things are happening in Bangladesh: The number of church members in Bangladesh will double in the next five years, according to current Global Mission plans. Bangladesh is a high-priority Global Mission area, with scarcely 10,000 Adventists among

more than 120 million people. Due to the generosity of a donor who has a passion for the challenging part of the world known as the 10/40 window, G.M. will be allocating \$5 million over the next five years to specific projects within Bangladesh. Already Maranatha Volunteers International are constructing a new academy and orphanage, as well as a training school for lay workers. This money will help establish 100 Adventist Churches in unentered areas, as well as 82 church buildings for new G.M. congregations established since 1990.

G.M. has worked closely with the Bangladesh Union to map out a five-year plan with specific dates for every stage of this initiative.

FOCUS ON FAITH

The Witness of the Septuagint (LXX):

Segment nine dealt with the last two sections of the Old Testament canon -the Prophets and the Writings. By the beginning of the Christian era, the identity of all the canonical books was established and acknowledged. Jesus in Luke 24:44, therefore, could refer to the three divisions of the Old Testament in a way, which indicates that it was well-known and accepted. At that time, the third section was known under the name of the first and largest book in the collection - the Psalms. The term "writings" appears for the first time in the Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b) from the fifth century. Though there is reason to believe that the tradition goes back to the second century A.D.

Between 250 and 150 B.C. the Old Testament was translated into

Greek in Alexandria. This version is called "Septuagint" (from Latin *septuaginta*, "seventy") because seventy-two Jewish scholars supposedly translated it in seventy-two days. It is the earliest known translation of any book into another language.

Prior to the use of codices biblical books were written on separate scrolls and had no specific order. However, once they were bound together in codices, a certain sequence or order had to be established. In the early Christian centuries, when codices were expensive and relatively rare, not only were biblical books bound together, but other books used in worship, or books recommended to be read, were bound with them. Thus the three important LXX codices, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus, contain not only the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament but some of the Apocrypha and additions to biblical books as well. Some scholars, therefore, speak of a wider, or Alexandrian canon. However, there is no evidence that the Jews in Alexandria had a different canon to the Jews in Palestine. "Indeed," says F. F. Bruce, "there is no evidence that the Alexandrian Jews ever promulgated a canon of scripture" (*The Canon of Scripture*, p.45).

The order of the books in the copies of the LXX, which have come down to us, is different from the order in the Hebrew Bible. It is similar to the sequence of books in our Bibles, in each case Daniel follows Ezekiel. ■

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