

Reformation Herald

GENERAL CHURCH PAPER OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT

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EDITION**



The 16th General Conference Delegation Session

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*. . . a picture is worth
a thousand words . . .*



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"THE AGE IN WHICH WE LIVE CALLS FOR REFORMATORY ACTION."
—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488.

Reformation Herald

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In This Issue

Signs of the Times	3
General Gatherings in Romania	7
Why Are G.C. Sessions Necessary?	12
A Historical Event in a Historic Setting	16
Breuberg, Erbach, Miltenberg	21
Reports and Decisions	27
Special Thanks	34
Face to Face With Death	35
G.C. Officers for 1991-1995	36
Delegates to the 16th Session	40



Signs of the Times

THE JEWS in the days of Christ were rebuked because of their inability to read the signs of the times. Jesus said to them: "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Matt. 16:2, 3.

The people of God have never been left without a prophetic clock, which Jesus called "the signs of the times." As God's servants studied the words of the prophets in comparison with a succession of events taking place in history, they were able to identify the days in which they were living and, what is more, they knew what was to be expected in the near future. To the faithful believers, the Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the conquest and possession of the land of Canaan, the Babylonian captivity, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the end of the captivity and the restoration of Israel as a nation, the birth of the promised Redeemer, the second destruction of Jerusalem, the second Diaspora (dispersion of the Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem), the cruel persecution suffered by the Jewish people century after century—these events did not come by surprise; they were expected as a necessary fulfillment of prophecy.

The events foretold by the prophets, by the apostles and by Christ Himself, especially in Matthew 24, in reference to the Christian era, have

also been confirmed in history. Prophecy speaks and history repeats its words in accomplished acts or prevailing situations. Therefore, today, as we look at the prophetic clock, we should be able to read "the signs of the times." Christ said, "When ye shall see all these things [which He mentioned in His prophetic sermon], know that it [His second coming] is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24:33. The things that are going on in the world show, in the light of the prophetic chart, that we are living in the very last days.

Among other events characterizing the latter part of our century, Bible prophecy points out three which are of special interest today:

- 1) the West-European community;
- 2) coalition of the three main powers in the world: Rome (Roman Catholicism), the United States (Protestantism), and state atheism;
- 3) a temporary condition of false peace and security.

1. European Unity

The nations which resulted from the breakdown of the Roman Empire, and which remained divided until recently (Dan. 2:43), are finally uniting. They have vowed to band together by 1992. The effects of this temporary union will be felt, not only in Europe, but around the world. Prophecy says:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings [kingdoms]. . . . These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast [a political power that will be restored in Europe]. . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore [a religious power which is now regaining its former prestige and influence], and shall make her desolate and naked,

and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman [the harlot] which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Rev. 17:12, 13, 16-18.

With reference to what has been taking place in Europe these last three decades, *Time* magazine (Oct. 6, 1961) reported:

"Everywhere, the quarrelsome continent [Europe] is caught up in a quiet revolution of cooperation. . . . The men who run the Common Market seldom forget [their] ultimate purpose: 'Make no mistake about it,' says the European Commission's president, German economist Walter Hallstein, 'We are in politics. We are building the United States of Europe.' . . .

"Like many other revolutionary ideas, united Europe is not a new notion but an old one revived. The dream of order and unity once embodied in the Rome of the Caesars lived on through the Middle Ages, not only in the Catholic Church but in that embattled but strangely viable anachronism, the Holy Roman Empire."¹

Jean Monet, French economist, leading founder and promoter of the European Economic Community, declared: "Once a Common Market interest has been created, then political union will come naturally."

A columnist for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "Europe's history is littered with noble ideas and broken dreams. Now there is a new dream: unity. Twelve European nations, among them countries whose differences dragged the world to war twice in this century, have pledged to complete by 1992 what was once dismissed

as impossible—an end to frontiers and creation of a single unified marketplace.”

Two of America’s most experienced foreign affairs experts have stated that “the European Community’s single market may prove to be one of the seminal events of the latter half of the 20th century.”

2. Confederacy Among the Powers of Earth

“Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.” Isaiah 8:12.

In the book of Revelation, several



political or religio-political powers are brought to view as acting together in these last days:

a) the dragon (Rev. 12:17; 16:13);
b) the beast (we will call it “the first beast”) which is dominated by the “mother of harlots” and whose power is restored by the ten symbolic horns (Rev. 13:1-4; 16:13; 17:1-13);

c) the “mother of harlots” that is carried by the beast and is finally opposed and made desolate by the ten horns, which stand for the ten kingdoms of Western Europe (Rev. 17:15-18; 16:19; 18:2-10);

d) the second beast whose dragon-like voice will finally contradict its lamblike appearance (Rev. 13:11, 12);

e) the image (imitation) of the first beast, which is to be set up under the

auspices of the second beast, in the area where the second beast rules (Rev. 13:14-17);

f) the false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 19:20).

The interaction of these entities will result in three main forces in the world:

1) the dragon (atheistic states);

2) the beast (an oppressive government in Europe will reveal the intolerant aspects of the Holy Roman Empire);

3) the image (facsimile) of the beast, which will be set up in free America when, under the influence of the false prophet (apostatized Protestantism), religious liberty, the most important of all human rights, will be terminated.

of the speakers spoke enthusiastically about the venture, and non-Romanists spoke strongly in favor of union with Rome.

“While the United States of America will form an image [likeness] of [Papal Rome], the United States of Europe will restore [the former prestige and power of] the Papacy itself. There will be a church dominated State operating in both America and Europe. Protestantism will lead out in the new world, and Romanism in the old. . . .

“Protestant America will lead out in coerced homage to [Papal Rome] by enforcing some religious observance [instituted by Rome, such as Sunday-keeping]. Economic boycott and even death itself [Rev. 13:15] will be

“The people of God have never been left without a prophetic clock. . . .”

As can be seen, a comparison between prophecy and history warrants obvious and general conclusions only; an advanced, detailed explanation of prophecy yet unfulfilled would border on speculation and presumption. Nevertheless, the opinions emitted by some Bible scholars should not be ignored. One of the students of Bible prophecy, whose name became well known in Adventist circles, wrote with reference to Revelation 13:12, 16, 17 and 17:13:

“The prophecy explicitly outlines what is now transpiring before our eyes. Some observers have already pointed out that the [European] Common Market is Catholic dominated. . . . Britain, which has been the stronghold of Protestantism in Europe, has already fallen into the Catholic dominated European alliance. . . . In a . . . debate in the House of Lords concerning a One-World Church, most

brought to bear [or threatened] against any one who refuses to receive ‘the mark of the beast.’ And although America, the land of religious liberty, will lead out in enforced religious observance that will be an act of homage to the Papacy, the nations of the earth will follow her example.”

The spiritually bankrupt institutions of the so-called Christian countries are seriously threatened; therefore, church leaders—Protestant, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic—are now working to achieve world-church unity. A joint letter by officers of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. and by the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops’ conference says: “Reconciliation is central to God’s redeeming plan.” Yet “we remain seriously unreconciled under judgment of the word we proclaim. . . . It is clear that God wills a

visible, growing unity for the church.” This doesn’t mean uniformity, they said, but “God does expect a true unity in our diversity.”²

In a prayer meeting with the presence of representatives of non-Catholic churches—Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant—in a Catholic cathedral at Malinas, Belgium, May 18, 1985, Pope John Paul II declared that the ecumenical movement “is irreversible” and deserves “pastoral priority.”

One of the most significant facts in the ecumenical movement is that, after a break of 117 years, America extended her hand of reconciliation to Rome. The United States and the Vatican established full diplomatic relations on January 10, 1984. The changes sweeping across the eastern bloc countries of Europe have resulted in a reconciliation with Rome. The meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and the Pope in December 1989, which testifies to the changes taking place even in the Soviet Union, is another evidence that the powers of the earth are becoming united. The news media reported:

“When the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV decided to seek the pardon of Pope Gregory VII in 1077, he stood barefoot for three days in the snow outside the papal quarters in Canossa, Italy. Though Gorbachev’s concordat with the church was less arduous, it was no less significant in its way.”³

Although Gorbachev did not come hat in hand to the Vatican, as an article in *Newsweek* says, he did issue a public *mea culpa* during a major speech in Rome:

“We have changed our attitude on some matters, such as religion, which admittedly we used to treat in a simplistic manner,” he said. “Now we not only proceed from the assumption that no one should interfere in matters of the individual’s conscience, we also say that the moral values that religion embodied for centuries can help in the work of renewal of our country, too. In fact, this is already happening.”⁴

Gorbachev’s apology was based on facts which are well known to him:

“Until recently, the battalions of Marxism seemed to have the upper hand over the soldiers of the cross. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Lenin had pledged toleration but delivered terror. ‘Russia turned crimson with the blood of martyrs,’ says Father Gleb Yakunin, Russian Orthodox bravest agitator for religious freedom. In the Bolsheviks’ first five years in power, 28 bishops and 1,200 priests were cut down by the red sickle. Stalin greatly accelerated the terror, and by the end of Khrushchev’s rule, liquidations of clergy reached an estimated 50,000. After World War II, fierce but generally less bloody persecution spread into the Ukraine and the

new Soviet bloc, affecting millions of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well as Orthodox.”⁵

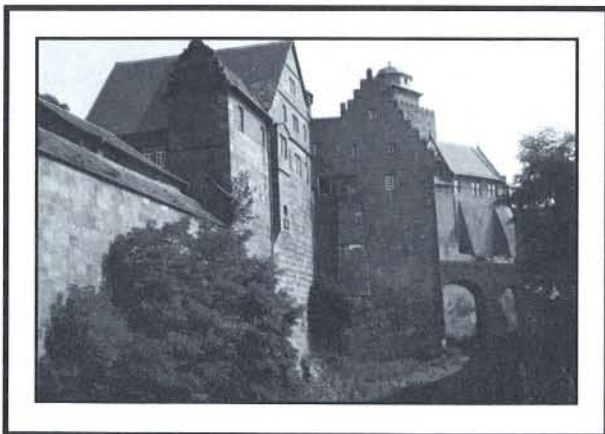
Blessing Gorbachev’s program of Perestroika, the Pope said:

“The Holy See follows with great interest the process of renewal which you set in motion in the Soviet Union. It wishes you success and declares itself ready to support every initiative that will better protect and integrate the rights and duties of individuals and peoples, so that peace may be ensured in Europe and the world.” The Pope insisted that Soviet believers must also have full religious liberty. “As I said many times,” he told Gorbachev, “[religious freedom] is the foundation of other freedoms.”⁶

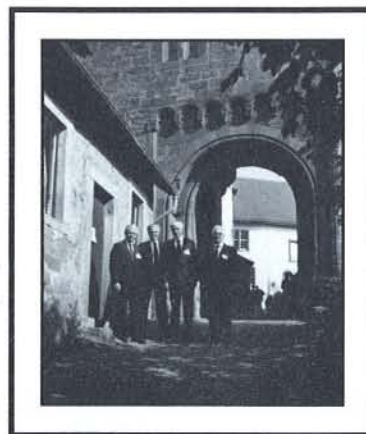
Both the Roman Pontiff and the czar of world atheism wish to be regarded as defenders of religious freedom. Also, in the United States many political and religious leaders may be looked up to as champions in the battle for human rights. They may have noble intentions, but they do not know what will be the result of this movement aiming for church-state unity. Those who keep the law of God will be adversely affected.

The Spirit of Prophecy warns us:

“The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and



Breuberg castle



Brethren going for a stroll

bond (Rev. 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath.”⁷

“Let the watchmen on the walls of Zion not join with those who are making of none effect the truth as it is in Christ. Let them not join the confederacy of infidelity [atheism], popery, and Protestantism.”⁸

3. False Peace and Safety

The main object of the movement toward confederating the political and religious powers is to establish a new world order which would ensure peace and safety.

When President Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev concluded their summit on December 3, 1989, with a friendly joint news conference that shattered Cold War precedent and provided a symbolic start to a new East-West relationship, Bush declared:

“We stand on the threshold of a brand new era in U.S.-Soviet relations. It is within our grasp to contribute, each in our own way, to overcoming the division of Europe and ending the military confrontation there.”

Gorbachev, in turn, declared that the Soviet Union would never start a “hot war” against the United States and that the world was entering “a new era” in which “the arms race” would be relinquished, as well as “the

psychological and ideological struggle.”

On the night of January 29, 1991, President Bush spoke about the progress of the New World Order.

While we are given the impression that the world is heading toward a long period of peace and safety—and we do not deny the noble intentions of some of the political and religious leaders—we know what is actually going to happen, because the prophetic clock pointing to the “signs of the times” has never deceived us. The prophetic word says:

“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Rev. 16:13, 14. “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” 1 Thess. 5:2, 3.

“When He [Christ] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the

sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.”⁹

Are we prepared for what is coming? R

¹ *Time*, October 6, 1961.

² *Roanoke Times & World-News*, January 17, 1987.

³ *Time*, December 11, 1989.

⁴ *Newsweek*, December 11, 1989.

⁵ *Time*, December 4, 1989.

⁶ *Newsweek*, December 11, 1989.

⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 604.

⁸ *SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, p. 1141.

⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.



Brass band from Romania



Some brethren from various countries who previously suffered imprisonment for the truth's sake

General Gathering in Romania

SEVERAL MONTHS before our recent GC session (September 1991), the hospitable Romanian brethren decided to prepare an international general gathering. Invitations were sent out together with a program for a spiritual convention to be held in Ploesti, Romania, August 27-31, 1991. Many delegates and a great number of non-delegates came from various parts of the world. The least we can say is that the presence of the Lord and His holy angels was felt at that unforgettable congress.

In Germany

The majority of the GC delegates from around the world arrived at Frankfurt, Germany, on Friday, August 23, and were lodged at the Hofheim church center, which is situated only a few miles from the Frankfurt airport. It was wonderful to meet some of the

brethren who had attended the 1987 GC session in Brazil and also to see new delegates who were coming to a GC session for the first time. In spite of the language barriers, we all felt—

and still do feel—that we have something in common which binds us strongly together; the love of God in our hearts, “which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things”; the present truth as revealed in Revelation 14:6-12 and the message of reformation (Isa. 58:1-14; Rev. 3:14-20); and the glorious hope of the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Friday evening, for the opening of Sabbath service, the meeting room at the Hofheim center was packed, and even overflowing. Sabbath morning we went to a neighboring town, where we held our meetings in a large assembly hall. After the Sabbath school studies, Brother N. S. Brittain led out in the divine service, directing our attention to the spiritual bridge that each one of us must cross to have life everlasting. Christ has bridged the gap between heaven and earth. He is that “bridge”



Korean quartet



Russian choir

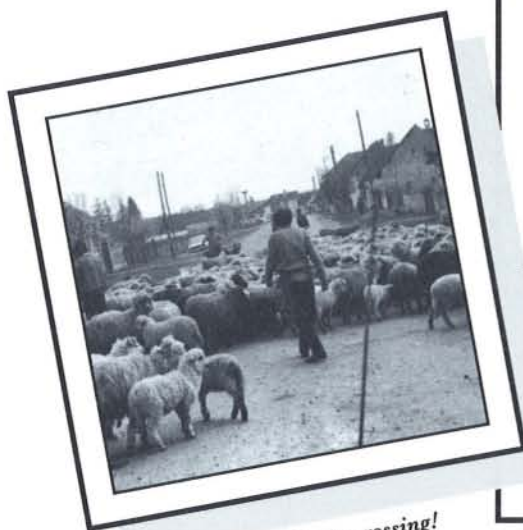


Bro. Bilic (center) from Russia, with translators

which makes salvation possible. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me," He said.

In the afternoon meeting, a number of beautiful items were rendered to the praise of our heavenly Father. Also, we heard interesting experiences from some of the delegates and visitors. One very impressive experience was narrated by Sister Quiroga from Brazil. She told us about what she had gone through as a Catholic nun and how she was converted to the truth. She is now married to Brother Moises Quiroga, a delegate from Brazil, who was instrumental in her conversion.

Conference attendees



Caution — Sheep crossing!



Our trip to Romania

On Sunday morning, August 25, a large, modern double-decker touring bus arrived at the Hofheim church center, and in a short time we—over 70 passengers—were all aboard, on the way to Ploesti, Romania. In about 40 hours we covered a little over 1,000 miles. The trip was interesting. The panoramic scenery was beautiful. We saw many historic places which previously we had only read about or seen in pictures. Vienna, the capital city of Austria, is a beautiful city; so is Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

Towards the evening of the first day we called at Wels, Austria, where some of our brethren and sisters had



Bus for the delegates

graciously provided a nice meal for all. Before midnight we passed through Vienna, where Brother Schlatter, who is from that city, boarded our bus and conducted us on a short historical tour. Monday morning we crossed from Hungary to Romania. At the border we were delayed for a little time because of a bit of red tape—fortunately not too long—which gave us a chance to stretch our legs.

In Romania they still practice the old, natural and healthful way of farming—horse-pulled farm carts, plows pulled by oxen, farmers using a scythe, both men and women making haystacks by hand, etc. And storks can still be seen, in their nests on the tops of chimneys, as if they belonged to the farm house. The winding roads are quite narrow, so the bus drivers had to be extra careful because of the horse-drawn vehicles and domestic animals. All along the road it was common to see flocks of geese wandering the side streets.

As the main road goes through the center of cities, towns, and villages, there was much excitement when the people saw our bus.

Around noon the bus pulled off the road into a field to give us a chance to enjoy our next meal. As SDA Reformers

Brn. Camarasan, Barbu, and Tomoiaga addressing over 3,500 people at baptism



Baptism and fellowship-ment of 105 souls



usually do, we had our own palatable provisions with us, which we were happy to share with one another. The two bus drivers, who seemed to enjoy our company, could see that we were a happy band of missionaries, as we spent much of our time exchanging experiences, quoting Bible texts, singing and also praying.

On arrival at Ploesti around midnight, we were escorted by some of our brethren to the assembly hall and then to the sleeping quarters. We were most grateful for a warm shower, a clean bed, and some sound, refreshing sleep.

In Ploesti

It was a pleasure to meet so many brethren and sisters from around the world, especially those from Romania and Russia, who had suffered oppression and persecution for a long time. One brother expressed that for us (meaning those who live in the western countries) the terrors of World War II

Ploesti, Romania, where over 3,500 souls assembled for the general meetings



Sabbath, August 31

J. Moreno: The Greatest Event in History

had ended in 1945, but for them only in December 1989. They were so happy now to be able to worship God in relative freedom.

Visitors to the conference had come from many countries; three big busloads were from Russia, one was from Yugoslavia, while ours, from Germany, brought delegates and non-delegates from different countries. It was a privilege to be part of an international gathering of God's children.

The assembly hall was an indoor sports stadium with approximately 4,000 seats, all of which were filled during the meetings. The convention was opened Tuesday, August 27, with a welcoming address given by the leading brethren in Romania together with the General Conference leaders. The well-prepared musical items revealed professional skill and heartfelt devotion. The grand theme of the conference was: Jesus is coming again.

Timely and uplifting sermons were delivered by the following brethren:

Tuesday, August 27

- R. Ludwig: The Time to Seek the Lord
- J. J. Barrozo: Signs of Jesus' Coming in the Social World
- W. Volpp: The Middle East, Armageddon, and the End of the World

Wednesday, August 28

- S. Krevatzki: Signs of Jesus' Coming in the Religious World
- N. S. Brittain: Signs of Jesus' Coming in the Health Field
- A. Balbach: "I will take you unto Myself"
- A. C. Sas: Signs of Jesus' Coming in the Scientific World

Thursday, August 29

- D. P. Silva: Our Preparation for the Latter Rain and the Close of Probation
- G. Popek: The Time of Trouble and the Deliverance of God's People

On Thursday, August 29, after lunch, most of the congregation gathered on the banks of the river and witnessed the baptism of 105 candidates. It was a most touching occasion to see so many young people make their covenant with the Lord. In the assembly hall the newly baptized souls stood side by side forming a large semicircle while some of the church leaders extended to them the right hand of fellowship into the church. On this happy occasion we felt that all heaven was praising God for the fact that the door of probation is still open and that the Holy Spirit is still working upon the hearts of men and women who are turning to God with repentant hearts.

Friday, August 30, was left free to allow for preparation for the Sabbath. Most of the delegates were then accommodated in the homes of our brethren in the town of Bucov, at a short distance from Ploesti. The warm hospitality of our Romanian brethren was greatly appreciated.

Many of them live within a walking distance from the meeting place at Bucov, where Sabbath services were held. Friday evening we met there to welcome God's holy Sabbath day and to hear some of the brethren tell their experiences.

On Sabbath morning, August 31, Brother E. Luup conducted the teachers' meeting; Brother A. C. Sas opened the Sabbath school meeting; and Brethren B. Burec and L. A. Araujo led out in the study of the lessons. Then Brother J. Moreno, who was in charge of the divine service, brought to our minds the great need to prepare for Christ's soon coming.

He referred to the early Adventists in the time of William Miller. They really believed that Jesus was coming in 1844, so they gave away their possessions and made everything right with their brethren, their families, and their neighbors. He said that we should be imbued with the same earnestness which characterized the

believers in those days, and should make a thorough preparation for Christ's return, because He is coming very soon.

The afternoon was spent listening to experiences narrated by our Romanian and Russian brethren, who had been persecuted for their faith. Some of them spent years in prison, while others never came out alive.

Returning to Germany

The same evening, around 10:00 p.m., we boarded our bus and began our long journey back to Germany. Some of the delegates and non-delegates traveled by car. One delegate was unfortunate to have had an accident which damaged his rented car and delayed his arrival at the delegation session.

Another brother collided head-on with a wild boar that came running toward him to attack his car. By the grace of God, there were no personal injuries.

The trip back to Germany was quite wearying, as we traveled continually with the exception of a few stops.

During the first night the bus had some trouble caused by dirty fuel. To gain access to the engine, the drivers had to unload all the suitcases. Only then were they able to clean the fuel filters. But, praise be to our heavenly Father, no evil befell any of us.

On our return journey back from Romania we saw, in the daytime, some of the things which we had missed by night when coming to Romania. One of the places that we were now able to see was Budapest, the capital city of Hungary.

The bus bringing us back to Romania took us straight to the ancient citadel and castle of Breuberg, in the Odenwald forest region, Germany, where we met the rest of the delegates.

In closing we thank the Lord for His mercy and goodness, for His protection and guidance. There is no

Reunification Committee singing in Romania



*Romanian choir
and brass band*

doubt that the Lord is with us. Let us therefore press together, form a united front, and do wholeheartedly the work that He has entrusted to us. Time is running out. The world is perishing in sin and we will not have many more days to labor for the salvation of souls. May the Lord hear our prayers and help us and our families, that we may be able to say, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." Isa. 8:18.



Why Are G. C. Delegation Sessions Necessary?

IN ANCIENT Israel there were three yearly feasts for which all the men of the nation were to assemble at the sanctuary (Ex. 23:14-16). After the conquest of the land of Canaan the Israelites held their annual gatherings at Shiloh for a time. Later on Jerusalem became the center of worship for the Jewish people.

In those days it was relatively easy for the tribes of Israel to convene three times a year because the whole nation lived in a small territory. Today, the people of God are scattered practically all over the world, which makes it difficult for them to hold general meetings. All the people do not come together; they rather send their representatives to an official business session once every four years. Besides the business session, there is also a spiritual con-

vention, which is attended not only by the local brethren but also by a number of visitors from other countries.

The importance of general gatherings

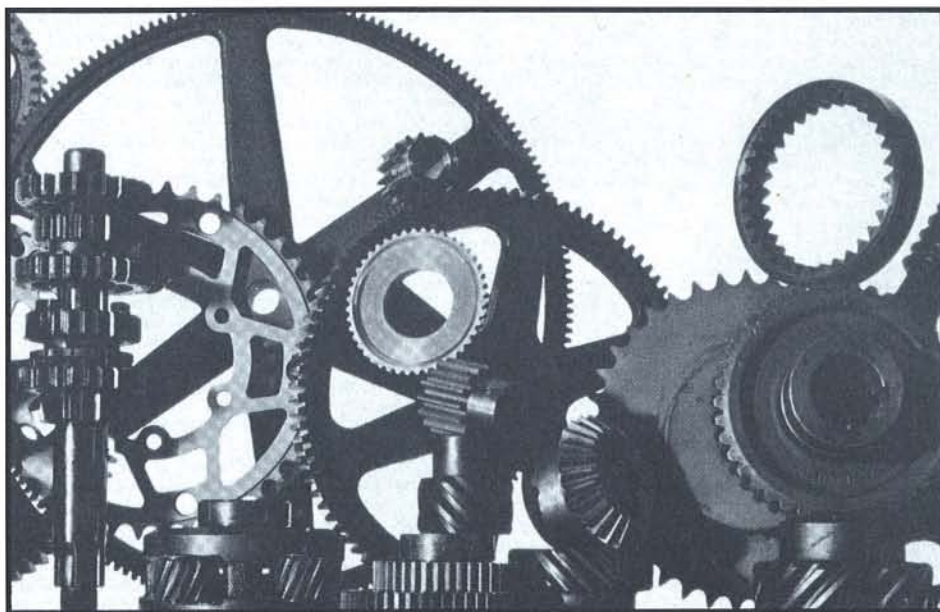
The plan of God for His church, as revealed in Ephesians 4:1-16, demands a general coordination, an international and worldwide interdependence. The church is compared to a human body. There is no room for the idea that in every place or in every country the brethren should be left to develop the work on a local basis, to the best of their ability, without any connection with other parts of the world. Those who have tried to organize and conduct an independent work, excusing themselves with the argument that they do not want to be controlled

and exploited by men, are usually found doing the very things they purport to be fighting against. Contrary to their opinion, their own experience should prove to them that organizational and administrative oneness is as important for the church as it is for an army in the battlefield. This is one of the reasons why we must have periodical gatherings at every level of the work—local church business meetings, state conference sessions, union conference sessions, and General Conference sessions. General Conference sessions are held for different purposes:

Reports

When Paul and Barnabas and other church leaders came to Jerusalem for the first general assembly for consultation and decision on an important issue which was threatening to divide the church, “they declared all things that God had done with them” (Acts 15:4). First of all, the delegates at a conference want to hear official reports about the development of the work.

Keeping accurate records and giving systematic reports is a well-established practice. The local churches send their reports to the state conference, the state conferences submit their reports to the union conference, and the union conferences forward their reports to the General Conference. Also the regional secretaries and GC departmental secretaries send their reports to the GC office and to the GC Council on a regular basis. When a GC session is near, the GC officers

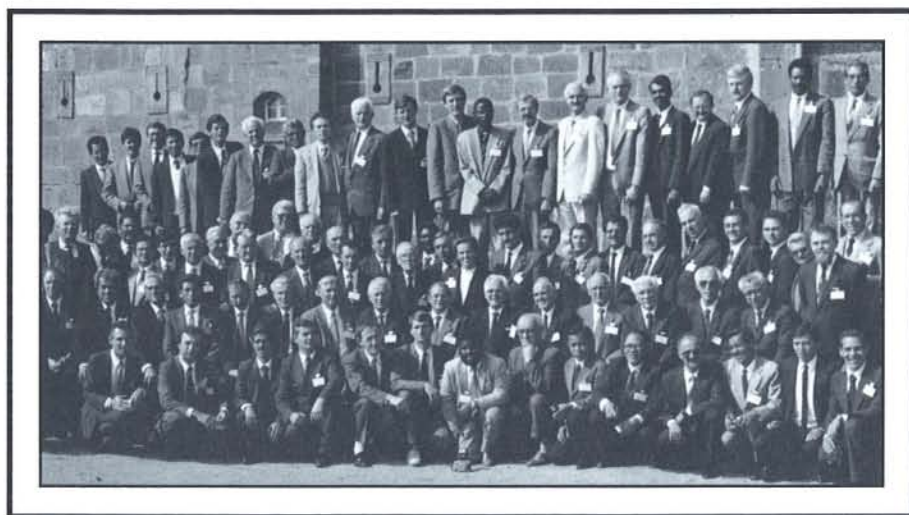


prepare their reports covering a four-year period, from the last conference to the forthcoming conference. In this line, the GC secretary seems to have the hardest job, because he must present a global statistical report including all the unions, fields, and missions. This report must show, not only the present membership, but also the number of new souls added since the previous session, as well as any decreases in membership resulting from death or apostasy. The number of ministers, workers, colporteurs and church employees, as well as church properties and institutions, must also be reported to the GC delegation in session. This shows how important it is for the unions, fields, and missions to send in their quarterly reports regularly.

The first general assembly held at Jerusalem (A.D. 51) contains a lesson combined with a warning. "Not all . . . were pleased with the decision [of the Council]; there was a faction of ambitious and self-confident brethren who disagreed with it. These men assumed to engage in the work on their own responsibility. They indulged in much murmuring and faultfinding, proposing new plans and seeking to pull down the work of the men whom God had ordained to teach the gospel message."⁴ Their teaching to those converted from among the Gentiles was: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts 15:1.

Indeed, there have always been some discordant brethren in the church. Even today there may be some who, out of some nonessential burden, want to formulate an additional test of fellowship and point of salvation; who consider as apostatized those who do not support their personal views; who put their own conclusions above the decisions of the general council of believers. "From the first the church has had such obstacles to meet and ever will have till the close of time."⁵ Let us heed the warning.

"The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions



A total of 109 delegates were present

"Those who know not God cannot comprehend His movements. There is at work a wheel within a wheel. Apparently the complication of machinery is so intricate that man can see only a complete entanglement. But the divine hand, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel, is placed upon the wheels, and every part moves in complete harmony, each doing its specified work, yet with individual freedom of action."

of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body. There have ever been individuals of independent minds who have claimed that they were right, that God had especially taught, impressed, and led them. Each has a theory of his own, views peculiar to himself, and each claims that his views are in accordance with the word of God."⁶

"In the church at Antioch the consideration of the question of circumcision resulted in much discussion and contention. Finally, the members of the church, fearing that a division among them would be the outcome of continued discussion, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, with some responsible men from the church, to Jerusalem to lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to

meet delegates from the different churches. . . . Meanwhile all controversy was to cease until a final decision should be given in general council. This decision was then to be universally accepted by the different churches throughout the country."¹

"The broad and far-reaching decision of the general council brought confidence into the ranks of the Gentile believers, and the cause of God prospered."²

"When dissension arose in a local church, . . . and the believers were unable to come to an agreement among themselves, such matters were not permitted to create division in the church, but were referred to a general council of the entire body of believers, made up of appointed delegates from the various local churches, with the apostles and elders in positions of

leading responsibility. Thus the efforts of Satan to attack the church in isolated places were met by concerted action on the part of all. . . . [God] requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality cooperating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.”³

Doctrinal issues, questions on church discipline, etc.

In spite of the widespread availability of the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Principles of Faith and Church Order based upon them, old and new questions are always coming up. Easy matters can be settled together among the members of the local church with the help of the minister. Other matters may require the help of the state conference or union conference. Matters that cannot

be solved by the union conference are referred to the General Conference office during the quadrennium, and from there they may be sent on to the Ministerial Working Committee, Doctrinal Council, or GC Council. In many cases, questions can be answered straight from the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy. Others can be addressed according to the way these inspired writings have led in our previous GC decisions. Delegates do not bring questions directly to the GC session; the union conferences and those fields and missions directly attached to the GC all send in their questions well in advance. This is the only way to ensure that any point which should rightfully be considered at the GC delegation in session will indeed go to the session.

Certain subjects may be brought up before the GC delegation in session, not because the elected GC Committees or Councils do not have the answer, but because all the unions, fields, and missions must necessarily be involved, sharing responsibility in whatever solution may be adopted. In the light of this thought, it is important for us to consider an example from the time of the early Christians:

“If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body.”

“By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference.”⁹

Mutual encouragement

The apostle Paul says that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Romans 15:4). Therefore, we should learn lessons also from the yearly gatherings of Israel.

Bro. D. Dumitru reading his report to the delegation while Brn. A.C. Sas and N.S. Brittain look on



"At these yearly assemblies the hearts of old and young would be encouraged in the service of God, while the association of the people from the different quarters of the land would strengthen the ties that bound them to God and to one another. Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them. . . . We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. The truths of His word lose their vividness and importance in our minds. Our hearts cease to be enlightened and aroused by the sanctifying influence, and we decline in spirituality. In our intercourse as Christians we lose much by lack of sympathy with one another. He who shuts himself up to himself is not filling the position that God designed he should. We are all children of one Father, dependent upon one another for happiness. The claims of God and of humanity are upon us. It is the proper cultivation of the social elements of our nature that brings us into sympathy with our brethren and affords us happiness in our efforts to bless others."¹⁰

"I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered."⁷

"The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council."⁸

Plans for the advancement of the work

A General Conference delegation session is the most appropriate time and place for the representatives of the



Delegates at work

church to acquaint one another with the problems, needs, and possibilities existing in each area. This enables them to adopt both local and general plans for the advancement of the work, and to secure mutual cooperation.

Election of GC Officers

"God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men.

"Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference.

How do we choose a place for a GC session?

The choosing of a place for a GC delegation session is not an easy matter. A final decision can be made by the GC Council, and the place can be announced worldwide, only after the Council has found answers to a number of questions, such as:

Where and who?

The GC Council suggests one, two, or three tentative areas—for example, Europe, North America, South America—and asks which union or field would be willing and able to host the delegation. No union or field will extend an invitation without first considering: whether they can secure a suitable place (we repeat: a suitable place) for the session well in advance; whether they can obtain competent personnel and organize adequate services to handle the delegation for three weeks; whether they can finance the cost (food, lodging and local transportation). Of course, the neighboring unions and fields are expected to help. While, on the one hand, these unions and fields incur heavy expenses with the entertaining of a GC delegation session, on the other hand they save a considerable amount of money by not having to buy expensive airline tickets for their delegates.

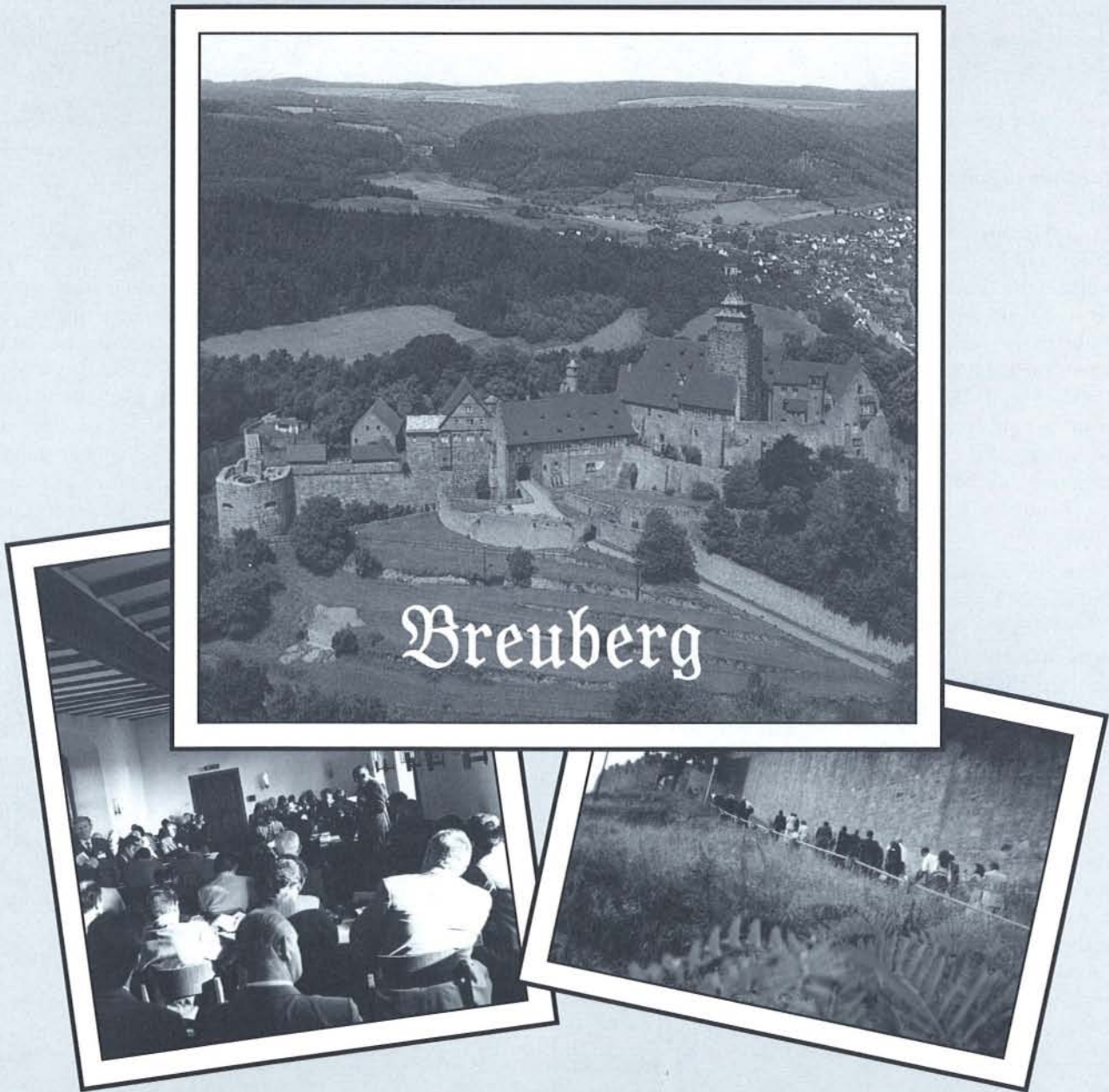
Important Considerations

The union or field serving as a host may overlook certain questions which may be important to the GC Council and to the delegates in general. For example: What will be the total cost of transportation for the delegation—if the session is held in North America? In South America? In

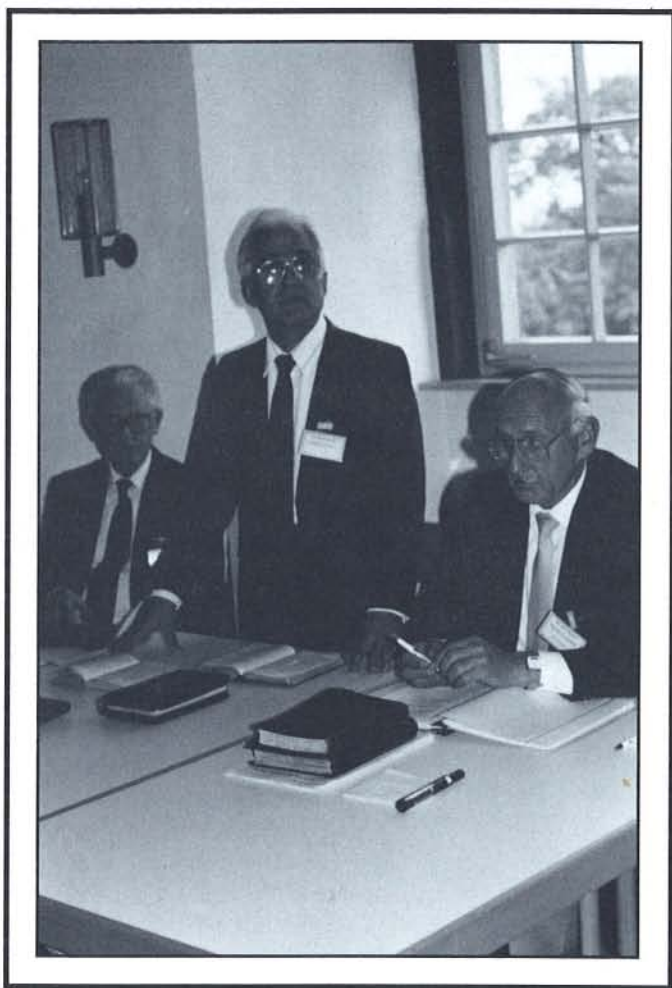
Continued on page 26

A Historical Event

in a Historic Setting



Burg Breuberg in the Odenwald forest area, Germany, where the 16th G.C. Session was held.



Bro. Dumitru, temporary chairman at the Session

SEPTEMBER 3, 1991, was an eventful date in the history of the Reform Movement. The dreams, wishes and prayers of many brethren around the world, who were looking forward to coming to the GC session, became a reality. The setting was a historic fort and castle that reminded us of the many years of turmoil and struggle in the distant past. As we entered the massive gate into the citadel, we were impressed with the deep, wide trench and massive walls encircling the stronghold, and the formidable tower located in the center. Of course, from a military standpoint, these formerly impregnable defense obstacles, which must have cost a lot of money and labor, have eventually become totally ineffective against the modern weapons of warfare. But the old fortress still stands—as a tourist attraction. Its castle has undergone some internal renovations and is now being used as a youth hostel. As we were given the historical background of the place, we could not but praise Him who holds the course of history and the destiny of the nations in His own hands.

As in the distant past, Burg Breuberg stood in defense of the area, seeing many an opponent turn away from its unsailable walls, so did the brethren, by the grace of God, stand in defense of the truth in the countries which were deprived

of religious liberty in the recent past. The experiences and testimonies of our delegates from Romania and Russia stirred our hearts with thanksgiving when we heard how the Lord has been working to preserve His people from the attacks of the enemy.

Truly, great changes have taken place in our world during these last few years, and some more serious changes are expected to occur in the near future. The prophecies and signs pointing to the end are fulfilling before our eyes. Indeed, Christ's coming is very near.

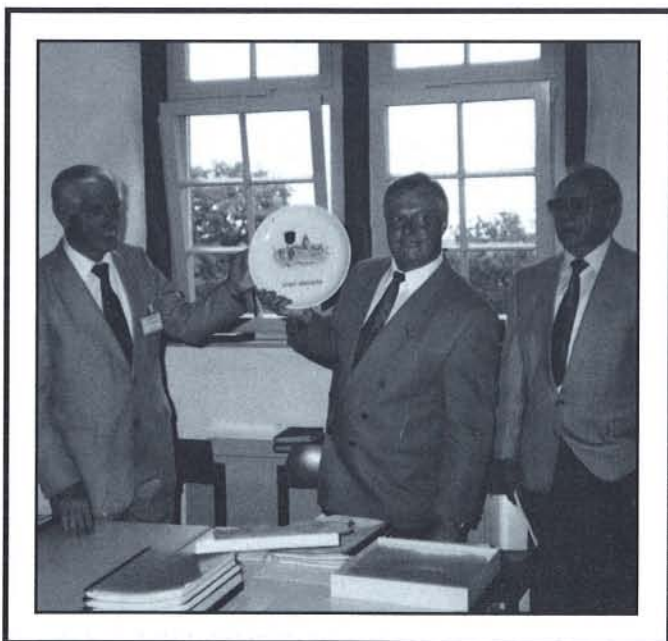
Opening of delegation session

The great political changes in the world and the opening of the Eastern European countries made it possible for 109 delegates to attend the sixteenth General Conference session.

For the first time in the history of the Reform Movement, it was possible to convene a full session of delegates. With a few exceptions, all the Unions, Fields and Missions were represented. The reports submitted by the various officers of the General Conference revealed that the Message of Reformation has reached over sixty countries and territories. And efforts are being made to extend the work into other countries which have so far been untouched. As a matter of fact, we have contacts in six new countries, and we trust and pray that the work will be established there also in the near future.

Visit of first councilman

September 6 we were all graced by the visit of the first councilman of the town of Breuberg, Mr. Horst Kunschak. He greeted the delegation in the name of the municipality, presented important information about Breuberg and neighboring towns, and related the history of the area and of the



First councilman's welcome

fortress back to the days of the Romans, who built the tower between 100 and 200 A.D. Especially interesting were the events connected with the fortress during the time of the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants. As a result of his visit to our GC session, a brief overview of our church appeared in two local papers. We transcribe from the *Breuberger Stadtanzeiger* of September 13, 1991:

"Once again Germany is serving as a host to the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference. The place chosen for their session, which will continue until Tuesday, September 24, 1991, is the romantic Burg Breuberg in the Odenwald area. Over 100 partakers have assembled from all parts of the world—North America, Central America, South

America, Africa, Australasia, Asia, Europe, and from the islands of the sea. For the first time after many years of isolation, the eastern countries—Russia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria—have been able to send their delegations. [Editor's remark: Poland and Hungary have been able to send delegates since 1979.] The church had been proscribed in these countries for a long time. A certain number of leaders were sentenced to fifteen years or more of imprisonment and, as they had to suffer great hardships, some of them died in prison.

"Since they had chosen to hold their conference at Burg Breuberg, the town of Breuberg has been induced to offer its testimonial to the international



Young attendees

visitors coming from nigh and far, said the first councilman, Horst Kunschak, as he conveyed to them the greetings of the guilds of the township.

"The fact that, after they met in Brazil, four years ago, their world-wide conference is now being held at Burg Breuberg, is a special event for the population of the district of Breuberg, Kunschak emphasized. . . . To afford the participants some relaxation during their session, he [the first councilman] offered them a visit to the orchestra of Rai-Breitenbach and wished them a pleasant stay in the district.

"As a souvenir of the town and citadel of Breuberg, Kunschak handed to the world-wide conference leader, Daniel Dumitru [Editor's note: Brother Dumitru was the chairman of the conference] and to the leader for Germany, Willi Volpp, the honorary plate [emblem] of Breuberg. In continuation, Kurt Frenzel, from the tourist office of Breuberg, highlighted some of the main facts of the history of the fortress."

For the first time in the history of the Reform Movement, it was possible to convene a full session of delegates.

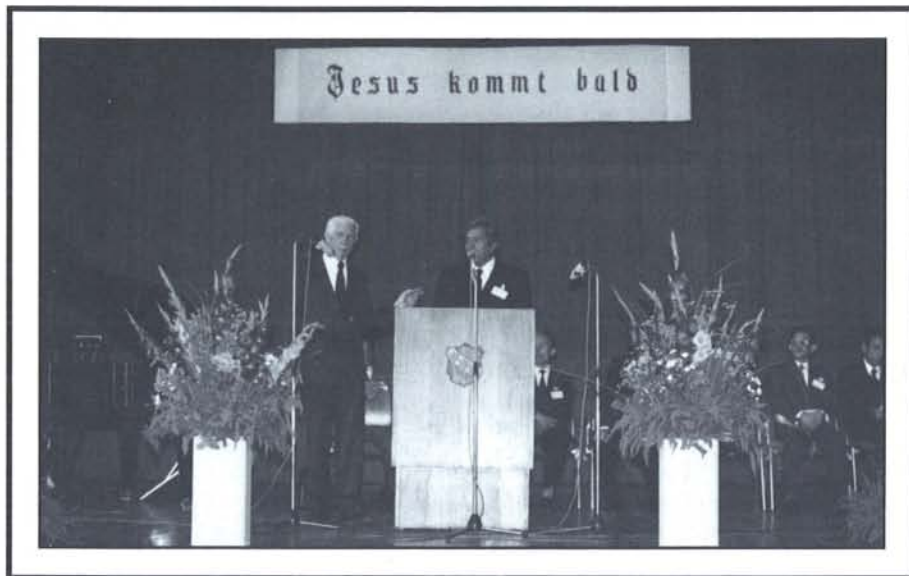
Hundreds of loaves of this delicious German bread were served



Kitchen staff

Spiritual convention at Erbach

The highlight of our worldwide gathering in Germany was the spiritual convention of the German Union, September 13-15. About 500-600 people gathered at the auditorium of the Ivory Museum, in Erbach, to receive the blessings of that spiritual feast. The theme of the conference—"Jesus is coming soon"—was very appropriate for the occasion. The deep conviction that Jesus is coming soon struck home to many hearts. Friday evening Brother Davi P. Silva presented a timely Bible study in connection with the Sabbath. Sabbath morning Brother Jorai P. da Cruz, from Portugal, conducted the teachers' meeting, Brother R. Ludwig took the review lesson, and several brethren went through the new lesson in different language groups. Then Brother A. C. Sas, who had the divine service, spoke about the final events and the soon coming of Christ. In the afternoon there was a young people's meeting conducted by Brother Rubens J. Araujo, from South Africa. After that Brother W. Volpp led out in the thanksgiving and experience meeting. The interesting experiences that were related, from different parts of



Bro. Manutahi from Tahiti addressing the congregation

the world, thrilled the hearts of all present. Sabbath evening Brother John Baer Jr. preached about the second coming of Christ. Sunday morning, September 15, Brother Daniel Dumitru presented a general report on the worldwide work. And then we were pleased to listen to many more brethren who had experiences to share with us. Brother Marc Manutahi, from



Brethren at Erbach

French Polynesia, told us how he and his wife came into contact with the Reform Movement. From Brother D. Sureshkumar we heard how the Message of Reformation reached northeast India. Brother Dong Choon Kim spoke about the development of the work in Korea, and Brother B. S. Tampubolon conveyed the greetings of the brethren from Jakarta, Indonesia, and many other brethren stood on the rostrum speaking words of farewell and encouragement until we closed the meeting with the hymn, "God Be With You."



Attendance at the German Union conference

Excursion trip

On September 24, when the delegation session was over, we visited two interesting places, Heidelberg and Worms. After taking a bus to Neckarsteinach, we went on a sightseeing tour, by boat on the Neckar River, to Heidelberg. The city is beautifully situated in a region of orchards and vineyards. It is best known for its university, founded in 1386. The famous castle, which we visited, dates from the 15th-17th centuries.

From Heidelberg we continued our tour, by bus, to Worms, a city which was the scene of important historic events. In 1521 Emperor Charles V called the famous Diet of Worms and among other matters took up the doctrines spread by Martin Luther, who had to face his opponents. The spokesman of the Diet asked Luther angrily: "Will you, or will you not, retract?" The Reformer answered:

"Since your most serene majesty and your high mightiness require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to

the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen."¹

The building in which the national council was convened is no longer there, but we passed over the ground where Luther stood before the council. Next to that place is a monument to the heroes of the sixteenth century Reformation. In the midst of the other

reformers there stands Martin Luther holding his open Bible in his hand. Underneath is the inscription: "Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me."

May God help us stand as faithful to the present truth for our days as those men stood to the present truth for their days! R

¹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 160.

Returning to Breuberg



Bro. Krevatski speaking to the congregation at Erbach



Breuberg, Erbach, Miltenberg



THE SIXTEENTH General Conference session was held at Breuberg, Germany, September 3–23, 1991. The spiritual convention of the German Union connected with the delegation session took place at Erbach; September 13–15.

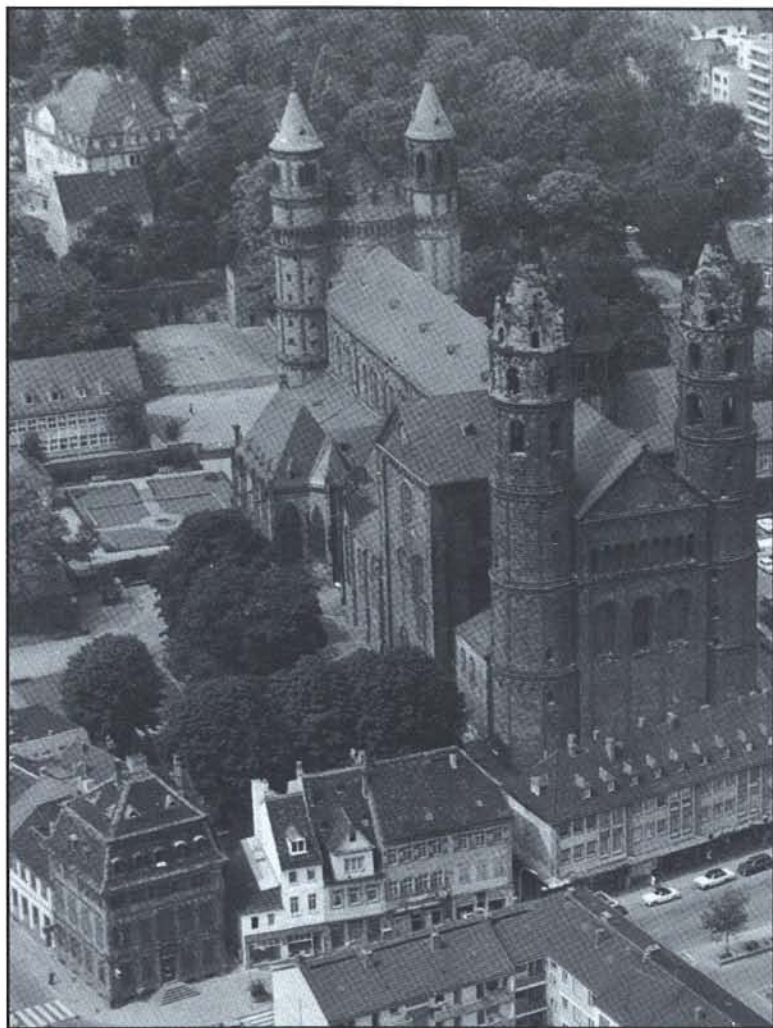
Breuberg is a little town about 100 miles south of Frankfurt, and Erbach is about 14 miles further south. These towns, which are situated in the beautiful forest area of Odenwald, were greatly affected by the religious wars, especially in the sixteenth century, when they were conquered and controlled now by Catholics, now by Protestants. The yearbooks of Miltenberg, another little town about 12 miles east of Erbach, narrate some interesting episodes of these conflicts. Of

special interest is a story involving two personages.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century Count Eberhard, a devout Catholic, lived in his stately castle and citadel at Erbach. His county, *i.e.*, the area ruled over by him, included Breuberg. We were told that in those days the castle of Breuberg, now a youth hostel where the GC session was held, belonged to him. On April 8,

1518, with much pain in his heart, the count said good-bye to his wife, whose tears were powerless to stop him. A group of armed men on horseback were anxiously waiting for him. As they were riding away, some of the servants thought he was going to bring a doctor to see his little daughter, who was lying very ill. But, as a faithful son of the Roman Catholic Church, he was actually headed toward Miltenberg on a religious mission.

On October 31, 1517, Luther had posted his historic 95 theses against the sale of indulgences, on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg. To him the practice of selling indulgences appeared as a great evil, because it tended to destroy the true spirit of repentance. As these theses were spread throughout



Cathedral at Worms

Germany, being hailed as an attack against the Roman Church, Luther suddenly ceased to be an obscure monk and became a public figure. And now, as Luther was anxiously expected in Miltenberg, where the Gospel had already gotten a firm foothold, the inhabitants of the little town were making festive preparations to receive the preacher of "justification by faith." This was the reason why Count Eberhard, as a defender of Roman Catholicism, decided to rush to Miltenberg with a company of soldiers.

Count Eberhard could hardly control his anger when he read the inscription at the gate of the town, "The Word of God and the teachings of Luther shall never pass away." While

joyful multitudes who had flocked together to listen to Luther were ap-
plausively talking about the man who was shaking the foundations of Rome, the count's voice was quivering with rage. Greatly disgusted, he came to the "Giant's Inn," whose owner, bowing before him as a sign of obeisance, said: "My lord and count, I never thought that Luther would be able to put also your grace on the move." The count alighted from his horse and told the innkeeper in a few dry words that he and his men wanted to stay there overnight. Then he took his evening meal and, tired as he was, he lay down, but was unable to fall asleep.

The count was thinking about the religious controversy in his country

"Who is that man in the adjoining room, that thrilled me with his songs and prayers last night and this morning?"

when, all of a sudden, he heard, across the thin wooden partition, a deep, melodious, masculine voice. A man in the adjoining room was singing a spiritual song as part of his evening worship. And the count understood every word of that hymn. His heart was so deeply impressed that he made the sign of the cross and folded his hands in prayer.

When the stranger finished his song, he began to pray aloud: "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver."



Martin Luther

These are the first two verses of Psalm 7, which were unknown to the Catholic count. And the man continued his prayer (verses 10-15): "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made." The stranger went on praying with much fervor, uttering words which wrought as piercing arrows upon the heart of the count.

As soon as the impressive petitions of the man in the other room were ended, the staunch Catholic, with folded hands and tears in his eyes, began to pray: "Amen, amen! May everything, O Lord, come to pass as this godly servant of Thine hath entreated Thee!" The count felt relieved in his heart and he fell asleep.

Next morning the count woke up when his neighbor began to sing. Another beautiful song. Another effective prayer. The count was again moved to tears. As the innkeeper appeared, he asked him: "Who is that man in the adjoining room, that thrilled me with his songs and prayers last night and this morning?" The innkeeper smiled and said: "He is a priest, a very good man." "Please, go to him," the count added, "and ask him if he can give me fifteen minutes. I am about to depart. But before I can go I must shake hands with him and look him in the face."

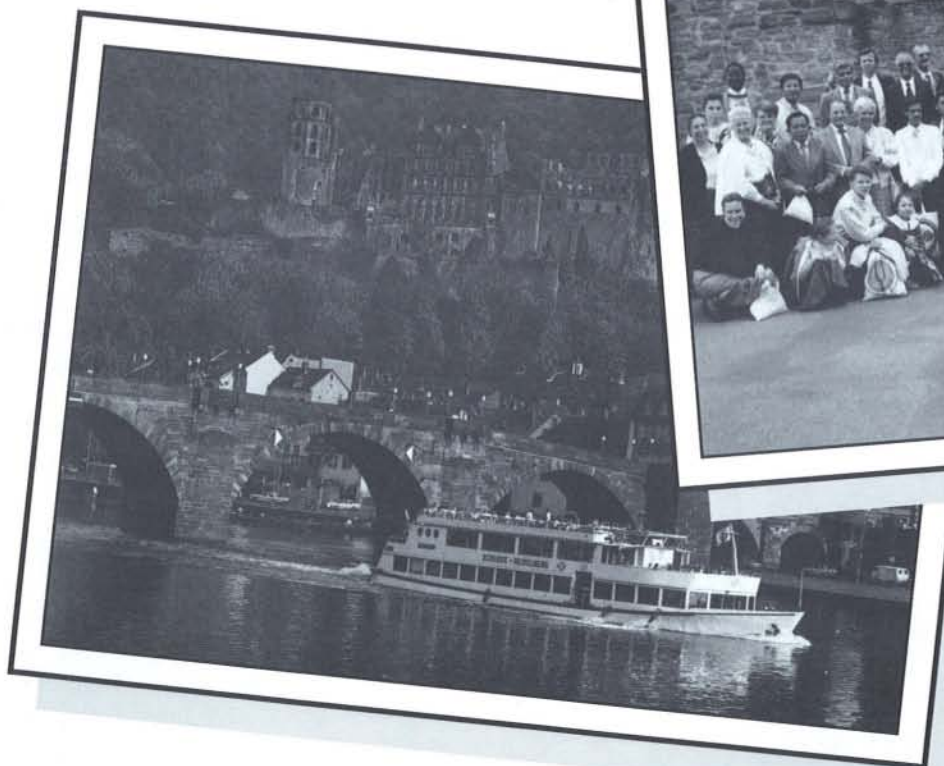
The count soon greeted the priest in the neighboring room—a middle-sized, thick-set man in his thirties. His face showed energy and gentleness, zeal and love. He was astonished to see before him the count in his armor, with his sword by his side.

"I come to you, venerable father,

to express my gratitude to you for the spiritual encouragement that you prepared for me last night and this morning. And I take this opportunity to ask you cordially to sing one more beautiful song for my comfort."

Again the count's heart was deeply moved. Holding the hand of the priest, he said: "Your wonderful songs have put a question in my mouth. What do you think of the new doctrine that is being preached everywhere? You are a God-fearing and intelligent man. I would like to have your advice and instruction."

The stranger, more than willing to fulfill the desire of the count, immediately began to explain the Holy Scriptures to him. The count listened with close attention, interjecting a question or objection now and then, due to which the conversation was protracted. Finally the innkeeper walked in and said that the soldiers, who were



Excursion by boat to Heidelberg, on the last day before the delegates went home

waiting outside, were getting impatient.

"Excuse me, venerable father. I must hurry off. I am engaged in a pious work which is pleasing to God, and which will certainly have your approval," the count explained.

"May I know what you intend to do?"

"Of course. This work is to be done to the honor of God and to the benefit of the holy Church. And for this purpose I need your blessing."

"Tell me all about it."

"I left home with my soldiers in order to make a catch. I am on the lookout for a naughty heretic, and I am sure I will lay hands on him today."

"Whom do you mean?"

"That insolent Augustinian monk of Wittenberg who lifted up his sacrilegious hand against the representative

of the Lord Jesus Christ and against his mother, the holy Church. He is going to travel from here to Heidelberg, as I have been informed."

"You mean Dr. Martin Luther?"

"Who else could it be but this heretic and teacher of false doctrines, who has caused offense and scandal throughout the German empire."

"And what do you intend to do with the monk of Wittenberg once you have caught him?"

"I will incarcerate him in my tower or in a safe convent, and my priests will press him so long that he will finally retract his pernicious errors and come out as a repentant sinner."

"And if he does not meet your commendable desire, but rather persists in his conviction—what then?"

"Do you think I am incurring such a heavy expenditure to no purpose—only to find out that he is going to

Heidelberg? He will not fall into my hands in vain. If he remains stubborn, I will send him to Rome—I myself and my soldiers will go with him—and I will deliver him to the Holy Father. If he still holds on to his errors, the Holy Father may condemn him to the stake, treating him as a heretic ought to be treated. Now I must go to do my work, but, venerable father, I cannot go without your blessing. I also ask you to give me your name, so that I can keep it in my memory and in my heart as long as I live. You are the most pious and educated priest that I have ever met."

The stranger remained silent for a while, only repeating to himself, mentally, these words: "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2. Then he turned to the count firmly and decidedly:

"You do not have to trouble yourself any further. The man whom you want to capture is right before you. I am Martin Luther!"

As if struck by a thunder, the count knelt before the pious man and said:

"You are better than I am. May God, in His grace, forgive me for having thought to harm you."

Luther smiled and said:

"Stand up, honorable count, and go your way in peace. He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. By the will of God, you shall see greater wonders than the breaking of bows and the destroying of spears by Him. They will not be able to suppress His word, for the word of the Lord remaineth forever."

"Venerable sir," the count entreated, "I have one more petition which I would like to urge on you. I was greatly edified by your prayers and your songs; and your clear, intelligent, and cordial explanations have enlightened my heart. Come with me to my castle at Erbach. God's leading has been so wonderful that I wanted to take you there as my prisoner, and now you are taking me there as your prisoner. I am anxious to listen to you



Brethren on deck and below deck on the way to Heidelberg

A monument to Luther



Some of the delegates in front of the statue of the 16th century Reformers in Worms, Germany

*“Like Saul I departed
planning to do evil; like
Paul I am coming back,
determined to do good.
Praise be to God in all
eternity for what He has
done!”*

still further, as far as your time permits. Come with me so that my wife may receive, through you, the same blessings that I have received.”

While they were riding across the mountainous Odenwald region, they continued their cordial dialogue about the love of God and the plan of salvation. When they were still far from Erbach, the count sent one of his soldiers to run ahead of them with a special commission unbeknown to the others. So, as they were approaching the town, suddenly all the bells there began to ring, and the teacher with a group of singing school children came out to greet them. Also the town-piper with his companions played hymns of praise to God, saluting the count and his guest.

The countess came to the gate of the castle with a smile on her face. Hugging her husband, she told him

first of all that their little daughter was much better. The count folded his hands and praised the Lord. As she was wondering who that stranger beside her husband could be, he said: “That’s him. Yes, that’s him. Believe me, this is Martin Luther. But we exchanged roles. He is the captor and I am the captive. Like Saul I departed planning to do evil; like Paul I am coming back, determined to do good. Praise be to God in all eternity for what He has done!” The countess greeted the visitor with great joy, and she, too, was converted to the teachings of the Gospel.

From then on the count invited faithful evangelical pastors and showed much interest and zeal in the preaching of the Gospel to the people in his territory. When Luther was summoned before the Diet at Worms, in 1521, he was not alone. A certain number of princes and counts, friends of the Reformation, stood with him, as the yearbooks of the city show. And the name of Count Eberhard of Erbach is recorded among them. R

Europe? Another region? How many visas are required and how troublesome and expensive is it to obtain these visas? Are there easy telephone connections to and from the place of the conference? How are the postal services of the country in question? How about its political and economic stability? These and other questions come up when the prospective place of a forthcoming GC session is under discussion.

Sessions of Prayer

When preparations are made for the holding of a GC session, much more than human wisdom, technical arrangements, and personal experience is needed. At every step the plans for such a session are placed before the Lord in prayer. And when the circular letter announcing the place and time of the conference is sent out, many of our brethren are requested to mention this important event every day in their prayers, entreating the Lord to bless the preparations, to protect the delegates on their trip there and back, and to take the work of the delegation into His own hands, so that everything may be done according to His will.

"It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer, of unyielding faith. The greatest victories of the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."¹¹ R

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 190.

² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 196, 197.

⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 428.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 199.

¹⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 236, 237.

¹¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 540, 541.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

... a picture is worth

a thousand words ...



While preparing for the picture taking session, one brother remarked: "This is an experience in itself—watching all of them get ready for the pictures!"



Reports and Decisions

“**T**HE CHURCH of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth and the beings in heaven who have never fallen constitute one church. Every heavenly intelligence is interested in the assemblies of the saints who on earth meet to worship God. . . . Oh, that we could all realize the nearness of heaven to earth! When the earthborn children know it not, they have angels of light as their companions. . . . Let us all bear in mind that in every assembly of the saints below are angels of God, listening to the testimonies, songs, and prayers.”¹ It was with this thought in mind that we came to the delegation session.

Opening of the session

The sixteenth GC delegation session was opened by Brother J. Moreno, the outgoing GC president, on September 3, 1991. After the singing of a hymn, a scripture reading, and two prayers, Brother Moreno addressed the delegation, bringing to their attention the fact that, in the history of the Reform Movement, this was the first session with full worldwide attendance. He expressed the hope, shared by all, that this conference would be blessed with a spirit of brotherly love, peace, and unity. There was a season of prayer in which many petitions were offered—one in each language—for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our assembly.

Seating of delegates

The delegates presented their credentials, one by one, as their names were called out by the secretary, Brother A. C. Sas. The delegates were seated and the session was declared

legal and competent to conduct business. Nine more delegates arrived later, bringing the total number of delegates to 109.

New Fields

As three Unions agreed to be dissolved for technical reasons, the constituent countries of these Unions were reorganized as follows:

Former Andean Union — now: Ecuatorian Union, Colombian Field, Venezuelan Field;

Former Danubian Union — now: Hungarian Field, Poland-Czechoslovakia Field;

Former Trans-African Union — now: Natal-Transvaal Field, RESDA Field, Zimbabwe-Botswana Field, Zaire Field, Zambia Field.

Besides these Fields, two new Missions were also accepted: Angola Mission, Mozambique Mission.

Reports

Brother J. Moreno, GC president: He thanked God for having kept us from dangers seen and unseen during the past quadrennium and then specified his activities (Sept. 1987–June 1991): visits to Unions, Fields, and Missions; participation in GC Council meetings, GC Executive Committee meetings, Doctrinal Council meetings; seminars for workers.

Brother D. Dumitru, GC vice-president: He mentioned his many missionary trips and visits to Unions and Fields; his participation in delegation sessions, spiritual conventions, and seminars; the numerous Council meetings and Committee meetings that he had attended; and the pastoral services that he had rendered in many places. He closed his report expressing the desire that this GC session would

bring us closer to Jesus and to one another. He said, “Let us unite our hearts and our efforts in the finishing of the work to hasten the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Brother A. C. Sas, GC secretary: Brother Sas presented the statistical report: 5,485 members added during the quadrennium; membership at the end of 1990: 20,769; number of church buildings and other buildings owned by the Organization, 395; organized churches, 492; organized groups, 481; rented meeting places 238; private homes where meetings are held, 355; number of ministers, 158; Bible workers (full time), 302; Bible workers (part time), 44; Bible workers (voluntary), 116; etc. In coordination with the Fields in North America, the German Union, and the General Conference office, he said, 10,000 Bibles were sent to Romania in 1990. His closing remark: “The GC officers have worked in harmony, revealing a good spirit of mutual understanding.”



Brother J. Garbi, GC treasurer: Brother Garbi gave us a clear picture of the financial situation of the Movement—revenue and expenses during the quadrennium; assets and liabilities as of December 1990. He said “I thank the brethren of the different Unions, Fields, and Missions that have cooperated with the General Conference and especially with the Treasury Department for sending in their reports and remittances on time.”

Brother W. Volpp, regional secretary for Africa: He spoke about the development of the work in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Zaire, Kenya, Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, and about the new interests in Ghana and Malawi. In his closing remarks he said: “May the Lord bless His work in Africa, this big continent, where there are many countries which have not as yet received the message of reformation. The African people are receptive to the Gospel and to the last message of God to the world. If we had

more trained workers, we would be able to do a much greater work. For this reason, there is a plan to start a missionary school in Africa as soon as possible.”

Brother N. S. Brittain, regional secretary for APAR (Asia, Pacific, Australasia): His report included the following countries and islands where

African Region delegates



APAR delegates



we have members: Korea, Japan, Philippines, Myanmar (Burma), India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Western Samoa. In conclusion, he said: “We thank the Lord for His blessings in the work of APAR.

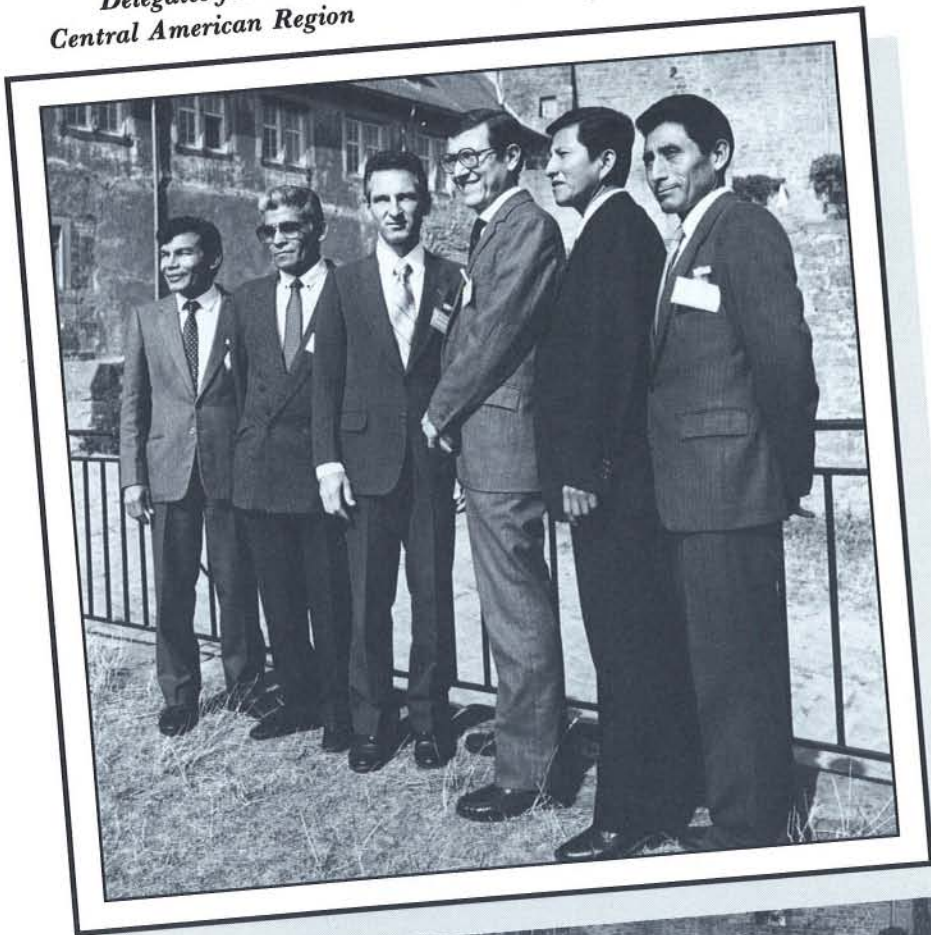
May He add His blessing further to this session that His work on earth may be promoted and finished before long, and that His coming may be hastened.”

Brother J. Romero, regional secretary for Central America and neighboring countries: he spoke about the attention that he had given to the work in Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. At the end of his report he stressed one blessed and precious assurance: "The greatest vic-

tories gained for the cause of God are not the result of labored argument, ample facilities, wide influence, or abundance of means; they are gained in the audience chamber with God, when with earnest, agonizing faith men lay hold upon the mighty arm of power."²

Brother R. Ludwig, regional secretary for Europe: His report showed

*Delegates for the
Central American Region*



that he had dedicated most of his time to the Eastern countries of Europe, where there had been restrictions. "My visits to these countries," he said, "were connected with special sacrifices and dangers. Now our people enjoy a measure of religious liberty in all these countries. Now they can hold religious services and can cross the borders more easily. Praise be to God for this change." He appreciated the help that had been extended to the work in Europe when Brother Jorai P. Cruz was sent to Portugal, Brother Angel Senior to Spain, and Brother Emilson Motta to Italy. In conclusion, he added: "I thank all my brethren for their cooperation, their support, their practical help, and for their prayers. It has been a blessing to work together. And I thank the Lord for His merciful protection on all our trips. May He continue bestowing His blessings upon His work in Europe."

Brother John H. Baer Jr., acting regional secretary for North America:



Delegates for the European Region

the North American region. Our believers in North America are of good courage in the Lord. It is my prayer that all Fields continue to grow and that their members may individually sacrifice and do all in their power to work unitedly to hasten our Lord's return."



G.C. officers and delegates for the U.S.A. and Canada

"John C. Baer had faithfully served as regional secretary for many years," he said, "serving our North American territory with great sacrifice both financially and physically while doing the work that he loved so dearly. He has been greatly missed these last two years. We will always remember him for his loving pastoral care, his sacrifice for the work of the Lord, and his firm stand for the Truth. Fourteen months after his death I was requested to assist as North American regional secretary. Within one year of service I have visited all the Fields except one in

the North American region. Our believers in North America are of good courage in the Lord. It is my prayer that all Fields continue to grow and that their members may individually sacrifice and do all in their power to work unitedly to hasten our Lord's return."

Brother Davi P. Silva, regional secretary for South America: He showed the work that was done with his assistance—spiritual conventions, delegation sessions, youth gatherings, special evangelistic efforts, seminars, Council meetings, etc.—in the four Unions comprised by the South American region: Northern Brazilian Union, Southern Brazilian Union, Southern South American Union (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia), Peruvian Union. "For all the goodness of the Lord I praise His name forever," he said.

Brother Daniel Dumitru, secretary of the Colporteur Department: Brother Dumitru helped establish, reorganize, and/or promote the colporteur work through visits, seminars, and counsels, in the following places: Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Peru, Spain, U.S.A. (Los Angeles and Denver), Puerto Rico. During the quadrennium he held 106 seminars for colporteurs. Here are the figures for the literature distributed during the last four years: Books sold — hard cover books, 1,981,698; soft cover books, 186,117; paperbacks, 329,043; booklets, 275,608; magazines, 320,412; tracts and pamphlets distributed, 3,158,928. "The needed attention and the right place should be given to the publishing work and the colporteur ministry, so that the finishing of the work of God on earth may be hastened," he said in conclusion.

Brother A. Balbach, secretary of the Editorial Department: Besides his routine work, namely, the editing of the *Reformation Herald*, *Standard Bearer*, and *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, he was also engaged in other literary activities, as follows: syllabus on the Doctrine of Salvation (Righteousness by Faith), textbooks for our missionary schools and seminars, the book entitled *The History of the Reform Movement*, etc. He also spent some time doing research work on doctrinal questions, and writing or revising booklets, tracts, pamphlets, etc. "It is my prayer to God," he said, "that His guiding hand will be with us and that He will bless us with health, wisdom, and means to carry on His work during the quadrennium which is before us."

Brother E. C. Luup, secretary of the Educational Department: During the past quadrennium Brother Luup was busy with the preparation of a religious educational program for the home, the church, and the schools. The plan focuses on the education of children and teenagers up to the age of 16 in primary, secondary, and intermediate schools. With his presence and assistance, seminars on Christian education were held in Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. There are mission-



*Delegates for the
Latin American Region*



Brazilian delegates

ary schools in operation in Brazil, Peru, and in the Philippines. Schools and seminars for the preparation of workers are also being conducted, on a regular basis, in French Polynesia and in Korea. The German Union, with the assistance of the Austrian Field, started such a school in Graz, Austria, in 1989. The first seminar extended from mid-November 1989 through mid-June 1990. For several reasons, especially the language barriers, the original plan to continue with the seminars year after year, was not followed. There are, however, plans to start a school for yearly seminars for the Romanian speaking brethren in the

near future. Brother Luup reported that there are 44 primary schools in operation with over 8,000 children.

Brother N. S. Brittain, secretary of the Health-Missionary Department: The report submitted by Brother Brittain covered the work done mainly in South America during the past quadrennium: number of institutions for inpatients, 4; employees as of December 31, 1990, 54; patients admitted to these institutions during the four years, 5,939; outpatient consultations and treatments, 7,326; health lectures, 2,929; cooking demonstrations, 813; missionary health courses teaching application of natural treatments, 1,794;

health food stores, 5; vegetarian restaurants, 7. Brother Brittain said: "I believe that the proper role of the missionary health work in the church, apart from proper, well established and duly controlled institutional work, should be at the grass roots level, where the people are taught in a simple manner how to live."

Brother B. Burec, secretary of the Literature Department: Besides the periodical publications—*Reformation Herald*, *Sabbath Bible Lessons*, *Youth Messenger*—the GC Publishing Department printed 3,000 copies each of 13 booklets entitled the *Good Way Series* (in-depth studies especially designed



*Delegates
for the Peruvian Union*



Yugoslavian delegates

for Seventh-day Adventists), 1,000 copies of the book *The Gateway to a Happy Home* (a practical guide on courtship, marriage and family life), 50,000 copies of the colporteur book *Como Vivir Sano*, 10,000 copies of the book *Las Maravillosas Curas del Limon y de la Naranja*, as well as four pocket-size pamphlets in English (50,000 copies each) and six pocket-size pamphlets in Spanish (300,000 copies). There are plans to publish a regular Spanish edition of the *Reformation Herald* beginning January 1992. Brother Burec thanked the Lord for the good success obtained through the

distribution of our publications, particularly in the United States and Canada. "By the grace of God," he said, "our denominational literature has been opening many doors in homes throughout the world. As the work thus advances, we pray that the publishing ministry will continue to be used as an essential instrument in lightening the earth with the glory of God."

Brother A. C. Sas, on behalf of the Missionary Department, reported: The number of radio stations through which the truth as understood and defended by the Reform Movement is being preached, 24; messages broad-

cast during the four years, 3,255; students enrolled in the Bible correspondence courses during the quadrennium, 112,988; students completed the courses, 32,384; lay missionary activities: Bible studies given 223,934; missionary visits, 342,590; books and booklets distributed, 433,774; tracts and pamphlets distributed, 2,084,920; magazines distributed 74,319; Welfare work: value of goods distributed, US\$173,520.00; financial help given to the poor, US\$119,315.00. The real figures for the lay missionary activities and the welfare work should be much higher, because only a few Unions, Fields, and Missions reported the work done by the lay members.

Brother A. C. Sas, secretary of the Sabbath School Department: Brother Sas' report included a complete list of topics used for our Sabbath school quarterlies from the first quarter 1987 through the fourth quarter 1990; number of countries where our *Sabbath Bible Lessons* are studied 65; number of Sabbath schools 1,209; number of branch Sabbath schools 176. These figures, Brother Sas explained, were taken from the partial reports sent in. He took the opportunity to appeal to the regional secretaries to see that all Unions, Fields, and Missions submit their reports faithfully and regularly.

Brother H. E. Weymark, secretary of the Young People's Department: He did not come as a delegate, but he sent his report based on the partial statistics that he had collected from the Unions and Fields: Number of organized young people's meetings, 1,200; youth conventions held, 243. "From my observations," he wrote, "and from reports received, I think that, rather than having a general world youth convention, it would be better to promote regional youth conventions, because this would give opportunity for greater local attendance, and the spiritual benefits would be largely increased, making it more practical and less expensive."

Temporary officers and committees

After a season of prayers, Brother D. Dumitru was elected chairman of the session; and Brother N. S. Brittain, temporary secretary. Brother J.

Moreno, the outgoing GC president, thanked the delegation for having entrusted him with the heavy responsibility in 1987 and for having given him the needed support, and laid down his office and those of his co-workers. The temporary officers, Brethren D. Dumitru and N. S. Brittain, took up their responsibilities, and, after a season of prayer and expressions of gratitude to the Lord, they pointed out the rules for the election of the temporary committees. Then the following committees were elected—nominating committee, finance committee, constitution and bylaws committee, doctrinal committee, health committee, plans committee, and subcommittees—and in due time they brought their reports to the delegation.

Fields and Missions requesting change of status

The Chilean Field was given approval to become a Union, on an experimental basis, for two years, beginning January 1992.

The Southeast U. S. Field and the Pacific North Mission were recognized as such by the delegation.

The request and recommendation was accepted that the Korean Mission become the Korean Field.

Brother Marc Manutahi from Tahiti explained the position of the work in French Polynesia and the legal implications at the moment; therefore it was resolved that henceforth, the French Polynesian Mission be known as French Polynesian Field, and that Martinique and Guadeloupe be considered as a Mission under the supervision of the French Polynesian Field.

Resolutions

The temporary Doctrinal Committee recommended, and it was resolved:

1. That traveling by private car on Sabbath to attend church services, to do missionary work, and to visit the sick, be permitted, and that unnecessary traveling on Sabbath be considered as prohibited by the Word of God. It was agreed that our people everywhere be instructed about the need to show more faithfulness in Sabbathkeeping.

2. That renting out houses which are separate from our doors is not a transgression of the law of God, provided that these houses will not be used for unlawful or unbiblical purposes. It was agreed that, “within our house,” or “within our doors,” where we live, we are not to have tenants who do not respect our faith.

3. That, with reference to the use of one cup in the Lord’s Supper, we confirm our original position as maintained by us as a church from 1925 until now.

4. That, in regard to church discipline, our ministers and church officers be instructed to follow Matthew 18:15–17 carefully, paying attention to Deuteronomy 17:6; 16:18, 19; 1 Timothy 5:18, 19; 5T 94–98. It was explained

that no Union or Field is authorized to establish its own rules on church discipline.

5. That the same order be followed in all church services, including the Sabbath School meetings: leaders kneel in silent prayer and congregation stands.

Russian delegates



Some of the Romanian delegates

Bro. Hunger addressing the Session

6. That our ministers, workers, and church officers, as well as our people, be instructed about the need to raise the standards and render more faithful obedience to the Word of God.

Negotiations for Unification

As the delegation was informed about the work of the Unification Committee and about the agreements reached so far with the brethren of the Reform Movement with headquarters in Mosbach, Germany, the delegation authorized and empowered the officers of our General Conference to continue working for a genuine unification in a humble spirit, under the guidance of the Lord, and in submission to His will.

The new GC President, Brother N. S. Brittain, thanked the delegates for the confidence bestowed upon him and encouraged them to take a good report back to their fields. He said we are called upon to raise the standard of the truth everywhere, even though in some matters we may not understand one another fully. He also thanked the German Union and the Romanian Union for the hospitality and for everything that was done to accommodate the delegation session and spiritual gathering. Then he read from Jude 20-25 by way of counsel to the homegoing delegates. In conclusion, Brother J. Moreno pronounced the benediction and we all sang the hymn, "God Be With You."

®



*Reunification Committee, left to right:
Davi P. Silva, Gerhard Hunger, Benjamin Burec,
Antonino Di Franca, Daniel Dumitru, Arturo Alva*

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 366, 367.

² *Gospel Workers*, p. 259.

A Special Note of Thanks! . . . Thanks! . . . Thanks!

We would like, first of all, to express our sincere gratitude to the Lord for the success of our recent General Conference Session which was held in Europe during the months of August and September 1991. We also want to express our heartfelt thanks to the Romanian Union for its willingness to sponsor the general meetings in Ploesti, Romania, and to all those who came from many different countries to attend the meetings. Furthermore, we want to thank the German Union for its willingness to sponsor the business session in Breuberg, Germany. We know that personal sacrifice and hard work were required from both the officers and the members of these two Unions. May the Lord reward them accordingly. Finally, we also want to say thank you to those brethren and sisters who helped with accommodations, preparing and serving the meals, and to those who worked in the laundry. It was the dedication and hard work of these brethren which helped to make our convention a success. Once again, thanks to all!

The brethren of the General Conference

Face to Face with Death

As told to the delegates at the Session five months after the accident

IN OUR missionary journeys, the Lord sometimes allows us, to make some extraordinarily trying experiences. Recently I was traveling to the Marquesa Islands together with another brother, a 65-year-old ordained elder. The Marquesas are known for being dangerous. There are no plains and the region is very mountainous.

The local airport is on the top of a mountain which has been flattened for use as an airstrip. The landing strip is not straight; it has a curve! This is the first airport I have ever seen built that way. Commercial airplanes bring passengers to the big island and then small airplanes commute between the main island and the little islands. We were on a small Dorney aircraft (for approximately 20 passengers), on Wednesday, April 17, 1991, planning to fly back to Tahiti the next day. Something had happened and the brethren wanted me to stay one more Sabbath with them. I called my wife and told her about it. "No, you should not stay there," she said, "because they are waiting for you here for the Lord's Supper this Sabbath." Against my inclinations, we went on to the local airport. It was about 3 kilometers away. It took us 45 minutes, traveling by horseback because the condition of the ways did not permit modern means of transportation.

When we arrived at the airfield, I was talking with the brethren in the parking lot while I gave my ticket to a sister to check-in for me. I said, "I don't have any desire to leave." Five minutes after we had boarded the 2-engine plane, we were airborne. From that small island to the big one, the flying time was to be about 40 minutes.



Thirty minutes later, our little airplane was flying at an altitude of 1,000 meters, over the top of the big mountain, near the central airport. I was sitting in the first row immediately behind the co-pilot. Between the passengers and pilot there was no door, so I could see and hear everything. While the pilot was trying to maneuver the plane, the right engine stopped. Two or three seconds later, the left engine also stopped. I could see the red lights coming on, announcing danger ahead. The co-pilot said to the pilot: "Let's do our best to land in the airfield." The pilot said, "No, if we try to land in the airfield, with the gas that is in the gas tank the airplane will explode and there will be no survivors! Let's try to land in the ocean."

This was the first time I had ever seen death right before my eyes. When you stand face to face with death, you have terrible sensations. This was my case.

So, I unbuckled my seat belt in order to turn around to see the brother who was traveling with me, seated in the back of the plane. There was smoke in the back and everybody was screaming and shouting, while the airplane was losing altitude. Most of the people there were Catholics, and they were crying: "Virgin Mary, save

us." These people perished in the accident.

As I could not see my brother, I sat down again, and the airplane made a nosedive into the sea. I thought at that moment, "Lord, here I am. Whether I have to live or die I accept what is coming; You make the decision." I could not even buckle up my seat belt again. I just repeated, "Lord, You make the decision." There was a terrible crash 60–100 meters from dry land. The depth of the sea there was 20–30 meters. The airplane plunged into the water and bounced and then floated. The cockpit opened but did not get separated from the rest of the airplane.

At the moment of the crash, everyone aboard passed out. The picture was catastrophic. The nose of the airplane was smashed. The co-pilot could not get out and was crushed. The pilot had been ejected from the cockpit and so had I. The wings of the airplane were floating above the water, but the fuselage was underwater. When I regained consciousness, I was floating next to the cockpit and the right wing. The other brother was also floating next to me. The ones on top of the wings grabbed him and helped him onto the top of the wings. Then they grabbed me by my broken arm that was dangling—you can see the scars from the surgery. My left arm, my skull, and nine ribs were fractured.

The pilot, full of cuts and bruises (even the tendon of his foot was cut), was on top of the wings shouting, "Pull them onto the airplane! Pull them! Quick, onto the plane." There were sharks around. As he was behind

Continued on page 47

Newly Elected G.C.

President: Neville S. Brittain

Vice President: Daniel Dumitru

Executive Committee: N. S. Brittain, D. Dumitru, A. C. Sas, R. Lopez, John Garbi.

General Conference Council: N. S. Brittain, D. Dumitru, J. Moreno, A. C. Sas, R. Lopez, J. Garbi, Wilhelm Volpp, D. Sureshkumar, Rudolf Ludwig, Jose Romero, Davi P. Silva, Ion Tomoiaga, Alfons Balbach.

Regional Secretaries:

Africa: W. Volpp

Asia: D. Sureshkumar

Pacific: N. S. Brittain (until he moves)

Europe: R. Ludwig

Central America: J. Romero

South America: D. P. Silva

North America: J. Garbi

Departmental Secretaries:

Colporteur: Jaime Campos

Educational: Edgard Luup

Sabbath School: Benjamin Burec

Young People: Branislav Jaksic

R.H.P.A.: R. Lopez (with assistance)

Missionary: Gerson Barros

Missionary Health: Daniel Boarim

Auditor: Josue Devai



Neville S. Brittain



Daniel Dumitru



Alfredo Carlos Sas



Ruffo Lopez T.



John Garbi



John Moreno

Officers (1991-1995)

Secretary: Alfredo Carlos Sas

Treasurer: Ruffo Lopez T.

Board of Directors: N. S. Brittain, D. Dumitru, A. C. Sas, R. Lopez, J. Garbi.

Publication Approval Committee:
A. Balbach, J. Garbi, John Baer, W. Volpp, J. Moreno

Reformation Herald:

Editor: A. C. Sas

Associate Editor: Barbara Monteiro

Contributors: The Regional Secretaries

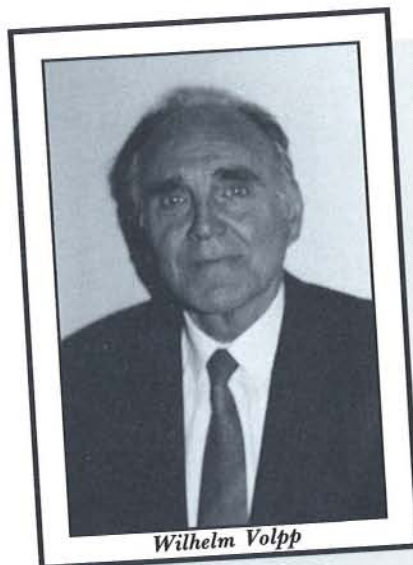
Public Relations: B. Burec

Doctrinal Working Committee: N. S. Brittain, D. Dumitru, J. Moreno

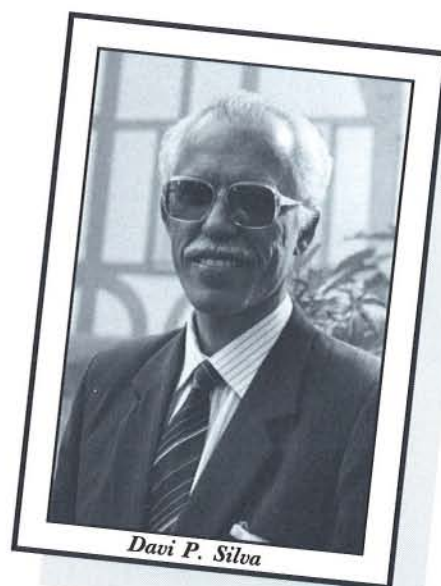
Doctrinal Council: N. S. Brittain, D. Dumitru, J. Moreno, A. C. Sas, A. Balbach, W. Volpp, R. Ludwig, I. Tomoiaga, Vasile Camarasan, Luiz Araujo, Ary Goncalves, Samuel Diaz, B. Jaksic

Finance Committee: Vincent Cimera, J. Devai, J. Baer

Bylaws Committee: A. Balbach, B. Burec, N. S. Brittain



Wilhelm Volpp



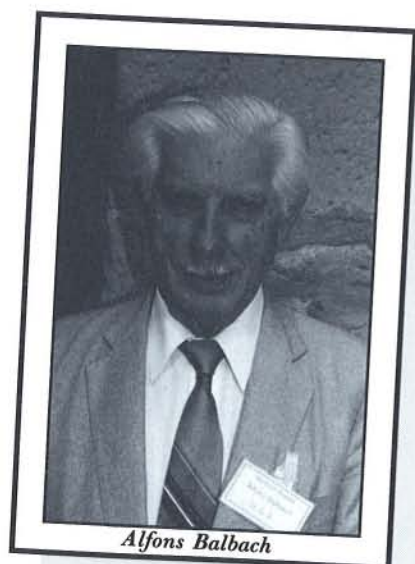
Davi P. Silva



Rudolf Ludwig



José Romero



Alfons Balbach














Ion Tomoiaga



D. Sureshkumar





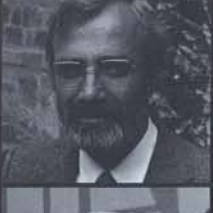


DELEGATES TO THE

G.C. Officers and Delegates from the U.S.A. and Canada

	<p>John H. Baer</p> <p>Acting regional secretary of North America, ordained elder for the Central U.S. Field</p>		<p>Alfons Balbach</p> <p>Minister, editor for the publishing department of the G.C.</p>
	<p>Benjamin Burec</p> <p>Secretary of the publishing department of the G.C.; elected secretary for the Sabbath School Department</p>		<p>Vincent Cimera</p> <p>Leader for the Northwest U.S. Field Conference</p>
	<p>Francisco Devai L.</p> <p>Minister, leader of the Southwest U.S. Field, presently leader of the Pacific Northwest Mission</p>		<p>Daniel Dumitru</p> <p>Minister, secretary of the G.C. Colporteur Department; re-elected vice-president of the G.C.</p>
	<p>John Garbi</p> <p>Treasurer of the G.C.; elected regional secretary for North America</p>		<p>John Maghiari</p> <p>Bible worker (now deceased), Northwest U.S. Field Conference</p>
	<p>John Moreno</p> <p>Minister, president of the G.C. (1983-1991)</p>		<p>Alfredo Carlos Sas</p> <p>Minister, re-elected secretary for the G.C. and elected editor of the <i>Reformation Herald</i> magazine</p>
	<p>Adele Satelmayer</p> <p>Secretary of the East Canadian Field Conference</p>		<p>Ljuban Vukotic</p> <p>Minister, leader of the Eastern U.S. Field</p>

16TH G. C. SESSION

Delegates from the European Region

	Joraí Pereira da Cruz Minister, leader of the Iberian Field		Vasil Hristov Leader of the field in Bulgaria
	Dragan Ilic Bible worker in Yugoslavia		Rudolf Ludwig Minister, conference president in Germany, re-elected regional secretary for Europe
	Vojo Lukic Field secretary and member of the Literature Department in Yugoslavia		Emilson Motta Ordained elder for the field in Italy
	Jean-Paul Parpaillon Ordained elder for the field in France		Bogumil Pawlak Secretary of the Poland-Czechoslovakia Field
	Gabrijel Popek Minister, president of the union in Yugoslavia		Bela Toth Minister, president of the field in Hungary
	Ernő Toth Secretary of the field in Hungary		Hans Woywod Ordained elder in the German Union





DELEGATES TO THE

Delegates from Romania

	<p>Marin Barbu Minister, secretary of the union in Romania and conference president</p>		<p>Vasile Camarasan Minister, president of a conference in Romania</p>
	<p>Dumitru Ciurea Minister in Romania</p>		<p>Mihail Corneliu Minister, treasurer of the union in Romania</p>
	<p>Traian Cracea Minister, president of a conference in Romania</p>		<p>Nelu Daramus Minister in Romania</p>
	<p>Francisu Matyas Minister in Romania</p>		<p>Victor Muresan Minister, president of a conference in Romania</p>
	<p>Stefan Nagy Bible worker in Romania</p>		<p>Florin Pistea Bible worker in Romania</p>
	<p>Valerian Constantin Raileanu Medical doctor, translator of our publications into Romanian</p>		<p>Benjamin Sirbusca Minister, president of a conference in Romania</p>

16TH G. C. SESSION *(Continued)*

Delegates from Romania

	Cornel Spetcu Ordained conference president in Romania		Gheorghe Stoica Minister, vice-president of the union in Romania
	Ion Tomoiaga Minister, president of the union in Romania		Stefan Ungureanu One of the oldest ministers in Romania

Delegates from Russia

	Mihail Demian Ordained elder, vice-president and secretary of a field, young people's leader for the union in Russia		Nicolai Fegina Minister in Russia
	Simeon Krevatzki Minister, vice-president of the union in Russia		Vasile Melinchuk Minister, secretary of the union in Russia
	Ivan Misiura Minister, field leader in Russia		Oleg Zvetkov Minister, field leader in Russia

DELEGATES TO THE

Delegates from Africa



Rubens de Jesus Araújo

Minister, Natal-Transvaal Field
leader in South Africa



Daimon Tepuke Chishimba

Secretary of the field in Zambia



Caba Samuel Kalende

Treasurer of the field in Zaire



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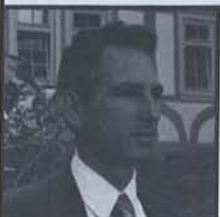
Treasurer of the field in Zimbabwe



Wilhelm Volpp

Minister, president of the German
Union; re-elected regional secretary for Africa

Delegates from Central America



Dorival N. Dumitru

Minister, leader in the Dominican
Republic and Puerto Rico



Celestino Ortiz Ferreira

Ordained elder and leader of the
field in Mexico



José Romero

Minister, re-elected regional
secretary for Central America and
neighboring countries



Herinaldo Gomes Silva

Minister, president of the
Ecuadorian Union



Ruffo Lopez T.

Secretary-treasurer of the
Ecuadorian Union, elected
treasurer for the G.C.



Victor Hugo Tomalá T.





Bible worker, delegate for Colombia

16TH G. C. SESSION *(Continued)*

Delegates from the Peruvian Union

	Guillermo Yañac Caviedes Minister, field president in south Peru		Daniel Dávila Member of the Peruvian Union Council
	Elias Granda Durand Auditor for the Peruvian Union		Julio Duire Guablocho Minister, field president in north-west Peru
	Mario Alvarado Palacios Minister, president of the Peruvian Union		David C. Chavez Pedrazas Administrator of the publishing house in Peru
	 Samuel Díaz Vergara Minister, vice-president and secretary of the Peruvian Union		

Delegates from the Southern Union of South America

	José Luiz Ignatov Director and physician of the health clinic in Montevideo, Uruguay		Joel Morales Ordained elder, field leader in central Chile
	Luiz Patiño Ordained field elder in west Bolivia		Jacinto Pereira dos Santos Minister, president of the South American Southern Union

DELEGATES TO THE

Delegates from the

	<p>Gerson Simões de Barros</p> <p>Manager of the publishing house in Brazil; elected secretary of the G.C. Missionary Department</p>		<p>Juracy José Barrozo</p> <p>Minister, secretary of the union in south Brazil</p>
	<p>Demerval dos Santos Ferreira</p> <p>Colporteur leader of the union in south Brazil</p>		<p>José Guidini</p> <p>Minister in south Brazil</p>
	<p>João Batista Gonçalves Lima</p> <p>Minister, conference president in the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil</p>		<p>José de Oliveira Lima</p> <p>Minister, conference president in the state of São Paulo, Brazil</p>
	<p>Edgard Carlos Luup</p> <p>Superintendent of our primary schools in Brazil; secretary of the G.C. Education Department</p>		<p>Silas Neri de Oliveira</p> <p>Treasurer of the union in south Brazil</p>
	<p>Daniel da Silva Rocha</p> <p>Minister, conference president in the state of Rio-Grande do Sul, Brazil</p>		<p>Ary Gonçalves da Silva</p> <p>Minister, conference president in the state of Rio de Janeiro</p>
	<p>Davi Paes Silva</p> <p>Minister, re-elected regional secretary for South America</p>		<p>Jose Silva</p> <p>Minister in the state of São Paulo in south Brazil</p>
	<p>Matheus Souza da Silva</p> <p>Minister, president of the union in south Brazil</p>		<p>Antonio Thomé</p> <p>Minister, director of the sanitarium <i>Hospital Oásis Paranaense</i> in the state of Paraná, Brazil</p>

16TH G. C. SESSION *(Continued)*

Two Brazilian Unions

	<p>Josif Tuleu Director of the welfare department, bakery and health food store in south Brazil</p>		<p>Jorge Santos Alves Colporteur leader for the union in north Brazil</p>
	<p>Luiz Almeida Araújo Minister, president of the union in north Brazil</p>		<p>Isaias da Silva Caires Treasurer of the union in north Brazil</p>
	<p>José Honório Cândido Minister in Brasilia, Brazil</p>		<p>Josué Devai Accountant for both unions in Brazil</p>
	<p>Artur Gessner Minister, conference president in northeast Brazil</p>		<p>Ivan da Silva Lima Minister, leader of the Missionary Department in north Brazil</p>
	<p>Alvaro D. Cardoso Menezes Minister, conference president in Minas Gerais, Brazil</p>		<p>Delvacir Dias Preto Minister, conference president in central Brazil</p>
	<p>Moisés de la Cruz Quiroga Minister, conference president in north Brazil</p>		<p>Raul Mérida Salguero Leader of the Medical Missionary Department in north Brazil</p>
	<p>Caetano Verto Sink Minister in north Brazil</p>		<p>José Morais de Souza Minister, conference president in north Brazil</p>

DELEGATES TO . . . (Continued)

Delegates from APAR (Asia, Pacific, and Australian Region)

	<p>Neville S. Brittain Minister, regional secretary of APAR; elected president of the G.C.</p>		<p>Hyun Jong Hwan Secretary of the publishing department in the Philippine Union</p>
	<p>Branislav Jaksic Ordained field elder and vice-president of the Australasian Union</p>		<p>Dae Chun Kang Minister, vice-president of the field in Korea</p>
	<p>Dong Choon Kim Minister, president of the field in Korea</p>		<p>Jung Shin Kim Minister and leader of the Nippon Mission in Japan</p>
	<p>Marc Manutahi Minister, president of the field in French Polynesia</p>		<p>Bambang Moelyadi Treasurer of the church in Jakarta, Indonesia</p>
	<p>Tuariihionoa Puarai Bible worker in New Caledonia (French Polynesia Field)</p>		<p>Mervyn B. Southwell Ordained field elder in New Zealand</p>
	<p>D. Sureshkumar Minister, elected regional secretary for Asia</p>		<p>Bongitan S. Tampubolon Church leader in Jakarta, Indonesia</p>
		<p>Daniel Cordero Todavia Minister, president of the Philippine Union</p>	

me, I think he could see some of them.

The first-aid team came in a fishing boat and they had no idea of how to act. While they were removing us from the aircraft, I said to the brother who was in a severe state of shock, "The most important thing is that God has saved us; it doesn't matter that we are cut and bruised." He just smiled at me.

Those men that came to help just grabbed us one by one and threw us into the fishing boat. That was the first aid we got! I was quietly lying in a corner while others were being thrown one on top of the other. One man was howling with pain; his leg had been cut off and left in the sea. It was a terrible scene!

They put us under a shed—a roof over a concrete slab. Everyone was put there—the wounded, the dead, and the dying. Some, with broken arms and legs, were howling in pain. Finally the real first aid arrived from Tahiti.

I heard the doctor saying to his assistants, "Leave this one alone; he is dead"; "That one is also dead"; "Take this one to Papeete immediately." I was one of the last ones to be examined by the doctor. They told me, "We cannot take you right away; you must be operated on right here." All of the survivors were gone except me. There were ten dead bodies, and there were ten survivors, four of whom died afterwards.

The accident occurred around 11:30 a.m., and I received first aid only at 7:00 p.m. They had to take the survivors to Tahiti and only then did they begin treating me. Several times I passed out, woke up, and then passed out again. There were no ambulances or hospitals and they took me in a small pickup truck to a little first aid station in a nearby village. There they began to pump water and gasoline out of my stomach. I had gasoline in my lungs also. The doctor said, "We will examine you further because your spleen is perforated; if we transport you to Tahiti now, you will die on the way." I did not believe that my spleen was really perforated, and a little later

the doctor also dropped his concern about that.

The problem was that I had gasoline in my lungs, a fractured skull, a broken arm, and nine broken ribs! I said to myself, "It would be foolish to think of dying now. God has saved me from the accident because He wants to keep me alive." So I was put on an oxygen mask and got intravenous feeding. I was full of tubes and needles all over. A tube was also introduced into my bladder. Someone was brought especially from Papeete to take care of me at that first aid station.

The next morning, I heard the lady doctor calling the authorities in Papeete. I was in the next room and could hear her say: "It is impossible. He has only 8 hours to live. If you come later he will be dead." To me her request seemed impossible, because a commercial airplane takes five hours to come from Papeete to the main Marquesa island. Then she said, "We will prepare the patient." So they removed me from that first aid station as my physical resistance was getting lower.

I began to ask the Lord, "Why did you permit this to happen?" While suffering terrible pain, I was put on a little fishing boat and taken to the airport. The doctor said to me, "You cannot sleep. Keep talking. If you fall asleep, that's it. Please tell me what you are thinking. What is going through your mind?" Two men were holding the stretcher because the boat was rocking, while another man was holding the oxygen mask, and another was holding the intravenous bag, etc. I think there were six men. The doctor by my side was saying, "Talk to me, What can you see?" I told her, "I don't feel sick, I feel well." I had the impression I was on a flying carpet, floating in the air. She kept asking me, "What do you see?" "Now I do not feel anything, I am floating." She urged me, "Come back to earth. Stop floating, or you will die."

When we got to the airport, there was a special airplane that had taken three hours to arrive from Papeete. There was a doctor aboard, and I was the only passenger—a government airplane just for me. In three hours we were back in Papeete.


On the airplane, whenever I began to sleep, I had a nightmare—I rehearsed the airplane crash. I tried to get hold of something—anything I could grab—just to hold onto something. Upon our arrival, the president and the chief authorities of Tahiti were there to see me and ask me how I was feeling. I got first aid inside the ambulance on the way to the hospital, where I was to stay for one week to be strengthened before I could be taken to New Zealand or France. But that was not necessary, because I regained strength quickly. For one week I had moments of consciousness and unconsciousness.

The second week I was a bit better. Whenever I was conscious I asked the Lord, "Why? You promised to protect Your servants through Your angels. Why did You not send at least one angel to protect them that serve You?" In those difficult moments, the devil was tempting me, "Can you see?" Someone who came to visit me said, "If you were not in the missionary work, this would not have happened to you." There was confusion in my mind. I said, "Lord, You have the answer."

It was during this second week that I opened my Bible for the first time after the accident, and I read the first verse I put my finger on—Psalm 34:19, "**Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.**" When I read this verse, I said, "Thank You, Lord, You have given me the answer." Afflictions will surely come to the righteous, but God delivers them out of them all.

I stayed in the hospital for three weeks and, except for the brother who was with me, and who had received only minor injuries, I was the first to be released from among all others that had been in the accident.

I leave this experience with you together with Psalm 34:19. Do not forget the Lord's promises.

I thank you all for your prayers while I was in the hospital. I am sure that your prayers speeded up my recovery, and I had one more evidence that God is still working miracles in behalf of His servants. 



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